



Adolf Heller | Karl Geyer

Of the essential

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Draft version!

Still in progress...

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Introductory Scriptures

Still to fill

Coincidence?

Nothing on earth is meaningless;
It is planned by God eternities ago
And wants to eternal goals, beautiful and great,
Guide the long-suffering, poor creation.
There is not one coincidence in the world,
Not near nor far;
The Father who holds His universe in His hands,
Directs every little stick and the course of the stars.

Every event has a purpose and an aim.
The Father has measured out everything to us.
His will shapes the beings fight and play
And has not forgotten even the slightest thing.
The enemy perishes through his own wickedness.
What he plans against us will meet him.
The word from God's mouth is infallible,
That He will protect and bless His own.

His salvation is for the wicked and the good,
That ultimately overcomes all beings.
Even the enemy's poisonous fire arrow
Effects only what God proclaims beforehand.
The ruler of all worlds is served by the universe;
Who before the creation already sees the goal
knows for certain that His plan will always and
everywhere His plan will be gloriously fulfilled. A. H.

We die into glory!

We die into the glory
Of the true world
Therefore the hardship and suffering of the earth
Must only be a blessing for us.

What our great God desires
In Christ our Head,
That will surely come to pass
On everyone who believes in him.

What is done to us or taken from us
What hurts and displeases us
Is intended only for our salvation
Before the foundation of the world!

We are served by the enemies
The fear and torment of the earth,
We die into the glory
Of the true world

Adolf Heller

Of the Essence of Glory - by Adolf Heller

In every human heart there is a deep, ardent longing for an essential glory which is not of this creation. Even the child suspects darkly that this world full of fear and misery, full of guilt and sin cannot be the real and lasting thing, but that there must be something very great, delicious and happy, something pure and wonderful, for which it is really worth living.

Unfortunately, however, even among the devout of all shades there are many people who in the depths of their hearts are "people of this age" (Ps. 17:14), whose "Christianity" is only a pious fringe decoration of their lives. To them, those who are truly moved by God appear to be enthusiasts who go too far; they cannot comprehend that one, filled with ardent love for Christ, can be deeply delighted and blessed by God's salvation. At best, they approve of a legal sermon on breaking; but when the glory of God is spoken of, they become angry. But is it not written, "Glory and honor and peace to everyone who works that which is good!" (Rom. 2, 10) And do not the holy scriptures, especially the Pauline letters, which apply to us, the body of Christ, speak in many delicious contexts of the glory, which we already now behold, possess, enjoy and administer in the spirit and of which we will become partakers in wonderful fullness in the eternities to come? Does not the apostle write in holy delight of the "gospel of the glory of the blessed God" which has been entrusted to him (I Tim.1;11)?

This dark, tortured life would only be a pointless hustle and chase if it were not for the promise of God's glory. It would not be worth living if there were not a fulfillment, renewal and restitution of all that burns in the hearts of men in unquenched longing.

Blessed are those who know something of the "Christ in us, the hope of glory" (Co1. 1, 27), who live "to the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1, 12) and will one day be "revealed in glory" (Co1. 3, 4) with their Lord and Head! There are still only a few who, as God's elect, are "witnesses of the sufferings of Christ and partakers of the glory that is about to be revealed" (1 Pet 5:1); but one day the earth will be full of the "knowledge of the glory of the Lord" (Hab 2:14). Until then it is necessary to wait, to be silent, to serve and to love. And this only faith is able to do, which "according to the riches of his glory is strengthened with power through his Spirit into the inner man" (Eph.3, 16). - —

When it comes to final and deepest self-revelations given to us by God, He is called "Father of Glory" (Eph. 1:17). Glory is the sphere of being that cannot be

grasped by human standards because it is inaccessible to our natural senses. Glory can only be revealed from the Word of God through His Spirit.

No creature is able to bring about life from death. Only the light and life forces of the essential, upper world can do that. That is why we read in Rom. 6, 4 that Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. What a powerful thing the glory must be!

Because God is the Father of glory, it is the desire of His heart to have not only one glorious son, but to bring many sons to glory (Heb 2:10). It is significant in which context this testimony stands. On the one hand, it speaks of the fact that for his sake and through him the whole universe was brought into existence (verse 10 a), and on the other hand, it refers to the fact that he made his Son, the author of the salvation of many sons, perfect through suffering (verse 10 c). The heart of creation and redemption, then, is God's glory goal for his sons, which he conceived in the Son.

If glory is so appropriate for the Father that He is called by it, and if He cares so much about leading the Son and the sons to His glory, we can understand that the Lord Jesus does not only ask for His own to see His glory (Joh. 17, 24), but that He also wants to give it to them (Joh. 17, 22).

And what is the purpose of the communication of His own God-given glory to His own? Joh. 17, 22 b gives us the answer: "that they may be one, even as we are one". This testimony contains a great, delicious truth concerning the unity of believers. Their unity is to be as perfect and intimate as that of the Father and the Son. This is far beyond our imagination. Only on the ground of glory received together is divine unity even possible. Common sin and guilt also create a unity, most certainly! But it is a destructive, devilish darkness unity. Glory, however, which has its roots in the pre-eternal love of God (John 17:24 b), brings about divine unity. Do we understand from these contexts why the enemy reviles and blasphemes "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God"?

Now because the goal of our hope is profoundly glory, we may and should boast or boast of the hope of glory, as it is written in Rom. 5:2: "We boast of the hope of the glory of God." But he who sees no goal also misses the way. That is why the enemy wants to obscure the high goal of glory for us.

We are transformed into Christ's radiant image only by beholding His glory (2 Cor. 3:18). But this means a step-by-step and finally complete and final annihilation of the enemy. Should we be surprised if he suspects the glory and persecutes its bearers and proclaimers with special hatred?

C. H. Weisse writes in his "Philosophical Dogmatics", Leipzig, 1855, Volume I, page 617: "If of any concept of the Holy Scripture it can be rightly said that it has been dissected and killed under the hands of ecclesiastical dogmatism, then it is that expressed by the word *doxa* (glory)" Whether this word of a specialist and thorough connoisseur of ecclesiastical dogmas is still valid today?

Are not those who, in a holy desire of the heart, endeavor to penetrate the whole richness of the fullness of truth repeatedly reproached for going too far in their testimony, for being too one-sided and for emphasizing the glory too much? They are often told that one should only proclaim repentance and breaking. This alone brings about a healthy, sober life of faith. However, every testimony of glory easily leads to enthusiasm: one must remain on the ground of everyday, practical life and must not lose oneself in things that are disputed and doubtful. Repentance and faith are the main thing, but everything else is secondary.

That sounds very plausible. But what does the Scripture say, which is far more important for our life of faith and our testimony mission than all the well-intentioned reasons of reason? One fact alone should make us think: the word *doxa* and the verb *doxazo* derived from it occur more than two hundred times in the New Testament. In contrast to this, let us investigate how often we find the expressions repent and break, and let us nevertheless seek to remain in the holy balance of divine truth, even if at first only in a purely external sense! What is great and important to God, so that he often and in many contexts speaks of it and puts it before our eyes as the highest goal, that must certainly not be secondary and meaningless to us.

And much less should anyone to whom God's holy, living Word is authority revile something that the Spirit strives to make great and important to believers.

May the concept of *doxa*, "disembodied and killed" under human hands, be made so essential to us that we are not only those who "seek glory with perseverance in good works", but who "rejoice in glory, exult in their camps" (Ps. 149, 5)! - Rom.2, 23 testifies to us that by nature we do not attain the glory of God. It actually means that we have to suffer lack with regard to the glory of God, to be deprived of it or to live in want because of its absence. From this it follows that our heart and life are created for the *doxa* and that we lack the most essential and delicious things as long as we have not been seized by the glory of God and become partakers of it.

We already saw that we are raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. The resurrection enables and imparts to us the ability to "walk in newness of life".

For we are, since our germ was in Christ, raised with Him! Now, as those raised with Christ, we may seek that which is above, where the Son of God, seated at the right hand of glory, waits as a forerunner until all His enemies are laid at the footstool of His feet (Co1. 3, 1: Hebr. 10, 13).

God has the deep need to reveal his own nature, because he does not want to be everything, to remain in himself, but to be everything in all at the end of his ways.

For this purpose he creates vessels into which he pours himself. Every being and creature is, even without its knowledge and will, a vessel of God. 1ies Rom. 9. 20-23! In the last verse of this context we are told that he wants to make known the riches of his glory in the vessels of pardon or mercy, i.e. in us, whom he has prepared beforehand for glory. What a precious testimony! God prepares us, the congregation of the Body of Christ, for the glory whose fullness of riches he wants to manifest or present in (literally on or over) us! Glory is God's nature urging display, and glory is the goal to which He is leading us!

In the 2nd Epistle to the Thessalonians we find references of a distinctly Israelite color, when in I, 7-9 the angels of God's power are mentioned, the aeonian destruction away from the face of the Lord and the glory of His strength. We may perhaps assume that the 2nd Thess. letter was addressed to believers from Israel as a supplement to the first letter to the Thessalonians, which is addressed to Gentile Christians.

In our context it should only be pointed out that doxa denotes the nature of God and that the Scriptures speak of the glory of His grace as well as of the glory of His strength, which is given to Israel and the nations (Is. 46, 13; PS. 97, 6 and many more) and shall one day shine over the whole earth (Ps. 57, 5; 108, 5; Ez. 43, 2; Rev. 18, 1).

God, who is blessed in Himself and who proclaims the gospel of glory, dwells in an inaccessible light, so that no man has seen Him or can see Him (1 Tim 6:16). And yet he will one day "present his own before his glory blameless with rejoicing" (Jude 24)! What a mighty sight it will be, far beyond our wildest imagination, when we shall stand in perfect likeness to Christ, our Head, rejoicing before the glory of God! - —

The nature of the Son of God is also often called glory. Thus, the Lord speaks to His disciples of the "throne of His glory" on which He will one day sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matth. 19, 28). In Luke 24:26 he calls his ascension after the accomplished work of redemption a "going into his glory."

The signs and wonders that Jesus did were a revelation of His glory (Joh. 2, 11), which led His disciples to faith. Truly believing in the sense of the Scriptures is not someone who affirms some church or free church, a community or brother dogma and is zealous for it, but someone who is essentially seized by the glory of Christ. The godless or pious world may laugh at or revile such an inwardly gripped feeling, but God, who caused light to shine out of darkness, has shone in our hearts to the radiance of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Cor. 4:6). And this is something wonderful and essential that human beings can neither give nor take away.

We already saw that the purpose of the glory communicated by the Lord to His disciples is that they may be one as He is with the Father. Often one hears it said, common sorrow unites the people. But this is the fall only for a short time and in a small measure. It is not the deep hardships of the common fear of death in steel-strewn ground funnels, in air-raid shelters, in collapsing, burning houses that unite people essentially and permanently, but, according to the word of our Lord and Head, only the glory of God imparted by Him can do that.

Jesus has an inherent glory given to him by the Father. It concerns not only his person, but also the sphere, the circle of life which surrounds him, which belongs to him like body and soul to the spirit. Now the glorious goal, which God let his son reach, is at the same time also the goal, to which he called the church of his body, yes, finally the whole universe, - namely transfigured corporeality. Bodiliness, however, is connected with spatial relationship, since a body cannot be without space. But where there is space, there is also time, since both condition each other. Thus, in the glory there are space and time relations of a transfigured kind, but they are completely free from all the torment and burdensome things that are inherent in our earthly circumstances. That is why an essential part of the redemption consists in putting away what belongs to the fallen curse of this creation: death, mourning, crying, pain (Rev. 21, 4) curse (Rev. 22, 3) and night (Rev. 22, 5).

The glory of God and Christ is something supercreative uncreated, is the radiation of their divine being. In this glory sphere the Father works. What the Son sees the Father doing there, he works out toward the side of creation, as he testifies in John 5:19, 36: "The Son can do nothing of himself except what he sees the Father doing, for whatever he does, that also the Son does in like manner...." The works which the Father has given me to do, the works themselves which I do, bear witness of me that the Father has sent me."

Thus we also understand that the Lord is called the workmaster who carried out and carried out what the Father had decided in His sphere of glory with Himself (Prov. 8, 22-30).

According to John 17, we may well say of the glory of the Son that it is not the glory of the Father Himself, but must be distinguished from it. It is not created, since it was already there before the foundation of the world. To the creaturely eye it is visible, thus it occupies a space. This glory belongs to the Lord essentially, since he receives it back and enters it again after his humiliation. However, he does not want to enter into this glory sphere alone, but to take with him those whom the Father has given him out of the world. Since this glory exists spatially and is visible to the creaturely, transfigured eye (verse 24), it must have a physicality that is somehow shaped. This visible, spiritual-bodily and spiritual-spatial glory of Christ is probably the power- and life-giving center, the "central sun" imagined by some saints, around which all beings and worlds from the light nearness of the redeemed to the darkness distance of the still damned walk their courses praising and rejoicing or cold and spiritually dead in gradations of most different clarity and light fullness.

All cosmic and spiritual laws up to the law of the spirit of life, which alone is able to break and abolish the law of sin and death in the vast universe (Rom. 8, 2), are relations of all created things to the Lord of glory. For in creation there is no dead mechanics but a holy, divine dynamic of love that carries and moves, redeems and completes everything. The seven spirits of God, sent out into the world to perform the tasks and offices of the Holy Spirit, receive their powers and graces from the light and life sphere of the glory of Christ. After all, the Lord says of the Comforter, the Paraclete: "He will glorify Me, for of Mine He will receive (or take) and proclaim to you" (John 16:14).

But because the spirit has entered into a connection, at first probably only a contact, with the fallen, chaotic creation, on the one hand the forces lying in the created are fertilized and liberated to a certain degree; on the other hand, however, they retain the germ of death in themselves and remain for the time being in complete separation from God's very own life and being, which communicates itself to faith only through new generation.

Creation is a replica of the primordial types of glory, but not in purity, beauty and perfection, but distorted and disfigured since its fall by the law of sin and death, which is by no means abolished, but only subdued even in the saints of God by the action of the Spirit. Man, who at his creation had the breath of divine life breathed into him, stood essentially above creation and should and could have

been its redeemer. But through his fall he sank heavily into the curse of the creaturely and, as world history frighteningly proves, becomes more and more the instrument and channel of satanic powers of destruction. At the same time, however, in unhappy brokenness he carries the deep longing and desire for freedom and glory ineradicably within himself.

Body glory is the goal of all God's ways. Believers founded in the word and spirit of Scripture have recognized and testified to this again and again. But this high goal is not reached automatically, i.e. not completely by itself and without any help of the creature. God is absolutely and in every respect the only active and the all-active. And nevertheless the creature must "be present". It is not at all, as some would have us believe, that the sinner sinks into unconsciousness and awakens one fine day glorious and saved, transfigured and blessed. This is a fantasy of the pious flesh, whose innermost motives can be seen through only too easily. The Word and Spirit of Scripture testify to something quite different! The process of renewal, beginning with the ego and ending in the universe, leads through deep inner and outer firings and purifications of all kinds. Just compare 1.Cor.3,15 with Hab.2,13.14; Zeph. 3,8.9; 2.Petr.3,10.12.13! Here we see that the partly still impure church, the nations, the earth and the heavens are led to the goal by processes of fire. Whoever now allows these firings to take place inwardly and willingly enters into them, ignited by the love of God and Christ, will one day no longer have to suffer them outwardly, but will rather be allowed to be a purified vessel of salvation and grace of his Father. The goal of all these humiliating and painful processes is nothing other than glory (Rom. 8, 21). In the clear grasp of the goal of this salvation and completion work of God lie undreamed-of powers of blessing, which enable the believer, who has been emptied of everything of his own and creaturely, to walk his dying paths on earth not only depressed and tormented, but with holy joy. Paul reached out to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, boasting of the tribulations through which he was led. Not because sufferings and hardships are in and of themselves something desirable - they are neither for our flesh nor for our spiritual sensibilities, and for the spirit only insofar as it has been divinely enlightened and made partaker of Christ's nature and character! but because tribulation and suffering serve to reach the goal of glory.

In the completion of the church, the election from the nations not only receives a body of glory conformed to their Lord and Head (Phi1. 3, 21), but is also transferred to the sphere of glory (1 Thess. 4, 17). From there it will be unveiled with its head in glory (Co1. 3. 4) after certain events which will take place on the

one hand for the church in the heavens before the judgment seat of Christ and subsequently before the throne of the Father and the holy angels, and on the other hand for Israel and the nations on earth in the horrors of the antichristian tribulation period. The whole creation longs for this unveiling (Rom. 8, 19). The completed church will then be given wonderful tasks and offices, beginning with the judgment of men and angels (I Cor. 6, 2.3) and ending with the recognition or new witnessing of all created things (1 Cor. 13, 12 b; I Tim. 6, 13). Whoever is allowed to grasp such high final goals of God from his word through his spirit, does not at all become secure, proud and haughty, - that would only be a proof that he has not essentially received something, but only intellectually accepted something - but bows down in astonished adoration and becomes willing and ready to go every way of death that God leads him.

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"Before the world was", before the existence of the cosmos (John 17:3,5), the Son had glory with the Father. Whoever is in life connection with the Lord, who has really grasped and experienced his grace and goodness, does not need to argue about the pre-existence of the Son of God. It is self-evident to him. After all, the true believer has himself become a partaker of the glory that Christ received from the Father (John 17:22). Paul refers to the proper glory of the Son of God, in which He appeared to him before Damascus, as the "glory of that light" (Acts 22:11). The doxa of Christ is so great and overwhelming that in his earthly life the Lord only allowed it to shine through the lowliness of his material body in a veiled and attenuated way, because otherwise his surroundings would have been consumed. Let us only remember that the favorite young man of Jesus, who used to lie at the breast of his Master, fell at his feet as if dead when he saw the Risen and Glorified One (Rev. 1, 17)

Also in his humiliation the Son of God is the Lord of glory (Joh 2, 11, I Cor 2, 8) He lived in and from the sphere of the upper glory. Only in this way can we properly understand and evaluate his self-awareness. After all, he possesses insight into heavenly, earthly and subterranean connections that far exceed the barriers of human knowledge.

Already at his first public appearance he proclaims in bold, powerful symbolic language his resurrection after 3 days (Joh 2, 19). In Jn 3, 14, interpreting the story of the brazen serpent as an example to Himself, He speaks of His death on the cross. He knows the circumstances and details of the betrayal of Judas, the denial of Peter and knows the thoughts of men from afar (Jn 1, 47-50) "He did not

need anyone to bear witness about men. For he himself knew what was in men." (Jn 2, 24. 25)

We know where our cradle was; but when, where and how we will die, we do not know. We see a colorful world around us, and carry a wonderful and yet tormenting and burdensome world within us, without recognizing the final and actual connections. We see so many people without seeing through them to the last, since we do not even unravel ourselves to the deepest and most secret.

Jesus not only knew the cause of the paralytic's illness, but also saw the thoughts of the scribes (Mark 2:3-12). He clearly saw through the outer and inner life of the Samaritan woman (John 4) and recognized hidden and accidental things in nature that an ordinary person could not possibly know by virtue of his senses. Let us think of the stater in the mouth of the fish in Matth. 17, 27 or the donkey and her fillings in Matth. 21, 1-3! In many other contexts we find the adorable fact confirmed that the Lord knows everything, from the course of the history of the universe to small, insignificant incidents, so that His disciples could exclaim: "Now we know that you know everything and have no need for anyone to ask you; by this we believe that you came from God". (John 16:30).

While the vision of the prophets saw only the great and essential, bridging space and time, the Lord saw even the smallest present, the seemingly incidental and accidental. His knowledge is not only prophetic, but divine-human to the fullest extent. This is of great importance for our personal life of faith with its anxieties, struggles and burdens. If the Lord already had such knowledge, such insight, as the one who was lowered into the flesh, how much more now that he is exalted and his knowledge and work is boundless and limitless! If he who walked on earth was already the Lord of glory, in how much more comprehensive a way is he now! How able he is, in his love and faithfulness, to make the powers and blessings of that sphere of light and life accessible and serviceable to our spirit and faith, to us who are, after all, his body, his fullness! - —

The testimonies that speak of the intrinsic glory of Christ are manifold. We already mentioned the "throne of His glory" on which He will once sit in the rebirth (Matth. 19, 29), when He will come "in His glory" (Matth. 25, 31). This knowledge must have been quite familiar to James and John, otherwise they could not have asked to sit in His glory at His right hand and at His left hand (Mark. 10. 37).

Only after His suffering did the Lord enter into "His glory" (Luk.24, 26).

Do we, the members, not suffer the same as the head? According to Rom. 8, 17, our being glorified must be preceded by our suffering with Him. Only those who share in the sufferings of Christ can rejoice in the revelation of His glory (I Petr. 4, 13), and only witnesses (according to the original text: martyrs!) of the sufferings of Christ are also partakers of His glory (1 Petr. 3 1). But we fools resist these ways of Christ's perfection in our snivelling!

While the world regarded the Lord as nothing, His disciples recognized the glory of the only begotten of the Father in the Logos made flesh (Joh. 1, 14). Jesus did not seek His glory (Joh. 8, 50). did not glorify Himself (Joh. 8, 54). He left it to His Father. We, on the other hand, always try to justify ourselves immediately and put ourselves in the best light when a wrong judgment is made about us or we are insulted and reviled. How little we have learned from our Lord!

Already Isaiah saw Christ's glory (Joh. 12, 41), while the unbelievers of our age, in spite of the filled word of God, are not able to see anything of the "shining light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2.Cor.4,4).What power has the "God of this world time"!

We have an indescribable privilege to be vessels of pardon, whom God has prepared for glory in advance, in order to make known the "riches of His glory" in them (Rom. 9, 23). Whose heart is filled with this God-given knowledge, his mouth overflows! The "glory of His inheritance" in us, His saints (Eph. 1, 18), we are only able to recognize with enlightened eyes of the heart when the spirit of wisdom and revelation is given to us (Eph. 1, 17. 18).

What the Lord does in terms of divine power effects through His Spirit on us "into the inner man" does not happen according to the measure of our efforts and endeavors (although these will always be involved somehow), but according to the riches of His glory (Eph. 3.16). We are destined to sonship, ordained to sonship for the glory of grace (Eph. 1, 5. 6); we may experience, who knows how soon, the transformation of our body of lowliness into the likeness of His body of glory (Phi1. 3, 21); we will be strengthened with all power according to the power of His

Glory" (Co1. 1, 11), while those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ will suffer punishment, eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2. Thess. 1, 8. 9).

God raised His Son from the dead and gave Him glory (1 Petr 1:21). This was certainly a far greater glory than the one the Lord voluntarily laid down and from which He received a beginning of receiving again on the Mount of Transfiguration (2 Petr. 1. 17). Would we like to be those whom the Lord preserves without stumbling and whom He is able to present before His glory blamelessly with rejoicing? What will we be like when we not only see the glory of Christ, but become partakers of it in indescribable delights of God! - —

Splendor and power, honor and wealth of men are also often called "glory" in the Scriptures. However, this external, creaturely glory is not essential and lasting, but muted and clouded by the curse of materiality and the law of sin to which all created things are subject.

Thus Joseph asked his brothers, "Report to my father all my glory in Egypt and all that you have seen!" (Gen. 45:13); God commanded Moses concerning Joshua, his successor: "Put of your glory upon him, that all the congregation of Israel may obey him!" (Deut. 27, 20); in Esther 5, 11 we read that Haman told of "the glory of his riches"; Job speaks (29, 20) of his glory, which he believed would remain fresh with him, i.e., would never fade and wither; Nebuchadnezzar praises the great Babylon he built "in honor of his glory" (Dan. 4, 30), and confesses that after his deep humiliation his glory and splendor returned to him (verse 36); Isa. 8, 7 speaks of the king of Assyria "and all his glory"; to God-hating Moab the weeping prophet calls out "Come down from your glory!" (Jer. 48, 18; vg1. Is. 16, 14); Ephraim is prophesied that his glory, like the bird, flies away (Hosea 9, 11); Prov. 14. 28 sees in the crowd of a numerous people "the glory of a king"; the increasing wealth of a man is called in Ps.49, 16. 17 "the glory of his house"; and the treasures of the nations and their kings are called their glory and honor in Rev. 21:24, 26.

But all these creaturely glories are never able to fully satisfy the heart of man and the longing of the nations, because everything is looking for such a glory and honor that is imperishable (Rom. 2, 7).

In a subtle irony, the Lord speaks in Luke 12:27 that Solomon "in all his glory" was not as beautifully clothed or cloaked as a field lily or anemone. Moses and Elijah appeared "in glory" on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke 9:31). Whether this was their temporary body state until the resurrection? Or whether perhaps they had received this body only temporarily to participate in this important conversation? Who would presume to know all this and explain it completely? - Let us wait in humble, holy faith until God will reveal it to us in that essential world!

Our dying over this poor, cursed earth is a sowing of dishonor, but our resurrection will be in glory. (1 Cor. 15:43). Is this not a reason to look forward to our transformation and Rapture with great and holy joy? Be it that we may experience the coming of our Lord and Head during our life, be it that we will fall asleep beforehand and our body will be called out of the grave, - it will in any case be an act of glory that we have before us. Whoever "sews in" the message of glory, touches the lifeblood of the hope of the church.

For it is a historical fact that in the measure in which the joy in the returning Lord dwindled from the circles of the true children of God, the secularization of the congregation also increased. Whoever is not really and intrinsically seized by Christ must naturally regard a longing wait for the Lord as a delusion, and the delay of his coming as a self-deception of Jesus. Only he who lives and suffers and loves as if the Lord were coming today, to whom it is not only a living consciousness but also a deep desire that Jesus is coming soon, is in the deepest spirit a happy, redeemed and loosened person, who does not seek money and goods, honor and prestige of this world, but seeks only to please his Lord and Head.

That is why the question whether we are in the original Christian burning expectation of the Second Coming or not is not at all incidental and irrelevant. It reflects our innermost being and nature, our last and deepest thoughts and goals, our most secret desire much more than we think. God's power and grace flow to us to the extent that we are waiting for the returning Lord. We can see this also in 1 Cor. 1:7, where Paul writes: "You are not lacking in any gift of grace by waiting for (or impatiently or steadfastly looking for) the unveiling (unveiling, i.e. return) of Jesus Christ."

This scriptural word clearly shows what a deep, causal connection there is between the abundant presence of gifts of grace and the expectation of the returning Son of God. A servant who knows that his master is coming soon will faithfully prepare himself for that moment. But if a wicked servant says in his heart, "My Lord is delaying (or is not coming for a long time), he will beat his fellow servants (Matth. 24. 49) and become intoxicated (Luke 12, 45).

He who truly waits for his Lord does not beat his fellow servants. If all servants of Christ were such people, who in truth were in a living lookout for the coming of their master, there would certainly be no theological quarrels and fratricidal war, nor envy and quarrels in questions of law, power and money. Let us pay attention to the fact that Jesus does not call those intoxicated who count on "an imminent return, but those who do not want to know about his imminent return.

This has something to say to us! How unspiritual and unbiblical is the accusation of unsober-mindedness and enthusiasm that has always been levelled at those who stood in burning love and waited for their Lord! What an awakening this will be when Matth. 7, 22. 25 is fulfilled one day!

If waiting for the Lord is fanaticism, then the early Christian churches were made up of fanatics, and Paul was the greatest among them; then Jesus and his apostles were wrong; then the Bible is a doubtful book; then everything that God promised ultimately collapses. Praise and thanks be to the Lord that His word is true and He is right in spite of all ungodly and pious unbelief. Whoever is seized by the glory of Christ longs in holy joy for the returning Lord. No threat nor terror, no enticement nor flattery will keep the church from serving the living God and awaiting His Son from the heavens (1 Thess. 1:10). - —

While we are still groaning in the flesh, we may experience a continuous, inner transformation from glory to glory by the Spirit of God (2 Cor. 5:18). This process, however, does not take place without our intervention, but, in human terms, requires our believing vision of the glory of the Lord as a prerequisite. Because the believing vision of the clarity and the light of Christ has such tremendous effects, the enemy tries to make the message of glory contemptible. Even though he cannot make our consummation impossible, he wants to delay it with all his might in order to gain time.

The enemy has nothing against the threatening message of the law, but the joyful message of the glory of God and Christ is a thorn in his side. For the consummation means the beginning of his fall. Do we not already feel the dawn of the "woe" of Rev. 12:12b, and do we not notice the rage of the devil, who drives the world events into staggering and crashing, because he knows that he has little time?

Soon the now still hidden Christ will be revealed. Then his members, the church from the nations, will be unveiled with him in glory. Who would be able to fully recognize this unveiling of the now still rejected Son of God and his persecuted, reviled body church, which surpasses all human concepts and standards? Faith knows something of these future glories and lives on them, while unbelief smiles at them and half-belief festers against them. When we have grasped how great and substantial the glory of our Lord and Head is, then something of the breadth and height of our calling lights up for us, as it is described in 2 Thess. 2:14: "He (God) has called you through our gospel to the obtaining (gaining or appropriating) of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. How differently one searches

the holy books for the glory of God and His Son, if one may believe and know that one is called to the possession and enjoyment of the same glory.

Suppose I am reading the description of some estate or castle and its riches and beauties, and suddenly I am told that I am destined to be a co-heir and co-owner of that estate and all that belongs to it. How very differently I will then become absorbed in all the details and enjoy them in spirit. It is exactly the same, yes, to a much higher degree, with the glory of the Father and the Son, which we too are to attain as sons and heirs. By this we do not at all become proud and arrogant, but bow low in the dust, that in ourselves utterly unworthy we may grasp such delicious facts in the obedience of faith. For it is not breakage, judgment and torment that lead us to repentance, but God's goodness (Rom. 2:4). If judgments and sufferings led to repentance, then all people would have to let themselves be broken and bow before God in the time of tribulation. But the Scriptures report the exact opposite¹. Let us only read Rev. 9:12-21; 16:9-11! These shattering prophecies will, who knows, soon be fulfilled literally and literally.

The change of mind that now takes place in us does not happen through threats, blows and punishments, but through the spiritual search and investigation of what is above, where the Christ is (Co1. 5, 1. 2), through the insight into the glory of the Son. Of course, this gospel is hidden for the zealot of the law. He cannot grasp it and therefore rejects it. This was already the case during the lifetime of the apostle Paul. He wrote in 2 Cor. 4. 5. 4: "If our gospel (that of the body of Christ and not that of the kingdom, which Paul never called "our" or "my" gospel, since the twelve had it long before him!) is hidden, it is hidden in those who are perishing, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that the radiance of the gospel of the glory of Christ does not shine out to them."

We saw that children of God are called to the glory of their Savior and Head Jesus Christ. This is something exceedingly delicious. But the testimony of Scripture goes even further. Romans 8:21 teaches us that even the creation will be set free from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. The ktisis, the creature or creation, includes everything that God has called into existence by an act of creation. And this includes everything that exists at all, with the sole exception of the Father and the Son. For the Father is not created, but the Being; and the Son is not created, but begotten.

The deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption has not only a negative side, i.e. it is not only a putting away and removing of what is not godly;

it has also a positive side, namely the being formed into the same degree of glory that becomes our part. Thus, the condition of the whole creature will one day fully correspond to that of the redeemed church, just as the glory of the redeemed from the nations will one day correspond to the clarity and radiance of their Head, the Lord Jesus.

Already the Kingdom message foreshadowed something of these mighty goals of God, even if only, according to the extent of the promises given to it, with regard to the earth. Thus we read in Ps.72, 19: "The whole earth will be filled with his (i.e. God's) glory', and in Is. 40, 5 it is written: "The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh together will see it: for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." In order to understand what the scriptures mean by "all flesh" and what they promise to "all flesh", let us read some words of God.

1 Cor. 15:59-41: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but one is that of men, and another that of cattle, and another that of birds, and another that of fishes. And there are heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies: but another is the glory of the heavenly, and another of the earthly: and another is the glory of the sun, and another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars: for star differeth from star in glory." Joh. 17, 2: "As thou (i.e. God) hast given him (i.e. the Son) power (or authority) over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to all whom thou gavest him." Ps.65, 2: "Hearer of prayer, to you all flesh will come!" Ps.145, 21 "Let my mouth utter the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh praise his holy name forever and ever." Isa. 49, 2b: "All flesh shall know that I the Lord am your Savior, and I. the Mighty One of Jacob your Redeemer." Joel 2:28: "After this it will come to pass that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh." These scriptural statements are so unambiguous and clear that no words of man need be added. The flesh, the most corruptible thing there is in this creation, the most susceptible to Satan, this drill ground of sin, after painful, humiliating processes of death and transformation, shall finally become partakers of the glory of God! And indeed all flesh!

That which was actually God's nature alone, shall and will be one day in the glorified creation the nature and condition of all created things. Blessed is he who may believe and grasp this and learns to rest and worship in this God-given knowledge already now in the midst of a suffering, fear-torn world and mankind!

Doxa not only describes a glorious state, a transfigured way of being, but is also the name for the appreciation, veneration and worship that one pays and offers to someone.

Whoever takes honor or glorification from someone and does not seek the honor of God alone cannot believe. This is a serious truth that the Lord testifies in Joh. 5, 44. Jesus did not come in His own name, but in the name, i.e. in the commission and authority of His Father. But another, namely the Antichrist, will one day come in his own name. And Israel will receive him (verse 43). The reason why they fall prey to a deceptive spirit, a hellish miracle, is ultimately because they seek their own glory and do not offer God the glorification that is due to Him alone.

But this is also the case today. The real reason that a person who hears the gospel testify clearly does not come to living faith is to be found in the fact that he is not willing to renounce the honor and dignity of this world, that he is not willing to become nothing and let God be everything. Pride, however fine and humanly noble its imprint may be, is the reason and cause of not being able to believe. For to believe means to affirm God's death sentence on us, thus means to give oneself away and to let go. But this is the death blow for the value consciousness of our own self. And the natural man avoids this as long as possible. To be pious, to become religious, to belong to this or that church, certainly, one did that gladly, why not? But to deny oneself totally and radically, that is, to deny oneself completely and down to the last roots and to affirm God in Christ, to be guilty of the criminal death on the cross and to no longer want to live according to the ego, - no, that is not possible! And yet, in this and in nothing else, there is the essence of biblical faith, of real salvation. - In Joh. 11, 4 we read a powerful word that puts the purpose of the suffering into a bright light. There, looking at the dying Lazarus of Bethany, the Lord says to the messengers of his sisters Mary and Martha: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." If only we could always understand and believe that our weaknesses and hardships, our misery and our burdens are not always punishments for our own or others' sins, but serve to reveal God in the deepest essence, how much more blessed and secure would our path be! How much more blessed and secure would be our path, and how much more would this delicious insight renew and enliven the powers of our spirit and soul! Was this not also the case with the man born blind? Did not the young ones in their shortsightedness ask the Lord, "Rabbi, who sinned, this one or his parents, that he was born blind?" And did not the Lord give the surprising answer, "Neither has this one sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God might be revealed in him!" (Joh. 9, 2. 3.)

Once when Jesus was traveling through Samaria and Galilee, he met ten leprous men. He healed them by sending them to the priests. This is, prophetically seen, a reference to the salvation of all nations (ten is the number of the fullness of nations) through the priestly people of Israel¹. But this is not to be spoken of in our context. What is strange is the fact that only one returned to the Lord, fell down worshipping before Him and glorified God. The heart of God longs for our love in return, for our praise of His grace and goodness, which He revealed in His Son and gave to us completely. - —

Let us return again briefly to the raising of Lazarus! When Martha drew the Lord's attention to the fact that her brother's body had already turned to decomposition, since it had already been lying in the tomb for four days, Jesus replied: "Did I not tell you that if you would believe, then

would you see the glory of God?" (Joh. 11, 40.) To see the doxa of God and the glorification and worship resulting from it does not enable first of all a sharp mind, a strong empathy, a lively imagination, but quite simply a simple faith! However, not a faith which is only a believing in the truth! For the demons also believe, but they tremble or shudder (Jam. 2, 19) The saving faith is a personal, trusting taking of refuge, a surrendering to God's heart as the only real place of rest in this hunted and troubled world. Such a faith, which surrenders to the Lord in full obedience of trust, sees the glory of God shining in ever new contexts and thus learns to grow into a life that is "full of God and empty of all else" even while it is still here.

He who believes sees God's glory. The more unconditionally we entrust ourselves to the Lord, the more completely we open ourselves to him, let go of ourselves and take hold of him, the more brilliantly the glory of his grace and goodness shines for us. Only the faith that is willing to let all its wants and desires, its longings and its longing for love be satisfied and fulfilled by and in God alone through Jesus Christ is able to grasp something of the blissful fullness of God's glory. His heart overflows with appreciation and adoration of his Father in Christ as he would never have thought possible before. Do we not often feel like Martha, that we see only death, grave and decay, when we could see God's glory?

In Rom. 4:20, 21 we are told of Abraham, the father of faith: "He did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory (honor, appreciation, worship) to God, and was fully assured that what He had

promised He was able to do." Abraham gave glory to God! How did he do that? He was "fully assured" that God was able to do what He had promised. All external signs spoke against the fulfillment of the promise, according to which he was to have a body heir. His own body had died, and also Sarah was no longer in the way of the women. And yet he believed in God's promise. Despite everything, he waited in living trust for the promised seed.

This is the way never to glorify God before the visible and invisible world, how to honor and worship him properly. However, those who apply to the promises of Scripture the pitiful standard of their experience or intellect, and distrust and criticize the reliable word of truth, are unable to behold the glory of God and dishonor their Lord. Let us do as Abraham did and bring glory to God. Let us do as Abraham did and give God the glory, appreciation and adoration that He deserves! In this way, our eyes will be opened more and more to the delicious truths of fullness, and our hearts will be blessed in Christ.

In Rom. 15:7 we read an exhortation which, as we so often encounter, is connected with, or based on, a deep and subtle teaching: "Receive one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God." Christ has welcomed and accepted us. Through this we became God's children, we were saved and blessed. Even more than that, the Father was glorified by it! We have hardly ever considered this most important aspect of our acceptance by the Lord in our pious selfishness, which desires only our own salvation and not God's glory.

Just as it was a glory to God when Christ received and accepted us (the last word of this verse is literally: "into the glory of God"!), so also the Father is praised when we receive one another, that is, when we do what the Lord has done for us. How much envy and strife, distrust and slander would disappear from the circles of God's children if this word were heeded! Those who are truly accepted by Christ will not be so quick to reject and exclude others because of any difference of opinion, but will receive them as the Lord has received him.

For what purpose did God ordain us to sonship? What purpose does he have in calling us, who are the last, the least, and the most foolish, even nothing, to such dignity? The context of Eph. 1, 5, 6 gives us the answer: "to the praise of the glory of His grace". From this we see how much the Father cares that the glory of His grace, the all-surpassing glory of His goodness, be recognized, appreciated and praised. This is, after all, his innermost being, his very being, of which the mighty angelic powers, the representatives of his holiness and strength, neither know nor understand anything, since they are created beings and not, like us, beings begotten by the Spirit and born of God.

The same purpose, which, however, is not limited to grace, but aims at the praise of the whole glory of God, we find in the 14th verse of the same chapter. There we read that the holy and faithful (Eph. J, f) are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise until the redemption or redemption of what has been allotted or purchased for us. Therein lies a most delicious promise. Until the moment we really and substantially enter into the full possession, enjoyment and administration of those ineffable goods of salvation, we have an inviolable, indestructible pledge and deposit: the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given to us, who dwells in us.

And why did God do all this? What is his last and deepest intention in this wonderful action? It is expressed in the simple words. To the praise of his glory". The Father desires, in a fervent desire of love, that His glory be appropriated to His own, that it be communicated in essence, so that they may be as happy and blessed in it as He Himself is, by worthily praising and worshipping His glory and splendor. Where God does something, there is always the enemy at work. Satan, the prince and god of this world, seeks to blind the mind, i.e. the thoughts and judgment of the unbelievers, to surprise them with suddenly appearing will-o'-the-wisps, so that they lose their orientation, like someone who comes into the cone of light of a car speeding along on a pitch-black country road without dimming the lights. In any case, he wants to prevent people from having the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ shine on them (2. Cor. 4. 4).

From the fact that the diabolos, the in-betweenner and confounder tries to suppress the fullness gospel, but not the preaching of the law. Which incites the old man to pious performances, or message of judgment and damnation, we should learn to suppress. The demons only saw in the Son of God the one who would torment them one day (Matth. 8, 29). This is their belief that makes them tremble and shudder. Of course, this side of the truth must also be witnessed. The conscience of the natural man already does that! But one must not stop there. That would not be the gospel.

Satan knows very well that "beside him a day of darkness is prepared" (Job 15:23 b), but "he does not believe in a return from darkness" (verse 22). That is indeed also a belief and knowledge, but just knowledge property of the demons. But we have good news, we have a joyful knowledge of the glory! And that is something essentially different. That is why the enemy tries to spoil every proclamation of fullness. Because where the light glow of the full victory of Golgotha shines, there the final defeat, the complete elimination of all darkness and death principles of Satan is revealed. And this is what the enemy seeks to thwart. Only from here

can we understand the deeper and real causes of the struggle against the full Gospel, can we understand the rejection of the Glory Message.

We have already indicated the purpose for which the Lord gave the glory he received from the Father to his own. Not because they were proud of having greater and more delicious things than others. Whoever treats divine goods of salvation in this way will, if he has really received any, soon have them taken away again. Not for his own glory, but "that they may be one as we are one," the Lord gives to his own the glory entrusted to him by the Father.

If this God-given glory does not lead to growing into love for all the saints, then one is not worthy of it. Where Christian party spirit rules, where one loves and seeks only oneself and one's organization, there can be no God-given recognition of His glory for inner reasons. God communicates Himself in His actual and innermost being and essence only where one is willing to administer the entrusted good of salvation for all and to pass it on to all. But where sectarian spirit reigns, which cuts itself off from other believers or other children of God from itself, does not want to acknowledge them, but reviles them, then one tramples underfoot the heartfelt word of the Lord from the high priestly prayer and deprives oneself of the possibility to receive the glory of the Father and the Son. Of course, the one who is affected by this - he cannot understand it - will never admit it. But the Scriptures, on the other hand, speak about it too clearly for the faithful and simple children of God not to understand it. Joh. 17, 23 testifies that the perfection of the believers is intimately connected with the unity of the children of God. Perfection happens in and through love, just as salvation is brought about through faith and sanctification through hope. So we are saved by faith, sanctified by hope and perfected by love. However, a love that seeks only itself, but does not want to recognize the brother whom God leads differently, is not an essential love of God that leads to perfection.

According to the same verse, the salvation of the world is also connected with the perfection of the saints. When the believers are perfected, the world will know that God sent His Son and loves the saints as He loves His only begotten. But according to the 3rd verse of our chapter, the knowledge of God and of Him whom He sent is nothing less than eternal life! What tremendous connections light up for us here! And all this is initiated and brought about by the fact that the Lord communicates the glory of the Father to His own. Do we not now see even more clearly why the enemy seeks to dampen and fight the message of the glory of the Christ in every way? - According to the inspired prayer of the aged Simeon, Jesus, the salvation (of God, is a light for the unveiling of the nations and

for the glory of the nation of Israel (Luke 2:30-52). The first nation to experience glory as (a total people will be Israel. It is therefore quite unscriptural to speak of "Christian nations" (one could also say with a contradiction in terms: Christian Gentiles!). The nations must first be unveiled, revealed or unveiled, i.e. recognize themselves in their lostness before the holy God. Only then, and that through the saved, blessed people of election, will they be set right and obtain salvation. For their salvation is "from the Jews", as the Lord testifies unequivocally in John 4:22. The church of the present time, on the other hand, which forms the body of Christ, is gathered from all peoples, and is therefore an election from the nations. The salvation of whole nations is still pending and can only come when Israel has attained salvation. The rest of the people and all the nations will not seek the Lord until God has raised up the ruined tabernacle of David (Acts 15. 15-17). Let us therefore distinguish clearly: the first organism that will partake of the salvation and glory of God and Christ is the election from the nations, the congregation of the Body of Christ; the first people, on the other hand, that will be brought to fullness in its entirety, is Israel, from which the Bride, the Lamb's wife, will come.

Thus, Israel as a people is the firstborn son of God compared to all other nations (Exodus 4:22). As such, it is also a role model for the proud nations that constantly persecute and harass it. Whether this happens with or without human legal reasons is not to be discussed here. After all, every earthly event has two sides. In any case, the nations, the enemies of Israel, will also suffer tribulation and judgment, as e.g., to pick out only one of many scriptural examples, Lamentations 1. 1, 2 concerning the people of earthly choice and their enemies prophesies: "You have heard that I sighed, 'I have no one to comfort me! All my enemies have heard my calamity, have rejoiced that you have done it. If you bring about the day you have proclaimed, they will be like me.'"

In this context we also understand that Paul writes in Rom. 9. 3. 4: ... I myself, I desired to be removed from Christ by a curse for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, whose is sonship and glory." Sonship with regard to the other nations belongs to Israel: sonship with regard to God the Father and our Lord and Head, on the other hand, is given to the church from the nations (Eph. 1,). Regarding all created things, however, angels and angelic princes are called sons of God (Hebrew *bene elohim*: I. Mo. 6, 4; Job I, 6; 2, 1; Ps. 29. 1. 89, 6; Dan. 3, 25; Job 38, 7). A thorough study of these passages will give us much light.

If we do not learn to distinguish between these different sonships, we will never come to a clear biblical vision, but will get into contradictions that become more and more irresolvable.

We saw that there is a glory of the Father and of the Son: the Spirit is a Spirit of glory (1 Pet 4:14): dark and light angelic powers are called glory: the church of the Body of Christ and the bridal church of Israel each have their own particular glory, and even creation in its fallen state of cursing still possesses a certain degree of glory. Only a total biblical view sums up the bewildering diversity into a delicious unity richly articulated in itself. Faith knows how to keep these things apart and yet to see them together, for "what the mind of the understanding does not see, a childlike mind practices in simplicity." - —

It is, as we have seen, an entrusted gift of grace when we are so captured by God's glory that we praise, extol, and worship or, in other words, offer Him glory. But how and in what way can we show Godly appreciation that makes the Father happy and makes ourselves happy? Can't the liturgical spirits of the angelic worlds (Hebr. 1, 14) do this much better than we can?

The answer of Scripture will surprise us. In all things, even in the most insignificant, everyday things, we can and may offer glory to God. Let us read, for example, 1 Cor. 10:31: "Whether ye eat, or drink, or do any thing, do all to the glory of God." This is a delicious word for people who are poor and weak in themselves, who suffer from the fact that they are nothing and can do nothing, know nothing and have nothing. They are allowed to do the highest thing there is in the vast universe: to offer glory and adoration, appreciation and glorification to God the Father through Jesus Christ. When we do what we do, even if it is the most miserable, dirty work, in the name of Jesus, seeking to serve not men but the Lord, we glorify God.

Where the overflowing grace of God is recognized, thanksgiving flows from the hearts of the saints, and this thanksgiving brings glory to God, as 2 Cor. 4:15 says: "All things are for your sakes, that grace, abounding through the many, may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God." We find the same adorable truth in 2 Cor. 1. 20. "Through (or by means of) us" the promises of God become reality, so that the Father may receive glory through them. As long as we are still in the weak body of this poor, tormented earthly life, we will probably not be able to comprehend the full extent of such testimonies of God. - Doxa does not only designate a nature and a state and is also not only a designation for appreciation and adoration, which we offer to God, it has still further meanings in the linguistic usage of the New Testament. For also the kingdoms of the world

and those beings of light and power who belong to a higher sphere than we poor earthly people are called doxa.

When the devil tempted the Lord, he showed him from a high mountain "all the kingdoms of the world and their glory" (Matth. 4, 8). We can see from this that even the decaying state structures of this earth, which, according to the prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's image, are becoming more and more worthless and fragile, nevertheless have their artful glory. Do not even many believers, who carry something of the powers and joys of that essential, future world in their hearts, succumb again and again to the spell of the accursed visibility? Do not the lust and suffering of Eros, this strongest, most alluring and at the same time most terrible ruler of this cosmos, enrapture and torment many children of God? Yes, even the kingdoms of this world have a high degree of honor and splendor, of majesty and glory, from which the majority of people are blinded and deceived with ever new deceptive maneuvers.

Far more often, however, the term doxa is used for the world of angels. And not only for the unfallen light beings of the upper spheres, but also for the fallen, darkened powers of wickedness. Let us think for example of the Christmas narration of Luke 2! There we read in the 9th verse: "Behold, an angel of the Lord stood with them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them." The "glory of the Lord" is simply called "the angels" in verse 15. So we see that angels form the glory of God or the Lord. We find this confirmed in Isa. 6. There the prophet looks at seraphim who have ministries of worship and unction. Vergl. Is. 6, 1-7 with Joh. 12, 41!

In the holy of holies of the tabernacle, two angels overshadowed the atonement lid of the ark of the covenant or the mercy seat. They are called "cherubim of glory" in Heb 9:5. The "strong ones" or "living creatures" are the representatives of the natural life forces of creation. In many contexts of Scripture we read strange things about the appearance and ministries of these cherubim. Only in the eons to come will these glory worlds be truly revealed to us. Now we know but little of them. When one day the ancient vision of the prophet Enoch is fulfilled, of which we read in Jude 14, and the Lord returns for judgment, then He will appear with power and great glory, i.e. with many holy thousands of His angels (Matth. 24, 30; vgl. 25, 31!). Lukas 9,26 tells us that the Lord will come one day in His glory and that of the Father and His holy angels¹. Accordingly, there are appropriate glories of the Father, the Son and the holy angel¹. In what they consist in detail and in what they differ, we do not know. As in many other

questions of the Scriptures, we have to be modest and wait until God reveals all the details to us.

In 2 Pet. 2:9-11 we read: "The Lord knows how to deliver the godly from temptation, but to keep the unrighteous until the day of judgment to be punished; but especially those who walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement and despise dominion, the bold, the high-handed; they do not tremble to blaspheme glories, while angels greater in strength and power do not bring a blasphemous judgment against them before the Lord." There are audacious, impudent people, slaves of carnality, who have neither fear nor reverence and blaspheme everything. Angels, on the other hand, who are far superior to us (vg1. 2. Kings 19, 35; Isa. 37, 36), do not dare to bring forward a blasphemous judgment against dignities and powers. This seemingly dark passage becomes clear when we read the 8th and 9th verses of the Epistle of Jude on it. There it says, in parallel with the passage from Peter just quoted, "These dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and blaspheme glories. But Michael the archangel, when he had an exchange of words with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to pronounce a blasphemous judgment on him, but said, The Lord rebuke thee!" The glory spoken of here is none other than the devil! Does Satan have a right to the bodies of those who sin? According to our context, it could well be so. In any case, the enemy has as much power and influence in our personal lives as we allow him entrance through sin. Michael, the angelic prince of Israel (Dan. 10, 21; 12. 1), disputed the devil's right to the body of Moses, but respected and honored his adversary as a majesty, even if as a fallen power hostile to God. That Satan is called "glory" even in his darkened state of cursing gives us pause. We should reckon with much greater awe that a mighty world, still invisible to us now, surrounds and watches us, a world of light and darkness that constitutes part of God's glory, to which everything, even without knowledge and will, is at the service of.

The more a person has fallen into sin and is under the power of evil forces, the more insolently and apparently freely he behaves. In this way, he tries to compensate for his inner bondage and pretend to have a freedom that he should have, but in reality does not. Ranting and scolding are always a sign of mental and spiritual insecurity, and those who shout and rave only prove that they are in the wrong. In this way, those blasphemers from the 2nd Letter to Peter and the Letter to Jude also reveal that they are inwardly disintegrated personalities to whom the dignity of being human had never dawned or had disappeared again.

Understanding this is important for our dealings with people. Once we have this understanding, we will no longer get "angry" so easily, i.e. make ourselves angrier than we already are, no longer get "indignant" so quickly,

i.e., to lay down the armor of faith and thereby become vulnerable to the enemy, and no longer to "carry after" something so quickly. For to carry a heavy load after someone who goes his way spry and fresh is a very unpleasant thing, as any porter will gladly confirm.

Such people who hurt us are not at all comfortable. For only those who are in pain themselves cause pain to others. He who is really well himself, consciously and unconsciously does good to others. Whoever wrongs others, whether through hatred and envy, slander or theft, puts himself in the wrong before God and burdens and torments his conscience. But we, who have also suffered injustice and dishonor. Suspicions and misjudgments silently and lovingly from God's holy hands, will one day be repaid beyond all measure, in which we were harmed here below and came up short.

The spiritually minded person has reverence for what God has created, holy respect for everything that bears the likeness of man. Scoffers and blasphemers, on the other hand, only prove that they are more or less slaves to the scoffer and the blasphemer, namely Satan. - —

Once we have understood that God's word calls angelic powers of light or of wickedness "glories", passages like Co1. 1, 27 or Rom. 5, 2 gain a completely different, much more powerful meaning. Let us first look up the former scriptural word. Its conclusion is: "Christ in you, the hope of glory." It is speaking, profoundly, not of a hope of glory, but of a hope of glory. The glory hopes or expects something. Who the glory is, we have seen above. It is those powers that we are not to blaspheme, even if they are powers hostile to God.

Now, on what does this glory place its hope? Who is the mediator of its expectation? None other than the Christ in us. The Christ proclaimed among us as Lord and Head over the universe, the transfigured Savior seated at the right hand of God, who will one day bring all things into order, the Son of the Father who dwells in us through his Spirit and will one day work through us, his members, is their hope.

Now it becomes clear to us why we are called a spectacle of the angels, why the principalities and powers of the heavenly regions should learn the wisdom of God from us, the church (Eph. 5, 10). Satan, who before his fall was a shielding, anointed cherub, perfect in beauty, has destroyed his wisdom because of his

arrogance (Ezek 28:14-17). This danger of arrogance also exists with new converts when they get an office in the church of God too early. That is why Paul warns against giving newcomers an overseer ministry, so that they do not become puffed up and, just like the devil, fall prey to judgment (1 Tim. 5, 1-6).

Because the enemy has lost his wisdom through his fall, he must learn the wisdom of God anew. And that in us, the church! This is completely in line with 1. Petr. I. 12.

Where we are told that angels desire to see into the things that have been proclaimed to us by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. So the Christ proclaimed among us or dwelling in us has a very important relationship with the heavenly worlds. The glory sets its hope on the Christ of God, expects its salvation from the Lord as the Head of the Church of His Body, and not from the King of Israel. For the salvation of the nations comes from the Jews and their king: the salvation and completion of the supernatural and subterranean creation, on the other hand, is longed for and expected from the church of the Christ body, revealed together with its head (vg1. Rom.8,19).

Rom.5:2 testifies that we boast about the hope of glory. We recognized that the glory powers put their hope in Christ dwelling in us, proclaimed among us. And therefore we read quite logically that this fact fills us with such joy that we "boast" of it, as one may literally translate We boast not only of our hope in the glory of God - we certainly do that in holy, humble gratitude. No, much greater is said here. In the context, it is not our hope, but the hope of glory! It would never have occurred to us. To long for or strive for something so high would be presumption and madness if such thoughts had arisen in our hearts - God Himself has set them down in His Word and revealed them through His Spirit. But we may grasp them in grateful, humble wonder through the obedience of faith and boast of them in holy joy. Yes, we boast about the high expectation that the glory powers have, since we, as body or body, as fullness or full measure of Christ, may be the fulfillers of this expectation. - So we do not boast about something that lies in us, that we have accomplished or still intend to accomplish, no, we boast about what God Himself has planned and will also carry out in His time and in His way.

Will. O, blessed, delicious God's glory, which. from the unbelief and the Half-belief ridiculed and reviled, the poorest and most miserable among the Children of men are given by grace! - —

Created beings called doxa naturally have a much lower degree of glory than the Father and the Son. Now, apart from this created doxa, there is a glory begotten by God, born of God. When Eph. 1, 17 speaks of the "Father of glory", it means that God passes on His innermost being, His splendor and splendor, His honor and majesty, and lovingly imparts it to others. But who are those who are begotten of God, born of God The shining, mighty overworld of the angels, as wonderful as it is, cannot be meant by this. For in Hebr I, 5 we read "To which of the angels did he ever say You are my Son, today I have begotten you" It is clearly testified that all angels, not only some of the lower groups, but all of them up to the highest throne spirits, are liturgical beings, sent out for diakonia, for the service of those who are to inherit salvation (Hebr. 1, 14).

So we see that angels are only created beings, not beings begotten and born of God. People, on the other hand, who are in life communion with Christ, are born of God. Let us think, for instance, only of the I Epistle of John, in which no less than eight times there is mention of such as are born of God (2, 29, 3, 9 twice, 4, 7, 5, I twice, 5, 14, 5, 18).

If God is the "Father of glory", then those begotten by Him also bear the marks of glory. Sons always bear the mark of the Father, whether in the earthly on the line of curses or in the divine on the line of salvation Does the Scripture really testify to us that the church is called the doxa of God or Christ? We know the terms body or body of Christ, fullness or completion, sons and heirs of God, etc. Are there also passages that speak of us as being of the doxa.

Let us first think of 1 Thess. 2, 20 There Paul calls to his spiritual children, You are our glory and joy The apostle calls those for whom he suffered and made many sacrifices, whom he served and whom he, like the Corinthians, "begat in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 4, 15), but his glory Paul was a prophet Are his letters prophetic writings (Rom. 16, 26). A prophet, however, is a God- and Christ-presenter. Therefore the apostle could testify of himself in divine authority "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Ga1. 2, 20) If he therefore calls the Thessalonians his glory, then this applies in a much higher degree of our Lord and

Main with regard to the whole municipality

Is this not too bold a conclusion of faith? May we really call the children of God "Christ's glory" 2 Cor 8:23 may give us the answer There it says "Our brothers are messengers of the churches, Christ's glory" So here the co-workers and brothers of the apostle, or the churches as such, are called "doxa Christi" We do not want

to bend or weaken anything about this testimony We simply want to let it stand, even if we are not yet able to grasp its full extent.

Doesn't our assertion fully coincide with the statement of I Cor. 2:7? In this context, the Scriptures teach us that the hidden wisdom of God, which is much greater than the wisdom of this eon and of the princes of this eon, is predestined by God "before the eternities" for our "glory". But what kind of glory will we have one day? If we are really to be filled to the fullness of God, as Eph. 3:19 promises, then we will also be allowed to be bearers of the entire glory of the Father Only those who have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God Himself are able to recognize with enlightened eyes of the heart the "riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:17-18). Of the greatness of this riches of glory we may have some idea if we note the heaped expressions in 2 Cor. 4, 17. A "weight of glory exceeding exceeding (or leading into the extraordinary)" is spoken of there. A person who has never been overwhelmed and enraptured by the grace of God must consider such language to be gushing. And yet we know that Paul was always, even when he wrote down his own thoughts, under the discipline and guidance of the Holy Spirit. After all, he emphasizes in Romans 15:18, "I will not dare to speak of what Christ has not wrought through me."

We may therefore boldly say that, according to 2 Cor 8:23, we represent a part of the glory of Christ Will our body of lowliness one day be transformed into conformity with His body of glory (Phil 5:21) Thus, begotten of the "Father of glory, we will be transformed both within and without

We must be the bearers and mediators of the glory of Christ. For with the power, with which the Lord makes our body like his transfigured body, he is able, according to the same testimony of Phil 3, 21, to make the whole universe subordinate or obedient to him.

Perhaps in this light we may also look at John 17:24 with quite different eyes than we have since. Since the gospels were first only meant for Israel ("I am sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"), those whom the Father gave to the Son are first of all Jews believing in the Messiah. These should now behold his glory. But if we are His glory, as we saw above, this is the beginning of a further fulfillment of Eph 2:14, 15, according to which Israel and the nations are to be created into one new man.

When the head will have put on his members, will have united his glorious body with himself, then "the measure of the full growth of the fullness of the Christ"

will be reached (Eph.4,13). In the Christ of God, the head together with his members, "the perfection of the saints for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4, 12) will come about. Then the adult Son, brought to perfection, will be united with his bride, the election from Israel, so that spiritually sons will be born to him like dew from the dawn. Thus John 17. 24 will be completely fulfilled in an unexpected way. - —

Glory also denotes a place, namely the immediate proximity of God and his Son. This place is "higher than all the heavens" (Hebr. 7, 26). Christ did not ascend into heaven (Acts 1:8, 9, 11), He also passed through the heavens (Hebr. 4:14) and ascended above all the heavens (Eph. 4:10). He entered the essential sanctuary (Hebr. 9, 24), of which the earthly one was only a weak image, or, as 1 Tim. 3. 16 tells us, He was "taken up in glory"!

When we read in Luk 19:38 about "peace in heaven and glory in the highest", it is already clear from this typical Hebrew parallelism that just as heaven is first of all a place, glory may also be understood in the first place. The throne of God and its immediate surroundings are glorious according to their nature and are therefore also called glory. Thus we see from the expression "glory on high" that the term *doxa* may also be understood in purely local terms.

It is similar with the already mentioned designation "cherubim of glory" (Hebr. 9, 5). The whole context of this chapter shows that the cherubim, these high spiritual beings that carry and represent the perfected being of creation, are called so because they are in the most glorious place, namely in God's immediate proximity, who was enthroned above them as a *Shekinah*, as a cloud of light and glory. Our scriptural word wants to show that the holy of holies of the tabernacle is an image and prophetic - symbolic reference to God and his heavenly dwelling. Thus, the earthly cherubim made of gold are only small, poor copies of the essential throne spirits of whom we read: "The glory of the God of Israel rose from the cherub above which it was" (read. 9:5).

The glory of Jehovah" (10:4): "and the glory of Jehovah was set above the cherubim" (10:18): "you are enthroned among the cherubim" (Ps. 80:1); "Jehovah of hosts. You alone are the God of all the kingdoms of the earth: you made the heavens and the earth" (Isa. 37, 16).

From these and still many other connections we see. How closely the cherubim are connected with the glory of God, so that these high princes of light are, so to speak, domiciled in the place of glory and go out from there only for special services, but always return there after carrying out their assignments.

So also Solomon's glory is localized to his kingdom, his capital, his throne. And when truth seekers from the nations look for glory according to Rom. 2, 7, this is an unconscious memory of paradise, where the glory of God was lowered to a certain area of the earth, but later was taken up again to the highest places. Down here on earth, in the curse of this cosmic interweaving of light and darkness, spirit and flesh, splendor and dirt, there is so much decay, shame and lowness. There now people, who in their inner and outer life are not oriented downward but upward, long for incorruption, honor and glory. At first, they think of a place above in the light, since we, as cosmically bound living beings, are primarily used to thinking spatially and temporally.

From all these testimonies we see that the Scriptures also understood by glory a place, namely the throne seat of God and Christ¹. - (To be continued.)

Of the Essence of Glory By Adolf Heller

(Conclusion)

God's word is also glorious, for it comes from the sphere of glory. Thus Ps. 119, 89 testifies: "Forever, Jehovah, your word stands firm in the heavens." The whole of Psalm 119 is, after all, about the Word of God, whose essence and value are brought into the light by the most diverse expressions. The sacred scrolls, then briefly called the Law and the Prophets, are referred to as.

1. Derek = way, going, traveling.
2. Eduth = testimony, memorized by repetition.
3. Pikkudim = regulation, order.
4. Mizwah = commandment, constitutional command¹.
5. Imrah = promise, placed in the light.
6. Torah = law, order.
7. Mischpat = rights, court decisions.
8. Zedek = righteousness, that which is proven right.
9. Hok = statutes, engraved.
10. Dabar = statement, clarified.

In Is. 42, 21 we are testified: "It pleased Jehovah for his righteousness' sake to make his law (according to Kautzsch: his teachings) great and glorious." The "ministry of the Spirit" consists in glory (2 Cor. 3:8). But the clearest and purest instrument of which the Spirit now makes use is the Word of God. Even the ministry of condemnation, which is done through the law, was glory (2 Cor 3:9). The law, which was only temporary and was to be done away with, was introduced with glory (2 Cor 5:11). So we see that the whole word of God comes from the sphere of glory. The holy scriptures are so rich and deep and filled, even the law contains such wonders (Ps. 119, 18), that people always looked at the "main parts", the most essential and important according to human opinion. Blinded and confused by the overabundance of light and knowledge, people sought out what was fundamental and necessary and compiled it into confessions. In the fight against fanaticism and false doctrines, the "Confessions" emerged as bulwarks and weapons of a healthy life of faith.

However, it must not be misunderstood that also spirit-filled children of God have always been called enthusiasts and fantasists, fought against, even cruelly tortured to death. Whether medieval or modern methods of murdering a human being are the more cruel ones, we do not want to discuss here. In any case, it is a fact that every truly great man in the kingdom of God stood at first lonely and reviled at his post, and only before Christ's judgment seat will it once become clear and obvious how many faithful, simple believers, whose only fault was that they had received more light and grace from the Lord than others, went a dying way of loneliness and ignominy without equal. Until this moment, who knows how near, it is necessary to be silent and to suffer, to love and, as far as God gives it, to serve with the entrusted property.

Let us not forget that it still happens today in "Christendom" that those who believe in the Second Coming of the Lord at the Rapture of the congregation, who proclaim a future millennial kingdom of peace, who by God's grace know something of the final execution of all the plans and counsels of eternal love, are persecuted and expelled as swarmers and false teachers, because they are not content with the valid creeds but desire the whole fullness of glory of the Word of God.

About the relationship of human creeds to the holy scriptures, the actual divine source of all essential knowledge, Oskar Wächter makes the following excellent remarks in his book "Bekenntnisgrund" (Stuttgart 1862), which are worth taking to heart: "God's word is richer, deeper and truer than the creeds, it is lighter and clearer, cheaper and more just than the word of men. Therefore, the Church

must not rest merely on the laurels of the Fathers, but has every cause and reason to grow more and more and to become more complete. We readily admit that even our scriptural confessions do not yet correspond to the full measure of depth and scope of knowledge to which the church of Christ is to be led up¹. Holding fast to confessions is compatible with right freedom only if the eternal truth expressed by the confession is clearly distinguished from the temporal form, and if the knowledge of eternal truth is not seen as being completed with the confession. It is quite compatible with each other that the same truth, which the confession expresses unadulterated on many sides, as time required and permitted, nevertheless has many still unrecognized depths and many still unilluminated sides, the knowledge and development of which are reserved for the future." So much for Oskar Wächter.

Any confession, no matter how clearly formulated, is only a makeshift, a crutch, a swimming belt needed by those who cannot stand on their feet or do not feel safe in the water. To take away the crutch from a leg-impaired person or the cork vest from a non-swimmer would be a crime. But a fixed confession can also be a fetter, an unbearable barrier, which with its imperious demand, with its iron grip, wants to prevent us from penetrating deeper into veins of gold of hidden treasures that have not yet been broken open and to swing us up into heights and expanses of salvation that had been lost since the springtime of faith of primitive Christianity, but are now to be revealed again through the work of the Spirit of glory and offered to the church of God. There the relentlessness and rigidity of man-made dogmas and confessions often creates a true martyrdom for the living and true witnesses of the Gospel. However, those who are truly called and commissioned by God will not be afraid to go even through disgrace and discredit. With our great teacher and brother, the apostle Paul, he will joyfully testify: "In my glad tidings I suffer tribulation unto bonds like an evildoer; but the word of God is not bound" (2 Tim 2:9).

It is of deep and essential importance that the sufferings of the apostle are mostly related to the ministry of the all-glorious grace and glory. In Ga1. 5, 11 he testifies that his persecution would cease the moment he preached circumcision, i.e. pious performance. Not the law, not even the promised establishment of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is the core of his gospel; rather, he emphasizes in 1 Tim. 1, 11: "I have been entrusted with the good news of the glory of the blessed God." Profoundly, then, we are dealing not with real but with personal mysteries, not with things and things, but with the Father and the Son Himself. The natural-religious man wants first of all only to be freed from the torment of his burdened

conscience, to be rid of his sins and to have the feeling of rest and peace. And this is also given to him when he grasps justification by faith. The truly spirit-begotten man, born of God, on the other hand, wants more. He wants community of life, unity of love with the Father through the Son. He longs for God's very own being, for light and glory. He longs for the Lord Himself! To find this, he is ready to pay any price, to take upon himself any disgrace, to go into any isolation against the masses, also the religious masses.

Only in this light do we understand the context of the 9th and 10th verses of 2 Tim. 2: "In my gospel I suffer tribulation unto bonds like an evildoer; but the word of God is not bound. Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with everlasting glory." Paul is willing to suffer everything in order to impart to others the salvation and glory of which he was made a part.

Doesn't this fully coincide with Rom. 8, 18, where the apostle exclaims: "I hold that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory that shall be revealed in us! The remarks of verse 19-30 which follow this testimony, and which probably express among the deepest and most powerful things ever spoken by human lips, end with the words, "Whom he justified, these also he glorified." Is this true? Should it not be: these also he will glorify? Where a man is truly justified on the basis of predestination and calling (vg1. verse 30 a), he is also, although this may not yet have appeared outwardly, glorified. He is brought into the life connection with the glory sphere of the Father and the Son and finds in it, the longer the more, his actual reason for living. For the merely religious man, a rational comprehension of the act of salvation is sufficient, a faith that secures his own worthy person. He does not want more.

But the spiritual man seeks glory. He wants to enter completely into that which is of the Father and of the Son; he thirsts primarily not for blessings and benefits, but for God Himself. Such a one will always appear to "sober Christians" as extravagant and will be smiled at by them or, if they feel punished in conscience, fought against. The Isaac line of sonship must always be followed, as then so also today, by the "also pious" Ishmael line, as Ga1. 4. 29 testifies: "As then he who was born after the flesh persecuted him who was born after the spirit, so also now." Those born of the flesh are also children of Abraham. are no doubt also blessed and outwardly appear much more impressive than the Isaac people. But they are not the real promise bearers.

These inner lines cannot be learned nor afforded; they must be suffered and fallen in love with. To argue about it would be completely pointless. However, once one has been taken in essence by them, the bliss, the spiritual vision and the enjoyment of the glory of God and Christ are infinitely delicious, so that he is willing to take the God-given path of solitude and, if necessary, of disgrace with joy.

All the really great, the friends and favorites of God, it was no different. 1We read in Exodus 33:16-18: "How shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Not by the fact that you go with us, and we are set apart, I and your people, from every nation that is on the face of the earth? And Jehovah said unto Moses, This also that thou hast said will I do; for thou hast found favor in mine eyes, and I know thee by name. And he said, Surely let me see thy glory."

Moses, who had been in the service of the law for so long and had struggled with the stiff-necked, disobedient people of Israel, desired proof from God that he and his people had found favor in his sight. The presence of the Lord and the election of Israel out of all the peoples of the earth were to confirm to him that God had turned his favor toward him. To the touching answer of the Lord: "What you say, I will do" (verse 17) the last, deepest request of the long-suffering man of God is made; his innermost heart's longing, his very real longing for love, which has remained unsatisfied until now, is clothed in the fervent plea: "Let me see your glory. Let me see your glory!" (verse 18).

If already Moses, the man of the law, is filled with such a hot, holy desire, how much more should the Spirit of God be able to kindle this desire in the hearts of the members of Christ! "If that which was to be done away was brought in with glory, how much more will that which remains stand in glory! Having therefore such a hope, let us use great frankness, and not do as Moses did, who put a covering over his face." (2 Cor.3, 11-13 a).

Do we understand what Paul is saying? We should not veil the glory that God has given us. Even if we are reviled for it, what God has placed in His own in the light of His glory is not only a delicious, blessed gift, but also a divine obligation, leading into suffering and tension. Oh, that we could understand this! Possession and enjoyment of divine glory brings loneliness and disgrace; but enduring these adversities with thanksgiving enables us to receive new, deeper glimpses of God's glory.

According to Eph 4 13, "we shall all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to the full-grown man, to the measure of the fullness of the fullness of Christ" But how is this godly unity of faith to come about? Should it be made possible by uniform confessions? Phi1. Frdr. Keerl says in a lecture he gave at a pastoral conference in Barmen in 1862 with regard to the confessional writings of the church: "It cannot be denied that the teaching of the church, as it has been formed up to now, is not able to lead to faith and to the knowledge of Eph. 4, 13 ...Eph. 4, 13 will only be fulfilled when a deeper principle is found, in the light of which all untruth and deformity of life and doctrine can be judged and eliminated, i.e. only when we all come to the same faith and knowledge of the Son of God. ...The church has the task of working out the whole, full treasure of truth as it is directly given in Scripture, for knowledge and thus also for life, and of imparting it to the congregation as a lasting blessed possession The whole fullness of God is to become, through Christ in whom it dwelt bodily, the possession of His congregation which forms His body....But we can only gain this treasure if we allow ourselves to be led by the spirit of truth into its fullness and depth, unperturbed by those who think that the whole, complete truth has already been found... But how else can we become capable of doing this than in unceasing research in the holy Scriptures, sanctified by prayer, and in complete surrender to the spirit of wisdom and revelation which rules in it, to penetrate the whole counsel of God... But in order to achieve this, we must become poor in ourselves, completely poor. The old mystics, a Suso and a Tauler, speak not without reason of a "process of annihilation" which we must undertake with ourselves, with everything of our own that comes from the world, so that nothing remains but longing, but hunger and thirst for the Lord. But then he will also fill us with the rich goods of his house, reflect his glory in us and transform us into his image from one glory to another...The Jews once expected the Messiah promised by the prophets. But they only desired a Messiah in glory and ignored the other side of the prophecy, according to which he should first appear as the Lamb of God who bears the sin of the world, as the most despised and unworthy one who had to take our sickness and sin upon himself.

In our time almost the reverse is the case. Against the preaching of Christ crucified, the message of Christ, the Lord of glory, takes a back seat. We should do the one and not leave the other and testify both to "the sufferings that were to come upon Christ" and to "the glories that follow" (I Peter 1:11). As for our sins he humbled himself to death on the cross, so for our righteousness he was exalted to glory".

So far Keerl, whose words seem so close to the present that one can only read them with deep inner joy and movement of the heart. How great and delicious are "the riches of glory" (Eph. 1:18), which the apostle to the nations is so burning to recognize! How can we dare to belittle something that is so exquisite to God and into which he gives his sevenfold Spirit of God, to portray it as secondary and absurd, or even to revile it as a rapture? Whoever does not have this ardent desire for glory burning in his heart, whoever practically denies any dignity of man beyond visibility, is put to shame by those ignorant pagans who persevere in seeking glory (Rom 2:7).

Certainly, it would be fundamentally wrong and harmful to reach out for intoxicating raptures. That this ever and ever happened is sad and shameful for the church of God. But this false, distorted longing for glory is precisely a proof that there is a real, true, divine longing for glory. After all, the enemy is not original, he cannot create anything original, but only anticipate, distort and misuse God's thoughts. So also here the wrong use does not cancel the right one but stimulates to examine and search in God's holy documents. Nothing would be more wrong than to throw the baby out with the bathwater and say: "Every testimony of glory is a raving and therefore to be rejected. We are to lead men to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live prudently and righteously and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:12). This is undoubtedly healthy and sober. Let us do so in our personal lives and in our service to those whom God has entrusted to us.

But how do we bring people to this high moral goal? By what means can we lead them to this height of clear, pure spiritual air? Through the law, for instance? Not at all! For the law causes wrath and does not lead to perfection, as the Letter to the Hebrews teaches. You will perhaps say that only the reference to the person of Jesus and his pure example can guide us to the attainment of this goal. But this is only true to a limited extent. For at one point the apostle says in 2 Cor 5:16 "Even if we follow the Christ according to the

We have known the Lord in the flesh, but now we no longer know Him in the same way. And on the other hand he testifies in 2 Cor 3:18: "Beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, we are changed in the same image from glory to glory". The earthly life of Jesus in lowliness will always remain an inexhaustible model for our personal life of faith and sanctification, it will become more and more a powerful prophecy and symbolism of His revelations of salvation in the eternities to come, but according to this clear, unambiguous scriptural testimony of 2 Cor 3:18, our transformation into the likeness of Christ's glory is

accomplished by beholding His glory. And this does not only apply to individual pious people who are interested or predisposed to it, but, as the first words of this verse say, to all.

But how can I look at the glory of the Son of God, i.e. consciously open myself to it and receive it into myself, if every doctrine of the glory is suspected to be a raving. Here it is necessary to obey God more than men and rather to renounce the recognition and praise of our fellow world than to lose the glories that God has prepared for us before the foundation of the world (I Cor. 2:7) Whoever, however, rejects the mystery of the hidden wisdom of God, which is spoken of in this context, should not be argued with. He does not reject the witnesses of divine truth, but the holy scripture, yes, God himself. But the Lord will also reveal this to such in his own time and in his own way (Phil 3:15).

Let us turn again to the question from which we started. How is the sanctification goal of Titus 2:12, which according to the possible interpretation of the word "instruct" or "educate" is at the same time a teaching goal, to be achieved? The context gives us the answer Verses 11-13 speak such clear, forceful language that human attempts at interpretation cannot weaken them. They read: "The grace of God has appeared saving to all men, instructing (educating or chastening) us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live prudently and righteously and godly in the present course of time, looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

By what, then, do we come under the discipline of grace to a prudent, righteous and godly life? By standing in living expectation of the fulfillment of the blessed hope of the revelation of the glory of our Lord and Savior! But if I know nothing of the blessed hope and hidden glory of Jesus Christ, how can I wait for it? Only the life forces of that essential world of light and love are really able to transform us. Law and morality, no matter how Christianly dressed up, can have no real and lasting effect on our life of sanctification.

A church father once said "What you love, that is you! Do you love the

If you love earth, you are earthly; if you love heaven, you are heavenly! We are formed into that image which we look upon with loving desire, be it light or darkness, sin or glory. It is a matter of sending our heart into where and how we wish to be eternally. As the weary child longs for the womb of its mother, as the homeless refugee with a burning heart desires a permanent dwelling place, as the imprisoned longs for freedom, and as the reviled, tortured and disenfranchised of this earth long for true and lasting justice, so the true and

right children of God thirst for nothing less than the glory of their Father in Christ Jesus.

But whoever, on the basis of the Word of Truth, has grasped, or rather is moved by the fact that "even the creation itself will be set free from the bondage of corruption to the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8 21), to him it is not only a God-given right but also a sacred duty of gratitude, which he owes not only to his Lord but also to the groaning, waiting creature, to enter into God's glory with his whole being and essence.

Of the 95 theses that Luther posted on the castle church at Wittenberg, the 62nd read, "The right and true treasure of the church is the holy gospel of the glory...of God." But how, since that memorable hour, has this "right and true treasure" been misjudged and neglected, has the message of glory been reviled and blasphemed! The fine testimony of Phil Frdch. Keerl, with which he concluded the above-mentioned lecture at the Barmer Pastoral Conference, may show how the same spirit which once filled and blessed the first Christians has ever and ever broken through in the church of God, and to this very hour, in spite of the strongest distrust and bitterest enmity, has not allowed itself to be shackled. Keerl said "Blessed is he who feels in himself, nourishes and nurtures the longing and groaning of the deepest bottom of his heart for the freedom of the glory of the children of God, and waits with uplifted head for the blessed appearing and revelation of the glory of our Savior Jesus Christ! Is this deepest longing for union with him who has bought us all so dearly and finds his pleasure and joy in it when we carry it within us, is the striving for the crown of glory that will one day adorn the overcomers the deep earnest desire of our soul, the basic trait of our life? Oh, we will all have to confess with deep bowing and shame that in us, as in the church, this waiting for the appearance of our Savior Jesus Christ, this striving for the crown of glory, has receded, in many cases has grown weary, yes, for the most part has completely disappeared. To awaken this longing, this aspiration, for this the holy Scriptures are so full of testimonies of glory from the first to the last leaf, therefore I have also dared to speak to you of this glory and to point to it as the most unique and most delicious jewel of our life."

We tried to hint at a little of what God's Word says about glory. But we were only able to give weak hints. For who would claim to be able to give an exhaustive account of the full scope of a biblical concept? Who would claim to be able to exhaustively describe the full scope of a biblical concept? How many veins of gold of glorious truths still lie hidden in the holy books, of which we now perhaps only suspect something! How little do we understand the language of our great

God and Father, which He speaks in the inspired documents of the Bible and in the mighty Book of Creation! The spirit-opened eye of faith beholds everywhere an effervescence of God's grace and glory to constantly repeat the image of the beloved Son in ever new degrees, degrees and forms. Christ all and in all! The written Word is profoundly the same as the Word made flesh, is the seed and the life mediator of the Word brought to fullness (Col I, 25 b), which in its very essence is the Christ of God consisting of the transfigured Head and His glorious full body.

Through the Word of God brought to perfection, through Christ and his body church, which is his pleroma, his fullness, and his soma, his body, all beings and worlds from the most radiant angelic prince to the curse dust of the blood- and tear-soaked earth will one day be led to the goal of perfection in glory. Will the confession of creation one day end and culminate in the exultant praise of the glory of God the Father (Phil 2 10, 11; Ps.103, 22; Rev. 5, 13) Blessed is he who already now may carry something of the overflowing, all-blissful glory of the Lord in his heart and testify with stammering lips to a desperate world full of woe and decay!

On the Essence of Hope - by Karl Geyer

God, in His perfect wisdom, has set for each age the partial goal that was or is possible to achieve on that path of development of the whole of humanity and the revelation granted to it until then. He has also given the bearers of revelation (prophets, apostles, etc.) and the healing bodies to which they were sent the gifts of grace of which they needed and need.

These things fall into two groups. One group consists of the gifts and orders, which have only educational value and are removed after their purpose is fulfilled. Their number is large. These include the law and every kind of commandments and prohibitions and precepts and ordinances and ministries of the Old Covenant, but also all the

Gifts, means, methods, disciplinary measures and rules of conduct that serve to build up the church of His Body. - The other group comprises the purely divine edification means¹. They are of a divine nature and thus a species-specific expression of this being. Their number is only small. They are called: faith, hope, love.

In this context, read 1 Cor. 12:4 with prayer and research.

-31; 13, 1-13 and Eph. 4, 7-16. There we see that there are many gifts and

There are many ministries and effects, and each of the many members has a special gift of grace that distinguishes it from all the others. But all these things, even the greatest of them, such as prophecies, tongues, and knowledge, cease and are put away; for when we are transformed into His image and shall be like Him and see Him as He is, we no longer need these aids¹. They have fulfilled their purpose and come to their end and are put out of action, just as the law was put out of action when the fulfillment was present in Christ. But divine being and divine way of acting remain. They never pass away. "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three!" If God in His wisdom is pleased to give many gifts and means for the education of the faithful and to apply various methods and to show more or less delicious ways (1 Cor. 12:31), let us apply and use and administer these things faithfully according to the divine principles and will intentions. By no means can we do without or disregard even one of them without suffering harm. On the other hand, all gifts and services and effects should only lead to that which remains. They should work faith, hope and love in us, or, better said, help that the love of God poured into our hearts unfolds in its essence and becomes manifest in faith, hope and love. Only the person who acts out of these motives

acts divinely and according to God. Without faith one cannot come close to God, without hope one cannot be sanctified, and without love one cannot bring anything to perfection. This

Entities are from God and therefore imperishable. That is why they remain, even if all means of education, which are adapted to the weakness of man, are removed. For this reason, we want to give them the more prominent place in our spiritual life and, the longer, the more, we want to concern ourselves with what remains and leave behind what was necessary for us as children in faith (1 Cor. 13:11; Heb. 5:12-14; 6:1-3 and many other passages).

The sins of the little children in Christ are forgiven (1. Job. 2, 12-14). This is the characteristic of childhood. However, it is not normal to always remain a child, but it is natural to grow and mature. This is how one becomes a youth and a man. The mark of discipleship is overcoming evil. This is practical representation of the power received. But even this is not the last, but the full communion with God in the Holy of Holies, the knowledge of Him who was from the beginning. This is the mark of the fathers in Christ.

Whoever enters the tent of meeting first enters the court. There he will be granted justification. The means to this is faith. "Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5, 1). Court - faith - justification - peace with God belong together. Hope leads us into the sanctuary. It brings about sanctification. "Whoever has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). As the fruit of sanctification, we come to enjoy peace from God. Sanctuary - hope - sanctification - peace from God belong together. Perfection, however, only comes through love. It leads into the Holy of Holies and into the complete communion of beings with God Himself. The fruit of this unity is the peace of God, His own, full peace in us. Therefore, the Holy of Holies - love - perfection - the peace of God Himself belong together. There are still many God-ordained connections and parallels that belong here. At this point we can only briefly point them out. The Lord is able to open them up further. Such parallels are:

Asking (forecourt) - giving thanks (sanctuary) - worshipping (holy of holies). The good will of God - the pleasing will of God - the perfect will of God. Creation - Redemption - Completion.

Resurrection of the righteous - Resurrection of the saints - Resurrection of the perfected (exanastasis). Pentecost - Millennial Kingdom - New Creation. Visible world - invisible world - God in the light. First heaven - second heaven - third heaven¹. Salvation - ministry - blessing communication.

All these parallels and many more are in a certain relationship with the threefold expression of the divine being: faith - hope - love.

Among the three that remain, hope occupies the middle place.

If it is to be presented in a special way once, as for example in the 1st Epistle to the Thessalonians, where the hope for the coming of the Lord and the Rapture (as well as the sanctification inseparably connected with it) are the main goal of the whole letter, it also stands purposefully at the end (1 Thess. 1,3). Otherwise, however, Scripture adheres to the normal, divinely regulated order in other places as well. See Hebr. 10, 22 (faith), 10, 23 (hope) and 10, 24 (love). Yes, the three following chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews talk about these three things for a whole chapter each.

Now it is striking that in general in the circles of the children of God during the proclamation of the Word very often faith is spoken of, often also (purposefully) of love, but very little of hope. What might be the reason for this?

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The enemy could not prevent us from becoming believers. But he wants to obstruct our path to maturity and perfection and thus break the connection between the beginning and the goal. He knows us and knows that our soul becomes tired and dull when it lacks hope. That is why it is a tactic of the enemy to lead us back to the beginning again and again, so that the Lord Himself instructs us in His Word that we must not always dwell on this, but must leave the beginning in order to progress to full manhood (Hebr. 6, 1). Repentance and faith in God also belong to these initial grounds. In the same chapter (Hebr. 6, 11) we are encouraged to reach the full assurance of hope and to hold on to it until the end.

Without hope there is no sanctification (1. Joh. 3, 3) and without looking at the promises there is no purification (2. Cor. 7, 1). Unholy and unclean believers are a bad testimony for angels and men. And this is exactly what the enemy wants! He wants to prevent us from being a fragrance of Christ and wants us to become tired and dull ourselves. He wants to make it seem as if the gospel is not a power of God, which already here makes all those blessed who believe in it.

However, His thoughts are not unknown to us, and we certainly do not want to be overreached by Him (2 Cor. 2:11). Therefore, we want to walk in all sobriety in the full light of day and follow the divine admonition, which recommends faith and love as protectors of the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (as breastplate), and the helmet of biblically sound hope for the covering of the head, so that we

can encourage and edify one another in the certainty of the coming salvation and blessedness (1 Thess. 5, 1-11).

And this is what we want to do! We want to encourage each other on the way. The Godly means for this are the promises of the Eternal Faithful. They fill the weary soul with new hope and thus give it the necessary strength to persevere in struggle and suffering and to walk the path of faith with firm and certain steps until the end.

Without a clear hope, there is no certain faith; for faith is a realization of what one hopes (Heb. 11:1). The hope that God sets before us is therefore the foundation of faith.

Once we were without God and without hope in the world. A deep but unclear longing filled our hearts. Then the love of God set before us a firm and certain and unspeakably glorious hope. We took hold of this hope in faith and were thus saved.

So it is that from God's side, love is the first thing, the motive from which He raised a hope for us, which we grasped in faith. He can say, "I gave you hope out of love so that faith would be awakened in you. From our point of view, the order is experientially reversed: faith, hope, love.

When the Tabernacle of the Testimony, the Tent of Meeting, was to be built, God, in His command to Moses, began with the Holy of Holies, or the Ark within. Then came the articles of the sanctuary, and then those of the court. But in the erection by the hand of the commissioned people, one went from the outside to the inside and erected first the forecourt, then first the sanctuary and last the holy of holies. It is the same here with the three divine entities: Love, Hope, Faith, which for our experience become Faith, Hope, Love.

Faith grows only on the ground of hope. Therefore, whoever wants to awaken faith must proclaim hope! And this is exactly what we want. The giver of hope

The deepest longing and desire of the creature is to get out of the bondage of mortality and transitoriness and to receive a share in the imperishable nature of God. This longing can be satisfied by nothing created, and no creature is able to communicate this God nature to the other. God Himself alone is able to impart His immortal God-being to the creature in a begetting way. Therefore, the hope that promises fulfillment to our longing can only be given by Him, as a gift, as an expression of His grace and goodness.

God is love, and love does not seek what is yours, but what is yours. Giving is more blessed than receiving. Who could feel the blessedness of giving better and more deeply than the blessed God?

The highest thing God has to give is Himself. In the Son of Love He took this step of giving Himself to the dying world. God was in Christ! In Christ He gave us everything! What should He still withhold from us of all His works, of everything He has, after He has already given the greatest, Himself, in Christ? - He does not withhold the smallest! He has given us everything in Christ! Everything is yours! The universe is yours! But thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! He Himself is ours, and we are His for all eons. Nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What a change! - Once we were dead in trespasses and sins and went our way like the rest: without hope in the world (Eph 2:12). Where there is no real life connection with God, there is no certain and living hope. But now we are reconciled to God, and the most glorious of all hopes is our firm and sure part: "We shall be like Him" (1 Job. 3, 1-3). Christ, the life-bearer and life-mediator, dwells in us. Christ in us, the hope of glory (Co1. 1, 27)!

Only one can give such hope: the living God Himself. For this, however, a special proof of His immortal power was needed. He went (in Christ) to death and then revealed through the resurrection that true life cannot be held by death. Before that, no man had ever come back from the dead, never to die again. Only through the resurrection of Jesus Christ was life and incorruptible nature brought to light (2 Tim 1:10; 1 Pet 1:3). And only through this fact was it proven that the hope of a share in God's immortality is not destroyed by death, but that submission to the bondage of mortality is precisely the door of hope, in that the creature is freed from the perishable nature through death and through the resurrection has a share in immortality forever. Thus the Father Himself begat us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (1 Pet 1:3).

With it, our hope is forever firm and sure and certain. God himself gave it to us. He raised it up before us and gave it to us freely by grace. He is the sole giver of all true hope. Creatures can give only created things. But the appearing is only appearance and does not remain forever. Only the permanent one, God, can give lasting things.

He testifies to this Himself in His Word. In 2 Thess. 2, 16 we read: "... our God and Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace ..." And Rom. 15, 13 we read: "But may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the

Holy Spirit." The God of hope! Yes, that is only He, the living God. All idols must pass away and perish and have no continuance. Only He, the Existent, the Abiding, has true hope. Before anything visible existed through which He could make Himself known and reveal Himself, the plan of the ages was ready before Him. He was also aware of His own power to carry out this plan to the last details, and to complete it gloriously. "All that He wills He does." - "All my will I make to be done." - He is aware of all His works from the beginning, and in the spirit everything is ready before Him from the beginning. How could there be any uncertainty for Him that His own hope would be dashed and His longing for God would not be fulfilled? - His hope is the most sure and certain thing there is. In His wisdom, He has not set before Himself anything that He cannot and will not fulfill. What should He be prevented from doing? - No creaturely limitations hinder Him in His will and work. His doing is as perfect as His planning. He knows everything beforehand, and to none of His plans and words of promise will one miss the fulfillment. He can hope for everything He wants, because He makes all His will into action. His hope embraces the whole creation, which He wants to raise to 'the same glorious freedom as the sons of God attain. Therefore, He Himself subjected them to mortality for hope. No one else could subject them to mortality on hope. Creatures can bring each other into death, but not out of it. But God makes even death, the destroyer of all created things, a door of freedom and the valley of curse and judgment of banishment a door of hope (Jos. 7, 24-26; Hosea 2, 15).

Who is like Him in this? - Who is able to do this? - Only He, the God of hope!

Whoever has once recognized this, no longer places his hope in anything created. He reaches out to get an ever more complete share in the hope of God.

This hope never disappoints and does not shame. Therefore, it does not make the soul weary, as always happens when unhealthy hopes intoxicate the soul, but the fulfillment fails. Every intoxication is followed by lamentation and disappointment. Then the soul becomes tired and the knees become shaky and the course becomes unsteady. But the real, true hope, which the Spirit of God imparts to us, is an essential part of the God of hope. Therefore, it is as certain and lasting, as blessed and full of power as the one from whom it comes. Whoever has this hope does not grow weary in the struggle of faith, but may confess with Paul, the model of the Church of the Sons: "Da r u m we do not grow weary."

(To be continued.)

Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

In issue 2 of this volume, we began with the reprint of this important and groundbreaking biblical reflection by Karl Geyer. The introduction spoke of the three lasting divine entities faith - hope - love and of God as the giver of hope.

In this and the following issues the publication will now be continued, according to the following outline of the author:

The content of our hope

The herald of hope

The sustaining ground of our hope

The scope of hope The unity of hope The essence of hope:

- a) Hope as an anchor of the soul
- b) Hope as an essential connection with the future
- c) Hope as an inner attitude and orientation towards the coming one and the coming one
- d) Hope as a longing for the perfect
- e) Hope as a desire to receive the full grace
- f) Hope as a blissful expectation of the appearance of the glory of God and Christ.
- g) Hope as the dwelling of the Spirit in the sanctuary of God
- h) Hope as the sacred homesickness for the unshakable and imperishable
- i) Hope as the longing of the spirit for eternity in the midst of time
- j) Hope as seeking and longing for the one who is above, and as resting and abiding in him in the spirit.
- k) Hope as the longing waiting of the whole creation for the revelation of the true life.
- 1) Hope as the creature's longing for the elimination of the tension between the impermanent and the imperishable.
- m) Hope as the expectation that the difference between suffering and bliss will be eliminated.

- n) Hope as the longing of the spiritual man to be at home from the Body and to be native to the Lord
 - o) Hope as the outlook after the things that are ready to be revealed
 - p) Hope as the striving for the goal in the joyful and certain Conviction that everything will come to a good end
 - q) Hope as the longing for completion of all that is unfinished
 - r) Hope as the echo of all the longing of the God of hope in the Hearts of the faithful
 - s) Hope as the participation of the spirit in the consummation goals of God.
 - t) Hope as the looking of faith to the goal
- The characteristics of hope:
- a) A living hope
 - b) A blissful hope
 - c) Good hope
 - d) Better hope types of hope:
 - a) The hope of justice
 - b) The hope of glory
 - c) The hope of bliss
 - d) The hope of eternal life
 - e) The hope of the Gospel
 - f) The hope of His calling Sanctification as the effect of hope

The content of our hope

The hope of God is not realized by any creature, by anything created. The Son of Love is the guarantor and surety for the redemption of all God's promises. In Him they are all yes and amen (2 Cor. 1:20). In Him the Father has poured out the whole fullness of His divinity and given Him all power in heaven and on earth. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Through Him the Father made the world (Co1. 1, 15-17; Joh. 1, 1-3); through Him He reconciled it (Co1. 1, 19, 20); through Him He also completes it and leads the whole universe into fullness (Eph. 1, 10, 23). Thus He reveals and manifests Himself in the Son and through the Son in the most complete way.

That is why the Father has placed all His hope in the Son.

On whom could we place our hope if not on Him?

Christ is also our hope! - Christ Jesus, our hope" (1Ti 1:1)..."...who before have hoped in Christ" (Eph 1:12). "...in whom also ye hoped" (Eph 1:13)."...having hope in Christ" (1Co 15:19). "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Co1. 1, 27)."....

Hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:3).

The Father hopes that the Son will bring us to Him. We hope the same.

The Father hopes that the Son will fulfill all the promises. We hope the same. The Father hopes that the Son will abolish sin with all its consequences. We hope the same.

Thus, we too hope only in the Son, the Father's commissioned executor of His will. Any other hope is not divine hope, but creaturely hope.

In the Son, our hope meets that of the Father. Thus we have communion of hope with the Father. Only in the Son and through the Son do we have true, essential communion with the Father, and faith, hope, and love flow into each other from both sides into perfect unity.

Without the Son, we are nothing and have no share in the divine essence. A dreadful expectation would have to darken our future. But in the Son, all our glorious portion is what the Father Himself gave Him; and He gave Him everything.

The members of His Body are united to Him, the Head, in the power of an indissoluble life. In Him we are chosen, called, redeemed, justified and glorified. When He is revealed in glory, we are also revealed with Him in His glory. Everything that concerns us depends on Him, the Head. In whom should we hope but in Him? "Christ Jesus, our hope!"

Where is a hope that is like such hope? - Is there a single created object in the whole universe that is even remotely similar to the Son? - Who else has the Father given such authority as the Son, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given? - Whom did the Father then appoint to

His co-counselor made among all creatures? - No one! Only the Son of love, the uncreated Son of God, begotten from the essence of the Father, was with Him, and in Him the Father conceived and sealed all His plans, when no creature at all had yet been called into existence. Who is like the Son?

On Christ rests the hope of God. Our hope also rests on Him. The whole universe, the whole creation, which is waiting with its neck stretched out for the revelation of the sons of God who will be revealed with the Christ, hopes in Him. The redemption of our inheritance and the appearance of our hope are tied to the appearance of Jesus Christ. When He, the Christ, our life, is revealed, then we also will be revealed with Him in glory (Co1. 3, 4). Therefore, the appearance of His glory is a blessed hope for us (Titus 2:13). If the Lord would not come again, we ourselves would never have to expect a glorification and also never a revelation before the world. Then there would also never be a world judgment and never a world renewal. The outcome of world history would be a hopeless sinking into nothingness. Neither the individual nor the world whole would have to expect a completion. The longing waiting of the creation would end just as in disappointment as the hope of the believers.

But God has given us a pledge that He will redeem the promised inheritance: His Spirit. But the Spirit always reminds us of this redemption and of the Redeemer, Christ. Thus Christ remains our hope for the future. It is bound to Him. No one else is able to redeem the inheritance than the one to whom the Father gave it for us, who provided and sealed it for us on behalf of the Father and who will transmit it one day. Only the fact of His return in glory makes our hope a blissful one and lets us await with joy the day when He comes.

The one who is coming is the same one who is in us and with us today, who was there before the world was. The hope of all created things can only rest on a being that is not held captive by the laws of becoming and passing away. Only in one is this divine being represented: in Christ. He was before the eons, and the eons became through Him. His are time and space. He is the Lord over everything. In Him was the life, the imperishable reality, the truth, the lasting.

Since the beginning of all world events Jesus Christ is the carrier of all openings. He is the one who also today carries the universe with the mighty word of His power and who always carries it further in the coming ages, towards the goal of its destiny. He is the man of divine trust. To hope in Him means to hope in a way that is Godly, God-willed and God-worthy. Any other hope will be dashed. All hopes in creatures are vain hopes. One hope remains: Christ! It remains because it comes from the abiding and is divine in its whole essence. That is why it remains even when the perfect has come. The life which is in the Father and in His Son Jesus Christ, and which will then also be in the universe, continues to unfold. "The universe begotten into life" and "God all in all." - But there will be no end to the multiplication of life. Inexhaustible is the fullness of life in God and

in Christ. More and more this life unfolds into all the future and lets us recognize that we have a growing hope for ever greater things. For we have a living hope, the one who is life, whose increase will have no end: Christ, the hope of glory.

The herald of hope

What lives in the heart of God in terms of hope, only the spirit that is in God is able to investigate (1 Cor. 2:9-13). No creature has been God's co-advisor, and the purposes of glory have not come into any man's heart. Tongues of men and tongues of angels cannot declare the depths of the Godhead, because no created spirit in its limitedness is able to search the depths of God. Only the spirit of God itself is able to express what is in God.

Where this Spirit is poured into a heart, He makes known what was from the beginning. He imparts to us the knowledge of God Himself, so that we may know Him who is from the beginning and that which He has prepared beforehand for our glory'.

Without the mind, it is impossible to know God.

It is therefore the content of one of the prayers of the sons' church that Paul delivered to us, as he had received them from the Lord (for Christ lived in him and spoke from him and through him), that the knowledge of the hope of His (Christ's) calling may be given to us through the Spirit of the

Wisdom and revelation (Eph. 1, 15-20; comp1. also Ko1. 1, 3-10). And in Rom. 15,13 the apostle wishes that the God of hope fills us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, it requires a special gift of the Father of glory and a special power effect of the Holy Spirit given through Him to know the hope of Christ's calling with enlightened eyes of the heart with certainty and to abound in hope.

After all, the Spirit of God is a Spirit of fullness and perfection. The number of Perfection is seven. Therefore, the scripture also presents Him to us in His sevenfold form and effect. On the Son of Love, the root shoot of Jesse, He rested in His fullness (Is. 11,1.2). On Him rested

1. The Spirit of the Lord,
2. the spirit of wisdom and
3. The spirit of the mind,
4. the spirit of counsel and 5. the spirit of power,

6. the spirit of knowledge and 7. the spirit of fear of the Lord. In Rev. 3, I the Lord describes himself (verg1. Rev. 1, 12-20) as the one who has the seven spirits of God.

This sevenfold spirit shall also be given to His members. They are to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18 [b]) until they are filled to the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19).

When we once received the realization of our lostness, we reached out to the mediator of indissoluble life, to Christ, longing for salvation. We laid ourselves down to Him in our whole earth-bound, creaturely state with all its debts, sins and shortcomings, with all its inability to reach the glory goal of God Himself. Only He, the Mediator, can give salvation and life and blessedness and glory. Therefore, we surrendered to Him all that we are and have, and made Him the Lord of our lives.

But this: To recognize Jesus as the only Savior and bringer of salvation and to acknowledge Him as Lord is a consequence of the Holy Spirit's activity in us. "No one can call Jesus Lord without the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3). It is true that without the Holy Spirit it can be considered true that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, lived in Nazareth and died on Golgotha. However, the recognition of these historical facts has nothing to do with recognizing oneself as a sinner in need of help who cannot produce divine life from himself without salvation in Christ. Most nominal Christians, who year after year celebrate the memory of the birth in Bethlehem, would turn away indignantly if we asked them about the certainty of the forgiveness of sins and the personal reception of life from God. We can offer the Gospel to all, but we cannot make people desire salvation. Only the Spirit of God can do that. But where a man's heart has become in need of salvation through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, it reaches out longingly for salvation in Christ, crying out, "Be ye also my Lord, who hath redeemed me lost and damned!" This, to make Jesus the Lord of one's life and to confess Him as Lord, to call Jesus a Lord, no one can do without the Holy Spirit.

Whereas believing is a matter of the intellect, faith is a matter of the whole person. It includes a clear realization of being lost and of the personal need for salvation as well as a conscious and complete surrender of life to Jesus Christ, the mediator of salvation and life. This is what forever distinguishes the soul-romantic man from the truly renewed spiritual man. The spirit is life; everything else is natural, religious piety.

The confession: "Jesus is Lord! He is also the Lord of my life!" is the first part of the work that the Holy Spirit does for us. But He wants to do a perfect work on us. That is why Paul, after hearing about the faith in the Lord that is in the

Ephesians, asks that now, after receiving the Lord's Spirit, the other spirits of God be given to them as well. The work of the Lord's Spirit is a single work. All other works of the Holy Spirit are double effects of two connected spirits. In Is. 11, 1. 2 we see that the seven spirits are listed in such a way that the first spirit, the Lord Spirit, stands alone. The six other spirits stand in pairs. Three pairs are bound together by "and".

The first pair is the spirit of wisdom and understanding (understanding, revelation). Therefore Paul also asks, after they had received the Lord's Spirit, that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation may be given to them for the knowledge of Him (God) Himself, so that they, having the eyes of their heart enlightened, may know what is the hope of His calling.

So, while faith in the Lord is a work of the Lord's Spirit, who made us slaves of Jesus Christ from slaves of sin, being filled with the abundant hope that is our portion in Christ is a result of being filled with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation. Just as the

As the power of God in its overwhelming greatness worked in Christ when God brought Him back from the dead, so it shall also be manifested in us, the believers. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have been begotten again to a living hope. This hope is now to find its permanent representation for all creatures in the members of His Body. Therefore, it requires the same power effect of the Father of glory to represent this resurrection life as the hope of the whole universe in us, as He brought to bear in the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Eph. 1, 15-23; esp. v. 19 and 20). The weaker the representation of the real life in us, the poorer the hope for us and others. In the same measure in which the true life is formed in us and represented through us by the power of the Holy Spirit, we ourselves become richer and more certain in our hope through the presence of these unmistakable marks; indeed, we become abundant in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore only spiritual people are also hopeful people! Who sinks in this world or directs the longing of his soul on visible things, will always be disappointed. No living, certain and joyful hope fills him. That is why the wealth of hope that we carry within us is one of the indicators of spirituality in general. The power of hope is a representation of the power work of the Spirit of God in us. (With shining countenance we reflect the glory wrought in us by the beatific power of the gospel.

May the Lord make us abundant in the power of the Holy Spirit and thus also in hope!

The sustaining ground of our hope

When God wanted to more abundantly prove the immutability of His counsel to the heirs of the promise, He added an oath to the word of promise so that we, who have taken refuge in the hope that is before us, might have a strong consolation through two unchangeable things (it was impossible for God to lie) (Heb. 6:17, 18). His promise, the word of promise, alone would have been enough to remove all doubt from the believer. For God keeps His word! He does not lie! But in order to reveal His nature and to prove Himself as the One whose will for fellowship with man is unchangeable, He bound Himself to the promise with a sacred oath openly before the whole creation. With this He wants to testify: If I do not fulfill this promise to bless and to multiply, then I am not God.

Such an enormous seriousness stands behind His decision to show kindness and mercy to the creature. He puts His own majesty of God and honor of the Creator on the line. In order to lead the weak faith to the full certainty of hope, God steps into the middle¹ with an oath. Now it must be proven whether God is really God and not a creature. If only one word of the promise does not come true, then He has failed. But if He can fail once, then He can fail even more. But then He is fallible and not perfect. Where is there then at all still a firm reason of the hope, on which the creature can build its future?

There is a holy, shattering seriousness in this oath of God. He puts his whole divinity as a pledge. He no longer wants to be God if He does not do what He promised. Yes, He can then also no longer be God, because He would be imperfect if He failed.

You child of man, - you child of God, - don't you see that you have to be blessed if He Himself wants to remain God? And there you still have here and there, perhaps even often, the devil's plague of doubt in your heart, whether God really means it that way, and whether He also leads it out certainly and completely as He said - as His word reports it?

Here is the ground of hope, where your soul can cast anchor! On this unshakable ground you can build your future in full certainty and unconditional, complete trust. God is God. His word is true. He cannot lie. His oath, to which He bound His own future, His whole being God, is in your hands. You have His word and His oath. Will you give me another reason on which you could build your future so surely, without ever doubting that everything will turn out as promised and as you hoped?

And how God swears! - Not a single condition is in His oath. It is not a covenant of reciprocity such as the Law. There it says: "If you observe all these things and do them, then I will..." Then it could not fail that the creature failed, because he was not able to fulfill the law due to his natural weakness. But with it the

Covenant broken. - It is different here with the promise. There God simply swears that He will give and give and bless and multiply¹. For His own sake He does all this. He does not ask if the promisee desires to see a land, nor if he wants it given, nor if he wants to be blessed in all ways. God simply says, "I will¹..." but not, "If you ..., then I will."

Think about it for a moment: God wants! He, the unchangeable, who makes all His will into action, He wants! Who can hinder Him? There is nothing that could hinder Him. Everything created is from Him and exists in Him and through Him. Even Satan, the enemy of God, cannot exist or act without Him. See Job 1 and 2! Satan may only do what he is allowed to do. Not a hair falls from our head without God's will. The hairs that you carelessly throw away in the morning, He has counted! Have you counted them too? - No, they are not valuable enough for you. But even the most unimportant things about you are important enough for Him to arrange them in such a way that nothing happens without His will, yes, everything works for your good. And this God, whom nobody can hinder in His doing, who daily holds your whole life with all its importance and unimportance in His hand and examines and orders it and lets it be completed according to His advice and will, this God is the one who took the oath that He would, yes, He could no longer be God if He did not lead everything that concerns you, your whole future and that of the whole creation, to the glorious goal and end.

Is this God enough security for your future? - Are the word of promise and the word of the oath of allegiance enough rocky ground for you to step on for now and forever? - Then read again believing and praying Hebr. 6,11-20 and Rom. 15,4.

All these things that have happened to the people of faith of all times God has set down in His Word for our instruction, that we may be exhorted thereby to persevere and have hope through the encouragement of the Scriptures.

How could we persevere without this rock foundation of the Word, without this teaching about God's purposes for us and for all creation? - Every soul grows weary that does not look to the goal. Who does not grasp the meaning and purpose of life and does not recognize the goal, for him the

His existence is meaningless and purposeless, and he wanders around without a goal and plan, a tired earth wanderer. How is he supposed to survive and win the struggle for existence?

But God, the strongest of the strong, carries us, the weak, so that we do not perish. He fills us with abundant hope and thereby enables us to persevere. In perseverance, however, we experience that we can already enjoy in spirit all that we will inherit later in sight. Thus, perseverance carries the richest reward and grants us a deposit on the future. In this way, however, hope is shown to be something essential, real, certain. Thus, the certainty of hope grows precisely in perseverance. Both the word of Scripture as a supporting foundation and perseverance as a confirming experience give us hope.

The strong God carries us so that we become able to carry others. What He expects from us, He Himself must first work in us (Hebr. 13, 20. 21). In this way, however, a commonality of knowledge arises in all of us, which also leads outwardly to a practical community of action.

The God of perseverance and encouragement generates through the same

The same reason for hope and the same goal of hope also create the same direction of will in all hopefuls and the same spiritual attitude, which is according to Christ Jesus (Rom. 15, 1-7). Hopeful people look into the future and expect the returning Christ, the bearer of hope. This expectation is not based on any desires of their own, nor is it the result of human imagination, but it is born of the word of promise and the oath of God Himself. Hopeful people have their sure and certain and joyful hope through the encouragement of the scriptures. The word from God's mouth is the ground of their hope. This ground never wavers, and as long as the believer bases his hope only on the Word and rejects any mixture with natural-emotional expectations, he also does not waver or grow weary and faint. 1Let us hold fast the confession of hope immovably, for faithful is He who made the promise! And let us encourage one another with these words, and all the more as we see the day approaching (Heb 10:23-25; 1Th 4:18; 5:11; Heb 12:12; Luk 21:28; Phi1. 2,1—11). And while we sing in our hearts in blissful adoration to the God of hope who has given us such blessed hope, let us also speak to one another out of the fullness of the Spirit in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

"Amen, amen, loud amen has the mouth of the faithful God; eternally He leads the name, that in Him the truth is based. What He says is true; it must be yes and amen.

The promise can be forgiven; if what He promises does not come soon, one must flee the doubt, because He never breaks His word. If only the right time is there, everything will be yes.

He has kept it this way from the beginning of the world. His truth will also prevail until the world falls into ashes, because He, as He never did, cannot deny Himself.

Well my heart, you can trust in Him! What He has promised you, you will also see fulfilled. Even if it does not come to pass right away, even if He often spares it a long way, it will still be an amen.

Amen, Lord, You will fulfill what Your faithful mouth promises; this I now expect in silence until it actually happens that You fulfill it. Amen! Yes, as You live!"

Thus sang a man of hope, Benjamin Schmolck. Even today, in spiritual joy and blessed assurance, people of hope sing and greet each other with such greeting and song (Eph. 5:19).

(To be continued)

Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

(continued)

The scope of hope

The scope of our hope can be neither greater nor less than the hope of God Himself. It is true that from His Word we can only gradually and piecemeal recognize the scope of what the God of hope hopes for. But it is important to grasp every recognized promise with faith and to accept every divine promise in its unconditional certainty. It is enough for us to see from the Word that God hopes for something. We then hope for the same thing. We do not want to hope for anything other than what He also hopes for. Only he who has been given a promise can have a certain hope. When the nations were not yet given direct revelations, as expressed in the gospel of the body church, they were indeed just as close to the heart of God as they were after it was preached to them, but they just did not know it. God Himself was most sorry about this. His happiness consists to a large extent in the fact that now, after Israel rejected the Son, He is preached among the nations and believed in the world (1Ti 3:16). Before that, however, the people of choice were the bearers of the promise.

This calling has in no way its reason in the intrinsic value of this people. On the contrary! God explicitly says that it is the smallest and most miserable among all nations. There were great nations, like Egypt and Babylon and Assyria. They were the bearers of the human culture of those times. They were not eligible as vessels for the revelation of grace, lest there should be danger for them and others of confusing divine revelation with their own art and saying, "We have done it by the greatness of our strength and the might of our arm!" That is why God chose a small and miserable little bunch, the little worm Jacob and the little bunch Israel. No other people gave Him so much trouble with their sins. But this is precisely the mystery of the divine election: Where sin has become powerful, grace has become even more overflowing. Where the flesh is proved to be what it really is, the honor and glory for every fruit of the Spirit also remain to God alone. Whoever does not understand this will also never be able to comprehend and divinely justify his own election (1 Cor. 1:18-31). First of all Israel was given the privilege to be the bearer of the word of promise, even if they did not prove to be worthy of this privilege (Rom. 3, 1-3). It was not a privilege according to the natural man (Rom. 3, 9-20). The knowledge of God's will only increased the responsibility, and Israel did not live up to this responsibility. A small flock obtained the promises, but the masses were hardened and rejected, as the chapters Romans 9-11 clearly prove. The key to understanding these chapters is found in Rom. 11:32. (See also verses 29-36.)

There is a tremendous tragedy in the history of this people. It received eternal goods from the hands of God to carry them through the ages, but it knew nothing about them and failed in its mission. Nevertheless, one thing remains: When the nations still sat in darkness and the bright light of the gospel had not yet shone upon them, Israel carried the hope of the world redeemer in her hands as a divine promise. The word of promise was entrusted to Him, and the hope of the world was only then the hope of Israel (Acts 28:20; Ephesians 1:12).

While the apostle could say of them that they had hoped in the Christ before, it is still written of the nations at the time of Christ's walk on earth that they will hope in Him (in the future) (Matth. 12, 21; Rom. 15, 12). Only after the joyful message of God, the word of truth, the gospel of their salvation was proclaimed to the nations, they also hoped for the Christ (Eph. 1, 13).

But now there is no limitation to the gospel. Everyone who believes in the Christ is saved. Here is neither Jew nor Greek, here is neither slave nor free, here is neither male nor female; they are all one in Christ.

Quite glorious is the hope of the sons' church, the selection from all nations. It is the church, which is His body, the Christ! The body is the sharer of all promises, which the Father has given to the Son (Eph. 3, 1-6). All that the Father has and all that He is, He has given to the Son and has withheld nothing from Him. Also to us, as heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ, He has given everything in the Son.

In view of such love, which gives all that it is and has, how could we want to hope less than this love promises us? - Yes, not only promises, but has already given in the Son and made available for revelation and manifestation to us! - Nothing could hurt love more than not to acknowledge the sincerity of its motives and to limit to it the pure blessedness of giving. What God has set up as the goal of hope for the believers of the present time, they have to simply accept in obedience of faith, without somehow making the attempt to want to limit the scope of the promises in false modesty or open unbelief. God has given us everything in the Son of love. His Word testifies to it, and the Spirit makes it certain to us and seals the promises in us. They are all completely fulfilled. The spirit of promise is the pledge for the redemption of the inheritance. Therefore, we expect from the future revelation of our inheritance that there will be nothing left that is not contained in it. We will be as He is and possess all that He has! Nameless bliss will fill us, like the blessed God Himself. We will be perfect, as the Father in heaven Himself is perfect. All the fullness of God, which dwelt bodily in the Son of Love, will also fill us (Eph. 3:19)!

Then it will be seen that our hope is equal to His. What would be insane presumption without the divine promise, is for the faith reason and cause for wordless amazed adoration in spirit and in truth (= reality, beingness).

As partakers of His promises, the members of the body church are the bearers of promise for the whole AI1. God not only lets the church participate in His own hope, but He has also included the whole creation in the realm of hope (Rom. 8, 20). If He had excluded even a single rod of all created things or even a being conscious of its existence from hope, then His own hope would not be perfect and He would not be the God of hope. For Godhead is perfection in the most absolute sense. Therefore, He believes and hopes everything without any exception. This alone is worthy of Him and corresponds to His nature, which is love. For love believes everything and hopes everything.

This is the scope of His hope and ours.

The unity of hope

If our hope were limited to created objects, there would be a variety of hopes, depending on what was promised to the individual. But in this way, the content of our hope is a person, the Christ. No country, no people, no corporation, no system, no community, no church is the content of our hope. The fullness of the Godhead, as it dwelt in the Christ bodily, will also dwell in us in the same fullness, when we are filled with the whole fullness of God. This is our hope, the Christ already dwelling in us in essence, the hope of glory. We are not waiting for any thing, but for the revelation of the Christ dwelling in us, the Christ of glory, who will reveal Himself with His saints before all the world.

Whoever sets the content and scope of hope lower than God Himself does, touches the credibility and thus the honor of God. At the same time, he also diminishes the bliss of enjoyment that the believer may already have in the present time through the anticipation of what is to come.

And nothing has a more divisive effect in the church of God than setting up different goals of hope. Because faith is a realization of what one hopes for (Hebr. 11,1). Therefore, where there are different goals of hope, different faith is the result. Unity of faith exists only where there is one hope.

Therefore, there is hardly a more promising method for the enemy, the great deceiver, to cause divisions among the believers than that of holding different goals of hope against them. They then try to realize them in faith and soon diverge in all directions. They do not even realize that they are going wrong. They refer to scriptural passages without noticing that the promises presented there go to completely different addresses.

He is the great Diabolos, the intermediary, who works with the Scriptures as an angel of light, as in the temptation in the wilderness, where he also held up passages of Scripture to the Lord. But the Lord was not deceived. He knew that those scriptural passages would be fulfilled in glory at His second coming. At His first coming, He was not supposed to and did not want to rule, but to serve and lay down His life for many. That is why He also held out to the tempter the passages that refer to His first coming.

As long as the congregation of the present time does not realize that its goal is not to bring about the conditions promised for the Millennial Kingdom, but to await the returning Christ (after whose return those promises will also be fulfilled), the various groups and circles are still far from unity of faith and knowledge.

The Lord in His faithfulness has ways and means to direct the expectation of the true believers in Christ in this, too, in spite of all external decay of human systems. The more the pre-final time approaches the actual end of this age, the less will be all mass and power activities of the believers on earth. And this is good! For this education will direct their hearts to place all their hope only in the returning Christ. This will bring about a unity from within that cannot be achieved by human beings (even with the very best will of those involved).

Just observe how people of the most diverse professions, ages, classes and estates are brought into a single expectation when some outstanding statesman announces his visit. There they stream from offices and workshops and factories, from houses and homes, and stand hour after hour to see the expected one. Without the use of force, the most diverse spirits come together in harmony and look "with neck stretched out" in the direction from which the person in question is to come¹.

The same expression is used in the Scriptures for the eager waiting of the creation, which waits with its neck stretched out for the revelation of the sons of God. And these wait just as longingly for their head, for the returning Christ. He is the content and goal of their hope and expectation. Whoever does not yet recognize this one hope of the calling that was given to the body church, is also not able to walk according to this calling (Eph. 4:4; see also verses 1-6). He will always try to realize lesser hopes of other times. However, this does not correspond to the dignity and height and glory of the calling with which we are called (Eph. 1, 18). Whoever acts in this way affirms, without knowing it, earthly conditions and confuses them with the spiritual goods of hope and blessings given to us. But whoever recognizes that the body church already now enjoys in faith the final yield of the eons, which will be granted to the waiting creation only after the revelation of the sons of God and after the expiration of the times of judgment and the times of restoration of all things, worships the Father of glory and expects the restoration of all that has been destroyed and scattered only through the returning Christ. This frees us from false hopes and, in anticipation of what is to come, allows us, in accordance with this one hope of our vocation, to also complete with dignity the path that the Lord in His faithfulness has marked out for us.

The practical implications of this realization are tremendous. Looking at the goal, one experiences the existing community with all those who have the same hope. This orients the really existing unity purposefully, as it is fundamentally

conditioned by the one act of redemption on Golgotha. The same reason and beginning of life from God and also the same goal: the returning Christ.

In view of such God's deed, on which we all stand, and in view of this God's goal, toward which we all look and toward which we walk, who would make unity dependent on human institutions, historical events, confessions that have become, and all kinds of forms and formulas and major and minor pieces? - —

The practical presentation of unity is possible only where one holds the one hope of vocation: Christ as a person, not any one thing. There is only one body to which we are called, the body of Christ; and there is only one Spirit who has called us to this body. Therefore the apostle says, "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye also were called in one hope of your calling." It is through the unity of hope that the unity of the body is possible in the first place. The hope of all hopes is that the mortal may and will one day share in the immortality of God. In Christ this hope is confirmed and fulfilled. Before the resurrection of Christ Jesus this possibility did not exist. That is why there is a living hope only since that time (1 Peter 1:3). The redemption of the promises and the visible realization of this hope takes place through the returning Christ. That is where all those who truly hope look to.

Whoever, therefore, wants the unity of faith and of the faithful, let him proclaim the one, great, living hope: "The Lord is coming again!" With this sermon, he does more for unity than with so many well-intentioned attempts to achieve a certain coordination of the confessions from the outside through conferences and synods.

Hope people are waiting people. And waiting people who expect everything from the coming Lord are resolved people. And resolved people do not resist unity, but keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. And this is true church, the one, holy, universal, - the communion of saints.

Of the essence of hope 88.doc88

Of the essence of hope

By Karl Geyer (continued)

a) Hope is the anchor of the soul

It is a firm and secure anchor (Hebr. 6, 17. 18). Without this anchor we would drift restlessly on the waves of doubt, and our torn soul would resemble the

wildly whipped up sea. This is what happens to people without God and without hope (Jude 12, 13; 2. Peter 2, 17; Jam. 1, 6; Hebr. 13, 9). In a similar danger as the doubters are also the underage (Eph.4,14).

The soul of the believer, that is, the very part of his being that tires so easily, is anchored in the Holy of Holies by hope. This gives the weary soul the sure and firm hold that keeps it from slipping away. Hope gives life a meaning, a future value, an eternal content. These higher values make the small seem really small, so that it can no longer have its soul-shaking effect when we experience disappointments in this world. We are united with Christ in the power of an indissoluble life, and in Him and through Him with the Father. And Christ, our life, is with the Father. We are hidden with Him in God (Co1. 3, 3). That is how securely we are anchored in the Son and in the Father! Who could tear us away?

- Who is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord?
- No one! Neither the present nor the future! - And this hidden life will be revealed once with Christ in glory. But until then it is hidden with Him in the Father. Whoever wanted to destroy our hope would first have to go up into that inaccessible light, where no one can go, and would have to take the Son out of the Father's heart and us out of the Son's heart. Only then would there be no more hope for us!

We are hidden in the Holy of Holies! Our life is hidden with Christ in God! Christ, the content of our hope, is with the Father! Who can take Him away from there?

- No one! Therefore, no one can rob or destroy our hope. So firm is the anchor rope by which we are connected with God and thus with the divine nature, immortality. The indissoluble life of the Father, which is also in the Son, unites us with them forever. The created cannot touch the uncreated, the mortal cannot dissolve the immortal, the perishable cannot destroy the imperishable! We have a living hope. As long as Christ lives, our hope lives and exists. And Christ lives forever!

The anchor reaches behind the curtain, into the invisible world, where the lasting things are, ready to be revealed. It connects with that which is not yet revealed.

b) Hope is the essential connection with what is to come, with what remains-
the (Romans8:24,25)

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The visible is not the object of the believer's hope. This connection with the future extends first to the future of the Lord Himself; but then also to everything connected with His future: the rapture of the saints, the resurrection of the dead, eternal life, future glory, the redemption of the inheritance, the enjoyment of all blessings, equality with the Christ, the perfection of the Father, participation in the performance of all the promises of God, and the accomplishment of all the future tasks of the Christ.

Immeasurably rich is this hope, and it holds as many glories as the depths of the Godhead itself encompass. Should not such a richness of glory work itself out in our lives? - Could our mind remain untouched by this fullness of grace, which is resolved in our hope?

Looking to the returning Lord and sharing in all that the Father has given Him gives our inner life the God-ordained direction and shapes the believer's entire attitude as the most prominent trait that fundamentally distinguishes him from all people of this world. The believer is "in the world, but not of the world", and his mind is not directed towards it.

(To be continued)

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Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

c) Hope is the inner attitude and orientation towards the coming and the coming.

Nothing creative can satisfy the soul and spirit in the long run. By grasping the hope that lies before us, we receive the strong consolation that gives us strength to persevere and overcome. Our longing is for the coming Christ. We distance ourselves more and more clearly from all the things that could obscure our view of Him. His goal is our goal. What He loves, we also love, and His plan is our will. We know that He will bring us the satisfaction of all longing, and we want Him also to find us at His coming in the practical condition He desires to find in us. He will not disappoint our expectation, and therefore His expectation shall not be disappointed.

In this way, hope changes our whole course of life and makes us joyful people for the future, who can therefore already fulfill their present duties much more easily and faithfully, because they do this not in view of people and circumstances, but in view of the returning Lord, with whom one day all the activities will also find their full reward, for which we were denied any

recognition here, yes, which perhaps no one experienced at all or for which we were even reviled.

The knowledge of the Coming One gives us a joyful outlook into the future. The faithful affirmation of the Coming One is the victory that overcomes the world, and the hopeful inner orientation toward the Coming One is the constantly working means of bringing His character traits to fruition in us. "But we all,

beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, are changed in the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18). "Therefore we do not become discouraged" (2Co 4:1). "Therefore we do not grow weary, but though our outward man decays, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.... Looking not at what is seen, but at what is not seen" (2Co 4:16-18). Looking at what is coming makes us see more and more clearly the difference that exists between the imperfection of everything creaturely and the perfection of the Creator. Our spirit longs for perfection. The present state of things is not enough for him. The world with its pleasure cannot satisfy us in the long run. It can only give us temporal pleasure. What satisfies the deepest desire of the spirit for eternity is still the goal and object of our hope today.

d) Hope is the longing for the perfect

Everything that the present creation grants has no continuance in itself. Every creature is subject to mortality, and the whole universe is under the law of transitoriness. All creaturely being and being and

Doing lacks the permanent, the lasting. But this is precisely a sign of the

Imperfection. The perfect, God, has permanence in Himself, and the perfect, as an expression of His being, is imperishable. But the perfect has not yet come. In longing hope we look out for it and await it with holy fervor of spirit and soul. Our expectation rests on the joyful certainty that there is a perfect One who is able to give perfection and who will bring this perfection at His return to all those who are already perfected in faith in Him (Co1. 2, 9. 10). We can hope for this grace completely (1.Petrl,13).

e) Hope is desire for the reception of the full grace

The grace is not exhausted in the fact that we received forgiveness of our sins. Even all the gifts of grace in the renewed life of believers are only a weak indication of what is to come. Yes, even the grace offered to us at His revelation is not the complete outpouring of what is present in God's fullness itself as the

abundant riches of His grace. All the ages to come are needed for the outpouring of this grace (Eph 2:7). The glory of this grace is to be praised befittingly in all the eons. As a vessel of its revelation and display, God has chosen and called the body church. Should not the desire of the body members coincide with His? - Should they not expect the grace He wants to make known? - —

The expectation of this outpouring of grace fills the hearts of the faithful with great happiness. The Lord already brings all the grace with Him at His coming, which satisfies any lack in them and makes them appear equal to Him. With this, however, the full stream of the fullness of grace and the glory of grace only begins to flow. It flows ever wider and deeper through all the coming ages. The beginning of this revelation of the exuberant wealth is the personal return of the Lord.

Now, when a believer looks out for this goal, only deep and holy anticipation and high bliss can fill his heart. And this is another trait of hope.

f) Hope is the blissful expectation of the appearance of the
God and Christ Glory

In the midst of all the weakness and frailty that we constantly discover in ourselves and around us, what could be more joyful for us than to look into the glory and the blessed certainty that it is our future part forever? - How does this view lift the bowed spirit, which after all coming short and unworthy of man now sees the God-ordained goal of purest and highest human dignity! For with the appearance of God's and Christ's glory, our state of vocation and our future being will also be revealed. We will be as He is! Yes, we will be like Him! Adoring expectation! Blissful hope! Praise be to the God of hope!

He who does not learn to worship above such hope of glory, will never learn it on earth! - But the man of hope goes in the spirit behind the curtain, where the anchor of the soul has found eternity ground, which holds him firmly and safely: Christ himself, whom God has laid as the foundation for everything. He sits down at his feet and worships in silent admiration and high bliss. There the spirit rests in holy bliss, and the searching soul also finds home and rest there. Here below, the spirit has no abiding place, and the soul finds no resting place. What it longs for dwells above in the light. "Soul, if you want to find this, do not seek it with any creature!

Leave what is earthly behind,

Swing over nature,

Where God and mankind are united in one,

Where all perfect fullness appears."

There is the resting place for the believer. Therein he sends his heart, as the ancients did who witnessed in these things (Heb 11:10; 11:2; Jn 8:56; Rev 1:10; Jude 14; Co1:3:1-4 and many more).

g) Hope is the dwelling of the Spirit in the sanctuary of God.

That is where he is at home. There is his home. From there he went out (Ga1. 4,26- 31). That is where his heart longs to be. In the sanctuary of God he must be, even if his neighbors do not understand this. This is what happened to the head (Luke 2:49), and this is what happens to us. For we must be made like Him in everything, and as it happened to Him in the world, so also to us. Nowhere does our spirit find true rest and complete peace at a time when waters from above and waters from below still cover the earth, as at the time of the flood (Genesis 8:6- 12). (For the lower waters compare Rev. 17, 15; for the upper waters compare 1. Eph. 6, 12 etc. See also Gen. 1, 6-8 and Hebr. 10, 19. 20.) May a meadow that feeds on carrion feel at home in a field of corpses, as did the raven that flew back and forth over the waters and corpses, - a child of peace does not feel at home there and longs for home (Psalm 73, 17. 23-26). As long as the wanderer stays in the foreign land, homesickness fills his heart until he has come home forever.

h) Hope is the holy homesickness for the unshakable and the imperishable.

The one who is reborn from incorruptible seed seeks species-appropriate satisfaction in the incorruptible. The new man does not feel wretched in the perishable being. His citizenship is in the heavens, from where he also expects the Lord Jesus Christ, so that He, through His effective power, transforms our lowly body into conformity with His glorious body (Phi1. 3, 20.21).

In this body of lowliness we feel so rightly the gulf between the power of the spirit and the weakness of the flesh. In high flight the spirit strives towards the light, but the lead weight of the earthbound body pulls it down. Powerfully buoyant longing for light and paralyzing earthly heaviness struggle with each other in the believer and fill his heart with holy homesickness for that time when he, freed from the shocks of the transient, may freely and powerfully and unshakably walk the high road of life in the light.

The eternal spirit finds no satisfaction in the temporal. Already here in the time of our earthly change he needs eternal goods to fulfill his longing.

After them he looks.

i) Hope is the longing of the spirit for eternity in the midst of time

In an unstoppable river, time is flowing rapidly. Whoever has no place of refuge is swept along by the current and drifts unrestrained toward the abyss. But just as in the midst of the Rhine Falls a rock rises up on which the wanderer rests securely when the waves crash thunderously into the depths all around, so the person of hope is placed from the waves of doubt on the rock of faith and rests in the midst of the all-devouring death current on the eternal rock foundation. The foundation is Christ (1 Cor. 3:11).

There is peace on the rock. The restlessness and haste of the thundering waves has no influence on the peace of the rock. In the middle of the stream a firm point! In the rushing and raging gear a haven of peace!

There are others resting on this rock. They all enjoy the eternal word and feed on values that are indestructible. The fellowship of the saints, in the midst of whom is the Lord Himself, is the most delicious deposit on the lasting bliss of the world to come. They enjoy His love, which is of God and therefore timeless and imperishable like Himself. His peace is in them, a peace that the world cannot give and cannot take away. And every spiritual fruit is a proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

These heavenly realities, which faith already enjoys in the present, strengthen and increase the longing and desire for eternal goods, which are not subject to the barriers of space and time. Our heart is occupied with these imperishable values (2 Cor. 4:18). They are a delicious treasure for us, and where our treasure is, there our heart is also. Yes, we carry this precious treasure in the earthen vessel of our body in the midst of the perishable world and walk through time as bearers of heavenly goods.

But the space is narrow, and the longing of the spirit goes into the distance. Over there the shore beckons, and beyond it the land of promise spreads out with the rich abundance of true life. Should not the longing break out in the heart for the all-filling fruitfulness of the shining meadows that greet us? - —

j) Hope is seeking and longing for the one who is above and resting and abiding in him in the spirit.

Above, with the Father, is the Christ, our life. From Him we receive already here in time the influxes of the abiding, the powers of the upper world. Our desire is for Him and His fullness. Our spirit no longer looks around searching to find an

object on earth that temporarily satisfies its longing. The One who possesses life from the immortality of God, the Son of Love, is above. This is enough to direct our longing to nothing less than that which satisfies man's deepest desire and gives him a purer nobility and a higher dignity than any human heart has ever dreamed of. What has never come into a man's heart and is not mentioned even in the boldest thoughts of the greatest philosophers, God has prepared for those who love Him. In Christ it is already our part¹. But it is still in Him and with Him hidden in God, until the time comes when it shall be revealed in glory. But the spirit searches all things, even the depths of the Godhead, namely the spirit that is of God. A created spirit does not even penetrate into the interior of nature. But the God-created spirit knows the things that are in God and are given to us by Him (1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 1:15-23; 2:6, 7 etc.).

In these things he walks. His walk and citizenship is in the heavens, there where the Christ is, who at His return will bring and reveal all the possessions of our citizenship. There the seeking spirit finds rest and abode. There he dwells in the light of the face of God and Christ and worships over the abundance of blessings and promises, all of which are "Yes and Amen" in the Christ. In the same measure as he takes hold of these promises, he himself becomes partaker of divine nature (2 Peter 1, 3. 4). The nature of God is formed in his inner man in a growing, continuous renewal (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Thus, already in the midst of time, eternity dwells in the renewed human being. The spirit-begotten sons of God are the God-appointed bearers of the future, because they carry the lasting in themselves in the midst of the transient and are thus the true life bearers of a dying world. In the inconspicuous garment of the last among men goes the highest calling and world-surpassing dignity (1. Cor. 1, 26 -31). Chr. Fr. Richter sings about this:

"The Christian's inner life shines,

Although they burned the sun from outside; What the king of heaven gave them,
Is known to none but themselves.

What no one senses, what no one touches,

Has graced their enlightened senses

And led them to the divine dignity."

So we are in Him above, and He is here in us. He in us, and we in Him! The Christ in us, the hope of glory! But everything is still hidden, still veiled, pressing to be revealed. As a pledge of inheritance we have the Spirit. He, too, groans with our spirit and longs for the final revelation of true life.

(To be continued.)

Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

k) Hope is the longing waiting of the whole creation for the revelation of the true life.

Creation is subject to the bondage of corruption, but in hope that it too will be set free from corruption and raised to the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:19-22). Only then will it have a share in true life. Today this is only revealed in the firstfruits, but even there it has not yet been revealed. Only one person carried it over this earth until now, Christ, and He let His most faithful see it only briefly, who were with Him on the holy mountain. Otherwise it was also veiled in Him by the curtain of the flesh (Hebr. 10,20). The revelation of Jesus Christ is still to come. From then on, it will only be seen what full humanity is, when God and man are revealed in complete unity in God-manhood.

God-manhood is perfect manhood, in which the highest will of God and the deepest human longing meet completely. The realization of such hope for the future is liberating and liberating, but also extremely obligatory. Therefore, this hope already now finds its practical effect in being prepared for good works, which reveal the inner nature of the believer and present it before men and angels (2.Tim.3,17). Once this true life is fully seen in the revelation of the sons of God, the goal of perfection that God has with every creature will be open before the whole creation. Every being can then perceive that God is able to transfer His own perfection and glory also to created beings and that He also wants and does this. Therefore, the longing hope of the creation becomes a good hope only when the true life is made known at the revelation of the sons of God. And that is why everything created longs for this moment, and also the sons of God and the Holy Spirit dwelling in them sigh for it.

As long as this revelation of true life has not yet taken place, there is a tension between the perishable and the imperishable. The creature suffers from it. But God suffers even more for the sake of the creature. Everything that concerns us first passes through His heart, and all world events, even the falling of a hair from the head or a sparrow from the roof, take place with His will. Without His will nothing happens. Thus, He also feels the tension between Himself and the world much deeper than an imperfect creature would ever be able to. But the creature

also suffers from it and longs for the tension to finally cease and the bliss of the God-worked relaxation to come.

l) Hope is the creature's longing for

Removal of the tension between the perishable and the imperishable The creature is under the law of perishability. It is set for the human being to die once. In the spirit he knows about the immortal and must nevertheless die himself. There is nothing more crushing for the pride of the self-confident creature than the realization of being transient. There is no use of running and running, - at the end of everything created stands the decay¹. What makes this realization so bitter for many is the knowledge that there is an immortal, and the further knowledge that they themselves have no part in it. The believer is a partaker of the divine nature. For this very reason he feels the tension between the perishable and the imperishable most clearly, because his spirit is life, because of righteousness, but his body is dead, because of sin. Shouldn't the longing awaken in him that the tension will be lifted one day and that everything will be led into the unity and perfection and fullness of the spiritual body of the God-man? -

As long as we are in the body, we have to suffer. In spirit, however, we feel the bliss of God's nature and the state of the coming ages, in which His grace will be poured out on us in goodness and everything will come to completion. Therefore, this moves our heart, and we look out for the time when the difference between suffering and bliss will finally be eliminated.

m) Hope is the expectation that the difference between suffering and bliss will be eliminated

We experience here again and again the humbling sensation of the fact that on the one hand we are already perfected in Christ, but that on the other hand the practical presentation does not correspond to this, but that our condition has deficiencies which do not do honor to the high state of our calling. Our faith looks to the Lord and is blissful in this beholding of His person and His fullness; our experience makes us aware that we are still walking in the body.

We must not deny both sides of our present existence. Only honest concession of the difference promotes in growth.

Who would not have lain worshipping before the Lord - as a believer - and in overflowing bliss praised His love, which comes to the end with everything? - And who would not have lain on his face and been deeply ashamed that he was

such a weak representative of the indwelling glory to angels and men, yes, that he perhaps offered them a pitiful picture of coming short? - —

This is not only the case for us, but for all the saints at all times, even for the apostle Paul, who was a man of the same emotions as we are. He, too, sighed in the tent house made with hands and longed to be clothed with the dwelling from heaven. He preferred to be at home from the body and to be at home with the Lord (2Co 5:1-9). This is what he hoped for.

n) Hope is the yearning of the spiritual man,

To be alien from the body and indigenous

To be with the Lord

The apostle would prefer not to be unclothed at all, but to be clothed over. This, after all, is what the believers will experience at the time of the

Rapture on earth. Who wouldn't want to be there? - —

Here, too, the deep longing sounds through: "...that mortal things may be swallowed up by life" (verse 4). For what we have now is a creaturely existence, but not true life.

The believer feels this constantly, because he carries life from God in an earthen vessel. As often as he looks at this vessel and remembers its precious contents, he ardently desires that the form of its presentation would also correspond to the value of the ineffable gift that has been bestowed upon him. "Christ in us!" Should this ark, this mercy-seat, always dwell under the tent-carpets of the earthly tabernacle, or should it not find its place in a glorious edifice of living stones forever, so that all flesh might come to it to receive salvation and life? - —

Rapture, Judgment Seat, Revelation of the Sons of God, Marriage of the Lamb, Millennial Kingdom, New Heaven and New Earth, - all these cannot come until the Lord Himself has come. But when He comes, His salvation comes with Him and fulfills all promises. Therefore, we look out for Him and for all the things that will then come with Him and through Him.

(To be continued.)

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Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

(continued)

t) Hope is the looking of faith to the goal - faith is the realization of what one hopes for.

By looking to the goal, faith gains the strength to persevere, and by realizing the good of hope through faith, it already becomes a firm spiritual possession for us.

Faith and hope are intimately interrelated. Without hope, faith would have no reason, no content and no goal¹. Without faith, hope would always remain an uncertain longing, the realization of which would lie in the unattainable distance. But in this way faith takes hold of the goods of hope and makes the treasures of the future world our inalienable inner possession, long before they become outwardly visible before all the world (Hebr. 11,1 Elbf. Übs.).

Thus, hope is persevering faith in view of the goal; but faith is hope realized in the spirit.

When I now look back at the preceding Part 7 of this work "On the Essence of Hope," it seems to me as if I had once gone around it in a circle. Whoever wanted to describe it properly would have to be able to describe the essence of the God of hope in its entirety as it is in truth. Then the world would not grasp the written books. And even that would not be enough. Because the essence of God cannot be described in its deepest content, but only represented. Only One was able to do that completely: the Son of Love. Whoever saw Him, saw the Father. Even in the flesh He was able to preserve the whole nobility of the divine being. Nothing clouded the purity of the representation, even if it was done in a way that allowed us to bear it. For the full glory of God no created being can bear without dying. For this, it must first be transformed into His image.

May the Lord grant it to us that we become whole people of hope, and bring to display before angels and men something of the essence of hope, though in all weakness, yet in purity and faithfulness!

(The series of articles on "The Nature of Hope" will be continued in the next issues with remarks on "The Properties of Hope" and "Types of Hope.")

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From the 'essence of hope

By Karl Geyer †

8. the properties of hope

a) A living hope

Nothing created has life in itself and from itself. Every creature receives its natural life from the fullness of life of Him who gives life and breath and everything (Acts 17:25). In Him we live and weave and are (Acts 17:28). He is the giver of the fullness of life.

Natural life is transient. At its end is death. It is set for man to die once. He who has no other life than the perishable one is already under the dominion of death during his lifetime. His spirit is not yet begotten to true life from God. The weakness of the creature is not able to reach the glory of God, and no created being can produce immortality from mortality. Thus, our life also once flowed away. The weakness of human nature prevented us from working perfection, divinity. Our deficiency revealed itself in all actions. In human terms, many things in our lives may be great and beautiful. In the light of God it is small. He who applies only human standards misses himself. The only true, absolute standard is God. In comparison to Him, everything created remains far behind. No one can reach this glory of God. We may want to, but we cannot accomplish the good, the perfect.

From this weakness of human nature comes a constant falling short of the divine norms, even of the minimum of what is laid down in the law. We transgress without wanting to, simply because of our natural weakness and deficiency. But to this is often added a deliberate transgression. In this way we add to the sin the transgression, the guilt.

By nature, we were all in this state and condition. We were dead to God, dead in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). There was no life in ourselves (Ioh. 6,53). The life is in Him, not in us (Joh. 1,4).

But there is a transition from death to life. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (Ioh. 3, 36; 5, 24).

The life that is in the Son is the same as in the Father (Joh. 5,26). The Father gave it to the Son so that He might give life to the world (Joh. 6, 33. 51). For the Father loves the world, and He does not want anyone to perish, but for all to come to life (Joh. 10,10; 1. Tim. 2,4). He is a savior of all people (not only a sustainer, as the Elberfelder translates wrong here) (I.Tim.4,10).

Life from God is uncreated life. That is why it is also imperishable. It has no beginning and no end. Its life is indissoluble like God Himself. The travails of death cannot hold it. Rather, it dissolves the travails of death and thus reveals that real life is stronger than

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death (Acts 2:24). It is, after all, the life of God Himself, and all His divine power is in it, the power of the One who makes the dead alive and calls the non-existent as if it were there (Rom. 4:17). This belongs to the essence of God and is inseparably connected with Him. Just as intrinsically, all this also belongs to the essence of the Son. He is the resurrection and the life (Joh. 11,25). Without this life mediator (1Ti 2:5) and this life from God no one can come to the Father (Joh 14:6), because in this perishable world no one is able to communicate the imperishable life of God than only the Son. All other beings are created and therefore do not carry immortal life in themselves and are therefore not able to communicate it to others.

When the Son had not yet come, the longing of many people from the nations of the earth also already went towards immortality (Rom. 2, 7-16). Without knowledge of the law, they were a law unto themselves, in that their thoughts excused or accused one another, and furthermore their consciences also testified. They showed the work of the law written in their hearts and sought honor and incorruption with perseverance. They will also attain these in that day when God will judge the world (Rom. 2:6, 7, 16). Until then they must wait. But then, when all see the Son, even those who pierced Him, then they will recognize the Mediator of immortality, and then the longing of all Gentiles (nations) will be satisfied (Hagg. 2, 7; Rom. 8,19-22; Rom. 2, 7 a and 14-16 and many more). The Gentile does not know God, but he seeks Him and worships Him without knowing Him. Paul testified this clearly to the Gentiles in Athens to whom he preached the gospel (Acts 17:22-51). The religions of all pagans are a searching and longing groping for God, whether they would like to feel and find Him, - mixed with much error, human invention, demonic inspiration and distortion. The answer to this question is given by God Himself by revealing Himself in the Son. Therefore, the Holy Scripture is not a book of religion, not a book of questions of religious people, but the book of answers to these questions, the book of God's revelation.

The pagans did not have this book. They had a great longing, but no certain expectation, no certain hope. Life had not yet appeared, and no divine promise formed the unshakable foundation of their hope.

Only since the Father sent the Son into the flesh has there been a clear, firm, definite and certain hope. It is indestructible. The Son victoriously overcame the power of death and paved a new and living way into the holy of holies (Hebr. 10,20). From then on there is a living hope (1Peter 1:3). The longing of the creature is satisfied. In Christ all are made alive (1Co 15:22).

(To be continued.)

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From the 'essence of hope

By Karl Geyer †

8. the properties of hope

a) A living hope

(continued)

Our hope is a living one. This does not only mean that we believers hope very much alive. Sometimes, however, this is not the case at all. No, He who is our hope lives in us and hopes for us and intercedes for us with the Father. And the Father, the God of hope, is Himself for us, and the Holy Spirit, who knows our deepest longing, intercedes for us with inexpressible groaning. And this very activity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is related to the hope of all creation, as Rom. 8:18-39 tells us. God Himself, the Living One, the Life-giver, hopes for His work, and the Son and the Holy Spirit hope with Him. The fullness of life hopes for us. It hoped for us even when there was no life in us, indeed, when we were not even born. From time immemorial, the fullness of the Godhead carried a living hope for us. Our hope was alive when we were not yet. How much more may we speak of a living hope now, since love has included us in hope by opening up to our faith the glorious good of hope (1 Pet 1:3).

Therefore, even if our own hope is only small, the content of our hope is always the same, namely Christ. And he lives in us and hopes for us and with us and does not let our hope die. Christ lives! Our hope lives! We are begotten again to a living hope, which always reveals its life-giving power to us and makes our spirit and soul joyful and strong.

It is inexpressibly great and glorious that the Father has seen to it that our hope does not rest in ourselves, but in the Son, and that it is not we who carry hope,

but that hope carries us. Our personal hope is only a more or less clear reflection of the hope of Him who hopes everything because He is love.

Christ himself, who dwells in us, hopes for us. This is the hope of glory. And this hope remains. It lives and multiplies without end. More and more, Christ unfolds the full scope of His own great, divine hope in us. Thus we grow in hope. The growth proves it to be a living hope, just as the growing fruit of the womb is a living hope for the mother, and just as after birth the child forms an ever greater hope for the parents. If we hoped for only one thing, our hope would be limited along with its scope. It could not continue to increase and grow. ¹but grows. Christ is the life. This Christ-life gains more and more form in us. With it, our hope also grows.

Therefore, we are never finished hoping and never come to the end of hope. Every new knowledge of Christ increases our hope. The glory of the fullness of Christ shines in us more and more; our joy becomes more and more complete until we are overflowing in hope (Rom. 15:13).

b) A blissful hope

(Titus2:13)

Since Christ rose victoriously from the dead, there has been a living hope. For the first time, as long as there are people on earth, one overcame death. All before Him had only died. He had died and risen again. Now it is evident that there is a way out of death. Christ is the way. He is the firstfruits from the dead. He has the key of death and the kingdom of the dead. He gives an open door, and no one closes it. Death has no more power over Him. Neither over those who are of the Christ. They have passed from death to life. Their life is hidden with Christ in God. Neither death nor life can separate them from the love of God. They share in His being and live even though they have died. Even though the body may be dead because of sin, the spirit is life because of righteousness. They are begotten and born of God and carry His life in them. They no longer live, but Christ lives in them. And He no longer dies. He lives, and with Him they live, and with Him also their hope lives.

The resurrection of Christ is the cause of our hope. Through this resurrection we are begotten again to a living hope. Christ, our Head, went to the Father. We, as His members, are united to Him in the power of an indissoluble life. Nothing can separate and separate us anymore, nothing present and nothing future. His life is in us, the life of the Risen One! Therefore we live in the spirit already now really and essentially, and the bodily death is no more loss but gain for us. Also the

body will not remain behind, but will be raised to incorruption by the resurrection, so that also this body of lowliness will become similar to His glory body.

Our spirit is resurrected, our body will be resurrected! (Co1. 3, 1-4; Eph. 2,6; Rom. 8, 9[b]-11; 1. Cor. 15,44.) This is what we hope for. The full sonship is still to come. It is not yet seen in us what we will be. As a pledge for the redemption of the full possession He has given us His Spirit. Now we expect the revelation of the sons of God together with the groaning creation and know that there the redemption of the body will take place, so that we will be revealed in glory with Him.

There is glory before us! All the glory of the Son shall be revealed to us in sonship. We will be as He is. Nothing is withheld from us of all God's fullness. Should not our renewed spirit rejoice even now? - Should we not praise and worship the Lord of glory? - Should not high bliss fill our hearts?

Yes, the same joy that fills the Father is also in us. "The mystery of godliness is great: God has been revealed in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3:16).

The bliss of God is also our part. Everything about which He is blissful is in fact developed in us in the same way as in the Son of Love, our Head. Also in our flesh God reveals Himself, justifies us in the spirit, presents us before angels and men, until we are finally taken up in glory. In this way, we experience in essence everything that "the Way" exemplified to us as a model for all those who follow Him.

Between His first coming in lowliness, the appearance of grace and life (the *epiphaneia tās charitos*), and the coming again and appearance in glory (the *epiphaneia tās doxās*), the sons' church is formed. Their way is according to the flesh a way of lowliness, poverty, suffering and sacrifice. Inwardly, however, it is a way of hidden glory, which is ready to be revealed and seen before the whole A11. Therefore, the members rejoice even in the sufferings and do not grow weary, because the joy set before them makes them consider the shame of the cross as nothing. The glimpse of the coming glory strengthens their faith, and the hope of the Lord's return, of His appearing in glory, fills them with high bliss, with inexpressible and glorious joy. He is coming! And when He comes, we will be with Him and will be as He is, yes, we will be like Him.

Blissful hope of the faithful! What other hope could there be in the whole world that could fill and gladden our hearts to the same degree?

(To be continued.)

God is not dead! Only He never dies in spite of all blasphemies!

Who once cried out dying on the curse wood,

Has soared

After the judgment into the eternal light, To fulfill God's saving will on all. A. H.

Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

8. the properties of hope (continued)

c) Good hope

"...our God and Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace..." (2 Thess. 2,16).

Unbelief has only temporal hopes. Its pitiful poverty is revealed at the graves. Parting is difficult in itself, but without hope it is unspeakably bitter and meaningless.

But believers, brethren, who have insight into the will of God, hold His sworn promises in their hands and carry the pledge of the Spirit in their hearts, are not hopelessly sorrowful (1 Thess. 4:13). They feel the pain of parting, but without bitterness. God Himself has given them eternal comfort and good hope.

Ultimately, good is only that which comes from God Himself. Everything else is transient and therefore imperfect. Sin can also grant pleasures, but only temporal ones (Hebr. 11,25). Even the noblest pleasure that people can have here is temporal and never goes beyond the limits of the creaturely in its scope and content. But God gives lasting good, perfect things (Jam. 1, 17; Joh. 4,10; 2. Cor. 9,15 and others). He has given us His Holy Spirit and through Him has poured out His love into our hearts. This Spirit is the Comforter, the Paraclete. Where He is, there is eternal comfort. There is also good hope, for His power fills us with overflowing hope (Rom. 15:13). He has poured out the love of God Himself into our hearts, and this love believes everything and hopes everything.

There is only one way to obtain eternal comfort and good hope; that is for God to give us His Spirit. Included in the gift of the Spirit is everything that God has to give. He searches all the depths of the Godhead and communicates to us what is in God (1Co 2:10). He takes from the fullness of life of the Christ and gives it to us (Jn 16:13-15). He proclaims what is coming and thereby directs our spirit to the great hope that lies ahead of us, which is exceedingly great and glorious. The Spirit leads us into it. Thus we become abundant in hope and are filled with the consolation that lies in this imperishable possession that is ours.

Between those two passages in which God speaks of the hopelessness of the

The mystery of the Lord, which speaks of the good hope of the unbelievers and the good hope of the believers (1Th 4:13 and 2Th 2:16), describes the blessed expectation of the church, the coming of the Lord. By a special word of the Lord, the mystery was made known to Paul, so that the brethren would not be ignorant of the future of those who have fallen asleep, and of the transformation of the living, which will take place at the

Rapture are still on earth. The Lord Himself comes to take His body home and unite the members with Himself. The kingdom church will be gathered once by angels (Matth. 24,31; 13,30.39-41.49).

The body church is picked up by the Lord Himself. The Head draws His members to Himself in the air and unites with them there. This is a mighty triumph over the prince who rules in the air, Satan, who with all his powers cannot hinder this union. Then the Head presents His church to Himself before His judgment seat (bäma Christi). There, death and life are no longer judged, because he who has passed from death to life does not come into judgment. At the judgment seat, judgment is made. The reward of faithfulness is distributed, by which believers differ, as star differs from star in glory, while their glory as members of the body is the same. As the members of a human body are made of the same flesh and blood, thus possessing the same glory, so the glory bestowed by grace on the members of Christ's body is the same. And just as the fingers of a hand can be distinguished from one another by rings and ornaments, so also the members of the body will one day bear on them the reward of faithfulness as a visible sign of their different walk on earth. In this they are different, as star is different from star in glory. (Vg1. 1 Cor. 3, 11-15; 9,24-27; 2 Cor. 5,9.10.) After everything is ordered before the face of Christ, He presents the church to His God and Father before the judgment seat of God (the bäma theou), without spot, without blemish, without wrinkle or the something. In pure beauty and radiant splendor He presents us to the Father.

And then He reveals Himself with us before the world, so that on that day (His honorable day, the day of the Lord) He may be glorified in all His saints and admired in all those who have believed (2 Thess. 1, 10). On that day the world will have tribulation, but we will have rest (2 Thess. 1:6, 7). That is why even the unbelievers secretly and often unconsciously fear the coming of that day. In them, as in the apostates, is a fearful expectation of judgment. But we expect the blessed hope of the appearance of His glory and our revelation with Him in glory (Co1. 3,4).

With these words we are to encourage one another (1 Thess. 4:18; 5:11). But it is also very delicious what this passage tells us. We are sons of light and sons of the day. This obligates us to behave as such. We are not to sleep like the rest, but to be awake and sober.

But if sleep should overtake us, because we are weak, we will not be left behind, but will live together with Him (1 Thess. 5,10; vg1. 5,6-11).

It is true that sleeping will be reflected in the reward of faithfulness, but we will not lose our position of grace as members of His body.

With such words one can encourage weary hearts. We want to do the same with ourselves every day (Hebr. 3,13). Likewise also with those who change, and all the more so as we see the day of the Lord approaching (Heb. 10:25).

Praise be to the God of hope, who has given us eternal comfort and good hope!

d) Better hope

"For there is an abolition of the former commandment, because of its weakness and uselessness (for the law brought nothing to completion), and the introduction of a better hope, by which we draw near to God" (Heb. 7:18, 19).

When the nations did not yet have direct promises from God, Israel was the promise-bearer. There are promises for the nations (or about the nations) already in the Old Testament, but they were not addressed to the nations themselves. They did not know anything about the fact that God had also spoken about them and had promised glorious things for them. The promises were unknown to them, they were strangers, so that the Scriptures testify that the nations were strangers concerning the covenants and the promise (Eph. 2:11-13 and others).

The promises God had made to Israel were earthly in nature. Their fulfillment was linked to the keeping of the law. As long as they kept it, they would prosper

in the land He had given them. But if they did not keep it, they would be cursed and judged.

Israel was not able to keep the law. Terrible judgments fell upon the stiff-necked and faithless people. The prophets poignantly describe the failure of the people, which then reached its low point with the crucifixion of the Messiah. The murder of the true promise bearer (Ga1. 3,16) could only happen because Israel had turned away from God and did devil worship (Joh. 8,44). The consequences of such an attitude were the judgment of hardening and the setting aside of Israel.

But already the prophets recognized that on this way the fulfillment of the promises was never possible. God himself had to give the fulfillment in the Son on the way of grace.

The new way came. His name is Christ. In Him, the Father gave us His own righteousness. Nothing more is expected or demanded of man. God Himself did what was impossible for the law (Rom. 8, 3). Now there is no more uncertainty whether anyone will ever reach the goal. The Son of Man has accomplished the work. Nothing remains to be done about this work. The Father has acknowledged the work as Godly by raising the Lord from the dead. Now the Christ is up there with the Father as a justified man. In Him we are also transferred to the heavenly realm. Our hope is clear and firm and certain. The anxious fear has disappeared. The bondage is over. The Spirit of sonship dwells in us and cries, "Abba! Dear Father!" Blissful hope fills us as we look forward to the appearance of His glory. We no longer have to want to hope, but hope itself lives in us and sustains and strengthens and fortifies our soul so that it does not grow weary. Is this hope not better than the hope of Israel under the Law?

The attempts of the flesh to justify itself on the basis of the law have been replaced by the act of God, who justifies us by grace for free and communicates His own righteousness to us. The possession of the Spirit is the seal of proof of this.

Threefold is the contrast between the uncertain hope of the law covenant and the certain hope of the gospel. Those human priests performed their ministry according to the law of a carnal commandment. Christ accomplished His work in the power of an indissoluble life (Hebr. 7,16). There the powerless law - here the power of the risen one; there the carnal transitoriness - here the indissoluble life of God; there the demanding commandment - here the fulfilling life.

God Himself abolished what, because of its weakness and uselessness, could not bring fulfillment and, by continuing to exist, would only have delayed the

introduction of a better hope. The time was fulfilled, God sent His Son. He fulfilled the demands of the law and thus put an end to its effectiveness and validity. Henceforth there is a new way to God, a better hope: Christ in us, the hope of glory. (To be continued.)

Arthur Keith, in the preface to the 1928 edition of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, wrote: "Evolution is unproven and unprovable. We believe in it because the only alternative would be a special creation which we cannot imagine."

Forster-Marston: *Yes-but ... Reasonable Answers to Honest Questions* (Brockhaus/Franz 1973).

Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

9. types of hope

a) The hope of. Justice

"For through the Spirit we expect by faith the hope of righteousness." (Ga1. 5, 5.)

The life of Jesus Christ on earth was a life of perfect righteousness and holiness. No blemish ever marred His purity, and no one could accuse Him of sin.

God acknowledged the perfect righteousness of Christ and, as proof of that acknowledgment, raised Him from the dead and seated Him glorified at His right hand.

Glory is the result of this righteousness, the fruit of the perfect life of Jesus Christ, the reward for His accomplished work, the compensation for the complete humiliation, the result of a godly walk in faith and perseverance and love. The exaltation to the right hand of the Father, the admission into the incomparable glory are the crowning of His blameless life and the divine seal on His righteous wall¹.

The perfect righteousness of Christ challenged the righteousness of God, and this righteousness corresponded to raising up and glorifying the Son.

As long as the Son walked on earth, the glory was still an object of hope for Him. But it was a firm, sure, certain hope. Because of His righteousness, it was fully justified, for God had already promised in the law, "He that doeth these things shall live thereby." And Christ was the only one who had done them.

Therefore, when His course was nearing its end, He could say to the Father: "I have glorified You on earth; I have accomplished the work which You gave Me to do. And now, Father, glorify Thou Me with Thyself with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:4, 5).

Since His ascension, glory is no longer a hope that lies ahead of Him. The hope that He was allowed to cherish because of His righteousness has been fulfilled to Him, and He already enjoys the yield of His perfect work. He is with the Father and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high above all that may be called powers, forces, authorities and dominions. . For us, however, the glory is still the object of hope. It is true that the Spirit of glory is already resting on us (1 Peter 4:13), as a kind of money and pledge for the redemption of the promised inheritance. But we will only come into full possession and enjoyment at the revelation of the Sonship, the redemption of the body (Rom. 8, 23; Phi1. 3, 21).

Without a godly righteousness, we should not have such hope. Faith possesses the same righteousness as the firstborn of the brethren. Since the believer does not find in himself the righteousness that is valid before God and has recognized that God can only recognize a righteousness that corresponds to Himself, he takes hold of the righteousness of God Himself, which the Father in the Son offers us.

God has sent down His own righteousness. Whoever grasps it is righteous in the righteousness of God. God acknowledges him as He acknowledged the Son of love. Thus, the same glory is also ours as the yield of that righteousness.

In the Spirit we possess it, and by faith we await the manifestation of that glory, the hope of righteousness, our hope. "We wait by virtue of the Spirit through faith for the hope of righteousness." (Translation by Wiese.)

b) The hope of glory

"Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Co1. 1, 27). When the Lord walked on earth in the flesh, He lived with His disciples and walked beside them. However, this coexistence was not an expression of complete communion and did not represent the perfect unity and essential communion that His heart longed for. The flesh formed the obstacle. They could not be in each other.

That is why He also told His disciples that it would be good if He went away from them (Joh. 16, 7). After the resurrection and the ascension to the Father He wanted to come again with the Father and dwell in them (Joh. 14, 1-31; 16, 12-16). Then the unity of the spirit (in the spirit) should be completed. They were to

be as completely one with Him and with each other as He was with the Father (Job. 17, 20-23).

This is what the spirit was supposed to do. He could dwell in them. He is a spirit of glory and should already make them participate in the nature of God Himself (1. Petr. 4,14; 2. Petr. 1, 3.4).

God's essence is spirit and love. He alone possesses immortality. That is glory. Nothing clouds His nature. With Him there is no shadow, nor change of light. Nothing transient is in Him. Everything is light and shines in luminous clarity.

We will one day share in this glory to the fullest extent. We may boast of this hope (Rom. 5, 2). We will be perfect according to the word of the Lord, as the Father in heaven is perfect, and be like Him.

Our body of lowliness cannot contain the divine fullness of glory. It is the object of our hope and shall be beheld in us at the revelation of the full Sonship, when the Lord will be glorified in all His saints on that day and admired in all those who have believed (2 Thess. 1:10; Rom. 8:18-23).

Because we cannot yet bear the fullness of glory, He dwells in us in grace, yet in truth, in being, just as at His first coming the glory of the Father was not beheld unveiled, but wrapped in the lowliness of a body similar to ours (John 1:14). Without this covering, we would not have been able to bear the glory of God. Creatures in their created bodies are not able to behold the light power and spirit and fire glory of the incorruptible God without being consumed. Therefore, all must first be transformed before He Himself can dwell among them unveiled.

But this mighty hope of God's glory is so firm and sure and certain for us because the Lord in His faithfulness has given us a deposit and a pledge. The Spirit of God, the Spirit of promise, the Spirit of glory rests upon us. The love of God, His very essence, is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. We are partakers of the divine nature. Christ dwells in us. His Spirit has become begettingly one with our spirit. The essence of God is actually present in us. We have consubstantial communion with the Father and the Son. The Father dwells with the Son in us. We have the Son and the Father and are in true unity with Them and with each other. One Spirit dwells in the Father and the Son and in all those who have received Him. God is present in us. His Spirit and His love are? poured out in our hearts. Christ, the radiant image of His glory, the Son of love, dwells in us. This is life! This is glory!

Is it not touching and shattering and at the same time beyond all concepts sublime and glorious that we now already have an essential share in the lasting?

- It is not an uncertain hope of what is to come, but a possession of a new beginning. The Christ Himself guarantees through His presence in us the fact that we can no longer be forced out of this love connection and community of beings by anything until the full glory is revealed and fully seen (Rom. 8, 35- 39).

Such a kind of hope alone corresponds to the nature of the glorious Savior God. No lesser kind of hope would be worthy of Him. Thus, He has given us not only a hope of future glory, but a hope that even now bears all the characteristics of glory in itself and germinates the whole of hope. This is the hope of glory.

Through such hope it is revealed how exceedingly glorious is the love of God, who withholds nothing, and how faithful God is, who gives the creature such guarantees and securities for faith. So great is the glory of our hope, - 50 glorious is hope itself!

And yet this is only one side of the hope of glory. The other side is no less precious.

Man was originally created in the image of God. "God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." - "And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him" (Genesis 1, 26. 27). This one man He created male-female. Both principles (original bases of being) were joined together in one body and formed the full human being. This man was very good, and as long as he walked in this unity in the garden, we hear nothing of temptation and defeat, but of dominion over all beasts and of the ability to understand the creature and to call it by name, i.e. to give it names that express its essence.

In this state of unity of the generations in one body we see the image of God from that time before the foundation of the world, when He was still all in one and the Son still rested in the bosom of the Father. If the Son had never emerged from within the Father, the Father would have remained alone forever, for the Son is the beginning of all God's ways, the firstborn of all creation. The deepest longing of love, its desire for communion and its will to commune, would never have been satisfied.

What moved the Father Himself before the time of the world, He represents in His image, man: "It is not good that man (man) should be a l e i n." God lets a deep sleep fall on man and takes the female half out of man.

Now both parts of being are no longer in each other, but next to each other.

What weakening this meant, we see from the next chapter¹. This no longer speaks of dominion, but of defeat. It begins with the words: "And the serpent

was more cunning...", and it closes with the sentence: "And the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden...; and He drove the man out...".

Between these verses we are told about the tragedy of temptation, sin and man's escape from God, God's judgment, His way of correction, the work, and the promise of the serpent who shall bring man back into the presence of God and after the abolition of sin (Hebr. 9:26) shall make the whole earth a paradise¹.

For the principles placed side by side since the division, the divine order determined that they should now be placed among themselves. So it became, and so it remained during all the times of ignorance, when all mankind was still in the state of immaturity.

Then came the son. In Him, the separation was eliminated. Not yet on the outside. There the difference of the sexes still exists and will be eliminated only by death and resurrection. (In the resurrection they will not be free, nor will they allow themselves to be free, because fully human beings no longer need each other). In Christo the man finds his female complement and the woman her male one. This also belongs to the "all-in-all-ness". Then in everyone there is fullness, so that nowhere a feeling of being left behind can arise. Every cause for envy and desire is then eliminated. No desire can any longer provoke to sin. Sin is then completely abolished, not only in its consequences, but also in its essence and causes. For the cause of sin is, after all, the relativity of things, and this is no longer present when everything has been brought into fullness. There is no more inferiority, no more differences and no more tensions. Everything is in the relaxation of being completely fulfilled. Henceforth, there is only the will of love appropriate to the state of perfection, to increase life without end.

As long as the church remains on earth, this state has not yet been reached, but only realized in the spirit. In Christ, therefore, there is no longer male or female. They are one in Christ. But as long as we are not yet transformed, the outward difference of the sexes still remains. In the church on earth there are still men and women, in Christo there are not. Our new humanity is of divine nature and therefore perfect. The Christ-organism of the body church is not only male, but male-female, as it was the image of God in the beginning (Eph. 5, 30-32), because in God Himself both principles are present, so that the Father could beget the Son from His womb.

Thus, in Christ, we go back the way we went astray since Adam. Under the law, not only man and woman, but also heavenly and earthly, divine and human, stood side by side. In the kingdom they stand side by side, as Christ in the flesh walked beside the disciples. In the organism of the body church, the heavenly

and the earthly are reconciled in one body. God and humanity are united in one. The way to fullness and perfection is opened. We are in each other. The unity of the spirit is already there. "He who adheres to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (1 Cor. 6:17). But not only with Him, but also with one another. "He baptized them all into one body by one Spirit" (1Co 12:12, 13). This is the unity of the Spirit. It is essential with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ and also essential among the members of the body. The deepest longing of love is that everything that has been separated should be united again, because love is the will for community. Therefore the son came into the flesh and carried heavenly and earthly in one body, divine and human. In one body He reconciled both with each other and reconciled the universe, that which is in the heavens and that which is on earth, through the offering of His body (Co1. 1, 20). That is why the bliss of God is so great, because He could be seen in the flesh by angels and men. Therefore the bearer of this revelation of God in the flesh, the Christ, was taken up into glory (I.Tim. 3,16; Phi1. 2,11).

But all the glory above stands and looks down on us, because now in the sons likewise heavenly and earthly, divine and human dwell together. And just as it was said of the Son of Love, the firstborn of the brethren, "Seen by the angels," so also in the afterborn the glory of God in the flesh is displayed before the whole cosmos, before angels and men, before principalities and powers in the heavens (1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10).

When this organism has passed through death and resurrection and is revealed before creation, which waits for this event with its neck stretched out (Rom. 8, 19 literally), then it is clear before all eyes that where God and mankind are united in one, where His spirit begat the human spirit into the divine life, death has no more power. The spirit is life! Death rules only over created things, not over divinely begotten things.

Christ dwells in us! Nothing can separate us from Him anymore! He is our life, - not Adam!

Therefore, everything that longs for the unification of the separated in the world looks to the Christ-organism. The body church, which has the firstfruits of the spirit, is the bearer of hope for the All. If it is possible to bring the life of God, the divine nature of which they are partakers, to fruition in the members of the body, then the way is open for the whole universe. God can beget it into life. Therefore, should not all those who long for the goal of perfection look to the Sons' Church? - —

Yes, they look down on her and on the Christ dwelling in her! The Christ of glory is in us! The Father of glory looks down unceasingly on the one who is in us. All the glories in heaven (who are themselves called glories by the Scriptures) look down upon the Glory Bearer, the Christ.

Your entire perfection hope depends on how far He comes with us.

So all the glory above hopes in the Christ in us!

Truly, this is a hope worthy of all: Christ in us,
the hope of glory! (To be continued.)

Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

9. types of hope

c) The hope of bliss

"But we who are of the day, let us be sober, clothed with the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet with the hope of the Blessedness." (1 Thess. 5:8.)

The salvation of the believer includes his whole person, his whole life and extends into the past, the present and the future. It is a rescue from the kingdom of darkness (Egypt), a rescue through the desert and a rescue across the river of death (Jordan) into the land of promise.

In faith, the believer went out and confidently placed his entire past in the hands of the Lord, his Savior.

In love he walks in his present life and makes faith effective through love.

He looks out in hope for the coming Savior and awaits His appearance with perseverance.

Faith governs our own life. We are justified by faith.

Love regulates our relations with the brothers and sanctifies communion with them.

Hope directs our gaze to the Lord Himself and inwardly focuses us on His coming.

The clear regulation of our entire life in the past, present and future through faith, love and hope is an essential piece of salvation. This is far more than just having forgiveness of sins. It is infinitely liberating and refreshing to experience the solution from ambiguity and confusion, from cramps and bondages, and to see the whole person placed in the light of divine-spiritual reorientation. If the believer looks behind him, his life is justified, and a sea of peace covers all the depths of his past. If he looks around him and above him, there is an open heaven above him in the present, and he realizes that infinite goodness is flowing down upon him because he is in favor (grace) with God. But before him lies the future glory, which is ready to be revealed.

Peace, grace, glory, - this is his true life, which he has and leads in Christ (Rom. 5, 1.2).

Looking at such preciousness, the attraction of the dazzling appearance of the world fades, and the sufferings of this time seem small and insignificant and short.

The Thessalonians, to whom Paul addresses the first letter he ever writes to the church as an apostle of the Lord, had ordered their lives in this way. They had converted (in view of the past) from idols to serve (in their present life) the living and true God and (in view of the future) to expect the Son of God from the heavens, - Jesus, who would save them from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1, 9.10).

This clear, inner direction was seen in its effects. Their faith bore fruit, their love labored for the brethren, and their hope brought about perseverance in the Lord (1 Thess. 1:3, 8).

To a multitude of believers who thus place their lives in the light of God's Word and who are in such lively expectation of the returning Lord, the Spirit of God, proclaiming what is to come, can reveal more of the things connected with the Lord's appearing and of the consequences this event will have for believers and unbelievers.

The Thessalonians stood in the first love, and they had kept that love. The Lord had remained first in their hearts and in their lives. Therefore, precisely because they loved His appearing, the Spirit was able to bring them closer to the last things through the apostle and, by communicating special words of the Lord, to give them increased light about all this. Thus it happens that the two letters to this young church contain such precious prophecies about the coming of the Lord and about being caught up to Him. God gives His (often so poor) saints on earth what they need. He meets them in graces, according to their needs. In the

Thessalonian church He finds nothing to reproach (as, for example, in the Corinthians). Therefore, He offers them according to the desire of their hearts and flatly according to the impulse of His love.

Especially in the section of ch. 4, 13-5, 10 He reveals to us the sequence of events at His coming. Likewise in the first two chapters of the other letter to the Thessalonians. In the first letter He emphasizes more the salvation of the saints from the coming wrath and the Rapture, while in the second letter He emphasizes more the judgment of the world under the leadership of the Antichrist.

For the world, the coming of the Lord means the breaking in of the divine judgment of wrath. This judgment will already make the unbelievers completely headless at its dawn (Rev. 6:12-17 and many more). The day of the Lord will seize them like a thief. When they say, "Peace and safety," a sudden destruction will come upon them, like birth pangs upon the pregnant woman.

The believers will not be shaken, because they expect the day and know that they are not set for wrath, but for the attainment of blessedness. Whether they are awake or asleep at the coming of the Lord, they will live with Him (1 Thess. 5:10). Death cannot deprive them of the attainment of blessedness, for it is precisely through death that they are saved, through the death of Him who died for them. And through His resurrection, they are begotten again to a living hope (1 Peter I, 3-5). This hope knows that in the final crisis of the cosmos they will not go to destruction, but will come to salvation; and this salvation is ready to be revealed.

They will receive praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. No judgment threatens them anymore. What they still lack in the glorious transfiguration into His image (according to 2 Cor. 3, 18), He Himself brings with Him at His revelation to all those who expect Him. Therefore they should hope completely for the grace that will be brought to them there (1 Pet. I, 13; 2 Tim. 4, 8). The certainty of this hope is so great that it gives the believers the strength to raise their heads freely under their covering in the struggle of faith and to look out for the coming of Him who is their Lord and Head and whom they love with the love with which He first loved them. Therefore the hope of the coming salvation, the hope of the future salvation or blessedness, is also called the helmet of salvation, the helmet of blessedness (Eph. 6,17; 1. Thess. 5, 8).

But this hope is not only a hope of the blessedness, but of the blessedness. The blessedness they expect is already dawning in them, just as the hope of glory is

not only a hope of glory, but of glory, because the Spirit of glory rests on them and the Christ dwells in them.

Life and blessedness are connected with His indwelling. The believer has this treasure in the earthen vessel of his body. This possession is blessedness for the bearer. "Blessed are" - not only "blessed will be" these, says the Scripture.

God does not just give a blank check to the future, although the simple assurance of blessedness by the Eternal One would be completely sufficient for us. However, He is the Existent One and gives to the partakers of His divine nature already now in essence all that is present in Himself, His righteousness, His holiness, His glory and bliss and everything else that is in Him, as much as the earthen vessel is able to hold. Therefore, all those are blessed who have His life in them, who have His Spirit, in whom He dwells.

This blessedness was the part of that blessed woman whose body was worthy to be the first dwelling place of the Son of God on earth (Luk 1:44-48). But not only her part, but the part of all who receive Him in faith. They are even more blessed, because they do not carry the Lord in His body of lowliness, but in the spirit of glory, and that is much more (Luk 11, 27. 28).

Should not the joyful message of the glory of the blessed God (1 Tim. 1, 11) also make our hearts glad, as it is His heart, from which

this glad tidings flow for us? (To be continued.)

On the Essence of Hope By Karl Geyer

9. types of hope

d) The hope of eternal life

„... in hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised before eternal ages." (Tit. 1, 2.)

" ... that we, being justified by His grace, might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Tit. 3, 7.)

Of all those who were instructed in the words of the apostle Paul during his lifetime, none was as completely of his mind as Timothy (Phi1. 2, 20). He had come to faith through the ministry of the apostle (1Ti 1, 2; 2Ti 1, 2), had received gifts of grace through the laying on of his hands (2Ti. 1, 6), was his most faithful travel companion and was entrusted by him with the leadership of that church

in which Paul himself had laid the foundations of salvation through a three year ministry (Acts 20, 17. 31; 1 Tim. 1, 3), and to which he then made known the highest and greatest glories through the wonderful letter to the Ephesians.

This Timothy Paul called his "true child after faith". No one understood the apostle so deeply, and no other person was so close to his heart. To no other person did Paul also write such long letters with such detailed exhortations and rules of conduct.

One of the most salient exhortations (or encouragements) is this:

"Lay hold on eternal life, to which you have also been called!" (1 Tim. 6:12).

What is it about this grasping of eternal life?

That this exhortation is not about receiving eternal life by faith is already evident from the fact that Paul is not writing to an unbeliever, but to his most faithful co-worker, who was also his true child of faith. Timothy was a believer and had life in him through faith. He did not need to receive it anymore, but he should take it.

We are not to carelessly leave aside the things given to us by God, but to hold them in faithful hands, to keep them in a fine heart and to manage them according to God until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 6, 13.14). We are entrusted with a stewardship, are stewards of God, stewards of His mysteries (1 Cor. 4:1, 2). In this service we are to be found faithful. The righteousness given to us by God should not only be respected as imputed righteousness, but should be proven righteousness in daily life and walk.

The righteousness given is the same for all believers. The proof of this righteousness in practical life is very different for individual believers. The given righteousness guarantees our salvation in general. It is ours by grace, without any merit on our part. It is ours by grace, without any merit on our part.

Proven righteousness is crowned with the crown of righteousness.

It is similar with life. There was no life in us. God alone has immortality. He gave us His life by begetting it through His Spirit. This life is the same in its nature and essence in all believers. However, the presentation of this life is very diverse. Where it becomes fruitful for others, it presents itself as proven and receives the crown of life.

Crowned righteousness is more than imputed righteousness; crowned life is more than bestowed life. Probation is added, which means glorification for God,

in that His essence is waxen in the earthen vessel of our body and is presented in faithfulness before angels and men (1Ti 4:15; Eph 3:10; 1Co 4:9).

For such a walk in truth, which leads to godliness, Paul himself found the necessary strength in the hope of eternal life. Not only that in view of this life he could endure and bear all that temporality brought him, but still more that the life present in him proved so powerful that it brought him a foretaste of all the goods of hope to come. Thus it is not only a hope of eternal life, but the hope of eternal life. Life itself carries the hope. It is an outflow of the life that exists.

Divinity is always essential. Thus also the hope of eternal life is not only a human hoping, but a divine reality, an essentially spiritual possession of that which is not yet seen, a manifestation of God's life present in us, a revelation of Christ in us.

It is not we ourselves who bring forth the glorious hope whose goal is not the transitory things of the present cosmos, but the lasting goods of the world to come, in which Christ is ever present and in which God dwells among men as Father. The Holy Spirit Himself, who dwells in us, brings about this hope as an outflow of the life He communicated to us. He is the source of all expressions of life, the divine cause of this glorious hope. Through Him we receive enlightened eyes of the heart and gain insight into the hope of the vocation that was given to the Christ and in Him also to us. The Spirit reveals to us the riches of the glory of the inheritance that the Father has given to the Son in the saints. He also makes us realize the greatness of the power in which the Father raised the Son from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavens, high above all powers and authorities, the power that is also revealed in us and has already given us a place with the Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:17-23; 2:1, 6, 7).

This power of the Holy Spirit works the great, superhuman hope in us and makes us firmer and more certain and richer in hope with each new evidence of life in us and with each new foretaste of the good of hope (Rom. 15:13).

Our faith thereby receives new impulses and is filled with all joy and peace. But divine peace and true joy are a fruit of the spirit. The spirit is a spirit of life (Rom. 8, 2). Through His divine power everything is given to us concerning life and godliness. Through Him we are already in connection with God in the power of an indissoluble life as partakers of His nature. From this life connection with God our hope flows forth powerfully and proves by its power effects that it is more than a mental-creative intoxication, that it is truly and really an outflow of the eternal life in us, the hope of eternal life.

e) The hope of the Gospel

"...if ye be otherwise established in the faith, and stand fast, and be not moved from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven, of which I Paul am become a minister". (Co1. 1, 23.) " ... because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, of which ye have heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which is come unto you, even as it is in all the cosmos, and is fruitful and increasing, even as it is among you..."

(Co1. 1,5.6.)

Once the nations were without promises and therefore without a firm, certain, well-founded hope (Eph 2:11-13). The only certainty they had was death, which was and still is imminent for everyone. It is set for man to die once. For none did life even come close to fulfilling the need for earthly happiness. With unsatisfied desire all drifted and drift day by day closer to the black gate, behind which the darkness lives. All attempts to escape this law and to free themselves from its effects failed, and all must admit that there is no escape from this compulsory order to which all creatures are subjected. That is why the life of all unbelievers is basically dominated by the fear of death. Nothing is more certain to them than that they are under the tyranny of an invisible power, the power of death, which they cannot escape. The fact that there is no evasion or escape from it burdens the minds with secret, mostly unspoken fear and lets the unregenerate go their way as slaves of the fear of death (Hebr. 2, 15).

The creature cannot change this law. But God can. He was in Christ and reconciled the world to himself. As a sign that Christ's work of reconciliation is fully valid before God, the Father raised the Son from the dead. Now there is an exit from death. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the historical foundation and the essential starting point of all hope of the creature, the true gate of hope for the whole cosmos, just as the cross is the low point of the history of the whole universe (1Co 15:1-28).

According to the first verse of the resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15), this is the gospel that Paul preaches. The content of his sermon is the risen and glorified Christ. He is entrusted with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11).

The consequence of the resurrection of the Christ is that through Him, the firstfruits, all others will be made alive, each in his own order, when his turn comes¹. All powers, which after the breakthrough of the true life want to hinder its full development in the whole universe, will be removed. Finally, death will

be eliminated. With the exception of the Father Himself, who subjects everything to Him, the whole universe will be subject to the Son. Then also the Son will submit to the Father, so that God may be all in all (1.Cor. 15,20-28).

God all in all! This is the hope of the Gospel, the hope of the Good News. Nothing and nobody is excluded from it. There will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, no more night and no more exile (Rev. 21:4; 22:5; 5:13).

This is good news! This gives hope even to the most lost. God leads all things out so gloriously that even all those who were enraged against Him turn back to Him in shame and confess: "Only in the Lord do I have righteousness and strength." (Isa. 45, 22-24; Rom. 14, 11; Phi1. 2, 10. 11; Rev. 5,13; Psalm 68,18, Luther: verse 19).

When the Son came to earth in lowliness to turn the destiny of the cosmos, the Father made proclaim through angel mouth to the slaves of the fear of death: "Fear not! Behold, I proclaim to you great joy, which shall be to all the people." And further: " ... and good pleasure to men."

Now the firstborn of God's good pleasure sits at the right hand of the Father as the resurrected and glorified one. God's good pleasure in man has been confirmed by the resurrection of the firstborn of the brethren. Now all may hope. Therefore, the resurrection is the historical starting point of our hope, and through it we are born again to a living hope (1 Pet 1:3, 4).

But our hope is that of the whole creation (Rom. 8, 19-25). It looks out with its neck stretched out for the revelation of the sons of God. The whole cosmos looks to us (Eph. 3, 10; 1 Cor. 4, 9). This visual instruction, which applies primarily to the spirit world, the powers that rule the cosmos, is not in vain. The Gospel with its central point: the resurrection from the dead and the participation in the life and being of God, has become manifest in the whole creation as a result of the manifestation of the wisdom of God through the church and is growing and bearing fruit in the whole cosmos as well as among us (Co1. 1, 5. 6. 23). The angels who desire to see into these things (1 Pet 1:12) now see day by day on earth, the stage of the universe (1 Cor 4:9), the display of the multicolored wisdom of God (Eph 3:10). This display is not without fruit, but the gospel is growing and bearing fruit throughout the cosmos, as it is among us. Therefore, in the panegyris, the triumphant church, the festive assembly in the heavens, there are not only the firstborn and the spirits of the perfected righteous, but also myriads of angels (Heb 12:22-24). To this we have come (not: we will come) and have fellowship with all the saints, not only those on earth.

We once knew nothing of this hope, although it has been kept for us in the heavens since time immemorial. Only since the resurrection of Jesus Christ, after God Himself had given proof of the truth or reality that His nature is love and His attitude is overflowing goodness towards all His creatures, the way was free to proclaim this good news. It was through the proclamation of this good news that it became apparent what a glorious hope awaits us. Therefore, our hope is truly the hope of the Good News, the hope of the Gospel.

f) The hope of His calling

" ... that ye, being enlightened in the eyes of your heart, may know what is the hope of His calling."

(Eph. 1, 18.)

When God consulted with Himself before the foundation of the world and, in His wisdom, made a resolution to be carried out by the Son of love, the Christ of God, in the course of the eons, one thought excited His special pleasure: to have many sons who would be like the firstborn of the brethren. God wants to have sons who resemble Himself, in whom He will behold His image once they stand before Him and are perfect as He, their Father in heaven, is perfect. Therefore, He chose us before the foundation of the world, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages (eons) (2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:3-6), and predestined us to sonship for Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, to the glory of His grace.

When the power of His grace has worked in all its glory on the sons, the result will be one mighty praise to God, who willed and brought forth such. Therefore, there are not many noble according to the flesh among us. In the weak and foolish and ignoble and despised, in those who are nothing, God reveals His power and wisdom (1 Cor. 1:23-31).

The nature of Christ Jesus can only be formed in us in the community of life with Him. Therefore, the faithful God called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1, 9). In Him He gave us everything (2 Petr 1:3, 4). He let all the glorious riches of His grace overflow towards us in all wisdom and insight by making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He has set before Himself for the administration of the fullness of time: to gather all things under one head (Eph. 1, 8-11).

Before the resurrection of Christ Jesus, such glory could not be revealed. To the Twelve, the Lord said during His lifetime, "I would still have much to tell you, but you cannot bear it now." But to the apostle Paul He made known by revelation

the mystery that was not made known to the preceding generations of men (Eph. 3:3-13; Rom. 16:25, 26). The essential content of this mystery is that the nations are co-heirs, co-bodies and co-partakers of His promises. Everything that the Father promised to the Son is also their part¹. They are heirs of God and co-heirs of Christ (Rom. 8, 17). God does not withhold anything from them. All of God's fullness, which dwells in the Son of love in the flesh, is also to be poured into them (Eph. 3, 19). We must be made like Him in everything, in His suffering (Co1. 1, 24; Phi1. 3, 10; Rom. 6, 5) and also in His fullness of glory (1 Thess. 2, 12; 1 Petr. 5, 10; 1 John 3, 2; Matth. 5, 48; Co1. 1, 28; Rom. 8, 29. 30; 9, 23; 2 Thess. 1, 10; 2, 13.14; 2 Cor. 3, 18; Co1. 3, 4; 1 Cor. 15, 49 and others).

Participants of His promises! We participate in everything. Yes, He, the glorious Head, who is the Yes and the Amen to all the promises of God, carries them out through us to the glory of God (2 Cor. 1:20).

Our whole future is inextricably linked to the head. Therefore, even the members cannot look into the future with any special wishes and self-chosen hopeful goods. Their hope is the same as His. In truth they have only one hope to which they are called (Eph. 4, 4), that is the hope of His calling (Eph. 1,18).

For the realization of this hope, enlightened eyes of the heart are needed. This enlightenment is brought about by the spirit of wisdom and revelation. We are growing in the nature of Christ and are developing to full manhood. So we also grow in the three things that remain: Faith, hope, love. To the same extent that we are filled with the Spirit, we are transformed into the same image.

We look at this glorious image with uncovered face, so that His features may be pronounced on us from one clarity or glory to another. To the extent that the Christ takes shape in us, to that extent we are also truth, reality, essentiality. In the same measure, however, we also participate essentially in all His tasks, in His sufferings and in His glory. Everything that He Himself waits to be fulfilled is also the object of our hope. In the power of an indissoluble life we are united with Him and are prepared for our future task. For the hope of our calling is the hope of His calling.

(Conclusion follows.)

Of the essence of hope

From Karl Geyer

(Conclusion)

Sanctification as the effect of hope

"And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure." (1 John 3:3)

"Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1)

The hope will find its visible fulfillment at the appointed time and hour. The believer, however, already enjoys the promise in the spirit, because the spirit is the essence, the reality, the truth (1. Joh. 5, 6 b). This making present, realizing, essentializing, anticipating, enjoying the good of hope (i.e. the lasting goods of the world to come), which gives us a foretaste of the life of the coming eons, lets us at the same time recognize the unworthiness of everything perishable. Thus, we lose our taste for the illusory values of the cosmos, knowing that the scheme of the cosmos, the shape or form of this world, is passing away (1 Cor. 7:31 b), because everything created is subject to transience. Therefore, to the believer, any loss of the pleasures of this transience seems small and insignificant, and all the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory that will be revealed to us¹.

Thus, walking in the abiding is the victory over the perishable. And this is the victory that overcame the world (the cosmos): our faith (1. Joh. 4, 4). (Vergl. Rom. 8, 35-37; 1. Cor. 15, 57.)

While the external, visible fulfillment of the promises is still future, the internal fulfillment in the spirit through faith is something present. This, however, makes the grasping of the good of hope effective and fruitful for our present life and presents the occupation with hope as the most practical thing the believer can do. Scripture testifies clearly and unmistakably that everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. It does not say: he can or may or should purify himself, but: he purifies himself just as He is pure, i.e. he does it simply as a consequence or effect of the hope inherent in him.

An experience serves as an example to explain this solving, purifying, sanctifying effect of hope.

Some time ago a brother had a wedding. It was in autumn. At this time of year, flowers are rare. A brother friend who lived in the same house wanted to give the bride a special treat by having his little boy present her with a bouquet of violets at the wedding table. At this, the little boy, who could hardly see the table, was to say a suitable verse of congratulations. Upstairs, in his parents'

apartment, he could do this quite well. In view of the many guests, however, he could not bring himself to say a word. Everyone looked at the little boy and waited for the little verse, but it did not come. He clutched the bouquet convulsively and remained silent. For the parents the situation was not exactly pleasant (because which parents - even pious parents - do not like to parade with their art of upbringing?)

Usually, such an embarrassing situation is ended by reprimanding the little loser, taking the bouquet from him and sending the little boy into the background. In this way, however, all feelings of displeasure, all shame, fear and distress that weigh on the boy are left unresolved. Henceforth, every time the word "wedding" is heard, the unpleasant memory with the whole complex of feelings of unwantedness rises up again in the boy and makes itself felt as a burden of inferiority.

In our case, however, the groom found the right solution, which was also a real solution. He took a large bunch of grapes from the fruit bowl on the table in front of him and held it out to the little boy. Then the little cramped hand released itself, put down the bouquet of violets and reached for the grape.

What a beautiful image! - The grape is in the scripture a symbol (allegory) of the joy. For the joy before him, he gave the fragrances of Egypt (image of the gross sensual world) to it. That was solution! He gave to it! It was not necessary to take anything from him. The value in front of him seemed to him so great that he did not feel the giving as a loss. He gained by this solution and was enriched inwardly by it. Lust and joy had taken the place of the feelings of displeasure.

This is the essence of every real solution, that it really liberates, so that after the solution the consciousness of having become free and of an actual increase in value are present. Such solution makes free! And for freedom Christ has set us free! (Ga1. 5, 1.)

How few liberated and truly loosened people there are in the world! Even within Christianity of all shades, there is so much uptightness, because believers are always being given demands: "You shall....!", "You must.!" Who of us has not yet demanded of others, and to whom have not been made demands? - But every demand is law! The Gospel is a gift, not a demand! "It is more blessed to give than to receive." - "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." (Acts 20:35; 2 Cor. 9:15-Verg1. 8-15.)

But uptight Christians offer a sad picture for the world and are a main propaganda tool of the enemy. The great God-denier Nietzsche said yes, the

Christians would have to look much more redeemed, if he should believe in their redeemer. In the reproach of this Christ-hater there is unfortunately only too much bitter truth. The blame for this, however, lies not primarily with the hearers of the Word, but with the preachers. How can the hearers believe if they are not preached to?

How poor it is to confess on the one hand that you are the child of the highest and richest king, and then again and again sigh painfully (in deep self-pity), "Even this and that I still have to give."

Is this the language of sons who are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, who have been given everything in Him?

Yes, there is a big difference between the forgiveness of guilt and actual, practical liberation from sin, from being bound. The first is a matter of the court, the other is a result of the sanctuary. In the outer court one obtains justification by faith, but in the sanctuary sanctification by hope. "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

The biblical, God-ordained means of sanctification is hope. Whoever wants to sanctify himself in any other way falls into error. At the beginning of his life of faith, while he is still a minor, every believer makes the attempt to purify himself in legal self-purification. How miserable we became there! Many then fall into the opposite, because they hear: "Christ has sanctified himself for us. You only need to believe that, and then you will be holy." But this is equally false and dangerous, because it makes us confuse the God-given state of being sanctified with our practical state of sanctification. Even our often poor presentation in practical life does not correspond to the glorious, God-given position into which we are placed by grace. Those who confuse or simply equate this fall into a theoretical perfectionism that does not exist in "reality." * Without the sanctification of Christ Jesus for us, we could never stand before God as sanctified. This is gift. Our practical sanctification, however, is probation.

We will be saved from both aberrations, that of legal sanctification of works and that of false perfectionism, if we walk the God-ordained path to sanctification in simple obedience to the Scriptures. Just as Christ endured the cross for the joy that lay before Him, nothing else enables us to endure all suffering and to give up all that is perishable than the joy that lies before us.

He who has no hope does not purify himself. How should one give away the little apparent values of this world and the temporal pleasures of sin, if he receives nothing at all in return? He would have nothing at all! But with empty hands and

hearts no man can live in the long run. He needs something that makes his existence worth living. But faith has the promise of this life and the life to come (1. Tim. 4, 8). Everything is ours, present and future (1 Cor. 3, 22).

The joy ahead is unimaginably great and glorious beyond all human standards. For believers there are no losses anywhere, even if they temporarily lose everything in the perishable goods of this world. All things work together for their good (Rom. 8, 28; Hebr. 10, 34), and even dying is gain for them (Phil, I, 21).

How such knowledge loosens hearts and hands and frees them for godly, spirit-worked service! "He who has such hope in Him purifies himself even as He is pure.

On the Nature of the Law - by Adolf Heller

Among the inhibitions and derailment possibilities, which from the beginning caused the greatest difficulties for the churches on Pauline soil, legalism is probably in the first place. It is therefore no wonder that already Paul resisted with all his might the intrusion of the law into the glorious gospel of free grace entrusted to him.

In the Epistle to the Galatians, which deals with these dangers, he strikes the harshest tones and does not hesitate to threaten with cursing all, whether angels or men, who seek to mix his incomparable message.

What we call church history is, in one respect, nothing more than a continued conscious or unconscious attempt to legally and powerfully transform the Pauline gospel, which is based on the principle of the Spirit, suffering and love, and to adapt it and make it serviceable to the present eon.

But the nearer we come to the close of this age, and the more vividly and deeply the Spirit of God awakens in the circles of believers the desire for the unclouded archetype of divine plans and purposes, and with it the love-desire for closest communion with the Father and the Son Himself, the more it is also recognized that the law has not only transformed the life of faith of individuals into powerful Pharisaism, but that through legalism the message of the Body of Christ has been almost completely lost within Christian organizations.

In general, the meaning and purpose of the law is not clear at all. On the one hand the scripture speaks of the curse of the law, from which we must be redeemed (Ga1. 3, 13), and on the other hand the same apostle testifies that the law is holy, just and good (Rom. 7. 12).

Again, Paul once rebukes the Colossians for allowing themselves to be "burdened with statutes" (2:20), and another time he admonishes Titus that believers should take care to do good works (3:8).

How do all these apparent contradictions resolve? Is the law something pleasing to God or not? Does the commandment, which according to Hebr. 7, 18. 19 is useless, brings nothing to completion and therefore should be abolished, have an important task in the divine plan at all?

All these doubts and questions will be cleared up in a wonderful, harmonious way when we begin to understand the origin, service and purpose of the law through the holy scriptures.

1. the law, an ordinance of God

There have always been people who taught that the law, which is something imperfect and curse-bringing, could not come from God but was of devilish origin. The practical consequence of such an unbiblical proclamation aimed at the flesh had to be, of course, complete lawlessness for those who consequently received such a message.

That one proclaimed in connection with it the complete irresponsibility of the human being can be understood easily.

Therefore, let it be stated first: the law is an ordinance of God! The opening words of Exodus 20 exclude any doubt about this. There it says: "And God spoke all these words, saying: I am Jehovah..." And then follow the Ten Commandments, the heart of all ordinances, then the sacrificial laws, etc., given to Israel.

Also Paul testifies in Rom. 7, 22. 12: "I am well pleased with the law according to the inner man ... So then the law is holy ..."

And yet the inspired writer of Hebrews says, "Sacrifice and meal offering and burnt offering and sacrifice for sin Thou didst not desire nor delight in" (10:8).

According to this scriptural testimony, the sacrificial laws that Moses gave, as well as the Ten Commandments, by virtue of divine decree, do not correspond to the will or pleasure of God. How is this to be understood? The overall will of God is a manifoldly structured one. The final goal is fixed and will be achieved without fail. His oaths, which He took with Himself, vouch for this. But the bringing about of His goals and the complete realization of His thoughts of love and salvation happens in many wonderful ways.

A distinction must be made here between

1. the counsels of God, 2. the will of God, and
3. the good pleasure of God.

What is the difference?

Counsels are made in the heavenly council of the saints. Because God does not rape any creature, but lets all of them have a complete effect, He even responds to Satan's suggestions in divinely sublime peace and security!

Let us read carefully Job I, 6-12; 2, 1-6!

The heavenly council is not made up of men, but of angels. The law comes from the holy angels, which is clear from a number of scriptural testimonies. We will mention only two of them:

Acts 7:53: "...you who received the law by the commandment of angels...".

Ga1. 3, 19: "Why now the law? It was ... by angels1..." That it is holy angels who gave the law and not unholy, fallen ones, can be seen in Deut. 33, 2. The fire of the law did not come out of the left but out of the right hand of God.

This is significant!

For while the right of the Lord are the good yes spirits, the evil no spirits form the left. Therefore we also read in 1. Con. 22, 19 that all the host of heaven (all the host! not only a part!) stands with Him, and that, as is explicitly reported, on His right and on His left.

The angelic beings try to achieve on the way of laws and ordinances, that is, of organization, power and force, what God will bring about through His Son on the way of love and vicarious self-offering through the sacrifice, on the cross: to make the universe subservient to Him.

Counsels, given with the best of intentions, come from the angels. As good and holy as these decrees are on the one hand, they do not correspond to the two higher principles of divine administration: His will and His good pleasure.

The will and good pleasure of God do not originate from any suggestions or advice of the council of holy and intelligent creatures, like His counsels, but from His own Father's heart.

But we will not talk about these wonderful things here; we only want to talk about the lowest level of divine administration, about the law and legal orders.

We summarize: The law is an ordinance of God; it is indeed a counsel that originated in the council of the saints and was confirmed and elevated to it by God, but it neither originates from nor corresponds to His own will conceived in Christ before the foundation of the world, nor to the good pleasure of His heart.

2. the law, a ministry of death and damnation

There is nothing in the vast universe that does not consciously or unconsciously serve God. David already testifies to this when he writes in Ps. 119, 91: "All things serve You." And that even the lawless serves the purposes of God, we see from Prov. 16, 4, where we read: "Jehovah has made everything His purpose, and also the lawless for the day of calamity."

But these ministries are very different. Besides spiritual, grace and love ministries, there are also those of death and damnation. For example, it says

2 Cor. 3:7-9: "But if the ministry of death, engraved with letters in stones, began in glory, . . how shall not rather the ministry of the Spirit consist in glory? For if the ministry of condemnation is glory, much more is the ministry of righteousness overflowing in glory."

That the law not only condemns and kills the ungodly and lawbreakers, but also the most holy and pure is evident from Joh. 19, 7.

There the Jews answer Pilate, who testifies to the blamelessness of Christ:

"We have a law, and according to our law He must die.... ."

Here the law proves to be fatal to the Son of God, as Paul later testifies about himself: "The commandment. . proved to be death for me" (Rom. 7, 10). When the apostle writes about the law: " . . which was given to me for life," he is probably thinking of Exodus 18:5 and other passages. So the law exercised a ministry of death and damnation on the Lord as well as on the apostle Paul.

We still want to look at some scriptural contexts that show us how terrible and horrible this ministry is, how, humanly foolishly speaking, without the law sin could not have unfolded and had any effect at all.

Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15:56 b, "The power of sin is the law." So without the law, sin would be dead and ineffective? Certainly! This is exactly what the apostle testifies in Romans 7:8b: "Without law sin is dead." "As many as are of works of the law are under the curse," we read in Ga1. 3, 10, and Romans 4, 15 testifies that the law causes wrath and that where there is no law, there is no transgression.

Wouldn't it be best to abolish every law? There would be no transgression, no wrath and no effectiveness of sin!

Only a person whose gaze is fixed on the outside of all events can judge in this way. But God, on the contrary, is concerned that the deepest, innermost and most secret nature of every creature is revealed and unveiled. He calmly lets the angelic worlds make their legal decrees, although, after all, the law cannot be kept and thus means bankruptcy not only for those on whom it is laid, but also for those who gave it. That is why God charges His angels with folly or error (Job 4:18), does not trust in His saints (Job 15:15) and, since perfect knowledge is only with Him, makes fools of counselors and judges (Job 12:16, 17).

He lets all abysses unveil themselves and all hell fires ignite, so that He can demonstrate in the end in all the more glorious way what He is able to do and who He is.

Only in this way will every mouth be blocked, and only in this way will the whole world fall to the judgment of God (Rom. 3:19, 20).

The passions of sins that work in our members are "through the law" (Rom. 7, 5). The 8th verse of this chapter even testifies that sin, taking occasion through the commandment, caused every lust in Paul.

Any desire!

In view of such devastating scriptural testimonies, who could still dare to take the standpoint of moral achievements? Who would still want to proclaim that it depends only on our will to fulfill the divine requirements?

Only from here we can understand the sharp words in Ga1. 1, 6-9, which at first sight do not seem to correspond to the spirit of love and grace.

Let us note that the law is weak, brings nothing to completion, is a failure for the lawmakers and for those who seek to fulfill it, and is only able to do services of death and damnation.

3. the law, a way to worship the angels

We already saw that the law was given through the angels' business. They are the creators of the law, which neither originated from your will nor from God's good pleasure. Therefore, whoever walks in lawful lines serves and honors those who are the originators of this well-intentioned but disastrous administration.

Understanding this is extremely important.

For most believers know only a mixture of grace and law and know little of the glory of the freedom of the children of God (Rom. 8:21). And because the full gospel of the body of Christ and the final execution of God's plans is hardly known to them, they are not able to reach "all the riches of the full assurance of understanding, the knowledge of the mystery of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Co1. 2, 2. 3), nor do they come to the "knowledge of Himself", so that they, enlightened in the eyes of their hearts, know what is the hope of His calling (Eph. 1, 17 b. 18 a). "Knowledge of Himself!" This is far more than "faith in the Lord Jesus" and "love for all the saints" (Eph. 1, 15). That is why Paul prays that the Ephesians will be given the Spirit of wisdom and revelation for the knowledge of Himself by the Father of glory only after he

has heard that the necessary conditions for the hearing of such a mighty request are present (read Eph. 1, 15-17!).

But because every further knowledge of God means an increased communication of His life (Joh. 17, 3), we understand that the enemy is interested in imposing statutes on us (Ko1. 2, 20) and to judge us about "food and drink or in regard to a feast or new moon or sabbaths ...". (Co1. 2, 16).

To deprive us of the prize (literally: to push us into a wrong path) he uses such people who outwardly seem to be pious and humble (Co1. 2, 18). These people do not know Christ as the head and know nothing of the body of Christ that grows out of the head (Co1. 2, 19). Their piety is basically nothing else than angel worship (worship of angels or religious commandments of angels) as we read in Ko1. 2, 18.

This expression "angel worship" has a double meaning.

He first wants to say that these pious people worship God as the angels worship God. These worship with their faces veiled (Is. 6:2), while the faithful who are called to the Body of Christ "gaze with unveiled face at the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Furthermore, the angels worship the holiness (Is. 6, 3) and creator power of God (Ps. 148, 1-6), while we are not rooted in the attributes only, but in the heart and very essence of our Father, in love (Eph. 3, 17).

From all this, we can understand why there are so many believers who emphasize only the holiness of God and the apparent endlessness of His judgments of damnation, but have no view of His very essence and the final execution of His loving intentions and glorious purposeful thoughts.

They are just on the level of "angel worship".

But this expression wants to say more.

Those who seek to confine the glorious gospel of the Body of Christ in man-made, albeit well-intentioned, organizations and dissolve it into a multitude of commandments, laws and regulations are, at the deepest level, serving the cosmocrators or system holders; they are engaging in angel worship without knowledge or intention. Let us let the complete seriousness and the whole depth of Paul's admonition work on us when the apostle exhorts us: "Let no one push you into a wrong path who wants to do this through humility and angel worship" (Co1. 2, 18).

Yet another scriptural context may show us that law service is ultimately nothing other than worship of the angels.

In Amos 5:21-25, God shows how He feels about Israel's religious enterprise: "I hate, I disdain your feasts, and your festival assemblies I do not like to smell. For when you offer burnt offerings and your grain offerings to me, I have no pleasure in them; and the peace offering of your fatlings I do not like to look at. Put away from me the noise of your songs, and I will not hear the playing of your harps. .. Have ye given me forty years in the wilderness

Sacrifices and grain offerings offered, house of Israel?"

In the following chapter (verse 5) He speaks a "Woe!" about those who invent musical instruments like David and "babble" to the sound of the harp, and in Ma1. 2, 3 He even speaks of the "dung of your feasts"!

Whether these extremely sharp words characterize only the conditions of spiritual life at that time, or whether they also apply to the religious power and mass operations of other times and peoples?

Amos 5, 25 requires an answer. To whom did Israel bring the sacrifices and

Did he offer a meal sacrifice during his desert journey? The solution is found in Acts 7:42 where we read: "But God turned away and gave them to serve the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets: Did you offer me sacrificial animals and sacrifices in the wilderness forty years?

House of Israel?"

Israel served "the host of heaven"!

Are there still "Christians" today who call upon people and angels for help and mediation and who perform an enormous cult around all kinds of creatures?

He who does not "hold fast the Head, out of whom the whole body . . the growth of God grows," but runs in lawful courses of outward ceremonies and human organizations, is on the level of angel-worship in gross or subtle form.

This is the meaning of Ko1. 2, 18. 19.

4. the law, something secretly slipped in

In Ga1. 2, 4 Paul speaks of "false brethren brought in by the way, who came in by the way (actually snuck in by the way) to spy out our freedom".

We know that we are dealing with the teachers of the law, whom the apostle confronts in this important and fundamental letter. They took offense at the

complete freedom of grace proclaimed by Paul, saying that such a lawless message virtually invites to do evil (Rom. 3, 8), and therefore wanted to force the believers under a yoke of law with the best of intentions. For this purpose they "crept in alongside". The same thing that is reported here about the false brothers is said in Rom. 5, 20 about the law, which is meant to be a person: "The law crept in secretly next to it."

We are also told the purpose of his sneaking in: "That the transgression might overflow."

That the crept-in law is only something "added" is also clear from Ga1. 3. There Paul explains that the promises given to Abraham are only obtained by faith, but not by fulfilling the law. Thus we read in verse 11: "But that by law no one is justified before God is evident, for the just shall live by faith." The covenant made with Abraham concerning all nations, confirmed by God, cannot be annulled, nor can anything be decreed in addition to it (verse 15.16a). Moreover, the promise was made 430 years before the law and therefore could not be invalidated by the law (verse 17). "It was added (established) because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (verse 19).

The important key word "until" indicates the duration of the rule of the law decreed by God: "until the seed would come", as Rom. 10, 4 says that Christ is the end of the law.

This secretly crept in sin awakener and pleasure stimulator, who is only able to bring about death and damnation, has his exactly determined time. He subjugates minors (Ga1. 4, 3) and is guardian and administrator (Ga1. 4, 2), but only "until the time appointed by the Father"!

Then Christ comes and puts Himself under the law and redeems all who languish and groan under the curse of the law (Ga1. 4,4.5). Death reigned from Adam to Moses (Rom. 5, 14) and through him sin (Rom. 5, 21); grace reigns through righteousness through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5, 21); but the law, in order to bring sin to its full measure, has crept in secretly and finds willing instruments even among those who pretend to know and serve Christ, in order to bring the church called to sonship and inheritance, which is supposed to be Lord over all (Ga1. 4, 1. 5. 6; Rom. 8, 17; Ko1. 2r 10), to subjugate it under the elements (or initial grounds) of the cosmos and to "burden" it with statutes according to the commandments and teachings of men (Ko1. 2, 20. 22).

5. the law, a disciplinarian on Christ

The law also has tremendous and glorious positive ministries. It is compared to a dungeon in Ga1. 3, 23 it is compared to a dungeon, in which Israel was "locked up" (surrounded or brought into violence) - and yet this locking up was at the same time a guarding and protecting.

For in the same verse we read that the apostle says of himself and his people, "Before faith came, we were kept under the law." The word *phroureo* used here actually means to guard, protect or keep.

Paul uses the same expression in Phi1. 4, 7, when he writes that the peace of God guards or protects our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Peter also uses this word once. In chapter I, 5 of his first letter he tells the strangers from the dispersion that they are guarded or protected in the power of God through faith.

So we see that the commandment also has a task of preservation. For Israel was not brought into the power of the law to perish in this dungeon, - no, it was locked up "by faith"! Who ever sat in this dark prison became light-desiring, and who ever languished in this bondage became freedom-thirsting. Thus the law makes those who are enclosed in it hungry for Christ in every way and becomes a disciplinarian (pedagogue or educator) toward Christ without knowledge or will (Ga1. 3, 24). .

Christ or the faith in Him became the deliverer from the bondage of this disciplinarian (Ga1. 3, 25), and this dark administrator was no longer allowed to subjugate the underage when they came of age through faith.

(Ga1. 4, 2. 3).

Without the bondage of the law, humanly speaking, such a desire for Christ, such a hunger for Messiah, such a thirst for light and grace would never have come alive and become effective in Israel, as was the case at the incarnation of Christ and will be the case in an even greater and more glorious way at the second coming of the Lord.

Do we not feel the same way? Whoever has labored long enough in religious achievements and has come to nothing in spite of the most sincere efforts, develops such a strong desire for grace, such a hunger for Christ, that nothing and no one is able to hold him any longer; he becomes "of age and grows from the position of servant into the position of son" (Ga1.

4, 1).

The point in time at which a believer reaches out of the immaturity of legal servitude into the maturity of sonship is of great

Meaning. In the example, we can see this, for example, from the fact that Abraham prepared a great meal on the day when the growing Isaac was weaned (Gen 21:8). It is no coincidence that from this moment on he attracts the hatred of Ishmael and is persecuted by him (Gen 21:9; Ga1:4:29).

Is it not the same today? Whoever grows out of the immaturity and bondage of lawful being arouses the hatred of those who, although sons of Abraham, that is, children of faith, are like. Ishmael are born according to the flesh.

6. the law as a prophecy of future divine acts

Unbelief sees in the law a regulation which it must fulfill in its own strength, a demand which it is obliged to carry out. The more eagerly and faithfully he tries to do this, however, the more he is defeated. Faith sees something essentially different in the law.

Already David, the holy inspired singer, prays: "open my eyes, that I may see wonders in Your law!" (Ps. 119, 18.) Another might have pleaded, "Give me strength, that I may be able to fulfill the demands of Thy law!" David, however, looks deeper. To him the law is not a collection of threatening commandments, no, he sees hidden wonders in it! And in order to be able to see these miracles, he asks God for opened eyes of the heart.

The law therefore requires spirit-opened eyes to be able to see its hidden wonders. If it were only there to be fulfilled, it would have to bring us to despair, since no man is able to fulfill it. We read a wonderful word in this regard in Matth, 11, 13. There it says: "All the prophets and the law prophesied (or prophesied) until John." According to our common opinion, it should be written there: "All the prophets prophesied until John, and the law commanded and commanded until John." But that is not what it says! The law has just like the prophets prophesying or prophetic ministry!

The law is prophecy at its deepest core! What tremendous perspectives arise from this fact!

Ultimately, the law is not a prophecy of what we will accomplish, but of what God himself will one day accomplish. It is a silhouette of future goods or benefits (Hebr. 10, 1) and does not aim at us but at Christ.

For even Moses did not write in the deepest of matters concerning the fulfillment of the law by Israel, but concerning Christ (Luk 24:27), and again the Lord says that everything must be fulfilled that is written about Him in the law of Moses and the prophets and psalms (Luk 24:44). May He also open to us, like the

disciples of Emmaus, "the understanding to understand the scriptures" (Luk 24:25).

When Paul answered to Felix the governor, he said: "But this I confess to you, that after the way which they call a sect, that is, I serve the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets..." (Acts 24:14). Again, anyone ignorant of the deep hidden meaning of the law would have declared, "I believe what is written in the prophets and do what the law requires." Not so the apostle! He does not see the essence of his service in doing and accomplishing, although he has done and accomplished more than any other witness of the Gospel. He serves God by believing all that is written in the law and in the prophets, so that he even calls the resurrection of the unrighteous an "elpis", a hopeful thing!

Therefore, if we want to be imitators of Paul (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1), we must learn to believe everything that is written in the law.

In Ga1. 4, 21 he reproachfully and ironically calls out to those who allow themselves to be enslaved under the law: "Tell me, you who want to be under the law, do you not hear (understand or grasp) the law?"

With this he wants to say: "You foolish Galatians want to be under law, but you do not understand the actual deep, wonderful meaning of the law at all!" And then he interprets in a bold, mighty way what the two wives of Abraham and their sons shadow.

Rom. 10, 4 can also be translated: "Christ is of the law Zie1." This means that the law aims at Christ. Seen outwardly, it is about Israel and its achievements; seen inwardly prophetically, however, it shadows the wonderful person and the various ministries of Christ.

But now we saw that the law comes from the angels. Did these beings consciously and intentionally put a silhouette of future deeds of God into their purely external arrangements?

Not at all! They did this wonderful prophetic ministry without knowledge and will by creating the law!

It was the same with many prophets of Israel (1 Peter 1:10-12). They had no insight into the messages they brought themselves, and the angels desire to see into the prophecies of the servants of God.

Also Caiaphas prophesied "not of himself" but only because "he was high priest that year" (Joh. 11, 51). His prophetic ministry was unconscious.

It is the same with the law!

By issuing commandments and regulations, the angels, without knowledge and will, sketched the most accurate silhouettes of future acts of God, drew wonderful pictures of Christ and His ministries and tasks.

If we consider, for example, the various sacrificial laws or the arrangement of the tabernacle, we see the glory of Christ shining out everywhere. How ambiguous the tabernacle is, for example, may only be indicated by a short word: Hebr. 9, 8. 9. There it is said that the front tabernacle is a likeness to the present time. If this testimony were not there, who would dare to claim that the tabernacle shadows different times or ages? How great and glorious our God and Father appears to us, if we consider that the angels, if they do something which neither corresponds to His will nor to His pleasure, must nevertheless represent His deepest and most secret thoughts of love in unconscious prophecy!

We saw that the law was given at the suggestion of the beings who embody the principle of power and authority. However, the law does not find its fulfillment in the power of any creature, be it man or angel, but in Christ, in love.

"He who loves to change has fulfilled the law," we read in Rom. 13, 8. And in the 10th verse of the same chapter it is written that love is the fullness or the full measure of the law. In "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" all the changing commandments are summarized (Rom. 13, 9). Love is therefore a summary of all the commandments.

What does "summarize" mean?

This word *anakephalaiōo* occurs only twice in the New Testament. Both times Paul uses it. In Eph. 1, 10 we find it again except in our passage from Romans. There it is said that the mystery of God's will, which He did not set before Himself in the council of the saints, but "in Himself," is to "sum up the universe in the Christ."

Literally translated, this expression means to head up, to make equal to the head, or to form into a unit equal to the head.

From the comparison of Eph. 1, 10 with Rom. 13, 9 results in the following: Just as the whole universe is raised up and formed into Christ, the law finds its final outer and inner fulfillment in love.

How great, mighty and wonderful the law appears to us from this point of view! For the faith it is a glorious prophecy of future deeds of God, a representation of the person and the offices of Christ, a stream of life that flows into love.

To unbelief, even the promise is a law that it seeks to fulfill; but to faith, even the law is a glorious promise of what God will do one day.

Only in this way and not otherwise can one understand that one can delight in the law and ponder it day and night (Ps. 1:2). The law is something to ponder, fills us with delight (Ps. 119:16, 174) and lets us find great spoils (Ps. 119:162).

However, this deep Christocentric meaning of the word has ever and ever been lost. Thus, for example, the prophet already complains about what has been made of the word of God's revelation: "And so the word of Jehovah will be to them: Commandment upon commandment, commandment upon commandment, precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little; that they may go and fall backward, and be broken, and entangled, and snared" (Isa. 28:13).

How clearly the prophet recognizes the effect of the commandments and regulations! The little word "so that" tells us what the book of laws and regulations, made from the word of God that imparts salvation and life, is for: that they may fall, be crushed, entangled and imprisoned!

Has not the good news been transformed into a threatening message today? Certainly it is necessary to emphasize the incorruptible holiness of God and the terrible seriousness of the judgment again and again; but doesn't the alleged endless torment of hell play a much more important role in some evangelizations (proclamation of joyful news!) than the love of the Father in the Son? Does not Isa. 28, 13 also fit into our time? -

To show that the law really has prophetic significance, we will pick out just two from the abundance of Old Testament commandments and ordinances.

Let us first read Exodus 21:28-36! There it speaks of oxen and donkeys. Do we mean our four-legged companions? Most certainly! But the meaning of this passage is by no means exhausted. Because 1. Cor. 9, 9. 10 tells us unequivocally that what is written in the law about oxen and donkeys actually applies to us. But who may well be, in the deepest and ultimate sense, the bumping ox in verse 29, the uncovered pit in verse 33, and the owner of the ox in verse 29 and the owner of the pit in verse 34? We will give the interpretation without giving it detailed biblical reasons for the sake of space. The ox that is pushed is in contrast to the

Lord, who is the plowing bull or the calf, the enemy; the pit is the realm of the dead, and the owner, to whom everything belongs, is God. One may examine the Bereans immediately on the basis of the whole scripture and all relevant

passages whether it behaves thus, and really "research" before one rejects and rejects something.

What does our "animal ordinance" want to tell us? But nothing less than the mighty and glorious truth that God makes Himself liable for all the damage of His creation, that He is, as it is evident from many testimonies, the great Redeemer, who restores and sets right everything that is lost and has gone to ruin!

A second law should be mentioned here, the regulation concerning the Hall or Jubilee year. We read in 3. Moses 25, 10. 13: "And ye shall hallow the year of the fiftieth year, and ye shall proclaim liberty in the land for all the inhabitants thereof. A reverberating year (or year of release!) shall it be unto you, and ye shall return every man unto his own possession, and every man unto his own kindred.... In this year of rejoicing you shall return each one to his own property."

If it was already a great thing when this commandment of complete apology and release was obeyed in Israel, what will be the rejoicing and exultation when God Himself will make this prophetic word come true in its fullness in the wide universe of the world one day after the passage of time!

When the "day of vengeance" will have passed, then "all who mourn" will be comforted (Isa. 61, 2), so that there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain (Rev. 21, 4). Then even Sodom and Gomorrah will return to their former state (Ezk 16:55), and "every yoke" will be broken (Isa 58:6).

What a mighty "release" that will be! "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame leap like a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shout" (Isa. 35:5, 6). "God will dwell even among the unruly" (or: "Even the apostates shall dwell with God") (Ps. 68, 18), and "everything that has breath" will praise the Lord (Ps. 150, 6).

Scripture is everywhere full of delicious mysteries and promises of perfection. Let us learn to look at them with enlightened eyes of the heart, even where they are seemingly incidental and superfluous legal injunctions, praying with David: "open my eyes, that I may

Wonder look in Your law!"

The glow of light from the glory cloud

Proclaimed in the desert tent

To the erring people of God

His salvation and the salvation of all the world.

The sacrifices of the two altars
Made of ore and pure gold
Areas that bow and honor be paid to the Savior God.
The brazen purification basin,
The golden cherubs,
The dark and shining ceilings, All this testifies to Him.
But only open eyes
Ability to see the interpretation,
Only loving hearts are fit to understand the wonders of salvation.
The sacrifices of the sheep and calves
In the front yard are not enough for us,
We seek Him full of longing In everlasting light.
How low even we poor have fallen,
His atonement and loving makes rich, For Christ becomes all in all, Is sacrifice and
priest at the same time. A. H.

On the Nature of Sin - by Adolf Heller

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

On the Nature of Sin By Adolf Heller

Hardly any term is subject to such diverse interpretations as that which is called sin per se. What one person calls necessary thriftiness seems to another as dirty miserliness. The prudent, cautious restraint of the phlegmatic appears to the sanguine as pathetic cowardice. Others call it senseless wastefulness, which could just as well be interpreted as generous generosity. The concepts of right and wrong towards God and man fluctuate alarmingly and change according to the mental attitude of an epoch or a people.

It is therefore valuable and important for believers to see clearly what the Scriptures, especially the New Testament, understand by sin. Therefore, let us consider ten different expressions that the authors of the Greek holy books use for the word or concept of sin.

1. Hamartia (hamarteema) = missing a target.
2. parabasis = crossing a line.
3. Parakoe - disobedience to a voice.
4. Paraptooma - Falling instead of standing still.
5. Agnoeema = ignorance instead of knowledge.
6. Heetteema - reduction of what would be fully refundable.
7. Anomia (paranomia) = failure to obey a law.
8. Asebeia = withholding prayer and thanksgiving.
9. Adikia = injustice, grievance, wrongful possession.
10. Proskomma = offence, annoyance, seduction.

1. hamartia = missing a target

More than 150 times the scripture speaks of hamartia, four times of the related hamarteema, hamartia means the missing of a goal; one could translate it very understandably with missing the goal. Let us look up several passages where we encounter this expression!

In Matth. 1, 21 Joseph was told concerning his foster son Jesus: "He will save His people from their sins." Of those who were baptized by John, Mark, I, 5 reports that they confessed their "sins." Joh. 1, 29 calls the Lord the Lamb of God, who takes away the "sins" of the world. Peter says of Jesus that He "did" no sin (1 Pet 2:22), John testifies that sin "is not in Him" (1 John 3:5), and Paul writes that the Lord did not "know" sin (2 Cor 5:21).

How exactly these three testimonies correspond to the character of the writers! Peter is the man of doing, John the man of being and Paul the bearer of highest and last knowledge.

The apostle of fullness uses the word hamartia often, most frequently in the Epistle to the Romans. The law brings about the knowledge of falling short of the mark (Rom. 3, 20). Christ was made by God to be sin for us, to miss the mark (2 Cor.5,21).

It seemed on the cross as if the Lord had missed His goal, as if the purpose of His mission had failed.

The scripture has enclosed the universe in miss-goal, teaches Ga1. 3, 22. What depths of divine wisdom and creaturely inability lie hidden in this simple testimony!

We were dead in slips and misses, we read in Eph. 2, 1. The following verse tells us that these slips and misses correspond to the course of time of this world, the Aon of this cosmos and the prince of the power of the air.

From these contexts we see an important, fundamental meaning of what sin is: the missing of a God-given goal. Let us not forget, however, that God Himself has included the universe in the missing of the goal in order to bring His creation back from this dungeon at the right time and hour through judgment and grace into His light-filled presence of blessing.

2. parabasis = crossing a line

Parabasis is another word for sin. It means something like crossing a line and is therefore often translated by "transgression". We encounter this expression seven times in the New Testament, namely twice in the Epistle to the Hebrews and five times in the Epistles of Paul.

Hebr. 2, 2 speaks of the transgression of the fixed word spoken through angels, and Hebr. 9, 15 calls the Lord the mediator of a new covenant, since death took place for redemption from transgressions under the first covenant. Rom. 2, 23 calls the transgression of the line of the law a dishonor to God; 4, 15 teaches that

transgression of the line is only possible where there is a law; 5, 14 speaks of the transgression of Adam; Ga1. 3, 19 tells us that the law ordained by angels was not added because of the righteousness to be obtained thereby, but rather because of the transgressions, and 1 Tim. 2, 14 testifies that not Adam, but the woman was deceived and fell into transgression.

So we always find the transgression or crossing of the line in connection with the law given to the first people or the people of Israel. The human being cannot do anything else than to transgress the God-given lines, yes, God draws this line or has it drawn by His holy servants, so that the creature is convinced of the fact that it cannot do anything else than to transgress the barriers of the God-given norms.

How great and all-sufficient salvation must be, when God is not only not frightened by the sin of His beings and worlds, but even allows the slumbering sin to be awakened by virtue of the law (Rom. 7, 7 -11)! 3. parakoe = not listening, disobedience

Parakoe actually means mishearing or not hearing, so it is disobedience to a voice. That is why parakoe is also translated as disobedience throughout. We find this expression only three times in Scripture.

First we read it in Rom. 5:19, where it is written, "Just as through the one man's disobedience the many were placed in the position of sinners, so also through the obedience of the one the many will be placed in the position of the righteous."

The parakoe, the non-hearing or false hearing of men, is opposed by the hypakoe, the hearing or obedience of Christ. Just as the disobedience of the first Adam put the change in the position of sinners, the obedience of the last Adam puts them in the position of the righteous (vg1. 1. Cor. 15, 22).

Also 2 Cor. 10:6 contrasts the two expressions parakoe = not hearing and hypakoe = underhearing: "We stand ready to avenge all disobedience when your obedience will be fulfilled."

The third passage is Hebr. 2, 2. We already saw that every transgression or line crossing of the fixed word spoken by the angels, namely the law, received just retribution. Besides the parabasis, the parakoe is also mentioned here.

The whole context of Hebr. 1, 14 to 2, 8 makes the following sense: The angels are ministering spirits. The present, but not the future course of time is subject to them. The law mediated by them was valid, every transgression and every

disobedience received due punishment. But if the law had to be taken so seriously, how much greater was the responsibility that the Hebrews had! The Lord had humbled Himself among the angels in His incarnation, but was then crowned with glory and honor, indeed, the whole universe was subjected to Him! The beginning - not the fullness - of His proclamation happened to the Hebrews during His walk on earth. This initial message was not only confirmed by those who heard it, but also corroborated by God, who accompanied the proclamation of the Kingdom Gospel with signs and wonders.

We could extend this line and continue in the sense and spirit of Scripture: If already the Israelite kingdom message meant a great salvation and every disobedience entailed punishment, how foolish we are and how great is the loss of glory if we belittle the fullness message of the Exalted One which He gave through Paul!

God preserve us in grace from every false hearing or non-hearing of what He endeavors to communicate and present to us through the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Himself!

4. paraptooma = throw next to, trap

Paraptooma = falling or misstep actually means "throwing beside". One explains this strange expression as follows: Even at the time when the New Testament was written, there were tax returns that had to be filed when buying or selling. For this purpose, in certain places there were stone or metal containers, a kind of mailboxes, into which such declarations were thrown. The state collected these declarations and taxed the buyers or sellers according to their statements. Now, even then there were tax evaders who wrote and filed returns, but they did not put them in the boxes, but beside them, so that the state could not find them. This type of fraud and swindle was called dane benwurf or paraptooma.

The New Testament uses this expression 22 times. 1Let's read some passages!

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord says: "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses" (Matth. 6:15).

Paul writes in Rom. 4, 25 that the Lord was given for our paraptoomata, and in Rom. 5, 18 we read: "As by one transgression against all men was condemnation, so also by one righteousness against all men was justification of life."

Rom. 5, 20 a testifies: "The law came in beside it, that the transgression might abound." Not so that it would be kept and save people, but so that our deceptive maneuvers would come fully to light, that is what the law was given for!

We find an important inner context of a similar kind in Rom. 11, 11. 12 a: "I say now, Have they stumbled, that they should fall? Let that be far off! But by their fall (paraptooma) salvation has become to the nations, to provoke them to jealousy. But if their fall is the wealth of the world..." - Israel's sin prepared its setting aside and thus our salvation. How wonderful is the inner interweaving of the guilt of the creatures and the graces of God! 5. agnoeema = ignorance

The word agnoeema = ignorance, not knowing instead of knowledge, we find only once in the scriptures in Hebr. 9, 7 b. There we read: "Blood, which he (that is the high priest) offers for himself and for the 'errors' of the people".

As in secular laws ignorance does not protect from punishment, so it is also in the spiritual. Christ not only atoned for our conscious transgressions, but also removed our ignorance concerning God and divine things.

Luther translates agnoeema with "oversight"; Schlachter, Menge, van Eß and Wiese render it by "transgressions" or "sin of ignorance"; Albrecht says here a bit more inaccurate "misdemeanor", while the most common English translation translates agnoeema quite well with "error" = error. In Christ God also overlooks "the times of ignorance" as Acts 17:30 confirms.

6. heetteema - diminution, lagging, deficiency

Heetteema = falling behind, deficiency, error actually means a reduction from what would be fully refundable. We find this expression in Rom. 11, 12 b and 1. Cor. 6, 7 a.

The two passages read: "Your (that is Israel's) 'loss' (loss or defeat) is the wealth of the nations", and: "It is already a 'fault' in you in the first place, that you have legal affairs with each other".

The coming short or failure of Israel means the wealth of the nations! What a bold assertion of the apostle! Without this fundamental testimony, neither Israel's history nor the essence of the intercalated message of the body of Christ can be understood.

If Israel had not been derailed and put under the curse, there would never have been - humanly speaking - a gathering and completion of the Gentile church revealed through the Glorified One by means of Paul.

Here, reproaches and condemnations of the natural man, which are completely justified in and of themselves, are transformed by the faith and knowledge of God into praise and worship of His wonderful thoughts, ways and purposes. That the Corinthians reproved one another was an "error," as the Catholic van Eß translation also translates. Schlachter writes here: "bad enough"; Menge translates: "moral defect," and Wiese writes: "harm." The French, English and Italian translations also speak of default, fault and difetto = fault or moral defect. In any case, the meaning is always that something is missing, a moral shortcoming. 7. anomia = non-observance of a law

Anomia or paranomia is the non-observance of a law and is usually translated by "lawlessness" or "godlessness". It could just as easily be translated as "normlessness" or "lawlessness." We find this word 14 times in the scriptures. Let's look up just three passages! In Matth. 23, 28 the Lord says to the scribes and Pharisees: "So you seem righteous before men on the outside, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." Jesus here compares the hypocrites to tombs that are beautifully decorated on the outside and present an image of order and peace, but are full of rot and decay on the inside. Seen from the outside, everything seems to be in harmony; inside, however, there is stinking normlessness.

God grant that this serious reproach may not also apply to us in regard to our knowledge and our conduct, our lip service and our hidden inner life!

Hebr. 10 speaks of the full sacrifice of Christ. The 17th verse is a quotation from Jer. 31, 33. 34 and reads: "Their sins (hamartioon) and lawlessnesses (anomioon) I will never (or by all means no longer) remember." Here we have one of the many delicious testimonies that give us a glimpse into God the Father's heart, His sensing and longing, His striving and remembering. In 1 John 3:4 it is written, "Everyone who does sin (hamartia) also does lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." The last half of the verse could also be translated, "Missing the mark is lawlessness." Those who do not root and weset in God's holy standards of love are on the arduous path of missing the mark.

We are happy that the Father has set us on the path of salvation and glory in His Son and that we may draw and live from His inexhaustible abundance!

8. asebeia = withholding godliness, thanks and praise.

Another word that belongs under the generic term "sin" is asebeia. Ase beia is the opposite of eusebeia = piety or godliness and means godlessness or freve1. It might best be characterized as withholding thanks and praise due to God.

Six times we encounter this noun in Scripture. We find it in Rom. 1, 18; 11, 26; 2. Tim. 2, 16; Tit. 2, 12 and Jude 15 and 18.

Rom. 1, 18 speaks of the wrath of God that is revealed against "all ungodliness of men". According to verse 21, this ungodliness has its roots in the fact that people neither glorified God nor gave thanks to Him and thus fell into darkness.

Gratitude is the way by which blessings are opened up and communicated, while ingratitude leads to hardening and error. That is why it is so very important for the church of the present time to give thanks "in everything"; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus toward us (1 Thess. 5:18). Rom. 11, 26 speaks of the turning away of "ungodliness" from Jacob by the Savior coming out of Zion, and 2 Tim. 2, 16 prophesies of ungodly, vain talkers who have strayed from the truth and progress to further "ungodliness".

Tit. 2, 12 instructs us to deny "ungodliness" in order to become prudent, righteous and godly waiters, and the two Jude passages speak of "ungodliness" as a characteristic of the end times.

It is good for us if we can learn to praise and give thanks from the heart at all times and for everything in view of God's glorious goals of perfection!

9. adikia = injustice or grievance

Adikia means injustice, insult, slight, or wrongful possession. It occurs 25 times in the New Testament. We meet this word e.g. in Joh. 7, 18: "He who speaks of himself seeks his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this one is true, and unrighteousness (adikia) is not in him."

By seeking not God's glory but our own, we withhold His own from Him, insult or offend Him, and usurp unlawful possessions.

Acts 1:18 speaks of the "wages of wrong" or insult that Judas received for his betrayal, and Simon the Sorcerer told Peter and John that he was "in bonds of wrong" or injustice (Acts 8:23). Love does not rejoice in insult or offense (1Co 13:6), and Paul asks forgiveness from the Corinthians in holy scorn because of his "wrong" of not being a burden to them (2Co 12:13).

In 2 Thess. 2, 12 we read about those who are judged because they did not believe the truth but were pleased with adikia. After all, for every judgment,

whether it is a judgment of hardening, revelation or condemnation, the decisive factor is what the heart's most secret thoughts and desires were directed toward, just as the reward and the crown do not depend on our performance but on our love (Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5; 14:25; 2 Tim. 4:8). It is not primarily what we say and do that matters, but where the roots of our being are, from where the most secret source areas of our being are fed.

Let us mention another word from the Epistle of James, in which we encounter the *adikia*: ch. 3, verse 6. There the apostle calls the tongue "a fire, the world of offense and insult". How open and serious, how true and powerful are the judgments of the holy scriptures about our words and their innermost nature!

10. *proscomma* = offence or annoyance

One last term that belongs in our context should be mentioned here: *proskomma* - offence, annoyance or seduction. We find this word in Rom. 9, 32. 33; 14, 13. 20; 1. Cor. 8, 9 and 1. Petr. 2, 8.

The Lord is called a "stone of stumbling" in Rom. 9, 32. 33 and 1. Petr. 2, 8. The latter passage is a quotation from Is. 8,14. There it is said of the Lord that He is both a "sanctuary" on the one hand and on the other hand a "stone of stumbling" and a "rock of stumbling".

In Rom. 14:13, the apostle admonishes us to be careful not to give offense to our brother. The 20th verse tells us that while everything is pure in and of itself, it is bad (bad or unwholesome) to eat anything "with offense." Even if one has inner freedom to some enjoyment, one should not give offense, annoyance to the weak. For the same pleasure to which we have inner authority would be a misstep and sin to the one who changes (1 Cor. 8:9).

Not by legal regulations of any kind, but by the spirit of love and consideration alone can the solution be found which is satisfactory to both parts. The dispute over what is permitted or forbidden to a child of God, the different opinions on the "middle things," will probably best be ended by the renunciation of the stronger out of love for the weaker brother.

On the other hand, many a "brother offense" who in reality cannot be detached from his envy or inferiority burdens, should be reminded that in John 11:9, 10 it is written, "If anyone walks by day, he does not stumble.... But if anyone walks by night, he stumbles because the light is not in him."

How great and comprehensive, how wonderful and world-wide the work of redemption of Christ must be, if a new, sinless creation without night and curse,

without mourning and tears, without death and devil will one day glorify and praise God the Father! (Rev. 21, 4; 22, 3. 5; 1. Cor. 15, 24 - 28; Ps. 103, 22.)

On the Nature of Sonship - by Karl Geyer

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

Of the essence of sonship

From Karl Geyer

The gospel is the good news of God about His Son (Rom. 1:1, 3). What is the reason of His joy and blessedness? No created thing, no made object can satisfy the heart of the invisible, uncreated God. Equal things must come before Him to make His bliss full. In the Son the Father sees Himself and therefore finds in the "imprint of His being" (Hebr. 1,3) the fulfillment of all His longing for God. The Son of love is the fulfillment of Him who is love according to His whole being. The whole fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in the Son. Therefore no one can represent and make known the Father but the Son (Co1. 1,13-20; 2,9; Hebr. 1,1-3; Joh. 1,1-3.14.18).

In the Son, God finds Himself again. There He, the invisible God, has become visible for the created. "God revealed in the flesh" - God is blessed (1.Tim.3,16). Therefore the gospel is the joyful message of the blessed God (1Ti 1,11).

Before the begetting of the Son, God was all in Himself, all in Him. All His fullness was still hidden in Him. Apart from Him there was nothing. Only He was aware of Himself and saw His own depths in the spirit (1 Cor. 2:11; Rom. 11:34). He knew His greatness and power and the glory of His being and was aware of all His works from the beginning before He called one of them into existence. But nothing was revealed yet, and nowhere was His glory reflected. No one knew of Him, no one admired His greatness, no one worshipped Him, no one loved Him, Love. His glorious fullness was not a source of refreshment for anyone and no fruit of His existence was seen. He had not yet become the Father, for the Word was still in God.

This solitude of God became togetherness, communion. Love multiplied itself. Its fruit was life. God begat the Son and thus became the Father. "You are My Son! Today I have begotten you!" (Ps. 2,7; Hebr. 1,5).

With this "today" God steps out of Himself and begins the revelation of Himself. Before, everything was timeless. Now He sets time. With this "today" the ages (eons) begin their course. The Son of Love, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of all creation, was there. The world history of God began. God began to make Himself

known, to reveal His nature. At the end of the ages, God completely unveiled Himself.

wraps and also fills in everything, so that He can be "all in all" (1.

Cor. 15:28).

God alone has immortality. In the Son, this immortality became life. Life is love multiplied by procreation. Without this multiplication of love, life would never have been manifested. That is why the scripture tells us about the Son: "In Him was life" (Joh. 1,4).

Sonship is life, is love begotten. Love is the completion of all beingness, the highest form of all existence, the deepest of all delights, the bliss of all blisses, the highest happiness of all being. Its

Fruit is life, is sonship; its origin is God. God is love (1 John 4:8,16). In sonship, God increases His own being. Therefore, there is nothing higher for God Himself than sonship. Nothing is more satisfying and blessed for Himself than the increase of life revealed in sonship. Therefore, of all the things that He intended to do, the good pleasure of His will rests on the Sonship. He testifies this to the Son of love (Matth. 3,17; 17,5), and He also testifies this to us (Eph. 1,5).

Sonship has its origin in the Father. Everything goes back to Him. Nothing that belongs to the Sonship is without Him. Therefore, the Son cannot do anything of Himself; everything that He sees the Father doing, the Son does as well (Joh. 5,19.20.30; 8,28). Therefore, He cannot speak from His own. Created things can speak out of their own and do their own will, as long as they have not yet entered into life connection with God, are still free from God or godless. In the created the life of God does not work yet. It is subject to mortality. That is why the natural man is still dead in transgressions and sins, even though he may act very much alive. For being alive is not yet living. Life exists only through procreation. What has not yet been begotten into the life of God has no share in the life of the Father. Therefore it can also fall and sin. This is the lot of all creaturely beings, the lot of the natural man. The one born of God, however, does not sin (1 John 3:9). The one born of woman has to sin. Both natures walk side by side in the believer, the one born of woman and the one born of God. For we do not yet have full sonship, but the spirit of sonship as a pledge that even the last ties will be loosened one day and the mortal will be swallowed up by life. Only with the full revelation of sonship in the redemption of the body does this tension end (Rom. 8,23).

Sonship is the representation of the Father's life - is co-support and co-suffering

The essence of sonship is to represent the life of the Father in all its effects, to adopt the same attitude of mind, to act from the same motives, to strive for the same goals - in short, to be representative and substitute of the same nature in everything.

The son is also heir - first not of external goods, but of the being and character of the father. Only from this inner connection of being results the hereditary share in the possession of the father.

In purity, only One represents this until now: the Son of love, Jesus Christ, the firstborn of the brethren (Rom. 8:29). But just as the firstborn was the Son of God, so are those born after. They are all partakers of the same Spirit, begotten of the same Spirit, partakers of the same nature of God, heirs of God and fellow heirs of Jesus Christ, and when the Christ, their life, is revealed, they will all be revealed with Him in glory (Rom. 8:14-17; Co1. 3,4; 2. Thess. 1,10; Phi1. 3:21; 1Jn 3:2; 2Co 3:18; Heb 2:10; Matth 5:48).

The essence of sonship also includes the sharing of responsibility out of an inner obligation, not out of a servile need. The spirit of the Father in the sons makes them feel co-responsible for everything He wants to lead out in the future¹. Violent tasks in the heavenly worlds await them in the coming years.

Ages. They will judge the world and the angels one day (1. Cor. 6,2.3). They shall rule with the Son from aeon to aeon until He has executed all His promises through them (2. Cor. 1,20). We have to be educated for this. We have to be made like the firstborn of the brethren in everything, to believe and recognize as His members like Him, so that we can also act out of the same motives in everything (Eph. 4,13). The firstborn of the brethren was made perfect through suffering and learned obedience by what He suffered. He carried the responsibility laid on Him in a perfect measure and in a Godly way, so that it became obvious again and again how consubstantial He was with the Father. He carries the universe towards the goal of His destiny and cleared the way to it through the surrender of Himself, through His self-sacrifice in love. Therefore also the life of the sons is a holy sacrifice (Ko1. 1,24). Love carries everything!

Sonship stands in total surrender to the Father and in total ab-

dependence on Him in all actions. The Son cannot do anything by himself. He acts from the Father and therefore also like the Father. The bond is expressed in everything. The way of the sons is a continuous revelation of God in the flesh. No matter how weak and wretched they may be in themselves, the spirit of

sonship lives in the earthen vessel and unflinchingly goes its way with them until Zie1.

The essence of sonship also includes participation in suffering, in feeling the tension between the immortality and glory of the Creator and the mortality and lowliness of the creature. Because sonship has the same nature as the Father, the sons also feel as He feels, even if not to the same perfect degree as He does, but in the same way.

Sonship in all its glory has been fully revealed only in One, the Son of Love. When He rose from the dead, it was shown that begotten life of God cannot be held by death. Satan and sin, death and Hades only have power over created things that are subject to mortality, but not over begotten things from the spirit. Sonship is the generation of the spirit. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, life and incorruptible being was brought to light. That is why the scripture speaks of sonship only after Christ was proven to be the Son of God through the resurrection of the dead.

The term "sonship" (hyiothesia) is only found in the epistles of Paul five times: Rom. 8,15; 8,23; 9,4; Ga1. 4,5; Eph. 1,5. Paul proclaims the resurrected and glorified Christ in a special way. The Lord was no longer in a state of lowliness when He revealed Himself to Paul before Damascus. He no longer spoke on earth, but from heaven. There He is no longer under law, but in the full freedom of sonship. Therefore the state of sonship in the gospels cannot be clearly described for us yet. Conversely, the expression "boy" (pais) is found only in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, and characteristically 24-ma1. It expresses the state of immaturity, in which the heir does not differ in anything from a servant (Ga1. 4,1).

Because there is a sonship according to the spirit only since the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, the position Israel was in is called a sonship according to the flesh. It does not differ in anything from bondage (Ga1. 4,21-31). The sonship according to the flesh is only a faint shadow, the sonship according to the spirit is

the being itself (Ga1. 4,1-7). Sonship according to the flesh belongs to Israel (Rom. 9:4); sonship according to the Spirit, true sonship, belongs to the church of the firstfruits (Eph. 1:5; Rom. 8:15; 8:23). The characteristics of sonship are

- 1. spirit drive (Rom. 8:14); ● 2. spirit effect (Rom. 8:15); ● 3. spirit witness (Rom. 8:16,17).

In these three, the connection of the indissoluble life in the sons with the Father is shown. These expressions of life are the confirmation that God began His work in a human being by imparting new life to him through the Spirit.

This life is what the creature subject to mortality craves.

Therefore, sonship is the hope of the entire universe. Without this hope, through sonship and in sonship to get a share in the life and nature of God Himself and thereby to be released from transitoriness, the life of all flesh is only an agonizing languishing, all existence is only a horrible insanity. That is why sonship is the hope of the whole creation. Everything longs for it. A threefold sighing and longing for her constantly resounds before God.

A triple sigh and longing

1. The whole creation longs and groans for sonship (Rom. 8:19-22).

2. We also long for the revelation of what we will be, and await with perseverance and groaning the adoption as sons, the redemption of the body (Rom. 8:23).

3. the spirit itself uses itself for saints with unspeakable sighs according to God (Rom. 8:26,27).

1. the longing of creation for sonship

The entire creation lies in labor pains and stretches out its arms to us in longing desire, in which it sees the first line of the spirit. Creation expects help from us out of suffering and need. The slavery of mortality weighs heavily on everything created. Help for the perishable comes only from the imperishable, the spirit. God, who alone has immortality, is spirit. Only through the generation of the spirit can life and incorruption be imparted to the mortal creature. God's spirit begets God's life, God's being, God's nature in us with our spirit. This is sonship. But not yet completed sonship. The mortal is not yet swallowed up by the life. But the marks of sonship are present in us: Spirit drive, Spirit action, and Spirit witness. The "why" of our actions is grounded in the spirit that guides us. The "why" of our existence finds its reason in the fact that the Father wants to have sons¹. Therefore, He has destined us to sonship for Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, and trustingly, out of this certainty of being there for Him, we say: "Abba, dear Father". The "whither" directs our gaze and our hope to the future glory that shall be revealed in us¹. Our glorious inheritance is nothing less than the participation in all that the Father has given to the Son, the

Christ. Everything the Father has given to the Son, and everything that belongs to the Son is also ours.

In spirit and in faith we already possess everything. The outward manifestation of these facts before the world will take place at the revelation of Jesus Christ in glory, when we will be revealed with Him, so that in that day He will be glorified in His saints and marveled at in all who have believed (Co1 3:4; 2 Thess 1:10). The uncreated creation does not yet have a share in incorruption. But God, who begets the universe into life (1Ti 6:13), has only subjected it to mortality for a time, in hope that it, the whole creation, will be set free from the slavery of mortality and raised to the same glorious freedom of sonship as the sons of God. The firstfruits are the pattern and model for the late ones, the dawn is the model for the masses. Therefore, the gaze of creation is upon us, in whom this imperishable spiritual life of sonship is already begotten. When we are completely freed from the remnants of mortality through the redemption of the body, then we stand before it in the final glory of creation. The final yield of the eons, which will one day benefit the entire creation, has already come upon us today (1 Cor. 10:11) and will be publicly displayed in us before the whole world when we are revealed with Christ. Creation, which is still shrouded in the darkness of death, longs for this sight. The revelation of the sons of God opens the door of hope for the whole AI1. Today, this door is not yet opened. The image of glory is not yet beheld. The freedom of sonship is not yet portrayed. That is why the creature groans. The whole creation is groaning together. What a mighty groaning!

What a worldwide lament! What a mighty symphony of the world and its passing, of suffering and dying! Only the final movement breaks the rigidity of death. Its theme is: "To hope! Soon the sons of God will be revealed! Then also we, the other members of the whole creation, will have our turn!"

Suffering has brought forth the most precious fruit in the whole universe. 1Suffering causes longing! Longing makes persevere in hope! Hope grants glimpses of glory! The glorious outcome makes all that has gone before bearable and makes it seem small in relation to the yield. In the midst of suffering, the boast of hope rises up and glorifies the God of hope, who leads everything out gloriously and who has turned the exits of death into gates of glory.

Everything mortal longs for immortality, for true life that is no longer subject to death. In Christ this life was seen. The risen Christ is the life-giver, and the resurrection is the gate of hope.

What was first seen in Him is now worked out in the body church. From all nations God has called firstfruits and destined them to sonship for Himself. They are now the bearers of God's life in the flesh. For the creation this is the test whether the transplantation of the divine life into the mortal flesh succeeds. In eager expectation (literally: with neck stretched out) all created things look to the sons of God who have the first fruits of the spirit (Rom. 8,19). The revelation of the sons of God is supposed to give the final proof that the transplantation of the uncreated into the created has succeeded and immortal life in full, divine development has also been granted to the creature. Thus, the masses have hope only when the firstfruits emerge as perfected ones. The whole creature is waiting for this emergence of the sons of God in the full glory of sonship.

No other moment of the coming history of the world has a closer and greater interest for the creation than the moment when the spirit-born firstfruits, the members of the body of Christ, are united with the Head and are revealed together with Him. Their longing goes to this sight, and this expectation makes them groan in birth pangs.

2. our longing for the full revelation of sonship

The suffering of creation causes compassion in the hearts of the children of God. Own and foreign longings ring together in us. We expect for ourselves the sonship, the redemption of the body. Beyond that, we long for fellowship with all created things. The spirit of sonship urges for reconciliation! This longing is not yet fulfilled. The mass of creation still lies in the slavery of mortality. We, as the dawning or firstfruits, are taken out and set apart for Him, sanctified. "If the firstfruits are holy, so is the mass" (Rom. 11:16). But we long for the others! They are not yet with us! This makes us groan for their sake and for ours.

We are saved, but the final result of our salvation is not yet revealed. It is presented to us in the head. For us, we expect it in hope. What is not yet seen is the object of hope. And just as the creature longingly reaches out for the appearance of its hope, namely the revelation of the sons of God, so we reach out for the appearance of our hope, for the coming of the head of the body church. "We await the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

The Father has communicated His life to the Son in the past.

"He gave the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26).

"You are My Son! Today I have begotten you!" (Ps. 2,7; Hebr. 1,5). In the present, the Son communicates this life to all those whom the Father has given Him. And

in the future, through the members of His Body, the Head will carry out all the promises and pour out the whole rich life of God into the universe.

Just as in the past the Son waited for the Father, so today we wait for Him, and so creation waits for us. Every body is waiting for its head. "The universe is yours! But you are Christ's! But Christ is God's!" (1 Cor. 3:23).

In this way, the fatherhood of God has an effect even in the farthest reaches of the world. The means and the way to this is sonship. Sonship means hope, from the firstborn to the lastborn. It is the way of life from the One to all. It began in the Father's heart when He was all in one, and it is completed when He is all in all. As long as the unfinished is still on the way, it groans and longs for completion. In faith we are already perfected in Christ (Co1. 2,10). But in looking we are yet to be perfected. In this expectation we groan for the redemption of our body, for the full sonship.

3. the longing and groaning of the spirit

In the same way, the Spirit also groans! He went out from the Father and worked in us the desire for sonship, because the Father desires sons. He wants to bring many sons to glory (Hebr. 2,10). The desire of the Father finds its echo in our desire for the Father and in the longing to be conformed to His nature hi- no, as it is seen in the firstborn of the brethren. The Spirit works all this in us. He knows the final goal and the full end result of the path that God is taking with us and the entire creation. With us, much is still unclear, blurred and dark¹. In all our longing we often do not know what to ask for and how it should be asked for. But the Spirit has gone out from God. He knows the will of the Father and knows the way to the likeness of the Son. Therefore, He uses Himself for the saints and brings everything worthy of God, according to God, before the Father. What is still in the depths of our hearts, which we ourselves are not clearly aware of, the Spirit brings before God's face with inexpressible sighs. The sighing of the spirit is the longing of the Father for Himself in His children and the longing of the children for their Father, who is their source, from whom they come.

How exquisite it is that we know that the connection between God and us, between Father and child, does not depend on the state of growth or the degree of perfection attained, but on the unity of essence of the Spirit dwelling in us with the Father! With infinitely greater love than ever a mother cared for her child, the Holy Spirit is concerned for us. Already there, where we stammeringly said "Father" in the first joy of becoming a child of God, He was there for us, and when once our body, which is His temple, fails, when even the senses become dull and the mind can no longer grasp everything clearly, then the Spirit of God,

the Holy Spirit, sighs out of the earthly dwelling and is concerned about His temple and orders everything according to God, what has to be ordered.

Wonderfully, the Father has seen to it that His children are led home in a way worthy of God! It is not the insufficiency of the earthen vessel that is decisive, but the preciousness and glory of the treasure hidden in it. The Holy Spirit dwells in us! He is the Spirit of glory and gloriously guides us to the end so that God is glorified and the Son is honored.

Faith can rest there! What deep within us longs for light and clarity, still veiled and little comprehensible to ourselves - the spirit knows the meaning of our longing and sighing, the desire of the life begotten by Him, and He brings everything before the Father, who can satisfy the needs of the germinating and the unfolding life and who satisfies them full of the joy of the Father and full of the bliss of God. After all, He nourishes and nurtures in us the life begotten by Himself, His life in us. Should it not be bliss for Him to find Himself in us?

And all that needs to be done between Him and us, what we as children still dwelling in the earthly body cannot bring before our glorious Father worthy of God, the Spirit does. He takes care of us, and His inexpressible groaning not only encompasses all our needs to bring them before the Father, but He accomplishes everything in the sublime manner befitting Him for whose sake all things are.

Unutterable groaning, unspoken groaning (Rom. 8:26). - The Spirit does not speak in human words. What He has to say remains unspoken outwardly. It is not even possible to express in human words what moves the Spirit in His hot labor of love for us and in His sublime, God-worthy making known of all our needs and at the same time of His own desires for us before the Father. The whole world of deepest feelings, which flows back and forth between the lover and the beloved, is included in this sighing. Everything that resounds in us between the tears of sorrow and those of joy resonates in a spiritually clarified way in this sighing. It is a sublime song without words, and no one can offer it worthy of God in the present time than only the spirit.

The groaning of the spirit is the wordless harmony of the feelings of the heart of the Son with the heart of the Father, which meet in the heart of Christ Jesus. The Father wants to form the image of the firstborn in us in order to be able to reveal it to the whole creation, and we long to be formed into this image and to be revealed in glory with Him. The Spirit knows the Father's will with us and moves our hearts to reach out so that this will may be done in us and to us. What we thus feel, the Spirit has felt in a much higher degree, and all our longing and sighing is only the fruit of the longing and sighing of the Spirit. - How great is

often already the longing for the perfect in our own little human hearts! How great then must be the longing of the Spirit, who stands before God for all the saints!

Perfect longing - only darkly felt and sensed by us - grasped in clarity by the spirit and communicated in perfection to God!

Also all our distress resonates in it, yes, it is felt by the spirit deeper and earlier than by ourselves. Before Peter denied the Lord through his perjury, the Lord had already prayed for him that his faith would not cease. And that was at the time when the Lord was still walking in the flesh and the Spirit had not yet appeared. Now that the Spirit of Glory, the Spirit of God, rests upon us, who was involved in all things before the foundation of the world, when God made His purpose in Himself and knew us beforehand and chose us and ordained us for Himself according to the good pleasure of His will for sonship, the Spirit uses Himself in a Godly way for saints.

With all this, the scope of what the Spirit does for the saints with His sighing is far from exhausted. Much higher and lower and deeper is His service. Who wants to express it? He Himself does not express it! It is inexpressible!

What is presented in us and to us and through us by the guidance of the spirit before the creation is, as weak and initial as it may seem, a deposit for the whole creation. But the spirit presents everything purposefully in perfection before God, so that it is befitting the dignity of God to be experienced in such sublime exits.

The symphony must resound mightily before God, in which the groaning of creation and the groaning of the begotten sons are summed up in the groaning of the Spirit, who sets the keynote and makes everything culminate in perfection: sonship.

"Love is the perfection of all beingness, the highest form of all existence, the deepest of all delights, the bliss of all blisses, the highest happiness of all being. Its fruit is life, is sonship, its origin is God." Karl Geyer.

On the Essence of the Word of God - by Adolf Heller

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

On the Essence of the Word of God. By Adolf Heller.

Everything that God speaks or does. is done through "the Word." "He spoke, and it was; he commanded, and it stood." (Ps. 33, 9.) The creative Word is something incomparably greater than we are inclined to assume at first glance. It is not only the written word of the Bible, no, it is something much more substantial! The Lord Jesus Himself is called the Word made flesh (Joh. 1, 14; Rev. 19, 13).

But not only that. The apostle Paul writes in Co1. 1, 25 that he received the divine commission to complete the word of God or to bring it into its fullness.

What is he trying to say? Who or what is the fullness word of God?

First of all, as no doubt every plain reader of the Bible does, we must relate this testimony to the sacred Scriptures. If the apostle does not exaggerate and we really understand his statement as inspired, as God-breathed, then he says nothing less than that the Pauline epistles represent the fullness or the full measure of God's revelation. Do we want to believe this testimony? At any rate, not all who refer to the Bible do. For again and again in the course of the centuries people appeared who claimed that what had been revealed to them personally had been given in addition to the written Word of God and was the Word of God to the same extent as the Bible itself.

On the other hand, the apostle clearly and unambiguously testifies that it was given to him to bring the word of God to its full measure, to complete it. Who do we want to believe now? The answer should not be difficult for us.

But the apostolic testimony contains another essential truth, which has not been grasped by all believers. If the Pauline letters really bring the fullness or the full measure of the Word of God, then neither the Gospels nor the Acts of the Apostles, neither the Petrine and Johannine letters, neither the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle to James and the Epistle to Jude, nor the Revelation reveal to us the last and deepest of what God wants to tell us, but precisely the Pauline letters! Whoever has grasped this by faith will never again try to invalidate the fullness of testimonies from the letters to the believers from the nations by other passages from the Gospels (according to which the Son of God who came in the

flesh was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel). But in our context we shall not speak about this in detail, we are moved by another question: if the Lord is the Logos, the Word, then who is the Logos brought into fullness or into "completion, the Word brought into fullness?

The answer may give us Eph. 1. 23. There the church, which is gathered from the nations, is called soma (body) and pleroma (fullness or completion). If the Lord is the Word and we are His fullness or completion, then the whole Christ of God, consisting of head and members (1 Cor. 12. 12; Eph. 3, 6), can be none other than the Logos brought into fullness, the completed Word of God. Indeed, this is the special task of the apostle Paul: to call the body church of Christ and to instruct and complete it through his inspired letters.

This coincides with many scriptural statements that shine wonderfully to the enlightened eye of faith. Let's just remember that we are called co-heirs of Christ (Rom. 8, 17; Eph. 3, 6) and that the promises of God "through us" serve to glorify the Father (2. Cor. 1. 20)!

We may therefore boldly testify that there is, first, a written Word of God, second, an incarnate Word of God, and third, a Word of God brought into fullness. The written Word of God is the Bible, the Word made flesh is the Lord Jesus, and the Word brought into fullness is the Christ of God consisting of head and members.

Now, there are quite a number of allegories or symbols for the Word of God. Let us look at some of them and try to understand that what we read about the Word applies not only to the holy scriptures, but also to the Lord Jesus and the Full Christ. We will see in how many delicious contexts this is confirmed to us.

God's word as a mirror¹.

"If anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror. For he looked at himself, and went away, and straightway forgot what he was like." (Jam. 1, 23. 24.) As a man recognizes his natural appearance in a mirror, so he recognizes his soul-spiritual condition in the Word of God. Many therefore reject the Scriptures, because the book of books punishes them inwardly. Whoever faithfully and diligently reads his Bible recognizes himself better and better and learns to condemn himself more and more. Thus, the Bible is a mirror for our inner man.

According to 2 Cor. 3:18, we behold "as in a mirror" the glory of the

Lord. Where else than in the holy scrolls can we see something of the radiance of Christ's glory? So we find confirmed also here that the Bible is a mirror from which we recognize the truth, the truth about ourselves and about the glory of the Lord.

Not only the written word, but also the Lord himself, the Word made flesh, is a reflection of God's glory. This is testified by Hebr. 1, 3. "Reflection of His (i.e. God's) glory" is how the fine French Segond Bible translates this passage. No being, neither man nor angel, has so represented and radiated the glory of God, his very being and essence, as the Son. This is quite understandable! For in the earthly it is the same. People can imitate other people in gait and posture, in word and behavior by practice. But the own children are unconscious

Performers of those who begat them and from whom they are born. And Jesus was the first begotten of God and born of God. He was in the bosom of the Father. Therefore, no one is able to represent, to shine, to reflect God like the Son of God.

The unity of essence between the Father and the Son is so great that the Lord could say: "He who has seen me has seen the Father. (Joh. 14, 9.) No man, no angel is able to claim that. It would be blasphemy. The only begotten Son, however, may boldly say this.

Just as the Lord Jesus was a reflection and imitator of the Father, so also to us, the church of the Body of Christ, it is called: "Be imitators of God as beloved children! (Eph. 5. 1.) Not as foreign servants, but as beloved, Spirit-begotten sons and daughters born of God, we may be imitators of our Father. This is a great admonition and promise at the same time.)

According to 1 Cor. 6:20, we may and should glorify, radiate or reflect God on or in our bodies. Without our knowledge and will, we radiate something of the radiance of light that dwells in us through faith. Faithful believers have an effect on the world around them like a mirror held up¹. That is why they are hated and tried to be broken by all kinds of ungodly or pious means and methods. Are you really a mirror of God? Am I one? Oh what miserable, dim mirrors we are! Would that the fullness of God's grace and goodness were reflected in us unbroken! How blessed we would be! How much salvation and glory could be radiated from us into the visible, but especially into the invisible world! Do the principalities and powers in the heavenly regions observe us and desire to look into the things which have been entrusted to us by God (1 Peter 1:12)?

What will it be like in the coming eons of perfection when God holds up the mirror of his perfected Christ to the universe-wide creation - after all, all creatures are already longing for the unveiling of the sons of God (Rom 8:19)! We only have an inkling of the abundance of what awaits creation and ourselves! We can only listen with emotion into the secret heartbeat of this word of the longing waiting or foreshadowing of everything created!

So we see that the Bible is a mirror of God, that the Lord Jesus in his lowliness on earth reflects the Father and that we, too, are allowed to shine off the glory of God already now in poverty and later in a perfect way. Truly, the Word of God, the written one, the one made flesh and the one brought into fullness is a holy mirror of God! God's word as a hammer

"Is not my word...like a hammer that shatters rocks? (Jer 23:29) Nothing is able to shatter us so thoroughly, to break us so completely as God's Word. The Word of God heard, read, moved in the heart is truly a hammer. The first effect of the Word of God is never to make us happy and blessed. On the contrary, the opposite is the case. That is why most people avoid the Word of God, withdraw from it when it begins to strike them in the innermost heart and break the rock of their natural being.

It is one of the deepest tragedies of our humanity that we can escape the language of God, escape the hammer of his word. Even the prisoner behind the barbed wire, the convict in the cell, yes, even the death row inmate who knows that he has only days or hours to live, can close himself off to the seriousness of God's language.

But it is also an indescribably great privilege that we, if we are of the truth, may consciously and voluntarily expose ourselves to the hammer blow of the Word. For a broken heart does not despise God, and a broken spirit is a pleasing sacrifice to Him (Ps. 51 17) God breaks to heal (Deut. 32, 39), and Israel had to break all idols if it wanted to stand in the lasting enjoyment of divine healing deeds.

Not the strong and proud, but "the brokenhearted he saves" (Ps. 34, 18), and "the brokenhearted" are sent out into freedom (Luke 4, 18) Therefore the raging people must be crushed (Is. 8, 9) Blessed is he who lets himself be crushed and shattered by God's word! He chooses a delicious, short path of grace that saves him from terrible, eternity-long judgment and damnation.

Because the peoples of the earth resist the hammer of God's word, another hammer will smite them. Before this hammer Jer 50:23 says: "How is the

hammer of the whole earth hewn down and broken in pieces" How has Babylon become a terror among the nations! I set snares for you, and you were caught, Babylon, without knowing it. You were found and also seized, because you engaged in war against the Lord" The Babylon of the end times will make the nations the anvil and will itself be the hammer of God, until it will experience the terrible judgment, which Rev. 18 describes so grippingly

Let us voluntarily expose ourselves again and again to the hammer of God's word, so that it can smash and smash everything that rises up as high against the Lord! It is only for us to hei1. The stony heart must be crushed so that God can take it out and give us such a heart that sincerely loves Him and willingly walks in His commandments - In Ps.2:7-9 the Lord testifies, "Jehovah has said to me: You are my son, today I have begotten you. Ask of me, and I will give you for an inheritance the nations, and for a possession the ends of the earth. With an iron scepter (or rod of discipline) you will shatter them, as a potter's vessel shatters them.

Here we look into mighty judgment tasks of Christ. He will one day smash the disobedient, unruly nations with an iron rod of discipline, like potter's vessels smashing them. The Lord proves to be the holy hammer of God, capable of crushing all resistance. It is so important to remain in harmony with the whole image of Christ.

Every spiritual epoch has its own image of Christ. Depending on the spiritual-emotional disposition, one side of the vision of Christ comes to the fore and displaces the others. Due to the narrowness of our consciousness, i.e. due to the fact that most people are able to grasp only one truth at a time (and then usually overemphasize it), it is difficult to remain in the holy balance of divine harmony or to enter it at all. For millions of people Jesus is only a little child on the arm of the "Mother of God", for others the "dear Savior" who caresses children and heals the sick; for uncounted only the lamb who lets himself be crucified out of love for us and silently goes to death. But is he not also the Risen One, the One exalted above all heavens, who reigns priestly at the right hand of God and waits until all his enemies are laid at the footstool of his feet? Will he not come again to take unto himself his own, and with them, his like, conformed church, return to the earth to execute judgment and establish his kingdom? Will he not, according to his holy oath, renew everything, and after long, anxious eons of judgment, be the first and finisher of his creation?

Would we learn to suppress nothing and to emphasize nothing one-sidedly, but to keep the divine balance with regard to the offices and tasks of the Son of God;

would we also learn to understand him as the holy judge and avenger, who will smash and smash like potter's vessels the haughty, pharisaic nations, who are, after all, in the deepest reason, despite all "Christianity", his enemies.

All these tasks are not carried out by the humiliated human being, not by the Word made flesh, but by Christ who has been brought to fullness. Therefore, on the one hand we read: "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son" (Jn 5:22); on the other hand, it is clearly and unambiguously testified to us: "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Do you not know that we angels will judge?" (1 Cor. 6:2, 3).

This is not a contradiction at all. For the head executes and carries out everything through the members. As in our body life the members are the executing organs of the thoughts of the head, so it is in an infinitely more sublime way also with the Christ. When the Lord breaks the gates of brass and shatters the bars of iron, it will be at the time when he is united with his body, the church of the nations. We participate in these mighty tasks, since we are "partakers of his promise", as Eph. 3:6 testifies.

In the symbolic language of Scripture, rocks or stones are often images of angelic and spiritual powers. These stones will be crushed by the Christ. "You will judge angels!" we read above. In this context belongs the fact that the law engraved in stones is given by angels (Acts 7, 53; Hebr. 2, 2; 2. Cor. 3, 3. 7): from here one also disguises quite differently the fearful prayer of Rev. 6, 16; the comparison of 5. Deuteronomy 32, 4. 17 and 31 shows us that the rock of unfaithful Israel are demons; the screaming stones of Hab. 2, 11 and Luke 19, 40 are not exaggerated oriental imagery, but have much more to tell us; and from stones

God is able to raise up children for Abraham, the father of faith.

(Matth. 3, 9)!

In what a wonderful light does the simple testimony of Scripture shine for us that the Word of God shatters rocks like a hammer!

God's word as fire.

Is not his word like fire, says the Lord" (Jer. 23:29). "Did not our hearts burn within us. when he spoke to us on the road, when he opened the scriptures to us?" the disciples asked each other when the Lord had spoken his word to them (Luk 24:32).

Where the fire of the Word of God falls into a human heart, it has a purifying effect and consumes evil. After all, fire is an often used symbol of destructive or purifying judgment. Our inherent sin is dead and unconscious until it is awakened (Rom. 9, 7b). But what is more capable of awakening us and bringing us before God's face, of revealing our actual being and nature more radically and unsparingly than the word of the Lord?

As the word of judgment burns in the hearts of sinners, so also the word of grace burns in those who are seized by it. To whom the scriptures are opened, the heart glows (Luk 24:32). Whoever has not experienced this, whose heart has never threatened to leap in holy, blessed joy because it burned and blazed, ignited by the fire of the altar, knows little of the essence of the Word of God. He may have a cold, dead orthodoxy, which is acquired or learned. - He will consider every really living, God-given recognition, every glow in the spirit, to be a mere enthusiasm. But blessed is he who knows something of the mighty, holy travail when God reveals and communicates his word and through his word himself!

We are certainly not waiting for a new Pentecost in this household of grace; we do not want to imitate anything, nor do we want to bring about anything in a spiritual way, which contradicts the clear line of the Body of Christ, - and yet we may personally, each in his own way, experience something of the holy fervor of divine ardor of love, to which the apostle Paul exhorts us when he writes in Romans 12. 11: ... Be fervent (or burning) in spirit!" Is not the

Lord come, according to His own words, to cast a fire upon the earth (Luk 12:49)? And is not God also called "a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29)? The fire of judging love and loving judgment burns deep into every heart that truly opens itself to the Spirit of God. The Logos of God is truly a fire that ignites all those who come into contact with him. He already called his forerunner and pioneer, the Baptist, "a burning and shining light" (John 5:35)! In how much greater a degree was the Lord himself a burning light! His flaming gaze saw through men to the most secret primordial depths of their deepest being, burned to the last folds of their very being. In this cold, dead world, which has died in sin and remoteness from God, there are

Bearers of divine fire of love, who always open themselves to the holy glow from the altar. Thus Apollos of Alexandria, who was "mightily instructed in the scriptures and in the ways of the Lord," was fervent or burning in spirit (Acts 18:24, 25). And was not the apostle to the Gentiles also a man so filled and imbued with the love of Christ that he was always burning (2 Cor. 1:29)?

What a difference there is between the dead, cold stones that shade the congealed angelic and spirit world, separated from the holy fire of God's love, and what they once were when He who was once a shielding, anointed cherub or angelic prince walked in the midst of "fiery" stones (Ezek. 28:14)!

Whether we take the fire as a symbol of judgment or of the spirit, the truth of Song of Songs 8:6, 7 remains great and adorable when we read: "Love is as violent as death, as hard as Sheol is its zeal; its embers are the blaze of fire, the flame of the Lord. Great waters cannot quench love, nor rivers overflow it. If a man would give all the wealth of his house for love, he would only be despised." Here we see that the inextinguishable, indestructible love of God, which is far more precious than all gifts and goods, is compared to fiery embers, indeed. represented as the zeal of hell.

The holy passion of divine love works itself, if it must, as the fire of hell! What tremendous insights into the households of God and their last and deepest purposes are given to us by such testimonies! Violence, harshness and fiery fires, according to this word, are profoundly nothing but ways of God's love. Do you understand now why God leads you and me such hard, painful ways? Out of love! Not external well-being, not power and success, not things and things God wants to give us, but himself!

If the Father of Light wanted to offer his creatures only gifts and goods, yes, even all the wealth he possesses, but deny his love, himself, he would only make himself contemptible according to his own word. If all Scripture is God's self-revelation, so is this. Here the Father of love reveals his true being and his deepest thoughts. In the actual reason the word of God is not a legal demand to the creature, but self-disclosure and self-communication of the Creator. The Lord does not say: "Search the scriptures, they testify of you", but: "they testify of me. Thus Song of Songs 8:6, 7 also testifies profoundly of God and His ways and purposes. He, to whom all things are at command and will, will also use the holy fire of his judgments in a well-balanced way in order to certainly achieve his love goals.

God's word as rain.

"As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither, but have watered the earth, and fertilized it, and made it sprout, and given seed to the sower, and bread to him that eateth: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall do that which I please, and it shall accomplish that which I have sent it for". (Is. 55, 10. 11.) The holy word from God's mouth is compared here with the rain and snow of heaven,

which water the earth, moisten it and make it sprout and then return to heaven again in a silent, soundless way, i.e. evaporate and form clouds again. How clearly and comprehensibly God speaks here of the directing of His good pleasure and the carrying out of His mission, which are accomplished by His word! The earthly is here, as so often in the Scriptures, a reference to the spiritual. Everything transient, time-bound is only image and shadow of eternal, divine realities. What rain and dew. What rain and dew, snow and hail do in nature, his word does in the realm of the spirit and the spirits. The soil of the heart, which has been trampled down by sin and habit, is softened and enabled to bear fruit by the proclaimed Word of God. This is even more true of the Word of God made flesh, the Lord himself, than of the written or spoken word. He says of himself in Hosea 14:5-7: "I will be to Israel as the dew: it shall blossom as the lily, and take root as Lebanon. Its shoots shall spread, and its splendor shall be like the olive tree, and its smell like Lebanon. Those who dwell under its shade shall in turn bring forth grain and blossom like a vine, whose reputation is like the wine of Lebanon."

The Lord is the holy dew, which brings the stifled, fruitless Israel to root and grow, to blossom and fruit-bearing. The various plants mentioned in our context are all of prophetic significance: the lily of purity, the fruitfulness and splendor of Lebanon (Isa. 29:17; 35:2; 60:13), the olive or olive tree as the bearer of the spirit, the grain that becomes the bread of life, the vine as the image of joy, the cypress as the symbol of peace, and so on.

Without the fertilization by the Son of God, the world would remain frozen in death and without life from God. But Christ is the holy dew that falls from heaven, waters the earth, fertilizes it and makes it sprout, dies itself as a seed and thus becomes the bread of life. Then, after having done what pleases God and accomplished what he was sent to do, he returns to his Father.

How clear is this picture! How deep and beautiful is this depiction of the work of Jesus! Whoever believes that the scripture has only one meaning, which excludes all other meanings, is not able to see such delicious perspectives. But whoever knows that there is not only a written, but also an incarnate Word of God, which once the disciples touched (1. Joh. 1, 1), new insights shine through, which fill his heart with holy joy.

Doesn't the testimony of Isa. 35. 11: "My word will do what pleases me" completely coincide with the well-known promise of Christ in Isa. 53, 10, where it is written about the Lord: "The pleasure of Jehovah will be in his (i.e. the Lord's) heart."

i. of the Lamb of God) hand prosper (be carried out or brought to the goal)"? Most of the words of men are powerless, without value and effect. But "with God no word will be powerless (or impossible)" (Luk 1:37). Even the law given by angels is powerless or ineffective (Hab. 1, 4; Rom. 8, 3), since it does not bring anything to completion (Heb. 7, 19); but God's word, both the written and the incarnate, does not return to Him empty.

Also the fullness Logos, the Christ consisting of head and members, is sprinkled like rain or snow like a drink offering in order to do his godly service. We see this in the first fruits and model of the body church, the apostle Paul. He writes in Phi1. 2, 17: "But if I also be sprinkled as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and am glad with you all." The apostle is ready to be poured out like a drink offering. We fertilize the world around us to the extent that we are willing to be poured out and given. This is a truth which we know well, but which we resist in our pious self-life, when it is: accomplished upon us, and, seemingly destroying us, realized.

"Poured out as a libation!" Are you ready for this? Am I in agreement with this? "Just as the rain and snow come down...it will not return to me empty." This is a dying way with a glory promise. This program of God applies not only to the lifeless creature, not only to dead materiality, it also applies to us, the church of His Son. Whoever allows himself to be poured out here and sprinkled as a drink offering will not return to God empty, but will have an abundant entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet 1:11). "He who pours out" (1 Cor. 3, 8) and, is willing to be "completely used" (2 Cor. 12, 15), will one day receive full reward (1 Cor. 3, 8. 14). He who voluntarily gives up his life will one day, like our Lord and Head, be allowed to take it again in a transfigured way (Joh. 10, 18). Truly, the rain and snow that falls from heaven does not return to God empty!

God's Word as Seed

The Word of God is not only rain and snow that dewes the earth, it is also the seed, the holy seed, without which no life, no fruit can come forth. That is why the Lord says in Luk 8, 11: "The seed is the word of God." Jesus explains the parable in Luk 8, 5-8 to His disciples in the following verses 9-15. The condition of our hearts is to blame if the Word of God does not bear fruit. The Lord is the divine sower: the devil and his helpers are the birds of the air; the sorrows and deceitfulness of wealth are symbolized by thorns. Here we have a whole series of clear symbol explanations. 1eider this great and wonderful field of scriptural

knowledge is but little noticed and known. And yet, without these keys of biblical symbolism, many divine truths remain completely closed to us.

Not only the written word is called a seed, but also the Lord himself is called a grain of wheat that falls into the earth, dies and bears fruit

(Joh. 12, 24). Who is probably in the deepest and actual reason the one who carries the seed to the sowing according to Ps.126, 6 while weeping? Is it not the Lord himself who is sower and seed at the same time and entrusts himself crying to the dark womb of the cursed earth? But from the one seed rich sheaves are born, which he carries home rejoicing!

We find a very similar context in Ps.90, 3. There a man, who is the Son of God in the deepest sense, returns to dust or crushing. But God lets on the basis of this many people, yes, in the end all people return, come back from curse and death from one single divine seed the true essential man, many rich sheaves become'.

Also the believers are considered as seed as divine seed. Let us think, for example, of the word of Jesus in Luk 22, 31. "But the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has desired to sift you as wheat!" The enemy would like, as he once tried to do with Job, to put the disciples to the test, to prove to God and to the angelic worlds around his throne that the other followers of Jesus also fail like Judas when they are tempted and challenged. This is the meaning of sifting Satan. The aim with the children of God is always the same: he wants to touch the honor of God by their falling and make him a liar in front of the eyes and ears of the myriads of angels and throne spirits.

In I Cor 15 37, the body we sow is called a naked seed. But not only our body as a vessel is entrusted by God as seed for all our doing and leaving, our innermost being and becoming is a perpetual sowing. The apostle warns us in Ga1. 6, 7 8 with the extremely serious words

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he who sows to his own flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the spirit will of the spirit reap eternal life" Our I is not only according to the body, but also according to soul and spirit holy seed, seed for coming eons Already on the line of the earthly kingdom God speaks of the seed

Israel. So the Lord says in Matth 13 38: "The good seed are the sons of the kingdom" This is completely in line with Zech 10, 9, where it is written "I will sow them among the nations" and with Hosea 2 23, where the Lord promises "I will sow them (the wife of Israel) to me in the land" The literal text Bible of Kautzsch gives these two. Passages quite similarly.

Because God values his people, even if they are still in a state of cursing, as holy seed, he also punishes so much the proud nations, which offend the seed of Israel. How exceedingly serious are passages like Joel 3, 1 -8 12 19 Isa 34, 8 54, 15 b, Ob 10-15" Zeph. 2 8-10 and others!

If the people of earthly choice are already so highly valued as a seed that will one day bear its God-ordained fruit, how much more highly does the Lord value the congregation of His body, the members of His body, which He is now making one with Himself in the spirit, in order to one day raise them completely to Himself! God gives to every seed its own body (I Cor. 15:38) What a radiant body, conformed to Him and formed like Him, the congregation of His body will have one day, when, according to Phil. 3:21, it is brought into the conformity of the Glory of the Head will be transformed'.

God's Word as Bread

"Not by bread alone shall man live, but by every word of God," says the Lord in Luke 4:4 to the enemy, who demanded a miracle full of deep symbolic meaning. Above the certainly necessary bread for the body stands the bread of God for the spirit. After all, Jer 15, 16 a also testifies "Thy words were present, and I did eat them; and thy words were unto me for the delight and joy of my heart" In Amos 8, 11 12, too, bread is used in a serious, emphatic way as an image of God's word, when God there promises "Behold, days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a hunger into the land, not a hunger for bread, nor a thirst for water, but to hear the words of Jehovah. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run about seeking the word of Jehovah. and shall not find it.

The bread by which we live is the Word of God; and he who does not read his Bible starves to death, perishes miserably through spiritual malnutrition. For how many of God's children does the serious word in Hosea 4:6 apply: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I reject thee; and thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" The Word of God read, heard and moved in the heart is the bread without which there is neither life nor growth.

The Lord Jesus, the Word made flesh, also calls himself the bread of life when he 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 from heaven! Again he testifies in verse 32-35: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses did not give you

the bread out of heaven, but my Father giveth you the substantial bread out of heaven¹. For the bread of God is he that cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, give us this bread always. But Jesus said to them: I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in me shall never thirst."

The Jews grumbled about this testimony (verse 41). But not only the Jews! Even his disciples grumbled about it and called these delicious words "a hard speech" (verse 58-61)!

Our heart is only truly satiated and essentially satisfied when we feed on the bread of God. As long as this is not the case with us, we are filled with a consuming desire for strength and light and comfort that cannot be satisfied by anything earthly. You are hungry! Your soul has been crying out for the bread of life for a long time!

But all the joy of this time

Brings only misery and burden and suffering And makes us poor and anxious.

What the world also offered us beautiful,

Still did not create salvation;

It was not true bread of life

And led us out of night and trouble But never to recovery.

Christ alone does not disappoint us; we never approach Him in vain;

He gives us what we need, He satisfies us with strength and light, And is the bread of life.

One of the most delicious examples of Christ as the bread of life is Joseph. When he was elevated so high at last, after his dark and heavy leadings, he was given the name Zaphnath-Pahneach. This means in German: Savior of the world or bread of life. So also the true Joseph, the Son of God, was born in Bethlehem, in German: Brothaus!, was sold by his brothers, his own people, went through the prisons of death and the realm of the dead and thus became the bread of life, the Savior of the world. The church of the body of Christ is also called bread. After all, the inspired Apostle to the Gentiles testifies in 1 Cor. 10:17: "One bread, one body are we the many, for we all partake of the one bread." We who represent the unity of the Body of Christ in the breaking of bread are called "one

bread." This is of programmatic significance both in terms of our journey of becoming and of our great tasks in the universe of the world. From the grain of wheat to the finished, edible bread, there is a series of dying processes which, since the laws of nature also apply in the world of the spirit, both the Lord and his church have to go through in order to become the living bread of creation. The grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies. When the fruit is ripe, it is cut, threshed, ground, interspersed with leaven, baked, and finally broken as bread. These are all breaking processes, which the head and its members, foreshadowed at the natural bread, must go through. For the natural is a model and reference to the spiritual and spiritual-spiritual. (1.Cor. 15, 46). God's word is bread; the Lord, the Word made flesh, is bread: and the church of His body is also called bread. What deep, inner connections lie therein, above which faith worships and praises, when it is allowed to look behind the seemingly senseless, tormented world events full of hatred and delusion! Lord, make us ready to communicate your life of God to creation as broken bread!

God's Word as Light

God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, says

Ps.119, 105. It shows us ways and goals of this dark world full of injustice and despair. If it were not for this light, we would always have to be in

The people of the world would be in a horrible darkness and would not be able to find a way out of this creation that has fallen prey to Satan.

But now "we have the prophetic word fastened on us, to which it is good for her to pay attention, as to a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Pet 1:19). How brightly God's word shines back to the time before the eons, when God was all in himself! The overjoyed God begat His Son and held converse and consultation with Him about the creation, redemption and completion of the universe. And how the course of the eons, the course of the eternities, is clearly shown to us up to the goal and end! Is the father of the spirits of all his works already before foundation of the world completely conscious. In what sublime, adorable peace and security he lets the powers of darkness take effect, since he is certain of his final victory and even uses the evil, even if without its will and understanding, that he reaches his salvation and glory goals.

All this and much more is revealed to us by the light of the holy scriptures, the inspired documents of eternally valid divine truth. But whoever believes in blasphemous delusion that he can reject God's word, will be rejected himself (1. Sam. 15, 23. 26)!

As the written word is a light, so is the Word made flesh, the Lord himself, a light. Joh. 1, 9 testifies of him: "This was the essential light, which, coming into the world, enlightens every man." How many and varied lights there are in this world! And yet all of them are not real, essential lights.

In the court of the tabernacle the natural light of the sun shone; in the sanctuary the seven-branched golden lampstand shone; but in the holy of holies the Shekinah shone the light and glory presence of God. So also in our life of faith there is a growing progression from clarity to clarity from the created to the uncreated light. If Saul had been told before his conversion outside Damascus that there was a light brighter than the sun, in whose radiance he would go blind, he would certainly not have believed it, but would have thought it was raving and fantasy. Therefore, there is no point in arguing with people who have not yet enjoyed the radiance of Christ's grace and glory and who are essentially blessed by Him. Golgotha, which appeared to the outer eye only as a place of curses and revelation of darkness, shines to faith as the most powerful breakthrough of divine light, as the clearest revelation of his fatherly love. "In your light we see the light", sings David in Ps. 36, 9, and "it is the light that makes all things manifest" or "all things that are made manifest are light", testifies Paul in Eph. 5, 13. What mighty tasks has this essential light in the midst of and at all darkness beings and expanses that exist since Satan's fall! For the final goal will be that there will be no more night (Rev 22:5), that the darkness will pass away (1 John 2:8). Blessed is he who already now knows, loves and seeks the Lord as the true light and thus becomes ever more substantially partaker of Him!

The Son of God also calls his own light. Already in the sermon on the mount he calls his Israelite disciples the light of the world (Matth. 5, 14). But this light ministry of Israel is limited. It goes only to the ends of the earth. Where the earth ends, the task of the earthly covenant people also ends, as it is written: "It is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I have also set you to be the light of the nations, to be my salvation to the ends of the earth." (Isa. 49, 6.)

The church of the body of Christ, which forms the full measure of the head and together with him represents the whole Christ of God, is also "a light in the Lord" (Eph. 5, 8). The believers from the nations, as "sons of light" (1 Thess. 5, 5), are "made able to share in the inheritance of the saints in light" (Co1. 1. 12). But this is far more than the splendor of the renewed earth as it will shine once in the Messianic Kingdom.

These "heavenly lights", "sources of light" or "beacons" (as one can also translate) have heavenly calling and heavenly position. After all, our citizenship is a distinctly heavenly one (Phi1. 3. 21), while Israel, as the bride or wife of the Lamb, has earthly callings and hopes. These things certainly flow into each other, spiritually speaking, already now and finally in their final effects in the completion eons. And yet it is necessary to distinguish them.

The church of the body of Christ is a spectacle for the heavenly worlds (1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10). This is what we have to grasp and hold on to again and again. What we carry in us as essential light in the form of faith, hope and love often has little or no effect on earthly circumstances. But those super-worlds, be they of a lawful or lawless nature, are deeply impressed by it and learn from us the wisdom of God. Therefore, the church of the present time is a light in a much more comprehensive way than Israel, which is not taken up into the heavens, but to whom the heavens will come down (Rev. 21:2)!

Let us keep in mind that God's Word, God's Son in lowliness and His Christ in glory are called "light" in many, wonderful contexts and will complete their work of light until everything will have become light in the wide world¹. Happy is he who already now lets himself be illuminated and renewed, so that he, free from all and every darkness, may look forward to and approach that glorious day, when everything will be moved into the incorruptible light of God! No matter how painful the necessary processes of death and humiliation, which we now voluntarily undergo, may be, - light and glory will be the result, first for us who believe and allow ourselves to be perfected, and finally for everything. Blessed be the Father of light, who not only "into the darkness" but also "out of the darkness" lets his blessed, redeeming light shine (2 Cor. 4:6)! - — —

We have sought to understand a little of the essence of the divine word. Our testimony could only consist of hints. Especially of how tremendous and comprehensive the effects of the Word brought to fullness will be, one can only stammer adoringly. For of the treasures which the Scriptures contain concerning the "fullness" and the "glory", certainly only a few have been lifted. But the more it draws to a close, the more clearly the Spirit of God causes to shine forth the riches which the Father has assigned to His Son and to His congregation of sons, the body of Christ. ¹Let us grasp them ever more fully in faith and administer them faithfully in holy obedience for the glory of God and the salvation of creation!

On the nature of love - by Karl Geyer

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

Love is the will to communion, it is at the same time a holy will of sacrifice that tolerates everything in order to clear the way to communion, to change and to change.

Everything that is great and good and true and beautiful and noble is found in love.

Love is tender and chaste and in its self-giving like holiest virginity. Love is strong as death, and its zeal is irresistible as Sheol; its strength is supreme manhood, which carries everything, which steps into the breach for change.

It is seen in the Son of Love.

Love is from God. God is love (1. Joh. 4, 8. 16). Therefore, everything divine is in it, and it is itself divine in its whole being and extent.

Because everything divine flows in it to unite and connect the distant and the near, the heavenly and the earthly, the willing and the resisting, it is the bond of perfection.

It is even greater than faith and hope. Without it, everything else is useless, even spiritual gifts and mountain-moving faith and the knowledge of all mysteries and the possession of all knowledge. It includes faith and hope, because it believes everything and hopes everything (1 Cor. 13:7). Therefore, it is even greater than these two, - it is the greatest among the three that remain.

He, from whom the universe is, said to His image, man: "It is not good that man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). If this is already true for the image, how much more for the being itself, for the one who is love! Without this will to communion, He could have been satisfied to see and enjoy the fullness of His life and being in Himself. No one would then have rejoiced in His glory. His grace would have had no object in which it could have shown itself, no admiration and adoration would ever have been granted to Him, and the wonderful life of God would not have increased and would have remained without fruit forever. Everything in Him drives Him to change, in which He can reveal and fulfill Himself. Everything in God pushes for communion. In order to attain this, He, for the sake of whom all things are, goes every way of sacrifice up to the gift of Himself, in

order to come into the relationship of the deepest and last communion with His creatures, in which His love can be completely fulfilled.

Love cannot remain alone. There is no increase of life and no fruitfulness in aloneness. There is fulfillment and increase only in the community. The longing of man, the image of God, is for community. It is not satisfied by anything alien to his being, but only by his other "I", by his complement, by the other part of his being, with which he becomes together a whole and out of the whole a fullness.

The longing of Adam, the image, is only a faint reflection of the longing of God, in whom also in His divine solitude everything pressed for fulfillment. And when the Son of Love walked on earth, He pronounced it: "I have longed to eat the paschal lamb with you."

All life and being can be fully known only through love. That is why God longs to fulfill Himself in love. Only in the lover does the beloved recognize love.

Love is fruit of the spirit (Ga1. 5, 22). God is spirit. Therefore, love is from God.

To know God is to know love, because God is love.

On the nature and development of the church - by Adolf Heller

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

On the development and nature of the community By Adolf Heller

How differently the goals of the apostle Paul are interpreted! Some believe that he wanted to organize a world-wide Christian church, and others think that he was concerned with the Christianization of art and science, of politics and social conditions of the cultural world of that time.

To a certain extent and for certain times and circumstances, such things may have been concomitant side effects of the gospel - but the actual goal of the Apostle Paul was quite different, much higher.

Only a degenerated and mixed Christ message strives for and achieves certain civilizational and cultural goals on a large scale. But that such a world Christianity in the course of time proves to be a mere whitewash, which the nations sooner or later shake off, is a fact which we also experience. What really moves the nations is not Jewish prophecy, but longing. It is not the Mosaic law but the creation that touches the conscience of the nations, who therefore always make the sun, the moon and the stars the object of their mind, as the Scriptures testify and history proves.

Let us only think of Romans I, 20: "The invisible things of Him (i.e. God), both His eternal power and His divinity, which are perceived in the made from the creation of the world, are seen, that they (the

Nations) be without excuse..."

Or let us turn to Deut. 4:19, where we read, "That thou lift not up thine eyes to heaven, and behold the sun, and the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be deceived, and bow down thyself before them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath allotted (or assigned to worship!) to all nations under the whole heaven." That this assigning really has a religious meaning, we see from the little word "but" of the following verse.

The commission of the glorified Lord, exalted at the right hand of the Father, to His servant Paul, the special instrument of ministry to the nations, was to build up the Body of Christ and to perfect the saints. At the God-ordained time and

hour, the full growth of the fullness of the Christ was to make its appearance, the perfect man predestined to be the executor of all God's promises.

In Eph. 4, 11 Paul lists five ministries that the Lord has given: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. These gifts are not given for the Christianization of the world, not for the religious revival of the nations or the "acidic" penetration of the nations with Christian culture, but "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to the adult man, to the measure of the full growth of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4, 12. 13).

These two short verses speak of seven pieces. These are:

1. The completion of the saints;
2. the work of service;
3. the structure of the body of Christ;
4. the unity of faith;
5. the knowledge of the Son of God;
6. the adult man;
7. the full growth of the fullness of Christ.

No writer of sacred scrolls knows anything more precise about this pronounced message of salvation to the nations than the apostle Paul. It was his special mission, which he emphasized again and again and defended against all dangers and hostilities. Let us only think of the Epistle to the Galatians and the Epistle to the Colossians, in which he defends his gospel of the glory of grace, the tidings of the highly exalted and glorified Christ, against the Jewish legalism of self-salvation and the pagan rapture of Gnosticism.

We want to try to get some light about the church goals of the apostle Paul based on these seven points of Eph. 4, 12. 13, so that our service and testimony is not an uncertain key full of strokes of the air, but a right and proper fight. Only then may we reach out in holy desire to obtain the crown of which we read in 2 Timothy 2:5.

1. the completion of the saints

The first purpose mentioned here, for which the Lord gave the ministries of apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers, is: perfection of the

saints. The word *katartismos* translated by perfection also means equipping, proper furnishing or training. So the believers are to be equipped or fully prepared.

As important as it is that the congregation is increased, 'that new people are won, to whom salvation in Christ is offered and imparted, it is also important that those who are won are nurtured, promoted and perfected. But this includes that the preaching of the word does not only consist of the milk of the beginning, but leads to the goal and fullness truths. Whether here is not a sore point in the different Christian organizations and circles? The perfection of the saints is not only a moral issue. It is more than that. Let us remember two words, one from the letter to the Colossians and one from the letter to the Ephesians. The first is: "Him (i.e. Christ) we proclaim, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ" (I, 28).

The second is: "He (i.e. God) has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He has set before Himself for the administration of the fullness of time: to uphold the whole universe in Christ, that which is in the heavens and that which is on earth. (I, 9. 10.)

Here Paul gives us an insight into what he is concerned with in his ministry to the congregations: perfect representation in Christ, i.e. being formed into Christ's nature and character, and the growing of the entire congregation into the pre-eternal will-secrets of divine plans of salvation and love.

"The moral thing is self-evident," says a worldly proverb. A Christian, in the sense of the Pauline Gospel of fullness, is not one who does no evil, but a person who is in life-union and love-unity with Christ. Perfection is more than moral faultlessness, it is life communion and connection with the exalted Head, a sharing of His mind and being, a participation in His interests and purposes, yes, a rejoicing in His sufferings and a complementing of His tribulations (Co1. 1, 24).

In the present, the Spirit of God does not aim at the Christianization of the world, not at the religious revival of as many people as possible, but at the perfection of the saints, at the completion of the church. Here it should be emphasized once again that the side effects of the gospel in the cultural, political and social spheres are certainly welcome, but neither correspond to the core of the Pauline message of salvation nor are they of lasting duration. Gratefully we may take the blessings that "Christianity" has brought from God's good hands and rejoice in them while we have them, but the heart of the present time of salvation is the perfection of the saints. Part of the maturity of the church is the presentation of the completion truths of Scripture. As important as the foundational truths are

for the beginning, the completion truths are necessary for the believer's completion. In terms of basic truths or words of the beginning, Scripture mentions: Repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection, eternal judgment (Hebr. 6, 1. 2). Beyond that, however, there are goal and fullness truths that lead into the deeper knowledge of God's ways and plans.

Not the revelation of John is the last and highest revelation of future deeds of God, but the letters of the apostle Paul. He writes clearly that it was given to him to bring the word of God to his full authority (Ko1. 1, 25). To the perfection of the saints also belongs the Vollmakt of the word of God.

2. the work of service

For what shall the saints be perfected? For the work of the ministry! But in what does the ministry of the church consist, and to whom does it have a mission to fulfill? These are questions of great importance. Their answer is not so self-evident as one usually thinks. For the practice of "Christendom" is not at all in complete agreement with what the Scriptures reveal about these things.

What is the ministry of the church? Now, during its lowliness, it should not do anything great and extraordinary, but let itself be prepared by faith and silence. Not mighty deeds, but thanksgiving in all things God expects from His own. "A quiet, calm life in dignified earnestness," which Paul presents as the purpose and goal of our prayer life, is by no means an exuberant program of a performance-intoxicated, "aggressive (attacking) Christianity." 1Sevation and suffering was the most essential thing of our Lord on ends. 1Sevning and suffering is also the most essential and important of what we can do if we want to become like our Lord and Head. When the apostle Paul set before his son in the faith, young Timothy, the most important things of his own laborious life for imitation and as an incentive, he did not mention deeds and accomplishments, miracles and successes, but "faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions and sufferings" in the last letter he wrote (2 Tim. 3:10, 11). These things were the most essential of his ministry! Let us be his imitators in this!

To whom does the church have a mission? One will not hesitate to say: To the godless and Christ-remote world surrounding it. This is undoubtedly also the case. But let us hear what the apostle tells us about this in 1 Cor. 4:9: "Methinks God hath set forth us the apostles to be last, as unto death: for we are become a spectacle unto the world, both to angels and men." "

Whose spectacle are the apostles? Of the cosmos, i.e. of the world system in its present state. In the cosmos there are two kinds of rational beings: Angels and

men. Now to both, but to the angels in the first place, the apostles are a testimony, a "theater" (basic text).

That this important truth does not only apply to the apostles but also to the entire church can be seen in Eph. 3:10. According to this testimony, the principalities and powers in the heavenly regions are to have the wisdom of God revealed to them through the church. Our faith, love and hope, our speech and silence, our victory and defeat are witnessed by the super-world and serve it to know the wisdom of God. This knowledge that we are now doing a service to the principalities and powers in the heavenly regions, which look down on us in eager expectation, should fill us much more vividly.

However, this is by no means to say that we have no duties on earth. We are more conscientiously subject to the God-given authorities than anyone else and faithfully fulfill our duty in every respect. We joyfully bear witness to the hope that dwells in us and seek to lead erring and despairing people, wherever we have the opportunity, onto the path of salvation. But we know that the church is a selection from the nations and that it is not in God's plan and will to bring whole nations to accept the gospel now. It would therefore be folly and wrong to expect Christian governments to strive to establish the Kingdom of God in accordance with the Scriptures. Neither do we hope that, nor do we work for such unbiblical goals.

Our service is to be faithful in the place and circumstances in which God has placed us according to His wonderful wisdom and goodness, to intercede for all people, to help and heal, to relieve and solve, to be found as witnesses of the Gospel and stewards of the mysteries of God, waiting for the returning Lord. This is our work of service for the present.

But the municipality also has enormous tasks for the future. We want to mention only two of them. First, we remember 1 Cor. 6:3, according to which we are to judge angels one day. Above we saw that we are a spectacle and object of view for the angels. Now we read that we are to judge them one day. How important these two things are! What we do now is done in weakness and often unconsciously. But when we are united with our Lord and Head, we will carry out our judging office in power and authority.

But this is not our original profession. This ministry is only an introduction and preparation for the great and glorious saving services that we will one day be allowed to perform for the whole of creation. God wants to show the abundant riches of His grace in goodness towards us in Christ Jesus in the coming eternities (Eph. 2, 7).

In view of such future tasks, we are also able to faithfully and cheerfully fulfill our present ministries of living, suffering, praising, and loving in Christ.

3. the construction of the body of Christ

Not the Kingdom of God, but its heart and core, namely the body of Christ, the future ruling church united with its head, is to be built now. The Christ body is the total church of the present time, the selection from the nations, which is now being gathered. This Christ body is a mystery, as Paul testifies in Eph. 3, 4b to 6: "The

The mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in generations past, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit, so that those from the nations may be joint heirs and joint bodies.

Eph. 1, 23 says of the church that it is Christ's body, the full measure of Him who brings all things to fullness, and 1 Cor. 12, 12. 27 testifies: "Just as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of the body, though many, are one body: So also the Christ . . . But you are Christ's

Body and limbs from one another."

Now how is this wonderful Christ body built?

Here too, as so often, the earthly is a model of the heavenly. Let us look up Ko1. 2, 19! There we read that the whole body grows out of the head the growth of God.

Just as in the embryo the head is the most important thing, from which the limbs gradually emerge, as it were, like protrusions, so it is also the case, in a spiritual and infinitely sublime way, in the development of the body of the Christ Fal1. The body grows out of the head, our word says unequivocally.

But that is only the divine side.

The construction of the body of Christ, like everything in the world here, also has a human side. It is also mentioned in our Colossian testimony. First, it says that we should hold the head, and secondly, it is written that through the joints and the bands we receive the offering and are firmly joined together (2:19).

There is talk of joints and ties. One could also say: of occasional touches and regular connections. The first word (aphee) was also used to refer to the sand of the arena, with which the wrestlers threw at each other so that they could better grab each other. In fact, they used to line the body with oil to escape the grip of opponents.

Through occasional touches and regular connections, we receive offering and are joined together. This is true with regard to the Word of God and fellowship, prayer life and witnessing. There is a regularly maintained life of faith (the bonds: syndesmos) and "incidental", occasional guidance and experience (the joints: aphee); through both we receive presentation and are joined together. But that we grasp or hold on to the head is our business. For the apostle warns in the whole context of verse 16 against those who do not hold the head. Also that one receives something, lets something be communicated and presented to him, is to a certain degree, seen from the human side, our very personal business. Let's read 1 Cor. 12:24b-25: "God has joined the body together, giving more abundant honor to the more deficient, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another." Deficient members receive more abundant honor. Accordingly, valuable members are little honored. Are not the life and recognition or non-recognition experienced by the HErr Himself and the Apostle Paul a clear proof of this truth? What a reevaluation of values there will be one day, when we are judged in the light of God and placed in the place that is due and appropriate to us!

There should be no divisions in the body of Christ, but the members should care for each other. So we can contribute to the completion of the body of Christ after all!

Paul says the same in Eph. 4, 15. 16, when he exhorts: "Holding fast the truth in love, let us in all things grow up (literally: bring the all to growth!) toward Him who is the head, the Christ, from whom the whole body, well joined and united by every joint of presentation, according to the effectiveness in the measure of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for its self-construction in love." We should, by holding on to the truth in love (not in self-opinionatedness and know-it-all attitude!), grow up in all parts to our exalted head, yes, bring the all into Him for growth.

So we see that the building of the Christ body is on the one hand entirely God's business, but on the other hand we have to respond in obedience of faith to all that God works not against or without us, but in us and through us. For the Christ body's self-construction in love takes place "according to the effectiveness in the measure of each individual part." The effectiveness or activity of each individual part is therefore necessary, each member has to exercise the function due to it, so that the self-construction comes about. Thus, in the knowledge of the truth of the body of Christ, a sacred obligation of love and faithfulness rests upon all who are called to it. 4 The Unity of Faith

A partial goal that the church should reach according to Eph. 4:13a is the unity of faith. Seen from the outside, the unity of faith was by no means present even in the much praised early churches. Otherwise Paul would not have had to write: ". . . until we all attain to the unity of the faith". So it was not there.

If the Bible were a systematic textbook, it would be very easy to arrive at an exact unity of conviction. But the Scriptures are anything but a clear and concise set of dogmas adapted to the demands of our human logic; they are a book of God's revelation that cannot be understood without the Holy Spirit and the obedience of faith.

No book in the world is as controversial as the Bible¹. Everyone refers to it. Some make fun of it, and others lay down their lives for it in holy faithfulness to their convictions. "Slaughtered for the word of God," we read in Rev. 6:9 of the souls under the altar. Who knows how quickly this time can come! It is true that the congregation has already been taken away from this earth by its Lord and its head, but it will still experience the beginnings of those times to a certain extent.

One takes moral offense at the "immoral" stories of the Holy Scriptures, and to the other, these very things are powerful symbolism of the deepest truths and wonderful consolation from God. Where is the "unity of faith"? Not even among like-minded, sincere Christians is there unity of faith. What seems great and worthy of worship to one person, seems trivial and insignificant to another. What drives one to worship God, the other calls false doctrine. How far we are from the "unity of faith"!

If there had been a real unity and oneness of faith from the beginning, what is called "church history" would not have appeared for the most part. For envy and strife, questions of power and authority of domineering priests are mostly the content of the religious battles, which not only murdered and tortured to death hundreds of thousands of true believers like cattle for slaughter, but also destroyed and depopulated whole regions and made them a prey of the plague and wild animals. Millions of peasants and craftsmen, who had not the slightest interest in the clerical bickering, but only wanted to pursue their profession and provide for their family, became a victim of so-called religious wars, which were waged for all kinds of selfish, worldly reasons, but not out of love for God and His Gospel. Unity of faith! Like a mockery of these words, "Christianity" and "Christendom" stand before our spiritual eyes. Nowhere is there more inner and outer contradiction, more discord than among the pious, who have therefore often become the laughing stock of the world.

And yet, all of this also belongs to the servant form and offense of the gospel. Just as the Lord appeared in the dust robe of an inferior people, became tired, hungry and sad "like another man, weeping and trembling and crying, and yet was the Lord of glory, the Creator and Bearer, Redeemer and Finisher of all beings and worlds, so also His book, His kingdom people and His body members are outwardly contemptible, miserable appearances, in whom there is really nothing desirable. They are reviled and despised, and, as the prophet once foresaw of the Lord, their faces are hidden from them.

And yet, in spite of all the apparent brokenness of faith, in spite of all the weaknesses, follies and sins among the pious, the hidden, true church is quite glorious and beautiful. For all the diversity of leadership and experience, the unity of the Spirit is truly and intrinsically there, though often desperately little of it is outwardly apparent. Believers grow and mature under God's faithful care to the exuberantly high and marvelous eternal destinies to which they are pre-ordained. Through the ceaseless, purposeful work of God's Spirit, they are being transformed, step by step, into Christ's image and nature. The glory of the Son becomes their part and essential possession in a growing way, even if unrecognized and hidden from the outside.

The unity of faith! As a high, shining goal it stands before the eyes of the Apostle of the Nations. Once all veils and bandages are removed from our spiritual eyes, this goal will be fully achieved. Until then, however, we should strive to attain at least divine unity of mind, to have the same love and, in spite of all differences in knowledge, to respect one another more highly in humility, as Paul mentions in Philippians 2:2, 3: "Fulfill my joy, that you are of one mind, having the same love, of one accord, of one mind, doing nothing for the sake of party or vain glory, but in humility respecting one another more highly than yourselves."

5. the knowledge of the Son of God

The goal we are all to reach is the unity of faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. At first glance, it might seem that the two are the same. But knowledge of the Son of God is more than unity of faith, because while unity of faith is what we possess, knowledge of the Son of God is what the Lord has or does.

What is the "epignosis" of the Son of God? "Epignosis" is not just knowledge or understanding. It is something that goes beyond. This can be seen from the prefix epi, which means above, to, or upon. The "gnosis" is mere comprehension and insight, but the "epignosis" is a spirit-inspired understanding of divine truths, an entering into divine life and love relationships.

Twenty times we read this expression in the New Testament; four times Peter uses it in his second epistle, once the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in the remaining fifteen cases Paul uses it. Almost every time it is a question of life-giving effects that come about through knowledge. Let us list the most important passages:

Rom. 1, 20: The nations did not consider it good to have God in knowledge (to come into life connection with Him).

Eph. 1, 17: Paul prays that God would give the spirit of wisdom and revelation for the knowledge of Himself.

Phil, I, 9: Let the love of the Philippians abound still more and more in knowledge.

Co1. 1, 9: The Colossians are to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,

Co1. 1, 10: They shall grow through the knowledge of God.

Co1. 2, 2: They should come to the knowledge of the mystery of God.

Co1. 3, 10: The new man is renewed to knowledge after the image of God.

1. Tim. 2, 4: God wants all people to come to the knowledge of the truth.

2. Tim. 2, 25: God's adversaries come to the knowledge of the truth through God-given repentance.

2, Tim. 3, 7: There are people who are always learning and yet do not come to the knowledge of the truth.

From these various connections we see that knowledge is not only a mere act of our natural thinking. The last mentioned passage, 2. Tim. 3, 7, says this quite clearly. Knowledge is spiritually inspired love for the truth and devotion to God, which can be accepted or rejected (Rom. 1, 20). For this love is also not inherent to us by nature, but is given to us.

In order to know God Himself, i.e. to enter into a deeper communion with Him, the spirit of wisdom and revelation is needed (Eph. 1, 17). Only where love overflows more and more, it comes to real knowledge (Phil, I, 9), which is more than salvation (1. Tim. 2, 4).

Divine wisdom and spiritual growth, growth in faith and grasping the mysteries of God have their reason in "epignosis" (Ko1. 1, 9. 10; 2, 2). This knowledge is also the purpose of the renewal process that is taking place in us (Ko1. 3, 10).

Only spirit-led, God-given repentance and not the activity of our natural mind leads to the knowledge of the truth (2. Tim. 2, 25).

How perfect and pure and glorious must be the knowledge of the Son of God! Even when He walked on earth in lowliness, He stood in uninterrupted dependence and communion of love with His Father. How much more intimate and substantial is the knowledge of God now, which the exalted and glorified One has at the right hand of the Father! And this knowledge of the Son of God we should and may become partakers of, to it we, the elect from the nations, should reach. This means, in other words, that the communion of life and love that we will one day have with God, our Father, is as close and intimate and substantial as that which Christ now has. Is this not a goal that goes far beyond the boldest thinking and sensing that has ever filled the heart of man?

6, The adult man

The high goal that awaits not only us but also the Lord, our transfigured Head, is "the adult man". The word "teleios" used here also means completed, perfect, flawless, full-grown, realized or fulfilled. Now who is this adult or perfect man? It is the Christ of God, consisting of head and members, whose body we, the election from the nations, are.

We long for our Lord and Head. But even more our Lord and Head longs for us! For as He is our fulfillment and completion, so also the Scripture describes us as His fullness or His Vollmafi.

But also the Father, who gave the universe to His Son and gave us to Him as members of the body, is waiting for that wonderful moment of union. If Abraham prepared a great feast for his son Isaac on the day he outgrew his infancy (Genesis 21:8), should the joy of the One who is the true Father over all be less?

When the perfected, adult Christ will one day be revealed, we will be revealed with Him in glory. In His lowliness He was alone. "I have trodden the winepress alone," it says prophetically of Christ in Isa. 63:3. He bore the wrath alone and was forsaken of God. No one stood by Him. But when He returns in glory and takes up one ministry after another in order to carry it out, He will have His transfigured congregation, conformed to Him, with Him.

Then He will be glorified and admired not only by, but i n all who have believed Him, as it is written in 2 Thess. 1:10: "He (i.e., Christ) will come to be glorified in that day in His saints and admired in all those who have believed."

The adult man, the Christ united with His members, is then, if we may say so, fully capable of action. Until that time, however, the Lord is a head waiting for union with His transfigured members. That is why we are so dear and valuable to Him. Therefore the poet is right when he sings to the well-known song "Oh, my Lord Jesus, if I did not have You . . ." he adds the verse:

"Ah, my Lord Jesus, if You did not have me,

For whom you pray to the Father every day,

Never would heavenly joys offer your heart

The wages of pain."

But this unveiling of the glory of the adult man is also the object of the longing harrowing of the whole creation. For in the unveiling of the sons of God, the future glory will be revealed to us. In order to attain these high dignities, we must now go through many a preparatory suffering. Of this Paul writes in Romans 8:18, 19: "I hold that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the future glory of existing Christ of God, whose body we, the elect from among the nations, are.

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Only in the perfected Christ, the adult man, does God have the object that can fully satisfy His heart. This adult man is an incomparable monument of what His grace is capable of. He is the instrument of God's perfect, purposeful love.

In 1 John 4:18 we read that this perfect love casts out fear. At first we may take this personally edifying, since a heart that is completely seized and filled with God's love has no more room for fear - in the end, however, love is neither a feeling nor a state, but a person: God is love! And Christ is the son of love. But this Son of love is perfected and brought to fullness, grown up and full-grown through His union with the church, which is His body or body. And this perfected love will one day, after long, anxious eons of judgment, drive out all fear from God's vast universe, so that only praise and glory and worship of a redeemed, reconciled creation will remain.

Let us walk worthy of this exceedingly high calling, that we may glorify the Lord even now, in the body of our lowliness! 7 The full growth of the fullness of Christ

The final goal of Pauline ministry mentioned in our scripture word is the full growth of the fullness of Christ. The word "heeliMa" means not only growth and stature, but also denotes full male maturity and age fit for service (from 18-60 lebensjahr). According to the linguistic usage of that time, it was also a designation for the armed crew or the core of the army.

The ascension of Christ, His exaltation above all principalities and powers, has a very specific purpose. We read in Eph. 4:10 the few and important words, ". . . that He might fill (or bring into fullness) the universe." The inspired apostle testifies to the same thing in I, 23 of the same epistle. He writes there that Christ fills all in all (or in every way).

In a certain respect the whole creation is already now and since ever filled by God. "In Him we live and weave and are," Paul calls out not to believing brethren but to such pagans who, according to their own testimony, did not know God at all. Even in the realm of the dead and at the far end of the sea, God's hand holds those who seek to flee from Him (Ps. 139:8-10).

The Father of our Lord Jesus, however, longs not only to be the unknown, terrible God from whom one flees and guiltily covers his face, but He wants to be recognized and praised in His innermost being. He wants to be everything in everything! In His fullness of love and His richness of mercy He wants to be seen, loved and praised. This is His goal of grace, His glory intention, His longing for love with His

Creation. This good pleasure of the Father will be carried out in the hand of the Son. Christ is the guarantor of all God's oaths, He is the great, reliable Yes and Amen and brings about the glory unfolding of grace for all and every creature.

But before the Lord leads everything to the fullness of God, He Himself must have reached the full growth of His fullness. Therefore Paul teaches in Eph. 1, 22. 23: "He (i.e. God) has subjected everything to His (i.e. Christ's) feet and has given Him as head over everything to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who leads all things into fullness.

The Lord is given to the church by God as the head and the church is given to Him as the body and fullness. In its union with Christ, the church is the fullness of Him who then completes everything in every respect. Thus, according to this testimony, the completion of everything is linked to the prerequisite that the Lord first put on His body, His God-given fullness.

God has a holy pleasure, a deep and blessed joy in letting all His fullness dwell in Christ (Co1. 1, 19). To this fullness, which dwells in the transfigured Christ without restriction and deduction, we are also added, so that with and in Christ we take the main position in relation to every principality and every power of the heavenly regions (Co1. 2, 9. 10). Is this not completely in line with Eph. 3, 19, where it is stated as God's goal of Christ-love that transcends knowledge, that we are to be filled up to the whole fullness of God?

The full growth of the fullness of Christ! What an overwhelming height of calling is set before our hearts in these few words, what a goal of faith far surpassing all human expectations is shown!

God Himself established it before the foundation of the world; He predestined and called us to it; we are His work in every respect. How could we do otherwise than, in grateful amazement at so much undeserved and unappreciated love and grace, give ourselves completely and willingly to Him and place ourselves at His disposal? - —

The enumeration and contemplation of these seven glorious pieces is not only intended to clarify and enrich the insights and knowledge of the recipients of the letter, but, like any apostolic instruction, also has an exhortatory purpose.

Therefore, verse 14, which follows verses 12 and 13 just described, begins with the words "that". The understanding and enjoyment of the surpassing blessings of the glory purposes to which we are called is to cause "us no longer to be babes (immature or sucklings), tossed to and fro and tossed about by every wind of doctrine." Rather, we are to hold fast the truth in love and grow up in every bit toward Him who is the head, Christ. - —

Is it presumption to claim that the Pauline church goals in their wonderful fullness of glory have been largely lost? Are we not widely content with something that certainly includes gospel and extols Jesus as Savior, but know and want to know little of the height of the message of the Christ body and the blessings and future graces associated with it? May God grant His church an eye and a holy desire to penetrate obediently and worshipfully into all the riches of the glory communicated to us, so that we may be ready for the soon returning HErrn!

Shepherding from the Essence Center of Man

- by Karl Geyer

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

Shepherding from the Essence Center of Man

By Karl Geyer †

Where in a clear turning to God, better return (conversion), through repentance and faith the reconnection of the creature to the Creator took place, the interrupted connection in the spirit of our mind is restored. The human being got a completely new position to God (2. Cor. 5,

17). The life from God now again flows through man from its source and renews him from within also in the practical outward representation of the new being.

The renewal in the spirit of our thinking is therefore the gaining of a completely new attitude towards God. It is divine re-creation of the inner man, it is rebirth in the spirit from the spirit. From here, from the

Pneuma of our Nous (Eph. 4, 23 basic text), the divine being flows through our human existence and fills more and more all areas of life until "in word and work and all being be Jesus and nothing else to read". From this point, where man found his reconnection to the source of the essential life, our pastoral service has to begin. Most often this service is called pastoral care. It is also a service of those who have to give account for the souls entrusted to them (Hebr. 13, 16 - 17). But the word pastoral care is not comprehensive enough. Christ is called: the bishop (overseer) and shepherd of our souls (1 Pet 2:25). After we are converted to Him, He exercises oversight over our souls and watches over us as the arch-shepherd (1 Pet 5:4). That is why Paul also commands the elders of Ephesus, whom the Holy Spirit had placed as overseers in the church, to feed the flock (Acts 20:28). From here it is also easy to understand why all his letters, especially the letters of the fullness, after the doctrinal revelation of our new position that God gave us in Christ, instruct us in the second half for the practical presentation of the new nature, so that it may be led into fullness through growth and practice. Growth requires nourishment and practice requires guidance. This leading to the green pastures of the Word and to the fresh springs of the water of life is the office of the shepherd (Ps. 23). He leads on the right road in view of the full goal. We have to imitate his example if we want to lead others on the same path on which he led us.

Since our renewal began in the innermost center of our being, in the pneuma of our nous (Eph. 4, 23) (figuratively speaking: in the ark of the covenant of our holy of holies, where the new bond with God would be accomplished, where the new covenant is kept in the ark, like the tablets of the law in the ark; verg1. (Jer. 31, 33), - therefore every true shepherd service can only start from there, as Paul also says in 1. Thess, 5, 23: Your spirit whole, together with soul and body.

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Shepherding, then, encompasses the whole man. It is the continuation of the work of God in man, which He began in the pneuma of our nous. From this point we also serve the renewed man.

Our service is therefore first of all a "talking into the nous", is a "nouthetein", is "nouthesia".

We seek to guide the renewed man through the promises, thus leading him on green pastures, to encourage him, as heir of these promises, to take possession of them, to obtain and enjoy them through faith and perseverance, to lead him to spiritual maturity and full manhood in Christ, to all the fullness of God (Eph. 3, 19), with which first the firstborn of the brethren was filled (Co1. 2, 9), into whose image and glory we are to be transformed (Rom. 8, 29; 2. Cor. 3, 17. 18; 1. Joh. 3, 2. 3).

So it is not about soul guidance alone (least of all through

psychology, psycho-analysis and psycho-therapy according to the methods of the psychikos, the unrenewed spiritual man), but rather a leading towards spiritual maturity through the shepherding ministry of the Nouthesia.

It is true that it often appears as if one can achieve a faster effect with the mental remedies, and this is indeed the case, because the symptoms soon disappear. But therein lies the deception. The healing does not take place from the innermost center of being, from the ark in the Holy of Holies, where God's essential glory dwells, but on the surface. In a way, one only dusts the badger skins of the tabernacle, removes the unpleasant manifestations of the soul life, the consequences of the complexes. But that part into which one can enter only as one previously reconciled oneself with reconciling blood, when one is called to it, one does not enter because one instinctively feels that it is dangerous to enter that place on one's own authority. God watches over the place of the presence of His glory and kills those who desecrate it. See Nadab and Abihu!

Shepherding is priestly service in the royal authority of the Spirit, is royal priesthood by God's grace.

(From the recommendable new writing "Vom seelischen Menschen zum Geistesmenschen" by Karl Geyer = Heft2 der Schriftenreihe "FÜR LEBEN

AND FAITH". For more details, please refer to the 3rd cover page).

Let us take hold of what God has given us! - by Adolf Heller

Our faith is the hand that grasps what God presents to us in His Son. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. For if someone wants to give me a precious gift, but I put my hands in my pocket and turn my back contemptuously on the giver and the gift, how could the gift become my property?

God does not rape anyone. For God is love. And raping love would be immoral. So He lets the one who despises His gifts go quietly for the time being (Acts 14:16). For He has ways and means enough to make every creature so hungry for salvation and longing for mercy that it desires full of longing what it rejected before (Malachi 3:1).

If I recognize what God offers in Christ, it is not yet my personal property. I must also take hold of what God has offered, must lay my hands on it in faith or, like Israel in Canaan, place the sole of my foot on the land given to me by God (Joshua 1:3). Only in this way will it become my property, and only in this way will I be able to enjoy the blessings God has given me.

All my seizing would be folly, even sin and presumption, if God did not present me with anything. But if He calls me to any position, any service, and holds out any blessings to me, it would be naughtiness, an insult and contempt of His goodness and love, if I did not take hold of His gifts.

That is why the Scriptures show us a double:

God has given us great and unspeakably glorious things in Christ.

It is our business to take all that we are called and blessed to do with faith and use it gratefully.

Thus we see on the one hand that everything comes from God alone, but on the other hand that our activity, the believing grasping is also necessary, so that we not only intellectually know about the salvation of God, but it also becomes our real, essential possession and renews and transforms us. That is why the Scriptures speak again and again in a holy balance about all that is given to us by free grace, but at the same time admonishes and encourages us to take hold of these gifts of God and to live and walk in them.

As with very many spiritual truths, here too man falls into one-sidedness and aberrations. Some say that one must make a tremendous effort to acquire God's grace through prayer and penance, fasting and weeping, serving and enduring.

Others teach that we have nothing to do at all. Our salvation is entirely God's business. He had decided it before the foundation of creation, no power in the wide universe is able to keep Him from carrying out His thoughts of love, and therefore every effort on our part is futile folly. Such people think that God's promises are automatically fulfilled and the creature involved does not need to reach out for anything or do anything else.

Both are wrong!

For measured by the Word and Spirit of Scripture, both attitudes are wrong. We do not want to weigh which is more foolish and pernicious. Only this much is to be said that the Word of God teaches that everything is given to us, but on the other hand we are warningly and temptingly called upon to grasp and hold on to these gifts of God with all seriousness in holy devotion. Just as the beggar does not praise his hand that took a rich gift from a kind Lord, we do not praise our faith and our struggling, struggling reaching out, which only accepts what God has given us in Christ in the way of glory and salvation.

Moreover, our faith, our pleading and searching, our sensing and longing is not an achievement of our own, but an opening up to that which God Himself has lowered into our hearts and continues to do so.

(vg1. 2. Petr. 1, II). Only the one who keeps these two sides, the divine and the human, apart or looks at them in holy synthesis as a unity, will not derail in one or the other direction, but rather give glory to God alone in simplicity and faithfulness by grasping and holding on to, witnessing and administering all the blessings and glories that his Father has given and gives him in Christ Jesus.

We want to consider on the basis of Scripture a series of blessings which, on the one hand, have been given to us by God, and for the acquisition of which, therefore, nothing more is to be done, but which we must nevertheless seize through the obedience of faith and hold fast in holy fidelity.

1. According to Romans 8:30, we are predestined, called, justified and glorified by God.

These are four great and wonderful pieces. But the verse after next tells us even more mighty things: "Will He (God) not also with Him (Christ) give us the universe?"

This rhetorical question is an amplified affirmative and wants to say that God will certainly give us the All with and in His Son.

What should we say to this? What could our efforts add or subtract when Paul testifies in Rom. 9, 16: "So then it is not in the willing, nor in the running, but in the pardoning God"? Without a doubt, God is the giver of all goods out of free grace, out of the longing love desire of His Father's heart, even for the most unworthy and miserable creatures, and offers Himself completely and without rest in His Son.

What a marvelous God, who in hot longing for love desires to communicate and pour Himself out to His whole creation!

And yet there is the necessity that we grasp all blessings, gifts and goods believingly!

The apostle Paul wrote to his spiritual son Timothy: "Seize eternal life! (1 Tim. 6, 12.)

If you look at the Word of God logically and one-sidedly, you must find this exhortation disconcerting.

For one could conclude from this exhortation that Timothy does not yet have eternal life, that he is not yet a believer! (Vg1. Joh. 3, 36.)

Certainly Timothy is a believer; without a doubt he has eternal life. But it is necessary to grow into a deeper and deeper life connection with God, to take hold of His goods of life and grace more and more completely and to keep the entrusted jewels.

That is why Paul writes in the same chapter in the 20th verse: "O Timothy, guard the entrusted good!"

According to Ko1. 2, 10 we are completed or brought to fullness in Christ and in Him we take the main position over the principalities and powers. and in Him we take the main position in relation to the principalities and powers. Although we, according to God's own purpose, as the body of Christ, are elevated so high above all creatures, we should arm ourselves against these powers of wickedness, so that we will not be defeated in the battle against them. That is why we read in Eph. 6: "Put on the whole armor of God!" (verse 11)} "having taken hold of the shield of faith" (verse 16); "take also the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit!" (verse 17).

Had not the Ephesians since then taken hold of the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit? Certainly they had, as the apostle himself testifies in Eph. 1, 13-15. But just as a soldier has to take

up his weapons again and again, keep them clean and practice with them, so it is also important for us to take up, hold on to and use our God-given blessings and messages of grace again and again.

In this context we may understand that according to 1 Tim. 4, 7 there is a practice (literally gymnastics!) in godliness. Godliness or godliness is therefore not something that one has once and for all as an inviolable possession, on which one rests relaxed and carefree, but something in which one has to practice, become skillful or accustomed (vg1. Hebr. 5, 13. 14!).

The good works of our life are prepared beforehand by God according to Eph. 2:10. This is a very good news for all who suffer from their shortcomings. On the other hand, it cannot tempt us to carelessness if we consider that these good works are not prepared beforehand so that they can be imputed to us and we can do whatever our flesh pleases, but "so that we may walk in them. Here again we see the holy harmony of God's work and the obligation to respond in obedience of faith to the blessings offered.

We are of God in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:30). By virtue of the sacrifice of Golgotha, we know ourselves to be God's rightful, inviolable property. This is a fact that nothing and no one in the whole wide world can shake. But this in no way cancels the Pauline exhortation to present (deliver or make available) our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1).

The fact that we are bought to God through Christ does not make the offering of ourselves to Him superfluous, but on the contrary makes it possible! Of course, our miserable reason, which is alienated from God, can hardly comprehend this.

7. Thus it is also said: "If God saves all His creatures one day, it is not necessary to preach the gospel with earnestness and zeal! The very opposite is the case! For the fact that God comes unconditionally to His goal enables us to serve everyone and is both a mandate and a strength for us.

When we were dead in sins, God made us alive with Christ (Eph 2:5). This was solely His act, His gift. But now we may and should present ourselves to God as living from the dead and our members to God as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6, 13).

9. the same apostle who testifies concerning the origin of salvation in Rom. 9, 16 that it does not depend on the willing or the running, but only on the pardoning God, speaks in 1. Cor. 9, 26. 27 about his running and struggling and the breaking and subjugating of his body.

Every knowledge of spiritual-divine truths is only due to the Holy Spirit given to us (1 Cor 2:12). That is why Paul writes in 1 Tim. 2, 7: "The Lord will give you understanding in all things." Our foolish human logic could draw the conclusion that then all our thinking, sensing and searching would be futile. But the inspired apostle speaks differently! He encourages: "Consider what I say to you, for the Lord will give you understanding..."

Timothy is to consider (noeoo = to pay attention, to ponder, or to ponder), and God will give understanding. The glorious spiritual gift of knowledge of divine thoughts, plans, ways and purposes does not fall into Timothy's lap during sleep, but is, humanly speaking, the result of diligent seeking and thinking.

- 11 To the same Corinthians to whom Paul assures by virtue of apostolic authority that Christ fortifies them to the end, that they are blameless (1 Cor. 1:8), and that they are washed, sanctified and justified (1 Cor. 6:11), he cautions and admonishes: "Flee idolatry!" (1 Cor. 10:14); "We exhort that you do not receive the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6:1); and "Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and spirit!" (2 Cor. 7:1).

It is one of the greatest miracles in the nature of God that He does not remove tribulation and replace it with glory, but rather transforms tribulation into glory (2 Cor. 4:17). However, this process does not take place automatically in and on us, but has its prerequisite, from a human point of view, in our not seeing or looking at the visible and invisible world.

That is why 2 Corinthians 4:18 begins with the all-important word "in that" and shows us the way, the way in which our tribulation brings about or prepares an exuberant eternal weight of glory. In fact, this transformation process takes place only when we look not at what is seen, but at what is not seen. By looking at the world of light and God's love, which is still invisible to our earthly eyes, our tribulation is transformed into glory.

Would that we could learn this better and better and experience it more completely!

- 14 In 2 Cor. 5:17, 18 we read: "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old has passed away, but something new has come into being. But all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation." "But all things from God!" He is in every respect the Creator and the Producer of new things, who works willing and accomplishing according to His good pleasure (Phi1. 2, 13) and will fulfill all the needs of His own according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phi1. 4, 19). But for us the ministry of reconciliation follows from the work of reconciliation (2. Cor. 5, 18).

The God who has called us in His faithfulness never comes to repent of His gift and calling because of our folly and sin. Rather, He will carry out all that He has called us to do. That is why Paul can write the short and yet so exceedingly promising and delicious word: "Faithful is He who called you, He will also do it" (1 Thess, 5, 24). However, this glorious promise does not release us at all from devoting ourselves in holy faithfulness to this work of God and to persevere in it.

- The fact that Christ has set us free is an indisputable fact. But the apostle ties the teaching of this truth to the exhortation: "Stand firm therefore and do not be held again under a yoke of bondage" (Ga1. 5, 1).
17. According to Ko1. 2, 19 the whole body of Christ grows out of the head the growth of God. We can neither accelerate nor stop this wonderful process. But one thing we can and should do: hold, grasp or seize the head!
18. Here also belongs the already mentioned word: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you..." (Phi1. 2, 12. 13). Therefore, because God is the only one who works, we can be given such a powerful invitation to work out our salvation. The solution of this apparent contradiction is found in the word "for" which links the request of what we should do with the instruction that in truth God is the one who works everything.
- 19 The same truth can be seen in 2 Peter 1:3, 5, where we read: "Since His divine power has given us everything concerning life and godliness,

therefore also give it to us, using all diligence...". The natural mind might say: If God has really given us everything, what is the point of our diligence (spudä = haste, zeal, effort, exertion)? But the one who has understood that it is necessary to take hold of what God has given and to make use of it, sees no contradiction here, but rejoices in these revelations of God and cannot help but follow the exhortations and encouragements attached to them and resulting from them.

20 The same applies to the doctrinal truth of Co1. 3, 3 that we have died and our life is hidden with the Christ in God, which is connected by the justifying "for" with the admonition of the previous verse concerning our mind and search.

We are only too inclined to read either only Ko1. 3,1.2 or only Ko1. 3,3 as the basis of our faith and the subject of our proclamation. Paul, however, this unique servant of Christ, links in holy harmony the objective, unchanging act of God with subjective exhortations, whose observance is unfortunately subject to so many fluctuations through our faithfulness or unfaithfulness.

Everything is given and presented to us in Christ, but it is up to us to put on the garments of salvation that have been given to us. Therefore we read in Ko1. 3,12: "Put on, therefore, as God's chosen ones, as saints and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness...".

21. The Lord himself will soon come down from heaven to take his own with him. This truth of the rapture of the church is blissful and wonderful, irrefutable and certain. But it has little or no effect on our hearts and consciences if we do not repeatedly draw one another's attention to it and strengthen our courage and trust in it.

That is why Paul concludes his teaching on the Rapture in 1 Thess. 4:13-18 with the exhorting note: "Encourage (or comfort) one another therefore with these words!" Thus, through the ministry of mutual encouragement, we prepare ourselves for that great and glorious moment, and the Spirit of God, as a deposit of future blessings, can even now bring something of these coming glories to life in our hearts.

God gives us all things abundantly to enjoy (1Ti 6:17). What a broad and comprehensive word! And yet it is our duty to stir up the gift of God given to us (2Ti 1:6) and to take hold of what we are called to do (1Ti 6:12).

Without a doubt, we rely and hope on nothing but the grace of God. But this awareness that grace alone accomplishes everything does not make us sluggish and careless, but rather causes us to gird up the loins of our mind and be sober (1 Peter 1:13).

24. Thus the full and all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ and His glorious resurrection becomes for us not a resting place for the flesh, but a holy incentive to become partakers of the mind of our Lord and Head, and to live no longer to the lusts of men, but to the will of God (1 Peter 4:1, 2).

May our rich and glorious Father grant us, on the one hand, to gain more and more insight into the overflowing riches of His unfathomable and boundless abundance of grace, and, on the other hand, to learn to take, use and administer, in faithful obedience, all that He has freely given us in unmerited grace in Christ Jesus!

Final words

Still to fill



Text

Kahal.De
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