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THE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF CREATION

WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ROMANS 8:18-23

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Theology

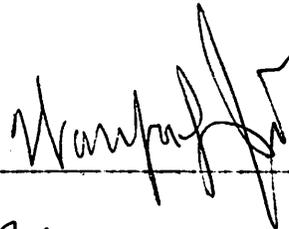
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by

ROBERT O. NEFF, JR.

May 1980

Approved by:

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Advisor

  
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Reader

  
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Reader

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Topic and Definition of Terms

The topic dealt with in this dissertation is "The Preservation and Restoration of Creation." In dealing with this topic there is "A Special Reference to Rom. 8:18-23" since this passage, if any, is the "sedes doctrinae" of such a topic. To deal with this passage of Scripture in connection with the "Restoration of Creation" is not at all exotic or peripheral to the Gospel message. R. C. H. Lenski sees the teaching of this pericope as "the final result of justification by faith as it is depicted by Paul. This is the great consolation section of Romans."<sup>1</sup> If the human body is truly an integral part of God's physical Creation, then, the physical Creation -- along with man's body -- shares the same fate. The question is one of the extent of God's gracious salvation. Shall He resurrect and transform the human body, but not the rest of His material Creation -- as if the body of man were somehow categorically distinct from it? Or is it that God shall restore and transform the whole of His Creation -- in His own order? The answer to these

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<sup>1</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 528.

questions, of course, can be known only by God's revelation concerning the matter, and this is why Rom. 8:18-23 and other pertinent passages will be examined.

The reason for coupling the Preservation and the Restoration of Creation together is because there is no legitimate cause for separating them. The latter results because of the former. That is, it is because God chooses to preserve His erstwhile pronounced "very good" Creation that He restores it to the faultless condition from whence it fell. He is the Savior and Redeemer of all Creation. A question may logically be posited such as this one: Shall God's Preservation of His material Creation continue through the Last Day -- or end with it? To put it another way: Shall the physical universe, divinely preserved until that Day, be annihilated and totally replaced -- or restored and transformed in a way analogous to that Scripturally predicated of the human body? It is an assertion of this dissertation that the Restoration of Creation is God's intention for the whole of His Creation precisely because of His will in its Preservation. Heinrich Schmid's long-used book on dogmatics summarizes the teaching of early Lutheran theologians by stating that God's Creation and Preservation can be distinguished only in their conception. Actually, the latter is the continuation of the former. This is to say, Preservation is only God's continued creation (creatio continua).<sup>2</sup> Hence it appears as if God's Preservation and God's proposed Restoration of Creation cannot be separated unless it be held that His Preservation of Creation terminates at the Last Day -- and is resumed subsequent to the

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<sup>2</sup>Heinrich Schmid, Die Dogmatik der evangelisch=lutherischen Kirche (Erlangen: Verlag vom Carl Heyder, 1843), pp. 130-134.

creation of an altogether "new" one? Moreover, if God's Preservation of "the works of His hands" be a true creatio continua then, a cessation of His Preservation would be a cessation of His ongoing Creation. Certainly, God's Creation may never be pronounced "a grand failure"<sup>3</sup> that must be redone. It is the opinion of the author of this dissertation that such cannot be the case.

The word "Restoration" may be understood as meaning that something is restored to its former condition or position. For the purposes of this dissertation, its antithesis would be the word "replace" with something not previously existing. The issue, then, is this one: Is the present Creation (albeit, fallen) to be annihilated, abolished, obliterated by its Creator on the Last Day, and replaced by another not previously existing -- or is the present universe (including man's body) to be restored, cleansed, transformed, renovated? If the former, may we legitimately consider man's (also, fallen) body as categorically distinct and separate from the rest of the material, physical world? If the latter, may we hope for all of Creation's freedom from the "bondage to decay" on that Day -- subsequent to, and dependent on, the resurrection of the human body from the dead? It is this issue which has led the writer of this dissertation to use the word "Restoration."

Having now explained the intended meaning of "The Preservation and Restoration of Creation with a Special Reference to Rom. 8:18-23," let it now be re-stated as follows. God's original Creation was perfect and -- despite its fall into a cursed state because of man's sin -- He shall continue to preserve it eternally. Subsequent to the resurrection

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<sup>3</sup>Lenski, p. 536.

of the dead on the Last Day, the physical universe itself shall be restored and transformed to share the divine glories of God's redeemed children.

#### Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of this dissertation are the following: (1) to demonstrate the teaching of the Lutheran Confessions relevant to the topic of this paper (2) to demonstrate the teachings of early Protestant Reformers and theologians pertaining to this same topic (3) to cite the teaching of certain Church Fathers along this same line (4) to present the disparities between the "world pictures" of pre-scientific and modern writers as they relate to the subject of this dissertation (5) to exegete thoroughly and relate relevant Bible passages -- especially Rom. 8:18-23 -- to the theme of this paper, and (6) to demonstrate how the Scriptural teaching on "The Resurrection of the Dead" is "The Key to Creation's Restoration."

The methodology to be used in this dissertation is the following one. The little that the Book of Concord says about the condition of the physical universe and its end will serve as the starting point for the consideration of this dissertation's topic. Then, appropriate passages from the writings of Luther, Melancthon, Brenz, Quenstedt, Hollaz, and others of that period will be investigated to determine what the few Confessional references probably meant. Other writers such as Calvin and, earlier, Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, and Bede will be presented to demonstrate the fact that the earliest Lutheran reformers and theologians were following the ancient Christian tradition about Creation's promised restoration. After the presentation of these things, two sharply contrasting

"world pictures" will be described. It will be shown how the Biblical concept of the universe, and God's working in it, is diametrically opposed to the Rationalism basic to the modern "world picture." Writers presupposing both points of view will be cited and commented upon. With the Confessional, earlier and later theologians, and the contrasting "world pictures" presented as a context, Rom. 8:18-23 and other pertinent Bible passages will be dealt with as a standard by which to appraise and evaluate that context. "The Resurrection of the Dead" will, then, be submitted as "The Key to Creation's Restoration." A Conclusion will summarize the basic arguments offered in the dissertation as a whole.

#### The Scope of the Dissertation

The scope of this dissertation is a Systematic one within an overview of Historical Theology. More specifically stated, the scope of this paper may be illustrated thusly: An exegesis of Rom. 8:18-23 is the standard by which other materials are to be evaluated. It is the thinking of, primarily, the Lutheran Confessions and early Lutheran theologians that are to offer an eschatological aspect of Systematic Theology. To a great extent the scope of this dissertation is delineated by this tradition because it is a Lutheran understanding of an eschatological theme that is sought. Historical Theology is considered in that several Church Fathers are introduced to establish the fact that the view of certain Reformers and early Reformation-period theologians was that of the Early Church Fathers. This dissertation is also concerned with Practical Theology in that it is desired that "The Preservation and Restoration of Creation" be taught and preached in such a way that comfort, hope and proper appreciation of God's Creation be proclaimed to the sheep of our congregations

over whom pastors have been appointed shepherds accountable to God. It must not be imagined, however, that it is within the scope of this paper to offer the views of all the Reformers of all traditions -- or that of every Scripture passage which makes mention of the subject under consideration. The scope of this thesis is primarily that of Rom. 8:18-23 and early Lutheran teachings relative to it. All other materials herein submitted are meant to serve only as a setting within which to view the basic Bible passage and the traditional Lutheran viewpoints related to its message.

#### Types of Materials Used and Bibliography

The types of materials used in this dissertation range from the Holy Scriptures themselves to the writings of contemporary theologians. Wherever possible, the materials will be considered, and quoted, in the original languages which are: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German and Danish. The author of this dissertation will comment, where appropriate, and offer his evaluation of the materials at hand. Most of the materials used in the research of this paper are readily accessible in good theological libraries, but some others are available in comparably few, that is, the works of early Lutheran dogmaticians.

In addition to the writer of this dissertation's own interpretation of certain Bible passages, theologians, ancient, medieval, and modern will be considered. Opposing points of view will be set before the reader for his/her own appraisal of the facts. The writings of Luther, Melancthon, and Calvin shall represent the best known Reformers of the Reformation period; and Brenz, Quenstedt, and Hollaz those of the "Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy." The writings of

Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, and Bede will be referred to to get some idea of how the Church Fathers conceived the subject under consideration. In the modern age writers representing various schools of thought will be handled. It should become apparent how their differing "world pictures" influence -- and sometimes determine -- their interpretations of Scripture passages.

#### The Need For and Hoped For Contribution of this Dissertation

In the opinion of the writer of this dissertation there is a great need for a consideration of the topic of this paper. At a time when the technologically dominated nations of the world are becoming increasingly alarmed with ecological problems of monumental proportions it is incumbent upon responsible theologians to investigate and, then, promulgate what God has graciously revealed in His divine Word regarding His will toward man's physical environment. Simply put, this amounts to God's Word being spoken to one of the most current and distressing of man's problems today. It is not believed by the writer of this dissertation that such speaking of God's Word in this connection shall result in any kind of total solution to the problem in this present life -- any more than God's Word addressed to man's fear of physical death. It is believed, however, that such speaking may offer hope and courage through faith in God's plans for the physical universe.

Another contribution this dissertation hopes to make is the fruitful insight offered to the student of the Bible once the "Preservation and Restoration of Creation" is rightly understood. It shall offer a deeper appreciation of the basic "goodness" of God's original Creation -- and a prolegomenon for further investigation into the

Scriptures concerning the subject. Related to this, however, shall come a dreadful awareness of the awful "futility" to which God's Creation has been subjected because of human sin. This word of "Law" may be relieved, however, when the Bible student comes to see God's merciful Preservation of all the things He has made -- and the glorious hope which His stricken creatures may take courage in as they -- along with the human redeemed -- wait with "eager longing." Taken together, then, a proper understanding of this dissertation's topic is God's Law and Gospel spoken by Him to all His Creation through the means of Holy Scripture.

As regards a specific contribution to the discipline of Systematic Theology, this dissertation hopes to relieve a subtle, yet perceptible, tension which exists between two historical, eschatological interpretations of Scripture: the Annihilation-Replacement interpretation of the universe, and the Purging-Restoration interpretation. The first of these has usually centered in on such pericopes as 2 Peter 3:10-11 and the second on Rom. 8:18-23. It is a desire of the writer of this paper to demonstrate how passages such as these are supplementary rather than contradictory.

In their diligence to make clear sinful man's "justification by God's grace through faith alone" many early Lutheran theologians -- and others, of course -- gave scant attention to certain aspects of Biblical eschatology. This was probably inevitable under the conditions in which they lived and worked. Edmund Schlink observed this and pointed it out.<sup>4</sup> He comments that when one inquires about the eschatology of the Lutheran

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<sup>4</sup>Edmund Schlink, Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften, 2nd ed., (Münich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1946), pp. 364-65.

Confessions, for example, the discovery is soon made that one article only has an expressly eschatological theme (Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession and its Apology). Schlink acknowledges that there are references scattered in other articles, especially in the Creeds, but where one might logically expect eschatological statements they are either missing altogether (as in the explanation of the second article of the Small Catechism) or only touched upon briefly (as in the explanation of the third article of the Large Catechism). Schlink has his own explanation for why the Lutheran Confessions contain so few explicitly eschatological statements. It is because they are, in fact, "voller Bewusstheit auf das Eschaton gerichtet."<sup>5</sup> It is the opinion of this dissertation's writer that this understanding of Schlink is a correct one -- although the problem remains for some solution. It still cannot be denied that certain aspects of the Biblical eschatology -- such as the one dealt with in this paper -- have been largely left without adequate treatment by the theologians of the Lutheran tradition.

Schlink's observation has also been made by others, Dr. Robert D. Preus also notes the lack of explicit eschatological statements in the writings of the early Lutheran theologians. Speaking of these men he says: "The burning issues of the day, which centered in Christology, soteriology, sacramentology, and the question of authority in the church, absorbed so much of their attention that the doctrines of eschatology . . . were given only perfunctory attention."<sup>6</sup> Especially is this true of the

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid, p. 365.

<sup>6</sup>Robert D. Preus, The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism, Vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 43.

topic of this present dissertation. For example, in Heinrich Schmid's [well-known] book on dogmatics already referred to <sup>7</sup> only one-half of one page is devoted to the world's end -- in a work numbering hundreds of pages! Therefore, it is the intent of this dissertation to deal with an aspect of Biblical eschatology which has been largely neglected. It is an endeavor to see what God's written Word does reveal on the matter, and what certain of the earliest Lutheran teachers thought about it. At least two very significant things will be discovered. Firstly, that some one of them wrote much more about the fate of the universe than is generally realized and, secondly, that the earlier dogmaticians of the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy held a view -- the one of this dissertation -- different from the one defended by later ones in the same Age. Most significant, of course, is the view taught in Holy Scripture itself. It is hoped by the writer of this dissertation that the evidence presented will lead the readers to a sure and steadfast conviction that the entire universe of God's Creation -- including the human body as a focal point -- is to be gloriously restored, renovated, transformed on the Last Day. If this goal is attained by means of this dissertation, then, it shall be believed by its writer to have made a significant contribution to the joint theological endeavor.

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<sup>7</sup>Schmid.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BOOK OF CONCORD: THE WORLD AND PEOPLE

#### An Attitude Toward the Universe and Its People

As mentioned in chapter one, certain "doctrines of eschatology . . . were given only perfunctory attention" by the earliest Lutheran theologians.<sup>1</sup> As true as this is with many other aspects of Biblical eschatology, it is nowhere truer than with the doctrine of the physical universe's transformation on the Last Day. Even so, as has also been pointed out, the whole doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions, in all their articles, is "voller Bewusstheit auf das Eschaton gerichtet" (is replete with eschatological expectation).<sup>2</sup> To understand and properly interpret the eschatological expectation of the Lutheran Confessions it is necessary to know something of their "attitude toward the universe and its people." Did the writers of the Confessions think as we do concerning the physical world and its inhabitants or did they have certain assumptions about these things which are not so commonly held today? Therefore, it is necessary when dealing with such a topic as is before us in this dissertation to seek to know the minds of the writers whose works are being investigated.

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Supra, p. 9.

Commenting on Article XVII of the Augsburg Confession, Professor George W. Forell said: "The most significant difference between the 20th century and all earlier ages of human history is . . . a basic difference in mood."<sup>3</sup> Much of the modern "mood" may be traced to Humanism which has its origin in 5th Century B.C. Greek thinking. What is said here of our own Twentieth Century and "all earlier ages of human history" is also true of the Sixteenth Century when the Lutheran Confessions were written amidst much struggle and searching of heart. Between the Sixteenth Century and ours is a fundamental and all-encompassing disagreement concerning the innate nature and capabilities of man himself. "The tremendous difference in the modern mood is the underlying conviction that man can basically change his environment and perhaps even himself."<sup>4</sup> The writers of the Lutheran Confessions were not so self-confident, self-reliant -- haughty as is "modern man." In sharp contrast to modern man's assumption that the physical universe is here to stay -- at least for the next few millions of years -- and that its condition, and his, can readily be changed for the good if only he and others like himself so purpose to do is the attitude toward the universe and its people held by the Sixteenth Century Confessors. To demonstrate this essential difference, let us consider three statements of theirs made in the Book of Concord.

The Preface to the Book of Concord (1580)

Concerning man's terrestrial environment, and himself, the Preface to the Book of Concord reads: "In the last times of this transitory

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<sup>3</sup>George W. Forell, The Augsburg Confession: A Contemporary Commentary (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

world almighty God . . . has permitted the . . . light of his . . . Gospel . . . to appear."<sup>5</sup> The original Latin is much more explicit and to the point at issue: "Dei Opt. Max. . . . postremis temporibus et in hac mundi senecta . . . lucem evangelii . . . exoriri . . . voluit."<sup>6</sup> A more detailed examination of these words and phrases will follow below, but at this point it can easily be seen that the writers of the Book of Concord -- and those who subscribed it -- held a very definite attitude toward the universe and its people. It was God who was almighty. The history of the world was in its "last times" and the world itself was "old." As for men -- they were desperately in need of the "light of the Gospel" to show them the darkness of their sin. Such an attitude stands in the sharpest possible contrast to any "underlying conviction that man can basically change his environment and perhaps even himself!"

It is also of the greatest significance that the writers and subscribers of the Book of Concord saw it fit and appropriate to place the above statement at the very beginning of the collected works which was to become their unanimous confession of faith. This is to say, they understood their confession of faith -- in all its parts -- to be made against the background of such an attitude toward the universe and its people. It was because of the desperate condition of men, and their world, that such a confession was necessary in the first place.

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<sup>5</sup>"Preface," The Book of Concord, trans. and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. v.

<sup>6</sup>"Vorrede," Concordia in Die Bekenntnisschriften (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), p. 3.

Rather than viewing their attitude of an aging and passing world as an innovation, the writers and subscribers of the Book of Concord professed this: "nunquam in animum nos induxisse, novum aliquod et peregrinum dogma . . . sed cupere, eam veritatem, quam Augustae anno 1530., professi sumus . . . constanter tueri ac retinere."<sup>7</sup> They intended to remain and abide loyally by the truth once recognized and confessed at Augsburg in the year 1530. It was in the Preface to the entire Book of Concord that its writers and subscribers made the statement about an aging and passing world. This, and other attitudes, were considered to be "piam et genuinam sententiam Augustanae Confessionis,"<sup>8</sup> that is, the faithful and genuine interpretation of the Augsburg Confession. Therefore, the statement under consideration was not, and should not be, looked upon as an extraneous and incongruous interpolation in an otherwise sane and balanced text. Just the opposite, it well expresses the Confessors' -- and subscribers' -- attitude toward the universe and its people.

So far, we have considered only the Latin version of the Preface to the Book of Concord. It is very helpful also to deal with the German version since we can then learn how the words expressed in Latin were understood by the German-speaking people of that day. The first Latin passage quoted above reads in German as follows: "Gott der Allmächtige zu diesen letzten Zeiten der vorgänglichen Welt . . . das Licht seines heiligen Evangelii . . . erscheinen . . . lassen."<sup>9</sup> As will be done with the Latin, so these words and phrases will be dealt with in detail below. At this point, however, it should be noted that the German version agrees

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 5. <sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 8. <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

with the Latin in referring to the world (Welt) as being in its "last times" (letzen Zeiten). Rather than calling the world "old" -- the German describes it as passing, transitory (vorgänglichen). The sense is nearly the same. This attitude toward the universe and its people, as well as the entire contents of the Confessions, was not seen as any type of deviation or innovation from that already professed at other times. It was said: "unser Gemüt und Meinung gar nicht wäre, einige andere oder neue Lehre anzunehmen . . . sondern bei der zu Augsburg Anno 1530. Einmal erkannten und bekannten Wahrheit . . . beständiglich zu verharren und zu bleiben."<sup>10</sup> It was their contention that what they said in the Preface, and elsewhere in the Book of Concord, was "den rechten, christlichen Verstand der Augsburgischen Confession,"<sup>11</sup> it was the correct, Christian understanding of the Augsburg Confession. Although there are slight differences between the Latin and German versions of Concordia's Preface concerning the condition of the aging and transitory world, their meanings are nearly identical. Both of them are thoroughly alien to any modern attitude that man can basically change his environment and perhaps even himself.

#### The Augsburg Confession (1530)

The Preface to the Book of Concord is not the only place where a statement is made about the world and its people. An even more explicit, and because of Augustana's confessional centrality, more important statement was made by the Lutheran Confessors in 1530. The German version will

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 5.    <sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

be dealt with first in this instance since it is considered to be the more official.<sup>12</sup>

Article XXIII of The Augsburg Confession treats Sacerdotal Marriage ("Vom Ehestand der Priester"). In this Article the Confessors mustered every argument available to them to urge the allowance of priests to marry. One of these arguments was based upon an attitude toward the world and its people. We read: "dass itzund in letzten Zeiten und Tagen, von welchen die Schrift meldet, die Welt immer ärger und die Menschen gebrechlicher und schwächer werden."<sup>13</sup> Literally, "that now in the Last Times and Day, of which the Scripture announces, the world is becoming always (more) vexatious and men are becoming (more) defective and weaker." Another possible reading, given in Bekenntnisschriften's critical apparatus, says that: "die Welt je länger je mehr abnimbt,"<sup>14</sup> "the world is evermore extended, evermore declining."

Although the Latin version of this passage is shorter, it is even more explicit: "Et cum senescente mundo paulatim natura humana fiat imbecillior."<sup>15</sup> The Confessors' argument went like this: because the world is growing old, and mens' natures are becoming weaker, the marriage of priests should be allowed so as to give no greater occasions for offense. Even though this is why the world and mens' natures are dealt with in this Article, the fact remains that the Confessors had a very definite attitude toward the world and its people; moreover, this attitude was more or less taken for granted. It doesn't seem as if they expected even their opponents to disagree with them on that particular point.

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<sup>12</sup>Tappert, p. 24.

<sup>13</sup>Bekenntnisschriften, p. 89.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid. <sup>15</sup>Ibid.

Despite explicit references to "die Welt" (mundus) and "Menschen" (natura humana), Edmund Schlink denies that the Confessors meant the physical world or (biological) mankind when they spoke of their "age" and "weakness." Concerning the Augustana statements quoted above, he wrote: "Man darf diese Aussagen genau so wenig biologisch verstehen wie die über die Sünde als Krankheit und Verderbnis."<sup>16</sup> No more than one might call Sin a "sickness and corruption" may the "aging" of the world and the weakness" of mankind be regarded as "biological." In other words, it is only metaphorical speech. To Schlink, references to a world growing old and worse only means that the people in it, as a whole, are behaving as a spiteful old man who grows more and more cantankerous and rebellious as he sees his end drawing near.<sup>17</sup> To show that he still has power, he rouses himself in a final grandiose revolt. Schlink's illustration is a vivid one, yet fails to take into account the very words used in the Confessional statements. Despite his objection to a "biological" understanding of "die Welt" (mundus) and "Menschen" (natura humana), these words easily lend themselves to an understanding which does refer to the physical world and the people in it. The Lutheran Confessions view the physical universe and its people as being integrally related. Nothing could be more "biological" than man's sex life which is the main concern of the Article from which the above Confessional statements come. As the world grows weaker and more infirm -- so does the human nature. There is nothing in the Confessional statements themselves which suggests that the aging world and the weakening human nature are to be considered separately.

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<sup>16</sup>Edmund Schlink, Theologie der lutherischen Bekenntnisschriften, 2nd ed. (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1946), p. 376.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

Schlink's difficulty is that he approaches this particular part of the Confessional writings with a world-view alien to theirs.

It would seem as if the passage from The Augsburg Confession presently being discussed were basic to the other Confessional statements along the same line. The similar statement already considered from the Preface to the entire Book of Concord (written fifty years later) might well have been prompted by this fuller remark in Augustana's Article XXIII. The writer of the Preface certainly thought his remark in order and completely in harmony with what his teachers had earlier held and professed.

#### The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531)

In Article XXIII of The Apology the same issue concerning a married priesthood is dealt with as was done in the same numbered article of The Augsburg Confession a year earlier. The Apology's Latin statement relevant to the topic of this dissertation is as follows: "Natura senescit et fit paulatim debilior, et crescunt vitia."<sup>18</sup> Here it is Nature itself that is said to be becoming progressively older, weaker, and more corrupt. The German version speaks of: "wie es zu den letzen Zeiten gehen werde, kurz für der Welt Ende."<sup>19</sup> If the thoughts of these two versions are put together the meaning is obvious: It is shortly before the end of the world ("kurz für der Welt Ende") and, therefore, Nature itself is growing older, weaker, and more corrupt.

We have seen, from citations from three different parts of the Book of Concord, that not only once, but in three distinct contexts --

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<sup>18</sup>Bekenntnisschriften, p. 344.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

and in six versions -- the same attitude toward the universe and its people is repeated. The very presentations of the thought -- briefly and with almost no explanation -- suggests that the Confessors felt that such an idea was generally held by their readers and not at all innovative, bizarre, or in dispute.

#### Words and Terms Used

In considering the words and terms used in the Lutheran Confessions concerning the topic of this dissertation we shall first deal with Latin instances and, then, German ones. Since identical or similar wording is used in the Preface to the Book of Concord, The Augsburg Confession, and the Apology to the Augsburg Confession their usage will be dealt with as a whole. The following classification will be used in handling the subject matter: the Last Times or Day; the World; People (Human Nature); and Nature Itself.

#### The Last Times or Day

The Preface to Concordia, Augustana, and the Apology all speak of the Last Times or Day. The first and third of these speak of it in both the Latin and the German versions while the second refers to it in the German version only.

There are two Latin references to "postremis temporibus." The first of these is in Concordia's Preface, and the second is in Article XXVIII of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. In both instances it may be translated as "in the Last Times." The context of Concordia's first reference is regarding God's merciful act of permitting the Gospel to appear "postremis temporibus" of the "old world" (mundi senecta). The context of the Apology's reference is an appeal to the Emperor of the

Holy Roman Empire to change the canonical law forbidding the marriage of priests. Two very good reasons for changing the unnatural law "praesertim has postremis temporibus" (especially in these Last Times) are "Nature has both grown old and gradually become weaker and more corrupt" (a quotation to be dealt with below).

The definitions of the two Latin words found in both instances cited above are standard ones. The "postremis" is from "postremus" and means last, end, extremity, worse. The "temporibus" is from "tempus" and means a portion or period of time; the state or condition of things (especially bad things). In other words, "postremis temporibus" may be translated as "in the last or end period of time." It is a straightforward and unambiguous meaning.

All three of the Confessional Writings being considered use German to speak of the Last Times -- and one of them (Augustana) also speaks of the Last "Day." References to the Last Times are nearly identical: "letzen" or "letzten" "Zeiten." The Preface to Concordia qualifies it as "diesen letzen Zeiten: of the transitory world (der vorgänglichen Welt). Augustana qualifies it as "in letzten Zeiten und Tagen, von welchen die Schrift meldet." The "Last Times and Day" of which the Scripture announces. This is to say, the Bible teaches about the "Last Times" to which Augustana refers. The Apology of Augustana further makes explicit that "den letzen Zeiten gehen werde, kurz für der Welt Ende." Not only are the Last Times or Day revealed in Scripture, but it is the "Last Times" which are to come shortly before the end of the world ("kurz für der Welt Ende"). What these Last Times or Day is, therefore, is clearly identified in the Confessions. Their contexts are unambiguous. It is the same Last Day announced in the Holy Bible.

As with the Latin version, so, too, in the German ones, definitions of the "letzen" or "letzten" "Zeiten" are straightforward and unequivocal. "Letzen" means the ultimate, closing, or final something. "Zeiten" is from "Zeit" and means an epoch, period, space of time, era, age or generation.

### The World

The Preface to the Book of Concordia and Article XXIII of both The Augsburg Confession and the Apology speak of the "world" in a similar sense. The first two of these speak of it in both the Latin and German versions. Here, the former will be first considered.

The Preface's Latin reference to the world is "mundi senecta" and Augustana's reference is to "senescente mundo." The context of the first is: In the Last Times and in this "mundi senecta" Almighty God has permitted the light of His Gospel to appear. The context of the second is: And with "senescente mundo" human nature is gradually becoming weaker and weaker.

As we have noted earlier, when considering the Last Times, so, here, the meanings of our words are the commonly accepted ones. Both "senecta" (Preface) and "senescente" (Augustana) are from the Latin "senesco" which means: To grow old, become aged, to decay or diminish in strength; to grow weak, feeble or powerless; to waste away, decline. Both "mundi" (Preface) and "mundo" (Augustana) are from "mundus" which means: The order of the universe, the world, especially the heavens and the heavenly bodies; mankind. Quite simply, then, the Confessions state that "the world" or "the universe" is growing old, wasting away, declining in strength.

The Preface's German reference to the world is "vorgänglichen Welt" and The Augsburg Confession's reference is "die Welt immer ärger." An alternate reading in the latter is "die Welt je länger je mehr abnimbt." The Apology's reference is "die ganze Welt . . . in ihrem Alter und im Abnehmen." The context for the first is: In these Last Times "der vorgänglichen Welt" God has allowed the light of His gospel to appear. The context of the second is: In the Last Times and Day, of which the Scripture announces, "die Welt immer ärger" and men are becoming more defective and weaker. The context of the third reference is an appeal to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire to graciously consider the marriage of priests because "die Welt je länger je mehr abnimbt." The context of the fourth is that the temptations to immorality be resisted since "die ganze Welt . . . in ihren Alter und im Abnehmen."

All of the above four references to the "world" use the German word "Welt" which means simply -- the world. The Preface's use of the word "vorgänglichen" is related to the word "vorgängig" which means previous, foregoing, past. "Vorgänglichen," therefore, means something that is passing away -- moving into the past. When The Augsburg Confession refers to "die Welt" as "immer ärger" it means that the world is "always" (immer) or constantly "ärger" -- offending, exasperating, fretting, annoying, vexatious. Taken together, the world which is passing away is a world which is constantly offensive and vexatious. The transitory world is a bad world because of sin.

An alternate German reading of Augustana's Article XXIII speaks of "die Welt je länger je mehr abnimbt." This phrase was used as part of an attempt to get the Emperor, Charles V, to make concessions for the human weakness of the priests in his empire. Because of the world's

temptations, many of them would do well if permitted to marry. Why? "Dieweil die Welt je länger je mehr abnimbt." To describe the world as "je länger je mehr abnimbt" means that "the world is ever more extended, ever more declining. "The little words "je . . . je . . ." may be translated as "ever (more) . . . ever (more) . . ." The word "länger" means extended, stretched out, diluted. The word "Alter" means "age" and "letzten Alter" means "last age." In other words, the world (and the people in it) is reaching the breaking point; something is about to snap. "Mehr," of course, means "more," and "abnimbt" is from the German word "abnehmen" which means gradually failing or declining. In context, then, it is argued that the priests be permitted to marry because (dieweil) the world (and the priests in it, as men) is ever more extended toward the breaking point, ever more failing and declining.

#### People (Human Nature)

Only The Augsburg Confession explicitly mentions the people of the world (human nature) in relation to the topic of this dissertation. It does so in both the German and Latin versions.

Augustana's reference to the world's people is found in the German version, and to human nature in the Latin version. This probably means that the Confessors considered them to be equivalent terms, that is, "People"="human nature." Augustana's German reference is to "die Menschen gebrechlicher und schwächer," and its Latin reference is "paulatim natura humana fiat imbecillior." The context of the former is: In the Last Times and Day, of which the Scripture announces, the world is always vexatious and "die Menschen gebrechlicher und schwächer werden." The context of the latter is: With the aging world "paulatim natura humana fiat imbecillior."

The German word "Menschen" means two things: People or mankind as a whole, regardless of sex. In the context of this dissertation it means people. The word "gebrechlicher" is related to the word "brechlich" which means breakable or fragile. "Gebrechlicher," therefore, means broken or damaged. The word "schwächer" is from "schwächen" which means weaken, enfeeble, impair, lame, or diminish. As a whole, then, "die Menschen gebrechlicher und schwächer" means that "People are broken and weak." Clear, but not at all flattering.

The Latin term "natura humana" is best translated as "human nature." The word "humana" is from "humanus" which means: Belonging to man, human. The word "natura" can mean: Nature, character, natural qualities or disposition; an element, substance, or essence. For our purposes, "natura humana" simply means "human nature," the natural qualities, character, disposition, or essence of human beings. The word "paulatim" means little by little, by degrees, gradually. The Latin word "imbecillior" is from the word "imbecillus" which means weak or feeble. Therefore, our Latin phrase may be translated as: Little by little human nature has become weak and feeble. This along with an also aging and senile world. Both the world -- and the people in it -- are growing impotent. The two are inseparably connected.

Only the Apology to the Augsburg Confession uses the word "Nature" by itself -- without any adjectives, and it does so in both the Latin and German versions. We will consider the Latin first.

The statement is: "Natura senescit et fit paulatim debilior et crescunt vitia." Its context is the following. Since other laws of the Empire and Church have been changed for the common good, why not change the canonical law forbidding the marriage of priests? There are many good

reasons for changing it, especially in these Last Times (praesertim his postremis temporibus). And, what are the especially "good reasons" for allowing the marriage of priests? These reasons: "Natura senescit et fit paulatim debilior et crescunt vitia."

The key-word in the above statement is the word "natura." It is not a qualified "natura," for example, "natura humana" -- simply "natura" all alone. It should be pointed out, however, that this unqualified "natura" is probably not a reference to either the world as such, or to the universe, or to Nature. If it were, it should be "rerum natura" (the things of Nature). Most probably it is another reference to "human nature" especially since this definition best fits the total context and intentions of the passage as a whole. This is to say, priests should be permitted to marry because of their "natura" (humana). This human nature is further described. It is "senescit et fit paulatim debilior et crescunt vitia." The word "senescit" is from "senesco" and has been defined above as: To become old, aged, weak, diminished in strength. "Paulatim" has also been defined as "gradually" or "little by little," The word "debilior" is from "debilis" and means feeble, weak, lamed, frail. "Crescunt" is from "cresco" and means to grow, appear, become visible. The word "vitia" is from "vitium" and means: A fault, defect, blemish, imperfection, crime, or vice. Therefore, our present statement may be translated thusly: Nature has become both old and gradually weaker and more criminal."

We are fortunate that this particular statement, pertinent to the topic of this dissertation, is elaborated upon in its German version. It is as if the German translator of the original Latin felt that he needed to make clear what the abbreviated original meant. We read:

Wir sehen, dass dies die letzten Zeiten sein, und wie ein alter Mensch schwächer ist, denn ein junger, so ist auch die ganze Welt und ganze Natur in ihrem letzten Alter und im Abnehmen. Der Sünde und Laster wird nicht weniger, sondern täglich mehr.<sup>20</sup>

Not only does this passage make it very clear how the Sixteenth Century Lutheran Confessors viewed the world and the people in it, but it is also the very passage used by Edmund Schlink to deny that mankind, in any "biological" sense is gradually weakening.<sup>21</sup> Before speaking again to Schlink's opinion, let us itemize four points which may be understood from the passage at hand. First, the declining condition ("im Abnehmen") of "die ganze Welt" and "ganze Natur" is observable ("Wir sehen"). Second, this declining condition is characteristic of being in the Last Times ("die letzten Zeiten") or the Last Age ("letzten Alter"). Third, the progressive weakening, due to age, of the whole world and all of nature is analogous to that between an old and a younger man ("ein alter Mensch . . . ein junger"). Fourth, as to make most clear what is meant by all this, sin and vice is not lessening, but daily increasing (Der Sünde und Laster wird nicht weniger, sondern täglich mehr"). This progressive decay is not viewed as a static, neutral, natural phenomenon, but as a negative, evil, corrupting, condemning state of affairs effecting both "the world" and "nature" (human nature).

Edmund Schlink considers the "old man" in this passage to be mankind as a whole. He becomes more and more cantankerous, defiant, and rebellious as he grows older. Finally, he stages a final rebellion against God. This opinion has much to commend it and is very vivid. No doubt,

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Supra, p. 17.

the opinion is largely based upon the "Sünde and Laster" becoming "täglich mehr." Two considerations, however, militate against Schlink's opinion. First, the sins and vice are not directly predicted of the "old man" himself (after all, it is sexual weakness being referred to historically), but, rather, he is spoken of as being "schwächer." Second, Schlink's opinion deals exclusively with the results rather than with the cause. Why is "die ganze Welt und ganze Natur" progressively becoming worse? Schlink would say because of sin. Yes, but why is the sinful condition ever worsening? The Confessors say -- because the "whole world and all of nature" is becoming weaker and weaker. Schlink denies that this is, in any sense, "biological." Despite his objection, however, it is biological in the sense that it is so described in Augustana:

Dass nach Adams Fall alle Menschen, so natürlich geboren werden, in Sünden empfangen und geboren werden, das ist, dass sie alle von Mutterleib an voll boser Lust und Neigung seindt und kein wahre Gottesfurcht, keinen Glauben an Gott von Natur haben können; dass auch dieselbige angeborne Seuch und Erbsunde Wahrhaftiglich Sünd sei . . .<sup>22</sup>

Not only has mankind been so disastrously affected, but also his whole earthly habitation. It is a fallen condition "von Mutterleib," if one will, it is -- "biological."

### Conclusion

A recurring thought has been noted in The Augsburg Confession (1530), the Apology to the Augsburg Confession (1531), and in the Preface to the entire Book of Concord (1580). It has been noted that the writers -- and subscribers -- of the Lutheran Confessions had a very definite attitude toward the world and its people. It was probably an attitude shared

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid, p. 53.

by the majority of Christians in their day -- however alien it seems to the majority of people in our day. This attitude, or assumption, may be summarized in this way: (1) the present conditions of the world are shortly to end (2) the Bible prophesies the end-conditions (3) Nature itself is growing older, weaker, and more corrupt (4) men are living in the Last Times (5) the world is "passing away" (6) human nature is declining in strength and becoming worse, and (7) there is hope and great promise because the great God has permitted His saving Gospel to appear in such troubled times so that men might be delivered from sin.

## CHAPTER III

### MARTIN LUTHER AND THE AGE OF LUTHERAN ORTHODOXY

#### An Introduction

This chapter will be an attempt to learn what Dr. Martin Luther, and the early Lutheran Church leaders who followed him, believed about the topic of this dissertation. Did Luther, and others of that same historical period, have anything to say about the Preservation and Restoration of Creation? What was his attitude toward the universe and its people? Did he, and other influential church leaders, actually believe in a "restoration" of Creation -- or did they believe in its total annihilation and replacement by another not previously in existence? Did Martin Luther, and those who identified themselves with him, agree concerning the question at issue -- or was there disagreement and divergent views? It is questions such as these which shall be dealt with in this chapter. First, the views of Dr. Luther and Philip Melanchthon will be considered together and, then, the views of certain prominent teachers who followed them in the Lutheran tradition.

#### Martin Luther and Philip Melanchthon

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Actually, we have already begun studying the views of Martin Luther pertinent to the topic of this dissertation. As pointed out

earlier,<sup>1</sup> the Augsburg Confession of 1530 has a confessional centrality among the Lutheran Confessions. In large measure it was Luther himself -- acting through his co-worker, Philip Melanchthon -- who was responsible for the contents of that Confession. Therefore, it may be assumed that Augustana is a faithful expression of Luther's views -- even as regards the passages in it relevant to our topic. Speaking along this line, Professor F. Bente wrote: "the material . . . out of which Melanchthon . . . framed the fundamental symbol of the Lutheran Church were the thoughts and, in a large measure, the very words of Luther."<sup>2</sup> This is especially true of The Augsburg Confession, but is also true of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531) and the Preface to the Book of Concord (1580) since those who followed him had: "a thorough familiarity with Luther's writings and a firm loyalty to his theology."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it is a valid and substantial assumption that the attitude toward the universe and its people which we have already investigated in the Book of Concord was also that shared by Dr. Martin Luther.

Arguing that all the earliest Lutheran teachers believed in a renewal or restoration of the universe rather than its annihilation, August Althaus makes the same claim of Luther himself. He wrote: "Aber die älteren Kirchenlehrer bis gegen Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts sprechen sich

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>F. Bente, Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Robert D. Preus, The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism, Vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 31.

ganz in angegebener Weise über die künftige Welterneuerung aus. So besonders Luther . . ."<sup>4</sup> So especially, particularly, Luther believed in the "Welterneuerung." This is the claim of August Althaus. Is the claim true -- or is it unfounded? "Welterneuerung" is a compound word from "Welt" (world) and "erneuern" which means: To renew, regenerate, or restore. Did Dr. Martin Luther, in fact, believe and teach the future renewal, regeneration, restoration of the entire world? What evidence does Althaus offer to substantiate his claim? This. He quotes (in detail) Luther's Kirchepostille for the 4th Sunday after Trinity.<sup>5</sup> In part, it reads:

Der Himmel hat jetzt sein Werkeltagskleid an, dort aber wird er anziehen sein Sonntagskleid . . . . An jenem Tage aber wird sie Gott wieder ausfegen und reinigen durch Feuer, 2 Pet. 3,10, . . . denn sie im Anfange ist gewesen . . . . Also auch die Erde trüge keine Disteln noch Dornen, wenn sie nicht um unserer Sünde willen verflucht wäre. Darum verlanget ihr auch sammt allen Creaturen nach jenem Tage, dass sie möge sammt ihnen geändert und verneuert werden.

Interestingly, the Epistle for the 4th Sunday after Trinity was the passage to be, primarily, dealt with in this dissertation, Rom. 8:18-23. Luther is speaking of the heavens (der Himmel), the earth (die Erde), and also the sun. In his characteristically vivid way he speaks of the present heavens and earth (the world) having on its "work-clothes" (Werkeltagskleid) whereas on that Final "Day" (Tage) it will put on its "Sunday best" (Sonntagskleid). Between the change of clothing there will be a "cleansing by fire" (reinigen durch Feuer, 2 Peter 3, 10). Not an annihilation by fire, but a cleansing by fire. The entire earth shall be

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<sup>4</sup>August Althaus, Die letzten Dinge (Verden: Steinhöfel'scke Buchhandlung, 1858), p. 117.

<sup>5</sup>Martin Luther, "Kritische Gesamtausgabe," D. Martin Luthers Werke, Vol. 41 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1910), pp. 301-18.

wondrously transformed and regenerated. No more "Thistles and thorns" shall grow from its soil. Cursed ("verflucht") from the time of Adam, the physical Creation shall be completely freed on that great Day. "All creatures" (allen Creaturen) long ("verlanget") for it. Why? Because all of Creation will be marvellously "changed and renewed" (geändert und verneuert). Not exterminated and replaced, but gloriously changed and renewed similarly to what it was "in the beginning" (im Anfange). In this one moving passage Luther harmonizes the apparently contradictory pericopes of 2 Peter 3:10-13 and Rom. 8:18-23. 2 Peter's "fire" is a cleansing -- not an annihilating -- one. It is to be granted that Luther's manner of expression is exuberant and highly figurative, but completely in line with the thoughts and expressions of those two passages of Scripture. August Althaus quotes further from Luther where he treats of "eine schöne Sonne, ein feiner hübscher Baum, eine köstliche, liebliche Blume,"<sup>6</sup> but enough has been shown to demonstrate adequately that Althaus' view concerning Luther's belief in the future "welterneuerung" has substantial foundations. Bornkamm was correct when he commented on Luther's view of Nature:

Luther hatte sich dabei nicht allein auf die Freiheit der dichterischen Phantasie berufen, sondern er sah ein tieferes Recht zu solcher Gleichnisdeutung. Die Natur ist nicht um ihrer selbst willen zu erforschen, sondern darum, weil sie Zeichen ist.<sup>7</sup>

Luther's view of Nature was no "poetical phantasy," but "am Glauben Luthers hing auch ein Weltbild, das der Bibel."<sup>8</sup> Whatever one might think of Luther's use of figures and images in describing the

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Heinrich Bornkamm, Luthers geistige Welt (Lüneburg: Heliand-Verlag, 1947), p. 176.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 173.

"Welterneuerung," it cannot be seriously doubted that he, himself, believed them literally. His "World-Picture" (Weltbild) was "that of the Bible" (das der Bibel).

Additional places in Luther's voluminous writings where evidences of his attitude toward the universe and its people may be found are not difficult to find. The difficulty is in sorting out characteristic passages which represent his view most clearly. Since the excerpt cited above was a sermon based on Rom. 8:18-23 we will continue dealing with his thoughts on that pericope. To demonstrate that he did not change his view when talking to educated people we shall look at his more scholarly writings.

When commenting on Rom. 8:19-21 in a glossary Luther referred to another Bible passage related to this. Speaking of the Final Coming of Christ in Matthew 24 (verse 35) he said in part:

Hoc est, quod dicitur "Celum et terram transitura," non secundum substantiam, Sed secundum corruptibilitatem . . . . Ego intelligo non secundum substantiam . . . Sed quod amplius non corruptibilia sint, Sed gloriosa. Hoc enim indicat verbum "transibunt" i.e. mutabuntur. Sicut Christus transiit . . . mutatus est in gloriam immortalitatis . . . . Sic 2. Peter ultimo: "Novus vero celos et novam terram expectamus" etc. Et Isa. 65: "Ecce ego creo celos novos et terram novam."<sup>9</sup>

It is obvious that the language here is not the exuberant speech of his 4th Sunday in Trinity sermon, but that of a highly trained theologian. Even so, his hope of a "Welterneuerung" is exactly the same. Luther's view could not be any clearer. He refers to several relevant passages: 2 Peter 3, Isaiah 65, Matthew 24 -- and Romans 8. The passing away of

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<sup>9</sup>Martin Luther, "Der Brief an der Römer," D. Martin Luthers Werke, Band 56 (Weimar: Herman Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1938), p. 80.

the universe ("celum et terram") is "non secundum substantiam, sed secundum corruptibilitatem." Not according to its substance, but according to its corruption. This is probably an allusion to 1 Cor. 7:31. The word "transibunt" (shall pass away) does not mean that the present universe shall be obliterated, but that it shall be "mutabuntur" (changed), changed as the earthly body of Jesus was changed into immortal glory ("Sicut Christus transiit . . . mutatus est in gloriam immortalitatis"). In other words, what is to happen to the present physical universe is exactly analogous to what happened to the body of our Lord Jesus Himself. We might add, and shall happen to our own mortal bodies on the Last Day as well. However changed and transformed our Lord's risen body was to the One which hung on the cross and was laid in the tomb -- the One was substantially related to the Other. It shall be the same with today's universe and the universe divinely dealt with on that Day. It is this kind of "novus . . . celos et novam terram" that is expected. Not "new" ones in the sense of having never existed before, but new in the sense of having been changed into immortal glory -- after all sinful corruption has been purged away. Presumably -- according to Luther's 4th Sunday in Trinity sermon -- this "passing away" of the earth's corruption is accomplished by the "fire" of 2 Peter 3.

It is sometimes difficult to get all of Luther's views on one Bible passage by looking in a work seemingly appropriate to that passage. Under Rom. 8:19-21 above, for example, we learned his view on Matt. 24:35. When we turn to his Genesis commentaries -- we find further remarks on Romans 8. This was characteristic of the man, adds great richness to his presentations, and shows us that he regarded the many books of the Bible as a theological whole.

Commenting on the Creation and Fall account of Genesis 3, Luther says of the physical, fallen world that: "Oportet ergo et ipsam conditionem reintegratam ad pristinum, sine prohibitionem servire justus: et hos Apostolus fecit manifestum in ea quae est ad Romanos . . ." <sup>10</sup> Luther, here, is alluding to Rom. 8:21 where it says that all of Creation will be set free from its bondage to decay. To him, this means that the whole Creation will be restored to its former (ad pristinum), pre-Sin condition. This would be "quando et creatura renovata, et liberata," <sup>11</sup> A Creation finally "renewed" (renovata) and "liberated" (liberata). In this same work Luther alludes once more to 1 Cor. 7:31 where it speaks of "the form of this world" which is "passing away." His comment is again: "Non enim substantia, neque materia conditionis exterminatur (verus enim et firmus qui constituit illam); sed figura transit mundi hujus hoc est, in quibus transgressio facta est; quoniam veteratus est homo in ipsis," <sup>12</sup> Luther's position is made ever more clear. It is not the substance of this world which is to be "exterminated" (exterminatus). It is only the "figure" (figura) of the present earth which is to pass away. This word, "figura," may be defined as: form, shape, kind, nature, or species. It is the nature of, and kind of, present world which must pass away -- not the physical world itself. The world was made for man! Of course, the kind of earthly existence in which the sins took place (in quibus transgressio facta est) must be removed "quoniam veteratus est homo in ipsis" (because man is become old in it).

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<sup>10</sup> Luther, "Kritische Gesamtausgabe," D. Martin Luthers Werke, Band 42 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1911), p. 1210.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 1213. <sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 1221.

This last phrase in the paragraph immediately above is a very significant one for at least two reasons. First, because Luther's remark that "man is old" (*veteratus est homo*) identifies his attitude to be exactly that we have already seen in this regard in the Lutheran Confessions. Second, because Luther's statement here is an exact quotation of the Second Century theologian, Irenaeus,<sup>13</sup> and thus identifies him with such a Patristic tradition concerning the world's End. More about such a Patristic relationship shall be investigated later. Martin Luther believed in the renewal or restoration of forgiven man -- and his earthly environment, he did not teach an annihilation-replacement interpretation of the universe. His joy, and sometimes nearly unrestrained exuberance, when thinking of the great promises and hope that "the creation itself will . . . obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" is amply illustrated in such a place as his comments on Psalm 8:3.<sup>14</sup>

#### Philip Melanchthon (1497-1560)

Not only was Philip Melanchthon an intimate co-worker and lifelong personal friend of Martin Luther, but this "layman composed the chief confession of Lutheranism [The Augsburg Confession, 1530] and its chief theological textbook."<sup>15</sup> What has already been said about Luther's relationship to the Lutheran Confessions<sup>16</sup> is also largely true of

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<sup>13</sup>Irenaeus, Libros quinque adversus Haereses, Tom. II, ed. W. Wigan Harvey (Cantabrigiae: Typis Academicis, 1857), p. 427.

<sup>14</sup>Martin Luther, "Kritische Gesamtausgabe", D. Martin Luthers Werke, Band 45 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1911), p. 230-39.

<sup>15</sup>Robert Stupperich, Melanchthon, trans. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>Supra, p. 30.

Melanchthon's relationship to them. As a matter of fact, it is probably even more true of the second man since he was the author of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 1531. Therefore, all we have said earlier about the Confessional attitude toward the universe and its people is true of Philip Melanchthon's view on the subject. We will consider other writings of his. Did he really believe in the ultimate restoration of Creation -- or did he hold to the view that the present universe is to be exterminated and replaced by a "new" heavens and earth not previously in existence?

It is Werner Elert who leads us into a consideration of Melanchthon's view of Creation's final renewal. He wrote:

Sie alle aber sind einig darin, dass das ewige Leben Auferstehung ist: ein neuer Leib, ein neuer Himmel, eine neue Erde. Ein neuer Leib, ganz anders als der jetzige . . . aber doch ein Leib, weil Gott gelobt werden wird von allen Kreaturen . . . . Die Auferstehung ist begleitet von der renovatio universae creaturae . . .<sup>17</sup>

Elert's Latin quotation here is taken from the writings of Philip Melanchthon. This is to say, Elert not only states, thereby, what Melanchthon taught concerning the "renovatio universae creaturae," but he endorses such a view himself. The "renovatio universae creaturae" is a renewal of all creatures -- including, of course, the human body.

Melanchthon's view, is very similar to that of Luther's although not nearly so often expressed or so jubilantly worded. We can also detect a note of caution and hesitancy when Melanchthon approaches the subject. Commenting on Isaiah 65:17-20 he elaborated upon this passage's remarks concerning a future existence where "new heavens and a new earth"

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<sup>17</sup>Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums, Erster Band (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1931), p. 456.

are created by God and where weeping, distress, early death, and frustrated labor are no more. We read in part:

Aliae sententiae aliis planiores sunt; sed tamen haec quoque testatur futuram renovationem totius creaturae, et pios habituros esse perpetua gaudia . . . . Ergo erunt sine peccato et morte. Item, infantes et senes perpetuo vivent . . . . Et quia hi loci docent Ecclesiam futuram esse in afflictionibus ante resurrectionem, et primum glorificandam post resurrectionem, et post renovationem universae creaturae . . . .<sup>18</sup>

Melanchthon speaks clearly here of a future renewal or renovation of the total Creation ("futuram renovationem totius creaturae") and the renewal of all creatures ("renovationem universae creaturae"). It was this kind of Melanchthonian thinking to which Elert referred. Although Melanchthon did not frequently give himself to such "earthly" ruminations, he is clear enough in the above passage. His manner of presentation, however, is both more restrained -- and logical -- than Luther's.

Since the passage above is still near at hand, let us conclude the quotation since we shall learn therefrom of a haunting fear which later became much stronger among certain Lutheran theologians beginning with John Gerhard.

The passage above is finished off like this: "clare testantur Prophetae, regnum Christi spirituale esse, nec esse politiam mundi ante resurrectionem, qualem Iudaei et Anabaptistae fingunt"<sup>19</sup> (clearly, the prophets have testified that the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, and not a political state of the world before the resurrection, as the Jews and

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<sup>18</sup> Philip Melanchthon, "Opera," Corpus Reformatorum, Vol. 21, ed. Henricus Ernestus Bindseil (Brunsvigae: Apud C. A. Schwetschke et Filium, 1854), p. 525.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

Anabaptists imagine). These few words have great significance for they show how squeamish and fearful a theologian could become concerning a certain doctrine because of its possible misunderstanding by some others. Let us elaborate on this. First, Melanchthon states that there is definitely to be a future renewal of the whole Creation, but, then, he feels constrained to safeguard against a misunderstanding of it. The renewed world "spirituale esse," it is "spiritual." It is possible that Melanchthon both accepted Irenaeus' "renewed universe" concept -- and feared lest Irenaeus' crass exaggerations and Millennialism<sup>20</sup> also be accepted. Certainly, there were Chiliasts doing exactly that in Melanchthon's day! Even so, this is not the time to go further into the development and eventual outcome of Melanchthon's "spiritual" safeguard. It will be dealt with later in this chapter. It should be noted at this time, however, that this is the -- inadvertent -- beginning of another, radically different attitude toward the end of the universe. Although Melanchthon certainly did not mean it that way, it is the germinal beginning of an annihilation-replacement theory. The outcome would be that the renewal of God's original, substantial Creation was diametrically opposed by an immaterial, "spiritual" one.

#### Early Lutheran Dogmaticians

##### The Orthodox: An Introduction

When speaking of "orthodox" dogmaticians we are speaking of men who represented "the concrete historical development that we see

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<sup>20</sup>Irenaeus, Libros quinque adversus Haereses, pp. 415-19.

persisting in Lutheranism from the time of the Formula of Concord [1577], and even before, to the first quarter of the 18th century -- 150 years . . ."<sup>21</sup> These men are of special interest because we wish to see how the respected teachers of the Lutheran tradition, following Luther and Melanchthon, dealt with the end of the universe. Did they continue to believe and teach, as Luther and Melanchthon had, that all of Creation would be renewed and restored on the Last Day -- or did they depart from that teaching? If some of them did depart from it -- why did they do so? We have already demonstrated, when dealing with the Lutheran Confessions, that at least down until 1580 all the Lutheran teachers believed that both the world and the people in it were becoming progressively weaker and more sinful. They believed and taught that the End was near. What is not taught in the Confessions, however, is what will happen to the physical universe on the Last Day. We have already seen, of course, what Luther and Melanchthon believed would happen -- although such was not stated in the Confessional writings. This chapter purports to investigate what the Lutheran teachers in closest proximity to the Reformers believed about the universe's end at the close of human history. To determine this, we will choose representatives of Luther's and Melanchthon's "old view" and, then, representatives of a "new view" beginning with John Gerhard.

#### Representatives of the Old View

John Brenz (1499-1570)

John Brenz was one of the very earliest followers and admirers of Luther, being won to his views not six months after the 95 Theses were

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<sup>21</sup>Preus, p. 27.

first published. He was one of the younger generation in whom Luther placed so much hope.<sup>22</sup> Luther praised Brenz to such an extent that to some unsympathetic persons it seemed flattery.<sup>23</sup> He was an actively involved contemporary of the Reformers, a born leader, and himself the Reformer of Württemberg, Germany. All of this is pointed out to show three things: (1) Brenz trusted Luther and his understanding of Scripture (2) Luther respected the opinions of Brenz, and (3) it may be legitimately assumed that Brenz' view of the universe's end is in direct-line relationship to that of his respected predecessors. As a matter of fact, exactly that will be shown to be the case.

In preaching on a passage from the Gospel of Luke, John Brenz said: "Werden Himmel und Erde so vergehen, dass von ihnen überall nichts bleibt? Mit nichten. Sie werden nicht vergehen, sondern verwandelt werden. Sie werden ablegen das Gewand der Verderbtseins und ein neues Kleid, das nicht verderbt werden kann, anlegen."<sup>24</sup> Here, he asks the rhetorical question: "Will heaven and earth so pass away, that nothing at all remains of them?" His unequivocal answer is, "Certainly not!" He continues: "It will not pass away, but will be changed (verwandelt werden)." The word "verwandelt" is from "verwandeln" and means to change or be transformed. Very reminiscent of Luther's remarks along this line, are Brenz' words: "It will lay aside the garment of Corruption and put on a new dress, which

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<sup>22</sup>Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand (New York: Abingdon Press, 1950), pp. 86-87.

<sup>23</sup>Charles P. Krauth, The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1875), p. 76.

<sup>24</sup>John Brenz, "Homilie 43 zum Lucam, "In Evangelii (Halae: Petri Brubachii, 1540), p. 623.

cannot be corrupted." This illustration about the taking off and putting on of clothing is nearly identical with Luther's simile of the world's "work-day" and "Sunday" clothes.<sup>25</sup> This certainly buttresses the assertion that John Brenz closely followed Luther's thoughts on the matter, and how he understood the Reformer. Dr. Robert D. Preus is probably close to the mark when he sees Brenz as saying:

Heaven and earth as we know them will pass away and perish, and a new heaven and earth, possessing completely new conditions and dimensions, will come into being. And there we live with God in glory and in our resurrected bodies, not bodies which have been changed into spirits, but spiritual bodies which are not subject to space and time and other earthly conditions.<sup>26</sup>

However much Brenz emphasized the difference between the present universe and the "new heavens and earth," it is to be a place for resurrected bodies. How very different is this view from that one beginning with John Gerhard will be shown below.

Philipp Nicolai (1556-1608)

Philipp Nicolai was a much respected leader in early Lutheranism. "In Philipp Nicolai [and others] we see orthodox theologians and dogmaticians who were capable of writing the most stirring hymns, the most touching devotional literature, and the most moving sermons."<sup>27</sup> Philipp Nicolai was in the Swabian tradition of John Brenz and James Andreae.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Supra, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup>Robert D. Preus, The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism, Vol. 2 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1972), p. 242.

<sup>27</sup>Preus, Vol. 1, p. 29.

<sup>28</sup>The Encyclopedia Of The Lutheran Church, Vol. 3, ed. Julius Bodensieck (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 1751.

This highly gifted "orthodox theologian" believed the same thing about the World's future transformation as had Brenz, Melanchthon, and Luther before him. Sounding more scholastic, but saying essentially the same thing, he wrote: "Es soll die jetzige Welt verbrennen und zwar im Feuer ganz untergehen. Aber doch nicht materialiter, mit Vernichtung ihres Wesens, sondern formaliter, nach ihrer jetzigen Gestalt und baufälligen Zustände, wie es mit den Leibern der Menschen geschieht."<sup>29</sup> Nicolai, here, alludes to the "fire" of 2 Peter 3, the "form" (Gestalt) of the passing world in 1 Cor. 7:31, and the resurrection of Romans 8 -- all of these to be dealt with subsequently. Nicolai's statement may be translated as follows: "The present world is to be burned up and truly to perish in fire. Still, however, not 'materially,' with the annihilation (Vernichtung) of its being (Wesen), but 'formally,' according to its present form (Gestalt) and dilapidated state, as it happens with the bodies of men." We detect in the first sentence of Nicolai's passage that he is refuting those who argue that the fire of 2 Peter 3 is an annihilating fire. Nicolai grants them that "die jetzige Welt verbrennen und zwar (indeed, truly) im Feuer ganz (completely, totally) untergehen (perishes)." "Aber doch nicht materialiter, mit Vernichtung ihres Wesens . . ." (However, not materially, with annihilation of its being), essence, or physical substance. The words of Philipp Nicolai are very clear and his view certain. It seems as if he is standing for the old tradition carried on by Luther, Melanchthon, and Brenz at a time when it was becoming increasingly unpopular among certain Lutheran theologians. A "new voice" was

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<sup>29</sup> Philipp Nicolai, De Vita Aeterna (Hamburg; n.p., 1620), p. 333.

being heard which called for a view of the universe's end radically different from that of Luther, Melanchthon, Brenz, and Nicolai.

### Representatives of the New View

#### Introduction

It was around the beginning of the Seventeenth Century that the majority of prominent Lutheran dogmaticians abandoned the earlier view of Luther, Melanchthon, Brenz, and Nicolai -- and began teaching the annihilation of the universe and its replacement by a vague and undefined "new heavens and a new earth." August Althaus described it in this manner:

Allein seit Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts macht sich unter den Kirchengdogmatikern fast durchgehends eine spiritualistische Auffassung vom neuen Himmel und von neuer Erde geltend und bleibt seit der Zeit auch herrschend in der Lehre. Von einer neuen Erde, welche Luther noch leibhaftig abmalt, will man nichts mehr wissen, sondern weiht sie völliger Vernichtung. Es bleibt nichts als der blosse Himmel über, aber auch dieser nicht als eine wirkliche Oerklichkeit, sondern mehr als ein Zustand: ein unermesslicher Raum für die Seligen, dessen Art, Eigenschaft und Lage, über diese Welt erhaben, sich gar nicht beschreiben lässt. Der bezeichnende Wortausdruck dafür ist seit der Zeit "jenes Wo der Seligen."<sup>30</sup>

Althaus, here, states the new view very well. It was around the start of the Seventeenth Century, or shortly before, that a new view of the universe's ultimate condition was introduced into Lutheran theology. "Of a new earth, which Luther still depicted bodily, one wishes to know nothing more, but (rather) it is completely annihilated." And, what is to replace the obliterated, exterminated Creation? Where are God's people to be eternally? According to Althaus' understanding of the proponents of the new view, little was offered but "eine spiritualistische Auffassung" amounting to a "jenes Wo der Seligen," a spiritual Conception of "that

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<sup>30</sup>A. Althaus, Die letzten Dinge, p. 118.

Where of the saints." Let us attempt to see whether Althaus' evaluation is correct.

John Gerhard (1582-1637)

There is no doubt that John Gerhard was, and still is, a highly esteemed father of the Lutheran Church. Some have even gone so far as to remark: "Gerhard is the third (Luther, Chemnitz, Gerhard) in that series of Lutheran theologians in which there is no fourth."<sup>31</sup> However much John Gerhard followed Luther in other respects, he decisely broke ranks with him concerning the fate of the universe. To "Gerhard belongs the dubious distinction of bringing Aristotelian terminology and distinctions to the aid of Lutheran dogmatics."<sup>32</sup> It was John Gerhard, then, who both brought Aristotelian terminology into Lutheran dogmatics -- and departed from the earlier, traditional view of the earth's Restoration. Whether one led to the other and were somehow naturally related remains to be seen.

John Gerhard was a brilliant theologian and usually makes his point very clear. He wrote under "De consummatione seculi" these words: "Consummatio seculi sive destructio mundi est Dei actio, qua per ignem coelum, terram, mare et omnes creaturas, quae in eis sunt, solis angelis et hominibus exceptis, in nihilum rediget . . ."<sup>33</sup> He is most explicit. "The consummation of the age or destruction of the world is an act of

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<sup>31</sup>John Gerhard, Sacred Meditations, trans. C. W. Heisler (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1896), p. 9.

<sup>32</sup>Preus, Vol. 1, p. 53.

<sup>33</sup>John Gerhard, Loci Theologici, Neuausgabe, ed. H. Preuss (Leipzig:1885), p. 107.

God, which through fire, the heavens, the earth, the sea and all creatures, which are in them, angels and men excepted, are reduced to nothing." How Gerhard may legitimately separate mens' bodies into a category totally apart from the rest of the material, physical Creation is an interesting question. His definition of the world, however, makes his position unambiguous: "tota rerum universitas cum omnibus partibus et contentis, exceptis solis angelis et hominibus"<sup>34</sup> (All the things of the universe with all parts and contents -- angels and men excepted). Gerhard seems to put angels and men in the same category -- but, men have bodies! Not only the earth is doomed to utter extermination, but the entire physical Creation, the universe. Gerhard refuses any exemptions to the coming annihilation (excepting men and angels). There are no mitigations of the future and annihilating holocaust whatever: "Formam consummationis dicimus fore non nudam qualitatum alterationem, sed ipsius substantiae abolitionem, adeoque totalem annihilationem, ut sic terminus a quo consummationis sive destructionis sit esse, terminus vero ad quem non esse sive nihil."<sup>35</sup> The coming consummation is "no mere alteration of existing (earthly) qualities, but the abolition of their very substance" -- a total annihilation of all matter! Gerhard's meaning is unmistakable. That Day is to be a "destructio κατὰ οὐσίαν," an "abolitio substantiae," an "interire substantialiter," "interire totaliter," "interire essentialiter" -- "redactio in nihilum."<sup>36</sup>

John Gerhard was a voluminous writer, but when dealing with the topic of this dissertation he always comes to the same conclusion. The

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid, p. 26.    <sup>35</sup>Ibid, p. 37. Also, p. 41

<sup>36</sup>Ibid, pp. 39, 41, 42, and 43 respectively.

present universe -- angels and men exempted -- is to be utterly obliterated. He had no sympathy for the other, Restoration, view. As one writer put it: "Es is ihm ein 'kindischer Gedanke,' den Himmel als einen Ort zu denken,"<sup>37</sup> it is a "childish thought." Nothing of the present world is to remain -- however drastically altered. After the annihilation of all things -- angels and men excepted -- "alicujus rei ex nihilo productio."<sup>38</sup> The first Creation was a failure and must be completely erased before its replacement by another created "ex nihilo."

Gerhard's concept of the "annihilatio mundi" influenced large parts of his theology as is ably explained in a book of that name written on his views.<sup>39</sup> The impact he had on Lutheran theologians who followed him was very strong. As A. Althaus said above, the "neuen Erde, welche Luther noch leibhaftig abmalt, will man nichts mehr wissen, sondern weiht sie völliger Vernichtung." It was John Gerhard who not only introduced the concept of the Creation's ultimate "Vernichtung" into Lutheran theology, but also created an atmosphere among fellow theologians so that "will man nichts mehr wissen" about Luther's "leibhaftig abmalt" "neuen Erde." Luther's "bodily" eternity was no longer desired. Later Lutheran dogmaticians accepted and expounded Gerhard's views.

John Andrew Quenstedt (1617-1688)

John Andrew Quenstedt has, and had, many admirers. Without doubt he was possessed of a highly gifted intellect. After "the Loci Theologici

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<sup>37</sup>A. Althaus, p. 118.      <sup>38</sup>J. Gerhard, p. 44.

<sup>39</sup>Konrad Stock, Annihilatio Mundi (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1971).

of Martin Chemnitz and Gerhard (who was his uncle) the Systema of Quenstedt ranks as the greatest dogmatics book ever written by a Lutheran."<sup>40</sup> The highly esteemed Systema also did much to promulgate the Annihilation view of the universe's end -- since Quenstedt followed Gerhard in this matter.

Besides being his nephew, Quenstedt was also theologically related to John Gerhard as Brenz and Nicolai had been to Luther. However much he expanded and elaborated upon Gerhard's view of the "annihilatio mundi," their views were actually just one view. Quenstedt's basic statement on the issue is nearly identical with Gerhard's as Brenz' had been with Luther's. We read from his celebrated Systema: "Forma consummationis hujus non in nuda qualitatum immutatione, alteratione, seu innovatione, sed in ipsius substantiae mundi totali abolitione, + in nihilum reductione . . ."<sup>41</sup> The very substance of the world ("substantiae mundi") is to be totally abolished ("totali abolitione"). There is no mistaking Quenstedt's teaching along this line. With his uncle, John Gerhard, he is as diametrically opposed to the "cleansing-restoration" view of Luther, Melancthon, Brenz, and Nicolai as one can possibly be. As a matter of record, Quenstedt names three of these men (Luther, Brenz, and Nicolai) as those whose views are antithetical to his.<sup>42</sup> This is one of the very rare instances in the writings of Lutheran dogmaticians during the Period of Orthodoxy where the Great Reformer is openly refuted by those

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<sup>40</sup>Preus, Vol. 1, p. 62.

<sup>41</sup>J. A. Quenstedt, Theologia Didactico-Polemica Sive Systema (Wittenberg: Matthaei Henckelii Acad. Typogr., 1696), p. 638.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid, p. 333.

following in his tradition. This may be the only exception to Dr. R. D. Preus' otherwise accurate observation.<sup>43</sup>

Oddly enough, Quenstedt cites the very Scriptural passages used by Luther, Brenz, and Nicolai (2 Peter 3, Romans 8, etc.) to present an opposite interpretation. Rather than the world having on "work-clothes" to be shed and replaced with "Sunday-finery" (Luther, Brenz) on the Last Day, Quenstedt cites Is. 5:6 as meaning: "Verba haec clare mundi, quoad substantiam, abolitionem afferunt. Ergo, quia coeli dificiunt, utique non semper erunt, non durabunt in aeternum, sed aliquando peribunt + definent totaliter."<sup>44</sup> All non-human matter is to be annihilated.

Quenstedt makes exactly the same qualitative, categorical distinction between the human body and the rest of the material, physical Creation as did his famous uncle before him.<sup>45</sup> Commenting on Rom. 8:19, he acknowledges various interpretations: "Quid vero nomine creaturae hoc loco intelligatur, de eo variant Interpretes; quidam per *ἁγίοις* hanc intelligunt angelos, quidam homines, quidam irrationalem creaturam."<sup>46</sup> Personally, however, Quenstedt understands "mundus" to mean everything "exceptis solis angelis + hominibus."<sup>47</sup> Therefore -- as John Gerhard had said before him -- every part of the physical Creation is to be abolished, exterminated, obliterated, annihilated "except angels and men." It is very clear as to where John Andrew Quenstedt stood in relationship to our topic.

The major contribution of J. A. Quenstedt relevant to the topic of this dissertation is not any original thoughts not previously

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<sup>43</sup>Preus, Vol. 1, p. 42. <sup>44</sup>Quenstedt, pp. 635-36.

<sup>45</sup>Supra, pp. 45-46. <sup>46</sup>Quenstedt, p. 638. <sup>47</sup>Ibid, p. 637.

introduced, but in the very proficient manner in which he draws together into one book the thoughts of many men who both preceded his time and were current during it.

David Hollaz (1648-1713)

David Hollaz produced one literary work of note, his Exam Theologicum Acroamaticum. Even so, this work is considered by many to be "the last great orthodox dogmatics."<sup>48</sup> Although not equal to Quenstedt's celebrated Systema, Hollaz' dogmatics borrowed its framework and collects the thoughts of many theologians who went before him. The Exam was a highly respected book in its day, going through many editions and no later dogmatics ever rivaled it in popularity. This last only goes to illustrate how the "annihilatio mundi" concept spread so rapidly throughout Lutheranism -- because David Hollaz was another of its advocates.

As Melanchthon, Brenz, and P. Nicolai had followed Luther, so, now, Hollaz follows Quenstedt and J. Gerhard. Reading Hollaz' interpretation of the world's end is almost exactly like reading Quenstedt or Gerhard. For example: "Consummatione mundi est Actio DEI trinunius, qua Is totam machinam coeli, terraeque, + omnes res conditas, creaturis intelligentibus exceptis, igne destruet + annihilabit in veritatis, potentiae + justitiae suae gloriam, + electorum hominum liberationem."<sup>49</sup> As Gerhard had said, so does Hollaz, the consummation of the world is the "act of God" (Hollaz adds, "DEI trinunius"). With Gerhard and

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<sup>48</sup>Preus, Vol. 1, p. 65.

<sup>49</sup>David Hollaz, Exam Theologicum Acroamaticum (Stargardiae Pomeranorum: Typis Johannis Nicolai Ernesti, Typographi Regii + sumtibus ipsius ut + Gothofr. Ernesti + John. Mich. Jenisch, 1707), p. 413.

Quenstedt, he also exempts angels and men from the all-consuming fire of the Last Day. He also speaks, as a more "modern" man, of the "machinam" coeli. Along with his mentors, he teaches that the universe "annihilabit in veritatis." It is something of a marvel how he can theologically speak only of "the liberation of the elect people" (electorum hominum liberationem) when Rom. 8:21 says clearly that "the creation itself will be set free . . . and obtain the . . . liberty of the children of God." With the annihilation-assumptions of Gerhard, Quenstedt, and Hollaz such is simply not a possibility.

Hollaz' similarity to Quenstedt and Gerhard is again apparent when he asks the rhetorical question: "In quo formaliter consistit consummatio mundi?" He, then, answers: "Consummatio mundi formaliter consistit non in qualitatibus hujus mundi mutatione aut alteratione, sed in totali substantiae mundi abolitione aut annihilatione."<sup>50</sup> His opinion cannot possibly be misunderstood. On that Day there is to be "no mere change of alteration of the universe's qualities, but," rather, the "total abolishing or annihilation" of its very material, physical existence.

#### The Un-orthodox: An Introduction

The "un-orthodox" Lutheran theologians in the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy may be understood as "the Lutheran Syncretists or . . . the later Crypto-Calvinists . . . quasi-Lutherans . . ."<sup>51</sup> There were many such men, and even the great Melancthon stumbled into their camp in an abortive effort at peace-making. It seems reasonable to suppose, however, that there were occasional points of contact between the "orthodox"

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid, p. 415. <sup>51</sup>Preus, Vol. 1, p. 19.

and the "un-orthodox" where they were not at all in disagreement, but, in fact, held similar opinions. Even among the orthodox themselves there was no unanimity on all points of doctrine. We have already seen, for example, that Luther, Melanchthon, Brenz, and P. Nicolai disagreed fundamentally with J. Gerhard, Quenstedt, and Hollaz -- all of the "orthodox" -- regarding the ultimate condition of the universe. It is the same with the "orthodox" such as Gerhard, Quenstedt, and Hollaz -- and the theologian, George Calixt, considered to be un-orthodox.<sup>52</sup> Even so, Calixt and the formerly named men were of one heart and mind -- against Luther, Melanchthon, Brenz, and Nicolai -- when it came to the "annihilatio mundi."

#### George Calixt (1586-1656)

George Calixt was a near contemporary of John Gerhard, the latter being just slightly the senior. He was a very influential theologian in some circles and had the ear of certain prominent people. However "un-orthodox" he might have been in other areas of theology, it is the opinion of one modern scholar that: "Georg Calixts eschatologische Gedanken passen ganz in den Rahmen der orthodoxen Lehrbildung,"<sup>53</sup> his eschatological thinking was entirely in line with the orthodox teaching. The "orthodoxen Lehrbildung," of course, subsequent to John Gerhard! Calixt dealt with the topic of this dissertation primarily in his three works: De immortalitate animae et resurrectione carnis, 1627; De supremo iudicio,

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>53</sup>George Calixt, Schriften zur Eschatologie, Band 4, Werke in Auswahl, Herausgegeben von Inge Mager (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972), p. 11.

1635; and De bono perfecte summo, 1643. Inge Mager is correct in the opinion that Calixt's eschatological thoughts are in line with the orthodox teaching-structure. He agrees almost uniformly with his contemporaries John Gerhard and John A. Quenstedt. After a detailed survey of certain Scripture passages and early Church Fathers, Calixt states his own view:

Scriptura plus aliquid videtur innuere, quando aeternitatem, immutabilitatem, iustitiam et veracitatem Dei exaggerat et illustrat oppositis mutabilitate et interitu coelorum et terrarum diserteque affirmat quae in principio a Deo creata sint coelum et terram peritura, praeteritura. Item coelos et elementa solutum, liquefactum terramque et quae in ea sunt opera exustum iri.<sup>54</sup>

Can it really be that God "exaggerates" (exaggerat) in His Word, as Calixt says here, and means the "opposite" (oppositis) of what He actually says? If this be so, how may anything revealed by Him be known with any degree of certainty? Indeed, how can anything be known at all? It would seem that a more logical -- and scholarly -- approach would be to understand the words as they are stated. Be this as it may, Calixt takes the same position in this regard as John Gerhard, Quenstedt and, later, Hollaz. The "heavens and the very elements of the universe are to dissolve, and everything on the earth is to be consumed." If Calixt's conclusion went no farther than this he could easily be interpreted differently than Gerhard and the others. He could be understood in the sense that 2 Peter's "fire" is a purifying and renewing rather than an annihilating, substance-exterminating one. Such is not the case, however, because whenever Calixt comments on the Church Fathers who held the cleansing-restoration view of Creation's end -- he counters their

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid, p. 362.

interpretations to the fullest of his ability.<sup>55</sup> To Calixt -- as with Gerhard, Quenstedt, and Hollaz -- the fire of 2 Peter 3 is an annihilating holocaust. As for the "coeli novi et terra nova," they are entirely "spiritual" -- whatever that means? "Nihil horum proprie capi potest, sed omnia figurate coelestem gloriam et beatitudinem abumbrant . . ."<sup>56</sup>

To this point in the present chapter we have considered an "old" and a "new" view of Creation's ultimate goal. Representing the "old" view were Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, John Brenz, and Philipp Nicolai. Representing the "new" view were the "orthodox" theologians: John Gerhard, John A. Quenstedt, David Hollaz -- and the "unorthodox" dogmatician, George Calixt. We have seen how the former group of men held to the traditional cleansing-restoration view of all created things, and how the latter group introduced a "new" annihilation-replacement concept alien to that held by their Reforming predecessors. A very basic question now forces itself upon us. Why? Why did so many of the highly esteemed and qualified theologians of the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy radically and uncompromisingly break with their revered teachers over this doctrine? What prompted them to take a view so basically at odds with Reformers like Luther and Melanchthon? In the last section of this chapter we shall attempt to answer such puzzling questions as these.

#### Causes Which Gave Rise to the New Annihilation-Replacement Theory

August Althaus, writing in the second half of the Nineteenth Century, puzzled over the radical change in Lutheran eschatological thinking which began with the famous John Gerhard around 1600. He wrote: "Was

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid, pp. 357-84. <sup>56</sup>Ibid, p. 381.

diesen der sonstigen lutherische Lehre und Anschauung so wenig entsprechenden Umschwung veranlasst haben mag, ist schwer zu sagen."<sup>57</sup> He puzzled, not only over the Revolution ("Umschwung") itself, but why so few theologians chose to challenge the ones who were introducing the new teaching? Certainly, Lutheran dogmaticians were not noted for their slowness in answering what they considered to be theological error. Why, then, at that time? Were they convinced and persuaded -- to the man -- by the evidence and logic presented by the great scholar, John Gerhard? Were they afraid to challenge a man of his academic stature? Althaus suggests another cause for their silence. He suggests that the cause which gave rise to the "new" annihilation-replacement theory, and insured its predominance, was the dreaded and tumultuous theological-sociological heresy of "der Chiliasten und Schwarmgeister."<sup>58</sup> These crass Millenialists and Fanatics (Enthusiasts) were literally over-running the lower and lower-middle class people of large parts of Europe -- and especially Germany! They, too, spoke of an "earthly kingdom" and its delights. Many of them were quite willing to bring such a kingdom into existence by bloodshed. Of course, their reasons for speaking of such an earthly kingdom were fundamentally different from the reasons of such men as Luther and Melanchthon, but the simple people might easily confuse the two! We have already seen how Melanchthon himself suspected the possibility of such a confusion and safeguarded the traditional (old) view by saying: "clare testatur Prophetae, regnum Christi spirituale esse, nec esse politiam mundi ante resurrectionem, qualen Iudaei et

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<sup>57</sup>Althaus, p. 118. <sup>58</sup>Ibid.

Anabaptistae fingunt."<sup>59</sup> Melanchthon himself retained the cleansing-restoration view, but already felt somewhat squeamish about its effects on certain groups of aroused people. He called Christ's kingdom a "spiritual" one -- which men such as Gerhard, Quenstedt, Hollaz, and Calixt would make into something quite different than Melanchthon intended.

The Jews and Anabaptists ("Iudaei et Anabaptistae") mentioned by Melanchthon and later dogmaticians were also spoken against in Article XVII of The Augsburg Confession: "werden hie verworfen . . . etlich judisch Lehren, die sich auch itzund eräugen, dass vor der Auferstehung der Toten eitel Heilige, Fromme ein weltlich Reich haben . . ."<sup>60</sup> The Latin version of this Article is substantially the same. We can learn at least three important things here: (1) the Lutheran Confessors felt it necessary to renounce a dangerous teaching beginning to appear in their day, circa 1530 (2) this was considered a "Jewish" teaching or opinion, that is, a too literalistic understanding of certain Old Testament prophecies concerning a paradise-on-earth, and (3) it was a false teaching that the elect would possess a "worldly kingdom" before the resurrection of the just (the same point was made by Melanchthon). It is most significant to note here that the negative emphasis is on the idea that the "weltlich Reich" be "vor der Auferstehung." There is no rejection in this early period of an earthly kingdom after the general resurrection -- or to an earthly kingdom of Christ at all. In other

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<sup>59</sup>Supra, pp. 38-39.

<sup>60</sup>Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch=lutherischen Kirche (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967), p. 72.

words, it was not at all alien to the Confessors' thinking that God's redeemed, cleansed, purified people would eventually possess a Kingdom on an equally redeemed, cleansed, and purified earth. Of course, they did not mean by this what the Fanatics meant. It was not brought in by human endeavor, it was not before the resurrection, but after it, and the earthly conditions after that grand Day were to be vastly different than they are in the present age. It may well have been the possibility of confusion between these points of view that led certain of the Lutheran dogmaticians to abandon the old view entirely and feel around for another. It isn't surprising, then, to find reactions against the Chiliasts (Millennialists) and "Jews" in the works of almost every dogmatician of the period, for example, George Calixt,<sup>61</sup> David Hollaz,<sup>62</sup> and even a reaction against the Mohammedans.<sup>63</sup> All of these were considered by some cautious theologians to have nourishing roots in the old, traditional "cleansing-restoration" view of the universe.

Another cause which might have helped to give rise to the new annihilation-replacement theory of the world's end was a reaction to "nonnullorum Philosophorum"<sup>64</sup> such as Aristotle who taught the "eternity of matter."<sup>65</sup> Some of the later dogmaticians believed that the cleansing-restoration view interpretation of Scripture was, in fact, founded upon Aristotelian assumptions.<sup>66</sup> Far more likely, however, and

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<sup>61</sup>Calixt, pp. 384-412.   <sup>62</sup>Hollaz, p. 413.

<sup>63</sup>Calixt, pp. 413-19.   <sup>64</sup>Hollaz, p. 413.

<sup>65</sup>Aristotle, Aristotle-Metaphysics, trans. Richard Hope (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1952), pp. 40-60.

<sup>66</sup>Hollaz, p. 413.

not unrelated, is Quenstedt's "antithesis" against "Quorundam Calvinianorum."<sup>67</sup> Perhaps, even more than their fear of the Chiliasts, the "Jews," the Mohammadans, or the "Philosophers" the controversy with the Calvinists concerning the Lord's Supper unwittingly forced the Lutheran dogmaticians from John Gerhard onwards to abandon the hearty, traditional view of Luther and to devise a new view of their own. Let us look more closely at this possibility.

As is well known, Martin Luther taught that the "right hand of God" was not a circumscribed locality in the skies, but the "ubiquity" of His almighty Presence. The Confessors endorsed this concept.<sup>68</sup> Luther himself did not have any difficulty holding this concept at the same time as he held that of the universe's final Restoration, but certain ones of those who followed him certainly did. Picking up on Melancthon's remark that "regnum Christi spirituale esse" and Luther's illocal definition of God's "right hand," men like John Gerhard (and many others) began teaching that "heaven" is no where in a local sense except that it might be considered (not their words) "jenes Wo der Seligen."<sup>69</sup> Apparently, it did not occur to men like Gerhard, Quenstedt, Hollaz, Calixt, and others that the "heaven" before the Last Day is not the same condition as the "heaven" after the resurrection of the body! Arguing as they did gave them added support, they felt, in their controversy with Calvinists who asserted that Christ's real body and blood could not possibly be present in the Holy Communion since He ascended bodily into heaven -- which is a "place" in the skies. Facing this

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<sup>67</sup>Quenstedt, p. 333. <sup>68</sup>Bekenntnisschriften, p. 1006.

<sup>69</sup>Supra, pp. 44-45.

argument from the Calvinists, the later Lutheran dogmaticians spoke against both a "place" for Christ's body in the present -- and an eternal "place" for His Presence among believers on the Last Day. They made too much of a good thing. Konrad Stock has recognized the integral relationship between John Gerhard's "annihilatio mundi" and his views on the Lord's Supper. Under the heading of "Die Abendmahlslehre als Grund der Rezeption des annihilatio-Gedankens" he deals with it in his excellent book.<sup>70</sup>

Another possible cause which gave rise to the new annihilation-replacement theory which was introduced into Lutheranism early in the Seventeenth Century was a shift in theological thinking about life-after-death. Paul Althaus (not to be confused with August Althaus already consulted) laments the radical change in Lutheran eschatology introduced by John Gerhard. He wrote: "Nichts mehr von Luthers Freude auf die Herrlichkeit der erneuerten Schöpfung! Die Seligkeit is weltlos gedacht,"<sup>71</sup> "nothing more of Luther's joy over the splendor of the renewed Creation! Salvation is thought of as world-less." Paul Althaus asks the question whether the change to spiritual silence concerning the new earth begun in the Seventeenth Century should be attributed to reaction to the sensualism of the Chiliasts -- and, then, answers his own question in the negative. To P. Althaus, the answer to the historic, theological "Umschwung" (revolution) in Lutheran eschatology is "in der inneren

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<sup>70</sup> Stock, Annihilatio Mundi, pp. 126-27.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, 1957), p. 355.

Entwicklung der lutherischen Theologie zu suchen haben."<sup>72</sup> An inner development in the Lutheran thinking of the period. Explicitly, this "inner development" was "der anderen Abweichung von Luther, in der Frage des Zwischenzustandes . . ."<sup>73</sup> a "deviation from Luther about the question of the Interim-condition," that is, the period between physical death and the resurrection of the body. Even before the Last Day the souls of the godly are in heaven -- with no connection with the world they left behind, the world of sin and death. So, even after the Last Day, after they receive their new bodies -- they don't need the world. To Paul Althaus, this understanding is "Hellenistic," Greek speculation, neither Biblical nor Lutheran in the original sense. He flatly blames the great John Gerhard for introducing such a Greek concept of the soul into Lutheran theology. "Es ist nicht zufällig," he says, "dass gerade Johann Gerhard als erster die Wendung vollzieht. Sein Jugendwerk, die Meditationes sacrae, steht ganz unter dem Einfusse von Joh. Arnds 'Wahrem Christentum' und ist in hohem Masse von der mittelalterlichen Mystik . . ."<sup>74</sup> This is a shocking accusation to make against a man of John Gerhard's reputation. John Gerhard, due to the influence of John Arndt, is accused of outright mysticism -- pietism! But, Paul Althaus is not alone in making such an accusation against him. Konrad Stock sees a definite influence of Valentinian Gnosticism in Gerhard's concept of "annihilatio mundi."<sup>75</sup>

Whatever one thinks of Paul Althaus' opinion, or that of Konrad Stock, it cannot be denied that beginning with John Gerhard and continuing until almost the present time a view of the universe's end, radically

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<sup>72</sup>Ibid, p. 356. <sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid. <sup>75</sup>Stock, pp. 9-12.

different from that of Luther and the earliest Lutherans, has gained -- and held -- ascendancy in Lutheran theology. Was it caused by fear of the crude Chiliasts, "Jewish" opinions, Aristotelian philosophy, Calvinism -- or a decisive change in the understanding of life-after-death? The author of this dissertation believes the last of these to be the deciding one however much the other influences played a part. Be that as it may, it is certain that the later dogmaticians in the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy rejected the old, traditional view held by Luther and others and went off on a path of their own. More important than being sure about the causes which gave rise to such divergency is that it be clearly recognized today and appropriate steps be taken to promulgate the Scriptural view on a matter so important and reassuring to our faith.

## CHAPTER IV

### OTHER TESTIMONIES

#### Introduction

The heading of this chapter, "Other Testimonies," intends that testimonies other than those already considered from the Book of Concord, the Lutheran Reformers, and the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy be heard pertinent to our topic. If it has been demonstrated that the above witnesses did in fact hold certain views of the universe's fate, were they alone in holding such views? Were these convictions original with them and held by no others before their time -- or were the Lutheran Reformers and Confessors expressing opinions they considered to be those of the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church?" The intent, then, of this chapter is to investigate whether -- or not -- the Preservation and Restoration of Creation was taught by the ancient and medieval Church as represented in this chapter by such pivotal and influential men as Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, Bede and Thomas Aquinas. In relation to these figures, the views of other men shall also be considered. A sixth personality will also be consulted as representing another stream of the Protestant Reformation besides the Lutheran one. This personality is John Calvin. He will be consulted to see whether in topic of this dissertation was taught -- or rejected -- outside the Lutheran sphere of influence. The presentation of all the above shall not be submitted without a concrete setting. The setting is this: When the Lutheran Reformers, and subsequent theologians of their

persuasion, spoke for the Restoration of the universe they were speaking in the context of an historical tradition. They were not the first, but, rather, the most recent expositors of a centuries-old teaching which had come down to them. How they handled it in the light of Holy Scripture is the major concern of this dissertation.

#### Irenaeus (c. 125-202)

When the first Lutheran theologians -- or any other Christian teachers -- spoke for the ultimate Restoration of all Creation they were not speaking out of a vacuum. They were handling a teaching which had been passed down to them over many long and tumultuous centuries. Paul Althaus said of this: "Verwandlung, nicht Vernichtung -- das ist einhellige Lehre von Irenäus an über Augustinus und Gregor d. Gr., über Thomas und die gesamte mittelalterliche Theologie bis in die gegenwärtige katholische Dogmatik."<sup>1</sup> This is a bold claim! That "change," not "annihilation" -- is the clear teaching of Irenaeus to Augustine and Gregory the Great, to Thomas (Aquinas) and the entire medieval theology down to the present (Roman) Catholic dogmatics. If such a stark claim as this can be substantiated, then, the Restoration teaching of Luther, Melanchthon, Brenz, and P. Nicolai will have been shown to be the one faithful to the ancient and medieval church -- whereas the "new" Annihilation doctrine introduced by John Gerhard and promulgated by Quenstedt, Hollaz, and Calixt will have been exposed as an innovation into Lutheran theology. Therefore, this bold claim will be examined -- beginning with Irenaeus.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, 1957), p. 350.

There is no doubt whatever that the earliest Lutheran dogmaticians had great respect for the Church Fathers. This was true of all of them and frequently the end of one of their works would have a long string of Patristic quotations -- supporting the author's view. This does not mean that the Church Fathers were always agreed with, but those who were not were dealt with in the body of the text rather than being appended to the work as a whole. It is a fact of Church History that the very first patrology ever written was done by an orthodox Lutheran dogmatician -- who himself coined the term.<sup>2</sup>

Irenaeus is usually the first major Church Father dealt with in Patristics simply because of his close proximity to Apostolic times. Dates for his birth vary from 115 to 142 A.D.<sup>3</sup> It is most probable that he was born sometime between these two dates, say around 125. This would be only one generation after the writing of St. John's gospel. Irenaeus was a pivotal and influential figure in Church History for several reasons. Though born in the East (Asia Minor), he became "the first great ecclesiastical writer of the West" (Gaul).<sup>4</sup> Through his revered teacher, Polycarp, Irenaeus may have preserved certain Johannine memories. One thing is beyond doubt, however. Irenaeus definitely believed and taught the ultimate restoration of the universe. Whether his views are in full accord with Scripture is to be evaluated later. At this point we wish to

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<sup>2</sup>Robert D. Presu, The Theology Of Post-Reformation Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>Williston Walker, A History Of The Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), p. 63.

<sup>4</sup>The Book Of Saints, compiled by The Benedictine Monks of St. Augustine's Abbey, Ramsgate, 5th ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966), p. 361.

learn what he actually said in this regard. What he did say should be heard as coming from "the first great systematic theologian of the Church."<sup>5</sup>

When we seek to learn what Irenaeus said we are confronted with certain difficulties. None of his works are preserved complete in the language in which they were written, Greek. Greek fragments of the original language have come down to us, but are tantalizingly incomplete. Happily, however, a Latin translation was made of the original not very long after Irenaeus' time and it is a very literal one.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the final five chapters of one work are missing altogether from the Latin version, but have survived in a reliable Armenian version along with Greek and Syriac quotations of it.<sup>7</sup> Despite textual variants and alternative readings, however, the main gist of Irenaeus' message is beyond doubt. Excerpts of his works which serve to illustrate this message now follow.

In the Latin version, but not surviving in the original Greek, we read that: "Cum sint enim veri homines, veram esse oportet et plantationem ipsorum, sed non excedere in ea quae non sunt; sed in iis quae sunt, proficere."<sup>8</sup> This expression, and attitude, is basic to Irenaeus' defense of the Christian faith against the Gnostic heretics who denied that the good God created -- or even cared for -- matter. Irenaeus' basic assumption and contention is that men have a real body and need a

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<sup>5</sup>Early Christian Fathers, Vol. 1, trans. and ed. by Cyril C. Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952), p. 344.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p. 354. <sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 391.

<sup>8</sup>Irenaeus, Libros quinque adversus Haereses, Tom. II, ed. W. Wigan Harvey (Cantabrigiae: Typis Academicis, 1857), p. 426.

real earthly existence. "Since men are real, they must have a real existence, not passing away into things which are not, but advancing [to a new stage] among things that are,"<sup>9</sup> Irenaeus' whole argument of a restored universe has its basis here -- men are real and, therefore, need a real existence-place. As we shall see, this remains true -- not only for now -- for all eternity. He continues, and this survives in the

Greek: "Οὐ γὰρ ἡ ὑπόστασις, οὐδὲ ἡ οὐσία τῆς κτίσεως ἐξαφανίζεται (ἀληθὴς γὰρ καὶ βέβαιος ὁ σνοτησάμενος αὐτήν) ἀλλὰ τὸ σχῆμα παράγει τοῦ κόσμου τούτου, τουτέστιν ἐν οἷς παράβασις γέγονεν, ὅτι ἐπαλαιώθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐν αὐτοῖς

. . ."<sup>10</sup> This is a significant passage for this dissertation in at least four ways: (1) it is the first instance in surviving post-apostolic church literature where we hear that "man has grown old" (ἐπαλαιώθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος) (2) the phrase "οὐ... ἡ ὑπόστασις, οὐδὲ ἡ οὐσία τῆς κτίσεως παράγει τοῦ κόσμου τούτου" uses exactly the same Greek words in reference to the material world (ὑπόστασις, οὐσία) as were later used of Christ's being and relationship to the Father<sup>11</sup> (3) the Preservation of the "οὐσία" of "κόσμου τούτου" is inextricably bound up with the faithfulness of the Creator-God Himself (ἀληθὴς γὰρ καὶ βέβαιος ὁ σνοτησάμενος αὐτήν)" which suggests that the annihilation of the world of matter would go against the very nature of God, and (4) this, in

<sup>9</sup> Early Christian Fathers, p. 396

<sup>10</sup> Irenaeus, p. 427.

<sup>11</sup> Walker, pp. 108-117.

the Latin version, is exactly a passage quoted by Martin Luther<sup>12</sup> in his exposition of Creation's ultimate restoration.

The above-cited Greek word, "ὑπόστασις", may be defined as: "Substantial nature, essence, actual being, reality (oft. in contrast to what merely seems to be . . .)"<sup>13</sup> The word "οὐσία" is defined as: Property or wealth; only at a time considerably later than Irenaeus was it used more technically as "essence" or "substance."<sup>14</sup> Of course, Irenaeus was fully aware of this and that is why he distinguished between ὑπόστασις and οὐσία by saying: "Ὀὐ . . . ἡ ὑπόστασις, οὐδὲ ἡ οὐσία" (not the substantial nature itself, nor the property of it). The difference is not a great one, the property or wealth of a thing being derived from its essence or being.

In the passage quoted above, Irenaeus also uses the word κτίσις (from κτίσις). This word can mean the act of creation (that which is created or any individual thing created) or the sum total of everything created. Its exact meaning in all instances of use is sometimes disputed, as in Rom. 8:19-22, but in this Epistle "the pass. is usu. taken to mean the waiting of the whole creation below the human level (animate and inanimate . . .)"<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact, Werner Foerster comments in his exposition of this word that the new creation (κτίσις) will manifest the

<sup>12</sup>Supra, p. 35

<sup>13</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament And Other Early Christian Literature, trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957).

<sup>14</sup>Walker, p. 108.

<sup>15</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon.

the fact that the word "warrant" is used in the same sense as in the

definition of "warrant" in the dictionary.

The dictionary definition of "warrant" is: "a written order or

command, especially one issued by a court of law, authorizing a person

to do a certain act, or to take a certain course of action."

It is clear from this definition that the word "warrant" is used in

the same sense as in the definition of "warrant" in the dictionary.

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Special Agent

A Special Agent in Charge of the New York and New Jersey  
Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York  
Office, New York, New York, dated and captioned as above.

Special Agent

A Special Agent in Charge

refashioning (Neugestaltung) of both man and the world when Christ again reveals Himself.<sup>16</sup> This is certainly in line with Irenaeus' point of view.

The word *κόσμος*, which Irenaeus also uses, can mean many things, but his use of it probably meant "the world as the sum total of everything here and now, the (orderly) universe or the world as the earth, the planet upon which we live."<sup>17</sup> Commenting on *κόσμος*, Hermann Sasse says: "Bezeichnet . . . das aus Himmel und Erde bestehende Weltall, in welchem sich die Gesamtheit der einzelnen Kreaturen (πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ) befindet. Stets haftet an dem Worte *κόσμος* der Begriff des Räumlichen . . . . Als Weltraum im Sinne des grössten Raumes, der gedacht werden kann . . ."<sup>18</sup> If Irenaeus' use of *κόσμος* was the same as in the New Testament times, as it probably was, then, he understood *κόσμος* as the entire material creation, "Weltraum im Sinne des grössten Raumes, der gedacht werden kann."

Another word used by Irenaeus which is of great significance for our topic is "ἐξαφανίζεται." This is a compound word derived from *ἐκ* and *ἀφανίζω*, meaning to render invisible or unrecognizable. In other words, to "annihilate" or obliterate. It is most significant that Irenaeus emphatically denies that such is to be the fate of "ἡ ὑπόστασις" or "ἡ οὐσία τῆς κτίσεως." Alluding to 1 Cor. 7:31, he grants that "τὸ σχῆμα παράγει τοῦ κόσμου τούτου," but certainly not its actual being

<sup>16</sup>Werner Foerster, "κτίζω, κτίσις, κτίσμα, κτίστης," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, Dritter Band, ed. Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: Verlag Von W. Kohlhammer, 1938), p. 1034.

<sup>17</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon.

<sup>18</sup>Hermann Sasse, "κοσμέω, κόσμος, κόσμος, κοσμικός" Theologisches Wörterbuch, p. 883.

or essential properties thereof. When Irenaeus speaks of the "passing away" or "disappearing" (παράγει) of the σχῆμα of this universe he means the passing away of its bearing, manner, deportment. With only a slight transposition of words, he is directly quoting St. Paul's words from the Bible passage referred to immediately above: "παράγει τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου," and concerning this passage we learn that "this world in its present form is passing away."<sup>19</sup> Certain questions are raised by such an assertion as this. Why must the "present form" (σχῆμα) of the world be erased? Irenaeus' answer is: Because they are "the things in which the transgression took place" (τουτέστιν ἐν οἷς παράβασις γέγονεν). This is to say, the σχῆμα (form) of this present, fallen, corrupted world comprise the "things" in which (ἐν οἷς) men have sinned from the Fall. Irenaeus is strongest here against the Gnostic heresy. He insists that it is not the physical, material things of earth themselves which are sinful. Just the opposite. The material things of the universe comprise the unwitting environment "in which" man sinned -- and they are suffering as a consequence. Matter, in and of itself, is in no sense sinful. Did not the Apostle himself say: "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself" (Rom. 14:4). Why? "For 'the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it'" (1 Cor. 10:26). Irenaeus is holding the faith against those who would see sin in the very fact of a material Creation. Such heresy is to charge the Creator Himself with something unspeakable! It was an alleged aversion to the material world which led K. Stock to accuse John Gerhard's theory of "annihilatio mundi" of Gnosticism.<sup>20</sup> Blame for sin must not be unjustly shifted from man to that

<sup>19</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 805. <sup>20</sup>Supra, p. 60.

which God lovingly created for him. This is why Foerster feels that it is better not to speak of a fallen creation, but, rather, of a Creation which has been subjected to corruption.<sup>21</sup> Continuing to speak about why God might have allowed a σχῆμα of the world which must pass away, Irenaeus says: "καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τὸ σχῆμα τοῦτο πρόσκαιρον ἐγένετο, προειδότες τὰ πάντα τοῦ θεοῦ. . ." <sup>22</sup> It is here that the original Greek breaks off, but already enough has been said to get his meaning. Since God foreknew all things -- including man's transgression -- He deliberately made the pattern (form) of created things transitory (τὸ σχῆμα τοῦτο πρόσκαιρον ἐγένετο ). The sense seems to be this: Since God knew beforehand that men would transgress against Him, He fashioned a temporal universe which would age -- along with an aging mankind. After a gap, the Greek picks up again: "παρελθόντος δὲ τοῦ σχήματος τούτου, καὶ ἀνανεωθέντος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, καὶ ἀκμάσαντος πρὸς τὴν ἀφθαρσίαν, ὥστε μηκέτι δύνασθαι πέρα παλαιωθῆναι, ἔσται ὁ οὐρανὸς καινός, καὶ ἡ γῆ καινή· ἐν τοῖς καινοῖς ἀναμενεῖ ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς καινός, καὶ προσομιλῶν τῷ θεῷ" <sup>23</sup>

When the form (σχῆμα) of this world has passed away, and man is made new and incorruptible, so that he can no longer age, then the new heavens and earth shall appear. In this new world, man will also remain new and in God's presence forever. The Final Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the following transformation of the universe would fit very logically (following Irenaeus) in the break between the two Greek passages above. Such was probably not the case, however,

<sup>21</sup>Foerster, pp. 1030-31.

<sup>22</sup>Irenaeus, p. 427. <sup>23</sup>Ibid.

for the Latin version (made very early) knows nothing of it. Such events were assumed by Irenaeus -- as we know from the total context of his writings.

Certain questions are logically raised by Irenaeus' assertion that, foreknowing man's transgression God made the *σχῆμα* of the world "temporary," yet, the "new" man is to have a "new" world in which to enjoy God's presence forever. In his own way, however, Irenaeus has already answered such questions. It is the *σχῆμα* (form or pattern) of the universe which was temporarily constructed -- not its *ὑπόστασις* (substantial nature) or *οὐσία* (property). Therefore, the present world's form is to pass away, but not its actual being. There is to be a transformation of God's Creation -- not an annihilation of it. Here is Irenaeus' answer, this time in Latin: "Non enim substantia, neque materia conditionis exterminatur; (verus enim et firmus qui constituit illam) sed figura transit mundi hujus, hoc est, in quibus transgressio facta est . . ." <sup>24</sup> To Irenaeus it was only right and just of the Creator that His creation which was "subjected to futility, not of its own will" should be restored and set free from corruption on that great Day. He claimed St. Paul's authority for such an opinion: "Oportet ergo et ipsam conditionem reintegratam ad pristinum, sine prohibitionem servire justus: et hoc Apostulus fecit manifestum in ea quae est ad Romanos . . ." <sup>25</sup> It is important to recognize here that the benefits of the material Creation are never ends in themselves, nor is the material world ever considered apart from the crown of God's

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<sup>24</sup>"Patrologiae Graecae," *Patrologia*, Tomus VII, Part 2, ed. J. P. Migne (Seu Petit-Montrouge, 1857), p. 1222.

<sup>25</sup>Irenaeus, p. 414.

Creation -- man. It is "reintegratam" (restored) "servire justus," to serve the people justified by God's grace through the merits of Jesus Christ.

Enough has been shown to this point to demonstrate Irenaeus' view concerning the Restoration -- and eternal Preservation -- of God's Creation. It is to be conceded that he is rather speculative at times, especially when he attempts to answer why God made a "temporary" universe due to foreknowledge of human sin. Although it is outside the purview of this dissertation, Irenaeus also is prone to extravagance in his exuberant claims for the coming new earth.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, he held quasi-Millenarian opinions<sup>27</sup> which caused considerable fear in later periods. As a matter of fact, the five final chapters of his otherwise celebrated Adversus Haereses were omitted in the copying of many early manuscripts "after the Church had come generally to repudiate the millenarianism supported by Irenaeus."<sup>28</sup> Despite all these (many times justified) criticisms, however, it is most noteworthy for our topic that his Restoration views were not omitted by the Church nor were they ever repudiated -- the reason being, of course, that the Church herself held the very same opinion.

#### Origen (c. 184-c. 253)

Origen was a younger contemporary of Irenaeus although their geographical fields of labor were widely separated. Both were born in the Eastern half of the Roman Empire although Irenaeus had moved to the West before Origen's birth.

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid, p. 428. <sup>27</sup>Ibid, pp. 415-19.

<sup>28</sup>Early Church Fathers, p. 391.

Origen grew up to become "a man of many-sided scholarship" and was more fully acquainted with the Bible than any of the writers in the early church."<sup>29</sup> This is not to say that he always interpreted it correctly, but that he studied it intensely. Origen has been called "the principal theologian of the early Church,"<sup>30</sup> and no matter how one evaluates his theology, his views must be taken seriously if one seeks to understand early Christian theology.

Certain aspects of Origen's theology are poles apart from what we have learned from Irenaeus. This is also true when it comes to the ultimate Restoration of all Creation. Despite basic, and essential, disagreements, however, there are certain points of contact since they both believed in a final renewal of created things. That is why the views of Origen are being considered here.

Origen lived a comparatively long and active life. He produced a massive body of writings -- totalling nearly one thousand titles! Most of these were exegeses or expositions of the Bible. Despite the voluminous quantity of his works, however, few survive in the original Greek, even in part. Of his very large correspondence, only two complete letters and a few fragments have come down to us. Only twenty of his many exegetical productions are extant. Fortunately, there were several early Latin translations made by reputable men such as Hilary, Jerome, Rufinus of Aquileia, and others.

For various reasons, among them valid ones, Origen had sharp critics even during his own lifetime. He also had many supporters and

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<sup>29</sup>Walker, p. 74.

<sup>30</sup>New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, ed. by Editorial Staff at The Catholic University of America (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967), p. 767.

admirers. After his death the number of his critics increased as did the number of his admirers. Even so, as the Fourth Century Church defined its theology more precisely the "imprecisions and inadequacies"<sup>31</sup> of Origen became ever more obvious. Although acknowledging these, such men as Athanasias and Eusebius of Caesarea nonetheless gave him his due. His teachings continued to spread East and West. Around the year 375, however, this was drastically changed. Epiphanius' virulent Panarion instigated an unrelenting attack on the questionable teachings of Origen. The onslaught continued through the following decades. It became even more intense in the Sixth Century. The emperor-theologian, Justinian, became aroused against Origen's revered memory. Council Fathers, outside official sessions, drew up fifteen anathemas against him in 553. The destruction of his writings, begun in the late 300's, continued in a systematic and very thorough way. If not completely, the destruction of Origen's writings was eminently successful.

Origen's First Principles (Περὶ Ἀρχῶν) is one of his major works, and one of those which managed to survive -- in translation. Very little of the original Greek is extant. The translator whose work is most often consulted is Rufinus of Aquileia. Henri De Lubac finds his translation fluent, clear, and pleasant to read although lacking somewhat in literalness.<sup>32</sup> Butterworth, although working with the translation, considers it not always trustworthy<sup>33</sup> due to Rufinus' apologetic intent. Be this as it may, the translation of Rufinus is believed to convey the main points of Origen's teaching on the matters dealt with.

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<sup>31</sup>Origen On First Principles, trans. by G. W. Butterworth (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. vii.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid, p. viii.      <sup>33</sup>Ibid, p. xivii.

*Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* was written around the year 225 when Origen was at the height of his career.<sup>34</sup> The title itself was not original with him having first been used by Clement of Alexandria. It means either the elementary principles of the Christian religion or a complete philosophy of religion. In Butterworth's opinion, Origen meant by it a "single body of doctrine."<sup>35</sup> Origen himself believed the doctrine in this work to be entirely orthodox and did not intend that his -- avowed -- speculations be accepted as dogma. Much of its content was questionable, not to say objectionable. Butterworth asserts that "Origen's system is in the same class with the Gnostic speculations of his time."<sup>36</sup> To be perfectly fair to him, however, it must also be stated -- as Origen himself stated many times -- that much of *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* is admittedly speculation, for the learned rather than simple folk. Gnostics presented their imaginings as dogma, Origen does not. This is a difference between the two however dangerous Origen's book still was to simple faith. Without summarizing every detail of Origen's doctrine presented in his *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν*, its basic lines of teaching will be offered here in order that the (sometimes difficult) quotations from it may be the more clearly understood.

Origen taught (or, if one will, speculated about) both the pre-existence of souls and their repeated reincarnation. Rational beings such as human beings, angels, and demons were all created equal by God and existed prior to the earth's history. God created as many of them as He could control! All of them were created with perfectly free will. Some of them voluntarily remained in submission to God (angels) and some of them (men and demons) did not. The latter experienced a pre-terrestrial

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid, pp. xxix-xxx.    <sup>35</sup>Ibid, p. liii.    <sup>36</sup>Ibid, p. liv.

Fall which necessitated the subsequent use of material bodies. At first these "bodies" were bright and transparent (like stars), but later -- because of continued sin -- they became darker and heavier. Thus the distinction between angels, demons, and men. The present matter of which bodies are made is not eternal. The purpose of earthly life was to discipline and educate rational beings so that they might rise in the scale of being. Realizing that such ascending (and descending) might logically go on forever, Origen emphasized the "God shall be all in all" of 1 Cor.15:28. He meant by this that God's invincible love must one day overcome even man's (and demons'!) free will so that all creatures would return to the original state of unity and perfection. Human bodies would either have become progressively finer -- to be discarded forever (Jerome's translation) -- or would be transformed into etherealised garments of the lightest and most tenuous nature conceivable (Rufinus). Realizing again, however, that such an upward progression for sin-prone beings (men, demons -- and even the devil!) must surely lie far into the distant future, and certainly could never be accomplished in one earthly time-span, Origen posited an indeterminable succession of worlds. Each succeeding world would be different, yet made from, the materials of its predecessor. Beings, then, would be repeatedly reincarnated into a new world on the same scale as their previous life merited. This would continue until all had attained perfection. Having now briefly presented the basic teaching of *Περί Ἀρχῶν*, its teaching relevant to our topic will be set forth.

Speaking to such questions as "What will happen to the world after it comes to an end?" and "Where do spirits live?" Origen attempted, largely unsuccessfully it seems, to give Christian answers. A passage in

Book I, Chapter VI of *Περὶ Ἀρχῶν* summarizes his view of the need for material existence and the earth's ultimate transformation. Referring to 2 Cor. 4:18, he wrote:

quaerimus quomodo haec, quae videntur, temporalia sint: utrumne pro eo quod nihil omnino post hoc erunt in omnibus illis futuris spatiis ac saeculis, quibus dispersio illa unius principii atque divisio ad unum et eundem finem ac similitudinem reparatur, an pro eo quod habitus quidem eorum, quae videntur, transeat, non tamen etiam substantia eorum omnimodis corrumpatur. Et Paulus quidem videtur id quod posterius diximus confirmare, cum dicit: "Transiet enim habitus huius mundi." Sed et David cum dicit: "Caeli peribunt, tu autem permanebis, et omnes sicut vestimentum veterescent, et sicut amictum mutabis eos, sicut vestimentum mutabuntur," eadem videtur ostendere. Si enim "mutabuntur caeli," utique non perit quod mutatur; et si "habitus huius transit," non omnimodis exterminatio vel perditio substantiae materialis ostenditur, sed inmutatio quaedam fit qualitatis atque habitus transformatio.<sup>37</sup>

Referring here to 1 Cor. 7:31 (as Irenaeus also did), Origen insists that it is only the "habitus (condition) huius mundi" which is to pass away (transiet). In answering the question as to whether there will exist nothing whatever corresponding to this present world, Origen is emphatic. Citing the Biblical authority of both Paul and David, he says: "Non omnimodis exterminatio vel perditio substantiae materialis ostenditur, sed inmutatio quaedam fit qualitatis atque habitus transformatio," it is not by any means an annihilation or destruction of the material substance that is indicated, but the occurrence of a certain change of quality and an alteration of the outward form.

Going this far -- and no farther -- Origen would appear to hold a view almost identical to that of Irenaeus. To stop here, however, would be very misleading. Origen does not mean the same thing -- exactly

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<sup>37</sup> Origenes. Vier Bücher Von Den Prinzipien, Texte Zur Forschung, Band 24, trans. und ed. Herwig Görgemanns und Heinrich Karpp (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), pp. 228 and 230.

-- as Irenaeus meant by similar remarks. Irenaeus meant such remarks as pertaining to the one and only heavens and earth; Origen means them as pertaining to the many earths on one's way to ultimate perfection and no further need of material things. This is a basic difference. It is most noteworthy that Origen is not Gnostic in the sense that he does say that the material world is sinful in and of itself -- although material bodies became necessary only because of the pre-terrestrial Fall. Even Irenaeus said that God -- foreknowing man's sin -- fashioned a "temporary" form (σχήμα) of the world which is to pass away.<sup>38</sup> A major difference between the two teachers is that Irenaeus held that the earthly environment was the scene "in which" the Fall took place whereas Origen believes in a previous Fall which necessitated an earthly environment. Neither of the men calls created things sinful by their very nature. Irenaeus speaks of an "aging" Creation whereas Origen speaks of a succession of worlds. Irenaeus knows nothing of such a succession although he does teach a transformed heavens and earth subsequent to the inevitable passing away of the "form" of this present one. Concerning the "new heavens and a new earth," let us see how Origen understood them.

Continuing from the above cited passage, Origen says further:

Esaias quoque . . . dicit quia "Erit caelum novum et terra nova," similem sine dubio suggerit intellectum. Innovatio namque caeli et terrae et transmutatio habitus huius mundi et inmutatio caelorum his sine dubio praeparabitur, qui per illam viam, quam supra ostendimus, iter agentes ad illum finem beatitudinis tendunt, cui etiam ipsi "inimici subiciendi" dicuntur, in quo fine "omnia" et "in omnibus esse dicitur deus."<sup>39</sup>

Here, on the one hand, Origen understands the "new heavens and new earth" as "transmutatio habitus huius mundi et inmutatio caelorum;" but, on the

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<sup>38</sup>Supra, p. 70.      <sup>39</sup>Origenes, p. 230.

other hand, it is only a further journeying along the way ("per illam viam") toward blessedness -- for even the "enemies (inimici) of God! According to Origen, this is necessary that ultimately God be "all in all." In other words, unlike Irenaeus, the Biblical "new heavens" and "new earth" is just another of the many along the way to ultimate perfection. He does not deny either the reality nor the necessity of such worlds, however, at least not for the time being. Current material existences are indispensable:

In hoc fine si qui materialem naturam, id est corpoream, penitus interituram putet, nullo omnino genere intellectui meo occurrere potest, quomodo tot et tantae substantiae vitam agere ac subsistere sine corporibus possint, cum solius dei . . . naturae id proprium sit, ut sine materiali substantia et absque ulla corporaea adiunctionis societate intellegatur existere.<sup>40</sup>

This is a very significant passage for the purposes of this dissertation because -- no matter how otherwise aberrant -- Origen was among the orthodox when he held that it was impossible for creatures to live without some kinds of bodies, of whatever nature. To exist immaterially was "cum solium dei . . . naturae id proprium sit," was a natural property of God alone. But, what of the ultimate end for body-needful creatures after the conclusion of all the many succeeding worlds? What was Origen's proposed eternal state of God's creatures? Here, he is most hesitant and not in any sense dogmatic:

Alius fortasse dicet quoniam in illo fine omnis substantia corporalis ita pura erit atque purgata, ut aetheris in modum et caelestis cuiusdam puritatis ac sinceritatis possit intellegi. Certius tamen qualiter se habitura sit res, scit solus deus, et si qui eius per Christum et spiritum sanctum "amici" sunt.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.    <sup>41</sup>Ibid.

Unfortunately, we do not have the original Greek for this passage. Rufinus' translation has it that the ultimate bodies of all creatures shall be of ether-like purity and clearness -- yet, bodies nonetheless. On the other hand, Jerome's version of this passage<sup>42</sup> reads in part: "Corporales quoque substantias penitus dilapsuras, aut certe in fine omnium hoc esse futura corpora, quod nunc est aether et caelum et si quod aliud corpus sincerius et purius intellegi potest." Bodily substances will utterly disappear ("dilapsuras"), or at any rate in the end of all things bodies will be similar to our air and sky or to any clearer and purer body that can be conceived. Origen's position, then, remains somewhat unclear. That creatures need bodies until reaching perfection is certain. When in the perfect state, however, are bodies -- of whatever nature -- still needed or are creatures to be body-less? It seems as if the former was Origen's conviction since, to him, God alone had the nature of immateriality. After all is said in this regard, however, Origen's future state of the blessed is not very concrete. He offers no "new earth, which Luther . . . depicted body,"<sup>43</sup> rather his view is closer to the "jenes Wo der Seligen" lamented by A. Althaus.<sup>44</sup> But, what of the earth or universe itself? Will it also be transformed in some way -- or is it to disappear forever? Let us consider Origen's position on the matter.

Origen not only believed in a succession of worlds in order that fallen creatures might have the opportunity to merit advancement in the scale of being, but he also believed in an upper, or "fixed," world of God and a lower world of this present earth. In this he was far removed from the simpler -- and more Biblical -- view of Irenaeus. In Chapter III

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<sup>42</sup>. Ibid.    <sup>43</sup>Supra, p. 44.    <sup>44</sup>Ibid.

of his Book II, Origen advances three "opinions" (the third being his own) about the end of all things. He exhorts his readers to judge for themselves as to which may be approved. In short, these three opinions may be stated thusly: (1) At the End men shall lead a bodiless existence (2) at the End men shall receive bodies commensurate with their merits, and (3) at the End, when the present form of this universe is superseded, there exists for the blessed a "fixed" abiding place -- the true heaven which surrounds and confines this present one.

The so-called "third opinion" above was really Origen's opinion. He believed in many previous and future "ages" (saeculae) and "worlds" (mundi).<sup>45</sup> He says:

Dicitur mundus etiam ista universitas, quae ex caelo constat et terra, sicut Paulus ait . . . . Designat sane et alium quendam mundum praeter hunc visibilem etiam dominus . . . quem re vera describere ac designare difficile est; ait namque "Ego non sum ex hoc mundo." Tamquam enim qui ex alio quodam esset mundo, ita dixit quia "non sum ex hoc mundo."<sup>46</sup>

Using, here, his own style of hermeneutics, Origen understands our Lord's words as referring to an eternal sphere above and beyond this present one. It is after the temporal has passed away, as explained by Origen,<sup>47</sup> that there is prepared "sphaeram piorum ac beatorum statio collocatur."<sup>48</sup> A "place of abode" (statio) for the pious and blessed. To these:

est caelum illud, quod ambitu magnificentione ipsam illam circumdat et continet terram, quod vere caelum et principaliter appellatur, in quo caelo vel terra finis omnium atque perfectio tuta ac fidissima possit statione consistere, quo scilicet vel hi qui post correptionem castigationum, quas pro delictis pertulerant purgationis obtentu . . . terrae illius habitaculum mereantur, hi vero, qui verbo dei obedi- entes fuerunt ac sapientiae eius iam hinc capaces se obtemperantesque praebuerunt, caeli illius vel caelorum promereri regna dicantur . . . . Hoc ergo modo videtur quasi iter quoddam sanctorum profectibus

<sup>45</sup> Origenes, pp. 324-26. <sup>46</sup> Ibid, pp. 312-14.

<sup>47</sup> Supra, pp. 78-79. <sup>48</sup> Origenes, p. 326.

aperiri ab illa terra ad illos caelos, ut non tam permanere in illa terra quam habitare videantur, transituri scilicet, cum in id quoque profecerint, ad "hereditatem regni caelorum."<sup>49</sup>

Here, then, is Origen's view of the goal of the present universe. It certainly is not the view of Irenaeus. To Origen, the present earth may progress to a better one -- and that one, eventually, to "regni caelorum," a "kingdom of the heavens." It is the same for the rational creatures of the earth. Earthly, bodily existence is a type of terrestrial "purgatory" for the purification from sins. Salvation is merited by the free-will obedience to God's Word. Although many "new heavens" and "new earths" may be needed before the ultimate goal is reached, there is such a goal -- the "regni caelorum" -- and it is a "place" of some presently undefined sort. G. W. Butterworth is correct when he states that "The weakness of Origen's system . . . lies in its assumption that the entire cosmic process is a mistake, due to the misuse of free-will . . . . History, however long drawn out, is but the mending of an original fault,"<sup>50</sup>

In summary of this section it may be said that Origen attempted to defend the Christian faith against Gnosticism and other philosophies, but came dangerously close to becoming one of them. His own philosophical presuppositions, and unique hermeneutics, led him to far-fetched speculations about matters concerning which the Scriptures are either silent altogether or provide little information. Even so, pertinent to our topic, he did deny the annihilation of the material Creation -- however much he managed to phase it out! -- and he did advocate a (strange)

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Origen On First Principles, p. lviii.

type of its ultimate transformation. To this extent, and to this extent only, he was a successor of Irenaeus and the tradition upheld by him. It is most significant, however, that the orthodox men who came later -- also advocating Creation's ultimate Restoration -- never saw fit to cite the great Origen as an authority on the subject.

Augustine (354-430)

If Irenaeus and Origen deservedly have a place in Church History, Aurelius Augustinus much more so. As one historian has put it:

In Augustine the ancient church reached its highest religious attainment since apostolic times . . . all Western Christianity was to become his debtor . . . . He was to be the father of much that was most characteristic in medieval Roman Catholicism. He was to be the spiritual ancestor, no less, of much of the Reformation.<sup>51</sup>

This is true of many issues in Christian doctrine. It is also true of the ultimate Restoration of all Creation -- for Augustine was one of its clearest and strongest advocates.

Of Augustine's many literary productions, his greatest treatise was the City of God (De Civitate Dei). This work was begun by him in 412, in the dark days after the capture of Rome by Alaric the Goth, and was finished about 426, shortly before his death.<sup>52</sup> It was Augustine's philosophy of history, and his defense of Christianity against the heathen charge that neglect of the old gods under whom Rome had grown great was the cause of its downfall. Augustine, of course, argues that the loss of the old gods and the worship of the one, true God was a great gain. It is this De Civitate Dei, the greatest of his treatises, which is the basic source for investigating his view on the ultimate renewal of the world.

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<sup>51</sup>Walker, p. 160.    <sup>52</sup>Ibid, p. 166.

Although Augustine does not mention Irenaeus of Lyons, he does pointedly refute Origen's errors (Book XI, Chapter XXIII of *De Civitate*) regarding the necessary use of human bodies because of sin.<sup>53</sup> To Augustine, following Scripture itself, it was in the beginning that the good God created a perfectly good Creation and, had no one sinned, the world would have been filled and beautified with nature's good things without exception.<sup>54</sup> It was sin which brought corruption into the natural order. The world we see today is not exactly the world God first made -- although much good still remains in it.

Not only the material world, but also the human body suffers because of sin. In Book XIII, Chapter I Augustine makes it very clear that mortality was brought about because of the historic Fall.<sup>55</sup> Had men not sinned an angelic immortality might have ensued. He sharply contradicts such men (philosophers) who disparage the body and esteem it a thing to be eventually rid of. As Whitney J. Oates correctly reads the original Latin text: "To obtain blessedness, we need not quit every kind of body, but only the corruptible, cumbersome, painful, dying -- not such bodies as the goodness of God contrived for the first man, but such only as man's sin entailed."<sup>56</sup> Augustine's meaning here is unequivocal. Bodies, as such, are of God like every other created thing, therefore, to despise

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<sup>53</sup>Aurelius Augustinus, Vol. 1, ed. by B. Dombart (Leipsig: In Aedibus B. G. Teubneri, 1877), pp. 492-94.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid, pp. 492-93.      <sup>55</sup>Ibid, pp. 556-57.

<sup>56</sup>Saint Augustine, Volume Two ed. by Whitney J. Oates (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 225.

the body is to despise God's creation. If present bodies are burdensome, it is because of sin's affliction upon them -- not because they are bodies. The first human body (Adam's) was perfectly good and lovingly contrived by God. The only bodies to be pitied are those such "as man's sin entailed." Indeed, on the Last Day the resurrected and glorified bodies of believers shall even far surpass the marvellous pre-sin bodies of our first parents.<sup>57</sup> As a matter of fact, Adam and Eve would never have died had they not sinned against God. Due to the eating of the Tree of Life in the Garden they remained in perpetual youth and aged in no sense -- until they disobeyed their Creator and sinned against Him.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, not only physical death -- but, also the process of aging -- is caused by the debilitating influence of sin. Although Augustine does not say it in so many words, he might be alluding to the "aging" of mankind mentioned nearly two centuries earlier by Irenaeus.<sup>59</sup> In portraying a (Luther-like) bodily kind of eternal life Augustine intended none of the exaggerated materialism which even Irenaeus tended towards.<sup>60</sup> Speaking specifically to the Chiliasts, he renounces immoderate carnal banquets, furnished with an amount of food such as not only shocks the feelings of the temperate, but even surpasses credulity itself!<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, the great bishop of Hippo reminds one of Martin Luther<sup>62</sup> and has no hesitation whatever about matter-of-factly asserting that the resurrected

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<sup>57</sup> Aurelius Augustinus, pp. 586-92.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. <sup>59</sup> Supra, p. 66. <sup>60</sup> Supra, p. 72

<sup>61</sup> Aurelius Augustinus, Vol. 2, p. 420.

<sup>62</sup> Supra, pp. 31-32.

body's eyesight shall be phenomenal!<sup>63</sup> Although all of what we have said so far is in an eschatological category, it is now necessary to become even more specific about the world's End. Augustine also has much to say about that.

Augustine relates, as does Scripture, that the eschatological Conflagration of the world immediately precedes its restoration and renewal. In Chapter XVIII of Book XX this is written:

Quaerat forsitan aliquis, si post factum iudicium iste mundus ardebit, antequam pro illo caelum novum et terra nova reponatur, eo ipso tempore conflagrationis eius ubi erunt sancti, cum eos habentes corpora in aliquo corporali loco esse necesse sit. Possumus respondere futuros eos esse in superioribus partibus, quo ita non ascendet flamma illius incendii . . . Talia quippe illis inerunt corpora, ut illic sint, ubi esse voluerint.<sup>64</sup>

From this passage we learn that Augustine held, as did all the Church that the universal fire of 2 Peter 3 was to precede the "new heavens and a earth." Before that fire began believers still living would be "changed" (1 Cor. 15:51-52) and "caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17). According to Augustine, their changed bodies would be such that they could be "ubi esse voluerint"! This is to say, no longer limited by time and space.

Augustine's understanding of the word "heavens" is significant for this dissertation in that it helps one understand what he believed about the extent of both the coming destruction and restoration of the created order. Referring to the Flood mentioned in 2 Peter 3, he says:

Ubi etiam commemorans factum ante diluvium videtur admonuisse quodam modo, quatenus in fine huius saeculi mundum istum peritulum esse credamus. Nam et illo tempore perisse dixit, qui tunc erat, mundum;

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<sup>63</sup> Aurelius Augustinus, Vol. 2, pp. 623-30.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 448.

nec solum orbem terrae, verum etiam caelos, quos utique istos aërios intellegimus . . . . Ergo totus aut paene totus aer iste ventosus (quod caelum vel potius caelos vocat, sed utique istos imos, non illos supremos, ubi sol et luna et sidera constituta sunt) conversus fuerat in umidam qualitatem atque hoc modo cum terra perierat . . .<sup>65</sup>

It is clear from this passage that Augustine considered the "air" or the earth's atmosphere to be the "heavens" spoken of in 2 Peter 3 and elsewhere. By "heavens" he did not mean "supremos, ubi sol et luna et sidera constituta sunt," he did not mean the entire universe as we now conceive of it. It was the global earth and its atmosphere which was to pass away and be renewed. Continuing along this same line, let us now see how he conceived of the "new heavens and new earth."

In Book XX, Chapter XVI of De Civitate Dei Augustine expounds on the Last Day in a passage which well summarizes his belief in the transformation, rather than any type of annihilation, of the world. It reads in part:

tunc figura huius mundi mundanorum ignium conflagratione praeteribit, sicut factum est mundanarum aquarum inundatione diluvium. Illa itaque, ut dixi, conflagratione mundana elementorum corruptibilium qualitates, quae corporibus nostris corruptibilibus congruebant, ardendo penitus interibunt, atque ipsa substantia eas qualitates habebit, quae corporibus immortalibus mirabili mutatione convenient; ut scilicet mundus in melius innovatus apte adcommodetur hominibus etiam carne in melius innovatis.<sup>66</sup>

Due to the unprecedented "ignium conflagratione," the "figura huius mundi" shall pass away -- its "figura" (form, shape) only. By means of this holocaust the "elementorum corruptibilium qualitates, quae corporibus nostris corruptibilibus congruebant" shall be destroyed -- but, not our bodies as such. With the purging away of the old -- is a concurrent reception of the new. Our "substantia eas qualitates habebit, quae corporibus

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 447. <sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 443.

immortalibus mirabili mutatione convenient." This wonderful "transmutation" (mutatione) leads as well the "mundus in melius innovatus." This is another way of saying what St. Paul says in Romans 8: "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (verse 21). To Augustine's thinking this is only natural since the earth was made by God for man's habitation. Irenaeus said much the same thing.<sup>67</sup> The qualities of earth itself are marvellously transformed "ut scilicet mundus in melius innovatus apte adcommo-detur hominibus etiam carne in melius innovatis." The earth is "accommodated" to transformed man so as to be a fit place for his eternal dwelling. The changed man and the changed earth are -- once more -- a harmonized Creation. This answers all the speculation as to how our changed bodies could possibly live in the present-type (unchanged) earth. The answer of Augustine? Both will be wonderfully transformed at the same time. Furthermore, Augustine, despite the literal reading of Rev. 21:1, leaves open the possibility of an equally transformed sea.<sup>68</sup>

As can be easily seen, Augustine's view concerning the world's ultimate Restoration is much closer to the earlier view of Irenaeus than to the spacious speculations of Origen. There is no mistaking his opinion that eternal life for the children of God is a corporeal one. Arguing against men who fancy that earthly bodies cannot be transferred to a heavenly habitation, Augustine responds in Chapter IV of Book XXII;

Corporibus quam corpora licet terrena sedibus quamvis caelestibus,  
tamen corporeis sublimari, nisi quia hoc videre consuevimus et hoc  
sumus, illud vero nondum sumus nec aliquando adhuc vidimus? Nam

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<sup>67</sup>Supra, pp. 65-66.

<sup>68</sup>Aurelius Augustinus, Vol 2, pp. 443-44.

profecto sobria ratione consulta mirabilioris esse divini operis reperitur incorporalibus corporalia quodam modo attexere quam licet diversa, quia illa caelestia, ista terrestria, tamen corpora et corpora copulare.<sup>69</sup>

To Augustine, here, it was a great divine mystery how the incorporeal soul is connected with the corporeal body. Even more mysterious is that the earthly body is to be exalted to the heavenly -- yet, bodily -- abode. To Augustine and Irenaeus -- even to Origen -- there was no human existence, either here or elsewhere, that was not some kind of "bodily existence." Moreover, to the bishop of Hippo, as well as to Irenaeus, this also meant that the "heavenly" abode must be some kind of appropriate corporeal dwelling place -- radically different from our present experience as it might be. Another way of saying it, it was the present earth transformed into the "new heavens and a new earth." If the Church Fathers seemed at times to stray from Scripture and indulge themselves in philosophical thought current in their times it is frequently because they were attempting (not always successfully) to speak the Christian message to the people of their day. This is especially true when they addressed the issue of the earth's fate and the future of human existence -- very tangible matters, indeed! They were more or less forced to use words and concepts relating to the earth's substance and those of which man's body is composed. A professor of Edinburgh University was certainly correct when he said in reference to Augustine: "The Biblical doctrine of Creation must somehow be related to the philosophical concepts of Nature, Form, Substance."<sup>70</sup> Augustine, as others before him, attempted to relate

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p. 558.

<sup>70</sup> John H. S. Burleigh, The City of God, (London: Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1949), p. 153.

these to eschatological teachings of the Bible. How well he managed is to be investigated later in this dissertation.

Bede (c. 672-735)

So far in this chapter we have seen how persistent and widespread was the teaching of the ultimate Restoration of the world and its people. Irenaeus taught it in Gaul (2nd Century), Origen taught it in Palestine (3rd Century), and Augustine taught it in North Africa (5th Century). Now, a fourth personage is introduced. The "Venerable" Bede is dealt with here, not because he was of equal stature with the men previously consulted or because he contributed something not earlier given, but because he illustrates the geographical scope of the Restoration teaching in the early Church and because he was a noteworthy teacher in the Medieval period of Church History.

Even though the period in which Bede lived and served "was not distinguished for developments in the field of theology,"<sup>71</sup> he was one of the two most significant Anglo-Saxon theologians of the Carolingian Era. The Anglo-Saxon people as a whole had not long been even nominally Christian and, yet, as we shall see, the ultimate renewal of God's Creation was already taught among them.

There is the possibility that Bede's belief in the ultimate Restoration of created things -- rather than their annihilation and replacement by that not previously in existence -- was passed down to him from Irenaeus' influence in Gaul. The Gauls, the Irish, and the British (although Bede was Anglo-Saxon by race) were all Celtic peoples and had

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<sup>71</sup>Bengt Häggglund, History Of Theology, trans. by Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 151.

been Christian long before their Germanic conquerors arrived on the scene. It is feasible, therefore, that Irenaeus' view was preserved in that part of the Christian world. "The scholarship of the Irish monasteries was transplanted to England . . . . Of this intellectual movement a conspicuous illustration was Bede . . . his learning . . . embraced the full round of knowledge of his day, and made him a teacher of generations to come."<sup>72</sup>

It is not necessary to dwell long on the Venerable Bede because what he says relevant to our topic has already been thoroughly covered when consulting Irenaeus and Augustine. He says practically the same thing in very similar words. In his Commentary on Mark, for example, and alluding to Revelation, he wrote:

Et ad Joannem angelus, Erit, inquit, caelum novum et terra nova, quae quidem non alia condenda sunt, sed haec ipsa renovanda. Caelum ergo et terra et transit et erit, quia et ab ea quam nunc habet specie per ignem tergitur, et tamen in sua semper natura servatur. Unde et per Psalmistam dicitur, mutabis ea, et mutabuntur. Quam quidem ultimam commutationem suam ipsis nobis nunc vicissitudinibus nunciant . . .<sup>73</sup>

In this passage, Bede is commenting on Mark 13:31 where it is said that "Heaven and earth will pass away; my words will never pass away." We have heard such comments before. Through the fire of 2 Peter 3, the present appearance of Creation is "per ignem tergitur" -- scoured, cleansed. The end result is a "renovation" or "change" rather than annihilation.

The Venerable Bede was not alone in his age when teaching the final renewal or restoration of the universe. In his Book of Job,

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<sup>72</sup>Walker, pp. 182-83.

<sup>73</sup>Bede "Commentaries on the Scriptures," The Complete Works Of Venerable Bede, Vol. 10 (London: Whittaker and Co., Ave Maria Lane, 1844), p. 207.

entitled, Moralia, Gregory the Great (540-604) had said: "Terra et caelum per eam, quam nunc habent, imaginem transeunt, sed tamen per essentiam sine fine subsistunt . . . . 'Erit caelum novum et terra nova'; quae quidem non alia condenda sunt, sed haec ipsa renovantur."<sup>74</sup> This last phrase is nearly identical with the last part of Bede's first sentence cited above. To the great Gregory, the "image" of the present created order was to pass away, "sed tamen per essentiam sine fine subsistunt." But, its "essence" or basic substance would "subsist" without end ("sine fine"). If Vincent of Lerins' definition of the true Christian faith be correct, that it is: "Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus,"<sup>75</sup> then, Restoration theology is most certainly that.

#### Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Thomas Aquinas was born in Italy of a noble family. Against the wishes of his parents, he entered the Dominican order of monks in 1243. In the crowded and busy years of his rather short life he was regularly called upon for important civil and ecclesiastical affairs, and was active in preaching. He wrote voluminously, the most important of his works being Summa contra Gentiles, Summa theologica, Scriptum super libros Sententiarum, and Compendium theologiae. The last of these, the Compendium, "written by St. Thomas in his full maturity, indicates what, to his . . . mind . . . is most important in theology."<sup>76</sup> Despite his pronounced

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<sup>74</sup>Gregorius I, "Morales Sur Job" in Sources Chretiennes, Vol. 212, ed. and trans. by Aristide Bocognana (Paris: Es Editions Du Cerf, 1974), pp. 172-74.

<sup>75</sup>Walker, p. 171.

<sup>76</sup>Thomas Aquinas, Compendium of Theology, trans. by Cyril Vollert (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1952), p. v.

intellectualism, he was also a simple, deeply religious, prayerful man.

It was a Protestant who said of him these things: "His work . . . places him among the few great teachers of the church. In the Roman communion his influence has never ceased. By declaration of Pope Leo XIII . . . in 1879, his work is the basis of present theological instruction."<sup>77</sup>

Aquinas expressed his theology when the medieval church was at the height of its secular power. "The Middle Ages never denied the final authority of the Bible. Augustine and Aquinas so regarded it. It was the Bible interpreted, however, by the Fathers, teachers and the councils of the church."<sup>78</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, the medieval attitude toward the Bible and toward "the Fathers" and "teachers" is well since, as we have seen, the Fathers understood the Bible as teaching the ultimate Restoration of Creation. Thomas Aquinas, also.

It is not to be supposed that from the time of Bede (d. 735) to the time of Aquinas (b. 1225) no Christian teachers instructed concerning the final renewal of Creation. No, indeed. The very influential Peter Lombard (?-1160), in his Sentences, had said before Aquinas: "Peribit caelum et terra non secundum substantiam, sed secundum speciem, quae immutabitur: Caelum quidem aereum, non aethereum."<sup>79</sup> It was common, accepted teaching of the one, holy, catholic Church -- not as Calixt would have it: "Hanc sententiam postea secuti omnes doctores Scholastici, et amplectuntur hodie plerique scriptores Pontificii."<sup>80</sup> The Bible's

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<sup>77</sup>Walker, p. 245. <sup>78</sup>Ibid, p. 296.

<sup>79</sup>Peter Lombard, Sententiarum Patrologiae, Series Secunda, Vol. 1, ed. by J. P. Migne (Seu Petit-Montrouge, 1853), pp. 1284-87.

<sup>80</sup>Georg Calixt, Schriften zur Eschatologie, Band 4, Werke in Auswahl, herausgegeben von Inge Mager (Göttigen: Vanderhoeck and Ruprecht, 1972), pp. 359-60.

Restoration theology cannot be slandered as being either "Scholastic" or especially Roman Catholic since, as has been demonstrated, it had been taught centuries earlier.

Thomas Aquinas' work, Compendium theologiae, is especially helpful in understanding his view of the universe' restoration because he presents things so concisely and logically. Granting that his teaching became encumbered with "Scholastic" distinctions and terminology -- the Irenaeus, Augustine, Bede theme is still very obvious. Perhaps, his definition of the "universe" is the best place to begin with him since it is profitable to learn the scope of his Restoration theology.

Simply put, Aquinas' definition of "universe is found in Chapter CLXX of the Compendium and is: "Sunt autem partes ejus essentialia corpora caelestia et elementa, utpote ex quibus tota mundi machina consistit; cetera vero ad integritatem corporei universi pertinere non videntur, sed magis ad quendam ornatum et decorem ipsius . . . ." <sup>81</sup> As we see, according to Aquinas, the essential parts of the "universe" are simply the "heavenly bodies" and the "elements," meaning by the latter fire, air, water, and earth. The "world machine" (mundi machina) basically consists of these. Aquinas also esteems man as an essential part of the universe inasmuch as it would be incomplete without him. <sup>82</sup> As he puts it: "Cum enim homo pars sit universi corporei . . . non enim videntur esse pars perfecta, si fuerit sine toto." <sup>83</sup> Plants, other animals (beside man), and "mixed bodies" are not essential parts of the universe and, therefore, shall not attain unto eternal incorruptibility. These

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<sup>81</sup> Thomae Aquinatis, opera Omnia, Tomus XVI (New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1950), p. 46.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.      <sup>83</sup> Ibid.

are merely for the "adornment and beauty" (*ornatum et decorum*) of the present age. Having now seen what Aquinas means by the word "universe," let us go on to see how he views its ultimate fate.

In Chapter CLXIX, Aquinas quotes both Rev. 21:1 and Is. 65-17 for his authority when he says: "Oportet igitur quod homine accipiente ultimam perfectionem per resurrectionem, creatura corporalis diversum statum accipiat: Et secundum hoc dicitur innovari mundus, homine resurgente . . ." <sup>84</sup> All is keyed and made to depend on man's resurrection from the dead. At the resurrection man himself "accipiente ultimam perfectionem" and thereupon "creatura corporalis diversum statum accipiat . . . innovari mundus."

Without much more restraint than Luther, Irenaeus, and Augustine, Aquinas describes, in Chapter CLXX, how that transformed man will no longer need to eat, dress (for he will be clothed with a radiance of glory!), or require any kind of medicine. <sup>85</sup> By saying all these things, of course, he really wishes to make the point that plants, animals (for transportation), and "mixed bodies" have no part in the transformed world -- and won't be needed anyway.

Having shown above that man and the "elements have an essential part in the eschatological Consummation, what about the "heavenly bodies?" Indeed, they, too, await a "state of consummation." He says in his Chapter CLXXI:

Complete igitur numero hominum ad vitam aeternam producendorum, et eis in vita aeterna eonstitutis, motus caeli cessabit . . . . Cessante autem motu caeli cessabit per consequens motus in inferioribus corporibus . . . et sic totum universum corporeum habet aliam dispositionem et formam, secundum illud 1 Corinth. 7:31: "Praeterit figura hujus mundi." <sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid, p. 45. <sup>85</sup>Ibid, p. 46. <sup>86</sup>Ibid, p. 47.

Again, everything -- properly -- keys upon saved mankind. Once they are safely delivered and established in eternal life, then, the motion of the heavenly bodies cease -- and consequently the movement of all "lower bodies" as well. This is how the attempting-to-be-scientific Aquinas understands the "form" (figura) of this world passing away as referred to in 1 Cor. 7:31. Thus, the "totum universum corporeum habet aliam dispositionem et formam," The whole universe shall receive another form.

However strangely (to our ears) he may express it, Aquinas was trying to make this point: "Quodammodo propter hominem . . . tota natura corporalis esse videtur. Ex consummatione igitur hominis consummatio totius natura corporalis quodammodo dependet."<sup>87</sup> In a certain sense, it is on account of man that the whole of nature exists. Therefore, the consummation of the whole of nature depends upon man's consummation. This is certainly in line with the thought of Rom. 8:19-21.

In something of a chain reaction, the ultimate Restoration of Creation goes back step by step to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. As we have seen, the consummation of the material universe depends upon the consummation of man, and it was to accomplish this consummation or restoration of man that the Son of God became Man. In Chapter CXCIX, Aquinas writes "De reparatione humanae naturae per Christum."<sup>88</sup> He speaks of God providing "reparationis remedium." This "remedy of reparation" is set forth, in his Chapter CC, to have been the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. With man restored -- Creation is restored. All this as the fruit of our Lord's earthly life and work.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 40. <sup>88</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

Although Thomas Aquinas expressed it in quite a different way, although he uses the "scientific" thought forms of his day, and although he utilizes Scholastic terminology, Aquinas, nonetheless, expounds the ancient theology concerning God's final Restoration of His created universe. In this, he was perfectly in line with Irenaeus, Augustine, and Luther, and -- as it is hoped shall be later proved -- in line with Holy Scripture itself.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

The Frenchman, John Calvin, was much influenced by Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century humanism, but he was also a man of the Holy Scriptures. Although he began his studies as a law student, following a "sudden conversion"<sup>89</sup> at the age of about twenty-four years he gave himself totally to religion. Gradually, he had come to espouse the Reformation cause and gave himself ever more fully to it. After the first publication of his Institutes of the Christian Religion (March, 1536) he stepped into leadership of French Protestantism. According to one historian: "The Institutes themselves . . . were, as published in 1536, far from the extensive treatise into which they were to grow in Calvin's final edition of 1559; but they were already the most orderly and systematic popular presentation of doctrine . . . that the Reformation produced."<sup>90</sup> From about 1536, to his death twenty-eight years later, Calvin's name was inseparably connected with that of Geneva (Switzerland). It was there where he worked out his own unique brand of doctrine and model of the Christian life. Despite many ups and downs, he was eminently successful. His influence came to

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<sup>89</sup>Walker, p. 349.    <sup>90</sup>Ibid, p. 350.

extend far beyond Geneva. Due to his Institutes, his Bible commentaries, and other major efforts, he moulded the thought of Protestantism in France, the Netherlands, Scotland, and various parties in England. His influence also penetrated Poland, Hungary -- and permanently took root in southwestern Germany. However validly some might challenge this opinion, in the eyes of many people, Calvin "deserved the description of 'the only international reformer.'"<sup>91</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, however, all of such facts as these are submitted for one reason, this reason being to show John Calvin's extensive influence as one who also taught the ultimate Restoration of the universe. This is to say, the Reformer, John Calvin, as a younger and very influential contemporary of Martin Luther, accepted the traditional Restoration theology of the Early Church and promulgated it among the thousands of those who looked to him as their leader. Therefore, it is submitted here that both earliest Lutheranism and Calvinism -- by far the overwhelming number of Protestants -- believed in, and taught, the ultimate Restoration of God's Creation rather than its annihilation and replacement by another not previously in existence. Now, let us see if this assertion can be substantiated in regard to John Calvin? Before offering citations from Calvin's works themselves, let us consider a brief summary of his overall Restoration thinking in order that the parts may be seen in the whole.

Over and above the redemption of man himself, and the consummation of the Church, Calvin taught the restoration or perfecting of the cosmos

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid, p. 357. This statement is valid only if by it is meant that international influence made during his own lifetime. The Reformation earlier begun by Luther, for example, eventually spread to such countries as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, and others.

as a whole. It, too, is in need of renewal, and such renewal comes about only by a dying -- or transformation. To Calvin, as to many Christian teachers before him, the lot of the creatures is inextricably bound up with the lot of mankind. As a result of the Fall into sin, man has dragged the creatures along with himself into the pit of corruption and mortality. The horrible enormity of our guilt and lostness -- but, also the inexpressible mercy of God in Christ -- is mirrored for us in the fate of the created order. Very similarly to both Irenaeus and Augustine,<sup>92</sup> Calvin holds that since the creation was punished because of the old man, so it will be glorified to correspond to the new man. Hence, the creatures "long for" the manifestation of their promised glory. This future glory consists essentially in the restoration of its original innocence and immortality. Calvin makes a sustained effort, however, to be neither carried away by nor overly indulge in speculation about such matters.<sup>93</sup> In his own words: "Hoc ergo simplici doctrina contenti simus, tale fore temperamentum, et tam concinnum ordinem, ut nihil vel deforme vel fluxum appareat."<sup>94</sup> To John Calvin, the ultimate Restoration of Creation is simply its eternal Preservation. All of this, of course, for the sake of God's people. It is for the sake of the eternal plan of salvation which God has for His fallen humanity that He preserves creation for its ultimate and corresponding redemption. The consummation of the world is to

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<sup>92</sup>Supra, pp. 65-66 and p. 88 respectively.

<sup>93</sup>Heinrich Quistorp, Die Letzten Dinge im Zeugnis Calvins (Gütersloh: Verlag C. Bertelsmann, 1955), p. 201.

<sup>94</sup>John Calvin, "Epistolas Ad Romanos, "Corinthios Et Galatas," Omnes Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentarii, Vol. 1, ed. by R. Steph. (Halis Saxonum: Sumptibus Librariae Gebaueriae, 1831), p. 104.

come about like that of man -- only through the termination of its present mode of being. The Last Judgment effects not only the end of earthly history but also that of nature as it is presently experienced. The final Parousia of Christ brings both the perfect renewal of man -- and also the total transformation of the created cosmos. To Calvin, this is not to say that things are eternal in and of themselves, but that the Creator God has graciously so willed that His Creation be made eternal. Hence, all Creation is fashioned anew and transfigured. This is possible only by means of a complete re-constitution and radical change. The present structure of the entire cosmos must pass away and give place to another. Not another in the sense of having never been in existence before, but another in the sense of appearance and manner. In regard to this idea of the transfiguration of the cosmos, Calvin makes the same distinction between substance and quality which he makes in regard to the resurrection of the human body. This is to say, while the character of the world changes entirely, its essence remains the same. It is, as it were, the kernel of a seed bringing forth something wholly new -- only after its outer shell passes away. In an accurate translation of the German, Quistorp comments upon the concept of Calvin in this manner: "Thus for Calvin, who here follows the ancient tradition of the church in contrast to Lutheran teaching, the consummation is brought about not by destruction but by transmutation."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Heinrich Quistorp, Calvin's Doctrine Of The Last Things, trans. by Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1955), p. 184. Underscoring mine. It is unfortunate here that a quotation from A. Quenstedt is taken to represent the original "Lutheran teaching" -- when it was not. Quistorp does, however, footnote that: "Luther himself on the contrary taught the conception of transfiguration (as a complete renewal of the world)."

Calvin's cosmic eschatology was never divorced from its Christological vision of the End. He always emphasizes that any understanding of the world's ultimate change must develop into an exhortation to man about his moral responsibility before the holy God. He warns against speculation and says that the main point of all Scriptural revelation concerning the world's End has to do with man's present deportment. All in all, the final purpose for the eternal Consummation of both man and the cosmos is: "Quo non aliud affirmatur quam singulas orbis partes, a summo caelorum vertice ad usque terrae centrum, suo modo creatoris gloriam enarrare,"<sup>96</sup> all Creation is bound to eternally praise its Creator.

After holding forth for some length on "The Final Resurrection" in Chapter XXV of Book III of his Institutes, Calvin acknowledges that misguided human reason might easily dismiss all thought of any type of post-resurrection bodily existence as entirely superfluous. He grants that when our bodies are "like the angels" they will no longer need the present physical comforts and necessities of earthly contingency. Even so, he will not surrender the ancient teaching concerning the transformed world as a place of man's eternal abode. He put an hypothetical query -- and his answer to it -- like this:

Deinde subit illis in mentem quorsum pertineat orbis reparatio: quando ex tanta et incomparabili copia nullium rei indigi erunt filii Dei: sed erunt similes angelis, quorum inedia aeternae beatitudinis symbolum est. Ego autem respondeo, in ipso aspectu tantam fore amoenitatem, tantam sine usu suavitatem in sola notitia, ut haec foelicitas omnia quibus nunc iuamur adminicula longe exuperet.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>John Calvin, Institutio Christianae Religionis 1559 in Opera Selecta, Vol. 4, ed. by Petrus Barth and Guilelmus Niesel (Monachii in Aedibus: Chr. Kaiser, 1931), p. 140.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid, p. 455.

In other words, Calvin's insistence on a substantial environment for redeemed and consummated man is not because he will "need" such, but because of the "great pleasantness in the very prospect" -- and because, to him, it was Scriptural. This anticipated "pleasantness" (*amoenitatem*) and "exquisite sweetness" (*suavitatem*) of the new heavens and earth reveals an aspect of Calvin's temperament frequently overlooked in the French Reformer -- usually considered to have been puritanical, austere, and rather emotionally sterile. He, too, knew the joys of God's Creation.

Calvin has a unique (and rather amusing) way of using the sub-human creatures of God's world to shame man for his weak faith and failure in hope. In the "race" of the Christian life, other creatures are "man's companions." Referring to the metaphor of Phil. 3:12-14, Calvin wrote:

Ac ne flaccescant animis in hoc cursu, idem illis omnes creaturas adiungit socias. Nam quia ubique deformes concipiuntur ruinae, dicit quaecunque in caelo et terra sunt eniti ad renovationem (Rom. 8, d.19). Nam quum Adam suo lapsu dissipaverit integrum naturae ordinem, sua creaturis servitus, cui propter hominis peccatum subiectae sunt, molesta et gravis est: non quod praeditae sint aliquo sensu, sed quia integrum statum a quo exciderunt, naturaliter appetunt. Gemitum ergo et parturitionis dolorem illis attribuit Paulus . . . pudeat in nostra corruptione tabescere, ac non imitari saltem mortua elementa, quae alieni peccati poenam sustinent.<sup>98</sup>

This passage has been offered here because it briefly summarizes the main points of Calvin's thinking in this regard, and brings together succinctly what is otherwise widely scattered throughout his writings.<sup>99</sup> The main

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<sup>98</sup>Ibid, p. 434.

<sup>99</sup>See John Calvin, Librum Geneseos Commentarius, Pars Prior, ed by E. Hengstenberg (Berlin: Apud Gustavum Bethge, 1838), p. 57; John Calvin, Omnes Pauli Apostoli, pp. 102-105; John Calvin, "Isaiah," Calvin's Commentaries, Vol. 4, trans. by William Pringle (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1948), pp. 397-99, 437; John Calvin, Institutes Of The Christian Religion, The Library Of Christian Classics, Vol. 20 ed. by John T. McNeill, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 246.

points of his viewpoint may be stated thusly: (1) "ruin and deformity" (deformes . . . ruinae) are visible throughout Creation (2) these have been caused by the Fall of Adam which "deranged the perfect order of nature" (dissipaverit integrum naturae ordinem) and brought a grievous and burdensome bondage to all creatures of earth (3) even without any intelligence ("non quod praeditae sint aliquo sensu") the creatures still naturally aspire to the state of perfection from which they have been caused to fall (4) due to God's grace toward His fallen Creation, all things in heaven and on earth are "tending to renovations" (eniti ad renovationem), and (5) as privileged recipients of His Spirit, God's people, weak in faith and hope, should learn a lesson from the lesser creatures and be ashamed of their faithlessness -- when even "the inanimate elements" (mortua elementa) are unremittingly aspiring to that glorious Day promised by their Creator. Indeed, the "mortua elementa" should at least be "imitated" (imitari saltem) by God's redeemed human creatures!

Calvin's inimitable way of shaming God's people for their unjustified lack of faith and hope, and the extent of the ultimate Restoration of all Creation, is seen in this passage from Book III, Chapter IX of Institutionis. Speaking of the Resurrection of the dead on the Last Day, he says:

Optime enim Paulus fideles alacriter ad mortem pergere docet, non quia velint exui, sed quia superindui cupiant (2 Cor. 5.a.2). An vero bruta animalia, atque adeo inanimae ipsae creaturae usque ad ligna et lapides, praesentis suae vanitatis sibi consciae, in ultimum resurrectionis diem intentae erunt ut cum filiis Dei a vanitate eximantur (Rom. 8.d.19): nos et ingenii luce praediti, et supra ingenium, Dei spiritu illuminati, quum de essentia nostra agitur, non attollemus animos ultra hanc terrae putredinem?<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>Institutio, p. 175.

Not only man is privileged to hope in God's promise of Restoration, but even "brute animals . . . inanimate creatures, down to wood and stones" (bruta animalia . . . adeo inanimae ipsae creaturae usque ad ligna et lapides) shall have a part in it. It should be again said here that Calvin is not primarily interested in sub-human creatures as such. Rather, as created for man, even they continue to serve him as constant reminders of his ultimate God-established hope of renewal -- and they along with, and because of, him. The extent of God's promised Restoration is all-encompassing.

As pointed out above, Calvin's opinion as to the extent of God's promised Restoration includes all creatures. This disagrees with the teaching of Thomas Aquinas that the lesser creatures of earth are not essential parts of the universe.<sup>101</sup> Moreover, Calvin does not concern himself overmuch about whether or not the universe is "aging" in the sense what earlier teachers -- and the Lutheran Reformers -- meant by it. He openly disagrees with them. As a matter of fact, Calvin sounds rather "modern" when he wrote that it is mens' sins rather than an aging and exhausted earth which diminishes and impairs it. He warns that "there is danger, unless the world repents, that a great part of men should shortly perish through hunger, and other dreadful miseries." In original context:

Falsam etiam est quod quidam dicunt, terram longo temporis successu exarescere, quasi eam lassaret pariendi assiduitas. Rectius sentiunt, qui crescente hominum malitia residuam Dei benedictionem paulatim agnoscunt minui et exteruari: ac certe periculum est, nisi resipiscat mundus, ne bona pars hominum fame et ingentibus aliis miseriis brevi tabescat.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>Supra, pp. 94-95.

<sup>102</sup>John Calvin, Librum Geneseos, p. 57.

Hence, Calvin disagrees with the alleged innate biological "aging" of the universe -- against Luther, the Lutheran Confessions, Irenaeus, and Augustine --<sup>103</sup> and sets forth a moralistic degeneration, with its consequences, as we have seen earlier held in this dissertation by Edmund Schlink.<sup>104</sup> It would seem, therefore, that Schlink's interpretation of what the Confessions mean by an "aging" world is Calvinistic rather than a proper Lutheran understanding of them.

The view of John Calvin, relevant to the topic of this dissertation, has been dealt with here to demonstrate the extent and continuity to which the ancient teaching of the universe's ultimate Restoration was held and taught by Christian teachers. At least from the Second Century (Irenaeus) and continuing down through the centuries with Origen, Augustine, Bede, Aquinas, Martin Luther -- even to John Calvin (second half of the Sixteenth Century) this teaching of the Early Church continued. What was made of the ancient heritage by certain Lutheran dogmaticians beginning in the Seventeenth Century we have already seen.<sup>105</sup> With the variations already noted above, John Calvin taught the tradition with conciseness and lucidity of expression -- and for him, some degree of feeling. What those who succeeded him have done with his Restoration theology is the scope of this present dissertation.

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<sup>103</sup>Supra, pp. 35-36; 13-15; 66; and 85 respectively.

<sup>104</sup>Supra, pp. 17-18.

<sup>105</sup>Supra, pp. 44-54.

## CHAPTER V

### WORLD PICTURES

#### Introduction

This chapter will be an effort to set forth expositions of the views held by selected Biblical scholars whose "world pictures" may be categorized as being representatives of either "The Biblical View" or "The Rationalistic View" of the universe's end. This categorization does not intend to take into account the entire teaching of such men on all points of doctrine, but explicitly limits itself to their views of the past, present, and future conditions of the material universe. By "The Biblical View" is meant that view of Scripture which holds that its content is the inerrant Word of God and, therefore, "unicam regulam et normam, secundum quam omnia dogmata omnesque doctores aestimari et iudicari oporteat . . ." <sup>1</sup> Behind this view of Scripture is the acknowledgment and conviction that:

Physics crosses into the area of theology now and again as when it deals with heavens and earth, fire and water, astronomy, and other natural phenomena such as man, animals, plants, etc. The study of such things . . . leads us to the knowledge of the invisible things of God . . . . The belief [is] predicated on the conviction . . . that many statements in Scripture pertaining to nature were meant to be informative (even though they might be figurative statements) not merely as information concerning nature but as information adjunctive to the articles of faith. To question this belief would . . .

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<sup>1</sup>"Konkordienformel," in Die Bekenntnisschriften (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1967), p. 767.

threaten such articles of faith as Creation . . . and the Incarnation as well as the facticity of the miracle stories.<sup>2</sup>

Francis Pieper put it another way: "Of course, it is not the chief purpose of Scripture to give information on such points . . . . But also the historical data which are found in Scripture . . . are inspired and infallible, because they are a part of Scripture."<sup>3</sup> It is an assumption such as this which is presently meant by "The Biblical View." Theologians who seem to hold this view -- at least when handling the topic of this dissertation -- shall be so categorized.

Over against "The Biblical View" and opposed to it are those scholars classified herein as representatives of "The Rationalistic View." Although the origins of Rationalism are in the age of Enlightenment which "brought with it an altered picture of the world,"<sup>4</sup> the sole concern of this dissertation is with some of its modern theological spokesmen. F. Pieper understands such men as saying that: "the Bible is no textbook of history or geography or natural science and for that reason inspiration could not pertain to the historical, geographical, and scientific data."<sup>5</sup> How some of these men do deal with our subject shall be demonstrated below. Most characteristic of "The Rationalistic View" of the Bible's teaching on the origin and fate of the universe is this: the writers of the Bible were pre-scientific men living in ages with totally different

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<sup>2</sup>Robert D. Preus, The Theology Of Post-Reformation Lutheranism, Vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), pp. 85-86.

<sup>3</sup>Francis Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, Vol. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), p. 220.

<sup>4</sup>Bengt Hägglund, History Of Theology, trans. by Gene J. Lund (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 336

<sup>5</sup>Pieper, p. 220.

concepts of the universe than that one we presently know to be true. Therefore, what they said about the origin and end of the universe must be interpreted in light of their backgrounds and cannot be normative for our thinking today.

Having said all of the above by way of introduction, let us now proceed to consider representatives of both the "Biblical" and "Rationalistic" views of the universe for the purpose of understanding how such widely divergent and contradictory points of view come to grips with the Bible's teaching concerning "The Preservation and Restoration of Creation With A Special Reference To Rom. 8:18-23,"

#### The Biblical View

In the second section of this present chapter we shall consult men who have views radically different from "The Biblical View" now presented. Already in this dissertation, however, we have considered many men holding to the traditional, Biblical eschatology. Men like the writers of the Lutheran Confessions, Martin Luther, Johan Brenz, Philipp Nicolai, Irenaeus, Augustine, Bede, and John Calvin. Therefore, our present intent is to introduce the opinions of much more recent scholars, theologians who, although living in the modern age, still hold "The Biblical View" with conviction and competence. Since their views are basically similar -- all being based on Scripture -- they will be dealt with together rather than a separate division for each man.

By no stretch of the imagination can the English scholar, C. H. Dodd, be correctly categorized as holding "The Biblical View" of the universe. Nonetheless, his candid evaluation of St. Paul's teaching on

Rom. 8:18-23 serves well to introduce the Apostle's doctrine on the Restoration of the physical universe. He says:

If we are to state in prosaic terms of metaphysics what Paul thought would happen, we must say that he shared . . . the belief that, in the Good Time Coming, the material universe would be transfigured into a substance . . . of . . . glory, thus returning to its original perfection as created by God. But Paul has made of this . . . as little as possible dependent on any particular metaphysics. What it means . . . it is impossible to say, nor can one argue about its truth.<sup>6</sup>

Dodd, here, acknowledges that St. Paul believed in, and taught, that the "Material universe would be transfigured . . . returning to its original perfection." To any scholar holding "The Biblical View" of the universe Paul's belief so expressed would be "God's Word" and, therefore, unquestioned truth about the matter. C. H. Dodd, himself honest in his evaluation of St. Paul's teaching, believed the Apostle's words in Rom. 8:18-23 to be "a truly poetical conception" not to be taken literally in today's modern world. Other theologians, however, equally gifted as the great English scholar, would disagree with him and take Paul's word "as what it really is, the word of God . . ." (1 Thess. 2:13).

Martin J. Heinecken, no Fundamentalist by any means, can say generally of Christian eschatology: "One thing is clear: we cannot hold the historic Christian faith and abandon the hope of Christ's coming again in glory . . . and to establish the new heaven and the new earth. If we did, we would . . . have to abandon all hope of a life-to-come, or . . . accept . . . alternatives . . ."<sup>7</sup> Strange as it would be for any

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<sup>6</sup>C. H. Dodd, "The Epistle Of Paul To The Romans, "The Moffatt New Testament Commentary (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932), p. 134.

<sup>7</sup>Martin J. Heinecken, Beginning And End Of The World (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 48.

professing Christian to "abandon all hope of a life-to-come" or "alternatives" it is also rather amazing how different are various interpretations of the life-to-come -- especially for man's earthly environment.

In his book on eschatology, August Althaus goes to great lengths to expound the Biblical view of the Last Things.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Paul Althaus,<sup>9</sup> almost exactly a hundred years later, expresses the very same Biblical views. Both of these men emphatically espouse the Cleansing-Restoration interpretation of the world's End. It is most significant that their close similarity of opinions -- despite the century separating them -- is due to their common loyalty to "The Biblical View" of the universe. Unlike rationalistic thinkers, their view does not change with every new shift in philosophical or scientific thinking.

Martin H. Franzmann is one of those theologians who contends that the entire Bible teaches an eternal "substantial world" for God's redeemed people. He writes:

Paul teaches us to hope for a re-creation of the world. He does so more explicitly . . . than any other writer in the New Testament. But his is not a solitary voice. The whole Bible rings with glad praise of the Creator; the incarnation of the Son of God is God's yes, in spite of all that sin has done, to His creation. He would not have sent His Son into the world if He were minded to take us out of this substantial world, as disembodied spirits, into some vague and insubstantial heaven of His own.<sup>10</sup>

To Franzmann, "the same continuity that makes the [resurrected] body of the future one with our present body connects the new unsullied world of

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<sup>8</sup> August Althaus, Die letzten Dinge (Verden: Steinhöfel'scke Buchhandlung, 1858), pp. 119.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, 1957).

<sup>10</sup> Martin H. Franzmann, "Romans," Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), p. 150.

God with the world we [now] know . . ."<sup>11</sup> Franzmann, not alone, makes a very important point here. It is a point of extreme importance. The very same connection between our future, resurrected body and our present, suffering body is exactly the same connection between the new heavens and earth and the present universe. They are inseparably connected. The fate of the one is the fate of the other. God is Creator and Redeemer of both man -- and his environment. The Swedish theologian, Anders Nygren, notes precisely the same truth:

The redemption of mankind is also to be the redemption of creation. For Paul the two go hand in hand and are inseparably united. Just as God, on the day of resurrection, will give man a body which corresponds to the new aeon of glory . . . so He will create a corresponding new cosmos . . . . So the consummation will not come by any automatic process of development . . . but the consummation will come through His own mighty action; it will concern not only individuals, but it will have cosmic meaning and cosmic dimensions.<sup>12</sup>

Nygren sees in the Scriptures what Franzmann, and many others, sees:

"There is a bond between man and creation . . . in the old aeon; and the new humanity has its counterpart in the new creation as it will be revealed when the new aeon comes . . ."<sup>13</sup> Nygren rejects the idea that the ultimate state of the universe is to be the result of any "automatic process of development." It shall come by God's "own mighty action."

Assertions such as these are based upon "The Biblical View: of the universe as opposed to the conclusions of present-day rationalism.

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Anders Nygren, Commentary On Romans, trans. by Carl C. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), p. 332.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, p. 331.

Geerhardus Vos acknowledges that the Restoration of all creation can be confused by some with Chiliastic teachings about a crass, materialistic reign of Christ on earth.<sup>14</sup> Even so, he writes of Rom. 8:21:

Because the resurrection is a revelation of sonship . . . it can be also called the "adoption of sons" (*υιοθεσία*). That not merely the bringing to light of an already existing body, but its real formation is referred to follows from the coincidence of the redemption of the body with the deliverance of the whole creation from its bondage of corruption.<sup>15</sup>

To Vos, here, the idea of our receiving real bodies on the day of resurrection is substantiated by there also being a real deliverance of "the whole creation."

There are many theologians who have taught, and continue to teach, "The Biblical View" of the universe's Cleansing and Restoration on the Last Day. Some others, equally loyal to Holy Scripture, hold to an Annihilation-Replacement interpretation of the texts. In either case, however, "The Biblical View" is not challenged, there are only differences of interpretation. This is not so with the men presented in the following section of this chapter. For reasons of their own, they have challenged -- and rejected -- the Biblical view of the universe.

#### The Rationalistic View

Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976)

Although four men shall be considered under this category, the German theologian, Rudolf Bultmann, will be dealt with first because he is eldest of the four.

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<sup>14</sup>Geerhardus Vos, The Pauline Eschatology (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 230.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid, pp. 198-99.

Even though born in 1884, Rudolf Bultmann's major theological influence on the world did not begin to take place until the 1940's. An intense and long-lasting debate was touched off in 1941 when he published a small volume entitled Neues Testament und Mythologie which was just one section of the larger work, Offenbarung und Heilsgeschehen. The extensive debate which followed involved a number of primary questions both in exegetical and systematic theology. In his Neues Testament und Mythologie, Bultmann asserted that the New Testament world-view -- including the cataclysms of the Last Days -- is totally incompatible with modern man's concept of reality. He called these New Testament elements "mythological." According to B. Hägglund: "It is clear that in Bultmann's view the mythological elements in the New Testament are not merely peripheral in nature -- they also involve the essentials of the Christian faith."<sup>16</sup> The "liberal theology" of those days tended to merely eliminate the "mythical" in order to preserve the Bible's basic moral and religious ideas. Biblical conservatives were accused of making a "sacrificium intellectus" simply because something was found written in the Bible. Some scholars began an Entmythologisierung ("demythologizing") of the New Testament message. For quite a while it became more or less theologically fashionable to do so. According to Bultmann himself, it was not necessary to excise the Bible's many myths. As he saw it, if they were interpreted in line with their original purpose -- the mythical element would fall by its own weight. Indeed, the demand for "demythologizing" was innately made by the myths themselves. They were never intended to describe external, objective facts or events. They were meant to speak to man's feeling

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<sup>16</sup>Hägglund, p. 406.

of existence -- their message was "existential." This "existential interpretation" was based upon the assumption that man, in his world, natural environment, is subject to the arbitrary powers of this world, to temporal interests, and to the things of earth which are around him. His true destiny of existence is in release from his absolute dependence upon them so that he can be free to devote himself to the future. The "kerygma" of Christ's death and resurrection offers man the possibility of altering his existence and this is realized in his decision of faith in the kerygma.

Since 1941 Rudolf Bultmann further developed his theories and methods of Bible interpretation in such works as Glauben und Verstehen and Kerygma und Mythos. He became very influential and has had many followers. Although Bultmann used traditional Christian words and terms he frequently meant something quite different by them. The "kerygma" had an historical basis only insofar as it went back to the person and message of Jesus. To Bultmann, the Kerygma's substance was independent of historical facts. The death and resurrection of Christ are significant only in the sense that they symbolize the possibility of freeing a bound human existence. To him the Crucifixion was an historical event -- but, the Resurrection was not. Many of Bultmann's own followers dissociated themselves from so extreme a view, but he himself continued to assert that the historicity of individual events recorded in the Bible were not important. Of course, this also applied to the Scriptural remarks about events of the Last Day.

More to the point of the dissertation's subject is Bultmann's view of the universe. As one theologian understood it:

By mythology, Bultmann understands the ancient cosmology which took the universe to be three-storied: a heaven above, a hell beneath, and an earth between. As for space, so for time: the New Testament speaks in simple linear images of a past, a present, and a future. Bultmann's concern was to reinterpret the biblical mythology in existentialist . . . terms, so that the faith-event in Jesus Christ is not needlessly obscured by space and time trappings of an age which is not our age.<sup>17</sup>

This is a good and well-expressed summary of Bultmann's understanding of mythology and his intentions for using his de-mythologizing. To him, the Biblical view of the universe -- and all events purported as happening to it -- is an "ancient cosmology," myths from a by-gone age. There was no Creation, in the sense that the Bible describes it, nor is there any End in the same way. He considered Nature to be a rigidly determined mechanical order. The scientific view of the universe he took to be a completely closed system of cause-and-effect laws -- which excluded any belief in God's direct intervention in the world.<sup>18</sup> The idea that God produces external, objective changes in space and time he held to be theologically objectionable. A "myth" in Bultmann's definition is any representation of divine activity as if it were an objective occurrence in the world.<sup>19</sup> The transcendent is falsely objectified when it is spoken of in the language of space and time, or imagined as a supernatural cause. Biblical "myths" are usually incorporated in a pre-scientific world-view and are, therefore, totally inadequate for modern man. For

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<sup>17</sup>Readings In Christian Thought, ed. by Hugh T. Kerr (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 330.

<sup>18</sup>Ian G. Barbour, Issues in Science and Religion (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), pp. 431-34.

<sup>19</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

the purposes of this dissertation, then, it is only natural to ask of Bultmann: Can one say that God at all acts in history or nature? His answer to this question is an existentially qualified negative. He wrote: "God as acting does not refer to an event which can be perceived by me without myself being drawn into the event as into God's action, [and] myself taking part in it as being acted upon . . ." <sup>20</sup> This reference is an example of Bultmann's ambiguous use of theological language. He does -- and does not -- deny that God "acts" upon a person. Yet, this action of God in the world is not an outward, objective thing perceptible to believer and non-believer alike. It is only when a person somehow perceives God at work is that person acted upon. Indeed, for God to act at all, man has to be "taking part"! It leaves the impression that God's "action" is dependent upon man's action. God's action in the world is reduced to an inner, subjective feeling of man rather than an independent, external, visible event in history. It is at once obvious that Bultmann's understanding of mythology rules out the traditional teaching of the Church concerning Christ's return for Judgment, the conflagration of the universe, and any real type of a new heavens and a new earth.

Bultmann's definition of eschatology -- but, not his understanding of it -- is the traditional one iterated by him in his 1955 Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He said at that time: "the 'last things' or, more accurately, of the occurrences with which our known world comes to an end. It is the doctrine of the end of the

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 68.

world, of its destruction."<sup>21</sup> Immediately following this traditional definition, however, Bultmann attempts to demonstrate how that the Bible's eschatology is but one of many ancient myths. It developed in the history of the West from "the periodicity of the course of worldly events . . . on the analogy of the annual periodicity of nature."<sup>22</sup> The "idea of the return of all things . . . grew out of oriental astronomy [and] was developed in Greek Philosophy especially by the Stoic thinkers. They evolved the doctrine of universal conflagration (*ἐκτύρωσις*) which leads the world back . . . again as a new world."<sup>23</sup> This cosmic mythology was "rationalized" by Greek science and was also "historicised."<sup>24</sup> Eventually, the unending, cyclical process of universal destruction and restoration was modified by further historicizing. "The new beginning which is to follow the end of the old world-era is understood as the beginning of a time of unending welfare."<sup>25</sup> More specifically:

A sign of this is the usage of the Greek word, *ἀποκατάστασις* (restoration). In astrological literature it refers to the periodic return of a star to its starting-point, and consequently the Stoic philosophers use the word for the return of the Cosmos at the end of a world-year to the origin from which a new world-year starts. But in the Acts of the Apostles (iii.21) and in later Christian language, following Origen, *ἀποκατάστασις* became a technical term of eschatology.<sup>26</sup>

To Bultmann, then, the concept of Restoration began as "astrological" speculation based upon the astronomical observation of a star and this

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<sup>21</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, The Presence Of Eternity (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 23.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.    <sup>23</sup>Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, pp. 24-25.    <sup>25</sup>Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

was later further devised by Stoic philosophers into a renewal of the Cosmos on a yearly basis. It was only when the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, and later Christians, seized upon the word did it come to be a "term of eschatology." So much for his evaluation of the New Testament teaching on the Restoration of the universe.

Bultmann's analysis and evaluation of the Bible's teaching concerning the final conflagration and restoration of the universe is based upon two assumptions which are: (1) that its eschatological statements are mythical and not, in any sense, objective, historical happenings; and (2) that ancient cosmological speculations pre-dating the Biblical statements are the original bases for the latter. Bultmann's assumptions in this regard make his views entirely incompatible with the Biblical view. It was in later Judaism that Bultmann feels that "cosmology was historicised by substituting the destiny of humanity for that of the world,"<sup>27</sup> "The divine judgment, which brings the old Aeon to an end, is no longer understood as an historical crisis . . . , but as a purely supernatural event, realized by a cosmic catastrophe."<sup>28</sup> He understood the eschatology of later Judaism as a combination of cosmological and historical points of view. "The old world will be replaced by a new creation, and there is no continuity between the two Aeons."<sup>29</sup> This is to say, Bultmann understood later Judaism as teaching an Annihilation-Replacement view of the world's End rather than a Cleansing-Restoration one.

Coming from the period of later Judaism into New Testament times, Bultmann said that: "both the Old Testament view of history and the apocalyptic view prevails." He attempts to clear Jesus of holding to too

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 29.    <sup>28</sup> Ibid.    <sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 30

much of the apocalyptic opinion by asserting that He "does not give any picture of the coming welfare, except to say that it is life . . . and that the dead shall be raised from death to this life . . ." <sup>30</sup> Bultmann feels confident to make such an assertion because of his historical-critical hermeneutical assumptions. To him it was only the "early Christian community" which claimed that Jesus gave any "picture of the coming welfare." He acknowledges, however, that St. Paul himself held such a "picture." <sup>31</sup> Despite this, however, Bultmann is bold to take issue with both St. Paul and the "early Christian community." He grants that the "message of the coming end of the world runs through most of the New Testament," and that "early Christian history is swallowed up in eschatology." <sup>32</sup> Yet, to him all of the Biblical statements concerning eschatology are "myths" -- pure and simple. It is precisely because of his "Rationalistic View" of the universe that Rudolf Bultmann cannot believe them in any factual, objective, historical sense. Inwardly, subjectively -- existentially -- they certainly have a message for modern man, but not outwardly, externally. For the purposes of this dissertation, then, Bultmann has little to offer. His "world-picture" is entirely different and at odds with that of the Biblical writers. His view, however, brilliantly presented, is actually a narrow, limited, presumptuous view. How can God Almighty be restricted and circumscribed by our conception of His activities? As Barbour says of Bultmann's type of existentialism:

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p. 32.      <sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pp. 34 and 37 respectively.

"It is one thing to say that God is not known apart from personal involvement; it is another matter to say he does not act except in the sphere of selfhood."<sup>33</sup>

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

The Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, was only two years younger than Rudolf Bultmann, but made his major theological impact upon the world many years earlier. Whereas Bultmann's claim to fame came only after 1941, Karl Barth became more and more widely known ever since his celebrated Der Römerbrief of 1919. As the years passed, he became a theological giant in many ways. He is described by one scholar as "the theologians' theologian of the twentieth century." Continuing:

Although he has addressed himself to a great diversity of topics from communism to Mozart, Barth's consuming passion for more than thirty years has gone into the dozen big volumes, totalling some 7,500 pages, of his Church Dogmatics . . . the only comparison for his . . . opus is Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica in the Middle Ages. A theology in the grand manner, its sprawling contents covers the spectrum of doctrinal discussion . . .<sup>34</sup>

Karl Barth's Der Römerbrief was a forceful and unexpected revolt against the Liberal Protestant theology of his day. He renounced the subjective interrogation of man's religious consciousness as the proper theological method of discovering truth. To Barth, the truth was not to be found in man's subjective awareness because man is a fallen creature -- and the truth is not in him. Theological truth must be the truth which man does not possess in himself; it comes to him from beyond or "above" himself -- from God in Christ.

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<sup>33</sup>Barbour, p. 434. Underscoring mine.

<sup>34</sup>Readings In Christian Thought, p. 291.

Beginning in 1932, Barth's Die Kirchliche Dogmatik progressively expounded his views on the Word of God, God, Creation, Reconciliation, and Redemption. Although he came to prefer his teaching being called "evangelical theology," it was also called a theology of "crisis," "neo-orthodoxy," and dialectical theology." Barth always wanted his theology distinguished from that of his predecessors and alienated both liberals and conservatives by insisting, on the one hand, that the Bible is authoritative in its own right regardless of man's understanding of it, and, on the other hand, that the Word of God must not be simply identified with the written words of Scripture. His main point was that Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh. Although Barth's style of writing is ponderous, highly technical, has irritatingly long paragraphs, many detours into the byways of theological history, private feuds with former friends, and is very opinionated on political events -- it is also governed throughout by this all-important theological norm.

One might wonder how such a man as Karl Barth can rightly be classified in the same category as Rudolf Bultmann? Placing the two men under the heading of those who hold "The Rationalistic View" of the universe is not meant to disparage the many positive contributions of either man -- especially those of Karl Barth. It is because of the topic of this dissertation alone that Karl Barth -- along with Rudolf Bultmann -- is said to fall under this present category for he, too, held "The Rationalistic View" -- although his view is neither so obvious nor explicit as that of Bultmann.

It is primarily to Barth's Der Römerbrief that we now turn since our topic has a special reference to a passage in that Epistle. Ponderous

and long as his style of writing might be, some of his passages are powerful and moving. When commenting on Rom. 8:18-23, however, Barth never even alludes to an historic Fall of man and nature although he certainly believed that man is a "fallen" creature. Again, where one might expect an exposition of the physical renewal of the earth -- that, too, is lacking. An occasional remark might tantalize, but not satisfy. For example, he does speak of "Veränderung der Welt und Menschheit durch das Himmelreich,"<sup>35</sup> but he does not go on to spell out what he means. Barth is correct, of course, when he says that a passage such as ours', in Romans 8, is comprehensible only from God's point of view.<sup>36</sup> He everywhere assumes that the modern, scientific view of the earth's history is the correct one and that is undoubtedly why he avoids making any positive statements about either the historic Fall or eschatological Restoration. In this sense, then, Barth holds "The Rationalistic View" of the universe rather than the traditional, Biblical view. Despite an inadequate answer, however, for either the historical origin of a fallen creation or its ultimate, historical goal, Barth does teach that all of creation -- including the invisible world -- presently suffers with men. Why this is so he answers in this way: "Das ist's ja, das Geheimnis des Leidens und seine Offenbarung, dass Gott Gott sein will und ist, und dass er in diesem seinen Willen und Sein von uns erkannt und geliebt werden muss."<sup>37</sup> As powerfully as Barth here states his understanding of the cause of

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<sup>35</sup>Karl Barth, "Die Lehre Von Der Versöhnung," Part 3, First Half of Die Kirchliche Dogmatik (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag Ag., 1959), p. 348.

<sup>36</sup>Karl Barth, Der Römerbrief (Zürich: Evz-Verlag, 1940), p. 287.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid, p. 290.

suffering -- it is not the Biblical teaching. It is almost as if men were to blame God for the present condition of things. Can it be true that the "secret of suffering" is that "God will be God" and that in suffering we are to know and love Him? There seems to be a taint of Stoicism here. One wonders why the great Swiss theologian did not at least refer to Genesis 3 or Rom. 8:20 when expounding on the origins of suffering? It seems that Barth did not because his "world-view" did not allow it. To Karl Barth, men and creatures are "controlled" (gestellt ist) by suffering. The closest he comes to advocating an historic Fall is when he says of Rom. 8:20:

die Leerheit des Kosmos in ihrem Ursprung, als der unschauliche Abfall des Geschöpfes von Schöpfer begriffen wird, dort ist auch Hoffnung, Hoffnung auf die durch Kreuz und Auferstehung des Christus wieder hergestellte unanschaulich Einheit von Schöpfer und Geschöpf. Die Erkenntnis der lückenlosen Knechtschaft ist auch die Erkenntnis der Freiheit.<sup>38</sup>

Barth, here, alludes to a Fall, but one is left to speculate whether he himself believes it to have been an historical thing or whether he is merely speaking in terms of the text itself? He is perfectly correct, of course, in seeing the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and ultimate hope for any "Einheit von Schöpfer und Geschöpf." He also teaches clearly that there is an inseparable connection between redeemed man and a redeemed world. He said: "Denn eine gesegnete Welt, die Welt der Schöpfung und ihres Lebens ist ja das Erbe, das mir, dem Kinde Gottes verheissen ist. Ist der Mensch frei, dann ist auch die Welt frei."<sup>39</sup> Such a statement as this is very encouraging. Does Barth mean it materially for the world -- as he means it physically for the bodies of men? He doesn't say.

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<sup>38</sup>Ibid, p. 293.    <sup>39</sup>Ibid.

To Karl Barth, God is supreme over the whole of history and Nature. To such an extent is God an active Participant in nature and history. that an isolated passage of his could almost suggest a type of pantheism. We read: "die Schöpfer in der Schöpfung, Gott im Kosmos. Wird er dort nicht gefunden, so wird er gar nicht gefunden . . ." <sup>40</sup> Certainly, Karl Barth was no pantheist, but some of his remarks do lead one to question whether he conceived of God operating in a "closed universe."

Barth strongly emphasizes God as the sovereign ruler of the created order and cautions against any use of philosophical or scientific categories to explicate God's operations in the world. To him, God "rules unconditionally and irresistibly in all occurrences." <sup>41</sup> He is quite Calvinistic in his insistence upon the teaching of Predestination. He limits the so-called "natural laws." They are an ordering within man's mind rather than being external forces in the world, God's ordination always takes precedence over any natural law since the latter has only a limited sphere of applicability. Miracles are real and are evidences of God's absolute freedom to act in the world. Despite all the positive beliefs held by Karl Barth concerning God's supernatural activity in His creation, however, he draws a very sharp line between creation and redemption, between nature and grace. For him, creation is preparatory, impersonal, and inert; merely "the theatre of the great acts of God . . . . The theatre obviously cannot be the subject of the

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid, pp. 292-93.

<sup>41</sup>Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, Vol. 3, Part 3 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1958), p. 148.

work enacted in it. It can only make it externally possible."<sup>42</sup> Therefore, as significant as Nature is, it does not directly participate in God's redemption.

Concerning the subject of this dissertation, Karl Barth is a refreshing and encouraging voice in modern-day theology. In almost every way he stands in sharp contrast to the extremely rationalistic views of Rudolf Bultmann. Even so, however, when it comes to unequivocal and unambiguous support for the Bible's teaching on Creation, the Fall, and the ultimate Restoration of Creation, even Barth offers little. As comparatively mild as he represents it, he, too, is one of those holding "The Rationalistic View" of the universe.

#### Emil Brunner (1889-1966)

Like Karl Barth, Emil Brunner was also a Swiss, and only three years younger than Barth. For most of his life Brunner lived, taught, and published in his native Zürich even though he also traveled extensively in America, Scotland, and Japan. Besides being a contemporary, he was also an early associate of Karl Barth in the so-called "crisis," "neo-orthodox," or "dialectical" theology. Despite Barth's towering stature in the theological world, Brunner's voice was often heard more clearly, especially in America, because translations of his works were quicker in coming due to the lucid and eloquent style of his writing. Not only popular in his own native area of Europe, Brunner became well-known in the English speaking world as just a partial list of his many books translated into that language amply testifies: The Mediator

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid, p. 48.

(1927), The Divine Imperative (1932), Man in Revolt (1937), and Revelation and Reason (1941). In 1946 the first of his three-volume set on Dogmatics appeared, followed in 1950 by the second volume, and in 1960 by the third. These volumes treated the doctrines of revelation, God and the Trinity, creation, man, the work and person of Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church, and eschatology. Despite the traditional sounding titles and structure of his presentation, however, there was nothing conventional about Brunner's theology. Although not so well known as some of his other books, Wahrheit als Begegnung (1938) really expresses his basic theological perspective.

Although having many "neo-orthodox" traits in common, Emil Brunner's Natur und Gnade of 1934 led to a controversy with Karl Barth which resulted in a parting of their ways. Brunner asserted that there must be a point of contact in natural man for the proclaimed Word if man is to be influenced thereby, whereas Barth responded with a categorical no. In some other, characteristic, "dialectical" stances, however, both Brunner and Barth held similar presuppositions. Scripture says nothing authoritative about scientific matters. The "scientific" ideas held by Biblical writers were the erroneous speculations of ancient times. Such ideas were to be taken seriously, but not literally. Brunner did regard the authority of science much more highly than did Barth, however. Brunner believed that sinful distortions to truth in the field of science were minimal whereas this was not so in other fields of knowledge.<sup>43</sup> Brunner's emphasis on a personal encounter between God and man made him

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<sup>43</sup> Emil Brunner, Revelation and Reason (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), pp. 368-81.

fear lest allegedly objective facts in the Bible detract from such an encounter. "The transfer of faith from the dimension of personal encounter into the dimension of factual instruction," said Brunner, "is the great tragedy in the history of Christianity."<sup>44</sup> Although with different emphases, both Brunner and Barth held that the opening chapters of Genesis were not real history, but a symbolic expression of religious truths. To them, the doctrine of creation had nothing to do with temporal origins -- nor eschatology with a temporal End. To Brunner, the doctrine of creation was not an hypothesis about origins, but one form of the basic affirmation that God is sovereign Lord.<sup>45</sup> It is similar with his opinion regarding the doctrine of eschatology.

Emil Brunner was not nearly so guarded in his renunciation of the Biblical view of the material universe as was Barth. He comes right out and says: "Von einer 'gefallenen Welt' weiss die Bible nichts!"<sup>46</sup> The only thing which emboldened him to make such an assertion was his (common "neo-orthodox") historical-critical hermeneutic. Any Biblical statement which contradicts his own position is preemptorily dealt with. The footnote to his assertion immediately above treats of Rom. 8:20-21. He says: "Die einzige Stelle, auf die sich diese Anschauung allenfalls berufen könnte, is Röm. 8:20f. Sie ist dunkel und ihre Auslegung

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<sup>44</sup>Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of God (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950), p. 54.

<sup>45</sup>Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952), pp. 1-26.

<sup>46</sup>Emil Brunner, Die Christliche Lehre Von Schöpfung Und Erlösung, Vol. 2 (Zurich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1950), p. 149.

kontrovers. Von einer 'gefallenen Welt' spricht sie auf keinen Fall."<sup>47</sup>  
 To Brunner, then, Rom. 8:20-21 is "dark" and controversial. One might suspect that it is "dunkel" to him because of his totally alien world-picture.

When renouncing the Biblical teaching of an historic Fall and when disparaging the teaching of Rom. 8:20-23 -- Brunner contradicts himself. In his Der Römerbrief he admits that St. Paul had the historic Fall in mind when he penned Romans, chapter five.<sup>48</sup> Then, in flagrant contradiction of himself, he later expresses doubt as to whether Paul still had it in mind when he wrote the eighth chapter of that same Epistle!<sup>49</sup> He also asserts that Paul's reference to "Schöpfung . . . meistens die Menschheit bezeichnet, und dass gerade Paulus von der Naturwelt sonst nirgends spricht."<sup>50</sup> By this Brunner means that the whole of "creation" refers only to men -- and not to any of God's other creatures. One wonders how Brunner could possibly deny that "Paulus von der Naturwelt . . . nirgends spricht" when it is precisely in this passage that he is so speaking! Brunner's rationalism is obvious when he says that modern man's knowledge surpasses that of Biblical revelation. Referring to "Das Leiden in der untermenschlichen Kreatur" of Rom. 8: 18-20, Brunner wrote:

ist eine Tatsache, die man schwer übersehen kann, und es ist für uns ein grosses Rätsel. Dass dieses Leiden durch etwas, was an und durch Menschen geschehen ist, bedingt sein soll, ist uns heute ein

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Emil Brunner, Der Römerbrief (Stuttgart: T. G. Oncken Verlag, 1958), pp. 61-62.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 62.      <sup>50</sup> Ibid.

schwer vollziehbarer Bedanke geworden, da wir heute ja mit Bestimmtheit von einer Naturgeschichte wissen, die der Menschgeschichte um Hunderte oder Tausende von Jahrtausenden vorausgeht, einer Naturgeschichte mit demselben grausamen Kampf ums Dasein und furchtbaren Katastrophen, wie sie uns in der heutigen Natur bekannt sind. Wir kommen hier an eine Grenze nicht nur unseres eigenen Erkennens, sondern auch der biblischen Belehrung.<sup>51</sup>

To Brunner, then, the teaching of Rom. 8:18-20 is "ein grosses Rätsel." How Nature could possibly suffer because of "etwas, was an und durch Menschen geschehen ist" is unimaginable. Why is it so difficult for Brunner? Why is this teaching of Scripture such a dark puzzle? Simply because his "Rationalistic View" of the universe and its history will not allow it to be understood in any literal sense. To Brunner, the world of today is the world that has always been -- there could be no other. The same "Kampf ums Dasein und furchtbaren Katastrophen" of today have always been -- and shall always be. Why? Because of the unquestionable teaching of "Naturgeschichte" and "Menschgeschichte." These -- not the Bible -- are unchallengeable. Therefore, for Emil Brunner, in the doctrine of Rom. 8:18-20: "Wir kommen . . . an eine Grenze . . . der biblischen Belehrung." It is a teaching which his own world-picture demands that he challenge and reject. On the other hand, it seems as if Brunner yearned for something more, and felt obliged to propose at least the possibility of some kind of real Hereafter. Although rejecting "a final cosmic catastrophe,"<sup>52</sup> he holds out for a glorious Consummation. We read:

That alongside of God there exists a world of creatures -- this is no error that must disappear at the Consummation. But what kind of

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Emil Brunner "The Christian Doctrine of the Church, Faith and the Consummation," Dogmatics, Vol. 3, trans. by David Cairns (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 427.

"world" this will be -- on this point even the revelation in Christ does not authorize us to make any definite statement. We must at least describe as questionable the pictures of a perfect world very like the earthly world . . . . There remains, as a limiting concept, this: that there belongs inalienably to human existence an environment without which the creature as such is not thinkable. In this sense the words about "a new heaven and a new earth" have validity . . .<sup>53</sup>

No "perfect world," only "an environment without which the creature . . . is not thinkable." Unable to make "any definite statement," we are left with Brunner's "limiting concept." It is as if Rom. 8:18-23 had not been intended by God to reveal anything at all. Thus, the outcome of Brunner's "Rationalistic View."

Jürgen Moltmann (1926- )

Jürgen Moltmann has been called one of the young scholars promoting a "Theology of Hope." His emphasis on "eschatology" for the whole of theology, and his emphasis on its fundamental importance, at once attracts attention to his theology. In fact, however, what Moltmann means by "eschatology" is far from the Church's historic teaching concerning the Last Day. The reason for this, as with all the other representatives of "The Rationalistic View," is that his worldpicture is entirely different from that of the Bible writers. His alien view is perceptible, not so much by what he says, as by what he does not say. He is most similar in this respect to Karl Barth. He uses Biblically traditional words and terms, but no where gets very specific about what he means by them. As one reads and reads, the awareness grows that Moltmann means something quite different about eschatology than what the Bible writers meant. Referring to the return of Christ in glory, the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 439.

Judgment, the Consummation of the Kingdom, the general resurrection, and the "neue Schöpfung aller Dinge," for example, he writes:

Diese Endereignisse sollten von einem Jenseits der Geschichte ins Diesseits hereinbrechen und die Geschichte, in der sich hier alles regt und bewegt, beenden. Indem man aber diese Ereignisse auf den "jüngsten Tag" vertagte, verloren sie ihre weisende, aufrichtende und kritische Bedeutung für alle jene Tage, die man hier, diesseits des Endes, in der Geschichte zubrachte.<sup>54</sup>

The most outstanding characteristic of these words is that they say so very little -- specifically -- of what the "jüngsten Tag" or "Endereignisse" is to be. Taken in a general way, the words are not offensive to traditional Christian eschatological doctrine, but, in actuality, one might suspect that Moltmann means by the "jüngsten Tag" something much different than the writers of the Bible had in mind. Exactly, what is the "Jenseits der Geschichte" which is "hereinbrechen?" How is it "hereinbrechen?" According to the Bible's teaching -- or otherwise? If otherwise, by what means? Moltmann declines to say -- at least explicitly.

Certainly, one can regret, with Moltmann, that at times in Church History that: "So führten diese [eschatological] Lehren vom Ende ein eigentümlich steriles Dasein am Ende der christlichen Dogmatik."<sup>55</sup> Yet, it is seriously open to question whether Moltmann's own "eschatology" offers any constructive correction? Reading page after page of any of his books, one searches in vain for anything even remotely resembling "The Biblical View" of the Last Things. Much of the same terminology is

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<sup>54</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, Theologie Der Hoffnung (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1966), p. 11.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

sometimes there -- but, not the content. It seems, rather, that his "eschatological" emphasis amounts to no more than a "hope-full" man-centered activism. Man is to be aware of what God is "doing" in the world, break the shackles of present bondage, and work towards a glorious future. Something like this is bringing in the "End-event." A contemporary of Moltmann critiques his theology in this way: "Jürgen Moltmann . . . substitutes spero ut intellegam and spes quaerens intellectum for the faith principle of Augustine and Anselm, warns us that we cannot have God 'in us or over us but always only before us' . . . and draws out the revolutionary implications of such unqualifiedly futuristic thinking . . ."<sup>56</sup>

Jürgen Moltmann is very selective in his use of Scripture, places little emphasis on the Cross, and avoids John's Gospel almost entirely.<sup>57</sup> In his opinion, man is to be critically dominant over God's Biblical revelation. He denies that his views are "Versuchen der Selbsterlösung oder der Selbstproduktion durch Arbeit,"<sup>58</sup> but it certainly seems that they are. He likes to speak of "Gottes Zukunft"<sup>59</sup> and "der kommenden Welt Gottes,"<sup>60</sup> but he studiously avoids spelling these out in any explicit way. The fact remains that the world-picture of Jürgen Moltmann is the picture of Rationalism. His world-view does not permit the traditional eschatological teachings of the Church to be taken seriously -- much less literally. It cannot be otherwise if one rejects any historical,

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<sup>56</sup> John Warwick Montgomery, The Suicide of Christian Theology (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1970), pp. 7-8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 223. <sup>58</sup> Moltmann, p. 312.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. <sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 275.

objective divine intervention from the "Jenseits" into the "Diesseits."  
For all his talking about "eschatology," all Moltmann has done is substitute the reforming efforts of man for the divine Restoration of God.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROMANS 8:18-23 AND SUPPORTING PASSAGES

#### Romans 8:18-23

If any passage in the Bible may be called the "sedes doctrinae" of the Restoration theology it is this one. It is neither peripheral to nor an exotic extra of God's revelation to us. R. H. C. Lenski sees this passage as "the final result of justification by faith as it is depicted by Paul. This is the great consolation section of Romans."<sup>1</sup> The almost limitless scope and prodigious sweep of this passage makes the sensitive exegete wonder in amazement whether all which seems to be said -- is really meant literally. Could it be true that all of Creation is to share in God's promised redemption? All of Creation? Not only God's human creatures -- but, also animals, plants, and inanimate matter? Is the "all" to be understood according to its primary sense? Or might we push the meaning of "all" too far in our interpretation? Perhaps, only human beings are included in God's redeeming purposes -- and the vast remainder of His Creation shall be obliterated? It is precisely people holding "The Biblical View" of the universe who have the biggest problem with this passage. Those with "The Rationalistic View" can easily dismiss its all-encompassing primary sense as being merely the undisciplined

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<sup>1</sup>R. H. C. Lenski, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 528.

speculations of a pre-scientific age. The truly Biblical exegete, however, must take each word seriously and honestly seek to know what the writer of the passage meant when he wrote it. This, then, is the Word of God!

The writer of this dissertation has discovered during the period of his research that many scholars -- past and present -- freely admit, regardless of their own personal opinion on the matter, that St. Paul believed in a future Cosmic Restoration. The modern theologian, John Knox, for example, wrote:

Paul is reflecting . . . here not upon how certain the future glory is, but upon how great it will be, so that it is better to understand him to be saying: "We do not grasp how great this glory will be until we recognize that the whole cosmic order -- all things animate and inanimate -- are waiting for it with eager longing."<sup>2</sup>

This from a "liberal" theologian. From a "conservative" one:

It presents a world view that is at once so lofty and so profound as to leave behind all non-scriptural conceptions. The whole creature world is made to depend on what God does with his children. Going back to the fall of Adam which plunged the creature world into vanity and corruption, the Christian hope is made nothing less than the fulfillment of the expectation of even this creature world.<sup>3</sup>

Both the interpretation of a "liberal" and a "conservative" theologian have been presented here to demonstrate that, if the very words of our passage are taken in the primary, literal sense, there is but one valid interpretation of Rom. 8:18-23 and that being this: God intends to redeem and restore all of His material Creation on the Last Day.

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<sup>2</sup>John Knox, "Romans," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 9 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 520.

<sup>3</sup>Lenski, p. 528.

## Exegesis

Verse 18

St. Paul was sharply contrasting "sufferings" (παθήματα) and "glory" (δόξαν) when he wrote: "For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us." Paul acknowledges what all men know by experience, that there are many "sufferings" in "this present time." This is sharply contrasted, however, with "the glory that is to be revealed to us." So great is this coming, future "glory" that the present sufferings are not worth comparing with it. This coming glory, however, must be revealed (ἀποκαλυφθῆναι) to us. It is not something we can seek after or discover on our own. It is not presently seen. It comes only in the future and it comes only by God's revealing it to us. Certainly Paul meant by this what he elsewhere spells out very clearly. The revelation of glory comes when Christ Himself comes -- on the Last Day (1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Cor. 15:51-58).

Every word in our present passage must be considered carefully because they all have great significance. This is true of even the smallest word. Four times the little word γάρ ("for") is used and each time it clarifies what is in the mind of the Apostle. In our verse 18 this is so. Commenting on this "for" Lenski says:

"For" = in order that you may understand the better what has just been said about our suffering together with Christ and our also being glorified together with him [verses 16 and 17]. All of this will become clearer when we view ourselves in the midst of the entire suffering creature world which longs for our glorification at the last day.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 529.

This little "for" connects our passage with what has been said before. In essence, what was said before was this: Being led by the Spirit of God, we are God's children. If we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with Him. To better understand this suffering/to-be-glorified relationship, as Lenski put it, it helps "when we view ourselves in the midst of the entire suffering creature world" which itself "longs for our glorification at the last day." This is to say, our entire passage is meant to comfort and encourage us in the midst of "the sufferings of this present time." Rather, then, of being a peripheral, exotic extra of the Gospel message -- it is an integral part of that message. It helps to know that we aren't suffering alone -- or even that human-kind as a whole isn't alone in sufferings. Behold! The entire creation is groaning along with us. Our fate is their fate -- our hope is its hope.

#### Verse 19

Already we have gotten into verse 19 for the profundity of one verse quickly penetrates the next. Again, another *γάρ* : "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God." The subject of this verse is "the creation" (τῆς κτίσεως ). It is crucial here to determine exactly what St. Paul meant by "the creation." As we have seen earlier, Emil Brunner believed that human beings alone were meant by it.<sup>5</sup> He would exclude all other creatures. It is extremely difficult to see how Brunner could come to such an opinion. In Kittel's Wörterbuch, Werner Foerster defines κτίσις as all that which on man's account (including man himself) was subjected to

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<sup>5</sup>Supra, p. 128.

vanity. Speaking of the "new creation," he sees it as the totality of this creation. The goal of the New Creation is the refashioning of both man and the world, which will not come until Christ reveals Himself.<sup>6</sup> It would seem, then, that St. Paul certainly meant all which God had made when he spoke of "the creation."

R. C. H. Lenski is even more specific when he deals with the word **κτίσις**. He sees it as "a term . . . denoting action . . . but here it is concrete: . . . the creature world. This abstract term used concretely is comprehensive: all creation . . . . Here the context limits "the creation" to the irrational world of creatures, excluding angels, godly men, and also ungodly men."<sup>7</sup> Lenski, then, believes that **κτίσις** used in our passage refers only to "the irrational world of creatures, excluding angels . . . and . . . men." This is the exact opposite of what the Lutheran dogmatician, John Gerhard, began to teach around 1600.<sup>8</sup> The idea connected with "the creation" is that all of God's inferior creation was bound to man from the very beginning. When men fell -- it, too, fell. There remains Good News for "the irrational world of creatures," however. Their ultimate destiny is bound up -- not with the ungodly who will perish -- but, with the godly and their coming revelation of glory. This is why they "eagerly" wait with "anxious longing."

The translation of **ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαταδοχία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται** is not an easy one. It is awkward because the Greek words contain so much. Lenski gives his own

<sup>6</sup>Werner Foerster, "**κτίσις, κτίσις, κτίσις, κτίσις**," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament by Gerhard Kittel, Vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Verlag Von W. Kohlhammer, 1938), pp. 1027-34.

<sup>7</sup>Lenski, p. 532.    <sup>8</sup>Supra, p. 45.

translation as: "For the creation's watching with outstretched head is waiting it out for the revelation of the sons of God."<sup>9</sup> Three terms are compounded with ἀπό in one short sentence. Ἀπό plus χάρα (head) plus δοκέω (in Ionian 'to watch') means that some one is watching with head stretched away from (ἀπό) the body like one leaning far out to get the first glimpse of something coming into sight. Then ἀπό plus ἔκ plus δέομαι, the second preposition making the verb mean "to wait it out," according to Thayer.<sup>10</sup> The composite idea is this: The "irrational world of creatures" so longs for the Day when Christ comes to free them -- along with redeemed men -- that they anxiously and eagerly look forward to it like some one leaning far out a window with outstretched neck in order to catch the first glimpse of that for which they long. But, what is "creation" looking for?

The event for which creation is eagerly awaiting is "the revealing of the sons of God." This revealing is that revealing already mentioned: "the glory that is to be revealed to us." It is the glory to be revealed when Christ comes again. At that time τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ will be openly shown to all whereas now, even though we are presently the children of God through faith in Him, "it has not appeared as yet what we shall be" (1 John 3:2). In the total context of St. Paul's writings it is obvious that the resurrection of our bodies is meant. He writes in Philippians 3:20-21: "the Lord Jesus Christ . . . will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory . . ." The anxious longing of all creation, then, is for the glorious resurrection from the dead of all God's children when Christ comes

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<sup>9</sup>Lenski, p. 531.    <sup>10</sup>Ibid.

again. Lenski feels that "sons" of God here is more appropriate than "children" of God (τέκνα θεοῦ) in verse 16 because "'sons' more clearly shows our distinction as compared with the creature world -- sons, not slaves; sons for whose service the creation was made."<sup>11</sup>

A question naturally rises to our minds when trying to understand how even the inanimate creature world can possibly "long" or eagerly "wait" for anything, much less such a thing as the resurrection of the dead which requires "faith." One need not go so far as Karl Heim<sup>12</sup> when trying to understand it. For an exegete holding to "The Biblical View," Lenski's attitude is probably best: "Who told the creation about the sons of God and about this hope of theirs? Some minds find only poetical imagination in Paul's words. Some use the word 'mystical,' but this word is inexact . . . . 'Mysterious' -- yes; but that means only that our minds do not fully penetrate the fact."<sup>13</sup>

### Verse 20

Verse 20 opens with another very significant *γὰρ*: "For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope . . ." This *γὰρ*, of course, refers us back to what was said in verse 19. Verse 20, following the *γὰρ*, explains why creation is longing and anxiously awaiting the "revealing of the sons of God." It is because it was "subjected to futility." This subjection to

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid, p. 533.

<sup>12</sup>Karl Heim, Christian Faith and Natural Science, First Harper Torchbook Edition (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957), pp. 86-92.

<sup>13</sup>Lenski.

futility alludes to Gen. 3:17-19 when "the ground" was "cursed" because of Adam's sin. Inanimate nature was cursed -- not because of anything which it had done ("not of its own will") -- but, because of human willful disobedience. The "curse" came from the Creator Himself -- "because of Him who subjected it . . ." As Lenski puts it:

The creation was made subject to vainness "not willingly," not by an act of its own will, it was not like Adam who willed to sin against God. Man is evil because of his own guilt, the creatures have no guilt. Man suffers justly, the creatures unjustly. Our restoration is pure grace, that of the creature world is simple justice. Its subjection to vainness and failure was "because of him who made it subject," because of God who so arranged and ordered it when man fell from God. This was not an arbitrary act on the part of God but was due to the original connection of the creature world with man. It was made with the purpose that he should live in it and be served by it. When man became sinful and perverted, how could he remain in a perfect creature world, how could it fulfill God's original purpose toward him? God might have removed man, but then what about all this creation made for him? Then it, too, would be purposeless. But God intended to extend grace to man, to give him time to repent, to be restored; so he subjected the creation to vainness and let man continue, and the whole creation ever reminds him of his sin and his guilt.<sup>14</sup>

Lest Lenski seem an unusual and lonely scholar on this subject, it is good to remember that Martin Luther said exactly the same thing about Nature's connection to man and his sin. Indeed, Luther was far less restrained about it!<sup>15</sup>

Verse 20 cannot be fully understood in itself, it has to be interpreted in relation to the verse which precedes it and in relation to the two verses which follow it.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 534-35.

<sup>15</sup> Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, 45 Band (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1911), p. 230-43.

Verse 21

Verse 21 is actually the second half of the long sentence which began as verse 20. Lenski gives his own translation of these two verses as the one sentence which they are: "For to vainness the creation was made subject, not of its own will, but because of him who made it subject, on the basis of hope that also the creation itself shall be liberated from the slavery of the corruption for the liberty of the glory of the children of God."<sup>16</sup> This is to say that when God "cursed" the earth because of man's sin -- He gave it the "hope" of being freed from the curse when man himself was freed from corruption. In other words, the fate of the one is the fate of the other. The "hope" given to His "unjustly" subjected creation was that it, too, "will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." And why should it not share this glory? The same divine "good" pronounced upon the Creator's human creatures was also pronounced upon it (Genesis 1).

Martin Luther himself clearly taught that an innocent earth had suffered a great misfortune because of man's sin -- and would be gloriously liberated on the Last Day.<sup>17</sup> Even Knox acknowledges that this is certainly what Paul had in mind when he penned the passage now being considered.<sup>18</sup> Just what the creation is to be freed from, however, is a very important question.

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<sup>16</sup>Lenski, p. 533.

<sup>17</sup>Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Band 42 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1911), p. 1210-27.

<sup>18</sup>Knox, pp. 518-19.

Creation is to be freed (ἐλευθερωθήσεται) from τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς. This "slavery to corruption" was earlier (in verse 20) called a subjection "to futility" (ματαιότητι). Lenski comments that:

A calamity came upon the whole earthly creature when its crown and head, Adam, fell; then the creation was made subject to vainness . . . . The creation was subject to man before the fall but not subject "to vainness." It was subject to man for true effectiveness, to accomplish the purpose for which God had created it. This noun is derived from μάταιος, "vain" in the sense of failure to reach the proper end, to accomplish the intended purpose; it is distinct from κενός, "vain" as having no inner content, "empty" in itself. The creature world was compelled to fail in its divinely intended purpose of glorifying God by serving man in a perfect way.<sup>19</sup>

In the English translation of his Luthers geistige Welt (1947), Heinrich Bornkamm said of the great Reformer:

nature is also subject to the fate that oppresses the whole world . . . according to the words of St. Paul (which never lost their mysterious sound for Luther), the vanity to which the creature remains subdued is the sin-laden human race, which nature must serve unwillingly. Luther paints a vivid picture of nature's repeated attempts to shake off this accursed dominion, by means of hail and floods, sickness and earthquakes. He declared that sun and moon would rather surrender their light than be forced to illuminate robbery and other shame. Weeds and vermin, sickness and the debility of the aged still betoken something of the curse sin has cast on the world.<sup>20</sup>

The words of St. Paul "never lost their mysterious sound for Luther" -- especially the words of our presently being considered passage. However much Luther was given to exaggerate and personify the elements of nature in their struggle with sinful man, his basic point is clear: man and nature are no longer harmoniously related. Nature, which was meant to serve him, now sometimes causes him harm. This was not meant to be -- and someday it shall no longer be. For that Day both believing man -- and Nature -- longs.

<sup>19</sup>Lenski, pp. 533-34.

<sup>20</sup>Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World Of Thought, trans. by Martin H. Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 191.

Lenski well expresses the "futility" and "slavery to corruption" under which the creation is presently struggling. It cannot do what it was intended and designed by the Creator to do. He writes:

The world is full of sinners, full of ungodliness; God's wrath is revealed against it (1:18-32). How can the creatures who were made for man serve him in the way in which God intended when he made them for man? They are abused at every turn for "vainness." The purposes and objects for which they are used are failures, utter failures. Man eats the fruits of the earth and dies; that is not what these fruits were made for. Man uses the animals, and his life ends by perishing; that was not God's intent. This "vainness" has entered the creatures themselves so that they even help to hurt and destroy man. In countless ways all is against him: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life," Gen. 3:17.<sup>21</sup>

The revealed thought of verses 20 and 21 explains many things through the eyes of faith. Why is it that Nature seems to sometimes work against us rather than for us? Why is it that some microscopic creatures -- themselves attempting to survive -- hurt or even destroy our bodies? Search as we might, no Paradise is to be found on today's earth where one can survive comfortably without taking means to protect one's self from Nature's "futility." All this, according to Lenski, because "the whole creation ever reminds [man] of his sin and his guilt."<sup>22</sup>

The total sentence of verses 20 and 21 ends with Good News, however! "Freedom of the glory of the children of God." A freedom for all of God's originally good creation. Freedom for both redeemed man -- and his God-given earthly environment.

If God had subjected His creation to futility without "hope," then, it would be perfectly logical that no restoration would be coming to it. Just the opposite is true, however. The creation was subjected

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<sup>21</sup>Lenski, p. 534.    <sup>22</sup>Supra, p. 141.

ἐφ' ἐλπίδι ("in hope"). This hope is clearly specified by the δότι

which begins verse 21. As Lenski puts it:

"that (ὅτι, not "because," A.V.) also the creation itself shall be liberated from the slavery of the corruption for the liberty of the glory of the children of God." The liberty of these children shall include also the creation made for them. The original intent of God when he created a perfect creature world for perfect man shall be carried out in spite of man's fall. God's creation is not a grand failure. Great was the destruction, greater is grace and the restoration . . . . "Also the creation itself," the creation is emphatic and . . . distinguishes it from the children of God and places the creation beside them . . . . Doubly, and thus emphatically, the creation and the children are joined together in the great final emancipation . . . .<sup>23</sup>

An emancipation of all creation "in spite of man's fall." God is almighty, and His works cannot possibly be frustrated. "God's creation is not a grand failure." Were fallen man, and fallen creation because of him, irreparably lost -- then, God's creation would be an utter failure. But such cannot be. He has willed to redeem and restore both.

It would be entirely senseless to suggest that "the freedom of the glory" (τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης) mentioned in verse 21 means total annihilation or obliteration of God's created universe. There is a sense, of course, in which reduction to nothingness might "free" a suffering creature, but such is not even hinted at in our passage. Rather a freeing "of the glory" is being asserted. To equate "glory" with nothingness is absurd. Moreover, the freedom of the glory is lucidly identified as being that "of the children of God." Certainly, that is not an annihilation to nothingness. In a very helpful passage R. C. H. Lenski ties together several other Bible passages to further illuminate our present one. He says:

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<sup>23</sup>Lenski, p. 536.

What Paul says . . . in this section settles the question raised by other passages . . . as to whether the creature world will be finally annihilated. "The liberty of the glory" cannot have a double meaning: blessed, eternal glory for the children of God, annihilation for the creation. To call the latter a liberation is an odd use of language. It has been well said that not the *κόσμος* itself will pass away but only the *σῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου* (1 Cor. 7:31), the form of this present world. The fire mentioned by Peter must be the fire of purification. The "new heaven and the new earth" mentioned in Rev. 21:1 are not *νέος*, newly created and never having existed before, but *καινός*, new in contrast with old, different from what heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1) formerly were. Rev. 21 states that the present separation of the Holy City from the earth shall end in a union of both. "Behold, I make all things new, *καινά* ." The teaching of the entire Scripture is to the effect that God's plans are never defeated, that he does not replace but restore.<sup>24</sup>

"God's plans are never defeated . . . he does not replace but restore" -- the "teaching of the entire Scripture." In a sense, God's plans for His creation would be "defeated" if He had to erase it as a "grand failure" -- and replace it by another. He does not do this with man's body and He shall not do this with the other elements of His creation. It appears that "the entire Scripture" teaches a Cleansing-Restoration hope rather than an Annihilation-Replacement verdict.

Beyond simply (but, very profoundly) stating that the creation itself shall share in "the freedom of the glory of the children of God," St. Paul offers not the slightest elaboration of what this might mean in detail. Certainly Dodd was correct when he said that Paul's remarks were "as little as possible dependent on any particular metaphysics."<sup>25</sup> Luther himself waxed eloquent on how the moon shall become as bright as the sun, the sun would become much brighter than it is now, how the stars, clouds, air, earth, and water shall be immeasurably purer and more beautiful, and how our eyesight, hearing, etc., shall become truly

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid, p. 538. <sup>25</sup>Supra, p. 109

amazing.<sup>26</sup> Lenski's modest statement, however, is probably most appropriate for our present time:

Many questions regarding details confront us in this connection. Will the animals, the plants, the insects be raised to life? What about noxious creatures, the bacilli, for instance? We have no answers. Wait! It is vain to operate with our logic in a field that is infinitely above all logic. Do we know what it means to create? As little do we know what it means to make all things new.<sup>27</sup>

It seems, therefore, that it is best to simply let God's revelation in Scripture concerning this matter stand as it is without wild speculation on the one hand or sceptical rejection on the other. God is great -- and "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard . . . all that God has prepared for those who love Him." (1 Cor. 2:9).

#### Verse 22

Verse 22 begins with the fourth, and last, *γὰρ* of our passage. "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now." If verse 21 had lifted us up into the sweet hope of the glorious and future Restoration of all things, verse 22 brings us back into the current world of present reality. The "whole creation groans and suffers." It is noteworthy at this point to observe how many Bible scholars -- past and present -- acknowledge St. Paul's profound empathy with Nature. John Knox is pleasantly surprised:

His words show . . . a very marvellous and somewhat surprising sympathy with nature itself for its own sake. It is often said that Paul has no interest in or understanding of nature . . . . When all of this is said, however, it must be added that this passage reveals unmistakably that he was not without a certain true feeling for nature. He feels the pathos of nature . . . . He is aware of the

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<sup>26</sup> Martin Luther, D. Martin Luthers Werke, Band 45.

<sup>27</sup> Lenski, 537.

futility, the meaninglessness, of nature, as felt, as it were, from within nature herself -- the ceaseless round, the dreary circle, the endless repetition of existence. The whole universe around him seems to Paul to be waiting restlessly -- waiting for that which will fulfill it and give it meaning . . . when the final "revelation" takes place . . .<sup>28</sup>

If Paul's words are seen to be, in actuality, God's Word -- then, it is the Creator Himself Who has "a very marvellous . . . sympathy with nature."

The Creator actually "feels" for His groaning and suffering universe.

C. F. D. Moule sees our passage as "the most remarkable statement in the whole New Testament about the relation of man to nature . . ."<sup>29</sup> Another scholar says of St. Paul's writing: "There runs through his words an intense sympathy with nature in and for itself. He is one of those (like St. Francis of Assisi) to whom it is given to read as it were the thoughts of plants and animals. He seems to lay his ear to the earth and the confused murmur which he hears has a meaning for him . . ."<sup>30</sup> To those with "The Biblical View" of the universe, what was said of St. Paul here -- is true of God Himself.

The "for" which begins verse 22 is meant to refer us back to the verse (18) beginning the entire passage. This is to say, the "groans" and suffering of "the whole creation" is a part of "the sufferings of this present time." The "groans" of verse 22 is from συστενάω, meaning

<sup>28</sup> John Knox, The Interpreter's Bible, p. 520.

<sup>29</sup> C. F. D. Moule, Man and Nature in the New Testament (London: The Athlone Press, 1964), p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> The International Critical Commentary, 7th ed. (1902), s.v. "The Epistle to the Romans," by William Sanday and Arthur C. Headlam, p. 212.

"lament or groan together (with)."<sup>31</sup> The entire creation is, as it were, "groaning together with" the equally suffering human creature -- lamenting together their common and debased state. Man and his environment are in it together. Lenski says of these statements:

This is nothing mysterious but something that all Christians know from their own observation. Paul has only interpreted this common knowledge. "All the creation is groaning together" in a great symphony of sighs . . . multitudinous is this suppressed agonizing of the whole creature world under the distress which man's sin and death have brought upon it. A million things are wrong, and all nature, especially animate nature, shows it . . .<sup>32</sup>

The comment of Knox has a more "modern" ring, but is, no doubt, a part of the whole truth. He sees Paul as thinking "of the suffering of animals -- the weak devoured by the strong -- of the ruthless destruction of plant life, of natural catastrophes of all kinds; he listens . . . to the cryings of the wind and the sea . . ."<sup>33</sup> Yet, by God's grace, the groaning and the suffering has a goal, a joyful end. It is groaning and suffering "the pains of childbirth." The pain and dreadful agony is to give "birth" to the New. Even our Lord used the metaphor (John 16:21) in reference to the suffering of His people in this world. Lenski says of the illustration that:

Paul has a second verb which deepens what Christians observe: "suffering birth pains together." This is not only pain and woe but travail, i.e., pains that end by bringing forth something, they are like a woman giving birth to a child . . . . The groaning is not to end . . . when death sets in but . . . when a new condition comes out of it.<sup>34</sup>

The grand sweep of this verse's conception is almost more than can be adequately comprehended by the mind. All of creation, mankind, animals,

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<sup>31</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon, 4th revised ed., trans. and ed. by W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 802.

<sup>32</sup>Lenski, p. 539. <sup>33</sup>Knox, p. 521. <sup>34</sup>Lenski, pp. 539-40.

plants, microscopic life, the inanimate elements -- all groaning and suffering together "in childbirth." By specifying that such anguish continues "until now" (ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν), St. Paul is holding out for the glorious future when the agonizing creation shall have given "birth" to the restored existence intended by its Creator.

### Verse 23

Verse 23 continues the teaching of verse 22. The little word  $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$  is most significant in this regard. In the English translation (NASB) it is translated as "this": "And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." Not only "this?" Not only what? Verse 22 answered this question. Not only does "the whole creation" groan and suffer the pains of childbirth -- but, "also we ourselves." An inseparable bond exists between the suffering creature world and ourselves. It cannot be escaped. What it suffers -- we suffer. What we suffer -- it suffers. Even so, however, there is a real and all-important difference between the two aspects of creature-suffering. As Lenski comments on the issue:

$\Delta\acute{\epsilon}$  = "moreover" and adds something different, the difference being that, while we, too, groan we have the first fruits of the Spirit, in this respect being unlike the creature world. Although we are so much higher we still groan much as does the creature world around us . . . we by no means understand Paul to say that we groan inaudibly while the creature world groans audibly. He does not say how we groan . . . The creature world . . . has no immortal soul, no reason, and above all no spiritual life, and thus does not groan "in itself," while we groan "in ourselves," in the depth of our new spiritual being.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Lenski, p. 540.

As much as Lenski takes issue with any one holding to the Annihilation-  
Replacement theory of the universe's End, he does agree with many that  
the sub-human creatures have "no immortal soul, no reason, and above all  
no spiritual life." This in spite of Solomon's expressed doubt on the  
matter: "Who knows that the breath of man ascends upwards and the breath  
of the beast descends downwards to the earth?" (Eccl. 3:21). In this he  
is at one with the Annihilationist, John Gerhard, who is quoted by Hein-  
rich Schmid in English translation as saying:

The souls of brutes were produced from the same material as their  
bodies, whence, when their bodies perish, the souls themselves like-  
wise perish . . . . But into man He breathed a soul . . . whence we  
infer: "A soul whose origin is different from that of the souls of  
brutes, does not have the same end with the souls of brutes."<sup>36</sup>

This, of course, is an inferential matter and not one at all central to  
the main teaching of our passage.

It is very interesting in this verse that exactly the same thing  
is said of the human being which was said of the creature world. In this  
verse it is said that "we ourselves . . . [are] waiting eagerly . . ."  
In verse 19 it was said that "the creation waits eagerly . . ."  
In both instances the verb is from ἀπεκδέχομαι which means "await eagerly."<sup>37</sup>  
But, for what is both "the creation" and "we ourselves" eagerly awaiting?  
Again, in both instances, it is the resurrection of the dead. Verse 19  
said that the creature world is awaiting "the revealing of the sons of  
God." This verse says that "we ourselves" are anxiously awaiting "our  
adoption as sons" -- "the redemption of our body." As a matter of fact,

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<sup>36</sup> Heinrich Schmid, Doctrinal Theology Of The Evangelical Lutheran Church, 3rd ed., trans. by Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 626.

<sup>37</sup> A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 82.

we "groan within ourselves" as we yearn for "the redemption of our body." We want it for ourselves. The creature world wants to see us get it -- because it will mean their deliverance as well! First, our redemption and then their liberation. We are not told the cause of Creation's ability to eagerly await our physical deliverance from death, but it is revealed to us the cause of our own ability to do so. It is because we have "the first fruits of the (Holy) Spirit." Earlier in this eighth chapter of Romans we are told that: "He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you" (verse 11). As a matter of fact, we already have "a spirit of adoption as sons" (verse 15) which causes and enables us to wait "eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." The Spirit, then, is the guarantee that our bodies shall be raised from the dead -- as our Savior's was. This is our hope, our expectation, our yearning. This is the groaning "within ourselves." Remarking on this, Lenski says:

Even the ungodly do not groan in this way, for Paul emphasizes the fact that we groan thus "as having the first fruits of the Spirit." By the Spirit we are reborn, by His help we recognize the full reality of this world's "vainness" and "slavery to corruption," and, on the other hand, "the liberty of the glory" awaiting us. It is thus that we groan. The ungodly cannot attain this inwardness . . .<sup>38</sup>

"The ungodly cannot attain this inwardness." Strangely -- pathetic as it sounds -- God's groaning sub-human world sees the goal of His work better than do unbelievers. The creature world eagerly awaits the "revealing of the sons of God," the ungodly know nothing of it. Thus, the pity, the tragedy, of unbelief.

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<sup>38</sup>Lenski, pp. 540-41.

In our present verse St. Paul refers to "the first fruits of the Spirit" rather than to the Holy Spirit Himself -- directly. "First fruits" is a translation of ἀπαρχή . Ἀπαρχή were the "first-fruits of any kind . . . which were holy . . . and were consecrated before the rest could be put to secular use."<sup>39</sup> At the Jewish Passover a sheaf of green barley, being earlier than the wheat, which was the first-fruits of the crop was waved before the Lord. Fifty days later, at Pentecost, two loaves of wheaten bread were offered to God as the first-fruits. Lenski says that: "Used figuratively, 'the first fruits' signify the assurance of much more to follow, namely the revelation of the glory . . . . In effect, 'the first fruits of the Spirit' = 'the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts . . . the first down payment which secures the rest . . . in due time'"<sup>40</sup> (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; and Eph. 1:14). This concept of "the first down payment which secures the rest . . . in due time" goes a long way to explain the apparent contradiction between verses 15 and 23 of our present chapter. The former says that we have already "received a spirit of adoption as sons" whereas the latter says that we still await the "adoption as sons." The idea of the "first-fruits," however, clears this up for us. The "first fruits of the Spirit" is our guarantee that we shall assuredly receive "the redemption of our body" -- "in due time." The "due time," of course, is the Day of resurrection -- "the revealing of the sons of God."

It must not be mistaken when speaking of the "first-fruits" of the Spirit, however, that this is something given by the Spirit and not

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<sup>39</sup>A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 80.

<sup>40</sup>Lenski, p. 541.

the Holy Spirit Himself. The "first-fruits" are the Spirit as earlier verses 14-16 make very clear. We have received the Holy Spirit as a gift -- He gives Himself.

The Holy Spirit solemnly assures us that we shall receive what He urges and encourages us to eagerly await -- "the redemption of our body." God's promise of the glorious resurrection of our bodies is the peak and major focal-point of this entire passage. All the futility, groaning and suffering is the "humiliation" side of it. All the glory and freedom is the "exaltation" side of it. It naturally parallels the Law-Gospel theme of the entirety of Holy Scripture. "Eagerly waiting" the redemption of our body may also be interpreted as "waiting out" the redemption since the word ἔκ is in the verb. The apposition of "adoption as sons" and "the redemption of our body" is significant. To "wait out" adoption does not mean to receive it for the first time (see verse 15), but to wait until its full consummation arrives -- the resurrection of the body on the Last Day.

St. Paul's use of ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος may be translated as "redemption" -- or better -- "ransoming" of our body. Ransoming (or redemption) is from the word ἀπολύω, meaning set free, release, pardon. The closely related word ἀπολύτρωσις has the sense of "buying back a slave or captive, making him free by payment of a ransom."<sup>41</sup> Lenski, therefore, is certainly correct when he states that: "When Paul calls this 'the ransoming' of our body he uses a term that is most apt in every way . . . the term was used in connection with the manumission of slaves . . ."<sup>42</sup> This term is most appropriate because of Paul's use of such

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<sup>41</sup> A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 95.      <sup>42</sup> Lenski, p. 542.

words as "slavery" and "freedom." Obviously, he is deliberately carrying on with the same thought. Still, the complete "manumission" lies in the future:

We may call its use here eschatological because it refers to the resurrection. The price paid for this final part of our deliverance is the . . . blood of Christ . . . . The word fits exactly the idea of "slavery of the corruption," for slaves often received manumission by ransom. It equally fits the liberation mentioned in v. 21 . . . . The body is in slavery even after it enters the grave, for corruption, decay, and death still hold it; the resurrection liberates it "into the liberty of the children of God."<sup>43</sup>

Even after entering the grave the human body is still held captive, a slave to corruption. But, again: "He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit . . ." (verse 11). As Christ was liberated from the tomb, so shall our bodies be liberated "through His Spirit who indwells" us. By the death of Christ on the cross, the price has been paid to "ransom" us from sin and death. We are -- and shall be -- free, and all the creation along with us.

### 1 Corinthians 7:31

#### Introduction

Almost inevitably, a consideration of Rom. 8:18-23 leads to the consulting of this passage. Both of them, of course, come from the pen of the same writer, St. Paul. It is only natural, therefore, that the meaning of either passage helps in the understanding of the other. It has already been demonstrated in this dissertation how that teachers such as Luther, Nicolai, Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, and Aquinas<sup>44</sup> all dealt

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<sup>43</sup>Lenski, p. 543.

<sup>44</sup>Supra, pp. 33-35; 43; 68-71; 76-78; 87; and 96 respectively.

-- in one way or another -- with this important passage. This is also true of the other Bible passages to be handled in this chapter. Therefore, 1 Cor. 7:31 will now be exegeted.

#### Exegesis

The second half of this verse reads in the Greek: --παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ κόσμου τούτου An English translation (NASB) is: "--for the form of this world is passing away." The little word "for" (γὰρ) connects the second half of this verse with the thought preceding it. Our verse is an integral and key point of the entire passage (verses 25-35). St. Paul was speaking to a particular situation in the Early Church. In even larger context, the mood is the shortness of time remaining before Christ's return in glory and judgment. Every thing Paul says in this passage is "in view of the present distress" (verse 26), and because "the time has been shortened" (verse 29). The "present distress" (ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην) refers to the painful and terrible experience which the confession of Christ may at any time bring upon a believer. The prophesied days of extensive pagan persecutions were drawing nigh ("the time has been shortened"). It is because of such uncertain and distressing times that Paul advises unmarried persons to remain unmarried (verses 25-28). To emphatically make his point, St. Paul extrapolates upon the transitoriness of world's present conditions. Because "the time has been shortened" (ὁ καιρὸς συνεστωμένος ἐστίν) there was scarcely any time remaining to live a normal married life (verse 29), to mourn, rejoice, or do business (verse 30). Even those seeking the excesses of pleasure (first part of verse 31) will hardly find the time for it. Why? Because (γὰρ) "the form of this world is passing away."

It is of crucial significance for our topic that it is "the form of" -- and not "this world" -- which "is passing away. "The form" is from the Greek τὸ σχῆμα and may also be translated "the fashion" of. Literally, σχῆμα means bearing, manner, deportment, outward appearance, form, shape.<sup>45</sup> In no sense does it mean the substance or essence of a thing. It is the outward appearance, then, or the form or shape of "the world" which is passing away -- not the world itself. Adolf Schlatter sees it this way and writes:

Das kommende Leben hat nicht wieder diese Gestalt. Der neue Mensch steht nicht mehr unter dem Zwang, sich durch Ehe, Nahrung und Eigentum das Leben zu erhalten und zu füllen. Es ist nicht bloss der Gedanke an die Vergänglichkeit alles Irdischen . . . . Paulus redet auch nicht vom Untergang der Welt, sondern stellt über die gegenwärtige Gestalt unseres menschlichen Lebens eine zukünftige mit anderen Gütern und anderen Ordnungen.<sup>46</sup>

"Es ist nicht bloss der Gedanke an die Vergänglichkeit alles Irdischen . . . ," it is not the thought of the annihilation of all earthly things. So far, Schlatter. Hans Conzelmann, on the other hand, disagrees with both Schlatter -- and the Greek Lexicon! He writes: "σχῆμα, 'Gestalt,' ist hier nicht die Form, sondern das Wesen, also: die Welt selbst."<sup>47</sup> Whereas the Lexicon defines σχῆμα as "form" rather than essence, Conzelmann defines it as "essence" (Wesen) rather than form! Indeed, he says that σχῆμα is to be simply equated with the "world" (Welt) itself! It seems as if Conzelmann prefers to make words conform to his concepts rather than allowing the meaning of the words to fashion his concepts.

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<sup>45</sup> A Greek-English Lexicon, p. 804.

<sup>46</sup> Adolf Schlatter, Die Korintherbriefe in Erläuterungen zum Neuen Testament, Band 6 (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1962), p. 93.

<sup>47</sup> Hans Conzelmann, "Der erste Brief an die Korinther," Meyers Kommentar V (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1969), p. 158.

It is also necessary here to be as clear as possible about the meaning of "the world" since it is "the form" of this world which is said to be passing away. The Greek word for "world," of course, is *κόσμος*. In Kittel's *Wörterbuch*, Hermann Sasse expounds on four meanings of the word, one of which does not appear in the New Testament ("order"), another of which appears only once ("adornment" -- 1 Peter 3:3), and another two which are appropriate to our current endeavor. Sasse points out that the Hebrew language has no word for "universe" but normally speaks of "heaven and earth." The Greek *κόσμος*, therefore, is synonymous with the Old Testament "heavens and earth." With the one exception cited above, all New Testament instances of *κόσμος* mean "world" in some sense. One of these senses is the "world" of order between men -- not "order" in any other sense. The other is something which is well assembled or constructed from individual constituents -- such as the universe. In the sense often used in the New Testament it is: "Als Weltraum im Sinne des grössten Raumes, der gedacht werden kann . . ." <sup>48</sup> It includes all living things as well as everything else in existence. It designates: "das aus Himmel und Erde bestehende Weltall, in welchem sich die Gesamtheit der einzelnen Kreaturen (*πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ*) befindet." <sup>49</sup>

What is predicated of "the form of this world?" St. Paul's answer is unequivocal: it "is passing away." The Greek is *παράγει*. This verb is from *παράγω*, meaning pass way, be brought past, disappear. <sup>50</sup> More simply, to go away. Putting it all together, then, the

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<sup>48</sup> Hermann Sasse, "*κοσμέω, κόσμος, κόσμιος, κοσμικός*," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, p. 883.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. <sup>50</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon*, p. 619.

latter half of 1 Cor. 7:31 is telling us that the outward appearance or fashion of the present world is going away. We are not being told that the universe is to be annihilated. Drawing much of what has been said in one statement, Lenski wrote:

Paul does not say "the world" is passing away; or even "this world"; he specifies more closely: "the form of this world," its *σχῆμα* or fashion. The entire expression, in particular the verb *παράγει*, seems to be borrowed from the ancient theatrical language: the role of the old *σχῆμα* is being played out, and a new *σχῆμα* is about to step onto the boards.<sup>51</sup>

Clarence Craig makes a good point when he calls attention to St. Paul's differentiation between *κόσμος* and *αἰών*.<sup>52</sup> We have already considered how that Paul's statement presently being considered is that "the form (*σχῆμα*) of this world (*κόσμος*)" is passing away. In Rom. 12:2, however, he wrote: *καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ*. "And do not be conformed to this world . . ." (NASB). In the two instances ("form" and "conformed") the Greek word is either *σχῆμα* or *συσχηματίζεσθε*. This is the similarity. The dissimilarity, however, is that the first English "world" is from *κόσμος* — and the second is from *αἰών*. In other words, the *κόσμος* refers primarily to the physical, material "world" whereas the *αἰών* refers primarily to the corrupt, sinful condition of it. The distinction, however, is not always a very sharp one. For example, the sinful and idolatrous attachment to the material things of earth seems to have been what St. John had in mind when he wrote: "And the world (*κόσμος*) is passing away (*παράγεται*), and also its lusts . . ." (NASB).

<sup>51</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, St. Paul's First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p. 320.

<sup>52</sup>Clarence T. Craig, "Corinthians," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 10 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 85.

Here, St. John seems to combine both aspects of the different words; the material condition of the world is passing away -- and all the idolatrous lust adhering to it. The message both Paul and John are trying to get across, of course, is that: "it is the part of wisdom to become as little entangled as possible in [the world's] transient affairs."<sup>53</sup>

Whereas *κόσμος* primarily refers to the physical, material world, *αἰών* does so only in a secondary -- or tertiary -- sense. The latter may be defined as: a very long time, eternity; a particular segment of time, age; -- or "the world as a spatial concept."<sup>54</sup> In either case, however, the one is inseparably related to the other. The present fallen, sinful, corrupt conditions of this terrestrial globe are "passing away." Foolish is the man who builds his life upon them.

An attempt has been made in dealing with 1 Cor. 7:31 to show how its thought is at one with the major pericope of this dissertation, Rom. 8: 18-23. Although it does not lend itself to thorough exegetical processes, the "passing away" (*παράγει*) of the world in this verse reminds one of an "aging" universe. Neither 1 Cor. 7:31 -- nor 1 John 2:17 -- speaks of this "passing" in the future tense. It is a present "passing away." If it were solely a catastrophic passing on the Last Day surely the future tense would be employed by the two Bible writers. Instead, we get the distinct impression that the "passing away" is gradually -- and inexorably -- taking place, as the vigor of a declining, weakening old man. Certainly, there is a moment of final collapse, the moment when the ages-long decay is complete. It is, therefore, a proposition of this dissertation that the "passing away" concept here is that one which gave rise

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> A Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 26-27.

to the teaching we have seen earlier in this dissertation expressed by certain Early Church Fathers -- and our own Lutheran Confessions and Confessors.<sup>55</sup>

Although our exegesis of 1 Cor. 7:31 is only supportive of the main Biblical text of this dissertation, it is a significant witness. Many scholars have recognized this as we have earlier stated. It definitely promotes the Cleansing-Restoration interpretation of Scripture. Lenski wrote: "The decisive passage of Scripture regarding the question as to whether this present world will be annihilated or will be transformed is Rom. 8:19-23, which declares for the latter. Not the world as such but its form is passing away and will at last pass away completely."<sup>56</sup>

#### Revelation 21:1

This is another of the key-passages dealing with the question as to whether the present universe is to be annihilated and replaced by another -- or whether the present existence is to be cleansed and restored on the Last Day. Martin Rist has no doubts about it at all. Referring to 2 Peter 3:10 and 13 he says: "there can be no doubt: the first heavens and earth are to be annihilated by fire, and . . . new heavens and a new earth are to be created. This quite definitely, is the view of John as he writes, 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.'"<sup>57</sup> This "quite definitely, is the view of John?" Despite Rist's firm assertion as to what St. John meant when he wrote of a "new heaven and a new earth," he offers little evidence. Most of his "evidence" is

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<sup>55</sup>Supra, pp. 13-28, 35.      <sup>56</sup>Lenski.

<sup>57</sup>Martin Rist, "Revelation," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 12 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), p. 528.

based upon "Iranian eschatology" and apocalyptic "Jewish sources." Calling it a "Christian . . . reference" rather than words of God, he grants that "a reference to an eschatological regeneration is made in Matt. 19: 28,"<sup>58</sup> but he quickly adds that "it is difficult to know whether a renovation or a new creation is meant." No where in dealing with this passage does Rist even comment on the original Greek words -- whose literal meaning is highly significant to the issue. It is difficult to see how his comments can be regarded as an exegesis.

Not only the first verse of Revelation 21, but also the fifth verse is helpful to us. Therefore, before looking at verse 1, let us briefly consider verse 5. The One sitting on the throne says: ". . . I am making all things new" (NASB). The Greek is: *καὶ νῦν ποιῶ πάντα* . . . God does not say "I am making all new things" -- but, "all things new." This is to say, He is making everything presently in existence -- new. He is not making something "new" in the sense that it was not in existence previously. It is the divine Renovation of the old Creation rather than its demolition and replacement. That this is the proper sense of verse 5 is proven by every use of the Greek word "new" -- both in verse 5 and in verse 1.

We have seen above how that the Greek word for "new" is *καὶ νῦν* . In verse 1 this same word is used twice: *καὶ εἶδον οὐρανὸν καὶ γῆν*  
*καὶ νῦν* : "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth . . ." (NASB). Fortunately, the Greek language is very precise about what it means by calling something "new." There is *νέος* , "new," and *καινός* , "new." Alan

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Richardson says of these: "In the papyri there is not much difference between  $\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ;  $\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$  means recent, new in the sense of new in time, while  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  means new in quality . . . . Thus the adjective  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  becomes in the NT almost a technical eschatological term."<sup>59</sup> If Richardson be correct, then, John's reference to "a new heavens and a new earth" means a heavens and earth whose "quality" has been radically transformed. Not "new" in the sense of never having previously existed, but "new" in the sense of a marvellous transmutation. Both the editors of The Oxford Annotated Bible and Martin H. Franzmann see the meaning of Rev. 21:1 in exactly this way.<sup>60</sup> Kittel's *Wörterbuch* bears out the very same observations concerning the  $\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$ - $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  distinction. Concerning this, Behm says, in English translation: "In the NT  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  means 'not yet used' . . . 'unusual' . . . especially 'new in kind' . . ."<sup>61</sup> More specifically:

Of the two most common words for "new" since the classical period, namely,  $\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$  and  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ , the former signifies "what was not there before," what has only just arisen or appeared," the latter "what is new and distinctive" as compared with other things.  $\nu\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$  is new in time or origin . . . .  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$  is what is new in nature, different from the usual . . . better than the old, superior in value or attraction.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Alan Richardson, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), p. 244.

<sup>60</sup> The Oxford Annotated Bible, ed. by Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 1509 and Martin H. Franzmann, Concordia Bible (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 539.

<sup>61</sup> Johannes Behm, " $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ,  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\tau\eta\varsigma$ ,  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ,  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\omega$ ,  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\alpha\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\omega\tau\iota\varsigma$ ,  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\kappa\alpha\lambda\iota\upsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ ," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), p. 448.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 447.

The whole context of our currently being considered verse is the divine Newness that God shall bestow on all of creation subsequent to His coming in Judgment. Following the removal of Death and Hades -- by fire (verse 14) -- God pronounces His will to make all things new. All evil and sources of evil are done away with. The first (old) heaven and the first earth is said to have "passed away" (ἀπῆλθεν). This word is from ἀπέρχομαι which means: go away, depart with no indication of place; go away with an indication of place; or go after to follow someone.<sup>63</sup> There is no indication of the destruction of its substance. The heaven and earth as we now see them in the universe are disturbed by sin and evil. These "go away," disappear from view. The "new" heavens and earth taking their place, however, are not created on the spot ex nihilo. Lenski says of this:

When some consider the . . . going away . . . of the old an annihilation and the new a creation like that of Genesis 1, ex nihilo, they come into conflict with Rom. 8:20-23 and with our present passage . . . shall God annihilate heaven and earth and create ex nihilo another heaven and earth? Combine what is here said with Rom. 8, and the answer is plain.<sup>64</sup>

What Lenski has recommended us do in the last sentence above is that this section of this chapter has attempted to do. "Combine what is here said" in Rev. 21:1 "with Rom. 8." The answer does seem plain. A restoration of God's created universe -- not its annihilation and replacement by another never before in existence.

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<sup>63</sup> A Greek-English Lexicon, pp. 83-84.

<sup>64</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, St. John's Revelation (Minneapolis; Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), pp. 614-15.



transformations: . . . new heaven and earth Is. 65:17 (in place of old) . . ."<sup>65</sup> The very same word is used of the transformation of nature in Is. 41:20. **אָרְצָא** does not always mean to create ex nihilo by any means even though this is the case in Genesis 1. The word for "heavens" (from **שָׁמַיִם**) in our passage can simply mean the visible heavens or sky. The word for "earth" (from **אָרְצָא** means either that or "land." In both instances, the heavens and earth are to be made "new." The Hebrew word for "new," here is from **חֲדָשׁ**, and other forms of the word can mean to "renew" or "repair." As an adjective, however, **חֲדָשׁ** means simply "new." After all these rather standard definitions we are left with the simple translation and sense that: God shall "create new heavens and a new earth."

Earlier we noted that the definition of the Greek word **καινός** -- as opposed to **νέος** -- meant "new" in the sense of a basic change in quality rather than "new" in the sense of never having existed before.<sup>66</sup> Behm comments in Kittel's *Wörterbuch* that it is this same **καινός** which was used as the closest equivalent of the Hebrew ("new"). He writes: "The LXX regularly uses **καινός** for **חֲדָשׁ**."<sup>67</sup> This is to say, our presently consulted Hebrew word for "new" (**חֲדָשׁ**) was understood by the Septuagint translators as being "new" in the **καινός** sense -- not the **νέος** one.

Many Bible commentators note the **καινός** sense of our passage. James Muilenburg writes of Is. 65:17:

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<sup>65</sup> A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament by William Gensenius, ed. by Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, trans. By Edward Robinson (Oxford: At The Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 135.

<sup>66</sup> *Supra*, p. 162.

<sup>67</sup> Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, p. 448.

translations . . . . .  
 The very same word is used of the translation of nature in  
 La. 11:20. It does not always mean to create or build by any means  
 even though this is the case in Genesis 1. The word for "heaven" (from  
 in our passage can simply mean the visible heavens or sky. The  
 word for "earth" (from "land" or "land". In both the  
 spaces, the heavens and earth are to be "new". The Hebrew word for  
 "new" here is from ~~the~~ and other forms of the word can mean to "re-  
 new" or "rebuild". As an adjective, however, it means simply "new". All  
 can all these words (including "rebuild") we can deal with the same  
 translation and sense that God shall "renew" the heavens and a new  
 earth.  
 Further we note that the definition of the Greek word ~~new~~  
 as opposed to ~~old~~ -- means "new" in the sense of a basic change in qual-  
 ity rather than "new" in the sense of never having existed before.  
 Both comments in Kittling's "Introduction" that it is this same ~~new~~  
 used as the classic equivalent of the Hebrew ("new"). He writes: "The  
 regular use of ~~new~~ for ~~new~~ is to say, our presentiv  
 consulted Hebrew word for "new" (~~new~~) was understood by the translators  
 translations as being "new" in the sense -- not the ~~old~~ one.  
 New Bible commentators note that ~~new~~ sense of our passage.

James Millington writes of Is. 65:17:

A Hebrew and English lexicon of the Old Testament by William  
 Gesenius, ed. by Francis Brown, and Charles A. Briggs  
 trans. by Edward Robinson (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1890), p. 100.

Ed. 1890, p. 100.

Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, p. 448.

Throughout the O.T. . . . the redemptive acts of God are reflected in the natural world . . . the forces of nature are subject to the divine will . . . . The sovereignty of God over nature . . . is here applied to the new age. To the new age belong "new heavens and a new earth." The meaning is not that the present world will be completely destroyed . . . and a new world created . . . but rather that the present world will be completely transformed.<sup>68</sup>

"The meaning is not that the present world will be completely destroyed . . . but rather that the present world will be completely transformed."

The Roman Catholic scholar, Carroll Stuhlmueller, agrees when he says that: "The world will not be destroyed but transformed into 'new heavens and a new earth' . . ."<sup>69</sup>

Commenting on our verse, Claus Westermann gives his view on how the Hebrew  $\text{קָרָא}$  relates to it:

Wie bei Deuterjesaja ist das Verb bara im Sinn des Neuschaffens gebraucht . . . ; so meint auch "neu" wie bei Deuterjesaja . . . die wunderbare Wandlung. Mit dem Satz "Ich schaffe neu den Himmel und neu die Erde" . . . ist nicht gemeint, dass Himmel und Erde erst vernichtet werden und an deren Stelle ein neuer Himmel und eine neue Erde geschaffen werden soll . . . sondern dass die Welt, die mit "Himmel und Erde" bezeichnet ist, wunderbar erneuert werden soll.<sup>70</sup>

In Westermann's opinion, then, the Hebrew word for "create" can also mean complete "renewal." No annihilation of our present universe, but its "wunderbare Wandlung," wonderful change.

It is important to bear in mind as we seek to correctly understand Isaiah's references to the "heavens and earth" that by this term

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<sup>68</sup>James Muilenburg, "Isaiah," The Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 5 (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 755.

<sup>69</sup>Carroll Stuhlmueller, "Deutero-Isaiah," The Jerome Biblical Commentary, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 385.

<sup>70</sup>Claus Westermann, "Das Buch Jesaja, Kapitel 40-66," Das Alte Testament Deutsch, Teilband 19 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966), p. 324.



annihilation of the world -- or is it that it, too, reveals the ultimate Restoration of all things? If it does teach the latter, why is it such a ready reference for those who hold the opposite opinion? What are the causes for ambiguity? What, in fact, does 2 Peter 3 teach along these lines? The answer to this question is the purpose of this section of the dissertation.

Before dealing specifically with verses 7, 10, and 11-12 it is of the utmost importance to see them in the third chapter's total context. It appears as if the Christians of Peter's later years had forgotten some of the important truths taught them earlier, they needed to be reminded (verses 1 and 2). The very first thing they needed reminding of was the fact "that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking" (verse 3). What would be the "mocking" of these last days "mockers?" This: "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation" (verse 4). In a word, the mockers' mocking was ridicule of the Christians' warnings to them of Christ's imminent return for Judgment. It would seem as if the Christians had told them a message somewhat along the lines of Mark 13:24-27 or Matt. 24:15-41 including all the cosmological phenomena related to His coming. Since none of those terrestrial and celestial "signs" had occurred for some years -- the mockers mocked the Christians and their message. It would appear that the mockers were of Jewish background since they acknowledge both "the fathers" and "the creation." Moreover, there exists the possibility that St. Peter's words were all the more needed because -- human nature being what it is -- some of the Christians may have been discouraged by

the mockers' ridicule and begun doubting themselves? Probably for this reason more than for any other, Peter draws a vivid parallel between the first universal judgment -- in Noah's day -- and the final, imminent Judgment, possibly in their own day. Peter's exposition follows.

Peter makes a very sharp contrast between the universe being "held together" by the Word of God in the beginning (verse 5) and the world flying apart by God's same will (verse 10) at the End. This sharp contrast is not so obvious in English translation. A more literal rendering of the Greek might go something like this: "For it is concealed from them, this wishing [of theirs'= the mockers], that the heavens and earth of old by and through water having been held together by the Word of God . . ." And, verse 6 continues the thought: "through which the things then [of the] world being inundated by water -- perished!" The term "having been held together" above (*συνεστῶσα*) is from the Greek *συνεστῶς* (from *συνίστημι*) having the sense of bringing together, uniting, collecting. The whole point is this: Even though God used water to bring about the first creation, and held it all together by His Word -- by His same Word He used that very same element (water) to destroy what He had made! In relation to man, then, God may use what is necessary for his existence to judge him. He does this by His Word -- and the physical elements of earth as means. After using the creation and first judgment as an example, St. Peter makes the statement: "But the present heavens and earth by His same Word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." A significant word here is the one translated as "being reserved" in English. The Greek word is *τεθειραρισμένοι* (from *θησαυρός*), meaning something which is

stored up. The dramatic contrast is this: whereas the universe of Noah's day was held together by God's Word so "the present heavens and earth 'having been stored up' for fire, kept for the day of judgment." The former was held together for the flood water, the latter is stored up for the consuming fire. Both elements are mere servants of God's executing Word. No doubt, St. Peter wished to impress upon his Christian audience this fact: the very regularity of nature which leads the mockers to ridicule God's Word are the elements of nature that will destroy them when God utters His Word.

It is profitable to go back for a moment to take note of the words originally used in our text. Peter uses "heavens" (οὐρανοί) "and earth" (γῆ) in verse 5, but refers to them both collectively as the "world" (κόσμος) in verse 6. Again, in verse 7 he uses the same words for "heavens and the earth." It will be recalled that the Hebrew term "heavens and earth" was the equivalent of "universe."<sup>73</sup> Most significant for the purposes of this dissertation is the fact that Peter repeatedly speaks of "ungodly men" being destroyed by the elements -- but, not the "annihilation" of the elements themselves! This is made very clear in verse 6. He says that the "world" (κόσμος) of Noah's day "was destroyed." Of course, he meant sinful humanity primarily -- although Nature itself was drastically altered! By analogy, then, and by following his own parallel, one might logically expect the same sense of the "world's" destruction by fire. Not annihilation of the universe's very substance.

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<sup>73</sup>Supra, p. 158.

In verses 8 and 9 there is an exhortation to the early believers not to lose heart about the apparent "slowness" of the Lord's promised Coming. The reason for the Lord's delay is given as His patience "toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." This is reminiscent of Noah's role as "a preacher of righteousness" who bore witness before a scoffing world concerning the coming judgment. So St. Peter tells the believers of his day to have patience and continue bearing their Christian witness. Having assured them of God's coming in due time, he gets more specific about that Coming.

It is the specifics about the coming "fire" of God's judgment which gives the Biblical exegete the most trouble when trying to ascertain the message of the text. Verse 10 is the main point of contention. As an ironical fact, it is primarily just one word in verse 10 which may influence one toward the Restoration or the Annihilation interpretation of Scripture! The English translation of this verse is a simple one -- until you come to the very last word: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens (οὐρανοὶ) will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed (λυθήσεται) with intense heat, and the earth (γῆ) and its works (ἔργα) will be burned up" (NASB). The crux of the matter, then, is whether the Greek word should be translated as "will be burned up" -- or in some other way? Martin H. Franzmann states the issue very well when he wrote:

"Will be burned up." If this is the correct text, the total annihilation of the present world is meant, while the rest of the NT speaks rather of a restoration of creation (e.g., Ro. 8:19-22). But the best attested text is the very difficult "will be found," which may mean that the earth and the works of man that both adorn and

disfigure the earth will be exposed to the fire of God's judgment, be refined and purified, and emerge as God's "new heavens and a new earth."<sup>74</sup>

The crucial issue, then, is over the correct reading of the very last word in verse 10. Should it be translated as "will be burned up" -- or otherwise? Franzmann is exactly right when he states that the "best attested text" is not "will be burned up," but "will be found" or "discovered." Therefore, let us examine the word itself.

Without any doubt whatever the best attested Greek word for the text under consideration is *εὑρεθήσεται*. It is from the word *εὕρισκω* which means to "find" or "discover" or "come upon." Its literal meaning is perfectly clear and not in any sense given to ambiguity. Well, what then is the difficulty all about? Simply this -- it does not seem to fit into the contextual thought. Even such a conservative scholar -- and a Restorationist! -- as R. C. H. Lenski considers *εὑρεθήσεται* (despite its being the best attested word) "out of the line of thought."<sup>75</sup> Interested scholars line up on one side or the other. As we have seen, the translators of the NASB have "burned up." So do the translators of the RSV, AV, and the Living Bible. The translators of Today's English Version have "will vanish," with the footnote: "some manuscripts have be found; others have burned up; one has be found destroyed." Franzmann prefers "will be found," but acknowledges that it is "very difficult."

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<sup>74</sup>Martin H. Franzmann, p. 488.

<sup>75</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, The Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), p. 347.

Despite all the controversy, however, "will be found" or "discovered" remains the best attested text. Thomas W. Leahy prefers the slight variation "will be laid bare" of the New English Bible.<sup>76</sup> It seems that over the centuries Christian scholars have struggled with the correct reading of our text. As we have stated, *εὐρεθήσεται* is simply the third person, singular, future passive of *εὐρίσκω*, meaning "will be found," "discovered" or "laid bare." Just a glance at Nestle's appropriate critical apparatus at once reveals that several variant readings are offered in place of our *εὐρεθήσεται* -- none of which are as well-attested in manuscript evidence. A Sahidic version suggests that a negative should be placed before *εὐρεθήσεται*, making it "will not be found" = destroyed completely. Most of the other variants suggest various types of consumption by fire (*κατακαήσεται*, *εκπυρωθήσεται*, *λυόμενα*) or the destruction into invisibility or at least unrecognizability (*αφανισθήσονται*). It appears that most modern versions of the Bible, then, have laid aside the best-attested text in favor of a variant reading more in line with their conception of what the text should say. Since the difficulty is one of being unable to see how *εὐρεθήσεται* is in line with the whole thought of the pericope, perhaps, the following will be helpful.

Assuming that *εὐρεθήσεται* is the original autograph of 2 Peter 3:10, the line of thought is similar to the thought of such a passage as 1 Cor. 3:10-15. In this passage St. Paul admonishes each Christian in Corinth to take care "how he builds upon" the only sure "foundation" of

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<sup>76</sup>Thomas W. Leahy, "The Second Epistle of St. Peter," The Jerome Biblical Commentary, p. 498.

faith, Jesus Christ. He speaks of the various degrees of Christian faithfulness used to build upon the foundation of faith. Then, he solemnly warns them: "each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work" (verse 13). It seems, of course, that St. Paul is speaking figuratively here -- but, the basic concept is the same as in 2 Peter: the fire of God's judgment tests each man's "work." A difference between Paul's and Peter's passages is that the former speaks of a man's work being "burned up" (κατακαήσεται) -- "but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire;" whereas the latter has the "earth and its works" being "laid bare" -- with nothing at all remaining. Why the difference? Because the people Paul was speaking to were believers, however weak in faith, whereas the people Peter was referring to had no foundation of faith at all! The foundation of an old house can scarcely be seen until it is torn -- or burned -- down, then its foundation is "found" or "discovered" or "laid bare." The tragedy of unfaith is that after the tearing or burning down -- no foundation is there! The evil dreams, motives, and ambitions underlying all the "works" of man on "earth" shall be revealed, uncovered, shown to the light, "found," "discovered," "laid bare." As even our Lord said: "do not fear [evildoers], for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known" (Matt. 10:26, also Luke 12:2). When would the "covered" and "hidden" works of the evildoers be uncovered? On the Last Day. It is in this sense that εὐρεθήσεται fits well into the line of thought with the total context of our passage. The verse may, therefore, be rendered: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief,

in which the heavens (sky) will pass away with a roaring sound and the elements will be dissolved in burning, and the earth and its works will be laid bare."

After making his strong point concerning the fiery judgment to come, St. Peter pauses to apply the truth to the present life-style of his Christian audience. "Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God . . ."

(verses 11-12). It would be bizarre indeed for anyone to be "looking for and hastening" a Day when they would be destroyed in a blazing inferno! Certainly, the Christians of that day either anticipated being "caught up . . . in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess. 4:17) before the Lord's judgment by fire upon the earth -- or else they understood Peter's words somewhat differently than we do.

It is on account of the Lord's appointed Day of judgment that: "the heavens will be dissolved by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat." The over-all sense of this verse (12) and verses 7 and 10 is one of ultimate, all-encompassing, engulfing of the universe in fire. There is no other, legitimate, way that any other sense can be gotten. Certain points, however, need to be made lest serious misunderstandings arise. Two distinct verbs are used when speaking of God's judgment on the world. The first one occurs in verses 6 and 7 and the second occurs in verses 10-12. The first verb, in both instances, is from ἀπόλλεῖν which is related to ἀπόλλυμι, meaning to destroy, perish, annihilate. The second verb, however, is from λύω, meaning to loose, dissolve, break up into component parts, destroy, abolish. As far as our

text is concerned the verb from ἀπολλύμι (destroy, perish) was used in reference to Noah's "world" (κόσμος) which perished by water, and the destruction coming upon "ungodly men" on the Last Day. In the first instance we know that the "perishing" of the "world" did not mean the annihilation of its substance. The second verb from λύω (loose, dissolve, destroy) is used in reference to the "elements" and the "heavens." This "dissolving" of the elements and heavens by burning is probably meant to convey the same sense as when "all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and all the floodgates of the sky were opened. And the rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights" (Gen. 7:11-12). This is the way the first judgment's "water-catastrophe" came upon the earth. What awesome devastation those great waters caused! The very face of the earth was changed -- and the weather itself altered. Using that as his analogy, and drawing a parallel to it, St. Peter now speaks of "the heavens passing away with a roar" and its very "elements" melting in intense heat. Simply a "fiery" counterpart of the "watery" original. The chemical composition ("elements") of the present, fallen, universe is "melted" and "broken down into its component parts" (one definition of λύω). The proud and arrogant "works" of man on "earth" are "laid bare," judged and removed forever. There "shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; for the first things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). And, after all this -- what then? Are the "elements" of the earth and skies left in "dissolved" form? Does nothing remain after the dreadful burning? Again, the analogy of Noah's day. After the flood had subsided Noah and his family were brought out of the ark onto an earth free of wickedness. There God reestablished His covenant with them (Gen. 9:8-17). That covenant was made between the

almighty Creator, His people -- and "with every living creatures . . . of the earth" (verse 10). Even so, after the judgment by fire: "according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells." A short time before they were required to be "looking for . . . the coming of the day of God" (verse 12). Now, they may be "looking for new heavens and a new earth." Not an earth full of impudent mockers -- or even a Noah's family still prone to sin -- but, all things made "new."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD: KEY TO CREATION'S RESTORATION

In the primary, and most fundamental, sense of all it is the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead which is the "key to Creation's restoration." In a secondary and derived sense, however, the resurrection of all believers on the Last Day is the key to creation's restoration since "the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God [their resurrection] . . . that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19 and 21). When we are raised from the shackles of death on the Last Day -- Creation, too, will be set free to share in the eternal glory. What must be done in this chapter is to adequately explain in what sense Christ's, and our, resurrection from the dead is the "key" to creation's ultimate restoration.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Word of God, was naturally and actively involved in the creation of all things. Speaking of this St. John wrote: "All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being" (John 1:3, NASB). Not only was the Word of God actively involved in the creation of all things, but He still, presently, "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3). In a word, Christ made -- and upholds -- all things, visible and invisible. Even more specifically, Christ is: "the

image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (Col. 1:15). The "first-born of all creation:" *πρωτότοκος Πάσης κτίσεως*. Alan Richardson is certainly correct when he says of this term: "not the first of all created things (Arianism) but the one who takes precedence, like a first-born son, over all the rest of creation, which was made by him and for him."<sup>1</sup> The Lord Jesus Christ, then, takes "precedence" over the Creation, it was "made by Him and for Him." Jesus Christ is -- and always has been -- directly concerned with the Creation. It was made for Him -- and is His. What happens to the Creation directly effects the Lord Jesus, and what He has done directly effects the Creation.

In the Revelation of St. John, Jesus is called: "the Beginning of the creation of God" (3:14, NASB). The original words are: *ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κτίσεως*. The word *ἀρχὴ* can also mean "ruler" or "authority." This title is most significant when we later demonstrate that by His death and resurrection the Lord Jesus Christ re-asserted His natural "rulership" over His Creation. Being their natural Ruler and Lord, before Him: "every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth . . ." (Phil. 2:10).

St. Paul said of the Lord Jesus: "For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16, NASB). Four types of governorships are mentioned in this verse: *θρόνοι* (thrones), *κυριότητες* (lordships), *ἀρχαὶ* (rulers), and *ἐξουσίαι* (authorities). We know very little

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Richardson, Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), p. 213.

about these except that they were parts of "all things . . . created . . . in the heavens . . . invisible." Some of these we might term "angels," others, who have "fallen," we might refer to as: "the rulers . . . the powers . . . the world-forces of this darkness . . . the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12, NASB). Some of these titles are familiar to us: ἀρχάς (rulers), ἐξουσίαι (authorities), κοσμοκράτορας (world-rulers), and πνευματικά τῆς πονηρίας (spiritual forces of evil). The point of introducing all these types of "beings" is that they, too, are parts of God's creation although frequently overlooked by us because of their invisible nature. To get a fuller appreciation for the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ over sin, death, and the devil one must attempt to understand -- as far as this is possible -- the tremendous scope of His divine accomplishment. Alan Richardson reminds us that:

In St. Paul's thought, these world-rulers had fallen from grace and had rebelled against God and become corrupted; the "Fall" was a cosmic event, and was not simply the Fall of Man; the whole world-order was thus brought into subjection to corruption and death. But the death of Christ had . . . [been] redemption . . . upon a cosmic scale. Thus, when in II Cor. 5:19 Paul says that God was in Christ reconciling . . . the κόσμος to himself, the word κόσμος here does not mean merely the world of men . . . the reconciliation wrought by Christ's death was . . . cosmic, world-inclusive . . .<sup>2</sup>

Despite Richardson tendency to universalism, he makes the necessary point that the redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ extended to the invisible world of God's creation and was not limited to only that which we can perceive with our five senses. Unfortunately, the notable British scholar overlooks the final damnation of some of the invisible "forces" (2 Thess. 2:7-10).

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

When God first created the human being He entrusted into his care the earth which He had made (Gen. 1:26-28). When Adam fell into sin the earth itself was "cursed" (Gen. 3:17) -- and human beings expelled from Paradise. Since that time the entire created-order has been "subjected to futility" (Rom. 8:20). We must remember that because of human sin -- it was Christ's world which was put under the curse. Because of willful human disobedience of the Creator -- it was the Creation created "through" and "for" the Son of God which came to share the ages-long suffering and which "groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now" (Rom. 8:22). It is well to remember this because deliverance from the "curse" was integral to our Lord's work of Redemption. Even the hymn-writer, Isaac Watts, noted this is his joyful Christmas hymn, "Joy to the World": "No more let sin and sorrow grow Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make his blessings flow Far as the curse is found, Far as the curse is found . . ." The Incarnation of Jesus Christ began the divine struggle of Creation's Savior to win it back from the curse -- and reconcile "the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

The spiritual "forces" mentioned earlier in this chapter were thought of by St. Paul (and other Bible writers) "as in some sense controlling the universe."<sup>3</sup> Certainly Christ Himself referred to Satan as "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31, 14:30, and 16:11). The word for "ruler" (*ἀρχων*) here is exactly the same word used as a title of our Lord in Rev. 3:14. Nor did Jesus refute Satan's assertion, while He was being tempted in the Wilderness, that the evil one had the authority to

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<sup>3</sup>Martin H. Franzmann, Concordia Bible with Notes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 381.

give Him the "kingdoms of the world" (Matt. 4:8-9). By no means are these things said to suggest that our Lord and the wicked one are in any sense equals. Rather, it was due to Adam's sin that the evil one had usurped the authority over the earth which had been entrusted to the first man. Christ, as the Second Man (1 Cor. 15:45) had come to restore all things. As the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ was to be the perfectly obedient "creature" which the first Adam had failed to be. In every way He would be the humble and faithful Man (Phil. 2:5-11). The Incarnation illustrates this more fully than anything else. The first Adam had failed as a man, the Second Adam would succeed as a Man. It would be proved in the presence of all creation that God's "human experiment" was no grand failure. "Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death . . . the devil . . ." (Hebrews 2:14, NASB). The first Adam failed in "flesh and blood," the Second Adam would prove victorious in the same.

Being fully aware of Christ's aim, Satan attempted to thwart Him at every turn. From the very inception of His incarnation Satan stirred up his minions to destroy Him (Matt. 2:1-18). When He had matured as a Human Being and begun His ministry Satan "tempted" Him and worked surreptitiously through His closest disciples (John 6:70-71 and 13:2). Even though "tempted in all things as we are," however, He remained "without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Although Christ was constantly: "challenged by man's sin. Our Lord's miracles document His sovereign control over all creation during His sojourn on earth."<sup>4</sup> He could command, not only the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

wind and sea, but also sickness, disease -- and death. Not only would Jesus, as the perfect Man, be fully obedient to His Father, but He must bear the just punishment due to men by His vicarious death on the Cross. Had the fallen spiritual "rulers (ἀρχόντων) of this age . . . understood" the purpose and power of the Cross "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2-8) because it would mean their downfall -- and the ultimate restoration of all creation from their sinister rule. Death had come into the world because of sin and "so death spread to all men, because all sinned --" (Rom. 5:12), but the Lord Jesus was without sin and, therefore, "it was impossible for Him to be held in its power" (Acts 2:24). He would gloriously rise from the dead and break its dread shackles for all believers.

With the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead we come to the first major point of this chapter: Our Lord Jesus is the New Creation. Because of, and due to, sin the old creation was under the just verdict of death. Because of, and due to, the sin-less life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ He was able to "deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Heb. 2:15). By Christ's death and resurrection the devil, who had the "power of death," was rendered power-less. The creation he had usurped from the first Adam in the Garden -- was restored to its proper Owner by the Second Adam. Through faith in Jesus, all believers: "have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority . . . . When He had disarmed the rulers (ἀρχαίς) and authorities (ἐξουσίαις), He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them . . ." (Col. 2:10 and 15, NASB). With the freedom of believers from the fear of death and its "slavery" comes

the ultimate -- and resultant -- freedom of all creation on the Last Day. Just as a simple illustration, we might say that it is a reversal of the original tragedy of sin. In the Garden, the first Adam (1) sinned against God (2) came under the slavery of sin, death, and the devil, and (3) all creation suffered for it. On the Cross and from the Tomb, the Second Adam (1) perfectly obeyed the Father (2) destroyed the power of sin, death, and the devil, and (3) frees all of His Creation "from its slavery to corruption" (Rom. 8:21). Not only is the Word of God creation's Creator, He is also creation's Savior. He has reconciled "all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross . . . things on earth or things in heaven" (Col. 1:20). It was only fitting that the Maker and Owner of creation should see to its recovery.

We have seen earlier how that Jesus is "the first-born of all creation," meaning that He "takes precedence" over all of creation.<sup>5</sup> This reference calls to mind the first creation, in the beginning. The Lord Jesus is also the first-born of the New Creation. In Col. 1:18, St. Paul refers to Him as "the first-born from the dead" (*πρωτότοκος ἐν τῶν νεκρῶν*), indeed, "He is the beginning" (*ὅς ἐστιν ἀρχή*). To literally call Jesus "the beginning" is to call Him the Author of Creation (see Gen. 1:1)! Referring to Him as the "first-born" from the dead is to say that by His Cross and empty tomb He has taken "precedence" over death -- and is its Master. Therefore, we can be convinced "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ

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<sup>5</sup>Supra, p. 180.

Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39, NASB). Notice, please, that no "created thing" (literally, "creature," *κτίσις*) shall ever be able to separate us from Christ -- because He has precedence and pre-eminence over all of Creation. But, by His grace, the Lord Jesus did not intend to keep the glory all to Himself. It was the divine intention all along "that He might be the first-born among many brethren . . ." (Rom. 8:29). He was the first to overcome death and, because of His victory, many others would overcome -- through Him. It is in this sense that St. Paul refers to Jesus as "the first fruits of those who are asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20, also 23). Earlier in this dissertation we have observed the meaning and significance of the term "first-fruits."<sup>6</sup> In a word, it meant the promise of more to come. Therefore, when St. Paul spoke of Christ as the *ἀπαρχὴ τῶν κεκοιμημένων* he was saying that because of Him -- more resurrections were to come "at His coming" on the Last Day. Christ's own resurrection from the dead was the assurance and divine guarantee of this. It was this promise, and the faith in the promise, which enabled James to refer to believers as "the first fruits among His creatures" (James 1:18).

It is because Jesus Christ is the very beginning of the New Creation that St. Paul can write in exultation: "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17, NASB). Actually, this English version misses much of what Paul has to say here. The Greek reads: *ὥστε εἴ τις ἐν χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινά*. It is only by being that any human being can become "new." St. Paul means this in a literal, but, of course, supernatural sense. Since Christ is the New Creation, one can only become such himself by being in Christ.

<sup>6</sup>Supra, pp. 152-53.

Being ἐν Χριστῷ through faith, one instantly becomes καινὴ κτίσις .  
 Κτίσις may be defined as the act of creation or that which is created.  
 This "creation" is καινὴ , "new" in the sense of transformed quality,  
 not new in the sense of never having existed previously.<sup>7</sup> The "old  
 things" (ἀρχαῖα) have "passed away" -- just as the old "heavens" shall  
 do on the Last Day (2 Peter 3:10) and all other causes of sorrow as well  
 (Rev. 21:4). Moreover, just as the "new heavens and a new earth" come on  
 the Last Day so, too, at every believer's regeneration: "behold, new  
 things (καινά) have come"! It is almost as if the entire act of cosmic  
 restoration on the Last Day were enacted, on this side of that Day, in  
 the re-birth of a believer. This is only as it should be, however, since  
 the human creature is God's "crown of Creation" and its eventual "freedom  
 of the glory" depends upon "the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom. 8:19).  
 The resurrection of our bodies into eternal "newness" shall be similar to  
 the Resurrection of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe this  
 by faith, but we no more "understand" how such a thing can occur than did  
 St. John, who wrote: "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has  
 not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we  
 shall be like Him . . ." (1 John 3:2). It is similar to the physical uni-  
 verse being "set free from its slavery to corruption" on the Last Day,  
 and its sharing of "the freedom of the glory of the children of God."  
 We cannot conceive of how this will take place -- or what the outcome  
 might be? Lenski's words are helpful in this regard: "It is vain to  
 operate with our logic in a field that is infinitely above all logic.  
 Do we know what it means to create? As little do we know what it means to

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<sup>7</sup>Supra, pp. 162-63.

make all things new."<sup>8</sup> One thing is certain, however, the Restoration of the material universe shall be analogous to the resurrection of our bodies!

That the Restoration of the material universe shall be analogous to the resurrection of our bodies on the Last Day is the second major point of this chapter. A scholar of England's Oxford University noted this in a work of his dealing with the thology of St. Paul. He wrote:

Phil. iii. 20-21, "From heaven we expect our deliverer (sōtera) to come, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transfigure (metaschēmatisēi) the body belonging to our humble estate, and give it a form like (summorphon) that of his own resplendent (doxēs) body" . . . . St. Paul is speaking about a change, not about an exchange. He says, not that Christ will give the survivors a new body to replace the old one, but that the old body will be transformed . . . it will be the same body . . . . This act of transformation is analogous to the transformation of the physical world spoken of by St. Paul in Rom. viii. 19-23.<sup>9</sup>

Our "old" bodies will not be "replaced," but the "old body will be transformed." Oddly enough, the British theologian here compares the transformation of our bodies to that of the restored world -- rather than the reverse. This is to say, he assumes the world's "physical" transformation on the Last Day -- and compares our future bodies to that. The writer of this dissertation believes the reverse order to be more appropriate since creation longs for our resurrection rather than we awaiting its release into freedom. Even so, however, the writer is Scripturally correct to see the "analogy" between the resurrection of our bodies and the restoration of all creation. He also notes St. Paul's understanding of sin's effects on the human body and creation's suffering. The "association of

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<sup>8</sup>Supra, p. 147.

<sup>9</sup>D. E. H. Whitely, The Theology Of St. Paul (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 249-50.

flesh with sin and evil was probably connected with the fact that . . . the created universe was associated with the sin of Adam . . ." <sup>10</sup> In other words, the human body is a part -- an inseparable part -- of the material creation's suffering. Just as "the created universe" has fallen because of Adam's sin so, too, it shall be "resurrected" on the Last Day. Just as our bodies will be "transformed" rather than "replaced" so, also, a similar and related thing shall happen to the universe. Most specifically, for the purposes of this dissertation, the physical universe is not to be annihilated and replaced by another not previously in existence any more than such a thing shall take place in reference to our mortal bodies. There shall be "a change, not . . . an exchange."

It was remarked earlier in this dissertation that: "many statements in Scripture pertaining to nature were meant to be informative . . . not merely as information . . . but as information adjunctive to the articles of faith. To question this belief would . . . threaten such articles . . ." <sup>11</sup> It is the same when dealing today with those who would deny the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ -- or our resurrections on the Last Day. Aside from other matters where one might take issue with him, Alan Richardson is correct when he says that:

The fact that the tomb was . . . empty, on Easter Sunday morning appears to be a part of the original *παράδοσις* of the resurrection, and not just a later addition designed for apologetic purposes . . . The notion that the resurrection of Christ was a purely "spiritual" affair, while his corpse remained in the tomb, is a very modern one, which rests upon theories of the impossibility of miracle drawn from nineteenth-century physics. <sup>12</sup>

To bring up this issue is not at all to stray from the main intent of this present dissertation -- the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ is

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p. 40. <sup>11</sup>Supra, pp. 106-108. <sup>12</sup>Richardson, p. 196.

integral to it. If Christ did not rise physically from death neither shall we, and if we shall not -- neither shall the physical universe be materially be set free on the Last Day. It is a "chain reaction" -- one way or the other. St. Paul was absolutely right when he based the entire future of believers on the Resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15:12-23). This is equally true for Creation as a whole.

Richardson also sees the inseparable connection between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the redemption of the "whole creation." He wrote:

The bodily resurrection of Christ is important theologically because it attests the cosmic significance of God's act in raising Christ from the dead. The "whole creation" (Rom. 8:22; cf. Mark 16.15) awaits the redemption, which includes the redemption of the body (cf. Rom. 8.23); the resurrection of Christ in the body guarantees the resurrection of Christians . . .<sup>13</sup>

We might continue Richardson's words by adding to them: "the resurrection of Christians" guarantees the Restoration of Creation as a whole. This because it is eagerly awaiting "the revealing of the sons of God."

It is intriguing that exactly the same word is used both in reference to our "glorified" resurrected bodies and the present, fallen state of creation. This is to say, that "this perishable [body] must put on the imperishable [body] . . ." (1 Cor. 15:53). In both instances here ("perishable" and "imperishable") the word is taken from *φθαρτός*, meaning perishable, subject to decay. This is exactly the same word used to describe the present state of creation in Rom. 8:21. One is led to wonder if creation's liberty from its *δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς* (corruption) shall result in a similar kind of existence as the "imperishable" bodies

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 197.

we are to receive? Bodies set free from all limitations of "time and space"? It is presently best to minimize such wondering, however, since there is no way of knowing. It is enough to know that He who makes all things shall fashion an eternal environment delightfully suitable for our perpetual habitation.

Commenting on Rev. 21:1, R. C. H. Lenski says something which relates to our current consideration. He writes:

The newness of the heaven and of the earth shall be like our own. We shall be the same persons and have the same body and the same soul that we now have; but these made entirely new. Our newness begins with regeneration. Already this the Scriptures call a creation of God . . . so that we are *καὶ νῆ κτίσις* , "a new creation" . . . . After body and soul are glorified, we shall be new-created, indeed. The same is true with regard to the new heaven and the new earth. This is more than an analogy, for man is the creature for whom the first heaven and . . . earth were created, and if he is made new . . . without first having been annihilated . . . shall God annihilate heaven and earth and create ex nihilo another . . . ?<sup>14</sup>

Such reasoning as this is certainly the use of logic -- but, logic founded on the Word of God. There does, indeed, seem to be "more than an analogy" between the resurrection of our own bodies and the restoration of all created things on the Last Day. Such a relationship appears to be the inexorable Scripturally-based logic appropriate to the case. Any other conclusion would seem, then, to be either a misunderstanding of the evidence or a view of interpreting the Bible other than "The Biblical View."

The well-known Danish Systematician, Regin Prenter, sees a very close relationship between the Resurrection, the "world's rebirth," and our worship of God. He wrote: "Derfor er håbet om opstandelsen også et

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<sup>14</sup>R. C. H. Lenski, *St. John's Revelation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963), p. 615.

håb om 'verdens genfødelse.' I menighedens gudstjeneste skal dette heller ikke glemmes."<sup>15</sup> A hope in the resurrection is also a hope in the "world's re-birth." Again, this is the natural analogy between the resurrection of our bodies on the Last Day -- and the Restoration of the earth. "Verdens genfødelse" is better translated from the Danish as the "world's regeneration." This because of its natural relationship to the body of man. As parts of God's Creation Prenter would include the "body and blood of Jesus" (the bread and wine), "the altar flowers," art, organ music, and praise of God offered on other musical instruments as well, An English translation of the above cited work expresses it well:

The resurrection hope contains yet one more thing. Man is man only in context with the world. The nonhuman cosmos is not an indifferent appendage to the human existence. It is given to man by the continual goodness of God as a place in which to live. Therefore the resurrection hope is also a hope of a regenerated world. This must not be forgotten in the church's worship service. Along with the body and blood of Jesus there are also on the altar flowers from our gardens as a testimony that nature also shares in the hope of the glorious freedom of the sons of God. The creation joins in the praise of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . . No Christian worship service, no Christian sacrifice of praise has the right tonal quality unless creation's voice is joined with ours.<sup>16</sup>

This is not only a very practical application of the Bible's teaching on the Restoration of all of Creation, but it seems the proper "Christian" attitude. It seems as if Prenter is setting aright the criticism of Frederick Elder, and endorsing the second view of nature defined by him as follows:

Nature can be understood in at least two contrasting ways. The more common definition of nature is: the physical systems apart from man and his civilization which form man's basic, given environment . . .

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<sup>15</sup> Regin Prenter, *Skabelse Og Genløsning*, 2nd ed., (Kobenhavn: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1955), p. 622.

<sup>16</sup> Regin Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, trans. by Theodor I. Jensen (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 578.

From this view there arises the general tendency to think in terms of . . . man standing over against nature. However, there is another definition of nature which is more comprehensive, for it includes man and his works within its compass. From this view there arises the tendency to think in terms of man . . . as an inextricable part of nature.<sup>17</sup>

Elder does not hold "The Biblical View" of the universe, but he does see the problem clearly. Man can either oppose and exploit nature -- or see himself (at least his body) as "an inextricable part of" it. It is the opinion of the writer of this dissertation that the second alternative is the Biblical teaching. God's revelation on the matter, however, far exceeds any sentimental dreams concerning the "goodness" of Nature.

True, before sin entered the world by man's disobedience -- all Creation was "good." It is still good in many ways -- by God's grace to His fallen creatures. Even so, there is much wrong, twisted and perverted in Nature today. It is impossible for man to live in today's world in the same way that Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. There is no present harmony between man and the created-order. Because of sin, man was expelled from the Garden -- and a "flaming sword . . . turned every way" (Gen. 3:24) bars his premature return. The Garden no longer exists. It was for this very reason, however, that the eternal Son of God came into the world incarnate -- to restore it. Martin H. Franzmann recognizes this and sees Col. 1:15-23 as:

a mighty hymn in praise of Christ in His full glory as Creator and Redeemer . . . . He is God's "image," the perfect manifestation of the "invisible God; the first-born of all creation," the Mediator of creation, antecedent to and Lord over all created beings . . . . As He is Lord of creation, He is also "head of the church; as He is "the first-born of all creation," He is also "the first-born from the dead," the Lord in whom all mankind may find life everlasting.

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<sup>17</sup>Frederick Elder, Crisis in Eden (New York: Abingdon Press, 1970), P. 8.

"In him all the fulness" of the God who willed man's redemption graciously dwelt; in obedience to that will He went into the depths of a criminal's violent death . . . to restore man and all man's fallen world to God.<sup>18</sup>

Christ is the whole of it. He is the beginning and the End of Creation. It was made through Him in the beginning and shall be restored by Him in the End. It is for these reasons that all created things -- in heaven and on earth -- must worship God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ. In anticipation of the restoring of creation to that harmonious state first intended by the Creator, "man and creation" should now "meet one another in an interim relationship of friendship which points forward toward the perfect harmony between man and the co-created universe in glory."<sup>19</sup> If Franzmann is correct, and the "four living creatures" of Rev. 5:14 represent "nature in the service of the Almighty,"<sup>20</sup> then that passage (verses 12-13) reveals God, the omnipotent Creator, receiving the adoration of all Creation. This is as it should be -- and shall be -- forever: "And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.' And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen.'"

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<sup>18</sup>Franzmann, pp. 380-81.

<sup>19</sup>Prenter.

<sup>20</sup>Franzmann, p. 519.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

This final chapter shall be both a summary and a conclusion. Each of the dissertation's seven previous chapters shall be briefly summed up and, where appropriate, conclusions drawn therefrom. To aid the reader, each of those seven chapters will be given a sub-heading in this chapter.

#### Chapter I

Chapter I in this dissertation served as an Introduction to the whole. This dissertation's title, "The Preservation and Restoration of Creation With A Special Reference to Rom. 8:18-23," was divided into parts and each part explained. Such a topic for a dissertation was defended as being integral to the Gospel message. Since man's body is an essential part of God's physical creation it would seem incongruous to suggest that the two have separate eternal fates. The words "Preservation" and "Restoration" were said to be indivisibly related for the purposes of the dissertation since the latter is simply the eternal continuance of the former. The problem to be dealt with was whether the entire universe was to be annihilated on the Last Day and replaced with another not previously in existence -- or whether the universe was to be cleansed by fire and restored?

The Objectives and Methodology followed in developing our subject were: (1) an examination of the Lutheran Confessions relevant to its topic (2) to demonstrate relevant teachings of early Protestant theologians (3) to consult certain Church Fathers along the same line (4) to present two disparate "world pictures" and show thereby how each influenced the interpretation of Scripture pertinent to the topic of this dissertation (5) thorough exegesis of relevant Bible passages -- especially Rom. 8:18-23, and (6) to show how "The Resurrection of the Dead" is the "Key to Creation's Restoration."

The Scope of this dissertation was primarily a thematic one with an overview of Historical Theology, and the essential support of Scripture. Especially was it a "Lutheran" one since the writer of this dissertation wished to learn the teaching of his own tradition concerning the eschatological topic. Many types of material were used in research, from several languages. Frequently this was unavoidable because of the sources consulted. Opposing points of view were presented in an effort to see all sides of the issue.

The contribution hoped for toward the theological endeavor was that a very important -- and comforting -- theme in Scripture, frequently overlooked, would be once more brought to the attention of the Church's teachers and pastors. Also, that a fuller appreciation of Christ's cosmic mediation might result.

## Chapter II

Chapter II of this dissertation dealt with The Book of Concord, that is the Lutheran Confessions. The chapter was divided into six major parts: (1) An attitude Toward the Universe and Its People (2) The Preface

to the Book of Concord (3) The Augsburg Confession (4) The Apology of the Augsburg Confession (5) Words and Terms Used, and (6) Conclusion. Although little was found which explicitly dealt with the topic of this dissertation, a basic "attitude toward the universe and its people" was discovered. That attitude was summarized thusly: (1) the present conditions of the world are to end shortly (2) the Bible prophesies the End-conditions (3) Nature itself is growing more corrupt, weaker and more infirm (4) men are living in the Last Times (5) the world is "passing away" (6) human nature is declining in strength and becoming more corrupt, and (7) through His Gospel, God offers hope to the world.

The basic conclusion drawn from this chapter was that the writers of the Lutheran Confessions had a different "mood" from the one generally held by modern people -- and that that mood is in full accord with the topic of this dissertation. That is, the present "fallen" world is passing away and its only hope of help is in God. No where, however, do the Lutheran Confessions go into detail about how the Gospel of God shall effect the physical universe itself. The writers' views concerning that had to be gleaned from non-Confessional works.

### Chapter III

Chapter III of this dissertation dealt with Martin Luther and the Age of Lutheran Orthodoxy. This chapter was divided into four major parts entitled (1) Martin Luther and Phillip Melanchthon (2) Early Lutheran Dogmaticians (3) Representatives of the New View, and (4) Causes which gave rise to the new Annihilation-Replacement theory. Each of these major divisions were further sub-divided.

A main concern of this chapter was to learn what the men closest to the time of the writing of the Lutheran Confessions believed relevant to the topic of this dissertation. It was discovered that Luther and Melanchthon (Confessional writers) held opinions very close to Rom. 8: 18-23 and believed in the Restoration of the world on the Last Day. They did not believe that the universe would be annihilated and replaced by another not previously in existence. The same was true of the earliest Lutheran dogmaticians who followed them, represented in this dissertation by John Brenz and Philipp Nicolai.

Around 1600 a "new view" came into being among the Lutheran dogmaticians, primarily through the influence of John Gerhard. This new view broke sharply with the "traditional" view of Luther and others, teaching the annihilation of the universe on the Last Day. Many "orthodox" Lutherans followed Gerhard, such as Andrew Quenstedt and David Hollaz. Even the "un-orthodox" George Calixt came to hold the same view. Unfortunately, this "new view" came to dominate the theological world.

Causes giving rise to the "new" Annihilation-Replacement theory of the universe's End were also considered. In short, it was a changed view of the life-after-death. A type of "place of the holy" was substituted for Luther's "bodily" heaven. This opinion is still widespread today.

The conclusion drawn from the research which went into this chapter was that much of today's eschatological thinking is far removed from the attitudes and opinions held by our Reformation-era forebears. The change came around 1600.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV consulted Other Testimonies, that is, Christian teachers living in the centuries preceding -- with one exception -- the Protestant Reformation. This chapter was divided into seven sections which were: (1) Introduction (2) Irenaeus (3) Origen (4) Augustine (5) Bede (6) Aquinas, and (7) John Calvin. The last was included to demonstrate a prominent Christian teacher during the Reformation period, but outside the Lutheran tradition.

All of the men named above held the "traditional" Restoration view of the universe's End -- although Origen a very aberrant form of it. The time of their labors span fourteen centuries, from roughly 200 to 1600 A.D. They were residents of Europe, Africa, and Asia. This scope was demonstrated to show the persistence and ubiquity of the Restoration interpretation of Scripture. All the more, then, does the Annihilation-Replacement theory appear "new" when it arose in the Seventeenth Century.

As already stated, all of the above-mentioned men taught the Restoration interpretation of Scripture. Irenaeus' teaching, not without its idiosyncrasies, was remarkably close to St. Paul's understanding -- although he tended to stray into a crass type of materialism. Augustine and Bede generally followed Irenaeus. Calvin was much influenced by the Bishop of Hippo. Origen, as mentioned above, was rather bizarre in his treatment of the subject, and Thomas Aquinas tended toward Rationalism. With the exception of Origen, however, all of them teach basically the same thing about the earth's restoration on the Last Day.

The conclusion drawn from the work concomitant with this chapter was that the Restoration theology was the one always held by the greatest teachers of the Church -- until around 1600.

#### Chapter V

Chapter V dealt with the World Pictures of more modern theologians. The intent of this chapter was to illustrate how varying "world pictures" lead to different interpretations of Scripture -- especially as these relate to the topic of this dissertation.

This chapter was divided into just two major sections: "The Biblical View" and "The Rationalistic View." An Introduction preceded them. Since numerous men had already been consulted who held the Biblical View that section was only a brief statement concerning such a view with about six men referred to in it. Four prominent theologians were considered under the heading "The Rationalistic View," however. These men were: Rudolf Bultmann, Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Jürgen Moltmann. Karl Barth was the most encouraging of the four, but he, too, offered little in the way of eschatological specifics -- no doubt, because of an underlying Rationalistic view of the Biblical revelation. Emil Brunner was bolder in his rejection of certain Scriptural teachings -- especially one relating directly to the topic of this dissertation. Rudolf Butlmann came out clearest of all in his assertion that the basic structure of the Bible's eschatology is mere "myth." Jürgen Moltmann appeared most eschatologically concerned -- until one realized what he meant, and did not mean, by the term. He was prone to use Biblical-sounding words, but meant something quite other by them. This was a

general characteristic of all four of the men handled, another demonstration of their common "Rationalistic View."

The conclusion drawn from reading the four men named above is the conviction that one cannot derive Scriptural truths from the Bible when holding a Rationalistic view of the universe. One's conclusions are derived in large part from one's primary assumptions. To take seriously the words of Scripture one must assume that they are the inspired Word of God.

#### Chapter VI

Chapter VI dealt with Rom. 8:18-23 and Supporting Passages. It was assumed that no clear and sure answer to the question whether the universe's End would be one of Annihilation-Replacement or Cleansing-Restoration would be attained without a sure grounding in the appropriate Scriptural passages. Exegetical scholars from various traditions and points of view were consulted -- and a remarkable consensus was discovered. Either the exegete agreed with St. Paul's teaching on the universe's ultimate Restoration -- or, at least, he granted that that was St. Paul's understanding. Only two men were discovered by the writer of this dissertation who openly challenged St. Paul's teaching in that regard. The first (not an exegete himself) denied that the Bible teaches a "Fall," and called Paul's remarks in Romans 8 "dark and controversial."<sup>1</sup> The second felt that the *οχημα* of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 7:31 refers to the "world" itself rather than to its "form"<sup>2</sup> -- a contradiction of the word's basic meaning! Both of these men felt that Paul's remarks in Rom. 8:18-23 referred only to the people of the world -- not to the material universe

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, pp. 127-30. <sup>2</sup>Supra, p.

itself, Aside from these two scholars, however, there was surprising agreement concerning what the great Apostle meant. Those with a Biblical View" tended to accept the Restoration interpretation while those with the "Rationalistic View" at least admitted that Paul himself held that view.

The "Supporting Passages" of this chapter were intended to help in the correct interpretation of the dissertation's basic text, Rom. 8: 18-23. Besides 1 Cor. 7:31, Rev. 21:1, Is. 65:17, Is.66:22, and 2 Peter 3:7-13. Not only was a harmony found between the Greek New Testament passages, but also between the Hebrew Old Testament references. This was true in contextual meaning and according to the definitions of very significant words in each text. A study of the Old Testament pericopes shed light on how the New Testament writers used them and what they intended to convey by their use of them. A conclusion drawn from this was that the Restoration teaching extends throughout the Scriptures whether the writers be men separated by time, culture or language. Again, the several scholars consulted agreed with this. Whatever their own private opinions, they largely conceded that all the passages named above taught the Restoration view of the universe. Indeed, such a view was demanded by both the words used and the cosmological concept of the Bible writers -- be they in the Eighth Century B.C. or the First Century A.D.

Much attention was given 2 Peter 3:7-13 because of its pivotal significance in the effort to determine the Bible's teaching concerning the universe's ultimate fate -- whether it be Annihilation-Replacement or Cleansing-Restoration. By looking carefully at St. Peter's parallel between the Flood of Noah's day and the Fire of a later Day it was

concluded by the writer of this dissertation that he never intended to convey the idea that our universe was to be annihilated and replaced by another not previously in existence. This was concluded by both a thorough investigation of the Greek words used and Peter's use of Is. 65:17. What was also confirmed, however, is that a "fire" of unprecedented intensity shall utterly "melt" the very elements of our universe -- and remove all traces of evil. The major focus is precisely here! Are the "elements" to remain "destroyed" -- or are they to be marvellously reconstituted into "the new heavens and a new earth"? It was the second of these options that was the conclusion of this dissertation's writer.

#### Chapter VII

Chapter VII of this dissertation dealt with The Resurrection of the Dead: Key to Creation's Restoration. This chapter was accorded no subdivisions since its central thought remained uniform throughout. That is, it was the glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ -- primarily -- and the future resurrection of all believers on the Last Day -- secondarily -- that is the "key" to Creation's future Restoration.

Not only was the Son of God (the Word) active in the creation of the universe, but He has continued to uphold it (Preservation). Moreover, it was created "through and for" Him. He is its Lord. Therefore, when Creation "fell" because of man's sin -- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, entered the fallen world in order to redeem and restore it. Foremost in this divine effort was the salvation of man since he was the crown of God's creation. By His sacrificial death on the cross, Christ broke Satan's hold on the fallen world and set men free from their slavery to the fear of death. By His Resurrection from the dead -- as a

"first-fruits" -- Jesus promises the same victory over death to all who trust and follow Him. This culminates in our own resurrection from the dead when the Lord Jesus returns in glory on the Last Day. One more thing, however.

Just as the earth was "cursed" because of man's sin and thereby subjected to the bondage of corruption so, too, when the "sons of God" are raised incorruptible on the Last Day -- "creation itself also will be set free from the slavery of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21). It is in this sense, therefore, that The Resurrection of the Dead (is the): Key to Creation's Restoration. This concept is no appendage to the Bible's teaching nor of merely exotic or peripheral interest -- it is central and essential! God made matter. Our bodies are made of matter. The material creation of the universe has been no "grand failure" which God needs erase from His record. He does not annihilate and replace -- He cleans and restores.

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