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# THE BIBLICAL TEACHING ON THE ESCHATOLOGICAL VISION OF GOD

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

by

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THE VISION OF GOD

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#### CHAPTER I

#### INTRODUCTION

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). In this makarism Jesus crystallized a number of free-floating elements and created a phrase of power and pathos, which has demonstrated an enormous endurance and appeal.

Few miracles are more impressive than those worked with words. And one occurred when two of the commonest terms in any tongue or language, "see" and "God," combined to form one of the most powerful phrases in the history of religions, "see God." This paper proposes to study that phrase. Equally interesting and instructive would be a study of the opposite combination, "God sees." That, too, is important, but it is not for this paper to investigate.

But is the so-called "vision of God" important? Does it hold a position of any prominence or significance in the larger context of the New Testament message? That question can be countered and answered in a preliminary way with another. What could be more fundamental than the doctrine of the reality of God and the assertion that man, to be fully and really human, must know God? And that is the very least that the doctrine of the beatific vision teaches. What more it means remains to be seen.

Just why God's reality and man's destiny came to be phrased in terms of man's seeing God is a hard nut to crack. So also is the question of the relationship of the vision of God with other metaphors or symbols of man's fellowship with and enjoyment of God.

Nevertheless, for whatever reasons and whatever the specific content of the notion may be, the vision holds an indisputably large place in all the developed eschatologies of ancient civilizations and cultures. The very fact that the vision of God has gained wide currency and enjoyed considerable vogue in diverse regions, religions and philosophies makes one immediately suspicious that it probably means pretty nearly what the user wants it to mean. To it cling ambiguities and various shades of meaning. It may prove to be a regular chameleon.

As far as the contemporary use of the phrase goes, it seems that it does not convey so much intellectual content as emotional adrenalin—what Arthur O. Lovejoy called "metaphysical pathos." Protestants generally tend to neglect the notion of seeing God except in their devotional literature, where it has no precisely defined cognitive content but serves as a phrase of great emotional or affective value, such as "mother," "God," or "America." It is a traditional and time—honored term, which is so vague that anyone is free to fill it with whatever content he chooses.

A study of the New Testament references to "seeing God" is overdue, and the lack of such a study, in view of the interest in eschatology since the cataclysmic days of World War II, is somewhat surprising but not entirely inexplicable.

Current literature, including works on eschatology, has a blind spot when it comes to the vision of God. Just to give one example, H. A. Guy in his slender volume on New Testament eschatology does not even mention

Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1936), p. 11.

the vision of God as an object of the hope of the primitive Church.<sup>2</sup>

Paul Althaus in his textbook on eschatology has little to say about the vision. "To see God" means that the veiling of God by the present world-reality and His invisibility in view of the form of this world will cease. The struggle of faith for certainty about God, His power and His love will issue in fulfillment. Men will then experience God's love immediately, and they will give themselves to it completely. The vision of God is the consummated fellowship with God. It is eternal life.<sup>3</sup> Throughout his book Althaus describes the consummation in terms of the kingdom, and he expounds the kingdom as new life in a new world.

When one searches for reasons why evangelical writers are fond of ignoring or denigrating the vision of God, one finds that it is widely regarded as the private property of Roman Catholics, and that they are welcome to it. There is some historical justification for this point of view. Protestants, especially of the American variety, are activistic, not contemplative, and all brands are kingdom-minded. Calvin's stress on God's sovereignty and Luther's emphasis on the Word of God are well-known. Luther called the church a Hörreich and not a Sehreich, a place for speech and hearing, not for visions and displays. The church lives by the will of God expressed in His Word. The covenant theology, given classic expression by the theological labors of John Coccejus in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>H. A. Guy, <u>The New Testament Doctrine of the Last Things</u> (London: Oxford University Press, 1948).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Paul Althaus, <u>Die Letzten Dinge</u> (Gütersloh: Carl Bertelsmann Verlag, 1956), p. 119.

middle of the seventeenth century, replaced the older <u>loci</u> method of most orthodox theologians by taking as unifying principle a central Biblical teaching. The covenant and the kingdom are leitmotifs of Coccejus' work, which altered the course of Calvinist theology and was not without effect in other branches of Christendom. Today Protestants still recognize covenant and kingdom as the central Biblical and Christian motifs.

H. Richard Niebuhr in his well-known interpretation of American Protestantism organizes his material and analyzes "the kingdom of God" under three rubrics: the sovereignty of God, the experience of the loving reign of Christ, and hope in the coming kingdom. He writes that by way of contrast "Roman Catholicism tended to think of God as the eternal perfection of goodness, beauty and truth to the vision of which the church led its children."5 The Reformers were not so much interested in God's changeless perfection as in His forceful reality, activity and power. In a brief but comprehensive comparison of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism Niebuhr says that, speaking philosophically, the Reformers were nominalists rather than realists. Of course, they must not be described primarily in philosophical terms, because their religious insight was guided rather by the prophets. Speaking ethically, they were formalists, emphasizing obedience to the commandment, while Catholics were oriented in a fundamentally teleclogical way. But they were not primarily ethicists. Religious rather than metaphysical or ethical terminology

Harper and Brothers, c.1937. Kingdom of God in America (New York:

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

must be used to describe them. Niebuhr writes that the distinction between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant views may be summarized in the contrast between visio Dei and regnum Dei. Niebuhr himself prudently offers a caveat, and he warns that the fundamental agreement between the Christianity of the vision and that of the kingdom must not be obscured. In his own words, "Whether we say visio Dei or regnum Dei, 'God's first,' in Thomas More's phrase."

Influenced by existentialist philosophy and by the renaissance or flowering of exegetical studies and by the new interest in the Reformation, modern Protestant theology has discovered answ the rightness of Pascal's confession to God in his remarkable "Memorial" of November 23, 165h: "God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; not of the philosophers and scientists." The vision of God seems too static, too intellectualized and spiritualized, too Greek and philosophical. On the other hand, the new exegesis declares that the Bible gives the primacy to hearing God's Word and doing His will, obeying God instead of contemplating Him.

Ethelbert Stauffer neatly summed up the difference between Plato and the prophets by saying that the Greeks perceived the eternal harmony of the spheres, while the New Testament writers heard the march of universal history. But even Stauffer writes that the end and goal of history will arrive when the doxophany comes at last into unhindered display,

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 19f.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Ethelbert Stauffer, New <u>Testament Theology</u>, translated by John Marsh (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 76.

when God lifts the veil from His face and pours out the fulness of His glory. And this is no Romanizing lapse from the evangelical faith.

For all his massive emphasis on the word of God and faith, Martin Luther knew that the vision of God was not just a pet phrase of Thomas or of Aristotle but belonged to Biblical eschatology. Luther wrote,

When we come to heaven we shall see Him in another fashion without intermediary or darkness, but here on earth you will not see Him with your senses and thoughts, but as St. Paul says, we see Him in a dark word or covered image, namely in Word and Sacrament that are at once His "larvae" or masks and the clothes whereunder He is hidden. But He is most surely there and present and Himself does miracles, preaches and gives the Sacraments, hears, strengthens and helps and we also see Him yet as a man sees the sun through the clouds. For we cannot yet suffer the clear sight and showing forth of His Majesty, and so it must be covered and veiled and behind a thick cloud. 10

The many and various statements in the New Testament concerning "seeing God" are both prominent and ineradicable; yet they are pilgrims and exiles seeking a home in the midst of a contemporary reawakening of interest in matters eschatological. This is by no means to say that the Roman Catholic teaching on the vision of God ought to be taken over by the Evangelicals lock, stock and barrel, in order to repair the breach. Surely our Lord and His apostles taught that the pure in heart will one day see God. But just as surely has this notion been given a variety of interpretations and not all of them are compatible with the Biblical revelation.

A word or two should be said on the scope, intention and method of the present study. The paper is planned as an essay in Biblical theology,

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>10</sup>Quoted by Gordon Rupp, The Righteousness of God (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1953), p. 320.

primarily that of the New Testament. It will interpret the relevant passages and set them into the context of the rest of the eschatological teaching of the New Testament within the framework of the Gospel and show what the New Testament means by seeing God. The sayings have yet a wider context, since "the vision" was one of the favorite ways of describing the acme of religious experience in the ancient world. The Old Testament hope and the subsequent developments in Judaism will be delineated in contrast to and in relation with the viewpoints of the Hellenic and the Hellenistic worlds of thought. The paper will study and question the correctness of the widespread assumption that Greek thought is peculiarly related to seeing, while Hebrew thought is oriented towards hearing. It will be useful also to devote some attention to the question of the possible source of the New Testament idea.

The evolution and convolutions of the phrase in the history of the Church cannot be described in this paper. But the lessons and the issues which are the heritage of the church from her history will be kept in mind, so that the essay may speak a word relevant to the contemporary situation by permitting the Biblical witness to cast its light into the current clouded conflict about eschatology and the present lack of interest in the vision of God.

#### CHAPTER II

#### A SURVEY OF RECENT INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter will chronicle the exegetical work that has been done in recent years on those passages of the Old Testament and the New Testament which speak about seeing God or seeing God's face. By recording agreements and disagreements among scholars, it will point to the unfinished tasks. Matters referred to in this chapter will sometimes appear again in later chapters. A certain amount of repetition cannot be avoided. It must be borne in mind that this chapter attempts primarily to state the views of the authors cited without criticism. Enough of a writer's argument is reproduced to enable the reader to grasp the essence of his position.

#### Baudissin

The first major exegetical study which commands attention is an essay by W. W. Grafen Baudissin. In his day seeing God was often interpreted as intellectual perception. Baudissin hints broadly that such exegesis tacitly assumes a dependence of the New Testament passages on a Judaism much influenced by the language of the Hellenistic mysteries, which pictured the high point of religious experience as a seeing (offer) or contemplation (offer).

Baudissin was a charter member of the Religionsgeschichtliche Schule,

W. W. Grafen Baudissin, "'Gott schauen' in der alttestamentlichen Religion," Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, XVIII (1915), 173-239.

which attacked the ruling rationalism of the nineteenth century. Rationalism had viewed the Old Testament as a record of the evolution of ethical monotheism from polytheistic and superstitious beginnings. Baudissin and other members of the history of religions approach acted not from any orthodox bias but on the basis of the historical method, relentlessly and rigorously applied. One prominent feature of the newer approach was a positive valuation of the cultic material in the Old Testament, which was not and indeed could not be appreciated by the older rationalism. Perhaps Baudissin overemphasizes the importance of the cult and is guilty of mistakes for which later writers on the subject take him to task.

His work nevertheless stands as one of the first attempts to listen carefully and seriously to the Scriptures on the subject of seeing God. It is a pioneer study. Up to the time when Baudissin wrote the vision had had two major interpreters: scholasticism and mysticism. They had developed theories of the vision in Aristotelain and neo-Platonic terms respectively.

Baudissin is himself most concerned to counter the widespread notion that seeing God refers to the attainment of special knowledge. He quickly shows that all the beatitudes comprehend the whole treasure of the completed salvation. And he declares that seeing God probably means the perception of a heavenly form of God which is not denied to the eyes of the future corporeality of the children of God. The expression promises access to God unhindered by any limits and the fulfillment of all spiritual longing and yearning.

But the question is why this blessing is stated as a seeing of God.

According to Baudissin the Old Testament speaks only once, not counting
the seeing of God in visions and theophanies, of an actually experienced

seeing of God. A number of passages speak of the eschatological vision (Ps. 17:5; 11:7) or of discerning God's hand in the governance of this world (Is. 38:11; Job 33:26) or in storms (Job 19:26f.). The one instance which Baudissin counts is Psalm 63:3. That verse also gives the clue to the origin or source of the phrase.

Psalm 63 refers to an experience in the temple. Baudissin shows that the Psalmist is influenced by the very old conception according to which seeing the face of God means the same as visiting the temple. The Massoretes, however, in any number of passages changed "see the face of God" to "appear before the face of God," simply by changing the Qal to the Niphal. For them "appear before the face of God" clearly means "visit the temple."

The statement that the Qal is the original is strengthened by the fact that the expression, "see someone's face," is often used in the Old Testament for an appearance before a superior, especially before a king. This royal use is not to be separated from the cultic use. Comparing Massoretic readings with the Peshitta, the Targums, and the Samaritan text, Baudissin finds corroboration for the conclusion stated above.

The Massoretes were offended for two reasons. Later Judaism developed the dogma of the spirituality and invisibility of God. And Hebrew
thought had long contained the belief that no man can see God and live.

Related to seeing the face of God is the phrase, "God let Himself be seen." Sometimes the event is naively or even rather crudely related. But in every case the entire emphasis is on the grace of God in granting revelation and certainly not on the visibility of God. Nevertheless the manner of speaking does rest ultimately on the notion that God has been or can be seen. And then the Old Testament reports a whole series of

the ophanies and seeing in visions, which are not strictly compatible with the doctrine of God's invisibility or with the prohibition against seeing God.

Thus Baudissin isolates two conflicting strands in the Old Testament. It says both that God cannot and may not be seen and also that certain select persons have seen God. The idea that it is possible to see God, because of its agreements with a manner of speaking in non-Israelite ground, which are not to be viewed as mere analogies, has non-Israelite origin. And Baudissin believes that the opposite idea, the impossibility of seeing Yahweh, is connected with old Hebraic faith and cultus.

Much of the rest of Baudissin's essay delves into the question of the origin of the non-Israelite notion of seeing God. The Assyrians and Babylonians used the phrase, "see the face of God," in two different senses. It meant on the one hand to look to God or more generally to honor the deity and serve him. On the other hand it meant to appear before a god by participating in his cult or by seeing his image. Baudissin believes that the Egyptians used the phrase, "see God," in the sense of seeing the image of the god. And he therefore believes that the phrase meant the same among the Babylonians.

In the Eleusinian mysteries notions current in Babylonian and Egyptian religion lived on. In the mysteries the seeing constituted the mysterious zenith of the religious rite and was permitted only to the initiated, the epoptes. Baudissin believes that it is clear that the seeing meant seeing images or pictures of the god. And he then interprets the Hellenistic mysteries and their expressions, "see or contemplate God," in the same sense.

It is not a case of a Semitic construction common to Babylonians and

Jews. This is clearly established by the fact that the conception of seeing God is contradicted in the Old Testament by the genuinely Israelite notion that man cannot see God. Nor is it a case of direct Israelite borrowing from the Babylonians.

Both the notion that man can see God and that he cannot see God are very old. What probably happened is that the Canaanites borrowed terminology from the Babylonians and spoke of worshiping in the temple as "seeing the face of God." When the Israelites invaded Canaan, they took over Canaanite sanctuaries and Canaanite cultic terms. Babylonians, Egyptians and Canaanites used the terminology literally, but Yahwism was always a rigidly aniconic religion and therefore could not simply follow suit.

The Israelites had their cult objects, of course. In most ancient times they had their teraphim or penates. And later there was the ark. When the Israelites settled in Canaan they adopted a number of Canaanite practices and began to think of cult objects in the sanctuary as representations or visualizations of the presence of the deity.

The older Hebrew cult conceived God as a storm-deity who spoke through thunder and lightning but who could not be identified with any object in nature. This is the thought which the prophets followed out and developed. God came to be conceived of as incorporeal and references to seeing Him were altered in the Old Testament text. And "see the face of Yahweh" came to mean worshiping God in the temple.

But another view of "God's face" was current in Old Testament times.

"To see God's face" is not as strong as "to see God." The face meant a

particular side of Yahweh's being, not His whole divine being. It designated His revelatory presence especially for His people or for pious individuals. This means that the phrase, "see God's face," underwent a

spiritualizing process. The result was that neither the face nor the seeing was meant literally.

A similar development is observed in the more direct form, "to see God." Thus when the Old Testament speaks of seeing God or seeing His glory, it is not necessarily an appearance in visible form that is meant. One should rather think in terms of an inner experience of God's presence by a man.

Never in the Old Testament or in rabbinic theology did the notion of the immateriality of God achieve final dogmatic definition. God was always conceived as more or less corporeal. As a corollary, His dwelling or presence was thought to be locally circumscribed. Amos, Isaiah and Ezekiel report visions and evidently conceived God as having a form which He showed men when He appeared. Jeremiah is farthest removed from the mythological—sensible conceptions of earlier times and does not report any vision of God.

There is development in the Old Testament away from material conceptions of God toward spirituality. One step in the development is marked by the fact that after Solomon appearances of God are no longer reported. The theophany to Elijah is only an apparent contradiction. The priestly writers speak of epiphanies in the time of the patriarchs as special blessings belonging to an earlier and ideal time.

Later it is no longer said that men see God. Seeing in visions is
the one exception. Only in the eschaton will the people see God. As the
concept of God is more and more spiritualized, the notion of seeing God
retreats farther and farther into the background. That appearances of
God and the notion of God's local limitation go hand in hand is seen in
the fact that even apart from the formula, "seeing God's face," there is

a connection between seeing God and cultic places right into the latest times.

There are, however, a number of poetic passages from early times which seem to be an exception to the rule that seeing was conceived in ancient times as occurring always in the temple. In those cases there is no real exception, however. Here Baudissin makes a sharp distinction between ratah and chazah. Ratah always refers to outer, objective, literal, real sense perception. Chazah can mean an inner, subjective, metaphorical seeing. Chazah is used to describe the personal and intimate relationship of the pious man and God. The pious, like the prophet, sees what God is for the people and for himself as an individual.

That the vision of God in a future life is firmly established and well known in Judaism makes one think that it could be found in the Old Testament, too. But all in all the Old Testament looks not beyond this life but to consummation within history. Under Persian and Greek influence Judaism developed an otherworldly eschatology in the late, postexilic period. Because of this development in the outlook of Judaism it is very unlikely that in the New Testament sayings there is any influence from the language of the Hellenistic mystery religions, where the vision of God marks the acms of present, earthly experience. To Baudissin the shoe seems to be on the other foot. He writes that it seems to him to be quite possible that the conception of the Hellenistic mysteries concerning seeing God, a conception which is not explained from old Greek modes of thought, goes back finally to the same origins as the Biblical vision of God and has its source in those ancient oriental, Egyptian and Babylonian, designations of going to the temple or viewing the image as a seeing of God.

Baudissin hopes that he has demonstrated that the Biblical expression, "see God," used of an inner experience or of that which one hopes for in the future life arose out of the old formula for visiting the temple, that this goes back to the belief that in the sanctuary one sees the deity himself in looking at his image, and that this stands in contrast to the ancient Hebraic cult, which seems to have had no images of God, and to the ancient Hebraw idea that seeing God resulted in death. The genuine Hebraic line leads from the original aniconic worship of Yahweh to the later developed notion of the spirituality of God. That which came from foreign sources was altered to fit the Hebrew pattern.

What is the content or value of the vision for man? In the first place it is the highest experience or privilege which man can be given. Then it must be said that it is not the gift of any kind of gnosis. Baudissin clearly says, "Theoretical knowledge of God plays absolutely no role in the Old Testament." Baudissin says that in late Judaism Philo, for example, developed the view that the vision is the highest kind of knowledge, but this notion is not found in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament seeing God is nothing but the absolutely firm conviction of the nearness of God. Not the seeing itself but the nearness granted by the seeing is the real blessing. When the Old Testament wishes to talk about fellowship with God, it does not speak of God entering into man or of man being absorbed into God. The yearning for access to God and fellowship with Him is fulfilled by seeing understood as coming near to God. Seeing God means the same as having God.

A religion of pure transcendence is unthinkable. Absolute exaltation

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

of the deity would make religion impossible. The Old Testament compromises the transcendence of God in the least possible degree by saying that men can or will see God.

#### Nötscher

In 1924 Friedrich Nötscher, then lecturer at the University of Würzburg, published a monograph on the vision of God in Old Testament times. He began by looking as though he would take a narrower view than Baudissin. He declares his intention to study "face" and "seeing the face. But soon he is cutting a wider path by far than the one hewn by Baudissin. He investigates all kinds of appearances, angelophanies, theophanies, and revelations in dream and vision. Indeed Nötscher broadens out until it begins to look as though he will make a full-blown study of revelation in the Old Testament.

Two further basic differences between Baudissin and Nötscher may be mentioned here just briefly. Nötscher is more interested than Baudissin in the relationship between hearing and seeing, vision and audition. He is sufficiently critical of Religionsgeschichte to question whether everything good occurs at the temple or is influenced by the cult. It will be seen that Nötscher contests the generalizations of Baudissin as well as some of his detailed exegesis.

God or an angel of God appeared to men on special occasions and only seldom. Seeing the Lord is meant literally, although the figure of Yalweh is not described, except that it was evidently a human form that

Friedrich Nötscher, Das Angesicht Gottes Schauen nach biblischer und babylonischer Auffassung (Würzburg: C. J. Becker, 1924).

appeared and was seen. An appearance is an awful moment, for the common view was that one cannot see God and live.

God revealed Himself to Moses more directly and intimately even than to the prophets (Num. 12:6ff.). Eye to eye (Num. 14:14) and face to face mean the same as directly, personally, with no foreign intermediary. But the phrases do not describe literal seeing, as the theophanies to the patriarchs and others do.

In almost all cases of appearances the word and not the vision is central. This becomes an important theme within Nötscher's treatment, and it is a notion that has been emphasized increasingly in Biblical studies since Nötscher wrote. Sometimes the word is accompanied by extraordinary appearances in nature, so that Exodus 20:22 can say, "You yourself have seen that I have spoken to you from heaven." Revelation in dreams usually makes known God's intention. Thus even though the verb "to see" is employed, it is a matter more of hearing than of seeing God.

Nötscher declares that the spiritualizing process which Baudissin discerns in the Old Testament is not supported by the evidence. Nötscher furthermore disputes Baudissin's contention that theophanies and visions usually and regularly occur in the temple or a cult-place. Nötscher claims that Baudissin has reversed the real order. God does not appear in a place because it is a cult-place, but where God appears there cult-places arise and receive special names. Nötscher seems to have the better of the argument.

Among the many other ways in which God appears two more may be singled out. God appears in the cloud. It is the sign of the presence or the glory of Yahweh. It serves Him as a veil, when He appears to the

whole people. God reveals Himself also through His help, which one recognizes not with the eyes but with the understanding and the powers of reflection. Nötscher sums up the results of his study thus far by saying that the appearing of God does not always and necessarily make it possible to see Him, neither in the real nor in the visionary sense. To say, "God has appeared," is not the same as saying, "One has seen Him."

"To appear" can also refer to the experience of a revelation of God through His word or through His help. The real and even the visionary seeing of God's form occurs only in relatively few cases.

It is at all times, and not just in the most ancient times, as
Baudissin would have it, pure grace if those who see God are spared
death. Even in later Israel the effect of seeing God—death or blessing—
depended on the ethical condition of the ones who did the seeing. The
old rule that one who sees God must die admittedly presupposes the possibility of seeing God. But Exodus 33 shows that even between God and
the most elect man a great gulf is fixed, and no man can ever fully
plumb the secrets of God.

Nötscher disagrees with Baudissin concerning the meaning of "God's face." To Baudissin it means a particular aspect of God's being, His self-revelation to His people. But Nötscher contends that no essential distinction exists between the face of Yahweh and the person of Yahweh, except in a very few passages.

The peoples of the ancient near East thought as concretely as possible. One must therefore look behind the formula, "see God's face," for a concrete idea. Close to hand is the notion of looking at an image of the god. Although images had no official place in the religion of Yahweh, Baudissin believes that the Israelites borrowed the notion of

Babylonians and Canaanites did have images of gods in their temples.

But other concrete ideas and bases are possible.

Seeing someone's face means in Hebrew that someone comes into view, that a meeting occurs (Gen. 32:21). To see the king's face is a favor not given to everyone (Ex. 10:28f.). He who is in disfavor may not see it, that is, he is not permitted an audience (2 Sam. 14:24,28,32). It is a great favor to be permitted to see the king's face constantly, that is, to be in his service. Baudissin denies that the Hebrew phrase has this note of service. It is not, of course, the only note but also included is the notion of experiencing grace and favor. However, it is certainly true that to see God's face does not mean to serve Him.

"To see God's face" and "to be in the temple" are two things, between which the Israelite in his conception makes no distinction. This conceptual equation must have been made already before the formula was adopted by Yahwism and used of visiting the temple. But no reason exists for denying Babylonian influence, especially in view of the fact that around 1300 B. C. in the Amarna period Accadian was the ordinary language of diplomacy and commerce in Canaan, and exchanges between Mesopotamia and the West were very much alive. It is altogether possible that the cult borrowed Eastern terminology, not matter how vigorously Yahwism opposed idolatry and paganism.

Several elements worked together to introduce the usage to Israel.

The narratives of the ancient theophanies cannot be counted among the influences operating, since this specific terminology was not used of theophanies. Furthermore the notion that one cannot see God and live is bound up closely with theophanies. The fact that one could speak so

freely and easily of visiting the temple as a seeing of God's face shows that not the ophanic appearances but some less realistic, more spiritual seeing is in mind.

The dwelling of God above the ark favored the terminology. That presence was invisible, but faith was certain of it. The ark was the sign of God's grace. The possibility of seeing God in the sanctuary was bound up with the ark and was conceived of as a blessing and grace, for which even the king was grateful. The emphasis lies not on serving God but on seeking His favor. Only such a conception can explain how the vision of God, especially when separated from the temple, finally became the essence of the highest blessing. Serving God is not absolutely excluded, but it is not the main thrust.

In Canaanite religion the devotees kissed the images of the gods.

But in the Old Testament the expression, "caress God's face" (1 Sam. 13:

12; Mal. 1:9; Ps. 119:58), definitely means "to seek or woo God's favor,

to appease God's wrath."

Man does not necessarily and always see God every time God appears.

And when the Old Testament does say that one sees God, that does not mean that God is literally visible. It is only a figure of speech for the fact of divine help and grace, given to man. When the vision of God is loosed from the temple and conceived "mystically," it receives the meaning, "to be blessed by God in the highest way."

The transition from temple visit to mystical vision is observed in some pealms. The assurance of God's grace and help is most immediate in the temple (Ps. 63:3; 23:6; 8h:11; 27:h; h2:3). The spatial and the mystical are interlocked and interwoven in the temple. The temple is itself a symbol, namely of God's nearness. Later the temple and the

blessing came to be distinguished.

A further step is taken when the extra-cultic vision of God is thought to endure beyond death. Job talks of "seeing God in the land of the living" (Job 33:26). It means that one experiences His goodness, favor and gracious care towards one (cf. Ps. 27:13).

The vision of God, for Job the content of all salvation and fortune, is untouched by death. He sees God in spite of death. How it happens Job leaves unanswered. He does not teach resurrection, but he does teach a continued existence unlike the present (Job 19:26f.). Also in a number of psalms (Ps. ll:hff.; 16:ll; 21:7; 73) it is taught that the righteous, in their nearness to God and in fellowship with God, possess a blessing which does not end with life on this earth.

In the Old Testament the eternal, otherworldly vision of God is not presented with perfect clarity. The New Testament conception and usage are nevertheless prepared for by that of the Old Testament. The New Testament expectation that man will see God in the future life is by no means of Persian origin. And the vision of God in the Greek mysteries is something entirely different from that of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The vision of God in the apocrypha and in post-Biblical, Judaistic literature on the one hand and in the New Testament on the other is a continuation of the Old Testament. It consists in the first place not in knowledge but in nearness of God and fellowship with God. Baudissin and Nötscher agree emphatically on this point.

In the New Testament the vision of God is the expression for the spiritual fellowship which binds the blessed to God and for the unlimited possession of God. But in some New Testament passages the emphasis is

more on the perfected knowledge of the divine essence than on fellowship (1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Tim. 6:16; John 1:18). Here Nötscher begins to talk like a scholastic philosopher. These passages make it clear that seeing God means having exact and sufficient knowledge of God and of divine things as opposed to this-worldly faith, which is incomplete and uncertain, merely mediate knowledge.

Nevertheless Nötscher still says that for the major New Testament passages seeing God is not a species of knowledge but a gracious fellowship. That is shown by the emphasis on the exclusion of sin and by the emphasis on a pure heart and righteousness as prerequisite for the vision. And those who see God are His servants.

Those who see God will participate in the divine life, life in the emphatic sense, the opposite of the second death. And they will see Christ's glory, and they will see God not merely in His revelation through Christ but as He is in Himself (1 John 3:2). In the New Testament life, eternal blessedness, and seeing God are interchangeable terms.

## Dobschützl

Ernst von Dobschütz has noted that there is in the New Testament no theory of the five senses, such as is found in Greek philosophy or such as played so great a role in the writings of Philo. Von Dobschütz thinks this fact is significant. It shows that primitive Christianity is a complete stranger to philosophical theories. At the time when he wrote the essay here under review, Dobschütz was attempting to define the uniqueness

Ernst von Dobschütz, "Die fünf Sinne im Neuen Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVIII (1929), 378-411.

of the Biblical modes of thought vis-a-vis the Greek.

The whole New Testament pictures a Jesus who is the Word made flesh and is as such accessible to all the senses. But the real organs of revelation according to the New Testament are hearing and seeing. When Jesus wishes to deny that there is knowledge of God among the Jews, He says, "You have neither heard His voice nor seen His figure" (John 5:37).

Among the Greeks sight was granted the superiority, but among the Hebrews hearing was superior. The fact that Hebrew religion stresses hearing at the expense of seeing is a reflection of the transcendence of God and of the ethical earnestness of that religion. The New Testament followed the Old in its conception of God's Word and therefore of hearing.

John's Gospel emphasizes seeing for two reasons: John is influenced by Greek or Oriental thought more than the Synoptists; the proper term for the relation to the exalted Jesus of whom John writes is seeing.

Dobschütz notes that Jesus taught, and His words were heard, but the Exalted One appears and is seen. It is part of John's characteristic method to transfer what is true of the resurrected One to the earthly-historical One. But even John knows that believing is more important than seeing.

It is characteristic of primitive Christian psychology that the heart stands behind the senses. The heart rules in a man and subjects the senses to itself. It is not so with the Greeks. With them the mind stands in place of the heart, and both seeing and hearing are bound up with reasoning.

In Platonism the senses mediate to the soul evil, material impressions
from the external world and thus lead the soul astray. In primitive
Christianity it is the heart within a man from which evil thoughts proceed

(Mark 7:21). Primitive Christianity therefore did not teach a spiritualizing asceticism and derogation of the senses.

God has an eternal image in His Son, and this divine image has entered history as a man and has thereby become the object of human seeing. One can call them blessed who have seen Jesus Christ and His work. Thus a seeing of the invisible is granted to men even now. The time of salvation has come.

Seeing takes precedence over hearing in things eschatological. That is clearly expressed when Paul opposes hoping and seeing (Rom. 8:24). Hearing is stressed in connection with obligations, while seeing is the ordinary correlative of the blessings and gifts of salvation.

According to the dominical beatitude the vision of God is the quintessence of future bliss. The eschatological vision of God's glory is not
an esthetic experience. In the Old Testament seeing God often meant participation in temple services. Perhaps Paul's desire to see the Romans
is analogous (Rom. 1:11). Then it would express the desire for fellowship and personal relationship. It is the same as the Johannine "having
God" or the Pauline "being with Christ."

## Bultmann5

Rudolf Bultmann writes that among the early, religious Greeks man does not see and does not care to see the gods, because seeing the gods is dangerous, if not fatal. In the primitive view seeing images of gods could drive a man mad or render him blind. Even when the deity appears,

<sup>5</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, " Jεον οὐδει» εωρκεν πωποτε: Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXIX (1930), 169-192.

he is surrounded with mystery. God is neither unknowable nor invisible. It is assumed that man can see God but that he may not, because God does not will it.

Among the philosophers a change sets in. Plato said that that which is real cannot be grasped by the eye but only by the mind. God can be grasped by a kind of intellectual seeing of which the senses are incapable. The realm of ideas, which is also the realm of the divine, is characterized in the strict sense as a coefficient. It is opposed to the realm of alcourt, of openio, of that which one can grasp with the hands. God is according, according to Plato, but he is vontos. Only non-being is unknowable. Therefore in so far as the mind is the eye of the soul, in so far as grasping in thought is according to the Greek view a kind of seeing, God is visible. God is invisible to the senses, because His being is inaccessible to them. Thus in so far as God is conceived and defined as invisible, a definite manner of being is thereby designated, according to which He Himself is understood as one who is.

In Stoicism the doctrine of the natural knowledge of God is developed and propagated passionately. God is knowable in the contemplation of the cosmos.

Hellenistic gnosticism and neo-Platonism, combining metaphysical speculation and mystic-ecstatic piety, introduce a dualism setting God and the world opposite one another. God will be known and seen when man is no longer man. It is on this soil that the notion of the vision of God as only an "eschatological" possibility arises. The vision comes either after death, with the possibility of anticipation in the cult of the god, or it comes in the present in an ecstatic experience. And here "vision of God" came to mean a kind of sense perception, because God came

to be conceived as a divine substance accessible to the senses of the substantially changed man.

The development in Israelite-Jewish history is quite different.

The primitive and prophetic view in the Old Testament is that man can see God but God does not ordinarily choose to be seen. It was only under Greek influence that Judaism began to speak of God's essential invisibility. The Greek GodTOS does not even have a Hebrew equivalent.

Among the Greeks the difference between God and man is bridged by the mind ( vol), so that God is at the disposal of man's thought, if not of his senses. Among the Jews of the Old Testament God is holy and man is unholy, and God is absolutely not at man's disposal. God speaks His word and puts man at His disposal. Within the Old Testament itself there is a development. It is not, as Baudissin and Fascher think, that the concept of God is gradually spiritualized and intellectualized.

What happens is that the notions of God's superiority and of the impossibility of having Him at one's disposal are fortified and radicalized.

Israelite religion knew of a seeing of God in the cultus. The expression lost its original iconic meaning and came to signify being certain of God's gracious presence. The precondition of the vision is ethical and God grants strength for life through the vision, and thus a sure tie exists between the vision in the Old Testament cult and historical life. In the Old Testament the real meaning of the vision consists exactly in this, that it demandingly and givingly offers the whole life the possibility of attaining genuineness.

As circumstances and times changed and God's gracious rule could no longer be discerned, the vision of God became an eschatological possibility. Thus post-exilic Judaism looks forward to God's homecoming to Zion

and to His letting His glory appear. That is the hope of later Judaism and of primitive Christianity.

In later Judaism the idea carries through that to see God means to be sure of His grace. But it also receives a characteristic change because of which it stands in opposition to the Old Testament-Christian conception. It can mean to acquire merit before God. On the other hand if a man shows love to one whom he sees, it is counted as having been done to the One he does not see, that is, God.

Nevertheless in late Judaism the eschatological thrust is above all vigorous. Judaism still waits for fulfillment. Men will one day see Him whom they have in this life served. The eschatological thought receives a special twist in Judaism, since seeing God is understood not only as the gracious situation of the time of salvation but also as the event that stands before the individual in his hour of death. Man can only view with fear this moment which brings him salvation or destruction, when he will see not only God but also himself as he really is.

In the New Testament "seeing God" retains the meaning of "being able to stand before God" and being certain of God's grace. Access to God is given in Christ; for Christ is the concrete deed of God's grace. So the concept of seeing God is radically historicized as in the Old Testament, but the gracious working of God, to be sure of which means to be able to stand before God, is concentrated wholly in one salvation—act in the fulness of time in Jesus Christ. To grasp the revelation of God's love in Jesus means to see God (John Lh: Sf.).

For the church which believes in Jesus Christ that for which Judaism hoped has become present. God is present in Christ and the believer has already access to the Father. But of course the consummation is still

future, and the parousia lies ahead. And even if that were not so, the view must still be to the future, since the being of the faithful is not a condition, a mysterious quality or substance, but a living historical life, still in progress. For this reason we can speak of a final, not yet actualized vision of God in the future.

#### Kirk

The next work on the subject in point of time is by Bishop Kirk. 6
His study is a classic in the field of ethics, but it does not contribute in a basic way to the exegesis of "the vision of God," nor did the author intend that it should. In his preface Kirk announces the precise purpose of his investigation and discloses also his orientation and posture. He writes in order to fill a gap in Anglican moral theology. He sets out to develop the moral or ethical implications of the doctrine of man's last end.

The ideal of Christian character can be defined as "disinterestedness" or "unselfishness." He asks how that goal is to be attained. He answers that worship alone can disentangle a man from his preoccupation with himself and center his desire and aspiration solely on God. Worship is therefore the key to man's ethical problems. And here Kirk makes his connection between the vision of God and ethics. He says that throughout Christian history the best thinkers have interpreted the vision as implying that the highest prerogative of the Christian, in this life as in the next, is the activity of worship. In worship the soul catches glimpses

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup>Kenneth E. Kirk, <u>The Vision of God</u> (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1931).

of the Ideal and inevitably strives to render its environment more harmonious with that Ideal.

Kirk writes that Christianity entered the world with a twofold purpose: to offer men the vision of God and to call them to the pursuit of that vision. And the world into which Christianity came and to which it addressed its message understood to some extent the notion of the vision of God and demonstrated a passion for religious experience such as the Christian church offered.

In the canonical Old Testament and beyond, Jewish sources bear witness to the yearning for the vision of God. It is clear that if the
vision is to be attained at all, whether in this world or the next, it
will be attained by the righteous or by men who study and observe the
Law.

Kirk surveys the testimony of pagan writers who anticipated the Christian hope of the vision of God. Plato, the Mysteries, Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Epicureans pass in review. Their seal for the vision is inherited by Philo and the writers of the Hermetic books, where the yearning reaches a white heat. Kirk says that the purpose of the Hermetic books is to communicate the vision of God by word of mouth.

Kirk concludes his introductory section by saying that it is clear "that Christianity came into a world tantalized with the belief that some men at least had seen God, and had found in the vision the sum of human happiness; a world aching with the hope that the same vision was attainable by all." The church offered men the vision they sought.

Kirk approaches the Symoptic Gospels by way of the Transfiguration,

<sup>7&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, p. 54.

and he applies to the first three gospels words usually reserved for the Fourth Gospel. He says the confession of Peter and the Transfiguration form a double peak, constituting the watershed of Mark's gospel, whose framework has been adopted by Matthew and Luke. Kirk thinks the church early fastened on the Transfiguration as the central moment of the Lord's earthly life. It did this to remind itself that the whole gospel, from beginning to end, must be read and regarded as one great vision of God in Christ.

his visionary experiences, emphatically asserts that Christians have already seen God (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul is describing this experienced vision of God when he uses the famed analogy, "Now we see in a mirror, in a riddle, but then face to face; now I know in part; but then I shall know fully even as also I have been known fully" (1 Cor. 13:12). Kirk further relates this line of thought to 2 Cor. 3:18, "We all with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror (or, beholding as in a mirror, katolite() on £vol) the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." Paul here uses effectively a piece of ancient ethnic superstition, that of the magic mirror which transforms a man's image when he looks into the mirror. The Christian vision of God, is a magic mirror, because it enhances a man's knowledge of himself, and because it transforms him into the image of God.

But whatever hesitation or reservation there may be in St. Paul as to the possibility of receiving the vision of God during life on earth, it cannot be found in the Fourth Evangelist. Here Kirk quotes Loisy's famous dictum and calls the Fourth Gospel "a perpetual theophany."

Paul and John both use a number of formulas for the Christian's experience of the consummation, for the highest and fullest Christian experience, whether here or hereafter. St. Paul returns to the notion of seeing God in some at least of his most exalted moments, and it cannot be denied that the notion of the vision dominates St. John.

The pillars of the conception are four in number: the vision of God is indissolubly related to the historic Christ; unbroken personal intercourse with the divine is the end for which man was created; a foretaste and anticipation of this experience is possible even in this life; receiving the vision depends upon moral rectitude and results in an increase of personal holiness.

Here is Kirk's own summary of his first two chapters, the only ones immediately pertinent to this paper:

(1) The most primitive view is that God is physically visible in this life, though to see Him is death (older stages of the Old Testament). (2) God is physically invisible; but metaphorically visible (that is, knowable), that is, His character can be inferred from His "works" (Rabbis and philosophers—but most representatives of both schools are touched by the next conception too). (3) God is comprehensible to reason, from His works, but still more knowable by "faith," or mystic and ecstatic experience (many representatives among the philosophers; also Philo and Hermetica in their best moments). (4) The New Testament position is analogous to (3), but enriches it (a) by adding the Old Testament revelation and the person of Jesus as sources of rational knowledge of the character of God; (b) by stabilizing the vague concept of "mystical experience" in the far richer and more definite experience of communion with Christ in the Spirit. As to the relation between "reason" and "faith," the New Testament writers insist upon no one point of view, and so leave the way open for further developments. (5) Most representatives of (2) to (h) insist that moral affinity with God is essential to the vision; the New Testament suggests that it is more important than "experience." (6) The "gnostic" position (apocalyptists, mysteries, Philo and Hermetica at times, . . . ) -- God wholly incomprehensible to human reason, but "knowable" by non-rational methods (dreams, trances, initiations, ecstasies, etc.). (7) Nost schools of thought insist that God will be far more "knowable" in the next life than in this.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

The scholastic terminology and the intellectualistic conceptualization of the vision in this conclusion tend to obscure the very substantial and significant contribution which Bishop Kirk has to make to the discussion of the vision of God. He has shown in a decisive manner that seeing God has every bit as weighty an ethical and practical thrust as has the hearing of God.

### Fascher9

Erich Fascher asks concerning the significance of the two opposing strands of Biblical testimony: God is invisible and has never been seen; certain select individuals have seen God.

In the Old Testament stories of theophanies to Adam, Cain, Abraham, Sarah, and Moses the Scriptures speak at the level of naive realism. In Genesis 18, for example, God appears, disguised in human form. The notion that God's essence cannot thereby be fully grasped plays no role in this narrative. Whereas the Weather-God or War-God plunges man into fear and trembling, Genesis 18 presents the friendly Wanderer-God, who enters into conversations with men and speaks with them in human fashion.

Another level is reached in passages like Isaiah 6, which relate prophetic visions. God's form is not described. Even the scraphim cover their faces. Description is reserved and indirect. God remains basically invisible, even here where He permits His voice to be heard out of the fire and smoke.

In prophetic visions the visual experience recedes into obscurity,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup>Erich Fascher, "Deus Invisibilis," <u>Marburger Theologische Studien</u>, herausgegeben von Heinrich Frick (Gotha: <u>Leopold Klotz Verlag</u>, 1931), pp. 41-77.

but there is a certainty concerning the Word. Characteristically God's voice is plainly heard and apprehended as "human" without ever causing speculation on the question of whether or not God can permit Himself to be apprehended in the form of human voice.

Visions of God impress the recipients only with the nearness of God.

The will of God is in all cases clearly communicated in voice and speech.

A third level is attained when the intellectual interest of the thinker intervenes and reflects on the ways and means of God's self-revelation. Comparing the Wisdom of Solomon 11-15 with Isaiah 40, Fascher finds two quite different approaches and attitudes. In the Wisdom of Solomon the logical thought processes have taken the place of faith. Men know there is a God by reflecting on His works. Philo offers an epistemology. He says that God is invisible, but He is knowable to man, because man has a mind, the organ for the contemplation of the invisible and spiritual.

In the New Testament Fascher finds a similar conception. In His deity God is invisible, but in that He gave men from the creation of the world a mind, He gave them the power to perceive God's eternal Suvamis in His creation. If a vision of God (Seav Tov Deov) is impossible for men, yet men can achieve a knowledge (YIVW6KEIV) of God. That is God's appointed way. But if men in foolishness go another and become in their willful wisdom only fools, attempting to capture the glory of the eternal God in temporal stuff, they have sinned against the Old Testament law, sunk back below the knowledge of Second Isaiah, and have not yet achieved Christian understanding (John 4:24).

Besides this theological reflection the New Testament contains any number of examples of naive realism and prophetic vision, as in the Old Testament. However, an alteration of viewpoint is noticed. Those who do the appearing are an angel of the Lord or the resurrected Jesus, while God Himself remains quite distant and aloof, dwelling in light unapproachable.

Christology. He is working not from the point of view of redemption but from the point of view of the <u>Deus invisibilis</u>. All the appearances concentrate on the figure of the Christ. They contain all the features connected in the Old Testament with theophanies, but Christ appears in the place of God when He summens to apostleship. The stories of the calling of Isaiah and others are the Old Testament counterparts of the calling of the apostles by the resurrected Jesus. Christ is the revealer of the Deus invisibilis.

The invisible God cannot come visibly on earth, but He can manifest Himself in a form that is not only an inspired man but is a divine being (Gottwesen) from heaven. The Son, as the pre-existent Logos who was in the bosom of the Father, is a heavenly being. He comes from the world of being to that of becoming. He was the mediator of creation, exalted above all angels, the closest one to God, and God sent this One to the earth. He lived as man among men but was one who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stemp of His nature" (Heb. 1:3). He is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). It may at first seem paradoxical that an invisible being has an image. But the situation is this. God sent Jesus so that in Him we might have a picture of God's own being. The Son is, like the angel of the Lord in the Old Testament, a manifestation of God.

But the manifestation does not remove all mystery. Even Jesus could

not say everything, since the disciples could not grasp it (John 16:12). The deep things of God are inexhaustible.

God and the Son (as Image) do not always stand together. When the "seeing in a mirror" ends, man needs an image no longer, for then he will "see face to face." God will be invisible no longer. To the "knowing in part" belongs also everything which has been said of Christ as Image. He is the mediator of creation and redemption and judgment. Men are redeemed through Him, but men live as God's children with their source in God and their goal in God (£k 9600 KK; £15 926V). Afterwards the Son will subordinate Himself to God (1 Cor. 15:28), and in the moment when God is all in all, He becomes for man, if one may use the term, Deus visibilis. Man needs neither mediator nor image at that point.

Is God invisible? No, He has been seen in Christ. Is God then visible? No, He has been seen as in a mirror. Even for the Christian it remains true that "no one has seen God at any time."

# Kittel<sup>10</sup>

Gerhard Kittel was one of the pioneers in expounding the uniqueness of Christianity among the welter of religions and philosophies of the ancient near East. In the work here under review Kittel first of all examines some basic differences between Hellenic and Old Testament thought.

Among the Greeks the perception of God takes two different tacks.

For the philosophers, especially Plato, the knowledge of God is an intellectual activity or event. Man perceives the invisible God not with the

<sup>10</sup> Gerhard Kittel, Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1931).

Homeric to Hellenistic times accept a perception of the deity not through thought but through sight (Schauen).

In the Old Testament that which prevents the vision of God is not His non-materiality or spirituality (Geistigkeit) but His holiness. The profusion of passages on hearing God shows how little concerned the Old Testament was with denying a perception of God by means of the senses. In fact as sight is shoved more and more into the background, hearing comes more and more to the fore. Visions come to serve as backdrops for auditions.

Old Testament prophetic religion, in contrast to cultic religion, is a religion of the word. From this religion of the word develops the religion of the Torah, the religion of the Law. And finally this develops into a religion of works-righteousness.

Among the Greeks seeing takes precedence over bearing, and among the Jews the opposite holds true. But the same cannot be said of eschatology. Besides its legal aspects Judaism is a religion of hope, of waiting for the messianic time. In the end Hahweh and His glory will be visible. Then the cry will no longer be, "Hear, O Israel," but, "Lift up your eyes and see."

That individual Jews and Israel as a whole will be able to see God means that the dissonance between the holy God and impure man will be set to one side. Then they will sit with crowns on their heads and refresh themselves with the splendor of God's presence; then they will see God and eat and drink, as did Moses and the elders on the mount (Ex. 2h: 11).

In all of this primitive Christianity is the daughter of Old Testament

religion. The New Testament stands with the Old against Hellenism, which insists on the priority of seeing over hearing. The New Testament, as the Old, centers round a message given by God to men with the demand that they listen. The content of the message, of course, differs.

But in the New Testament seeing comes to hold a position of importance which it did not have in Judaism. The New Testament has its purely eschatological promises and its appearances and visions in which the word is most important. But seeing holds a new place because the Christ has come, and the Spirit, the firstfruit and guarantee of the coming aeon, has been poured out. Some men have even now begun to stand in a new relationship to the eschaton, as did the Seer, who was "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day and wrote of what he saw.

The reports of the resurrection, in spite of accompanying words of Jesus, are essentially appearances or epiphanies, and they give the priority to seeing. The same is true of Paul's Damascus experience. In describing his conversion Paul uses the metaphor of light and not of sound. The Easter-event is clothed in eschatological form. It is understood as an event of the other world, as the inbreaking of eschatology.

The peculiarity of John's Gospel is his description of Jesus from the point of view of Easter. Hearing and seeing are emphasized together. John writes the story of Jesus as an event simultaneously of this world, in which one hears, and of the other world, in which one sees. This is a point of view not entirely lacking in the synoptics. The element of seeing is what distinguishes the New Testament from the prophets and from Judaism, which is interested merely in teaching.

The "Word" of which I John I speaks is a visible word, a palpable reality. The word became flesh according to all the gospels and not just

the fourth. One comes here to the uniqueness of the New Testament. In the New Testament view of things Jesus is the bringer of God's message, because He is Himself the presence of God's world.

#### Barth

Markus Barth has written an extensive study of the calling, equipping and commissioning of the apostles. 11 The Biblical text which underlies the entire work is 1 John 1:1-3.

Jesus took the initiative and called men into fellowship with Himself. The connection they had with Him was visible, palpable and audible.

It was more than that, of course, but it was not less. External fellowship was the sine qua non of the relationship between Jesus and His disciples.

That fellowship is described by the New Testament writers in terms which the Old Testament reserved for the eschatological fellowship of Israel with God. Fellowship with Jesus is fellowship with God. It is not a mere sign of eschatological fellowship, but it is its beginning, its firstfruits. Eschatological fellowship begins with temporal fellowship.

The purpose of the fellowshiping of the apostles with Christ is that they might in their words and deeds and sufferings bear witness mutually to Him. Because God is in Jesus Christ, during the time of His humiliation the "Word of life . . . which was from the beginning" can be heard and seen and touched. Because the Son of God has appeared in the flesh,

Markus Barth, Der Augenzeuge: eine Untersuchung über die Wahrnehmung des Menschenschnes durch die Apostel (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag. 1946).

Christian testimony is always testimony to Him who was seen and heard and touched. The aim of hearing, seeing and touching Jesus Christ is testimony about Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

After some pages discussing hearing, Markus Barth comes to the sections most pertinent for this paper, his study of seeing.

God appears not only because hearing can deceive and seeing cannot, as Philo thought, and not simply because of Oriental or Hellenistic influence. According to both Old and New Testaments God appears when He wants to reveal Himself to a man in an especially plain, complete and direct manner. And it will be shown that God's revelation in visible appearances is no devaluation or calling into question of hearing, but is a strengthening of His revelation in the Word.

According to the Old Testament, no man can see God and live; for seeing God brings death as surely as Lot's wife suffered death when she turned to behold the forbidden sight. Why this should be we cannot say. But death resulting from seeing God is bound up somehow with man's sin.

God is in Himself not abstractly invisible. That is an idea which first occurs in Judaism. But sin renders a man incapable of seeing God. Paradise has been lost, and men know it.

Yet Israel rejoices and is thankful that God reveals Himself and is present, even though in veiled manner. He comes in cloud and pillar of fire, descends to Sinai, and is present in tabernacle and temple. Participation in the cult in the temple and in the blessing of God is called in the Old Testament "seeing the face of God."

Nevertheless certain chosen men are sometimes permitted to be witnesses of God's grace, His overcoming of sin, without their dying. But as a whole Israel is not granted the vision.

God's appearing is inseparable from His speaking. The cloud speaks with Moses. And of course more hear God than see Him. The seeing and hearing are not to be understood metaphorically but realistically. In spite of His people's sin, God really does reveal Himself in word and vision.

All these, Moses and the prophets and other elect ones, see God and live, because they must bear witness that God appears and wills man to live.

The appearances of God to His chosen ones are a guarantee and anticipation of the promised appearance of God to all men. One day all flesh will see God. Most Old Testament theophanies have as their purpose assuring the seer of God's coming visible help for the seer and for all Israel. And the God who will be seen already does works by which people behold His power and His will, His grace and His glory. God's glory and power are now visible only to those whose eyes are open. But the time is coming when all will see.

God's glory, word, face, work, and the working God Himself have all appeared in Jesus Christ. The time from birth to resurrection is the time of God's doxa. The whole New Testament bears witness that God's salvation has appeared in Jesus Christ.

But at the same time God is invisible according to many passages of the New Testament. During the whole time of salvation which began with the coming of Jesus Christ only the believer can and will see. Many have eyes which do not see. The messianity of Jesus is a secret now. And the true identity of Jesus is hidden from the unbeliever. The only sign they are given is the sign of Jonah. Now the secret is known only to the disciple. The Son of man will one day come or appear and be seen of all men.
But the New Testament also speaks of the coming or appearance of Jesus
not to all but to some select few. The chief passage here is Mark 9:1,
"Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste
death before they see the kingdom of God come with power." This passage
was fulfilled when the resurrected Jesus appeared to some chosen ones.

Throughout the New Testament the apostles claim to be eyewitnesses.

They saw Jesus not only in his humanity but as God's Son. The central cluster of appearances are those of the resurrected Jesus during the forty days between Easter and Ascension. But they also saw Him at the Transfiguration, and He appeared to Paul and the Seer after ascending.

Barth devotes a number of pages to the vocabulary used to describe
the various appearances. In general the vocabulary stands in striking
contrast to the highly developed and complicated terminology of the mysteries. The New Testament uses only a very few of the many words available, and the ones it uses are selected for their clarity and preciseness.

Very important is the fact that terms are used and tense and voice are such as to emphasize the factuality and reality of the event described, even apart from its being perceived. The vocabulary testifies that the appearances were not only in the imagination of certain men but were objectively real.

Men's seeing is described again in terms which emphasize that the seeing is not a mere spiritual perception but a real and objective perception. The New Testament writers take the opposite course from the intiates in the mysteries. They do not develop secrets; they bear witness.

The appearances have much in common. In the first place all the appearances are in the category of miracle. They all alike rest on the

miracle that God appears alive and gracious in His Son within earthly history and creaturely space. Then there is the connection of all the appearances with the Word. He who appears utters words of teaching, encouragement or comfort. The resurrected Jesus is God's word bodily, and He speaks. And finally all the appearances point to Jesus as the Son of man, the Lord of glory, the one in and with whom the eschaton has dawned. He is the glory of Israel and light for the nations. The one who appears confirms the election of Israel by appearing only to Israelites. But the visions and appearances from beginning to end are bound up also with mission commands.

The appearances and apostleship are inseparable. Barth defines an apostle as an Israelite who was a member of the fellowship created by Jesus, who was an eyewitness of the Lord and was sent by Jesus to Jews and Gentiles.

The New Testament retains the expectation of the future appearing of the Son of man. The parousia will mean that all men will see Him, including the unbelievers. The future appearing will, in contrast to the past manifestation, have catastrophic consequences for all who do not believe. It will mean the execution of the judgment of God on all men. No one who sees God will live. This curse imposed on the sin of men will then be executed. And for the believer seeing will be blessing. Meanwhile the church is a fellowship of believers in the intermediate period marked by faith in the invisible One.

Many besides the apostles are called witnesses or bear witness, but the family of words designating witness is used especially of the apostles. A witness is one who saw or heard an event and reproduces it in words (<u>Tat-sachenzeuge</u>). He proclaims a truth of which he himself is convinced.

## Michaelis12

Wilhelm Michaelis opens his comprehensive essay with an overview of Greek and Hellenistic notions concerning seeing. Mythology and poetry with their anthropomorphic notion of the gods reckon with the visibility of the gods for human eyes. Yet even in this sphere there are certain reservations. In Homer the deity, drawing near usually in human guise, shows himself only to the chosen few. The naive-poetic form of presentation does not permit saying with any precision just how the seeing in these theophanies is to be conceived.

Philosophy gave the notion of the invisibility of God, never completely lacking in Greek philosophical circles, a new depth by opposing the world of sense perception to the intellectual world. According to Plato it is possible for seeing (Sehen) and viewing (Schauen) to approach to true being. The highest life is to see the Good and to view the world of ideas in which the philosopher now and then sojourns. Aristotle took the next step and said that in the vision of God (TOT JEOT JEWEIX) the real meaning of human life is actualised. As the immortals are and exist in pure theoria, mortals ought to imitate them and become like them by participating in such seeing.

For the Greeks the deity is not believed or heard but seen. This fact goes to the heart and essence of Greek religion. Greek philosophy from Plato to Plotinus, by exalting the "theoretical" life, only transposed to the metaphysical level what was a historical reality in the

<sup>12</sup> Wilhelm Michaelis, "Que," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1954), V, 316-368.

the religious life of the Greek people.

The visual plays a large role in the mysteries with their initiation ceremonies, in gnosticism with its conviction that God is essentially invisible to man but that man can be apotheosized and so see God, in Stoicism with its notion that God is visible in His works.

In the Septuagint ocaw is not restricted to sense perception, as

SACTOW usually is, but includes mental or spiritual recognition and perception. It can mean "experience," "observe," or "recognize." "To see

God's glory" means to arrive at conviction and attain certainty on the

basis of God's revelation. The passive of savd! designates the revelatory presence without reference to any objective, perceptible reality.

The heart of Old Testament religion is expressed in terms of hearing. Seaw and solov are ordinarily used for visionary, ecstatic and prophetic seeing. But the visions and dreams are more and more mere framework for words. God reveals Himself in words but men see only persons, animals, objects and events. The prophetic visions of Daniel are later. Isaiah 6 is unique. The vision of Micaiah ben Imlah is "poetically constructed."

Numbers 12:6-8 is the basic passage marking the difference between prophetic vision and "mouth-to-mouth" speech. In spite of occasional crude and mythological remmants in the passage the complicated terminology used to describe Moses' encounters with God shows that God was not immediately seen. What is used to mark the presence of God, who reveals Himself in His Word.

"Seeing God" also carries the metaphorical sense of being certain of God's nearness or grace, of understanding or acknowledging God (Job 19:26f.). Michaelis says that the promise that men will see God beyond

death cannot with certainty be documented from the Old Testament.

In Philo passages which apparently teach without reservation a seeing of God stand next to passages which speak of a basic invisibility
and unknowability of God. That all these expressions are oriented primarily around the thought of the invisibility of God is clear from the
numerical relationship and the substantial weight of both groups of
passages. Seeing God in Philo is intellectual perception. Josephus
restricts the Old Testament theophanies, since for him God is essentially
invisible.

Both in the pseudepigrapha and in the rabbinic literature of Judaism there are passages which deal with the vision of God, primarily as an eschatological phenomenon. Especially the blessedness following the resurrection in the coming world is conceived as seeing God. This seeing was meant in the literal, bodily sense. But during his lifetime no man can see God, who is essentially invisible.

In the New Testament revelation comes primarily by means of the word.

And in general it must be noted that the New Testament does not separate
the sensible from the intellectual world. Nor does it find sense perception inadequate for a knowledge of the spiritual reality.

When Jesus says, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear" (Matt. 13:16), it might seem that He is emphasizing sense perception. Actually He is making use of a vivid, Semitic kind of expression to declare that the time of salvation has appeared. The coupling of hearing and seeing is not a congratulation of the eyewitness but a call to decision.

Faith is always required in addition to seeing. For all generations after the first seeing is impossible, and what is required is faith in

the message which is proclaimed and heard. Thus hearing takes the place of seeing. Even in connection with the first generation, the eyewitnesses, Michaelis asserts that "seeing is itself a form of hearing in that it is a reception of revelation."13

Revelation in dreams is infrequent. When it is encountered, it is always in the last analysis revelation through the word. There are no theophanies in the New Testament, although God's voice is sometimes heard. Angelophanies are more frequent, and angels are, of course, always bringers of messages. The visions of Peter (Acts 10:11ff.; 11:5) and those of the book of Revelation constitute the only cases of revelation through pictorial symbol in the New Testament. Because Revelation explicitly wishes to be prophecy, it too recognizes at least tacitly the priority of hearing over seeing.

Paul had ecstatic experiences, but no visions like those of the Apocalypse. He explains eschatology not on the basis of ecstatic visions but on the basis of the words of the Lord. Stephen's vision (Acts 7) is not primarily a vision of God. There is no need of words, since everything is crystal clear.

Jesus was no visionary or ecstatic. In the baptismal pericope the vision recedes behind the audition. The Transfiguration was a pedagogical revelation for the sake of the three disciples.

Very early who became a technical term used of the resurrection appearances of Jesus. In the Septuagint it is regularly used of God's revelatory presence without reference to the kind or manner of the presence. Thus in connection with the resurrection the term does not

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 348.

pronounce on the objectivity or on the spirituality of the perception. The chief thought is that the appearances are revelatory events, encounters with the resurrected Jesus who reveals Himself. The passive emphasizes not that Peter saw but that Jesus showed Himself. The same thing is meant even when the active **Logaria** is used. The question of how He appeared is thereby relegated to its proper, secondary role.

Michaelis wishes to dissociate himself from E. Hirsch on the one hand and from M. Barth on the other. He says that the presence "occurs in non-visionary reality," and yet "no category of human seeing is equal to it without further ado."

In the Fourth Gospel a number of passages speak of seeing Jesus (Daweev, John 6:62; 6:40; 12:14ff.; 16:10,15f.,19; 14:19,22ff.). At first they seem to refer to literal seeing. But ultimately these passages mean a spiritual perception of the scandal leading to the decision of faith.

Elsewhere the Fourth Gospel speaks of seeing the Father. But this mode of expression declares simply that God reveals Himself. And Jesus is the revealer (John 12:45; cf. 13:20; l4:8-9).

In John seeing means believing the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

John has chosen the verbs of seeing as terms of revelation in order to

stress the personal, existential character of the confrontation with

Jesus.

That the Son has "seen" the Father (John 6:46; 5:37f.) means that
He has full and free access to the Father. Man has access to God only
as God comes to man and reveals Himself. When John declares that no man

<sup>14</sup> Tbid., p. 360.

has ever seen God (John 1:18), he is not launching a polemic against assertions that God is to be seen in the ophanies or visions or ecstasies. He is declaring that God has revealed Himself exclusively in His Son (John 12:45; 14:9). The invisibility of God is elsewhere in the New Testament bound up with Christ as revealer (Col. 1:15).

Even in the time of eschatological fulfillment when God will be "seen," man will not have God as this disposal. The boundary between God and man will not be erased. Rather the revelation will be full and immediate. The eschatological relationship with God is seldom expressed in terms of seeing God.

In 1 Cor. 13:12, Matt. 5:8, and 1 John 3:2 the eschatological seeing of God is something which is totally different from any present experience. In contrast to sonship seeing God is a purely eschatological experience. Yet it is not the ultimate value of all, but is parallel to sonship and to belonging to the kingdom of God.

#### A Summary Statement

Baudissin, a religio-historical interpreter, was the first scholar to find the vision of sufficient worth to expend extended exegetical effort on it. With the cultic interests and evolutionary categories of his school he studied origins, relationships and developments. He found that the Biblical expression, "see God," ultimately used of an inner experience or of that which one hopes for in the future life, arose out of the old formula for visiting the temple, "see God's face." The latter phrase is of non-Israelite origin, standing in contrast to the aniconic worship of Israel and to the old Hebrew notion that seeing God issued in death.

The authentic Hebrew idea led from the original aniconic worship of Yahweh to the later developed notion of the spirituality and invisibility of God. Breaking with the rationalism of the nineteenth and previous centuries, Baudissin interprets the vision of God not as theoretical knowledge of God but as full and free fellowship with God, a guarantee and harbinger of which man has in worship.

Notice is a sober Roman Catholic exegete whose work amounts very nearly to a comprehensive study of the Old Testament conception of revelation. He interests himself in the relationship between seeing and hearing, and he decides that what is heard is the important element in dreams and visions. In fact, visual imagery is employed with a non-literal sense to mean simply that God has revealed Himself. That one cannot see God and live means that no men can fully plumb the secrets of God.

Hevertheless the Hebrews believed that the Lord had literally been seen in the ophanies in most ancient times in spite of the gulf between man and God. And the Old Testament shows no sign of any spiritualizing process.

The phrase, "see God's face," does not originate in cults which employed images of the deity. Court ceremonial and terminology underlie the use of the phrase. It means to come before the heavenly king and ask for and receive His highest favor. This the Hebrew did when he entered the temple. When the vision was loosed from its temple mooring and conceived mystically, it meant to be blessed by God in the highest way. A final step occurred when the favor of God was conceived as extending beyond death.

Von Dobschütz explored the terminology of hearing and seeing in an attempt to isolate the uniqueness of Biblical psychology. That Hebrew

religion stresses hearing at the expense of seeing, obedience at the expense of speculating, the heart at the expense of the mind, reflects the transcendent holiness of its God and the ethical earnestness of its faith. That seeing takes precedence over hearing in eschatological matters simply means that the present is a time of hoping, and the future will bring the promised blessings and gifts of salvation.

Bultmann, the demythologizer, develops notions found in von Dobschütz, declaring that the Greek conception of the mind as a bridge between God and man puts God at the disposal of man's thought. The Jess of the Old Testament stress God's word, by which God puts man at His disposal.

The Old Testament does talk about seeing God in the cultus. To see God's face means to stand before God, free of anxiety and certain of His grace. The New Testament radically historicises the Old Testament notion by saying that access to God and standing before Him and with Him are given in Christ. To grasp the revelation of God's love in Christ is to see God.

Kirk, the Anglican expert in moral theology, develops massively the notion that seeing God has every bit as weighty an ethical thrust as has the hearing of God. His work is scholastic in presuppositions and method, and he treats the notions of Jews and Greeks as varying philosophical theories.

Fascher is interested not so much in psychology, soteriology or eschatology as in theology proper. God is, of course, <u>Deus invisibilis</u>.

Visions of God impress seers only with the nearness of God. God's will is communicated in word.

In the New Testament all the appearances and visions concentrate on Jesus Christ, and He stands in the position which God Himself occupied in Old Testament theophanies. Thus Christ is the revealer of the invisible God. The manifestation of God will be complete and unobstructed only in the coming aeon.

Kittel, seeking out the uniqueness of Christianity and of the Old Testament, declares that Greek religion is a religion of mind and of sight. Old Testament prophetic religion is a religion of the word. The uniqueness of the New Testament consists in the fact that Jesus, who is the presence of God's world, has come into this world. Hearing and seeing are both emphasized in the New Testament.

Barth believes that ordinary seeing has extraordinary importance in the New Testament. The disciples literally saw the physical reality of the resurrected Jesus and were by their physical contact with Him firmly convinced of His lordship.

Michaelis in his long and comprehensive article in Kittel's dictionary sums up much of the foregoing. Disputing the realism of Barth and desiring to avoid the opposite extreme of liberalism, he believes with von Dobschütz and Kittel that the uniqueness of Christianity consists in its emphasis on the word, with Fascher that Jesus is the word and revealer of God, and with Bultmann that seeing God means a certainty of God's grace based on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

The exegetical and theological labors of the writers whose works are here surveyed have not adequately answered all the questions on the vision of God. The writers are by no means agreed on the source of the notion or on how it could be accepted by the Israelites. Certainly they express themselves in a variety of ways on the meaning of the vision and on the reality or literal objectivity of the seeing.

Another issue of some interest is that concerning the uniqueness of

Christianity or Biblical religion. Is it really fair to the facts to say that Greek religion is an affair of the eyes and that the Hebrews had a religion of the ear? Is the Old Testament really anti-optical?

What variation or novelty arrived with Jesus? How does the promise of seeing God differ from the promises of sonship, life, peace and right-eousness? These and other subjects will be discussed in subsequent chapters of this paper.

### CHAPTER III

## THE VISION OF GOD IN GREEK AND HELLENISTIC THOUGHT

The importance and wide implications of seeing are recognized and acknowledged by thoughtful persons in every age. In one of his sermons Paul Tillich has woven together some Biblical and classical insights and themes and offered up a modern interpretation of sight. He says that in the first place seeing is a creative force, the most marvelous of our natural powers. In a free meditation on Genesis he writes that sight receives the light, the first of all that is created. And sight, like light, conquers darkness and chaos. It creates for us an ordered world, so that wherever we see, chaos is transformed into creation. I

Seeing not only creates, says Tillich, but it also unites the seer with the seen. The word for this kind of seeing is "intuition," which means seeing into. The word denotes an intimate seeing, a grasping and being grasped.<sup>2</sup>

And in the third place we see beyond what we see to the very ground of being. Tillich writes that "con-templation means going into the temple, into the sphere of the holy, into the deep roots of things, into their creative ground."

Paul Tillich, The New Being (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), pp. 127f.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 128ff.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

It is commonly believed that the psychological and religious importance of seeing is reflected in the Greek vocabulary. While the Greek language has only one commonly used word for hearing, akoww, it has several words which describe various kinds of seeing: oeaw, is iv, shim, onravond, decond, deweew, areview, karonreizona. But this statistical superiority in itself is surely not sufficient to prove that for the Greeks seeing is superior to hearing.

Plato said that "sight is the most piercing of our bodily senses"

(Phaedrus, 250). In the same vein Heraclitus said, & fan poi yae rwy
w rwy are fetted prevents And yet Aristotle could say that in some
respects seeing is inferior to hearing. In the opening passage of his
Metaphysics Aristotle admits that men take more delight in the sense of
sight than in other senses (I, 1, 980a). But seeing is second to hearing in the development of intelligence, for example. The reason for this
is that hearing is indispensable for rational discourse. Aristotle's observation rests on practical experience. He notes that persons blind
from birth are more intelligent than the deaf and dumb (On Sense and the
Sensible, 437a). It is well to remember that seeing and hearing are

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952). Quotations are from this edition and are cited in the text in parentheses following the quotation or allusion together with the name of the dialogue, often abbreviated.

Hermann Diels, Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, herausgegeben von Walther Krans (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951), I, 173.

The Works of Aristotle, translated under the editorship of W. D. Ross (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952). Quotations are from this edition and are cited in the text in parentheses following the quotation or allusion together with the name of the individual work, often abbreviated.

both used in literature, Biblical and Greek, of understanding,

Michaelis? uncritically adopts the view elaborated by von Dobschütz<sup>8</sup> and Kittel<sup>9</sup> and declares that the Greeks were a people of the eye, supporting that conclusion with his own additional references to ancient Greek authors and to experts in Greek religion and history. 10 And he concurs with the judgment of Karl Kerenyi that Greek religion was a religion of vision. Kerenyi<sup>11</sup> correctly shows that Greek religion and Greek philosophy are from the point of view of epistemology a unity. They rest on a knowledge in which comprehension and viewing are one and the same, a solemn, cognizant viewing or seeing. In the language of the Greek cult and of Greek philosophy that knowledge or viewing has the same name,

Kittel and Michaelis and others attempt to show that the uniqueness of Biblical religion lies in its dissociation from the visual and its concentration on the audible. Prejudiced by their theory, they downgrade the verbal element in Greek religion and the visual element in Biblical religion.

<sup>7</sup>wilhelm Michaelis, "δεάω," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 195h), V, 319.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup>Ernst von Dobschütz, "Die fünf Sinne im Neuen Testament," <u>Journal</u> of <u>Biblical Literature</u>, XLVIII (1929), 378-411.

Gerhard Kittel, Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1931).

<sup>10</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., refers to Gunnar Rudberg for support.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Kerenyi, Die Antike Religion (Dässeldorf: Eugen Diedrich, 1952).

<sup>12&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., p. 116.</sub>

In what follows the statements of Greek religion and philosophy concerning seeing God will be unfolded without prejudice to any theory. The question here is only what the Greeks said about seeing the gods. The chapter proceeds in a roughly chronological fashion.

Among the Greeks it was a persistent, enduring and important belief that the gods appear to men. This fact is illustrated by a quotation of Homer appearing in a writing of the neo-Platonist, Eunapius (ca. A. D. 346-444). In his Lives of the Philosophers he tells the story of Sosipatra, whose father left her in the care of two strange old men, believing that they were heroes or demons or divine beings. The two initiated Sosipatra into some unknown and unidentified mysteries. At the end of a five year period of training her father was astonished to find that her wisdom had increased to such a degree that he could only conclude that she had become a divine being. He was all the more convinced of the godly nature of the two strange men. At this point Eunapius, living at the end of the history of Greek religion, quotes Homer, who represents the earliest days. Homer had said, "For the gods disguise themselves as strangers from abroad, and, assuming the most varied shapes, wander through the cities."

Belief in the visible appearances of the gods on earth was current among the Greeks in the earliest period from which literature survives. In fact the belief that gods, heroes or the spirits of the dead reveal

<sup>13</sup> The full story is printed by Frederick C. Grant, editor, Hellenistic Religions (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1953), pp. 51f.

llifriedrich Pfister, "Epiphanie," Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, begonnen von Georg Wissowa, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Kroll (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1924), Supplement Band IV, 302.

themselves visibly to the living belongs to the fundamental forms of religious faith and is common to all men. 15

Gods and the appearances of the gods are taken for granted in the Homeric epics. 16 The gods and goddesses are notoriously concerned for and involved in the affairs of men. In one two-sided intervention the human combatants were three times frustrated in their intentions and efforts by the divine actors. Hector hurled his spear at Achilles, but Minerva breathed on it so that it returned and fell at its thrower's feet. Achilles saw his chance and sprang to take advantage of Hector's surprise, but Hector's guardian, Apollo, was not napping. He snatched up Hector and hid him in a thick darkness. Three times this little scene repeats itself (II. XX, 438-454). Pallas Athene takes various parts in the human drama, playing successively Mentes, Mentor, a young girl, a mature woman and Telemachus.

Pallas Athene winged her way from Olympian heights and took up her stand outside the gates of Odysseus' house, posing as Mentes, a Taphian chief (Od. I, 96ff.; cf. II, 267ff.; XXII, 205f.). She came "with the voice and form" of Mentor (Od. XXII, 200f.; cf. II, 267), "in the likeness of a quite young girl" bearing water in a jar (Od. VII) or "in the guise of a tall, splendidly accomplished woman" (Od. XVI, 161). Aphrodite took the form of an old wool-dresser (II. III, 384ff.). Poseidon came up out of the sea and assumed the voice and form of Calchas, a seer and diviner of omens (II. XIII, 43ff.). The Greeks did not think of the gods

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 281.

<sup>16</sup> The Iliad of Homer and the Odyssey, translated by Samuel Butler (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1948). The Iliad will be cited as Il. and the Odyssey as Od. with the section numbers of this edition.

appearing as children. They wanted power in their epiphanies. 17 But all in all the appearances are described with reserve, although in obviously anthropomorphic terms.

Anthropomorphism is only to be expected, although it was, of course, a Greek, Kenophanes, who said that men create the gods in their own image, as any animal would do, if it could produce works of art. But animals cannot, and Greeks, enthralled by their own power to reason, spoke of the unity of the race of men and gods. Pindar wrote, "Single is the race, single of men and of gods; from a single mother we both draw breath." 18

According to Homer the gods of old appeared at banquets in human form to their human kin. And in later times the gods were expected to appear especially at places of worship and sacrifice. The gods and goddesses came in their real form at a sacrifice. It is said that Athene drew near and appeared to Telemachus after he "laved his hands in the transparent sea-water" and prayed that she come (Od. II, 266). Theophanies regularly occur following fervent and sincere prayer, but it also happens that, following an epiphany of the god, a sacrifice is offered or a permanent cult is inaugurated at the place of appearance. 19

The Greeks nevertheless did not take the gods and their kinship with the gods for granted. They recognized the difference also between gods and men. Pindar's poem continues, "But a difference of power in everything keeps us apart." The prime power is that of life itself. And

<sup>17</sup> Martin Persson Nilsson, Geschichte der griechischen Religion (München: C. H. Beck, 1941-1950), I, 550. Hereafter this work is cited as Geschichte.

<sup>18</sup>C. M. Bowra, The Greek Experience (New York: The New American Library, 1959), p. 57.

<sup>19</sup>pfister, op. cit., p. 297.

the basic distinction is that men are mortal and the gods immortal. Concerning the prevailing attitude toward death C. M. Bowra wrote that the Greeks never forgot that the ghost of Achilles said that he would rather be the serf of a poor man on earth than be king over all the dead. Some Greeks said that beyond the grave there was only extinction, and others hoped for Elysian beatitude. But the ordinary posture in the face of the awful majesty of death was one of anxious uncertainty.<sup>20</sup>

Such an attitude toward death helped make the Greeks this-worldly.

And gods intervene in the affairs of men to aid or to hinder men in attaining their earthly goals. The constant purpose of the appearances of Athene is to bring Odysseus home and to protect him from his attackers.

In spite of all the massive anthropomorphism which Greek thought exhibits the Homeric gods at times assume other shapes than those of men. Athene takes the form of a swallow and perches in the rafters (Od. XXII, 236). On another occasion she departed, "flying away like a bird into the air" (Od. I, 319f.). This may mean not that she was in the form of a bird, but that she was capable of levitation and flight (cf. II. XIX, 350). Elsewhere the poet writes that the goddess took flight in the way of a sea-eagle. Those who saw it were astonished at what their eyes beheld (Od. III, 317f.; cf. II. XIII, 13ff.). In Minoan religion a bird often serves as the form in which a god appears. A bird's sudden coming and going make its use easily understandable. Sometimes Minoan religion pictured the god in human form, flying like a bird among the clouds.
Minoan influence is reflected in the Homeric accounts of epiphanies in

<sup>20</sup> Boura, op. cit., p. 51.

the form of birds. 21

At times the goddess made her presence known by an uncanny deed rather than by the assumption of any solid form. Once Pallas Athene lightened the way and brightened the path for Odysseus and Telemachus, with the result that the latter was awed by the miracle and thus became aware that a divinity was present (Il. XIX, 33f.). Because of their strangeness "the gods are soon recognized" (Il. XIII, 70). Certain clues alert a man that he is experiencing an epiphany. The following are typical features in descriptions of epiphanies. 22 There may be something strange, uncanny and more than human about the appearance in general.

Male gods or heroes are usually taller than ordinary man, and the goddesses are distinguished by their beauty. A brilliance or splendor, taking the form of a nimbus or glow of light, surrounds the figure. Sometimes a certain pleasing odor accompanies the epiphany. 23

For all the kinship supposed to exist between the gods and men, the ordinary reaction of mortals at the appearance of the immortals is awe and fear. Sheer wonder, awe, astonishment or marvelling when confronted with the numinous is the first reaction (Od. XIX, 33ff.; Il. I, 19hff.; III, 317f.). Then awe turns to fear. Trembling seized Priam when Iris brought him a message from Zeus (Il. XIV, 170). Even animals are gripped with fear and struck dumb (Od. XVI, 161).

Men generally react to epiphanies with awe or wonder, with fear or

<sup>21</sup>Nilsson, Geschichte, I, 269ff.; cf. 325f.

<sup>22</sup>pfister, op. cit., pp. 31hff.

<sup>23</sup>For references and an interesting speculation see H. J. Cadbury, "The Oder of the Spirit at Pentecost," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVII (1928), 237-256.

joy, with loud shouting or deep silence. It is often remarked that the notion that men who see the divine must die is foreign to Homer and the Greeks. Sometimes a writer goes so far as to say that there is in Homer no "Woe is me," when the god appears. Perhaps Homer never goes so far as to say that persons to whom a god appeared actually died. Greeks chosen to receive an epiphany did not die any more than Moses did. But amased they certainly were.

And the Greeks did have the story of Orpheus' descent into the underworld, seeking the release of his lover. The gods gave in but commanded that he not look at her until he reached the upper world. But he turned and thus lost her forever. This is the common ancient notion that men must avert their eyes from the gods or ghosts of the underworld. And Homer himself says, "Gods revealed are hard to look upon" (II. XX, 131). Bultmann recalls the fact that in the primitive view of things seeing images of the deity could drive a man mad or render him blind. Even when the god makes his presence known in a veiled manner in a burst of light or in a rush of wind, the response is terror. 27

The gods do not show themselves to all and sundry. They are choosy and selective. The gods appear only to the man who is good, to the man who is especially beloved of the gods,  $9 \epsilon o \psi i \lambda u s$ . The one exception is

<sup>24</sup> For example, Michaelis, op. cit., p. 320.

<sup>25</sup> Erich Fascher, "Deus Invisibilis," Marburger Theologische Studien, herausgegeben von Heinrich Frick (Gotha: Leopold Klotz Verlag, 1931), p. 56.

<sup>26</sup> Bowrs, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>27&</sup>lt;sub>Rudolf</sub> Bultmann, "Prov ouses Eweaker TwTote: Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXIX (1930), pp. 169ff.

a punitive visit of a god. 28 Sometimes a god will appear to one man in a group, visible only to him. For example, Athene "stood before the living quarters and revealed herself to Odysseus, but Telemachus saw nothing there, the gods having the power not to be manifested except at will" (Od. XVI, 161; cf. Il. I, 194-200).

Epiphanies occur also in dreams, visions and ecstasies or hallucinations. The descriptions of theophanies of whatever kind are extremely reserved.

In the Roman epic<sup>29</sup> the gods are even more reserved and subdued, and they appear less frequently than in Homer. However, epiphanies are fairly common. Virgil reports that Aeneas met his goddess-mother, who appeared in a bright and dazzling form of exquisite stateliness (Aeneid II, 590ff.). On another occasion Venus came as a maiden, armed with the gear of a Spartan damsel (I, 31hff.). She came audibly as well as visibly. Speaking words of greeting to her son, Venus "flashed her presence on his sight" (VIII, 610-611). The word is uppermost in another appearance. Mercury, as might be expected of the messenger of the gods, appeared in a vision which served as framework for a word of warning. He bade Aeneas leave Africa and Dido to pursue his destiny. Having spoken, Mercury vanished out of sight (IV, 264-283). For all his familiar intercourse with the gods Aeneas still shuddered when face to face with them (IV, 26hff.).

Why do the gods appear? First of all they come and show themselves and act to influence and alter the course of events in tune with their

<sup>28&</sup>lt;sub>Pfister, op. cit., pp. 319f.</sub>

<sup>29&</sup>lt;sub>Virgil</sub>, "The Aeneid," The Poems of Virgil, translated by James Rhoades (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1952). All quotations and reference symbols are from this edition.

own wishes or vows. 30 Sometimes they do not act but speak. Pfister and Nilsson both tell the story of the poet Simonides who was staying over night in Thessaly. He heard someone call him to come outside. He heeded the call, went out, saw no one. And the house collapsed behind him. 31 Apollo came up unseen to Hector and warned him not to engage Achilles in single combat (Il. XX, 375ff.; cf. Il. I, 197, 218). Mercury appeared to Aeneas to warn him to be on his way (Aeneid IV, 264ff.).

It is not so far from Greek religion to Greek philosophy. Fundamental to both is the "sense of invisible forces at work in the familiar scene, of unreleased potentialities in the human mind and heart, of an ideal order lurking behind the manifold appearances of things." In some respects Greek philosophy is a transposition or demythologization of primitive Greek religion. And on the other hand pre-Socratic philosophy is really natural theology and is to be read as a chapter in the development of Greek religion. Both Greek religion and Greek philosophy are attempts to explain the universe.

The sixth book of Plato's Republic opens with the parable of the cave in which prisoners are so chained that they see only shadows on the wall and hear echoes which they take to be realities. When one is released and sees what actually is real, he recognizes his former folly. The cave is the world of sight. Those who are released and come to contemplate the idea of the good are said to attain to the beatific vision (Rep. VII, 517).

<sup>30</sup> Pfister, op. cit., pp. 293f.; Nilsson, Geschichte, I, 385.

<sup>31</sup> Pfister, op. cit., p. 296; Nilsson, Geschichte, I, 385.

<sup>32</sup> Bowra, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>33</sup> Werner Jaeger, The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947).

True philosophers are defined as those "who are lovers of the vision of truth" (Rep. V, 475). And Plato warms that "the souls of the many have no eye which can endure the vision of the divine" (Sophist, 254).

With Plato Greek thought arrived at a fully articulated division between the sensible and the intellectual. With Plato of stands opposed to vociv: only the world of sense, the algebrai, can be search; the world of ideas, which alone is genuine reality, is accessible only to the vous. The realm of ideas is the realm of the divine. God is docards, afternous, are not after a function. The proposition of Parmenides that only non-being is unknowable is axiomatic for Plato. God is vontes, accessible to the vous. 35

Plato speaks of the vision of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere (Symposium, 210). Beginning with the beauties of earth man is led upward to absolute beauty, the essence of beauty. The life which man ought to live is "contemplation of beauty absolute" (Symp. 211).

That being with which true knowledge is concerned, the colorless, formless, intengible essence, is visible only to mind, the pilot of the soul (Phaedrus, 247). Yet the sense of sight plays an indispensable role in arriving at the highest vision. Sight is the source of our knowledge of the universe. It creates the conception of number and time, issuing in arithmetic, geometry and astronomy (Timaeus, 44-47). These purify and re-illumine the eye of the soul, "more precious than ten thousand bodily eyes, for by it alone is truth seen" (Rep. VII, 527). Thus arithmetic,

<sup>31</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., p. 321.

<sup>35</sup> Bultmann, op. cit., p. 172.

geometry and astronomy are the source of philosophy, "than which no greater good ever was or will be given by the gods to mortal man" (Timaeus, 47).36

Plate compares the intellect, which alone is capable of dialectic, with sight, which imitates it. Both intellect and sight may have lesser or higher objects, and they must both be trained to contemplate the highest and the best (Rep. VII, 532).

In philosophic contemplation, in the beatific vision, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, man will be able to grasp not the images of beauty but the realities. By bringing forth and nourishing true virtue, a man will become the friend of God and may even become immortal (Symp. 211-212).

The soul had a pre-existence, consisting of a beatific vision in which it beheld true being. Knowledge of universals is the recollection of the things which the soul once saw while following some god. Philosophers followed Zeus, others following other gods. All souls recall very easily the things of the other world. They see them only in a glass dimly. Recollection is stirred by the sight of beauty in this world (Phaedrus, 250-251).

The man who exercises his intellect more than any other element in himself and has thoughts immortal and divine, must be immortal in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality. By learning the harmonies and revolutions of the universe, he renews his original nature and attains to that perfect life which the gods have set before mankind both for the present and the future (Timaeus, 90).

<sup>36</sup>Cf. Aristotle, On Sense and the Sensible, 437a.

In the <u>Phaedo Socrates argued that the soul is immortal and imperishable</u>, and it will truly exist in another world (<u>Phaedo</u>, 106). Socrates told a tale of that other world and explained it as a place of splendid sights and brilliant colors. Those who dwell there have the senses of sight and hearing and smell perfected. In the other world the gods really dwell in temples and shrines, and people in the other world hear their voices, converse with them, and see the sun, moon and stars as they really are (110-111). Those who achieved holiness of life are released from their earthly prison and go to that pure home above. There they dwell in a purer earth. The philosophers among them live forever in a disembodied condition in mansions which are indescribably fair (114).

In Aristotle the contemplative life (θεωεντικός βίος) is regarded as the highest activity of man, much to be preferred to the practical life (πεακτικός βίος, Metaphysics, 993b). Human life finds its ultimate meaning and fulfillment in θεωειά.

Reason (vous) is the best thing in man; it is divine (Jew), and life according to reason is also divine. Aristotle wrote that it is folly to heed those who advise men to remember their mortality and live according to it. Men must rather strive to make themselves immortal by living in accord with the best and highest thing in them (Nicomachean Ethics X, 7, 1177b, 30ff.). The life of the gods is neither action nor production but contemplation. And humans must emulate the gods in order to be happy (Nicomachean Ethics X, 8, 1178b, 20ff.). Since philosophers are those who exercise and cultivate reason, they are most akin to the gods and most dear to them.

Eudemos renders Aristotle's thought in religious terms when he says that the crown of human life is "to worship God and see him" ( $\tau \tilde{o} \checkmark \theta \epsilon \tilde{o} \checkmark$ 

θεραπεύειν και θεωρείν, Budemian Ethics VII, 15p, 12h9b, 16ff.).

Aristotle did not believe in personal, individual immortality. The reason is immortal, but it is not individual. By identifying oneself with it, one escapes from death to a certain extent.<sup>37</sup>

In Stoicism the doctrine of the natural knowledge of God was developed and propagated passionately. This teaching is related to the conception of the essence of God as the Spirit or Logos to which the spirit and logos of man are substantially related. Epictetus, for example, called man's reason "a fragment of God" (Anotherape rev 100). 38 God is Providence (Neovos), the universal law of nature (Kolvos voras fublus), and Logos or Fate (Eiropaine), perceptible in the contemplation of the cosmos and its order (Ness) and purpose, prevailing on the individual and especially on the cosmic level. The Kohnos is God's Eikuw. 39 Many of these ideas are exhibited in Gleanthes' famous Hymn to Leus, quoted here in abbreviated forms

Most glorious of immertals, Zeus the many-named, almighty evermore, Nature's great Sovereign, ruling all by law-Hail to thee! From thee was our begetting; ours alone of all that live and move upon the earth the lot to bear God's likeness. For thee this whole vast cosmos, wheeling round the earth, obeys, and where thou leadest it follows, ruled willingly by thee. Naught upon earth is wrought in thy despite, O God, nor in the ethereal sphere aloft which ever winds about its pole, nor in the sea—save only what the wicked work, in their strange madness. Ill-fated, hungering to possess the good they have no vision of God's universal law.40

<sup>37</sup>cf. Plato, Theaetetus, 176.

<sup>38</sup> Franz Cumont, After Life in Roman Paganism (New York: Dover Publications, 1959), p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> Bultmann, op. cit., pp. 172f.; see also the same author's Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting, translated by Reginald H. Fuller (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), pp. 135f. The latter will hereafter be referred to as Primitive Christianity.

Grant, op. cit., pp. 152f.

This same absorption in the contemplation and veneration of the orderliness of the universe and especially of the stars is found in Seneca.

In a letter to Helvia, his mother, he wrote, contrasting the variety of
places and soils on the earth with the steady sameness and dependability
of the sun, moon and planets, that he was content as long as he could
commune with those celestial beings and keep his mind on the sight of
kindred things above.

In another letter he wrote of the soul's vision when it ascends after death to heaven. The soul will behold the gleaming of countless stars and see the coursing of the sun, marking off day and night, fall and winter, spring and summer. The soul will have a perfect vision of the five planets and the stars, which cause the greatest and the smallest events on earth and determine the destinies of nations.

In yet another letter Seneca wrote of the joys which await a man when he dies and his spirit returns to the gods. Then will nature divulge her secrets, and man will be perfectly enlightened. That which a man now sees hazily and partially with cramped vision from a distance will then be seen directly and clearly and at close range. 41

Astral mysticism, introduced from Oriental parts, made astronomy the source of godly virtue and immortality, and modified more ancient notions about the appearances of the gods, and served to exalt the already common notion concerning the bliss of contemplation. The Greeks wax passionate in their flamboyant oratory in describing the communion of man with the stars. Man's spirit was intoxicated in the night by the glow shed on it by the heavenly fires. Inspired by the stars, men were lifted in ecstatic

hl Seneca's letters are in Bultmann, Primitive Christianity, pp. 150f.

rapture above their earthy clay and sprang on high, as borne by wings, to fellowship with everlasting stars and join their sacred chorus in movements harmonious. Man's reason was illumined and divined the laws of nature and the mysteries of destiny. 42

Ptolemy, not unconscious of his mortality, still sensed that his feet left the earth when he pondered the course of the stars, so that he was lifted on high to feast and banquet with immortal Zeus. In the other world the initiated will enjoy the delights of his astronomy and astrolatry in heightened degree. He will dwell everlastingly in a celestial observatory, from which the motions and rhythms of heavenly bodies will be perfectly discerned and clear. He will see the phenomena of the earth and the doings of men, and all things will be open to his eyes. That speculative life is alone in earth or heaven worthy of the sage. 13

The Oriental mysteries were exotic cults claiming to reveal the secrets of immortality to the initiated. With their promises of holiness in this life and felicity in the next, and with their confident appeal to divine revelation and an ancient tradition, the mysteries were destined to be immensely popular in a society tired of doubt and uncertainty.

The salvation offered by the mysteries was a personal identification with the god, a deification, which rendered a man immortal. The energy of the god penetrated the faithful. The metamorphosis was accomplished in a complicated liturgical drama whose high point was a visual experience. Clement of Alexandria preserves the saying of Pindar concerning the

<sup>42</sup> Cumont, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>43</sup> Cumont, op. cit., pp. 210ff.

Cumont, op. cit., p. 33.

Eleusinian mysteries: "Blessed is he who has seen before he goes under the earth; for he knows the end of life and knows also its divine beginning." Among the initiated the chorus, was higher than the mostus. Enough designates one who has seen the deity. The highest possible activity in the mystery is always called a seeing. It was no action which the initiated engaged in but something which he saw. To overlook that point is a grievous error. That it had to do with seeing is emphasized again and again. 17

In some cases the seeing plainly occurs in an ecstatic trance, as in the so-called Mithras liturgy. 48 But otherwise the exact nature of the experience is uncertain. No one knows whether the worshiper beheld plastic representations of the gods or priests masquerading as gods or ecstatic visions of the gods. The nature of the seeing is an unsolved riddle. And it always will be unsolved, since the obligation of silence was acrupulously observed. 49

However, first-hand knowledge of the mysteries of Isis is reflected in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius. The hero of the tale is one Lucius, who describes his initiation into the mystery. He drew near to the

LibClement of Alexandria, "On Marriage (Stromateis III)," Alexandrian Christianity, edited by J. E. L. Oulton and Henry Chadwick (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 48.

<sup>160.</sup> Kern, "Epoptes," Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, herausgegeben von Georg Wissowa (Stuttgart: J. B. Metaler, 1909), VI, 248f.

Nilsson, Geschichte, I, 626, with reference to Pindar's phrase, 6/605, 66715 16 W, and to the Homeric hymn, 6/6/05, 65 TOS TOWNEV.

<sup>48</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., p. 323.

<sup>49</sup>Nilsson, Geschichte, I, 627f.

confines of death, borne along through all the elements. And then he returned once more to earth. In the dead of night, he saw the sun shin-ing brightly. He approached the gods, and he worshiped them face to face. 50

Iamblichus (ca. 250-325 A. D.), a neo-Platonist writer, in his book, On the Mysteries, offers a fantastic description of epiphanies. The appearance of a god sometimes obscures the whole sky, eclipsing sum and moon. The whole earth is scarcely able to bear it. When an archangel appears, only portions of the earth are agitated. And the archangels are of various magnitudes. He goes on to describe the appearances of angels, demons, heroes, archons and souls. The brilliance and splendor decrease as one goes down the ladder. 51

At the high point of the mystery the god appears and is seen by his devotess. No messages are exchanged, no commands given, no sayings are uttered. As Aristotle noted, the devotee receives no information. He is profoundly stirred in the innermost recesses of his soul. The mysteries are founded on the emotional depths within man. 52

Magic was practiced in every period of Greek and Roman history but was especially popular and influential in Roman Imperial times, when it filled a widely felt need, was nourished and encouraged by Oriental influences and grew strong enough to influence and transform religious views, "one of the most momentous and distressing developments in the

<sup>50</sup> Grant, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>51</sup> Grant, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>52</sup> Martin Person Nilsson, Greek Piety (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 157.

evolution of religion in late antiquity."53 By the use of prayers, secret words and names, formulas and series of letters, amulets and charms, men sought to break the iron sway of fate and compel the gods and demons to deal favorably with them. Some men sought help in winning another man's wife, asked protection from snakes, scorpions and the evil eye, or wanted fame and fortune. Others yearned for loftier gifts. Some desired the intellectual enlightenment of secret wisdom. Others commanded the gods to come and dwell in pictures or statues. The And many attempted to force the gods to appear to them and answer their questions. Of course, behind every cult and every prayer was the desire for a relationship with the deity and the hope that he might become present or at least accessible.

And success was often signalled by an epiphany. 55

A prayer designed to compel the god to appear was known technically as action to Adver. 56 Some of the prayers in the magic paperi are refined liturgical statements revealing a depth of religious feeling and pathos.

Interesting for its information on epiphanies is the following:

I invoke thee, who art greater than all, who hast created all, thee the self-begotten, who seest all but art thyself unseen (TOV TAVITA DEWITH MADE AND DEWITH WALL AND DEWITH TO THE ALL THE COSMOS and the light appear. To thee all things are subject; thy true form none of the gods can behold. Thou who canst transform thyself into

<sup>53</sup>Nilsson, Geschichte, II, 498.

Sharl Prümm, Religionsgeschichtliches Handbuch für den Raum der altchristlichen Umwelt; hellenistisch-römische Geistesströmungen und Kulte mit Beachtung des Eigenlebens der Provinzen (Rom: Päptsliches Bibelinstitut, 1954), pp. 377f.

<sup>55</sup> Pfister, op. cit., p. 302.

<sup>56</sup>Karl Preisendans, Papyri Graecae Magicae: Die Griechischen Zauberpapyri (Leipzig und Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1931), III, 699; V, 55; cf. VI, 319.

all things art the unseen Aion of Aions (Mag. Pap. XIII, 63ff; of. 571-586).57

Healings were regularly ascribed to epiphanies of Asclepius and others who appeared ordinarily in dreams. Aelius Aristides, prominent orator of the second century A. D., wrote his <u>Sacred Orations</u> in gratitude to Asclepius, who had appeared to him and healed him. He describes the epiphany with considerable warmth. He had a sense of contact with the god, feeling the presence of the god with absolute certainty. His state of mind was neither sleep nor wakefulness. Dreamily he was conscious of sharpening his ears and listening intently, while fearing to look up lest the god should vanish. His hair stood on end, every nerve was alert, and tears of joy streamed down his cheeks. His heart was bursting with a proud modesty. 58

earthed in modern times and give a glimpse into the personal lives of ancient private citizens. One of them shows how closely healing was connected with proper dreams. Ambrosia from Athens had been blind in one eye. She came to the temple seeking help, but as she went about the temple, she made fun of the records of cures, thinking a cure by means of a dream impossible. Then she had her own dream. The god approached and promised to cure her on condition that she offer the temple a silver pig in memory of her stupidity. Then the god cut open her eye and poured in some drug. She went away cured. 59

<sup>57</sup>The translation is that of F. C. Grant, op. cit., p. 47.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp. 53f.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

"Epiphanes" and call themselves by other divine titles. When the Romans conquered the eastern world, they inherited the tradition and were not slow in developing and refining it and turning it to their own use. The origin of worship to rulers is "the darkest and most disputed problem of Greek religion in historic times." It is not easy to see how the gulf between men and gods could be closed on Greek soil, because the Greeks counted it hybris to ignore the boundary line. Nevertheless in an age which believed without reservation in the possibility of divine appearances it is not too surprising that men of outstanding deeds or unexpected action should be hailed as \$\color{\epsilon} \tilde{\epsilon} \tilde{\epsilon} \cdots \cdots

Alexander the Great was among the first to attract to himself divine honors on a wide scale. He enjoyed it and played it to the hilt. Cultus paid to rulers became accepted custom and came to play an important role in politics even more than in religion. Especially when hardship, war and ill fortune eroded the traditional beliefs and men lost faith in the traditional gods, the earthly conquerors seemed to exhibit all the hall-marks of the gods and indeed to be even more effective than the gods in altering chance and fortune. The honor paid to Demetrius Policorates, "liberator" of Athens, has been preserved in a work of Athenaeus (ca. A. D. 200) who found it in Duris of Samos (ca. 340-260 B. C.): "The other gods either are not, or are far away; either they hear not, or they

<sup>60</sup>Nilsson, Geschichte, II, 128; W. W. Tarn, Hellenistic Civilization, third edition revised by the author and G. T. Griffith (Cleveland: The World Publishing Co., 1961), pp. 19ff., sketches the origins and development of the worship of kings, giving full references.

<sup>61</sup> Pfister, op. cit., p. 312.

give no heed; but thou art here, and we can see thee, not in wood or stone, but in very truth. #62

Enosticism "is a religion of saving knowledge, and the knowledge is essentially self-knowledge, recognition of the divine element which constitutes the true self." To that knowledge a fantastic and bewildering array of myth and cult was added. Or, as Bultmann puts it, the doctrine of gnosticism was cosmology and anthropology from the point of view of soteriology. Oh

The knowledge which the gnostic possesses is not like other, secular knowledge, which is gained through the activity of the vous or koyos. The knowledge of the gnostics is a xoolook, that is, it must be bestowed by God. It can be attained not by reflection but only by revelation. The neo-Pythagorean Onatas spoke for many circles of later Greek philosophy in describing god and man's knowledge of god in rational, Platonic terms:

"God himself is neither visible nor accessible to the senses but can be viewed only by reason or the mind" (o per wy leos out o out

<sup>62</sup>Tarn, op. cit., p. 55; Grant, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>63</sup>R. M. Grant, Gnosticism and Early Christianity (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), p. 10.

Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhaumer Verlag, 1933), I, 694. Hereafter this work is cited as TW. This is not a paper on the history of Greek religion. It is not essential to the purpose of the present paper to decide whether the Hermetica are gnostic writings or not. R. M. Grant, op. cit., pp. 147f., considers them less gnostic than philosophical. Nilsson, Geschichte, II, 586, on the other hand, says flatly that hermetism is the heathen branch of gnosticism. And yet he uses gnosticism to designate Christian gnostic sects. And Nilsson, ibid., 590, has an opposite view from Grant also in this comparison: "That which was a religious experience for the devotee of the Hermetica was expanded by the gnostics with religious speculation and metaphysics."

<sup>65</sup> Bultmann, IW, I, 693.

# OUTE diedatos, andadog w mover kai vow dewertos).66

Chosticism had a new notion concerning the relationship between God and the nous, which had been identified at least since Anaxagoras. In the Hermetic literature <sup>67</sup> God is above the Nous: "God is not Mind, but the cause to which Mind owes its being" (CH II, 13; but see XII, 1). The highest powers of the human soul are mind and reason. Since the highest god stands exalted over the Mind, union with God means more than participation in the Mind. <sup>68</sup> Thus gnosis is not primarily information but illumination, even though in some types of gnosticism the knowledge was a kind of philosophical speculation.

The Hermetic god is wholly other, the alone, unique, eternal, unchangeable, invisible, inaccessible. He is above Being (2006/d6705) and is neither Mind nor Spirit nor Light. In this way the god of the Hermetica comes to be irrational according to Bultmann. And Milsson calls the Hermetic god pure power. 69

Bultmann defines gnosis as a divine fordais, a magical power. Like myellow, it is a divine fluid which acts on and substantially alters the soul. 70 God is accessible to the gnostic who has been substantially changed by the power of gnosis. One must be the equal of God in order to

<sup>66</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., p. 323, quotes this line and says that these same notions are current also in some parts of the Hermetica.

<sup>67</sup>Walter Scott, Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings which contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924). In the following CH stands for Corpus Hermeticum, Ascl. Lat. for the Latin Asclepius, and Stob. for Stobaei Hermetica.

<sup>68</sup> Primm, op. cit., p. 598.

<sup>69</sup> Nilsson, Geschichte, II, 577.

<sup>70</sup> TW, 1, 695f.

comprehend God, according to the principle that like is known by like (CH X, 120b).

Sometimes it is said that the gnostic is deified and thus made fit for the vision of God by gnosis. A variation is found in the saying, "Without philosophy, it is impossible to be pious" (Stob. III, 32). And sometimes it is the vision of God which deifies the knowledgeable man. Similarly gnosis designates both the goal (the ecstatic-mystic union or vision of God) and the way, whose TEAO, is Dewell. 71

On the other hand, man as mind, quintessential man, is already of divine nature. Nothing is more divine than mind (CH X, 23). Therefore the Hermetic theology does not hesitate to say that a man on earth is a mortal god, and that a god in heaven is an immortal man (CH X, 25). On this view it is not so much that man must be deified as that man must be taught to denigrate the body and so fit himself for reunion with his brothers, the gods. The same thing is said elsewhere in other words, "Holy is God, who wills to be known, and is known by those who are his own" (CH I, 31).

The Hermetica teach more than one version of man's vision of God.

At death the body with its elements, properties and senses returns to the universe from which it came. The man himself makes his ascent through the seven spheres of heaven, leaving in each a part of his earthy and evil inclinations. Then in his essential pristine power he enters the eighth sphere of heaven and joins celestial beings in hymning the Father. Finally he ascends beyond the eighth heaven to the Father, becomes one of the powers and enters into God (iv Isw Yivevici). This apotheosis (CH X, 6) is

<sup>71</sup> Bultmann, TW, I, 694.

the Good, the consummation prepared for those who have gnosis (CH i, 2h-26a).

Deification is not possible for a man still in the body (CH IV, 5; X, 6), but glimpses of the vision before death, while temporary and partial, are possible. However, men in the body again and again lapse into blind sleep or error. Only when they have been released from the body can they hope to attain to that full fruition, which is "that levely sight" (CH X, 5).

The vision is granted in this life to men who approximate death in their suppression of the senses and forgetfulness of the body. In ecstatic trance, in standing outside his body, the vision may be granted. In the vision one apprehends nothing else, hears nothing else, sees nothing else. He cannot move his body, and he forgets all bodily sensations and all bodily movements (CH X, 6).

The basic conception remains that a man in the body does not attain to the vision of God. Life in the body is a period of training. The soul must gather gnosis to itself that it may not miss the way to God when it has been released from the body (Stob II, 3). The vision is not accessible to the bodily eyes but only to the mind and heart (CH VII, 2a).

Alongside these mystic and gnostic conceptions, there is another notion, associated with Stoicism. God is in Himself invisible, in the sense that he is hidden from the senses (CH IV, 9; V, 1), but he is at the same time most manifest in the cosmos, which is not so much his creation as his reflection or image (cf. Ascl. Lat. I, 10). Man and the cosmos are the two images of God (cf. CH I, 14). The Hermetic god manifests himself ungrudgingly through the whole universe. The knowing man can behold God's image with his eyes and lay hold on it with his hands (CH V, 2).

The Hermetic god makes things in order to be seen in them (CH XIV, 3; cf. V, 10a).

The ultimate and highest vision, however, may be described by analogy with the sun as a "good and most beautiful sight" which nearly blinds the eye of the mind by its brilliance (CH V, 3f.; X, h). And yet it is said that "the vision of the Good is not a thing of fire" like the sun. It is an incorporeal radiance, more penetrating and more subtle than visible light. When man has been reborn by gnosis, he no longer sees the ordinary three dimensions but perceives the incorporeal (CH X, hb; RIII, 11a). It is the Beautiful and the Good, but it has neither shape nor color (Stob. VI, 19; CH IV, 9). It is incorporeal, invisible, without shape, and non-material (Stob. I, 2).

In accord with the variant interpretations of gnosis offered by the gnostic writings, the union with God is conceived many times as "an ontic merging" and at other times it seems to be a comprehension of God by the aid of the higher intellectual powers. Gnosis in Hermetism means union with the ineffable God, attained by contemplative ecstasy. Gnosis in earlier gnosticism is a doctrine of the visible and invisible world. Gnosis in later circles is knowledge of the rites and formulas which guarantee the soul's ascent. 73

Neo-Platonism reigned from the time of Plotinus (ca. A. D. 205-270) to the middle of the sixth century of the Christian era and somewhat later in the case of Alexandria. Summing up and systematizing very nearly all of the traditional strands of philosophical and religious thought, "it is

<sup>72&</sup>lt;sub>Prümm, op. cit., p. 598.</sub>

<sup>73</sup> Nilsson, Geschichte, II, 588ff.

the philosophy of expiring antiquity,"74 and it is "the last great philosophical system of ancient times."75

Nec-Platonism strongly emphasizes the transcendence of God. But then it unites transcendence with a monistic world view founded on a dynamic pantheism. The opposition between the highest essence and the world is then heightened to sharpest dualism by describing the Absolute as exalted even over being and thought. The tension is resolved by conceiving the Absolute as the cause of everything, including the Negative, the material, of the world of appearance. In its dualism and transcendence nec-Platonism is related to Pythagorean-Platonic-Aristotelian ideas. In its monism and dynamic pantheism it is akin to Stoicism. Nevertheless it breaks out of the philosophical realm by its religious doctrine of ecstasy as the final goal. 76

Thus neo-Platonism has a comprehensive, synthetic character and is also marked by a powerful originality. It is both religious or mystical and metaphysical.

Previous to neo-Platonism Plato had conceived God as the Good, the Self-Sufficient Perfection, who was the goal of all right desiring. But Plato strikingly taught that God as at the same time the Self-Transcending Fecundity, who brought forth all possible kinds of temporal and imperfect things, an idea which has been called "the principle of plenitude." For Aristotle God's self-sufficiency is his essential attribute. God busies himself with self-contemplation and enjoys a bliss which is man's highest

<sup>7</sup>h Friedrich Ueberweg, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, herausgegeben von Karl Praechter (Basel: Benno Schwabe, 1953), I, 32ff.

<sup>75</sup> Nilsson, Geschichte, II, 412.

<sup>76</sup> Ueberweg, op. cit., p. 590.

good, achieved in the contemplation of God. But Aristotle in his studies of natural history was responsible for introducing the principle of continuity, the notion "of infinitely delicate shadings-off of everything into something else," as distinguished from discrete, well-defined and rigid classification and pigeon-holing. Aristotle also chiefly suggested to later thinkers the idea of arranging all things in a single graded scale, "the principle of unilinear gradation."

These three principles—plenitude, continuity and unilinear gradation—were the ingredients of a conception of the universe as a "Great Chain of Being," a picture of the structure and plan of the world which was to be accepted unquestioningly by most educated persons until the end of the eighteenth century. It was in neo-Platonism that these notions were first merged and organized into a single coherent system. 77

In the Plotinian system the transcendent is a divine triad; it consists of three graded hypostases. The highest of the three is the One, the First Existent, the Good, the Absolute, the Unconditioned. It is exalted even over being and thought. Plotinus writes, "Existing beyond and above Being, it must be beyond and above the Intellectual-Principle and all Intellection" (I, 7, 1). 78 It is unknowable and one can say only what it is not, describing it by the way of negation. Plotinus' negative language emphasizes the utter transcendence of the One. He is careful not to give the impression that the transcendence is spatial in character.

<sup>77</sup>Arthur O. Lovejoy, The Great Chain of Being (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1936), pp. 24-66.

<sup>78</sup> Plotinus, The Enneads, translated by Stephen MacKenna, second edirevised by B. S. Page (London: Faber and Faber, 1956). The system of references used in this paper follows MacKenna's edition.

The One produces or generates the Nous, the Intellectual-Principle; the divine Mind. Plotinus calls the Intellectual-Principle the first act of the Good and the first Existence (I, 3, 2). In the Nous is found plurality or multiplicity; for here there is the distinction between the subject and the object of the act of thinking, the thinker and that which is thought. And the Nous contains the ideas and so the totality of true being.

The Nous contemplates the One and engenders the third hypostasis, the universal Soul. The Soul is "an utterance and act of the Intellectual-Principle as that is an utterance and act of the One" (V, 1, 6). The Soul contemplates the Nous and generates the material universe. Each rung on the ladder is the emanation and image of that above it and each generates that below it. Generation or emanation is conceived as a good and necessary procession of being, implying neither diminution nor weakening of the generator.

Generation occurs because perfection implies production and creation.

"The perfection entails the offspring; a power so wast could not remain
unfruitful," says Plotinus (V, 1, 7). To be perfect, derived beings must
contemplate their source. Contemplation thus precedes activity and generation.

Human souls are parts of Universal Soul. The body is not a prison unless the soul surrenders to it by isolating itself from the whole, becoming trapped in the particularity of the material world (III, 3, 4). The true end of the soul with regard to the body is contemplation of Universal Soul and a complete sharing of Universal Soul's rule over the body it produces (III, 2, 8-9).

Matter is "the basic stuff of all the entities of the sense-world"

(III, b, 8). It is incorporeal, having neither quantity nor quality in itself (II, b, 8-10). It is the recipient of all properties and qualities. In this sense it has no separate existence but is a necessity of thought. It is the necessary base and substratum of all existing things. It is that in and upon which the forms and ideas are actualized in the sensible world.

Matter can, however, be regarded as evil (I, 8, 5ff.; II, 5, 4-12), in the sense that it fascinates the soul and attracts the forms downward. In this case matter is an evil substratum on which the forms are simply superimposed.

Natter is the last emanation of the generative power of the soul.

It is the point at which the creative power ends and beyond which no further procession is possible. It is almost but not quite non-Being. It is almost infinitely distant from the One, the Good, which, however, is its ultimate cause. Thus the opposition between metaphysical and physical is resolved by placing everything in a great chain of existence.

Matter and the One are opposite ends of a single line in the course of which the light of the One gradually fades and finally becomes the darkness of matter.

Plotinus thus describes reality as an ordered hierarchical universe, a Great Chain of Being, in which the higher levels spontaneously create from their abundance of being as a necessary reflex of contemplation each lower level on the chain. The cosmic movement is one that proceeds from absolute unity towards an ever increasing plurality and particularity. This is the metaphysical aspect of Plotinus' thought.

Then there is the upward, mystic movement of ascent and simplification.

The soul travels up through all the stages of the Plotinian universe to its

term, the immediate contemplation of the One and an ecstatic union with it (I, 3, 1). Porphyry, Plotinus' pupil and editor, reports that Plotinus achieved this term four times in five years, and he adds that in his sixty-eighth year he too was once admitted into union. Plotinus himself writes that the soul is evil by being interfused with the body and by coming to share the body's states and thoughts. In order to become good, the soul must throw off the body's moods and devote itself to intellection and wisdom; if it never allows the passions of the body to affect it, knows no fear at the parting from the body, and permits the Intellectual-Principle to rule completely, it will attain to likeness to God (I, 2, 3). Asceticism and deepest concentration are essential prerequisites for reaching the goal of union with the One.

In the union the distinction between seer and seen is overcome. By the union man is deified; for his real, divine essence is revealed. This is the same silent contemplation, the same quiet ecstasy, which the Hermetic Writings teach. 79

The soul is stirred by Eros to make its voyage to union with beauty and with the Good (III, 5, 1-9; VI, 9, 9). Eros can be led astray to lesser beauties and lesser goods. But the true term of man is the ultimate source of the highest principle in him. The goal of the soul's pilgrimage is the vision of the "wellspring of Life, wellspring also of Intellect, beginning of Being, font of Good, root of Soul" (VI, 9, 9). This state is the soul's first and final, source and goal. When it has come to God again, it becomes what it was.

Plotinus says that the soul arrives at its goal only when it has

<sup>79</sup> Nilsson, Geschichte, II, 415.

and god-like. It sees the divine presence suddenly manifesting itself; for nothing any longer stands between them. Here there is no duality, but the distinction between the two fades away. The union of lover and beloved is a copy of this religious union. The soul then concentrates not on its own condition or nature but only on that which is revealed to it. The union is perfect truth and perfect joy (VI, 7, 34).

Of the many successors of Plotinus his intimate disciple, Porphyry (232-30h), expounded and popularised the master rather faithfully, carrying Plotinus' thought on the ethical and religious sides forward. For both Plotinus and Porphyry religion is an inward affair of the individual, the flight of the alone to the Alone. But with Porphyry the later neo-Platonic interest in demons, magic, rites and asceticism is already stirring. His Letter to Marcella shows that asceticism is the true philosopher's way. He is also the author of a comprehensive fifteen volume polemic against Christianity, showing a concern for this world not to be found in Plotinus.

The neo-Platonism of Tamblichus the Syrian (c. ca. 330) is of a different sort. He was Porphyry's pupil in Rome and later a celebrated teacher in his native land. The two concerns of pagan neo-Platonism from Tamblichus onwards were the elaboration of a coherent theology out of the waning paganism of antiquity and the reduction of Plotinus' thought to a watertight system. Under Tamblichus' guidance neo-Platonism made its peace with gnosticism, upon which Plotinus had heaped so much scorn in his Emneads (II, 9). Putting aside the philosopher's mantle, Tamblichus appeared in the fantastic garb of an Egyptian priest. The way to the vision of God was no longer that of philosophical contemplation but that

of the sacrifices and rites of the traditional cults.

Proclus (\$10-\$85) became the head of the Academy in Athens and gave neo-Platonism a new lease on life. With him mysticism gave way to the urgy, magical practices involving incantations and the mysterious properties of herbs and other substances, the purpose of which was to set up a chain reaction of sympathies which would move the proper god to some desired end. Proclus influenced the medieval West through Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite, whose writings clearly reflect Proclus' spirit.

Neo-Platonism had a great effect on St. Augustine (354-430). All his life he was acquainted with the Christian religion, but it was Mani-cheism which first claimed his intellectual allegiance. Subsequently he was converted to neo-Platonism and thence to Christianity.

In Book VII of his Confessions Augustine declares his debt to neo-Platonism and gives his view of the similarities and decided differences between that philosophy and Christianity. Having been admonished by Platonic books, most likely the Enneads, he returned into himself. He traveled the way of contemplation until he saw with the eye of his soul that Immutable Light, which is above both soul and mind.

It seems trite to declare flatly that the Greeks yearned to see God.

But they believed that gods had appeared to the pious in the past and still did appear, if only one were holy or ascetic or ecstatic or contemplative enough.

Why did they want to see god? The gods had come in Homer's epics to save their favorites from destruction and to aid them in achieving their chosen goals. Temple propaganda swore that they appeared in dreams to heal the sick, the lame and the blind. Poems and traditions told of earth-ly fortune made or broken by the whim of the gods. Why should not the

plous man practice the superstitions of theurgy in order to guarantee success in love or business or war? If the wisdom of the ancient sages failed to satisfy, why not travel the mystic way to undreamed of treasures of knowledge?

Thoughtful and sensitive persons have always conceived of embattled existence on this planet as a restless pilgrimage, marred by imperfect communion with men and gods, brim-full with uncertainties and darkness. It is small wonder that they looked be ond this life for peace, for table-fellowship with the gods, and for the beatific vision. It was exactly under these three headings that men in the afternoon of the Hellenistic world conceived of future bliss. 80

The Greeks longed for rescue from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, fate and chance, long associated with life in the entombing body. That sense of fulfillment and bliss was achieved in the vision of Cod. That divine sight was often thought of as belonging to this world alone in its rarest and finest moments. But there are many voices which strike a futuristic note as well.

Religion is the expression of communion with the gods and also a means for realizing that communion. Prominent among the processes for achieving union were quiet mystic ecstasy, the rapturous flights of philosophical or astronomical speculation, and the frenzied rituals leading to epoptism. Hen tasted even on this poor earth of visions and sights divine, which gave them a sense of redemption and renewal. To see the god by whatever means was itself bliss, which illuminated the soul and filled it with godly splendor. Surely when the devotee departed this life, his soul,

<sup>80</sup> Cumont, op. cit., p. 190.

transfigured by the heavenly experience, would live endlessly with the god who had granted it the fugitive vision. The final beatitude of the elect was thought of as a magnified projection to the great Beyond of the felicitous foretaste granted to them here below. There above the blessed would enjoy face to face fellowship with their deity and learn all the secrets and mysteries in which they had only begun to be schooled.

This chapter has been a brief and necessary excursion into the religion of the Greeks who lived in the days of the prophets of Israel and the apostles of Christianity. The hope of seeing the gods rests on basic Greek assumptions concerning the nature of man and the nature of the gods. The method by which a man arrives at the vision also depends on Greek notions concerning man's predicement. It is not the seeing in and of itself which is peculiarly Greek. The definition of seeing on Greek soil is conditioned by the whole of Greek philosophy and religion.

This paper turns now to a study of Old Testament materials. In the Bible the reader also meets gods and men, visions and auditions. Much in the Scriptures is akin to Greek thought and Greek hope. But much else is peculiar.

#### CHAPTER IV

## THE VISION OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

#### Introduction

The distance between the gods and men in Greek thought is less than in the rest of the ancient Near East. The Greek gods were not the creators of men but their ancestors, a fact jubilantly celebrated in song and poem. The gods are, of course, different from men. They possess greater power, that is, they are immortal, while it is the fate of every man to die. And mature Greek thought developed the notion of the invisibility and immateriality of the gods, while men were entombed in bodies. But if men are related to the gods, they can by capitalizing on their essentially divine nature, by practicing ascetic or liturgical disciplines, by taking thought, and finally by dying and thereby taking leave of the body, achieve immortality and life with the gods.

In the Old Testament the basic fact about God is not His intellectuality or immateriality but His holiness, that is, His absolute transcendence and uniqueness. Transcendence here means that God is not related substantially to men but is utterly different from them. 3

The peculiarly Old Testament belief concerning God is that there is

Henri Frankfort et al., Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949), chapter 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>See Gerhard Kittel, <u>Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum</u> (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1931), p. 98.

See Norman H. Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1942), p. 47 and all of chapter two.

only one God, the Creator of all that exists. He is holy and just, without sexuality or mythology. He is invisible to man except under special conditions, and no graphic or plastic representation of Him is permitted. Far from being restricted to any part of His creation, He is equally at home in heaven and on earth and in every nation on the earth. He is unique and transcendent.

Transcendence does not mean that God is spatially remote or inaccessible to man. On the contrary, Yahweh cares for the little man, for each individual person. It is in this sense that anthropomorphism is "fundamental to early Israelite religion" and "absolutely necessary if the God of Israel was to remain a God of the individual Israelite as well as of the people as a whole." Anthropomorphism guards against conceiving God as an abstract idea or a bland and juiceless principle. Anthropomorphism safeguards the belief that God is the personal and living God, who stands over against His people, meets them on the field of history, involves Himself in their affairs, comes to them, and calls them to be His servants. Just exactly here is the truth of Henri Frankfort's statement that the Hebrews, in eliminating or transcending all other current myths of immament godhead, common to the ancient Near East, created the new myth of the will of God. 7

W. F. Albright, Archaeology and the Religion of Israel (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1942), p. 116.

<sup>5</sup>w. F. Albright, From the Stone Age to Christianity (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1957), pp. 265f. Hereafter this work will be cited as FSAC.

Ludwig Köhler, Theologie des Alten Testaments (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1953), p. 6.

Frankfort, op. cit., pp. 244 and 248.

Israelite anthropomorphism was chaste and reserved. The God of Israel resembles man at his noblest, and there is in Him not a trace of
that frailty which makes of the Olympian deities such unedifying examples.

Here, too, in these introductory remarks belong some comments on the aniconic nature of Israelite religion. The holiness of God had as its corollary a form of iconoclasm. It is difficult to realize the shattering boldness of the contempt for imagery which the Hebrews displayed.

Everywhere in their environment religious zeal found plastic and pictorial expression. The Hebrews, however, denied that the transcendent God could be given any relevant form. The Hebrew God would be offended by a representation, whatever the skill and the devotion that went into its making. Every finite reality shrivelled to nothingness before the absolute and boundless God. Yahweh could not be represented by any figure which could be touched or seen or carried about in solemn procession. His holiness was too terrible to allow any presumption or undue familiarity of approach. 10

Rudolf Bultmann has made observations which point out the importance of these conceptions for the task at hand. The Greek accords has no Hebrew equivalent. The Old Testament says that it is possible for man to see God, but it is dangerous and even fatal so to do. God can show Himself to whom He will under special conditions and at His own good time. But God's holiness means that He is never at man's disposal. Bultmann implies that having God as the object of one's vision might too easily be

<sup>8</sup> Albright, FSAC, p. 265.

Frankfort, op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>10&</sup>lt;sub>G</sub>. Ernest Wright, The Old Testament Against its Environment (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1950), p. 25.

interpreted as having Him at one's disposal. Old Testament religion is a religion of the Word. As Bultmann says, in His Word God has man at His disposal, and not vice versa. 12

It is not necessary to render a judgment on Bultmann's evaluation of seeing God to appreciate his observation. God is the personal, living God, who reveals Himself to His people. That revelation, as Kittel noted and as von Dobschütz is at pains to point out, 13 occurs in such a way as not to circumvent or deny the possibility of sense perception. But God's revelation still never puts Him under man's thumb or makes Him an object over against which man can stand as a spectator.

God shows Himself or speaks to men from heaven. The intention of this chapter is to deal with the epiphanies or visual experiences. That does not mean that all hearing is thereby ignored or excluded from discussion. As a matter of fact, because currently available discussions on the relationship of hearing and seeing are unsatisfactory, this paper will make some suggestions concerning that relationship. Nevertheless the main concern of this paper is the investigation and interpretation of the notion of seeing God. The procedure will be basically chronological, not in terms of the age of the various sources but in terms of the subject matter with which the sources deal.

<sup>11</sup> Kittel, op. cit., p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Bultmann, "Seov ouders Eweakev TwHote: Untersuchungen sum Johannesevangelium," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XXIX (1930), pp. 177ff.

<sup>13</sup>Ernst von Dobschütz, "Die fünf Sinne im Neuen Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVIII (1929), 378-411.

## The Patriarchs

Later Israelites knew that their ancestors in Mesopotamia had worshiped other gods (Joshua 24:2). They knew also of another stage. To Moses the Lord declared that He had appeared to the patriarchs, not under the name Yahweh, but as El Shaddai (Ex. 6:2-3). And the Lord reminded Moses that He had made a covenant with the patriarchs. Careful modern studies have demonstrated that these are two of the principle tenets of pre-Mosaic Hebrew religion. The patriarchs worshiped God under the names El and Shaddai. They possessed a very keen sense of the relationship between the patriarchal clan or family and God, a relationship expressed in terms of a covenant. 14

In this sense one can appreciate why John Bright eagerly registers his assent to the judgment of Albrecht Alt that the Gods of the patriarchs were the paidagogoi to Yahweh, God of Israel. Bright adds a third note to the two principal features of patriarchal religion given above. He writes that with the patriarchs there began that restless search for the fulfillment of God's promises which could not fully be satisfied with the gift of land and posterity but pointed through and beyond the Old Testament toward the city "whose builder and maker is God." 15

The first of the patriarchs is Abraham, the rock from which Israel was hewn and the quarry from which Israel was digged (Is. 51:1). Yahweh had initiated a covenant between Himself and Abraham, in which He swore to carry out a number of promises in the future. It is remarkable that

lhalbright, FSAC, pp. 243ff.

<sup>15</sup> John Bright, The History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 93.

no obligations are bound onto Abraham, who was expected only to trust God. Circumcision was not an obligation so much as a sign, marking out the recipients and testifying to the existence of the covenant. The picture of the intimate personal relationship between the individual patriarch and God painted by Genesis is no fable. And it forms the necessary background for considering the appearances of God.

when "the God of glory appeared ( ( ) to our father Abraham . . . and said to him" that He would give him a land and descendants (Acts 7:2ff.). Stephen accurately reproduced the very phrases of Genesis: "The Lord appeared ( ) 11, 20 m ) to Abram, and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' So he built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared ( ) 1 , 20 coperated ( ) 20 cope

Other language with different overtones is met further on. "After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision" (75 12), in Section and promised him seed (Gen. 15:1). This passage is distinguished, indeed unique, as the only one in the Pentateuch to employ the

<sup>16</sup> George E. Mendenhall, Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Pittsburgh: The Biblical Colloquium, 1955), p. 36.

prophetic formula, "the word of the Lord came," and to mention a vision. 17
The deep sleep and the dread, great darkness give a first-hand interpretation of the mode of revelation. The sleep sank both intellect and senses into slumber but opened up to Abraham a wakefulness of a higher order, rendering him capable of receiving God's revelation. 18

More anthropomorphic, more naive and more mysterious, both to the patriarch and to the modern reader, is the episode at the oaks of Mamre, later an important sanctuary, where "the Lord appeared to him" at midday (Gen. 18:1). "He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men stood in front of him." Gunkel evidently first noted that the men are there all of a sudden. Abraham did not catch sight of them afar off and watch them draw near. Appearances of the divine are always surprising. 19

Abraham saw them (\*? 23, 256), spoke with them, had their feet washed, and offered them both food and drink, which they proceeded to eat. In a comment on this passage Josephus indulged in a bit of first century demythologizing and noted that heavenly beings only seem to eat. 20

Von Rad assigns the story to the Yahwist, who is full of the boldest

<sup>17</sup>The story of Bileam in Numbers 24 is a lone exception.

<sup>18</sup> Gerhard von Rad, Das Erste Buch Mose, in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Herntrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1953), pp. 157f. This work will hereafter be cited as ATD.

<sup>19</sup>Von Rad, ATD, p. 175; Cuthbert A. Simpson, "The Book of Genesis,"
The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (New York:
Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), I, 617.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup>Josephus, <u>Antiquities</u> I, 122, cited according to the edition and translation in the Loeb Classical Library by H. St. John Thackeray and Ralph Marcus (London: William Heinemann, 1926-1943).

anthropomorphisms. But he rightly warns that this is quite different from the crudeness and naivete of a deliberately archaizing narrator. The unaffectedness and spontaneity of this story are the hallmark of a high and mature spirituality. 21 Fascher inclines to the other direction when he describes the event as "a really massive epiphany of God in broad daylight. 22

The appearance might be understood as implying that Yahweh is one of the three men, the other two being messengers (Gen. 18:22; 19:1).

But von Rad is probably right in seeing Yahweh appearing in all three figures. 23 The opening sentence of the chapter leads in the same direction. The mission of the two angels permits the narrator to differentiate the various activities of God on earth.

Abraham journeyed southward and sojourned in Gerar, calling Sarah his sister (Gen. 20:1-2; cf. 12:10-19). Abimelech, king of Gerar, took Sarah but is warned by God concerning her and Abraham. God came to the king in a dream by night (Gen. 20:3,6). God is not seen but heard, and He holds an entire running conversation with the ruler. In this connection Abraham is dubbed a prophet (\* 73,6en. 20:7). Abraham is viewed as a bearer of a mediatorial-prophetic office, because of which he has special access to God. And the function of a prophet according to this pericope is not to speak of things yet to come but to utter effective prayer (Gen. 20:7).

<sup>21</sup>von Rad, ATD, p. 17.

<sup>22</sup> Erich Fascher, "Deus Invisibilis," Marburger Theologische Studien, herausgegeben von Heinrich Frick (Gotha: Leopold Klotz Verlag, 1931), p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Von Rad, ATD, pp. 173f.

<sup>21</sup>won Rad, ATD, p. 195.

Here may be inserted just a few words on the subject of sources or strata. This paper presupposes no particular theory of sources. It is outside the province of this thesis to propound any view of the pentateuch, whether that of Fundamentalism or of Higher Criticism or of the scores of viewpoints between and beyond those extremes. Indeed it would be presumptuous in view of the current confusion and flux with regard to Old Testament source criticism.

Nevertheless the views of the commentators on the attitude of the various strands or strata of tradition in the pentateuch toward theophanies and angelophanies are relevant to the subject at hand; for it cannot be denied that various kinds of epiphany are reported. The language used here is that of some moderate commentators.<sup>25</sup> It is by no means necessary to agree with their dissection of the pentateuch to be instructed by them concerning theophanies and epiphanies.

The Yahwist (J) exhibits a certain joie de vivre, which is lacking in the other sources. George Ernest Wright calls it a great work, "full of joy, confidence, and faith." It is replete with naively related anthropomorphisms. And yet Bentzen cautions that there is also a tendency to get away from anthropomorphisms. For example, God is described as a flame (Gen. 15:17; Ex. 3:2) and is sometimes represented by a messenger (Gen. 16:7ff.; 19:1ff.; 2h:7; Ex. 3:2). Yahweh walks in the cool of the garden, descends to see what is going on at the tower of Babel, walks up to the oaks at Mamre and has dinner with Abraham, wrestles with Jacob

<sup>25</sup>Köhler, op. cit.; von Rad, ATD; Aage Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad Publisher, 1957).

<sup>26</sup> George Ernest Wright and Reginald H. Fuller, The Book of the Acts of God (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1960), p. 33.

(Gen. 2:7,8,21,22; 3:8; 11:5,7; 18:1ff.). In spite of features which might be called uncanny, primitive and demonic (Gen. 32:25ff.; Ex. 4:24), J has a deep understanding of the reality of sin, and in his sublime art God does not lose anything of His exaltedness, His position as "the Holy One of Israel."<sup>27</sup>

In contrast to E, who has a high degree of interest in the psychology of persons, the whole interest of the Priestly Writing (P) is absorbed in that which comes from God, His words, commands and ordinances.

P's concern is more theological in the strict sense of that word than is that of E or J, who retell the entire profane event in which God's plan

<sup>27</sup>Bentzen, op. cit., II, 49.

<sup>28</sup> Von Rad, ATD, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> Von Rad, ATD, pp. 17f.

actualizes itself. In a certain sense P writes of the deus revelatus, while J and E investigate the ways of the deus absconditus. 30 P concentrates on God's revelation which alone leads history onward to the proper issue. His writing is a real work of history, leading on from stage to further stage. Bentzen says that P's intention is to set forth the relation between the stadia in the revelation to Israel. P's historical theory is that God has regulated his relations with the human race through a series of covenants. 31

Striking anthropomorphisms appear in P's work, but God is strongly transcendent. It is characteristic of P that he speaks of God's revelation in and through His glory, which is veiled in a cloud and seen only by Moses, who is the founder of cult and the great mediator between God and the people. 32

It was also in Gerar that the Lord appeared (\*???, \*\*\*? ) to the second great patriarch, Isaac, promising him that He would be with him and bless him by fulfilling the covenant-oath He had made with Abraham, his father (Gen. 26:1-5). From Gerar Isaac traveled east and south to the hill-town of Beersheba, between Judah and the Negev (Gen. 26:23). Here again the Lord appeared, identifying Himself as "the God of Abraham" Gen. 26:24). Isaac commemorated the epiphany by erecting an altar (Gen. 46:1) and settling there, where he evidently spent most of his life (Gen. 26:25; 28:10). Here once again God is no nature deity, associated with a particular place or area, but appears as the God of a particular circle

<sup>30</sup>von Rad, ATD, p. 296.

<sup>31</sup> Bentzen, op. cit., II, 35.

<sup>32</sup> Bentsen, op. cit., II, 36.

of people.33

As Isaac is associated with Beersheba, Jacob's name is linked indissolubly with Bethel. On his way to Haran, Jacob arrived after sunset at
Luz, where he slept and dreamed. In his sleep he saw a ladder stretching
from heaven to earth on which the angels of the Lord were ascending and
descending. And the Lord stood above it, identified Himself as the God
of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and confirmed to Jacob the oath He had
made with the older patriarchs (Gen. 12:7; 26:2). Isaac set up a stone
as a marker, poured oil on it and named it "Bethel" (Gen. 28:10-22).

The ancients distinguished between the earthly place of appearance of a deity and his real (heavenly) dwelling. Jacob makes the distinction:
"This is a house of God, that is, the place of the God's appearing, which will become a place of worship, and this is the gate of heaven." 34

The event was not simply a subjective, inner experience designed to comfort and encourage the young traveler. A revelation of God had occurred which had to have effects in the world of space and time. 35 Jacob was long to hearken back to this experience, the first in a series of appearances vouchsafed him. He remembered it and spoke of it on his deathbed to Joseph (Gen. 48:3). God later identifies Himself by reference to that event (Gen. 35:1,7), and in the same place God was later to appear once more and give Jacob a new name, "Israel" (Gen. 35:9).

After his sojourn in Haran Jacob turns at God's behest (Gen. 31:3; 32:9) once more toward Canaan, the land of Israel's destiny. Laban gives

<sup>33</sup>von Rad, ATD, p. 237.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

chase. As God had appeared to Abimelech on behalf of Abraham, so He also came in a dream by night to Laban the Aramean, warning him not to harm Jacob (Gen. 31:24). As Jacob progressed, he was met by and saw the angels of the Lord (Gen. 22:1-2). Their presence probably signifies that God's special realm, the promised land, is near at hand. 36

Approaching the old homeland, Jacob is baset by doubts concerning
Esau from whom he had fled twenty years previous. In prayer he remembers
God's command but his petition shows that he is anxious and wavering in
his determination to go home. He therefore begs God to fulfil His promises
to him. That same night before crossing into the land of his fathers,
Jacob was confronted with an apparently human figure at the Jabbok. Jacob
wrestled with Herculean strength the whole night through and prevailed.
Toward morning, when the strange person asks to be released, the truth of
his supernatural identity begins to dawn on Jacob. And he quickly asks
for a blessing. The person gives Jacob a new name, "Israel," because he
had "striven with God (and with men)" (Gen. 32:28). And he blesses the
patriarch (cf. Gen. 35:9~13).

Jacob knows that the greatest miracle of that night was that he had "seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." Therefore he called the place Peniel, the face of God (Gen. 32:30). The appearance was a sign of God's favor and promise, and was therefore an answer to Jacob's prayer. In a prophetic commentary on that event Hosea is reticent about the seeing but explicit about the hearing: "He strove with the angel and prevailed, he wept and sought his favor. He met God at Bethel, and there God spoke with him—the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord is His name." And Hosea

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

continues to draw the lesson from the occurrence: "So you, by the help of your God, return, hold fast to love and justice, and wait continually for your God" (Hosea 12:4-6).

That the night of struggle with God in some mysterious way set right the relationship between Jacob and Esau is evidenced by Jacob's greeting:
"To see your face is like seeing the face of God, with such favor have you received me" (Gen. 33:10), which certainly echoes the words of the preceding chapter (Gen. 32:30).

Near the end of his life Jacob was to leave Canaan again, this time traveling down to Egypt. At Beersheba God spoke to Israel in visions of the night ( ) ? ? ? I IN ? D , Ev olemot: The vokes) and said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also bring you up again" (Gen. 46:2-4). It is not on human impulse at Jacob's initiative but on divine instruction that the patriarch deserted the promised land. God, not man, leads forward the history of His people through ways mysterious.

## The Exodus

The Exodus is the next great period of revelatory word and deed to be studied. Both vision and audition achieve heights not to be surpassed in the Old Testament.

According to Israel's ancient creeds (Deut. 6:20-25; 26:5-10; Joshua 24:2-13) the time of the Exodus was the formative period in the national, life, and the record leaves no room for doubt that Moses dominates that period. In a sense Moses' vision of God and relationship to God was normative and paradigmatic. The experience of Moses was normative, since it was to the Exodus and all the events surrounding it that Jews have always

looked for an explanation of their peculiarity, mission and destiny. The Exodus is origin, source and fountainhead of Israel as God's covenant-people.

And Moses' experience and the experiences of the people at Sinai are a type of the things to come. In the end things will be like that great and auspicious beginning.

H. Wheeler Robinson wrote that "at Sinai occurred the cardinal theophany which set the pattern for so many others, experienced or imagined.

Sinai, wherever it lay, was, until Zion usurped its place, the mountain of God, par excellence." And in the same passage he calls Moses the unique channel of God's revelation, the essential interpreter of whatever physical phenomena mediated it.

The theological connection of the story of Moses with the patriarchs is carefully established not in the exertions of heroism of man but in the memory and faithfulness of God. "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob; and God saw the people of Israel, and God knew their condition" (Ex. 2:24-25; cf. 6:5).

As His chosen instrument God selected Moses, born in Egypt and raised under Egyptian influence. Forced to flee the country, he took up a nomadic life in the land of Midian, east of the gulf of Aqabah and married the daughter of a Midianite priest named Jethro or Reuel. At that time Sinai and Midian were occupied by semi-sedentary tribes, some of which mined copper and plied a trade with Egypt and Canaan. 38

<sup>37</sup>H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 41.

<sup>38</sup> Albright, FSAC, p. 257.

While seeking pasture for the flocks of his father-in-law, Moses came to Horeb, the mountain of God (Ex. 3:1), where the angel of the Lord "appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed" (Ex. 3:2). Till his dying day Moses remembered "Him that dwelt in the bush" (Deut. 33:16). Here as elsewhere the theophany is accompanied with fire, but is not more definitely described, nor need it be. H. W. Robinson has called the flame of fire, which is here associated with the bush, a familiar feature of theophanies. He believes it may be regarded as the physical phenomenon manifesting Yahweh beyond all others. 39

God called to Moses out of the bush, "I am the God of your Father (see Luke 20:37), the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:6). Moses objects that many will surely not believe that the Lord has appeared to him (Ex. 4:1,5). To bolster his confidence and to persuade the Israelites, God grants him power over the rod, a strange case of temporary leprosy, and the ability to change Nile water into blood.

And for Moses' own edification and encouragement he was given a new revelation of God, consisting in knowledge of God's personal name, "Yahweh," by which the patriarchs did not know God (Ex. 6:3). He is "I am who I am" (Ex. 3:13). When the people ask the name of the God who has sent Moses, he is instructed to tell them, "I AM has sent me to you" (Ex. 3:14).

The Lord is about to fulfil the promises He made to the patriarchs and bring the people up to a land flowing with milk and honey (Ex. 3:17;

<sup>39</sup> Robinson, op. cit., p. 40.

<sup>40</sup> See Albright, FSAC, pp. 259ff., for an interpretation of the name.

6:8). The long dialogue between the Lord and Moses comes at last to an abrupt end. The ceasing of the theophany is not mentioned and the close of the encounter is signalled only by the opening of a new pericope (Ex. 4:18).

After the Lord had shown His power to reluctant Moses and to more reluctant and recalcitrant Pharach (Ex. 9:16), the children of Israel were finally permitted to leave Egypt. They went out and came at length to Sinai or Horeb, scene of the normative theophany (Ex. 19ff.). Here Israel camped before the mountain.

The authority of Moses was to be established by a theophany, whose effects would be plain to all the people (Ex. 19:9). On the day of the Lord's descent to the mount, "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. . . . And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord descended upoit in fire" (Ex. 19:16-18; 20:18,21; 24:17). The Psalmist added a further note and spoke of an earthquake and pouring rain (Ps. 68:7-8).

These phenomena have led some commentators to the conjecture that

Horeb must have been a volcano. The regions of Arabia abound in volcanoes,
but there are none in Midian and the Sinai peninsula. Hence some have

sought Horeb in Arabia. But Johannes Pedersen has seen that the author

has simply done all that he could to convey the idea of the might of the

Lord. The dark cloud, the thunder and lightning, the trumpet blast and

the smoke are all meant to express Yahweh's power over the world of na
ture. Besides, the Biblical writers could easily have heard tales of

volcanic eruptions, and they certainly witnessed the awesome spectacle of

University Press, 1926-1940), III-IV, 662.

thunderstorms of northwestern Arabia. 12 It evidently became a convention to describe any theophany in terms reminiscent of earthquake, storm and volcanic activity. 43

The Lord descended, and Moses went up (Ex. 19:20) and drew near to the thick cloud of God's presence (Ex. 20:21). At first they are represented as speaking with one another. The roaring of the thunder was God's voice answering Moses (Ex. 19:19; cf. Jn. 12:28). The Lord identified Himself as the Savior of Israel (Ex. 20:2) and gave Israel His commandments (Ex. 20ff.).

In chapter twenty-four (Ex. 24:9-14 is usually assigned to J) the

Lord calls up not only Moses but also his brother Aaron, together with

Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. They are to wor
ship "afar off" (Ex. 24:1). Only Moses comes near to the Lord. These

representatives chosen out of Israel went up and were granted a theophanic

vision. The author reports,

They saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And He did not lay His hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank (Ex. 24:9-11).

In the first case the text supplied a clue, which the Septuagint

<sup>42</sup> Albright, FSAC, p. 263.

<sup>43</sup> Robinson, op. cit., pp. 41f.

eagerly grasped, but in the second case the translators were obviously stumped, and they transformed a theophany into an anthropophany. They took too much rope and hanged. One interpreter, who apparently takes his cue from the Septuagint, comments of the elders of Israel that they did not behold a figure directly. They looked up at the sky, which appeared as a pavement of sapphire stone, on which the feet of God were supposed to rest. They conceived of God as throned above the waters over the canopy of heaven.

After this Moses ascended the mountain once again, to remain there in solitary communion with God for forty days and forty nights. The glory of the Lord, visible as a cloud and a "devouring fire," settled on the mountain in the sight of the people for six days (Ex. 2h:15-18, assigned to P). This theophany fittingly serves as prelude and preface to the chapters following, which contain orders for the construction of the tabernacle, in which the glory seen by the people is to dwell, if not continuously, at least from time to time. The Lord said,

There I will meet with the people of Israel, and it shall be sanctified by My glory; I will consecrate the tent of meeting and the altar; Aaron also and his sons I will consecrate, to serve Me as priests. And I will dwell among the people of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them; I am the Lord their God (Ex. 29:43-46).

While Moses lingered on the mount, the people grew restless. Their restlessness matured to impatience and doubt concerning Moses. And when doubt was fullgrown, it gave birth to idolatry. They ask Aaron to replace their leader with gods, "who shall go before us" (Ex. 32:1-23). They

hly. Coert Rylaarsdam, "The Book of Exodus," The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), I, 1018.

rejected the charismatic leadership of the prophet in favor of what they hoped would be a more stable and manageable representation of deity.45

In Deuteronomy Moses at the end of his career grounds the aniconic nature of Israel's religion on the character of the theophany at Horeb. He says that since the people saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to them at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, they should beware lest they act corruptly by making a graven image for themselves in any form whatsoever (Deut. 4:15ff.). Reticence concerning seeing is grounded at least partly in the fear of gross idolatry.

Because the people have proved themselves stiff-necked (Ex. 32:9; 33:3,5; 3h:9), not bending to the Lord but proudly rebelling against His holy will, God declares that He will not go up among the Israelites to Canaan (Ex. 33:3,5). But Moses intercedes with God for Israel, as Abraham once had done for the Sodomites (Gen. 18:16-33). He does not care to go up to Canaan without God's presence in the midst.

Moses finds favor in the sight of the Lord (Ex. 33:12,13,16,17; 34:9), and he stands in closest communion with God, who knows Moses by name (Ex. 33:12,17). Because of Moses' faithfulness God listens to him and accedes to his wishes, declaring, "My presence ('12) will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14).

As a sign of the renewal of the covenant Moses asks that he might see God's glory. In response Yahweh grants Moses a personal theophany.

The scene is a marvel of reserve. The theophany is not described directly as by a reporter, but is hinted at in the quotation of Yahweh's words, as He tells Moses what will occur. God says,

<sup>45</sup> Rylaarsdam, op. cit., p. 1064.

Behold, there is a place by Me where you shall stand upon the rock; while My glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with My hand until I have passed by; then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen (Ex. 33:21-23).

Yahweh declares that it would be fatal for Moses to see His face (Ex. 33: 20). Moses saw God's "back." In the words of the Lord that means that all the goodness of God ('\(\frac{1}{2}\)\)? \(\frac{1}{2}\)\), The electro Copia: The Sos is proved passed before Moses, and the Lord proclaimed to him His name, "Yahweh" (Ex. 33:19; 34:5-6). It is given not even to Moses to comprehend God completely. There is a gulf between God and the most elect man.

Moses' communion with God had certain visible effects on his appearance. When he descended from the mountain, "his face shone because he had been talking with God" (Ex. 3h: 29; \$250 \ xera: \( \cdot \) \( \cdo

God never enters into direct conversation with the people as He had with Moses. It is granted them to hear, or rather to overhear, God's voice, as He speaks with Moses (Ex. 19:9). The whole majestic theophany took place in the sight and hearing of the people, who "perceived the thunderings and the lightnings and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking" (Ex. 20:18), and they saw that God talked with them from heaven (Ex. 20:22), but all this they experienced while "they stood afar off" (Ex. 20:18,21).

h6See for discussion Friedrich Nötscher, Das Angesicht Gottes Schauen nach biblischer und babylonischer Auffassung (Würzburg: C. J. Becker, 1921), pp. 9ff.

At first Deuteronomy seems to hint that the Lord dealt with the people immediately:

And you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom. Then the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice (Deut. h:11-12).

Nevertheless Deuteronomy makes it clear that whatever the people saw or heard had to be interpreted and taught to them by Moses (Deut. 4:14; ef. 4:1,5). The emphasis on nearness to God in Deuteronomy is intended to drive home to the Israelites the greatness of their heritage over against the heathen nations (Deut. 4:7,32-40). Moses sets the record straight in his words,

The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain (Deut. 5:4-5).

God's presence and will are made known to the people through a mediator. He does not come to the people directly, but unmistakeably marks out Moses as His servant to whom the people are to give heed (Ex. 19:9).

The people are not even particularly anxious to come too close to God; for to see God, even to hear Him, is to court death. They beg Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die" (Ex. 20:19; Deut. 5:22-27).

## Appearances and Death

Mortal man dare not come too close to God, dare not see Him, not because of man's creatureliness or mortality but because of his sin (Is. 6: 5). When man is confronted with God, he is on holy ground and it is fit that he avert his eyes (Ex. 3:5-6). The people at Sinai are warned to stand clear. The mountain is roped off for fear that the people would approach and gaze and perish (Ex. 19:21; cf. 19:12-13). The fear of dying if one sees God can be documented from many strata of the Old Testament. The Lord said, "You cannot see My face; for man shall not see Me and live" (Ex. 33:20). When the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, they were afraid. "We shall surely die," they said, "for we have seen God" (Judg. 12:22; cf. Dan. 8:17).

Nor may people recklessly handle the ark, the earthly locus of God's presence and glory. Aaron could not enter the holy place beyond the veil, where the ark was, any time he chose, "lest he die" (Lev. 16:2; cf. Ex. 28:34f.).

The Old Testament records very few cases of deaths caused by being too close to the presence of the Lord without having been invited. When the ark was being returned to Israelite soil after seven months in the hands of the Philistines, God slew some of the Hebrews, because they looked into the ark (1 Sam. 6:19). When the ark was being transported to Jerusalem, the ox stumbled, and Usziah put out his hand to steady the ark, and he died (2 Sam. 6:6-7).

An analogous case is the death of Lot's wife. Warned by the angels not to look back at Sodom, her feminine curiosity mastered her, she gazed back, and she died. No man is permitted to view God's intervention in immediate action on the earth. 47 The pericope of Lot's wife has much in common with the story of the creation of woman. Adam was put to sleep while God worked. When God came near, Abraham lapsed into sleep (Gen. 15: 12). And Moses could see only God's back. Immediate knowledge of God is

<sup>47</sup>von Rad, ATD, pp. 67 and 185.

not granted to man. He cannot see God in action but only having acted. Some passages of the Old Testament put hearing God in the same category with seeing God in this respect. God does not address men directly. At least He does not speak to the generality of men immediately, but only through prophets. The Israelites believed that it was ordinarily fatal to have God speak to them. When they saw and heard the wonders at Mount Sinai, they trembled.

#### Moses

It is clear that there was a gulf between Moses and the other Israelites. He stood head and shoulders above them; he is in a class by himself.
Not only is he prophet and priest, but he is also the divine companion,
the intimate of Yahweh. He is not deified, but he has access to God as
no other man has. When the covenant is restored, Moses alone witnesses
the theophany. 48

The memory of the uniqueness of Moses lived and lives on among the Jews. Deuteronomy closes with the eulogy, "And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). Indeed the prophets suffered in comparison with Moses. And the Israelites long cherished the hope that there would again come a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15-22; 13:1ff.).

When there is a prophet among the Israelites, God makes Himself known in a vision and speaks with him in a dream (Num. 12:6). But with Moses matters are utterly different. The Lord scolds Miriam and Aaron,

Not so with My servant Moses; he is entrusted with all My house. With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in dark speech;

<sup>48</sup> Rylaarsdam, op. cit., p. 1063.

and he beholds the form of the Lord (2 ] : aja; aja; ajan,

### The Glory of God

This is as good a place as any to insert two semi-detached notes.

These notes deal with the glory (and the cloud) and the angel of the Lord.

These are forms under which God Himself appears to men.

Throughout the Hebrew Old Testament Till is a common, gardenvariety word meaning "honor." Etymologically it originally denoted "heaviness" or "weight," and very early came to mean "riches." For example,
Abraham was rich (Tll) in cattle, silver and gold (Gen. 13:2; cf.
26:13f.; 31:1). The same use is found in the psalms. There it is said,
"Be not afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases. For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not
go down after him" (Ps. h9:16-17). For ancient peoples wealth meant more
than material gain. Property is intimately connected with man. It fills
and uplifts the soul (2 Kings 14:10), making it increase in value and
honor. 19 Glory came to mean anything, whether material or not, which
makes a man or a nation weighty and imposing. It is whatever makes a man
obviously and apparently an important figure, who commands respect and
recognition.

From this last meaning it is but a short step to the full and numinous content which the word bears when employed of or used in connection with God. Primarily it is that about God which is obvious and striking to man. God is invisible, but when He reveals Himself, man knows it,

<sup>49</sup> Pedersen, op. cit., I-II, 228f.

because God impresses Himself upon a man's senses. 50

Gerhard von Rad despairs of writing the history of the word. 51 He notes that passages in the literature which come from a late period, whether they are poetic or priestly, often exhibit extremely early influences. What is possible is a setting forth of the various conceptions which appear in the Old Testament.

One of the most obvious ways in which Israel experienced God's glory was in storms with their terrifying accompaniment of thunder and lightning and foreboding clouds (Pss. 29 and 97). Such a display could be awesome both for eye and for ear. Storm imagery is indissolubly connected with the majestic theophany to Israel at Sinai.

The imagery of the stormcloud is common to many religious widely scattered in time and space. It is believed that the association of religious ideas with clouds had its roots in animism and that it was intensified by human dependence on clouds. Clouds pour down necessary rain.

And they also are the source of lightning, hail and the destructive flood.

of Christ (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1949), pp. 10ff., is driving at in his discussion of the origin of the glory of Yahweh is not exactly clear. On one page he distinguishes between "the revealed being or character of Yahweh" and "a physical phenomenon whereby Yahweh's presence is made known." Then he seems to link the latter with the notion that God is found only "in this or that locality or meteorological phenomenon," while the former has to do with God "who has intervened in history to deliver Israel, made a covenant with her and revealed to her His sterm moral demands and His righteous purpose." But, as he himself states, the meteorological and the ethical are blended in the Israelite conception of God's glory.

<sup>51</sup> Gerhard von Rad and Gerhard Kittel, "Soft," Theologisches Wörterbuch sum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1935), II, 242. This article is hereafter cited as Doxa.

Thus especially the dark approaching thundercloud has a numinous effect. 52

Many theophanies are described in images drawn from storms. Clouds moving rapidly across the sky with lightning and pelting hail are a standing feature of theophanies. The Psalmist wrote,

He bowed the heavens, and came down; thick darkness was under His feet. He rode on a cherub, and flew; He came swiftly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness His covering around Him, His canopy thick clouds dark with water. Out of the brightness before Him there broke through His clouds hailstones and coals of fire (Ps. 18: 9-12; cf. 21:9-10; 68:7-8).

The imagery became conventionalized and served as a cry for help (Ps. 144: 6-8). Elsewhere the clouds are not God's canopy but His chariot (Ps. 19: 1). In Psalm 104 the light is His garment and the clouds His chariot, which is powered by the wings of the wind. And as He goes, fire and flame accompany Him as His ministers (Ps. 104: 2-4). All these features are present in the Exodus narratives.

Very often both cloud and fire were loosely identified with the glory. The children of Israel were led in their wanderings by the Lord, who went before them by day in a pillar of cloud and by night in a pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21-22; Deut. 1:33; Ps. 78:1h; 105:39). The cloud and the fire acted not only as guides, but also as guards. The Lord in the pillar of fire and of the cloud discomfitted the host of the Egyptians (Ex. 1h:2h).

Throughout the rest of Israel's history the cloud is charged with numinous content. The Lord used the cloud as His garment, the sign that He was present, though veiled. The cloud descended to the mount or to the tent of meeting and God spoke with Moses in the sight of all the people

<sup>52</sup>Albrecht Oepke, "VEQEN, VEQOS," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1942), IV, 906.

(Ex. 33:9; 34:5f.; Num. 9:15-23; 10:34; 11:25). The cloud appeared at the tent of meeting at the commissioning of Joshua as Moses' successor (Deut. 31:14-15). The Psalmist declares that the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and also to Samuel in the pillar of the cloud (Ps. 99:6-7).

God's presence rested on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:2). At the dedication of Solomon's temple "a cloud filled the house of the Lord," an event which is explained as meaning that "the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord" (1 Kings 8:10-11). The same had occurred at the tabernacle in the wilderness (Ex. 40:34-38).

The cloud and the glory are thus closely associated and sometimes even identified. In the description of the events at Sinai stand these lines: "The cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days" (Ex. 21:15; cf. Deut. 4:11-12; 5:22-23).

Nevertheless the glory is elsewhere associated more closely with the fire than with the cloud. So often is the glory described as a fire that H. W. Robinson believes that the glory of Yahweh is pre-eminently a fiery manifestation of God's being. He offers several examples and cautions, "Such descriptions are not to be regarded as a figure of speech; the glory is fire, though charged with the added mystery of the divine activity." 53

The Exodus narratives offer a number of examples. The glory of the Lord looked like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain (Ex. 24:17). Isaiah evidently borrows this imagery when he writes, "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting

<sup>53</sup> Robinson, op. cit., p. 40.

burnings?" (Is. 33:14).

After the consecration and ordination of Aaron and his sons, sacrifice was offered. At the completion of the ritual "the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. And fire came forth from the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat upon the altar; and when all the people saw it, they shouted and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9:23-24). With this one might compare the devouring fire which consumed the water-soaked sacrifice of Elijah on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:38) and the fire which devoured the rebels together with their sacrifices at Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 16:35).

The view that the glory is a fiery manifestation of God is associated primarily with the Priestly Writer. The fire is often glimpsed within a cloud (Ex. 16:10; cf. 24:15-18). For the Priestly Writer the cloud is the covering, and the fire is the glory. In this view, furthermore, all the people evidently see the glory with their ordinary, earthly vision.

Exekiel propounded a further view of the glory. His book opens with a vision of an approaching storm driving out of the North. It is characteristic of Exekiel that the glory is seen only in visions and not by the ordinary sight of the mass of the people. 54 with it came "a great cloud, with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming bronze" (Exek. 1:4). But this is not yet the glory. Out of the flaming cloud came gleaming cherubin in the midst of whom was "something that looked like burning coals of fire . . . and out of the fire went forth lightning" (Exek. 1:5-14). But this was not yet the glory. As Exekiel gazed at the vision, he saw four strange

<sup>54</sup>von Rad, Doxa, pp. 243ff.

wheels beside the living creatures (Ezek. 1:15-22). Over the heads of the whole vision was "the likeness of a firmament, shining like crystal" (Ezek. 1:22), and above that was the "likeness of a throne" (Ezek. 1:26), and seated above that was "a likeness as it were of a human form," whose appearance was brilliant and fiery (Ezek. 1:26-28; 8:2). Ezekiel concludes, "Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord" (Ezek. 1:28; cf. Heb. 1:3).

W. F. Albright seems to depend on just such a conception as Ezekiel expresses when he declares that Yahweh, in contrast to heathen gods, almost always appears in the earlier sources in a manner which suggests His human form, although His body was usually hidden in a refulgent envelope called His glory. The same conception is met in the very early narrative in Exodus 33:12-23, where God put Moses in the cleft of the rock and permitted him to see only His back. It had to suffice Moses to know that the glory of Yahweh had passed by him. In spite of its massive realism the theophany has more in common with 1 Kings 19 than with Exodus 19 and 20, and that means it is closer to Ezekiel than to the storm theophany on Sinai before all the people. This fact shows that the connection between the storm imagery of the Exodus narratives and the anthropomorphic conception of Ezekiel cannot be conceived in simple evolutionary terms.

Hardly less important for the subject of this paper than the varying notions of the appearance of God's glory are the several conceptions of the time and place of His appearing. Exodus 19, Exodus 33 and 1 Kings 19

<sup>55</sup> Albright, FSAC, p. 264.

Martin Noth, Das Zweite Buch Mose, in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Herntrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), p. 212.

have one important feature in common. All the reported theophanies with their varied images occur on Mount Sinai. Sinai was the chief site at which the Lord appeared before the Conquest. Indeed, apart from His coming to the tent and ark and aside from His destructive epiphany directed against the rebels at Kadesh, it was the only place that God chose to appear during this period.

In Canaan a number of sanctuaries were established, taken over from the Canaanites and hallowed by associations with the patriarchs. But in time all were superseded by the royal sanctuary at Mount Zion.

It was a question in what sense Yahweh could be said to dwell at the sanctuary. In all periods the people believed that God's dwelling place is heaven. But the problem was how to integrate that belief with the equally strong faith that God was present at particular places, especially Sinai and the temple. Under Camaanite influence the notion that God was securely and everlastingly attached to the sanctuary devoted to Him made its mark on Israel.

In violent reaction against the identification of Yahweh with any site, sanctuary or cult object were the older prophets, such as Elijah, sects, such as the Rechabites, and the literary prophets. By proclaiming the transcendence of God, the writing prophets helped to preserve the notion that God's presence at the temple was an act of gracious condescension for the purpose of self-revelation. 57

The view elaborated by the Deuteronomists was that God Himself dwells in heaven, and His name is in the temple (1 Kings 8:27-30). The other

A. Baker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), I, 106. Hereafter this book will be cited as Theology.

solution was that offered by the Priestly Writing. There is some question as to its exact position. Von Rad says that God's glory did not dwell permanently in the sanctuary but was manifested there occasionally. 58 Ramsey, however, relates the work of Ezekiel to that of the Priestly school and says, not, however, without some reservation, that the glory according to the Priestly conception dwelled constantly in the temple. 59 Eichrodt says that although the conception of Yahweh as dwelling in the temple continued to be used, it was made unmistakably clear by the narratives of Yahweh's appearances in the sanctuary, that the transcendent God was present only on special occasions, and even then He was veiled in His glory. The temple is a copy of the heavenly sanctuary and serves as a pledge that God is in a special relation with this particular place on the earth. 60

Ezekiel's views apparently differ somewhat from those of the Priestly Writing. He is prophetic in his insistence that God is not slavishly bound to the temple in Jerusalem and has indeed departed the holy temple (Ezek. 10:19), and has left the holy city (Ezek. 11:22-23). In his inaugural vision Ezekiel sees the glory of God approaching from the North, not from Zion. Negatively, that is "an omen that His abode is no longer in the city of His choice." Positively, it means that God is not dead when His people are crushed and His sanctuary destroyed. He is still

<sup>58</sup> von Rad, Doxa, p. 243.

<sup>59</sup> Ramsey, op. cit., pp. 15ff.

<sup>60</sup> Eichrodt, Theology, pp. 106f.

<sup>61</sup>s. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (New York: Meridian Books, 1957), p. 280.

powerful to intrude into history to establish His kingship. And yet
Esekiel is more priestly than the priests when he insists that God's glory
will dwell constantly in the eschatological temple. The Lord declares of
the new temple, "This is the place of My throne and the place of the soles
of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the people of Israel for
ever" (Ezek. 43:7). And the glory will re-enter the temple, just as once
it had departed (Ezek. 43:1-4). Then the name of the city will be "The
Lord is there" (Ezek. 48:35).

Two further senses of glory in the Old Testament may be noted briefly. In poetic passages glory is sometimes scarcely more than another name for God. It became a liturgical or reverential periphrasis. Thus Psalm 57: 5 sings, "Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let Thy glory be over all the earth."

Even more often, however, glory is used in the psalms and elsewhere as an attribute of God. Glory is God's honor or beauty or power, revealed in nature and in God's deeds, which fill earth and heaven. 63

The characteristic and dominant sense of glory in both testaments, and the most important meaning for this paper, is that of "the divine and heavenly brilliance, pregnant with the sublimity and majesty, even the very essence of God and His world." The eschatological revelation of God's glory will be the subject of a later section of this paper.

<sup>62</sup> Walter Eichrodt, Der Prophet Hesekiel, in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Herntrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), pp. 8f.

<sup>63</sup> See, for example, Psalm 2h: 7-10.

Oly Von Rad, Doxa, p. 240.

### Angelophany

This is also the place for a word or two on angelophanies. Especially the "angel of the Lord" is a concept closely related to the cloud and the glory and the name. As the line between the other concepts is blurry, the cloud and the angel are interchangeable notions in more than one passage. From earliest times the attempt was made to find or create forms to express God's intervention and invasion into worldly reality, which would not compromise His transcendence. The custom of speaking of the angel, the face, the glory or the name of Yahweh is the result of the desire to do justice to the tension between the immanence and the transcendence of God. 65

The distinction between a theophany and an angelophany is not very great, especially when it is an appearance of the angel of the Lord. Some at least of these angelophanies may be refinements of more naive theophanies under the influence of theological reflection.

Compared with her neighbors, early pre-exilic Israel had little in the way of angelology. The regions between earth and heaven were not populated by a whole host of divine and semi-divine beings, as was the case in the conceptions of most of the surrounding nations. Because of God's own ceaseless activity and zeal everywhere in His creation, and because of the very real danger and threat of polytheism, Israel was conservative and reserved in the matter of angels and demons, and had fewer intermediary beings than other contemporary religions.

The angels which Israel does know have no independent and personal

<sup>65</sup> Eichrodt, Theology, p. 214.

functions of their own, and they do not govern autonomous realms. They are by no means the rivals of Yahweh. They are His ministering servants.

Two angels, in appearance like handsome young men, went to Sodom and stayed with Lot and his family, whom they saved from the conflagration (Gen. 19). As he left Canaan, Jacob saw all the angels of God attending the Lord (Gen. 28:12). And on his return from Paddan-Aram Jacob was met by angels of God amounting to two armies (Gen. 32:1f.). The warlike appearance of the heavenly beings is a recurring feature (1 Kings 22:19; 2 Kings 6:17).

But the most significant figure, often encountered, is the angel of the Lord (37,37; 75,50) or simply "the angel" (1 Chron. 21:15; 48:16). When Hagar was fleeing from Abraham's family, the angel of the Lord found her and questioned her concerning her past and future. At first she did not recognize the true identity of this person, who appeared in human form, but the perspicacity of her interrogator led her to guess the truth. She celebrated the angelophany by calling the name of the Lord who spoke to her "God of seeing," marking the miracle that God saw her and appeared to her. She may have had the simultaneous insight that she had seen Him who had seen her. The words "God of seeing" are therefore "the glad acknowledgement of the heavenly grace that beholds our human needs." 66
Later the angel of the Lord was known as all-seeing, discerning and wise (2 Sam. 14:17,20; 19:28).

The story of Hagar's flight exhibits a feature common to many epiphanies of the angel of the Lord. The text itself shifts back and forth

Walter Russel Bowie, "The Book of Genesis," The Interpreter's Bible, edited by George Arthur Buttrick (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), I, 607.

ascribing the acting or the speaking sometimes to God and sometimes to the angel of the Lord (Gen. 16:7,13; 21:17; 22:11,12; 21:11,13; 48:15,16; Ex. 3:2,4; Judg. 2:1). Remarking on this feature of some epiphanies, von Rad says that these were originally conceived realistically as theophanies and were later refined for the sake of maintaining God's transcendence, and the angel becomes the form of God's epiphany. The angel of the Lord is "God Himself in human form." The transcendence of God is heightened by those narratives in which the angel of the Lord does not actually appear but instead calls from heaven (Gen. 21:17; 22:11,15) or speaks in a dream (Gen. 31:11).

Rylaarsdam says that "the angel is God in one of His capacities or functions." On Rad more closely describes the angel of the Lord as "a functionary of the covenant faith," on and so he appears in a number of instances. The angel of the Lord is identified with the pillar of cloud which protected Israel at the Red Sea crossing by coming between Israel and her pursuers (Ex. 14:19f.; Num. 20:16), confounding the Egyptians.

Isaiah celebrates the event by saying that the angel of God's presence saved them (Is. 63:9; cf. Ex. 23:20,23; 33:2f.). G. B. Gray suggests that the angel in E plays the same part as the cloud in J. 70

<sup>67&</sup>lt;sub>Von Rad, ATD, p. 163.</sub>

<sup>68</sup> Rylaarsdam, op. cit., p. 1014.

Gerhard von Rad, Walter Grundmann and Gerhard Kittel, "Tyycho,"
Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard
Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1933), I, 76. Hereafter this
article is cited as Angel.

<sup>70</sup>George Buchanan Gray, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Numbers (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), p. 266.

When Balaam was called in by Balak, king of Moab, to put a curse on Israel and halt her forward march, the prophet of Amaw did not know what he would have to contend with (Num. 22:1-35). As he rode his ass toward Moab, the angel of the Lord stood in the way. The ass saw him and refused to pass (vv. 23ff.), despite a beating. "Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, with his drawn sword in his hand (Num. 22:31). This man was to say of himself that he had heard the words of God and had seen the vision of the Almighty with eyes uncovered but averted (Num. 24:3-4,15-16).

All in all Balak fared better at the hand of the angel of the Lord than did that other enemy of God's covenant people, Sennacherib, of whose army the angel of the Lord slew 185,000 (Is. 37:36; 2 Kings 19:35). Truly God is the angel who redeemed Israel from all his troubles and blessed his children (Gen. 48:15-16).

At the gateway to the Promised Land on the plains of Jeriche Jeshua lifted up his eyes and beheld the angel of the Lord standing before him. The angel appeared to be a warrior arrayed for battle. Joshua fell on his face and worshiped. The angel, the commander of the Lord's army, said to Joshua, "Put off your shoes from your feet; for the place where you stand is hely" (Joshua 5:13-15).

The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon. The epiphany is described in massively realistic terms. The angel sat down under an oak tree. He consumed meat and unleavened cakes soaked with broth in divine fashion by striking a rock with his staff and causing a fire to shoot up. Then he vanished, leaving Gideon terror-stricken. But Gideon was comforted with the words, "Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die" (Judg. 6:11-24).

The birth of mighty Samson was accompanied and heralded by angelophanies. Samson's mother was barren until the angel of the Lord appeared
and promised her that she would conceive and bear a son, who would be a
Nazirite to God from birth. The woman related the event to her husband
thus: "A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of the angel of God, very terrible" (Judg. 13:2-7).

Manoah, Samson's father, prayed to the Lord that the man of God might come again with instructions regarding the child's future. God granted the request of Manoah. The angel of God came again to the woman who ran and fetched her husband. "Are you the man who spoke to this woman?" he asked. "I am," was the numinous and ominous reply. Unlike the scene involving Gideon this time the angel did not partake of food but directed that an offering of a kid and cereal be made to the Lord. And the angel ascended to heaven in the flame of the altar and appeared no more, whereupon Manoah and his wife knew that he was the angel of the Lord (Judg. 13:8-20).

Of course, the angel of the Lord is not always on the side of Israel. The Lord is favorable only as long as Israel is on the side of the angels. When Israel runs counter to God's will and purpose, she suffers the consequences. One example from a later period may be given.

David decided to act as other kings and take a census of his people. The act displeased God, who sent the angel of the Lord to punish Israel. He decided even to destroy Jerusalem, but God repented and stayed His hand. The angel of the Lord came and stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord standing there, suspended between earth and heaven. In his hand he held a sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Ornan and his four sons also saw

the angel in a separate epiphany. David erected an altar and presented sacrifices (1 Chron. 21:1-30; 2 Sam. 24:1-25).

The angel of the Lord with drawn sword is an ominous, menacing figure, denoting God's wrath and displeasure (Gen. 3:24; Num. 22:23,31; Joshua 5:13; 1 Chron. 21:30). Later the angel with the sword gives way, in part at least, to Satan, the accuser of God's people (Job 1:6ff.; Zech. 3:1-10; 1 Chron. 21:1).

Worthy of note is Fascher's comment that God never takes the form of any specific historical person. Athene appeared as Mentor, but Yahweh never comes disguised as Moses or Abraham. Yahweh always appears in a quite indefinite and indeterminate way as "man" or "angel." This fact corresponds with the holiness or transcendence of God in the Old Testament. 71

The angel of the Lord is "an explicit organ of the special, gracious relationship of Yahweh to Israel; he is the hypostasis of Yahweh's help for Israel." He is the "outward form in which God appears." The same is true of the cloud and the glory. The angel of the Lord is God Himself in human form and, as such, a type of Jesus Christ. The angel is "a designation for the temporary incarnation or visible appearance of God for men."

<sup>71</sup> Fascher, op. cit., pp. 55f.

<sup>72</sup> Von Rad, Angel, pp. 75f.

<sup>73</sup>Fascher, op. cit., p. 50.

<sup>74</sup> George Foot Moore, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), p. 57.

<sup>75</sup> Von Rad, ATD, pp. 163f.

<sup>76</sup> Fascher, op. cit., p. 49.

### Judges and Kings

In the period immediately following the conquest Israel was loosely organized into a confederation of twelve clans, an amphictyony. Early Israel was no nation and did not possess either statehood, king, capital city or bureaucratic administration. Each tribe was independent and organized along patriarchal lines. Elders were respected but there was no hard and fast government within the clans.

In spite of the fact that surrounding nations were highly organized with a king or tyrant as central, commanding, more or less absolute authority, Israel maintained her loose confederation on the amphictyonic principle until the end of the eleventh century. God Himself was Israel's King and Lord, ruling the covenant people directly without intermediary. During this time the tribes were tied to one another by holy bonds, swearing allegiance to the same God. The ark of the covenant, symbolizing God's presence and God's covenant, was kept at the central sanctuary at Shiloh.

This is the age of the judges, men and women who arose spontaneously at moments of crisis to ward off attack and serve as magistrates or arbiters of grievance cases. They were charismatic rulers, followed because they were especially with God's Spirit (Judg. 3:10; 14:6) and possessed obvious personal qualities, which marked them out as leaders of men.

Epiphanies recorded as occurring in the days of the judges took the form of angelophanies, and they have been studied already above. By the end of the period of the judges prophecy had evidently pretty much petered out. One author said, "And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision" () \( \frac{7}{17} \), 1 Sam. 3:1). This passage is

interesting for its bracketing of vision and audition. However, God had His eye on a youthful temple servant.

The story of young Samuel tells of his inaugural vision and audition, by which he was called to serve the Lord. Israel soon learned that Samuel was a genuine man of the Lord, because "the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground" (1 Sam. 3:19f.). Saul visited him to find out where his asses were and ended up being anointed prince over Israel (1 Sam. 9-10).

In this latter pericope a parenthetic remark explains some terminology. The author says that he who is now called a prophet (% " ] ] was formerly called a seer ( ? % ). Evidently the earlier terms were seer and man of God (I ? ? ? % ). The angel of the Lord, who also brought messages from God and acted in His behalf, likewise bore the name "man of God" (Judg. 13:6). Is there a direct descending line from "God" and the "angel of God" through "man of God," used either of the heavenly or earthly messenger, to "seer" and "prophet?" It would seem so. Other than these legitimate spokesmen were also abroad. In his desire for revelation Saul was later to turn to the medium at Endor, when "dreams,

Urim and prophets" failed him (1 Sam. 28:6,15).

As Samuel is paired with Saul, Nathan is bracketed with the mature David. Nathan first gave his blessing to David's plan of constructing a temple for the ark (2 Sam. 7:3). But that very night "the word of the Lord came to Nathan," instructing him to call a halt to this novelty. Not David but David's son would be the temple-builder. Nathan spoke to the king "in accordance with all these words and in accordance with all this vision" (2 Sam. 7:17). It is not unusual to find a very fluid boundary between vision and audition. Both sight and hearing together mean perception of God or of His will. Isaiah said, "From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides Thee who works for those who wait for Him" (Isaiah 64:4; cf. 1 Chron. 2:9).

Solomon's celebrated wisdom came to him after an epiphany. At Gibeon "the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night," bidding Solomon ask whatever he wished God to give him. Solomon requested wisdom, that he might always render justice (1 Kings 3:5). While the Chronicler (2 Chron. 1:7) notes simply that "in that night God appeared," the writer of Kings reiterates that the appearance was "in a dream" (1 Kings 3:15). And this was no solitary experience for the king. Once again the Lord appeared to Solomon "as He had appeared to him at Gibeon," that is, in a dream, telling him to keep His commands and prosper. To forsake them is to die (1 Kings 9:2; 2 Chron. 7:12; cf. 1 Kings 11:9-10). Neither time is there any attempt to say what Solomon may or may not have seen. All emphasis is on the message.

#### The Prophets

For half a century after the division of the kingdom Judah and Israel

engaged in mutual antagonisms, cold war and intermittent shooting war.

Then Omri (876-869), a general of the army, engineered a military coup, seized the throne of Israel and sought to bring stability from chaos. He oriented his policy westward toward the Mediterranean and Phoenicia, cementing relationships by marrying his son Ahab to Jezebel, a princess of Tyre.

Living during the evil reign of Ahab and his wife Jezebel, Elijah, the greatest of the early, ecstatic or non-literary prophets, had his work plainly before his eyes. Jezebel ardently promoted her native deities, Esal and Asherah, importing 850 prophets of those gods. Such a large number could have only one purpose in Israel, and that was a missionary one. 77 The queen evidently hoped to make Baslism the national religion. Soon Israel could not decide whether to worship Yahweh or Basl but went "limping with two different opinions" (1 Kings 18:21). Baslism with its eestatic enthusiasm and its colorful ritual of fertility stood in sharp contrast to the sobriety and high morality of Yahwism. 78

The contest of the prophets of the two religions on Mount Carmel is well known. Elijah's actions are significant. He began with dramatic gestures, placing twelve stones as the altar and three times drenching the sacrifices with the water from four buckets. And then he prayed to the Lord, "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel," asking God to reveal Himself as God in Israel (1 Kings 18:36f.).

The Lord heard Elijah, and "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked

<sup>77</sup>Wright and Fuller, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>78</sup> Albright, FSAC, p. 307.

up the water that was in the trench" (1 Kings 18:38). Once again fire is the visible manifestation of Yahweh, as it had been in the days of the Exodus.

Humiliated, insulted and angered by the defeat of her prophets, the queen poured out her hatred and pent up frustration and threatened Elijah's life. He knew Jezebel was capable of anything and so fled from her and came at length to Beersheba. From there he went out into the wilderness and sat beneath a broom tree and asked that he might die. Then he lay down and slept. Evidently during his sleep the angel of the Lord touched him and said, "Arise and eat." After eating the cake and water set out by the angel, he lay down again. Once more the angel directed him to eat in order to gain strength to go on (1 Kings 19:1-8).

The angel of the Lord is seen here functioning in behalf of the Sinai covenant. As the angel hindered Balaam from delivering prophecy against Israel, he furthers the work of God's true prophet and messenger to Israel. The closeness of the relationship between the angel and prophecy is made clear in some of the formulas of revelation. Instead of "the word of the Lord came" (1 Kings 17:2,8; 18:1; 19:9) or "the Lord said" (Joshua 4:1) some passages contain "the angel of the Lord said" (2 Kings 1:3,15; Judg. 2:1). In Zechariah and elsewhere in apocalyptic literature it is the angel who reveals God's mysteries to the prophets (Zech. 1:8-17).

Elijah, strengthened by the angel, traveled forty days and forty nights to lonely Horeb, where he lodged in a cave. There the Lord confronted His prophet. In rapid succession there came a high wind, an earthquake and a fire. Each time the text says that the Lord was not in it.

But then after the fire there was heard "a still small voice" or "the

sound of a light whisper" (1 Kings 19:12). 79 Elijah recoiled from the numinous presence in the voice and wrapped his face in his mantle. Then he went out and stood at the entrance of the cave and the Lord spoke with him.

At first the appearance to Elijah seems to be the very opposite of the majestic theophany of Yahweh at Sinai in the days of Moses. It seems to have nothing in common with the celebration of the power of God over the elements in Israel's hymns. Nevertheless it is the same God who is revealing Himself. In His approach to Elijah God stresses a spiritual aspect which had previously receded behind other, more dramatic and palpably powerful aspects of His being. From the time of Elijah onwards Yahweh's shattering self-manifestation in phenomena of nature was more and more restricted to the sphere of poetic imagery. 80

That Yahweh revealed Himself not in the storm or the earthquake or the fire but in the murmuring of the wind may also indicate to the zealous and now despondent prophet that Yahweh's method is not angry destruction and wrathful punishment but pure quiet and mildness.

Another prophetic thorn in Ahab's flesh was Micaiah ben Imlah. Before opening his campaign against the Syrians, Ahab consulted the prophets and insisted on hearing the plain, unvarnished truth about his chances. Micaiah obliged him, telling him that "the Lord has spoken evil concerning you."

The prophecy is introduced with these words, which stress the authenticity of the message:

Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His

<sup>79</sup> Robinson, op. cit., p. lil.

<sup>80</sup> Albright, FSAC, p. 308.

throne, and all the host of heaven standing beside Him on His right hand and on His left; and the Lord said, "Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?" (1 Kings 22:19f.; cf. 2 Chron. 18:18ff.).

This manner of speech becomes a stylized convention, a further development from those descriptions of God, found in some of the Psalms, which picture God as enthroned on the clouds, attended by His heavenly court. And it has a further history within the Scriptures, culminating in the theophanic visions of the Seer of Patmos.

# The Literary Prophets

Amos, a Judean by birth, was active in the northern kingdom a century after Micaiah (ca. 752-738), speaking of God's justice in a social message which widened Israel's religious horisons. Once the prophet Amos boldly declares, "I saw the Lord standing beside the altar" (Amos 9:1). The Lord is no more described there than in the other two passages (Amos 7:1, 7) in which the Lord's appearing is recorded. In each case the Lord's word or the Lord's action and not the Lord's appearance is the content of the revelation.

The epiphany of Amos 9:1 serves to indicate a possible relationship between vision and altar or temple, paralleling the connection between vision and nature found in earlier passages. The sheep which Amos herded have even been thought by some to have been temple flocks. But this does not appear likely, since Amos so passionately denounced the cult at Bethel, as Micah rejected that of Jerusalem (Micah 7:12).

The first part of Amos' book brings oracles introduced by "Thus says the Lord" (Amos 1:3,6,9,11,13; 2:1,4,6; 3:12; 5:3,16) or "Hear this word" (Amos 3:1; 4:1; 5:1). These formulas cease abruptly at the end of chapter

six. Then begins a series of visions. The introductory formula is now "Thus the Lord showed me" ("] 전 기 기 기 Amos 7:1,4,7; 8:1), and the prophet says, "Behold" (기 기 기 Amos 6:14; 7:1,4,7; 8:1,11; 9:13). No wonder Amos is called a seer (기 기 和 Amos 7:12). Yet he is given the title because of his words (Amos 7:10).

The famed theophanic temple-vision of Isaiah, called in 7h2 B. C., the year that King Uzziah died, is similar to the vision of the son of Imlah. But Isaiah's vision is more dramatic, more majestic, and places an enormous stress on God's holiness and man's sinfulness, together with the Lord's condescending mercy. The prophet saw the Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, within the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim, who did not dare look at God but covered their faces with their wings. They called to one another and said, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory." Recalling the clouds and earthquake associated with the theophany at Sinai, the foundations of the temple shock and the sanctuary was filled with smoke. The prophet, conscious of his sin, despaired of his life (Isaiah 6:1-5).

The Psalms also picture the Lord surrounded with His council and enthroned upon the cherubim (Ps. 89:5-8; 99:1; cf. 104:1-4). And how often the refrain is met, "The Lord reigns!" (Ps. 93:1). In contrast to Amos and Micah, who attacked the cults of Bethel and Jerusalem, Isaiah pictures Zion as the throne of the thrice holy God and the heart of the kingdom which He had inaugurated and guaranteed.

Isaiah lived in the period of aggressive Assyrian expansion. For half a century Isaiah "towered over the contemporary scene and, though perhaps few in his day realized it, more than any other individual,

guided the nation through her hour of tragedy and crisis."81

Judah survived the Assyrian enslaught, but a new threat loomed on the horizon in the form of the revived Babylonian Empire of Nabopolassar and his son Nebuchadnessar. Judah soon felt the pressure and was ultimately crushed. In those bleak, black days Jeremiah, prophet of inward religion and individual responsibility, spoke to Judah.

did not climax in a theophany but has both auditory and visual elements nonetheless. Three times the refrain, "The word of the Lord came to me," is repeated in the opening chapter of his book (Jer. 1:4,9,13). The calling of Jeremiah is presented as a dialogue between the Lord and the reluctant prophet. Two visions are granted, and neither is a vision of God. Jeremiah saw the rod of almond, signifying that God watches over His word (Jer. 1:11f.). And he saw a "boiling pot, facing away from the north," symbolizing the hoardes which will sweep down to Jerusalem from that direction (Jer. 1:13ff.).

Judah was devastated by the Babylonian invasions and deportations.

Some few Jews were left in the Negev (Neh. 11:25ff.), and those to the north of Jerusalem were under the authority of the Babylonian governor of Samaria. The rest were resettled in Babylon, where Ezekiel was the foremost religious figure among the Jews.

The book of Ezekiel's prophecies opens with three statements, all of which declare that the prophet has a revelation from God to deliver: "I saw visions of God" (Ezek. 1:1); "the word of the Lord came to Ezekiel" (1:2); "the hand of the Lord was upon him" (1:3). These clauses are parallel one to the other, and all express Ezekiel's prophetic consciousness.

<sup>81</sup> Bright, op. cit., p. 273.

The initial chapter goes on to record the prophet's inaugural vision, central to which are the four living creatures which came forth from the "great cloud with brightness round about it, and fire flashing forth continually" (Ezek. 1:4-25). The vision climaxes in the appearance of the likeness of a throne upon which was "a likeness as it were of a human form" (Ezek. 1:28; cf. 3:23). Note that hearing and seeing go together. The approach of the glory is accompanied by the sound of a great rushing (Ezek. 3:12).

Some seven years after his vocational vision the prophet reports having had a further vision of God. Again the prophet beheld "a form that had the appearance of a man; below what appeared to be his loins it was fire, and above his loins it was like the appearance of brightness, like gleaming bronze." The figure took the prophet by his hair, and the Spirit lifted him up and took him in visions of God to Jerusalem. There he beheld the glory of the God of Israel, like the vision that he had seen in the plain (Ezek. 8:2-4; cf. 1:26-27; 3:23).

The visions of Ezekiel are a strange blend of explicitness and reserve. They are explicit and outspoken in their anthropomorphic description of the Lord, who has human form, loins and hands. But of course the form is much more than human and is brilliant like fire or polished, gleaming bronze. And in spite of the outspoken details of the visions, Ezekiel does not say directly that he saw the Lord. He hesitates to be so bold. Instead he saw "the likeness as it were of a human form," and "a form that had the appearance of a man."

The dichotomy of vision and audition appears in interesting fashion in Zechariah. The prophet writes, "The word of the Lord came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, son of Iddo, the prophet; and Zechariah said, "I

saw in the night and behold'" (Zech. 1:7-8). Zechariah's work encourages the Jews still in Babylon to return to Jerusalem and Mount Zion. Yahweh's final intervention in history on Israel's behalf is imminent, and the temple of Zion is the place where He will establish His rule (Zech. 1:7-17; 8:1ff.).

In the first five and a half chapters, the formula of revelation is a visual expression and in the latter part of the book hearing is stressed.

In Amos the same phenomenon operates but in reverse order.

Up to Zechariah 6:8 the prophet regularly punctuates his work with such expressions as "And I lifted up my eyes and saw" (Zech. 1:8; 2:1; 5:1; 6:1; cf. 4:2; 5:5), or "he showed me" (1:9; 3:1). The only reference to a vision or prophetic seeing in the second half of the book comes in the statement, "On that day every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he prophesies" (Zech. 13:4). Beginning with Zechariah 6:9 the regular formula introducing an oracle from God is "Thus says the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 6:12; 8:9,14,20; 11:4; 12:1) or "The word of the Lord of hosts came to me saying" (6:9; 7:4,8; 8:1,18). The whole stress in the later chapters is on the "voice of the Lord" (Zech. 6:15). The task of the former prophets is summarized as bringing the law and words of the Lord (Zech. 7:12).

The opening chapters of the book which bears his name picture Daniel as a seer or wise man, who "had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Dan. 1:17). The gift of interpretation had been granted him by God (Dan. 2:30; 4:18). In a vision of the night, God showed Daniel the meaning of the dream troubling Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2:19), and he interpreted the dream to the king (Dan. 2:31-45). Daniel also unravelled the mystery of Belshazzar (Dan. 5:24-28).

In the final chapters of the book (Dan. 7-12) Daniel is not so much

the interpreter of other people's dreams and visions as he is himself a dreamer and visionary. The section includes a number of revelations by dream and vision which came to Daniel by night as he lay in bed (Dan. 7:

1). Here are offered descriptions of the Almighty which inspired generations of apocalyptists:

As I looked, thrones were placed and one that was ancient of days took his seat; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames, its wheels were burning fire. A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; a thousand thousands served him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the court sat in judgment, and the books were opened. . . . I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and kingdom (Dan. 7:9-14).

Besides visions of the Ancient of Days and the Son of man Daniel sees Gabriel, who interprets for him the vision of the Ram, the He-goat and the Horn (Dan. 8:15,7). Gabriel appeared again (Dan. 9:20) at the time of sacrifice to offer Daniel the revelation of the seventy weeks of years described as word and vision (Dan. 9:23).

Another angelophany is described by Daniel in vivid and explicit terms. He writes,

I lifted up my eyes and looked, and behold, a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with gold of Uphas. His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and the sound of his words like the noise of a multitude. And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves (Dan. 10:5-7; cf. 10:16,18; 12:5-7).

What Daniel sees is the future of Israel. The other prophets also had both visions and words concerning Israel's destiny. Comment on the future hope of the prophets will occupy another section.

#### Vision and Audition

Here an additional word or two on hearing and seeing may be appropriate. As has been noted, the prophets by no means play one off against the other. They do not defend hearing and denigrate seeing. They know that the Lord Himself stands behind both vision and sudition and discloses Himself and His will to His prophets, utilizing their ordinary bodily senses as well as coming in dream and trance. God spoke to the prophets, multiplying visions and giving parables (Hosea 12:10).

The prophets display a cavalier attitude to the mode of revelation. Whether the Lord makes known His will and His plan in word or deed or vision is a matter of small moment to them. They are aware that words and visions can lead astray. But all these can be equally valid channels of God's revelation to men. The following paragraphs will demonstrate the fluidity of the prophetic vocabulary in this regard.

The prophecies of Amos bear the title, "the words of Amos . . . which he saw concerning Israel" (Amos 1:1). Seeing words strikes one as uncommon, to say the least, but this manner of speech was not unusual among the prophets. Micah and Habbakuk begin the same way, while Nahum's words bear the superscript, "the book of the vision (7)> T) of Nahum" (Nah. 1: 1; cf. Obadiah 1:1).

Isaiah's book is also called his vision, which he saw concerning

Judah and Jerusalem. But another way to express the same thing is to

call it "the word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw" (Is. 2:1). And the

opposite combination also appears. The prophet reports, "A stern vision
is told to me" (Is. 21:2).

Jeremiah berates the false prophets for speaking "visions of their

own minds, not from the mouth of the Lord" (Jer. 23:16), while Ezekiel says that foolish prophets "follow their own spirit and have seen nothing" (Ezek. 13:3; 1 Kings 22:23). Or they have seen delusive visions (Ezek. 13:7,9,23), false visions (Ezek. 22:28) and lies (Ezek. 13:8). Jeremiah asks, "Who among them has stood in the council of the Lord to perceive (\*) "") and to hear His word?" (Jer. 23:18). "Standing in the council" is reminiscent of the visions of Micaiah ben Imlah and of Isaiah.

Almost all of the prophets had experience with dreams and visions, angelophanies and theophanies, as well as with words or calls. They never polemicise any particular mode of revelation as inferior. There were other criteria for deciding the validity and authenticity of a revelation.

# Worship, Eschatology and Theophany

But the Lord also came down from Sinai and was present at the tabernacle and later at the temple. The tabernacle was therefore sometimes called "the tent of meeting" (Ex. 33:7-11). The particular symbol of God's presence in tabernacle and temple was a plastic representation of the phenomena accompanying theophanies. The ark of the covenant, covered with the mercy seat, was placed beneath the outspread wings of two huge cherubim (1 Kings 8:6f.). Several times the ark is described as "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim" (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Ex. 25:22). Henceforth theophanies were regularly associated with the temple and the cult (1 Kings 8; Isaiah 6). Ezekiel is a priest (Ezek. 1:3), and his visions are indissociably connected with the temple.

According to the psalms theophany was the climax and center of the

cultic celebration of the Sinai covenant. 82 Many are the hymnic references relating the cult to the theophany at Sinai. The Lord sits enthroned on the cherubim (Ps. 18:10; 99:1; cf. 104:3). If the Lord's throne reaches to heaven, the earth is still His footstool (Is. 66:1; Matt. 5:34f.). The particular locus of His earthly presence is the temple. The Psalmist writes, "The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven" (Ps. 11:4), and the temple or the ark is pictured as God's footstool (Ps. 132:7; 99:5).

Mount Zion is pictured as another Mount Sinai, with imagery taken from the majestic theophany in the days of the giving of the Mosaic covenant. The Psalmist exults,

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth. Our God comes, He does not keep silence, before Him is a devouring fire, round about Him a mighty tempest. He calls . . . , "Gather to Me My faithful ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice" (Ps. 50:2-5).

The Psalms of Ascent repeatedly make the same point. Israelites sang,
"To Thee I lift up my eyes, O Thou who art enthroned in the heavens" (Ps.
123:1). Whether Psalm 121 was originally a pilgrimage song or not, 83 it
became one, and the hills to which the poet lifts his eyes are surely
Mount Zion and the surrounding hills (Ps. 125). Psalm 132 is a song for
the dedication of the temple. Part of the psalm is found in Solomon's
prayer of dedication (2 Chron. 6:41-42). Of Zion it says, "The Lord has
chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation: 'This is My resting
place for ever; here I will dwell'" (Ps. 132:13f.). Zion, like Sinai, is

<sup>82</sup> See Artur Weiser, Die Psalmen, in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Herntrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1955), p. 18 and passim.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 513ff.

the place of vision, and "the God of Gods will be seen in Zion" (Ps. 84: 7).

The worshipers in the temple cry to Yahweh to "appear" or "shine forth," again evidently selecting terms which will be deliberately redolent of the Sinaitic theophany (Ps. 50:2; 80:1; 94:1). And in other passages the Aaronic benediction (Num. 6:24-26) is recalled (Ps. 4:6; 31: 16; 67:1; 80:3,7,19). Both these modes of expression are used in parallel of the God who is enthroned upon the cherubim (Ps. 80).

The epiphany and presence of God in the temple find eloquent expression in a number of psalms. In a hymn of deep yearning the Psalmist cries, "I have looked upon Thee in the sanctuary, beholding Thy power and glory" (Ps. 63:1-2; cf. 27:4; 96:6).

The Psalms speak many times of "seeing the face of God" (Ps. 42:2;

17:15; 11:7; 27:4; 63:2; 84:7) or of "seeking God's face" (Ps. 24:6; 27:

8; 105:4). The intimate connection between the seeing and the temple cannot be disputed in some of these passages. The face of God or the glory of God (Ps. 72:19) is similar in conceptual content to the name of God.

It designates God Himself in His revelation to the world and to His people.

It is the same as His gracious, revelatory presence. This definition does justice both to Baudissin<sup>84</sup> and to Nötscher, 85 while also correcting their views. The phrases are used to intensify and emphasize the sense of Yahweh's personal, unmediated presence or intervention.

The question of the origin of the expression, "seeing God's face," is

<sup>84</sup>w. W. Grafen Baudissin, "Gott schauen in der alttestamentlichen Religion," Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, XVIII (1915), 198ff.

<sup>85</sup> Notscher, op. cit., p. 53.

answered by Baudissin and Nötscher in different ways. Baudissin thinks
the expression was borrowed from Canaanite religion, where it referred to
seeing the idol. The Israelites used the phrase of experiencing inwardly
or outwardly God's aid and grace. Nötscher finds parallels to the phrase
in ancient near eastern cultures, where it meant to stand as suppliant
before the king. Ultimately even though Baudissin and Nötscher disagree
on the origin of the phrase, they agree that it means "to be in the temple
to seek God's favor."

However, in seeking so assiduously for parallels and possible sources of the phrase outside of the Israelite tradition and experience, they have both overlooked the tremendous bonds between the devotional use of the phrase, "seeing God" or "seeing God's face," and the Sinaitic theophany. Because the language of the psalms is drenched with the tradition of the cultic theophany of Yahweh, and because that language is so clearly shaped by the theophanic vision at Sinai, the theophany at Sinai is to be viewed as the source and determining factor in the choice of the language in the psalms. 36

Many passages in the psalms and elsewhere in the Old Testament appear at first sight to speak of seeing God after death in a future life. There came days when the glory seemed to have departed, when injustice and foreign oppression lay heavy upon the land, when temple and ark were destroyed and the people deported, when God seemed to have turned his face away from his people. Then the pious looked to the future for the restoration of the glory to Israel and the revewal of the vision. Then they said, "My eyes fail with watching for Thy salvation, and for the fulfillment of

<sup>86</sup> See especially Weiser, op. cit., pp. 18-27.

Thy righteous promise" (Ps. 119:123). The same yearning is expressed in the words, "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God" (Ps. 42:1-2).

As the temple-theophany was restricted to the man of clean hands and a pure heart (Ps. 24:4; 17:1,17,24), so the future vision was also for the righteous. The Psalmist says that "the upright shall behold His face" (Ps. 11:7). When would this happen? The Psalmist writes, "As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with beholding Thy form" (Ps. 17:15). The awakening may refer either to resurrection from the dead or to arising to greet a new day with new opportunities. The commentators are divided on the question. Artur Weiser thinks that this refers to the cultic theophany. But Rudolf Kittel believes that the passage refers to awakening after death to the great and final vision of God. <sup>87</sup> Kittel finds the same "sloughing off of death or resurrection of the pious" plainly expressed in a number of other passages (Ps. 73:24,26; Job 19:26; Ps. 49:16; Is. 25:8; 26:19).

The famous passage in Job has been much disputed. Job says, "I know that my Redeemer lives. . . . I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold and not another" (Job. 19:26f.). Baudissin believes that the passage refers to the nature-theophany, perceptible to the sense, reported at the end of the book (Job 38:1; 42:5), granted to Job during his lifetime. O. S. Rankin lists a number of possible interpretations. According to Rankin Job believes he will live on as a

<sup>87</sup>Rudolf Kittel, Die Psalmen übersetzt und erklärt, vierte Auflage (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1922), pp. 58f.

disembodied spirit and see God vindicate his cause at the last judgment or in the ordinary course of history. Or Job may believe that his earth-ly fortunes will be reversed by a miracle of God. Rankin himself prefers the last named view. 88 Notscher seems closer to the truth when he writes, "The vision of God, for Job the content of all salvation and fortune, is untouched by death." 89

Whatever Job's exact intention may have been, it is certain that
Hebrew thought could not in the long run rest content with anything less
than a full resurrection of the body. Less than that would have constituted a denial of the goodness of God's creation or an admission that
God's purposes had been frustrated. Either notion would be repugnant to
any thinking Jew. Exchiel's vision of the valley of dry bones is a symbol of Israel's national recovery, but it is exactly along such bodily
lines that Hebrew thought operated.

The dates of Isaiah 26 and the Book of Daniel are subjects of controversy which need not even be mentioned here. It is enough to note that both the Isaianic apocalypse (Is. 26:12f.; cf. 25:8) and the Book of Daniel (Dan. 12:2) expressly teach a bodily resurrection.

The Psalmist looks for a day when the glory of the Lord will fill the whole earth (Ps. 72:19). Isaiah and Esekiel share the same conception and hope. In the present God is hiding His face (Is. 8:17; 59:2), but the day is coming when "the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before His elders He will manifest His glory" (Is. 2h:23).

<sup>880.</sup> S. Rankin, Israel's Wisdom Literature (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936), pp. 118ff.

<sup>89</sup> Notscher, op. cit., p. 159.

Israel "shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God" (Is. 33:17; 35:2). And the vision becomes more expansive and inclusive still. The prophet says, "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together" (Is. h0:5; 52:10; 56:1; 60:1-3,19; 66:18-19). As a consequence "all flesh shall come to worship before me, says the Lord" (Is. 66:23). For Isaiah the return of the glory of the Lord will mean the triumph of God over all His enemies and the conversion of the nations to the worship of the true God. Ludwig Köhler believes that Isaiah h0-55 is "one single comprehensive theophany." According to those chapters of Isaiah the goal of history is that God's glory appear visibly te all flesh. 91.

The fulfillment of prophecy will mean the actualization of visions and the effectualization of words. God directs Easkiel to tell the people, "The days are at hand and the fulfillment of every vision. For there shall be no more false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel" (Eask. 12:23-24). Easkiel proclaims the fast approaching day when Yahweh will "enter into judgment with you face to face" (Eask. 20:35; ef. 35:11). Then will He manifest His holiness among Israel in the sight of the nations (Eask. 20:11; cf. 36:23; 35:14). His greatness and His holiness will be patent, and He will make Himself known in the eyes of many nations, who will adknowledge Him as Lord (Eask. 38:23). No longer will the Lord hide His face from the nations, but He will show them His glory (Eask. 39:13,21,29; cf. Nicah 3:4).

Ezekiel's prophecy climaxes with the vision of the returned glory to

<sup>90</sup>Köhler, op. cit., p. 238.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

the perfected temple:

And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the east; and the sound of His coming was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory. And the vision I saw was like the vision which I had seen when He came to destroy the city, and like the vision which I had seen by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. As the glory of the Lord entered the temple by the gate facing east, the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me into the inner court; and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the temple (Ezek. 13:2-5).

Zechariah in his prophecy sees the angel of the Lord operating above the historical plane as the intercessor with Yahweh for the sake of the captive exiles. As Satan is the accuser of God's people (Zech. 3:lff.), the angel of the Lord is the advocate and spokesman for Israel (1:8-17; 3:1-10). The special relationship between the angel and the covenant people, as well as the identification of the angel with God Himself, appears clearly in the eschatological teaching of this prophet (Zech. 12: 8-9).

Haggai was to urge the people onward with their efforts by bringing this word of the Lord: "Build the house . . . that I may appear in My glory" (Hag. 1:8).

The restoration and reconstruction did not lead straight to the perpetual theophany which Israel hoped for. Joel looked for days when all men would be inspired prophets, drawing their life from God and therefore doing and speaking His will. He saw a good time coming when the Lord would pour out His Spirit on all flesh, when all men would see visions and dreams (Joel 2:28-29).

In the end the angel of the Lord will act in Israel's behalf, the covenant people will freely and willingly worship their God, all men will stand in perfect fellowship with the Lord, every man will be seer and prophet, the glory will be visibly enthroned in Israel in the midst of

the nations, and the theophanic vision will flash and shine forth from Zion as once it did from Sinai.

It is wrong-headed baldly to declare that the Old Testament knows nothing of seeing God as eschatological hope, as some scholars are doing. To denigrate vision and theophany is to cast out an important feature of Old Testament hope. It would appear to be an important conclusion of this section on the Old Testament that seeing God is a central element of Old Testament eschatology. Inspired by the theophany at Sinai, nurtured in the cultic theophany of the temple, the notion of seeing God in the end is bound up intimately with the hope for a return of the glory, a renewal of the covenant and a rejuvenation of the whole earth.

Surely the vision in Greek religion differs radically from the vision in the Old Testament. Greek religion and Greek philosophy encourage the pious and the thoughtful to ascend to God by extricating themselves from entangling matter. The Old Testament says that God stoops low and condescends to reveal Himself to men. For Greek religion and thought the vision is a possibility founded on man's essential kinship with the gods. For the Old Testament the vision is possible because of God's mercy toward sinners. The content of the vision on Greek soil is pure and certain knowledge such as only the gods possess. Thus deification is often the climax of the vision. In the Bible the vision means that God is victorious over every one and every thing which opposes Him. The goal of the vision is perfected fellowship in which man is true man, recognizing God alone as Lord.

### CHAPTER V

# JUDAISM

# Introduction

Jewish life and thought were radically altered by the destruction of Jerusalem, deportation of the population and existence as exiles in foreign Babylon. Return to Judah was not return to the status quo ante.

The exile was an irruption of tremendous proportions, changing the course of Jewish history and fundamentally redefining Israel.

Originally Israel had been an amphictyonic league with a common religious allegiance. It shared a history, traditions, cult and belief. Everyone who was a member in good standing of one of the twelve tribes was a member of Israel.

Later Israel became a nation. To be an Israelite meant to be a citizen of this particular realm, pledge allegiance to its king, participate in its cult and support its institutions.

Thus an Israelite was easily definable as a person who lived within particular geographical boundaries with Jerusalem as the political and religious capital. When Jerusalem fell and the temple was destroyed, the nation ceased to exist. The Jews in exile sought a new definition of their peculiar identity, which could sustain them in their separation from land and cult, hitherto their chief identifying features.

They had their customs: the Sabbath, tithing, and food laws. They had their memories: Exodus, kingdom, and the promises of the Lord. But the Jews needed some central rallying point which could unify the welter

of traditions, customs and beliefs into a meaningful whole. Ezra supplied it in the promulgation of the law.

From the time of Egra the mark of an Israelite was not so much blood, soil or cult as it was the law. A Jew is henceforth one who bends his neck under the yoke of the law. Originally the law had described the responsibility laid on Israel on the basis of the covenant. It now became very nearly a synonym for covenant and the sum and substance of religion.

During this whole period of the development of Israel into a community of the law the Jews were subject to the Persian rulers, who had the hegemony from Cyrus the Great all the way down to Darius III (539-332).

A new star rose on the horizon with Alexander the Great, who absorbed Palestine into his huge but ephemeral empire. Short as it was, Alexander's career marked the dawn of a new era in the history of the ancient Orient. Under Alexander and his successors the Hellenisation of the Jewish world went on at a rapid pace. There were more Jews living in foreign urban centers like Alexandria than there were in Palestine. Greek colonies soon dotted the Palestinian countryside and surrounding territory.

The Hebrew Old Testament was done into Greek. Hellenistic culture was imitated and absorbed right along with the Greek language. Jerusalem soon had its gymnasium, and young Jews in Greek dress ambled the streets.

During the turbulent period following the return from exile other currents were at work besides the rise of the law and the inroads of Hellenism. Prophecy ended with Ezra, but a new phenomenon rose in prophecy's place. Apocalyptic literature, concerned with describing by means of

John Bright, The History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 416. See also the same author's book, The Kingdom of God (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953), pp. 170ff.

mysterious symbols and counters the impending end, began to be written
in the post-exilic era and reached the height of its development and
popularity by the second century B. C. It had its roots in the eschatology
of older Israel, especially in the hope of the Day of Yahweh. Borrowing
generously from the imagery of Iranian and other pagan sources, apocalyptic constitutes a frenetic intensification of the historic faith of Israel in the ultimate and impending victory of God's reign.

### Philo

By virtue of the generous proportion of their extant works and the quality of those works the outstanding spokesmen for and exemplars of the mind of Hellenistic Judaism are Josephus and Philo.

These men are quite different from one another, even though they have so much in common. Both were Jews writing apologetically for a Greek, pagan audience. Both dealt with the history of Israel as the primary stuff in their great works. They shared the Pharisaic outlook in stressing God as the Seer and Judge of men's actions and of the thoughts and intents of men's hearts. Man is accountable before God for the quality of his life. The great guides for the man who wishes seriously to pursue the virtuous life is, besides his own conscience, the law given by Moses.

The approaches they adopted differed. Josephus is more Biblical in his presuppositions and assumptions, more historical in his approach, and less consistent in his conclusions. He views events in history as occurring in a straight line between creation and judgment or new creation.

Greek philosophy makes inroads into his thought and causes distortions, to be sure, but he is a Hebrew of the Hebrews in his straight-line view

of history.

Philo, on the other hand, platonises, spiritualises and dehistoricizes. He therefore has no eschatology in the Biblical sense of the
word. He thinks spatially in terms of below and above instead of historically in terms of before and after. For Philo as for Plato a basic
distinction is that between the sensible and the intellectual. And it
is by means of the intellect or mind that man is in touch with the divine.

Both Philo and Josephus stand on the frontier between Hebraic and Hellenistic thought, seeking to interpret to the Greek mind the heritage of Israel. But Philo went infinitely farther than Josephus in sacrificing on the alter of Greek speculation the Hebrew sense of history, reducing the mighty acts of God to the status of food for allegorical thought.

It certainly cannot be maintained that Philo is any less religious than Josephus. If anyone besides Spinosa deserves the title of "God-intoxicated philosopher," it is Philo Judaeus. H. A. A. Kennedy quotes approvingly a judgment of Hans Windisch on Philo and offers it as a fine characterization of Philo's whole posture. He writes, "Religion is for him an inward impetus of the soul, a quest for and delight in divine revelations, a craving after fellowship with God, an experience of God."

Philo, translated by F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and Ralph Marcus (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929-1941). The following abbreviations will be used: Dreams; On Dreams; Flight = On Flight and Finding; Migr. Abr. = On the Migration of Abraham; Names = On the Change of Names; Post. C. = On the Posterity of Cain; All. Int. = Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis; Quest. Ex. = Questions and Answers on Exodus; Noah = Concerning the Work of Noah as a Planter; Heir = Who is the Heir of Divine Things; Spec. L. = The Special Laws; Dec. = The Decalogue; Rewards = On Rewards and Punishments; Moses = On the Life of Moses.

<sup>3</sup>H. A. A. Kennedy, Philo's Contribution to Religion (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), p. 178.

To Philo it was a mark of the true philosopher that he yearned for God and desired the vision of God. He writes that the seeking of God, highest and best of all existences, the Cause of all things, gladdens the seeker the moment he begins his search. And the quest is never fruitless, since by reason of His gracious nature God comes to meet man with His pure and virgin graces and shows Himself to those who yearn to see Him (Flight, lbl; cf. Migr. Abr., 170f.). Philo says point-blank that "nothing is better than to search for the true God" (Spec. L., I, 36).

Israel means "he who sees God" (Migr. Abr., 57; Names, 82). h Philo comments on the scripture which relates the struggle with the angel by which Jacob became Israel. Those are Israelites who are descended from the patriarchs not by the flesh but by the spirit, that is, those whose souls have been drawn up to the vision of God. Philo relates Jacob's wrestling to the life of every man by some allegorizing typical of his exegesis:

What garland more fitting for its purpose or of richer flowers could be woven for the victorious soul than the power which will enable him to behold the Existent with clear vision? Surely that is a glorious guerdon to offer to the athlete-soul, that it should be endowed with eyes to apprehend in bright light Him who alone is worthy of our contemplation (Names, 82).

When Moses wrote the history of the first inhabitants of the earth, Adam and Cain, he portrayed two forms of moral failure. Adam was driven from the garden by God, signifying that he had deliberately sinned and brought disgrace on himself. On the other hand, Cain "went out from the

LCf. Harry Austryn Wolfson, Philo (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947), II, 84 and 91. Hereafter this will be cited as Philo.

Erwin R. Goodenough, By Light, Light (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 136. Hereafter this work will be cited as Light.

face of God." That phrase means that Cain sinned involuntarily, and his punishment is not so severe as Adam's (Fost. C., 110).

Moses is clearly the hero with Philo as later with Josephus. Philo presents Moses to the prospective proselyte as the ideal king, lawgiver, priest and prophet. Moses longed to experience the presence of God. He prayed for that devout consummation. The cry of Moses is the cry of every enlightened seeker: "Manifest Thyself to me" (Ex. 38:13). Philo writes that Moses yearned to see God and to be seen by God. He wanted to see God's own nature and so arrive at a knowledge free of all false-hood and attain a certainty free of all doubt (Post. C., 13).

And the clear vision of God was granted to Moses. The mind of Moses is perfect and thoroughly cleansed. He has undergone initiation into the great mysteries, so that he gains knowledge of the First Cause not from created things, as one may learn the substance from the shadow, but lifting his eyes above and beyond creation, obtaining a clear vision of the uncreated One directly from the First Cause Himself (All. Int., III, 100-102; cf. Post. C., 13-16).

Those who were with Moses on the mountain shared in the vision of God.

Philo comments thus on the words of Exodus 24:11, "They appeared to God in the place and they ate and drank":

Having attained to the face of the Father, they do not remain in any mortal place at all, for all such (places) are profane and polluted, but they send and make a migration to a holy and divine place, which is called by another name, logos. Being in this (place) through the steward they see the Master in a lofty and clear manner, envisioning God with the keen-sighted eyes of the mind. But this vision is the food of the soul, and true partaking is the cause of a life of immortality. Wherefore indeed it is said, "They ate and drank." For those who are indeed very hungry and thirsty did not fail to see

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 180-198.

God become clearly visible, but like those who, being famished, find an abundance of food, they satisfied their great desire (Quest. Ex., II, 39).

Moses is the one who leads men unerringly to the vision of God. Goodenough therefore calls him savior and hierophant, and he even believes that Philo views Moses as a substitute for God. 7

### God is Invisible

At the same time that Philo so energetically pursues the theme that man hungers and thirsts for communion with God, for a glimpse of the divine, he is equally as emphatic that man cannot see God, that God is invisible. In his words, "Manifest Thyself to me," Moses clearly shows that there is not a single created being capable of attaining without aid to the knowledge of God (Post. C., 16). Philo comments elsewhere on the prayer of Moses by recording that God answered, "The apprehension of Me is something more than human nature, yea even the whole heaven and universe will be able to contain" (Spec. L., I, 14). And the passage which begins so valiantly, "Nothing is better than to search for the true God," ends quite timidly, "Even if the discovery of Him eludes human capacity" (Spec. L., I, 36). God is emphatically invisible, unknowable, and inaccessible to the senses or mind of man. God is "the Power that is beyond conception" (Flight, 141). It is impossible to see Him.

In other passages the designation "invisible" (000005, used both as an adjective and a substantive) is ascribed directly (Noah, 18; Dec., 120) and indirectly (Heir, 115) to God. Truly God's nature is "hard to divine" (Post. C., 13).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 227.

God has shown His nature to no man, but He has rendered it invisible. Man can assert of the First Cause neither that it is a body nor that it is without a body. In fact man can make no positive assertion concerning His essence or quality or state or movement. God alone can declare regarding Himself, since He alone has unerringly exact knowledge of His own nature (All. Int., III, 206).

Philo comes to the profundity that no name can properly be assigned to the true God (Names, 11). To name God would be to define and thus to set limits to Him who is incomprehensible. Such is clearly unthinkable and absurd; for "to God alone is it permitted to apprehend God" (Rewards, 40).

In contrast to all previous philosophers Philo unflinchingly maintained that God cannot be comprehended by the mind. This is the meaning of his phrase that God "by His very nature cannot be seen" (Names, 29).8 Indeed Philo was the one who introduced into the history of philosophy the new principle that God is unknowable in His essence.9

### The Paradox Relieved if Not Resolved

Is there a solution to the paradox of the true philosopher's unquenchable thirst to see God and God's natural and essential invisibility? How can one reconcile the pious and praiseworthy yearning to see God and the impossibility of apprehension? Philo seeks relief in several quarters.

At first Philo seems to imply that the seeking after that which is beyond matter and beyond sight is good and honorable, that it brings joy

<sup>8</sup>Wolfson, Philo, II, 119.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

and satisfaction and is in some sense its own reward. He offers to disheartened seekers the teasing consolation that there will accrue to them "a vast boon, namely to apprehend that the God of real Being is apprehensible by no one (\$\frac{1}{2}\trace{1}\trace{1}{2}\trace{1}\trace{1}{2}\trace{1}\tra

Nevertheless Philo employs two lines of reasoning to show that the yearning for vision and the impossibility of vision are not so irreconcilable as at first sight. One approach is to distinguish carefully among the objects of the vision. Philo declares that it is impossible to take literally in the sense of ordinary language such scriptures as "The Lord was seen of Abraham" (Gen. 17:1). Gertainly it must not be thought "that the Cause of all shone upon him and appeared to him, for what human mind could contain the vastness of that vision?" And Philo continues by asserting that "we must think of it as the manifestation of one of the Potencies," which attend God (Names, 15).

It was with one of the Potencies that Jacob wrestled. That Potency is called "unseen master" (Names, 14), and seems to be conceived as a circumlocution for God. But elsewhere Philo distinguishes carefully between the Powers of God and the essence of God (Spec. L., I, 45-46; Quest. Ex., II, 45-47).

It is not granted to men to see God in His essence. Philo believes that is impossible, since even Moses averted his face, fearing to look

upon God (Ex. 3:6). But in so far as it is "allowable that created nature should direct its gaze towards the Fower that is beyond conception," God shows Himself to those who yearn to see Him (Flight, 141).

But even with this Philo has not made all things clear. What is the difference between God Himself and God's glory or Potency? The answer appears to be that Philo here distinguishes between essence and subsistence (Post. C., 167-168). Subsistence but not essence can be seen.

Moses, for example, saw the Powers or Potencies, which follow upon and attend God. Wolfson believes the Powers are to be equated with the Platonic ideas. Of Goodenough reconstructs the place and significance of the Powers according to his notion that Philo's universe is arranged in a great chain of being. He locates the Powers between the Logos and the world of forms.

At any rate the "vision of God" is an equivocal phrase. There are different kinds of seeing and different objects of sight. Philo is fully aware, of course, that many do not see at all. Many simply deny the godhead.

But he calls them "admirable persons," who have inferred the Creator from His works. Philo offers a cosmological argument for the existence of God. He says people gain their apprehension of the First Cause from the world and its constituent parts, apprehending God by means of His works (All. Int., III, 97-99). Elsewhere Philo summarily states, "God always appears in His work, which is most sacred; by this I mean the world" (Quest. Ex., II, 51).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., I, 218.

<sup>11</sup> Goodenough, Light, pp. 25ff. and 213.

Philo distinguishes from the foregoing what he calls a "clear vision" (All. Int., III, 100-102; Names, 82), that is, one in which the mind gains knowledge of God not from His works (learning the substance from the shadow) but directly from the First Cause Himself. Those chosen for such a vision are few and far between. Moses was, of course, such a man (All. Int., III, 102).

Without the co-operation of any reasoning process Moses was led on to the vision, in which he saw not God's real nature, a thing impossible, but that God is (Rewards, 43-44). This still does not mean that Moses or Jacob or others have seen God as He is. They have directly discerned His subsistence not His essence. It means that they have received knowledge of God not by ratiocination but by revelation. 12

In a section dealing with the anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament and with the ophanies in the form of man or angel Philo begins to offer an explanation for the inability of men to have a clear and unhampered vision of God. With disembodied souls God converses as friend with friends.

However, to souls still in the body God appears as an angel, so that men see a semblance of God and not God Himself (Dreams, I, 232).

On man's inability to apprehend the Existent Philo says, "We have in us no organ by which we can envisage it, neither in sense, for it is not perceptible, nor yet in mind" (Names, 7). The division of labor between the senses and the mind is fundamental for Philo, as it had been for Greek thought since Plato.

As in the case of many thinkers before him Philo has a theory of the senses. The "dominant senses" are sight and hearing (Moses, II, 211).

<sup>12</sup> Welfson, Philo, II, 90f.

But it is clear that sight holds the edge over every other sense. Philo calls the sight of the eyes the most excellent of all the senses, since the eyes alone apprehend the most excellent of existing things, the sun and the moon and all the heavenly bodies (Migr. Abr., 57). Here may be the proper place for a peculiar Philonic passage commenting on a peculiar scripture. The philosopher is theorizing on the hierarchy among the senses and speaking most appreciatively of sight as a highly spiritual—ized sense. Since the fairest things in nature are objects of sight rather than of possession, and since the contemplative life is the most appropriate for a rational being, the words of God are not heard but are interpreted by the power of sight residing in the soul (Migr. Abr., hoff.). And elsewhere Philo mentions "commands promulgated by God not through His prophet but by a voice which, strange paradox, was visible and aroused the eyes rather than the ears of the bystanders" (Moses, II, 213).

Philo acknowledges that there is an "intimate connexion between seeing and contemplation" (Migr. Abr., 165). But the word "contemplation," for all its visual connotations, is used of a purely intellectual act.

Like Plato, Philo distinguishes between the eyes of the body and the eye of the soul. The former see only the objects of sense (\tau act nmi), while the latter beholds the divine vision (\tau veiav Pavrachav, Names, 3-4).

Physical vision is the queen of man's senses, but it is far inferior to spiritual vision. Philo speaks of "the keen-sighted eyes of the mind"

(Quest. Ex., II, 39) and says that "the sight of the mind, the dominant element in the soul, surpasses all the other faculties of the mind, and this is wisdom which is the sight of the understanding" (Migr. Abr., 57). And God makes it plain to Moses that God Himself and the Powers of God are discerned not by sight but by mind (Spec. L., I, 46). And a little

further on Philo contrasts seeing with "the eye of the body" (6ωματος οθθαλμοίς) unfavorably with that by the "unsleeping eyes of the mind" (διανοίας ακοιμάτοις ομμαίος Spec. L., I, 49).

It even develops that a suspension of sense perception is an aid to spiritual contemplation. Philo remarks, "They shut their eyes, and stop up their ears . . . that no object of sense-perception may bedim the eye of the soul, to which God has given the power to see things spiritual" (Migr. Abr., 191).

As was mentioned in the introduction to this entire section, Philo cannot avail himself of an eschatological solution to the paradox of man's yearning to see God and God's essential invisibility, as Josephus does. Philo does not think in terms of history progressing toward an end which is different from its beginning. Nevertheless he does very definitely speak of a progress in the life of the individual, a progress prefigured or symbolized in the migration of Abraham from Chaldea, the land of astrology, to Haran, the place of the senses and therefore knowledge of self, to the Promised Land, the place of contemplation of God. The mind must make the pilgrimage from astrology through physiology to ascetic contemplation and knowledge of God (Migr. Abr., 194-195).

### The Beatific Vision

According to Philo seeing God is the highest joy and blessing possible for a human being, the beginning and end of happiness (Quest. Ex., II, 51). The perpetual vision ranks above belief in God and lifelong joy as the greatest spiritual blessing.

Philo maintains that for the pilgrimage to the vision man needs the aid of a gracious God, since "there is not a single created being capable

of attaining by his own efforts the knowledge of the God who verily exists" (Post. C., 16). And the Father and Savier, perceiving in pity the sincerity of the seeker's yearning, will surely grant him the vision of Himself ( $\tau \hat{n}_S \in \alpha \sigma \tau \circ \mathcal{O}(\sigma S)$ ), in so far as he can receive it (Rewards, 39). The vision of God for Philo is attained by means of revelation and its correlative, prophecy. 13

Philo is at pains to make clear that the vision is granted only to the man who is pure in life and in mind. As the taught is rewarded with belief in God and the self-taught with joy, so the man of practice who with unwearied and unswerving labor has pursued what is excellent has as his reward the perpetual vision of God (ôcar à 170 a, Rewards, 36-40). The vision cannot be given "to him who has not made his soul . . . a sanctuary and altogether a shrine of God" (Quest. Ex., II, 51). The vision is for "the mind more perfect and more thoroughly cleansed" (All. Int., III, 100). It is moral failure that cuts a man off from the face of God (Post. C., 1 and 10). And it is moral and intellectual excellence which forms the path of return to the vision.

# Philosophy or Mystery

Is the nature of the vision in Philo's thought philosophical or religious, speculative or mystical? The name connected above all others with the notion that Philonic thought represents a form of mysticism or mystery religion is that of E. R. Goodenough.

Goodenough calls mysticism that form of religiosity which stresses participation rather than imitation, union rather than filial devotion.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., I, 48; II, 83ff.; II, 90.

Two centuries before Philo there was in Alexandria a Persian-Isiac-Platonic-Pythagorean mystery, which with its exalted monotheism resembled Judaism more than anything else in its environment. Ill Philo, deeply moved by the ideas behind the Hellenistic mystery, developed the notion that Judaism is the true mystery.

Goodenough is not, of course, alone in his interpretation. He mentions the names of Bousset, Brehier, Windisch, Leisegang, Reitzenstein, Lewy and Pascher and declares that there is a general agreement among these men that the fundamental departure of Philo from normative Judaism lies in his appropriation of the pagan notion of salvation, namely, that the spirit must be released from the flesh that it may return to its source in God. Goodenough acknowledges his debt to others, but he has certainly developed the thesis that Philonic religion is Jewish mystery more elaborately than it has ever been worked out before.

Moses came to be identified with Orpheus and Hermes-Tat, and was viewed by Jews not only as lawgiver but also as mystagogue and hierophant. Jewish wisdom was equated with Isis or the female principle in nature. The Torah was represented as the genuine 12005 hogos. The allegorical method of interpretation was the key by which the esoteric ideology of the Torah could be opened. Judaism was transformed into the only true mystery, which solves for men the mystic problems of life by showing them most clearly the way of ascent to the Light-Life of God. 16

Light, p. 237.

<sup>15</sup> Erwin R. Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 16; cf. pp. 178ff. Hereafter this work will be cited as Introduction.

<sup>16</sup> Goodenough, Light, pp. 10 and 264.

From Goodenough's point of view Philo's Judaism is a revelation that God is "the source of a great stream of being. 17 True Judaism demands not only that men recognize the nature of God but that they ascend along the Royal Road farther and farther from matter into ever greater participation in the being of God. 18

H. A. Wolfson sharply opposes Goodsnough's views. He admits that
Philo describes the covenant between God and Israel as a mystery. But
Philo did that, because the term mystery had the general meaning of any
difficult subject whose inner meaning lay hidden and could be learned
only through instruction in the allegorical method of interpretation.
Furthermore Philo was throwing down the gauntlet to heathen mysteries,
declaring them false, and calling obedience to the law of Moses the true
mysteries. 19

Wolfson believes that Philo tried to present Judaism as a philosophy superior to Greek philosophy. <sup>20</sup> It is superior, because it has been learned not by way of Platonic recollection but through revelation and prophecy. <sup>21</sup> Through prophecy select men may see and know things not perceived by the senses. <sup>22</sup> Hellenistic Jews said that Judaism resembles not Greek religion but Greek philosophy, that their God was not like that of Greek religion but that of Greek philosophy. But they did not believe

<sup>17</sup>Goodenough, Introduction, p. 15; cf. pp. 131ff.; cf. Light, pp. 11ff.

<sup>18</sup> Goodenough, Light, p. 44; cf. Introduction, pp. 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> Wolfson, Philo, I, 49.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., I, 86.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., II, 9ff.

<sup>22&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, II, 13.

that Greek philosophy ever attained the full truth of Scripture, given directly by God. 23

The argument between Goodenough and Wolfson can not and need not be settled here. Important is the fact that they agree that Philo places the vision of God in a central position in his system or religion. Furthermore they agree emphatically that Moses is the philosopher or mystategogue, who leads men from material entanglements to the apprehension of the existence of God, whether that apprehension or contemplation is speculative or mystical.

### Josephus

Josephus 24 does not have much to contribute to the topic under discussion, but what he does have is interesting and revealing. In the course of his history of the Jewish nation he mentions that God appeared (ETT (Axvers & Deox ) to Abraham, when the patriarch was ninety-nine years old (Ant., I, 191). This extraordinary event does not evoke so much as a single comment from the ex-soldier. He offers more explicit insight into his conceptions when he recounts Moses' vision at the burning bush. On lonely Sinai, known to be inhabited by the gods, Moses had his grand experience. Josephus describes the amazing prodigy, telling how the fierce-ly blazing fire left the green and blossom of the bush intact. The spectacle terrified Moses, who was still more amazed when the fire found a tongue and spoke to him. He was told to be content with "what he, as a

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., I, 19f.

<sup>24</sup> Flavius Josephus, translated by H. St. John Thackeray and Ralph Marcus (London: William Heinemann, 1926-1943). All quotations are from this edition and follow its system of reference. Ant. = Antiquities of the Jews. JW = The Jewish War.

man of virtue sprung from illustrious ancestors, had seen, but to pry no further" (Ant., II, 267). After Josephus has related the commission and the supporting miracles, he writes that Moses asked that the audition and vision might be crowned with the revelation of the name of the Deity (Ant., II, 275). And Moses' wish was granted.

Moses persuaded men to look to God as the source of all blessings, "both those which are common to all mankind and those which they had won for themselves by prayer in the crises of their history." He further convinced them that God was the all-seeing One, from whom no single action and no secret thought could be hid. Moses taught that God is "One, uncreated and immutable to all eternity; in beauty surpassing all mortal thought, made known to us by His power, although the nature of His real being passes knowledge" (Against Apion, II, 166-167). Here is Stoic doctrine with a Pharisaic twist, or vice versa, reminiscent of Philo's teaching. God is seen or known not in His essence but in His existence, that is, men know that He exists, that He provides blessings, and that He is the Judge of men's lives.

Moses is the great lawgiver of the Jews. The first commandment plainly states that the world about men was created by God, who is plainly
seen in His work. Men must be careful to worship the unseen God and not
make any image or bow down to the visible creature. To respond to the
invisible Creator either by idle speculation and curiosity or by imagemaking would be impious blasphemy. The only proper response or worship
is the practice of virtue (Against Apion, II, 190-192).

Besides the testimony to God in nature and the word of the lawgiver, each man has the witness of his conscience that this is a moral universe in which the virtuous can die willingly, knowing that to them "God has granted a renewed existence and in the revolution of the ages the gift of a new life" (Against Apion. II. 218).

Josephus describes briefly the eschatologies of Pharisee and Sadducee, the two chief "Jewish philosophical schools" along with the Essenes.

He himself stands with the Pharisees, of course. The Pharisees and Josephus believe that God sees men and scrutinizes their actions. But the
Sadducees "remove God beyond, not merely the commission, but the very
sight of evil" (JW, II, 162-166; cf. Ant., XVIII, 14).

To the dead who have led God-pleasing lives will be given "eternal renown." The homes and families they leave behind will be guarded by God. And "their souls, remaining spotless and obedient, are allotted the most holy place in heaven, whence, in the revolution of the ages, they return to find in chaste bodies a new habitation" (JW, III, 370-375).

Josephus elsewhere ascribes the teaching on the return of the soul to dwell in new bodies and enjoy new life to the Pharisees (JW, II, 163; Ant. XVIII, 14). Hence this is a Hellenized version of the resurrection.

Josephus describes the soul in Greek fashion as "a portion of the Deity housed in our bodies" (JW, III, 372). The soul is not at home in the body, which merely "drags it down to earth and clings about it."

Only at death will it be restored to "its proper sphere," where it will enjoy "a blessed energy and a power untrammelled on every side, remaining, like God Himself, invisible to human eyes." The invisible soul comes and goes unseen. It is one and incorruptible, and it possesses a potent vitality; for whatever the soul has touched lives and flourishes, and whatever it abandons withers and dies. It has a "wealth of immortality" (JW, VII, 346-348).

Josephus never speaks about an eschatological vision of God. The

implication of his theories, however, which attempt to cast Pharisaic notions in a Greek mold, is that the freest communion of the soul and God occurs in the interim between the release of death and resurrection or reincarnation.

# Apocalyptic and Rabbinic Judaism

Over against the views of Philo and Josephus those of apocalyptic and rabbinic Judaism form a separate section. Some would say apocalyptic and rabbinic materials must be treated as two further sections. But why make too subtle a distinction? Both are forms of Pharisaism.

According to R. H. Charles apocalyptic Judaism and legalistic Judaism are basically the same in source, both originating with the unreserved recognition of the supremacy of the law. And in the pre-Christian era they were not fundamentally antagonistic. 25 The apocalyptic writers did not invalidate the law. They asserted also the validity of prophetic teaching as revelation of God's will and the legitimacy of apocalyptic as the successor of prophecy. However, these two forms of Pharisaism, even in the pre-Christian era, began to accent more and more the primary elements in their respective beliefs. Legalistic Pharisaism became less and less apocalyptic, and it finally gave birth to Talmudic Judaism.

Apocalyptic Judaism, on the other hand, developed more and more the prophetic element, and in time it came to recognize the inadequacy of the law for salvation.

Rabbinic or legalistic Judaism certainly never entirely eliminated

<sup>25</sup>R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), II, vii. Common and easily identifiable abbreviations of the individual books will be used.

Judaism. The similarities between apocalyptic and legalistic Judaism are therefore bound to be greatest when compared on the subject of the last things. For this reason these two sides of Judaism will be considered together in a single section instead of separately.

### God is Invisible

On the one hand, it must be noted that the doctrine of God in Judaism was quite reserved and refined. The Jews were well aware of the mystery of God's being. They did not claim to know overmuch. On the other hand, the Jewish conception of God was precise and definite, having developed vis-a-vis a florid welter of crude pagan notions, representations and rites.

What could be more precise and lofty than the conceptions of the Sibyllists, whose chief object was to maintain the unity and sovereignty of God. They declared that there is one God, sole sovereign, who sees all and yet is invisible, beheld by no mortal flesh. Man can no more see visibly the true God than he can look directly into the sun (Sib. Oracle, Fragments, I, 7-18). There is nothing materialistic or even anthropomorphic about the conception of God in the Sibylline books. The doctrine might rather be called heliomorphic, because God is as real as the sun. God is described in similar fashion in the scrolls from Quaran. He is there often referred to as the Perfect-Light (Hymns 4:6; 18:29). 26
He is one, ineffable and invisible, and no image can represent Him (Sib.

The writings from Qumran are cited by familiar abbreviations in the translations of Theodor H. Gaster, The Dead Sea Scriptures (Garden City: Doubleday and Co., 1957), and Millar Burrows, The Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: The Viking Press, 1955).

Books, III, 11-17). He is one whom none can see or measure with mortal eyes (Sib. Books, IV, 10-11). God is "the invisible Father" (Apoc. Moses 35:3).

Other passages spell out elaborately the transcendence of God. Enoch was a wise man, a great artificer, and the Lord loved him. God granted that he should see the uppermost dwellings and be an eyewitness of the wise and inconceivable and immutable realm of God Almighty. Enoch was permitted to behold the glorious splendor of the Lord's servants. He gazed upon the inaccessible throne of the Lord and beheld the appearance of the incorporeal hosts. And he saw the apparition of the boundless light (2 Enoch 1:1). It is strange that among the list of adjectives used to describe by negation that realm and those beings no mention is made of "invisible." But then the cautious indirection and circumlocution of the passage makes explicit use of that adjective superfluous. Or is it a sign that sight and vision far exceed the seer's descriptive powers? That seems to be the case in the narrative of Baruch in which he reveals "those ineffable things which he saw by command of God" (3 Baruch 1:1).

Yet Enoch saw not only the farther stretches of the realm of God.

Gabriel seized him, "just as a leaf seized by the wind," and set him before the Lord's face. But even so he does not come face to face with God; for he "fell prone and could not see the Lord God and I bowed down to the Lord" (2 Encoh 22:8 B). And the mysterious and disquieting end of Enoch's career is recorded at the close of Second Enoch. The people did not understand how Enoch had been taken. But they found a roll in which was traced the words, "the invisible God," and they glorified God and went to their homes (2 Enoch 67:3). Not even the greatest of seers and chosen ones can

see God; for He is invisible.

A passage reminiscent in its cadence and sentiment of the book of Job stands in Sirach. It says God cannot be sufficiently praised, because no one has seen Him, and no one can describe Him. Man has seen but few of His works, and it is impossible to extol Him as He is (Sirach 43: 32).

The same conceptions and ideas are current among the rabbis. A blind teacher once said to Rabbi Chiyya, "You have greated one who is seen and does not see; may you be worthy to great Him who sees and is not seen." God is clearly the all-seeing and invisible One.

It is surprising that not even the angels see God. The only exceptions are the angels of the presence or the archangels. R. Aqiba, who died around 135, said, "Even the holy beings who carry the throne of glory do not see the glory of God." The word in Numbers 12:6, "No man can see Me," was interpreted to mean that no ministering angel can see God. Only the archangels, seven in number, the first created, stand within the curtain, serve God and see Him. Tobit 12:5 says, "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in before the glory of the Holy Cne." According to 1 Enoch the four angels of the presence are Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Phanuel (1 Enoch 40:1-10). While most of the angels receive their orders behind

<sup>27</sup> Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar sum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (Muenchen: C. H. Beck, 1924), II, 362f.; I, 916. The title page names also Hermann Strack, but his name was given as an honorarium by his pupil, the real author, Paul Billerbeck.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., I, 783.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., I, 783f.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., I, 784.

the curtain, only the few highest appear before the glory of God (Test. Levi 3:7; 3 Baruch 14:2).

God is invisible and unapproachable, standing off in forbidding aloofness from men and angels alike. Unlike the gods of the Groeks, the Lord of the Jews, holy and almighty, is the transcendent one.

### God Sees

God is the unseen Seer. Countless passages in the literature of Judaism declare that man speaks and acts "in the sight of the Lord." Each man will one day get his comeuppance at the hands of the God from whom no thought nor act is hid. This emphasis comes as no surprise in a literature so passionately interested in justice and, to a lesser extent, in theodicy.

Yet ultimately God does not have to justify His ways before His people. Rather it is they who must justify their words and deeds before the Creator and Judge, who is the unseen Ruler of His world and all men.

God is simply "He who sees all things" (2 Macc. 12:22; cf. 7:35).

God is both subject and object of sight. He is the all-seeing Lord, the God of Israel, who struck Antiochus Epiphanes an incurable and unseen blow, which brought low that proud man and made "the power of God manifest to all" (2 Macc. 9:5,8). The Sibyllists write, "With all-embracing view He beholds all, yet Himself is seen by none" (Sib. Books, IV, 12). He is "unseen, yet seeing all Himself alone" (Sib. Books, III, 12; I, 8). To call God the all-seeing one is to declare that He is the Judge, who will requite all men for their deeds.

### Men See God During This Life

Michaelis flatly asserts that the vision of God is only an "eschatological possibility." Surely that is an overly cautious statement.

No doubt his reserve stems from the laudable desire to safeguard the uniqueness of the Hebraic conception of God and religion as contrasted with Hellenic and Hellenistic views.

The assertion of Michaelis is called "overly" reticent, because the witness of this body of literature is that some select men during their lifetime have seen God, even if only at rare moments. Adam told Seth that immediately following the expulsion from the garden he was caught up into the Paradise of righteousness. And there he says, "I saw the Lord sitting and His face was flaming fire that could not be endured" (Life of Adam and Eve 25:3). Some few rabbis went so far as to claim that all Israelites had seen God at Sinai. R. Levi said, referring to Deuteronomy 5:21, "The Israelites asked two things of God, that they might see His glory and hear His voice and it was granted them." And even more explicitly the same rabbi said that they saw the face of God. This apparently seemed an extravagant claim to the rabbis; for it not only finds little corroboration and development, but for the most part it runs counter to the general stream of thought and expression.

Usually the vision is an experience reserved for the select few. In their temple service the Levites saw God's glory and therefore had to die according to Exodus 33:20. But in the future world God will reveal His

Wilhelm Michaelis, "2000," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1954), V, 339.

<sup>32</sup> Billerbeck, op. cit., IV, 939.

glory to all Israelites, and they will see and live forever. 33

Nuances typical of the Jewish attitude come to the surface when Enoch, whose eyes were opened by the Lord and who saw the vision of the Holy One, is pointedly named "a righteous man" (1 Enoch 1:2). In his vision Enoch saw two streams of brilliant, splendid fire. He fell on his face before the Lord of Spirits. With averted eye he saw what looked like a structure of crystals from which came tongues of living fire. Angels proceeded from that house, and with them came the Head of Days with hair as white as wool. His raiment was indescribable. Enoch fell on his face. His body became relaxed, and his spirit was transfigured (1 Enoch 71:2,5,10-11; cf. 46:1; 47:3).

In a second dream-vision Enoch saw the Lord as a shepherd with His sheep. His appearance was great and terrible and majestic, and His face was dazzling and glorious and terrible (1 Enoch 89:28,30,32).

More elaborate and embellished, and in a way less fearsome, are the visions recorded in the Second or Slavonic Enoch. The Lord's face looked like burning, glowing iron, emitting sparks. And yet the appearance was ineffable, marvelous and really quite terrible. Enoch saw the Lord's face and the Lord's eyes, shining like the sum (2 Enoch 22:1; 39:3-6). Enoch not only saw "the Lord from afar, sitting on His very high throne," but He was caught up and placed before the Lord's face and God spoke to Enoch face to face (2 Enoch 20:3; 22:8; 24:1; cf. 1 Enoch 14:20).

It is not only conceivable but quite understandable that not every man would care to see such a terrible God. But the literature of Judaism will permit no man to forget that he will one day see God face to face

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., IV, 925.

and then taste the pleasure or wrath of His God. Some rabbis interpreted Exodus 33:20, "No man can see Me and remain alive," with the words, "During his life no man can see God, but in his death he will see Me." 34

Even though much of the literature here cited is pseudepigraphic and not autobiographical, it is still nonetheless remarkable that the Jews came to speak about seeing God. Of course, the beginning of this development can be discerned already in the inaugural visions of the great Old Testament prophets.

Gertainly vision is extraordinary for any living man. It is pure grace, in that God takes the initiative and before God every man must bow his head and stop his mouth. Yet it comes only to the "righteous" and the most nearly deserving.

It should not excite either surprise, chagrin or disappointment,
when the vision or the Envisioned One is not dumb but speaks. At Sinai
the Israelites saw and heard God. God spoke to Enoch. Revelation means
hearing-and-seeing. This is stated in negative fashion in R. Eleazer
ben Jose (ca. 180), who commented on the fact that the ministering angels
cannot see God, "Not only do they not see God, they do not hear Him." 35

The word expresses the will of the Envisioned One. Revelation of God's inscrutable ways through chosen men uses the common vehicles of vision and sudition.

# They Shall See God

The righteous will be rewarded with the gift of the vision. The

<sup>34</sup> Thid., I, 783.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

rabbis paraphrased the thought of seeing God as "seeing the face of the shekhina" or more often as "greeting the face of the shekhina." Other phrases, identical in meaning, are "turning one's eyes to the shekhina" and "being refreshed by the glory of the shekhina." In Judaism men distinguished a metaphorical and a literal sense of seeing God.

Metaphorically "to see God" means about the same as "to appear before God." This figurative vision occurs when a man studies the Torah or worships in temple or synagogue. Around 250 R. Joshua asked, "Where is the proof that whoever observed the commandments about appearing at the Festivals in Jerusalem is like one who greets the face of the shekhina?" He found his answer in Exodus 23:17, "Three times in the year all men shall appear before the Lord their God." B. Jose ben Chalaphta advised his son, "If you want to see the face of the shekhina in this world, then busy yourself with the Torah in the land of Israel. For Psalm 105:4 says, "Ask after Tahweh and His Strength (I Torah) and seek His face evermore." 137

According to the views prevailing in Judaism dying men were granted visions at their death. They caught a glimpse of their destiny at the last moment before expiring. From the expression on their face or from the manner of dying or from a final cry or shout the bystanders tried to ascertain the dying man's destination. When the Most High has decreed that a man shall die, his spirit, as it leaves the body to return again to him who gave it, first of all adores the glory of the Most High (2 Esdras 7:78).

<sup>36&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, I, 207.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38&</sup>lt;sub>Tbid.,</sub> I, 226; III, 218ff.

Of the future beatitude of the righteous the rabbis said, "In the future world there will be no eating and drinking, no conceiving or planting, no business, no wandering, no greed, no enmity, no strife."

On the positive side they said, "The righteous will sit there with their crowns on their heads and they will bathe in the glory of the shekhina."

Some will see the glory more clearly than others; for some will see it through a pure glass and others will not.40

It is somewhat surprising that the Dead Sea scrolls nowhere speak of seeing God, since they make such large use of the figures of light, enlightenment and vision. They deal in apocalyptic imagery and much of the language is closely akin to that of the mystics of all ages. It has sons of light, who are the men of truth, have attained an inner vision of God and everlasting things by their scrutiny of God's creation, gazing on His wonders. They have arrived at a knowledge of the deep things of existence (Hymns 4:5-40; 5:20; 9:2ff.). In this life the enlightened one thanks God for the gift of revelation and illumination (Hymns 3:3), and he looks forward to the day when he will have perfect communion with God and stand in God's very presence (Hymns 11:11f.; 3:19-23), enjoying communion with the angels of the presence (Hymns 6:13). The redeemed will be given a crown of light (Man. Disc. 4:7f.; Hymns 9:25). On that day God's light will shine seven times brighter than at present (Hymns 7:21).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., I, 207.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., I, 211.

Theodor Gaster, op. cit., pp. 6-9, says the author of the Hymns was an out and out mystic. Millar Burrows, More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls (New York: The Viking Press, 1958), pp. 381ff., is more cautious and exact in saying that there is a deep gulf fixed between the religion of the hymns and that of Philo, for example.

In the days of the Messiah God will in contrast to His present hiddenness be seen on the earth. The rabbis taught that in the future, when God permits His shekhina to return to Zion, He will reveal Himself to all Israel. And seeing God, men will live forever. 42 And that is not all. They will also point with the finger to God and say, "This is God, our God, forever and ever." Elsewhere it is written, "Thereafter God will dwell with men on earth in visible form" (Life of Adam and Eve 29:7). Concerning future history God promised Moses, "And I will build My sanctuary in their midst, and I will dwell with them, and I will be their God and they shall be My people in truth and righteousness" (Life of Adam and Eve 1:17). The laws were given to be observed "until eternity, until I descend and dwell with them throughout eternity" (Life of Adam and Eve 1:26). And the Lord will appear to the eyes of all, and all men will then know that the Lord is the God of Israel and the Father of all the children of Jacob (Life of Adam and Eve 1:28). The messianic kingdom of a thousand years is succeeded by judgment and the joyful life of immortal spirits.

The conception that the vision of God will belong to the messianic age is later than the notion that the vision will come after the days of the Messiah, that is, after the resurrection of all the dead and the judgment. Leviticus 26:12 says, "I wander in your midst." A parable was told by way of explanation. The rabbis said that a king went out to walk with the farmer in his garden. But the farmer hid from him. The king

<sup>42</sup>Billerbeck, op. cit., I, 213f.; cf. IV, 924.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., I, 213.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., I, 212f.

asked, "Why are you hiding from me? See, I am like you." In like manner God will walk in the garden of Eden with the righteous after the resurrection. The righteous will see Him and shudder before Him. And He will say to them, "See, I am like you. Do not be afraid of Me any longer." 15

With reference to Isaiah 52:10 the rabbis declared that after the days of the Messiah, when the future world comes, God will shine forth in His glory and reveal His arm. 46 According to Baruch in the world to come "they shall behold the world which is now invisible to them, and they shall behold the time which is now hidden from them" (2 Baruch 51:8). But the new world is not always conceived as already finished, waiting only to be revealed. The Sibylline books say that everything will be reduced to dust and ashes. Then God will quench the giant fire, even as He kindled it, and He will fashion again the bones and ashes of men, resurrecting all mortals. Then will come the judgment, in which God Himself will pass sentence. The condemned will be covered over with a heap of earth, and they will sink into murky Tartarus and the black recesses of hell. The godly will live on the earth in the lovely and pleasant sunshine (Sib. Books, IV, 179-192).

Many passages give no clue as to the time of the vision. R. Levi ben Chayyetha has said, "He who goes from the synagogue to the house of study and busies himself with the Torah is worthy to greet the face of the shekhina." This could be either the messianic era or the future world.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., IV, 926.

<sup>47&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, I, 213.

Then there are passages and authors who operate with a body-soul dualism and speak of the vision as belonging also, if not exclusively, to the intermediate state. At death the soul departs from the body, and the righteous dead "shall see with great joy the glory of Him who receives them, for they shall have rest in seven orders." The seventh and greatest order is to be permitted to see the face of Him whom men have served in their lifetime. And when they are glorified, they will receive their reward from Him (2 Esdras 7:78,91,98). On the other hand evil spirits will wander in torment seven ways. The seventh and worst way is to wither with fear at seeing the glory of the Most High, against whom they have simmed in their lifetime. They fear Him as the judge before they will have to appear at last (2 Esdras 7:87). Reference to the "beatific" vision in ecclesiastical history is not then a mere pleonasm.

On the other hand the wicked are sometimes said to be cut off from the vision, not haunted and tormented by vision. Thus R. Jeremiah ben

Abba said that four classes will not greet the face of the shekhina: mockers, hypocrites, liars and slanderers.

In the messianic era or in the future world God will be seen, that is, the strain and tension of not knowing and of hoping will be removed. The contradiction between faith and empiric reality will be removed. Hope and faith will be realized and consummated in triumphant and joyous sight. The righteous will behold God. That is a bold saying.

# See the Glory

It is not made without reservation. Sometimes this body of literature speaks about seeing the glory of God. This is at times merely a cautious circumlocution for seeing God. But at other times the phrase

actually means something different from seeing God.

First note some passages in which the glory of God is a reverential periphrasis for God Himself. The Testament of Levi says that "in the highest of all dwelleth the Great Glory, far above all holiness" (Test. Levi 3:4). Enoch calls God "the Great Glory" (1 Enoch 14:20) and refers to "the presence of the Great Glory" (102:3). With these titles must be grouped those many references to "the God of Glory" and "the Lord of Glory," which abound in the literature of Judaism.

In the Old Testament Ezekiel had "the vision of glory which God showed him above the chariot of the cherubim" (Sirach 19:8-9). The insugural visions of the prophets are combined and elaborated in a passage in 1 Enoch. Enoch saw a throne, from beneath which came streams of flaming fire. And the Great Glory sat on it. His raiment was brighter than the sun and whiter than snow. None of the angels could enter or look at His face, because it was so magnificent and glorious. And certainly no flesh could behold Him (1 Enoch 14:19-21). Enoch therefore had to approach with his face downwards.

But prophets and holy men are not alone in beholding the glory.

According to the Sibyllists God made an exceedingly fair temple. Its

giant tower touched the clouds, and all the faithful and all the righteous

could see the glory of the invisible God, who is the vision of delight

(Sib. Books, V, 423-427). Here God's glory is God's revelatory presence

for man.

In other passages the glory bears a different value, as the context usually makes clear. It must be remembered that it was especially as religious people came to question God's justice and disposition of the affairs of men that interest in eschatology blossomed. Under one aspect

nearly the entire body of eschatological and apocalyptic writing might be called a great theodicy. The very least that can be said is that pious Jews trusted the promises of their God and looked somewhat impatiently for their fruition in a coming world.

On this background and in this context "seeing the glory of God" means seeing God's promises fulfilled and the life of righteousness vindicated. So Baruch is told to have patience. God says, "Wait and thou shalt see the glory of God" (3 Baruch 6:12; 7:2; 11:2).

In some passages the glory is very nearly interchangeable with the power or wrath of God. Thus God is the one before whose power all things shudder; for His glory cannot be borne, and His wrath upon sinners is irresistible (Prayer of Manasseh 4-5). And elsewhere it is reported that the kings of Judah "gave their power to others and their glory to a foreign nation" (Sirach 49:5).

It is possible to know God and describe Him by observing what He does. This is so, because "the work of the Lord is full of His glory" (Sirach 42:16). In one of the Psalms of Solomon, seeing the glory of the Messiah and the glory of the Lord is evidently the same as seeing "the good fortune of Israel" (Ps. Sol. 17:34,50). This is a common notion in the hymns of the Qumran community. Everywhere in those hymns God's glory is equated with His truth, wisdom and power.

Contemplating death, which is contrary to the purposes of the God of the living, Baruch breaks out in an eloquent prayer of deep religious yearning. He asks God to bring mortality to an end and reprove the angel of death. He begs God to let His glory appear and His might be known.

The showing of His glory includes also the opening of Sheol and the restoration of the dead (2 Baruch 21:22-26). Baruch's fervent prayer is the

Judaistic equivalent of "Thy kingdom come" or "Maranatha."

#### Man's Last End

The hope of mature Judaism was prepared for in the Old Testament, which was, of course, never so explicit as its Pharisaic offspring on the vision or on any other feature of the last things. Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha represent a massive development of earlier elements. But development of latent possibilities and potentialities rather than pure innovation is the way to describe the contrast.

Jewish hope of the period surveyed is futuristic, that is, unfulfilled. Anticipations of the vision there certainly are. Holy men have
seen and may see God according to the literature of Judaism. But the
rule is still that God will be seen by all flesh after the resurrection.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE VISION OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

## The Act of Seeing

The New Testament has a number of terms for seeing. This section may properly begin with a brief sketch of these words together with a statement or two on their various nuances.

The most common words for seeing in the New Testament are open and Eldow. Eldow is used as the second sorist of Sexul Sexul softw is not used much in the present and imperfect, where it is usually replaced by  $\beta\lambda\epsilon\pi\omega$ . Leapen is almost always only present and imperfect. Other tenses are filled by Jesoma, which lacks present and imperfect. Other voud is a new present formed from Sponal, when and Sponal. Besides these words the New Testament also has arenizw, gaze intently. To dreving is often used of the eyes to mean "staring." Also found is katoutel something or to reflect.

In the active voice we means to have sight, to see, to look, to interview. It is used with the accusative of the person (Matt. 28:7) or of the thing (Luke 23:49). It can in the second place be used metaphorically

<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Blass and Albert Debrunner, Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, zehnte Auflage (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), section 101.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

of seeing in dreams and visions (Luke 1:22). In the New Testament it can also mean to experience (John 3:36). Furthermore it can be used of a mental process and result. Used in this sense it means to have insight, to recognize (Acts 8:23), or it means to discern or perceive. In the last named sense it is interchangeable with akeuw. In John 8:38 (cf. 6:45f.), for example, sweet and revolute seem to be strictly parallel and synonymous. However, Michaelis says that seeing is here given the priority. But it appears that Michaelis is looking too hard for differences between hearing and seeing, even when they do not exist. Opto in the active finally means to take care, be on guard, be attentive, give heed to (Heb. 8:5; Natt. 27:

1). That is the original meaning of the word according to its etymology. In the passive opto means to appear or become visible (Acts 2:3; 16:9).

It is the passive which Moulton and Milligan have in mind, when they say opto is terminus technicus for appearances of the deity (1 Cor. 15:5,6,

Like (ow it can mean to perceive or become aware of (Matt. 27:54). It

Wilhelm Michaelis, "oedw," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Friedrich (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1954), V, 341. Hereafter all articles in this dictionary, edited in early volumes by Gerhard Kittel, will be referred to by means of author's name, title of article and the abbreviation TW, followed by the volume and page.

Jbid. See also Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, newly revised by Sir Henry Stuart Jones with the assistance of Roderick McKenzie (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1948). Page numbers are superfluous in referring to a work of this kind. All references are to the discussion of the word under consideration at the point of reference.

James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek
New Testament illustrated from the Papyri and other non-literary Sources
(London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1914-1919). References are to the alphabetically arranged discussions of the word under consideration at the point of reference.

is only a short step to the meaning, "be present and participate, experience" (1 Peter 3:10). It means to see someone on a visit (Luke 8:20).

Finally it means to consider or deliberate concerning something (1 John 3:1). How little this word can be confined to mere sense perception with the bodily eyes is seen also from the fact that the perfect, οίδα, means "to know," that is, "to see with the mind's eye." The use of ορώω and είδον as synonyms is evidenced in Stephen's anthropomorphic attributing of sight to the Lord: ἰδων είδον (Acts 7:34, cf. Ex. 3:7).

βλέπω designates more strongly than δράω the function of the eye.

It is used in contrast to being blind (Luke 7:21). One of its compounds, αναβλέπω, means to recover sight. It "has primarily the physical sense"? and is thus distinguished from δράω, the basic meaning of which is "perceive" or "become aware of." Nevertheless by Hellenistic times βλέπω and δράω are synonyms. Note also that God sees (Matt. 6:4,6,18) and certainly without the aid of bodily eyes.

Blue is usually transitive and then means to see something. But sometimes the intransitive appears and then it means to look (Acts 1:9) or look at (Acts 1:11). And then it shares a number of meanings with of www. It means to pay attention to something (1 Cor. 1:26), to beware (Mark 8:15), to recognize or have insight, including spiritual insight (John 9:39), to perceive (Matt. 14:30). This is the only one of the verbs of seeing used of geographical orientation (Acts 27:12, "a harbor looking northeast and southwest").

The meaning of ontwould corresponds to the passive of opological and

Moulton and Milligan, op. cit.

Blass and Debrunner, op. cit., section 101; cf. John 5:19 and 8:38.

means to become visible, to appear. Since Employing Yeverlow in Acts 10:40 is parallel to on toward in Acts 1:3, the two phrases are synonymous. Exerto in Luke 24:31 is the direct opposite. Thus on the one means to be visible. 10

Since the time of Homer Designated astonished or generally attentive seeing. It means to behold, watch, view. As a consequence of its exaltedness and solemnity it came to be used of visionary contemplation. Liddell and Scott, though writing with more reserve, agree that the word means to gaze at, to behold, mostly with a sense of wonder. 12 It can mean to see quite literally with the physical eyes (Acts 21:27). 13 It means to visit or greet (Rom. 15:24), to see with the physical eyes but in such a way that moral and spiritual perception is involved (John 1:14).

Deugew means in the first place to be a spectator. According to Michaelis the original meaning was to pay attention to a spectacle, especially at religious or dramatic festivals or at games. Liddell and Scott believe that it originally meant to be an envoy sent to consult an oracle. Whatever its origins, the word came later to be used of all kinds of seeing, but Michaelis may be going too far in saying that by New

<sup>9</sup>Michaelis, op. cit., p. 317.

<sup>10</sup>H. J. Cadbury, "Lexical Notes on Luke-Acts," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLIV (1925), 219.

Michaelis, op. cit., p. 317.

<sup>12</sup> Liddell and Scott, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., p. 344, thinks the verb here designates an "astonished or at any rate attentive and observing perception."

<sup>14</sup> Tbid., p. 318.

Testament times it is a synonym of Decopal and optus, even though it has widely pushed optus out of circulation. It has reasonably been argued that Decopal and optus are hardly parallel in John 16:16, mixeov kai over Jewelite me, kai Makin mixeov kai overlepe. As C. K. Barrett points out, the words may be synonymous, but then again overlepenhas an apocalyptic connotation. If the words are synonyms, overlepenhas are filled on Easter. If overlepenhase is allowed its strictly eschatological significance, then the seeing refers to the coming of the Son of man in glory.

Develor achieved a very important metaphorical sense. It became terminus technicus for scientific or philosophic procedure, knowledge, theory and speculation. In the New Testament the word has a number of metaphorical uses. It designates mental or spiritual perception and means to notice or come to recognize on the basis of observable evidence (Acts 17:22). It means to perceive, for example, the real identity of one sent by God (John 14:17). And finally it means to experience (John 8:51).

Greek, as most other languages, has a variety of words for seeing, while it is poverty stricken when it comes to words to describe otic perception, again as most other languages are. Each of the words for seeing is capable of a variety of meanings, as has been shown, all the way from simple sense perception to the loftiest, airiest mental or spiritual activity. These are garden variety words, which religious writers used freely and without apology. In the New Testament stones, stars, visions

<sup>15</sup> Moulton and Milligan, op. cit.

<sup>16</sup>c. K. Barrett, The Gospel according to St. John (London: S. P. C. K., 1956), p. 410.

and God are all alike "seen." It must be concluded that it is impossible to decide concerning the precise nature of the seeing or experience merely on the basis of the verb which is employed of the perception.

Some important features distinguish Biblical from classical views of seeing, and they ought to be noted. In the first place, the New Testament elaborates no theory of the five senses.

In the second place, the New Testament stands utterly and actively opposed to all Platonic otherworldliness and to all gnosticism. God and the heavenly world are decidedly not accessible to the trained and attentive mind while impervious to the sense. God is known and perceived only because He reveals Himself. And He chose to reveal Himself in a real person with a real history. The whole New Testament pictures Jesus as the Word made flesh, as Emanuel, God with us, and as perfectly accessible to all the senses.

It can hardly occasion surprise, therefore, that the New Testament contains no complaints about the inadequacy of the senses or the inferiority of that which can be grasped with the senses in contrast to what a man discovers by the use of his mental energies or intuition.

Hearing and seeing are the religiously significant senses in the New Testament. Smelling and tasting are seldom met (cf. Heb. 6:4-5).

Touching can serve as a substitute for seeing (Acts 9:8; 13:11). Usually, however, touching or feeling represents a step beyond seeing. It is the strongest means of becoming convinced of the real existence of a thing.

That which one feels is nearer to him than what he hears or sees. 17

<sup>17</sup> Ernst von Dobschütz, "Die fünf Sinne im Neuen Testament," Journal of Biblical Literature, XLVIII (1929), 388.

Markus Barth studies a number of passages of the New Testament in which touching Jesus is emphasized and given significance. He notes that touching is never reported in isolation from seeing and hearing (Mark 5: 27; Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:39). He indulges in some mathematics and tells the reader that touching is mentioned only once in 1 John 1:1-3, while hearing is mentioned twice, and seeing takes the prize with four occurrences.

Barth declares that touching is a more physical form of perception than hearing and seeing, which are often used in a metaphorical sense. But he notes also that the various modes of perception are co-ordinated in 1 John 1:1-3. All are possible ways of perceiving the incarnate One. Touching convinces men of the full humanity of the Christ in His earthly career and of the facticity and bodiliness of the resurrection. 18

Barth goes so far as to say that through hearing, seeing and touching faith was born in the Apostles. By that threefold manner of perception of the Lord they were created a fellowship and equipped for testimony. He singles out touching as of more than merely paradigmatic, contingent, temporary meaning. It has basic, normative and permanent significance, because bodily perception by the apostles is the proof of the incarnation and humiliation of Jesus Christ. It is at the same time proof of the attainment of the goal of Jesus' work: the founding of the church. 19

In the New Testament as in the Old Testament both hearing and seeing are conceived as perfectly adequate organs of revelation. The real question

<sup>18</sup> Markus Barth, Der Augenzeuge: Eine Untersuchung über die Wahrnehmung des Menschensohnes durch die Apostel (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelisches Verlag, 1946), pp. 202-271.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 271.

is whether one believes what he hears and sees. And yet it is often asserted that hearing takes precedence over seeing as a religious term in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. This paper must say something about the relationship among hearing, seeing and believing.

have a clear preponderance over akow, the only word for otic perception in the New Testament, which appears 425 times. But Michaelis declares that in reference to revelation hearing is "more important." What he really means is that akow is used more times in connection with revelation. His statement obscures the issue by confusing mathematical majority with theological significance. But in these days of the "theology of the word," which is not always clearly distinguished from theology of words, it is difficult to find any nonconformer or dissenter who will declare that seeing is as important in the New Testament message as hearing is.

In his article on account G. Kittel in the sub-section, "Hearing of Revelation outside of the New Testament," never even discusses the meaning of audible revelation among the Greeks. 21 He is concerned only to show that seeing is an essential mode of perceiving revelation. This he establishes by referring to the mysteries and gnosticism, with their epopteia and mystical vision. "The content of the revelation consists not in a hearing but in a seeing," he writes. 22 If this is meant to describe all non-Biblical revelation, it is a large conclusion resting somewhat shakily on slender foundation.

<sup>20</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., p. 346.

<sup>21</sup> Gerhard Kittel, "akww," Tw, I, 217ff.

<sup>22&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., p. 217.</sub>

According to Kittel the religion of the Old Testament and the Juda1sm derived from it "are religions of the heard or audible word." The
Old Testament speaks about seeing God or His face, but Kittel evidently
follows Baudissin in regarding that form of expression as a borrowing
from idolatrous non-Israelite sources, to be interpreted or demythologized
in line with what he regards as authentic Israelite tradition. However,
Kittel does allow an eschatological seeing of God. Beholding God will be
an eschatological event, occurring when Yahweh comes to Zion, and men
are no longer of unclean lips (Is. 60:1ff.; Job 19:26f.). But Kittel
is embarrassed by any seeing prior to that final denouement.

Kittel says that the priority which hearing has over seeing reveals the deepest essence of Biblical religion. He calls Biblical faith a religion of the word, because it is religion of action, of obedience to the word. It might therefore be well to summarize the meanings and uses of account in the New Testament at this point.

In the first place wrow means simply to hear. Then it means to give someone a hearing, to hear a case. It means also to learn or be informed about something, to hear of an event (John 12:34). To hear also means to understand. \( \text{\alpha} \text{vor} \text{vor

The sense of obey is strong in words compounded from arouw, though it is not the sole content. Electron means to listen to or obey (1 Cor.

<sup>23&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., p. 218.</sub>

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

This 21). Επακούω means to hear or listen to (2 Cor. 6:2). Kittel notes that this word was used since Homer as a technical term for the deity's listening to prayer. 25 επακούς was widely used as a title for the god. Επακούω also meant to obey, although there is no New Testament instance of its use in that sense. πορακούω bore three meanings in classic and Hellenistic Greek. It meant to overhear (Mark 5:36), to ignore, or to disobey (Matt. 18:17). πνερικού means disobedience, resulting from an unwillingness to listen (Rom. 5:19). In the overwhelming majority of cases υπακούω means obey (Eph. 6:1; 1 Peter 3:6; Mark 1:27; h:h1). υπακού generally means the obedience which a slave owes to his master but is used predominantly of obedience to God and His commands. 26

There is here a clue that exeges is has not pursued sufficiently or indeed at all. The statement that Biblical religion is a "religion of action, of obedience to the word" is generally regarded as unquestionably true, especially since Kierkegaard. However, it is not only supposed to be true; it is widely felt to be the whole truth. The corollary which is tacitly accepted but seldom verbalized, largely because it could not be defended exegetically, is that seeing means the same as speculation.

There are two questions which must be asked and answered. In the first place, does the word never degenerate into a mere doctrine or teaching which is learned intellectually instead of obeyed in wholehearted and full-bodied response? On this first point one may note that Kittel himself

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup>William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Fress, c.1957). Page numbers are superfluous in referring to a work of this kind in which entries are listed alphabetically.

with the New Testament view of the word as event. 27 He is forced to talk of "inner and outer" hearing, or of "real and physical" hearing. 28 Real hearing is acceptance of the revealed will of God. Kittel also notes that there thus arises, as the concept which crowns hearing, the notion of an obedient hearing which consists in faith and of a faith which consists in obedient hearing (UNCKON TIGGENS, Rom. 1:5; 16:26). 29

That seeing and hearing are diametrically opposed is "ittel's unwritten presupposition. He never questions and he never bothers to explain it. Playing off seeing and hearing against one another has become
an annoying habit of Biblical theologians.

And there is a second question requiring an answer. Is seeing really to be equated with intellectual freewheeling and speculating? The positive answer could again be refuted out of Kittel's own mouth. He states that Biblical eschatology employs the language of sight and vision as the primary mode of apprehending the eschatological realities. He writes that, corresponding to the Old Testament pattern, eschatology is everywhere in the New Testament described overwhelmingly as a seeing and not a hearing. The many references in the New Testament to seeing Jesus and other religious seeing are evidence of the fact that the eschaton has begun. The co-ordination of hearing and seeing in many New Testament passages indicates the distance between Christianity and Judaism with its

<sup>27</sup> Kittel, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>28&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., pp. 220f.</sub>

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 221.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

bobschütz defended the same view. The New Testament follows the Old in holding up to the faithful the promise of the eschatological vision of God or of the Lord. Furthermore the future salvation is everywhere in the New Testament represented in visual terms. That comes to clear expression when Paul (Rom. 8:24) opposes hoping and seeing. And von Dobschütz for good measure observes that the New Testament is silent, except for the heavenly singing of Rev. 5:9; 1h:3, on the subject of hearing in the heavenly places. 32

The verbal rigorists and purists, such as W. Michaelis, however, deny even the eschatological precedence of seeing over hearing. Michaelis, for example, always interprets seeing in terms of some other nonvisual relationship or experience, if there is even the remotest possibility of doing so. Otherwise he is at pains to demonstrate that seeing is really not so much in the foreground as a first reading of the texts might indicate. 33

It is really unfortunate that the question posed and the problem attacked has been put as an antithesis: "Is seeing or hearing more important?" That question is a red herring. It should rather be asked, "What is the importance of seeing (or of hearing or of touching)?" By addressing oneself to this question, it is possible to get out of the impasse into which the other way of posing the problem has led.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.; see also the same author's book, Die Religionsgeschichte und das Urchristentum (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1931), pp. 95-106.

<sup>32</sup> Dobschütz, op. cit., p. 405.

<sup>33</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., pp. 360-368.

Seeing is used in two religiously significant senses in the New Testament. Note that it does not mean speculation as among the Greeks. On one level seeing and hearing are co-ordinated or correlated. Both are organs of reception of revelation. When seeing and hearing are linked together, they designate the totality of sensible-intellectual perception, which forms the basis of testimony because it forms the basis of personal experience and conviction. The Harald Riesenfeld has shown that in many cases in the New Testament words of opposite meaning, Greeks and barbarians, for example, when bracketed together and joined by a co-ordinate conjunction, signify a whole or a unit which is greater than the sum of the parts. Michaelis refers to Riesenfeld's article and correctly notes that from the very beginning Jesus' words were not handed on alone but were strung together with His works. According to Michaelis word and work, and therefore hearing and seeing, express the full historicity and the totality of the revelatory event. 36

Seeing and hearing are significantly linked in any number of passages in the New Testament (Acts 2:33; 4:20; John 3:32; 1 John 1:1-3). Jesus said to His disciples, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear" (Matt. 13:16; Luke 10:23f.; cf. Is. 6:9-10 in Matt. 13:13ff.; cf. Deut. 29:3ff.). Jesus was not talking only of seeing and hearing but also of believing. But He is surely pointing also to the real and palpable presence now of that for which the prophets only hoped. Elsewhere

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>35</sup>Harald Riesenfeld, "Accouplements de Termes Contradictoires dans le Nouveau Testament," Coniectanea Neotestamentica, LX (1944), 1-21.

<sup>36</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., p. 348.

Jesus leveled this accusation at the unbelieving Jews: "You have neither heard His voice nor seen His figure" (John 5:37).

In the passages listed and quoted above seeing and hearing stand on the same level as equally adequate organs of revelation. Michaelis, however, declares that in all the above instances seeing is a form of hearing, that is, that seeing merely means perception of revelation. Thou that follows is anyone's guess. John 5:37 should show up the oddity of Michaelis' further contention that the prophets, for example, hear God Himself but see only assorted animals, persons and things. He draws the conclusion that "God reveals Himself with relative immediacy in audition and not in vision." The reader is left to guess what "relative immediacy" is.

It is not at all enlightening to call seeing only a form of hearing. Perhaps Michaelis has taken too seriously the title of Riesenfeld's article. Greeks and barbarians may be contradictory terms, but seeing and hearing are not. Even when seeing appears alone, it can mean visual reception of authentic revelation. The New Testament writers have no brief against seeing.

The revelation of God in Christ is both heard and seen. In Jesus of
Nazareth God is audible and visible. Jesus is not only the divine Word
but also the divine Image. Only in the combination of the audible and
the visible is the fulness of the incarnation comprehended.

Seeing as well as hearing can and should lead to believing. Faith is the proper goal and issue of seeing as of hearing. Faith expresses

<sup>37</sup> Toid.

<sup>38&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, p. 330.

itself in testimony. In fact it demands testimony. This grounding of testimony in faithful seeing and hearing is a central thesis of Barth's book on the eyewitness. Testimony in turn is the call and challenge to believe. And man believes with the heart.

Among the Greeks both vision and word are servants of philosophy and thought. In fact both vision (Deweid) and word (Noyos) mean intellection or reason. But among the Hebrews of the Old Testament and the writers of the New Testament word and vision are channels of the will of God striking through ear and eye to the heart of man, the source and seat of his religious and ethical life. 39

In the Bible intellection is subordinated to will and command. The genius of the Greeks was the intellectual discovery of pure speculative thought. The Hebrews are distinguished by their infinite moral courage and moral-religious view of the universe, which began, continues and will end as God wills. 40

In an investigation of the differences between the Greek and Hebrew mentalities, written from the point of view of philosophy and psychology, Thorlief Boman arrives at this conclusion: "Greek thinking is clear logical knowing; Israelite thinking is deep psychological understanding."

He states the same thing in other words, when he says, "The Greeks were organized in a predominantly visual way and the Hebrews in a predominantly

Johannes Behm, "Kagoir," IV, III, 611-616. See also Johannes Pedersen, Israel: Its Life and Culture (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), I-II, 99-181.

ture of Ancient Man (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949), ch. 8.

Thorlief Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek, translated by Jules L. Moreau (London: S. C. M. Press, 1960), p. 204.

auditory way." Both statements are summaries of his entire book, in which he argues that Greek thought is static and Hebrew most dynamic, his that Greek is synthetic or distinction-forming and Hebrew is of the analytic or totality type of thought, his that Hebrew thinking is historical and concrete, while Greek thought is spatial and abstract, his that Greeks proceeded symbolically and Hebrews instrumentally or functionally. According to Boman the Greeks considered as essential and primary in mental life that which is ordered, moderate, thought out, calculated, meaningful and rational. The Hebrew, on the other hand, leaned to the dynamic, the masterful, and the energetic.

However, in spite of everything, and in contrast to much modern theology, Boman declares that both types of thought are essential and necessary for a full and rounded view of any object. In this he has the full and enthusiastic support of James Barr, 48 who finds much to criticize in Boman's book but fully agrees that the unity of Greek and Hebrew thought has been ignored and even suppressed by Biblical theologians in recent years.

Besides launching a frontal attack on the assumption that there is

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 26-73.

lili\_Ibid., pp. 74-122.

<sup>45&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., pp. 123-183.</sub>

<sup>46&</sup>lt;sub>Tbid.</sub>, pp. 184-192.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>48</sup> James Barr, The Semantics of Biblical Language (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

a strong contrast between the Greek and Hebrew minds, Barr objects to that school of thought which finds the unity of Old and New Testaments in the common Hebraic background, way of thinking, and presuppositions of all parts of the Bible.

Most pertinent to this present study is Barr's massive assault on
the notion that conclusions about the psychology of a whole race can be
drawn from linguistic phenomena. He protests against the view that language neatly expresses the unique character of a people. The detailed
work of Boman and Barr supports one of the prime arguments of this paper.

It is an injustice to declare that Greek religion has an essentially visual orientation, which denigrates hearing, and to point for substantiation to the number of terms in the Greek language for various kinds of
seeing. And it is impossible to prove that Hebrew religion is oriented
about the word and obedience merely by pointing out that the term, "word,"
occurs in theologically significant contexts more frequently than the
term, "vision." To do so is not only to simplify but also to falsify.

What is true is that the New Testament correlates sight with heart or will, not sight with mind or reason as do the Greeks. Therefore the distinction between Greek and Biblical religion is not fairly expressed as one between hearing and seeing. It is rather the distinction between heart and mind, will and reason. It is characteristic of primitive Christian psychology that the heart stands behind the senses. The heart rules in a man and subjects the senses to itself.

The acoustical and otic per se have no claim to theological superiority over the optical and visual. It does not matter so much whether

<sup>49</sup> See von Dobschütz, op. cit., passim.

God is seen or heard. The real question is this: "What is the content of the revelation?"

On the eschatological level seeing takes a certain precedence over hearing in the sense that hearing and believing are often grouped with hoping and waiting, while seeing stands on the side of having and possessing the hoped for salvation. This paper now turns to religiously significant and eschatologically oriented sight and vision in the New Testament.

# Angelophanies

Among the Greeks appeals is a man who brings a message, a messenger. The word has sacral connections and messengers enjoyed the protection of the gods. Julius Schniewind said, "The earthly, sacral appeals is the prototype of the heavenly appeals."

The Old Testament view, according to which exyston are the angels of God, His messengers and the representatives of the heavenly world (Heb. 12:22; 1 Tim. 5:21), predominates in the New Testament.

The New Testament never confuses Jesus with the angels. In fact it clearly expresses Jesus' superiority over the angels (Heb. 1:4-2:9; Mark 13:32). He is the Son (Heb. 1:5,8), who in obedience to the Father became lower than the angels (Heb. 2:7,9), but now sits at the right hand of majesty and has obtained the name "Lord," so that angels bow before Him and worship Him (Heb. 1:3f.,6; Phil. 2:9-10).

Jesus is Himself Bethel, the gate of heaven on earth (John 1:51; Gen. 28:12). He is Emmanuel, God with us (Matt. 1:23), and when He is

<sup>50</sup>Quoted by Walter Grundmann, "ayyelos," IW, I, 73.

present, God's kingship has arrived (Luke 17:21). Jesus' birth and life on the earth was an epiphany of God (2 Tim. 1:10).

As the Son of God and the Lord of all, He has angels continually at His beck and call (Matt. 26:53). They accompany His every step and offer Him service and strengthen Him, especially in times of deepest temptation and struggle (Matt. h:11; Luke 22:h3).

The angels served as messengers and heralds of the Lord, announcing especially His birth but then also proclaiming His resurrection. In the birth narratives of Jesus and His forerunner the angel of the Lord appeared (wffm) to Zechariah and identified Himself in the words, "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19). When Zechariah saw (15wv) him, he was filled with awe at the numinous presence, but was then reassured, "Do not be afraid." Zechariah entered into conversation with the angel and received news of the birth of Messiah's precursor.

When Zechariah left the temple, the people were in some way able to tell "that he had seen a vision in the temple" (Luke 1:22, on takin & engage of the limit had seen a vision in the temple (Luke 1:22, on takin).

Six months later the same angel was sent to Mary and announced that she had been chosen as Messiah's mother (Luke 1:26-38). According to Matthew an angel of the Lord brought tidings of the impending birth also to Joseph. The angel "appeared to him in a dream" ( 'Sou ayxelos kueiw kar' oude Edavn, Matt. 1:20) and spoke to him. Jesus' name was also angel-given (Luke 1:31; 2:21; Matt. 1:21). The wise men were warmed in a dream to bypass Jerusalem on their homeward journey (Matt. 2:12), and Joseph again received directions from the angel in a dream (Matt. 2:13,19).

An angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds near Bethlehem with news of Jesus' birth, "and the glory of the Lord shone around them." The heavenly world irrupted into the earthly at the birth of Jesus. The last times, the promised times, were dawning. Awestruck, the shepherds are told not to be afraid. As suddenly as that first angel appeared, just as unexpectedly and mysteriously a multitude of the heavenly army appeared, praising God and interpreting the birth (Luke 2:8-14).

In mome of these pericopes is the angel in any way described, except to say that he was "standing" at the right side of the alter of incense when Zechariah saw him and that he spoke understandably. How he came, how anyone became aware of his presence apart from the glory on the plains outside Bethlehem, and what he looked like are questions never discussed or hinted at. The appearances of angels are evidently conceived anthropomorphically without any further reflection being given to the matter.

Matthew pictures a solitary angel of the Lord descending to open the tomb and announce the resurrection. His clothes betray his heavenly provenance, and guards and women react alike with fear and trembling (Natt. 28:2-7; Mark 16:5-6). Luke, with his massive emphasis on testimony and the establishment of every word and deed in the mouth of at least two witnesses, 51 hands on the tradition of two angelic messengers at the emptied tomb (Luke 24:4-7; cf. John 20:12). The disciples recall that the women had seen "a vision of angels" (Luke 24:23, Outcome ayrehow Empare voxi).

In the resurrection accounts the angels are conceived in an explicitly anthropomorphic way. Luke calls them "two men" (Luke 2h:4). They are pictured as clothed in supernaturally white garments (Luke 2h:4; Matt. 28:

<sup>51</sup>Robert Morgenthaler, Die lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis: Gestalt und Gehalt der Kunst des Lukas (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1949), develops the thesis that Luke by the use of doubling wishes to establish testimony to Christ beyond the shadow of a doubt.

3; of. Mark 9:3 and parallels), and they speak with humans in good, plain Aramaic.

The resurrection appearances cease at the Ascension, forty days after Easter. On that occasion once again "two men in white robes" are on hand to interpret the event for the disciples (Acts 1:11).

In the early, apostolic days of the church the angel of the Lord is active, carrying forward the mission and message of the church as well as wreaking havor on all who oppose the word and the apostles of the Lord (cf. Acts 12:23). An angel brought Peter and the other apostles out of prison with the instruction, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life" (Acts 5:20). Peter was again freed by an angel, who appeared (the form) in a surrounding, identifying light and loosed him from the maximum security conditions into which he had been placed. The angel struck Peter, spoke to him and led the way before him. Luke adds the interesting note: "He did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought he was seeing a vision" (capat Alerty, Acts 12:9). As usual with heavenly beings on errands, the angel disappeared suddenly and without a trace.

An angel of the Lord arranged the encounter between the Ethiopian eumuch and Philip the evangelist (Acts 6:26), so that the gospel may do its appointed work and gather in people who had been excluded under the Old Covenant (Is. 56:4; Deut. 23:1). The angel drops out of the narrative and "the Spirit of the Lord" becomes the protagonist (Acts 8:29,39). The story is parallel to Paul's experience in Asia Minor, where the Spirit directed his movements and a night vision was the means of calling him to Europe (Acts 16:6-10).

Cornelius clearly saw an angel of God in a vision ( Elder Er Seapari

Acts 27:23) and assured him that he would live to testify before Caesar and preach in Rome, capital of the Gentile world (cf. Acts 18:9).

In the end, when history has run its course, angels will again be active and appear. The Son of man will come with His angels, who will accompany Him and act in His name (Matt. 16:27; Mark 8:38; Matt. 25:31; 13:41; 24:31; Mark 13:27; 2 Thess. 1:7; 4:16). Angels will be present at the final judgment (Luke 12:8f.).

According to the testimony of the primitive church the angel of the Lord is active especially on behalf of Christ and those who are being saved (Heb. 1:14; Rev. 19:10). The role of angels is described in the doxologies of Christmas (Luke 2:14) and of the last time (Rev. 5:11ff.; 19:1ff.), which correspond to Isaiah 6. And they rejoice in the progress of the individual man in salvation history. So in the New, the angel of the Lord is the protector and guardian of God's covenant people. The appearance of angels and especially of the angel of the Lord testify that God is in Jesus and the church making a new covenant and creating a new covenant people.

#### Dreams

Some of the appearances of the angel occurred in a dream. The dream of over ) was a regular and respected channel of the Lord's revelation in

<sup>52</sup> Gerhard Kittel, "xyridos," TW, I, 84.

the Old Testament from earliest to latest times. 53 The New Testament has no prejudice against dreams as illusory or misleading. And yet very few dreams are mentioned in the New Testament. To those already noted above only the dream of Pilate's wife can be added (Matt. 27:19). It is interesting that Peter quotes with approval the ancient prophecy of the end time, "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

Breams (ονος, ένυπνιον) and visions (ορομο, οπταθία, οραθί) are eschatological charismatic gifts in the service of the holy God who is doing a new thing in the sending of His Son and in the creation of the church. There is a vast difference between the simplicity and chasteness of dreams reported in the New Testament and the flamboyance of those mentioned in the literature of pagan antiquity. Primitive Christianity, while it is not inimical to dreams, is critical of them, however. The reason may be that libertinistic gnostics appealed to their dreamings (Jude 8). And Paul had his hands full with feather-headed dreamers and enthusiasts both in Corinth and Colossae. Paul may have counted dreams as less reliable and less worth mentioning than "visions and revelations" (2 Cor. 12:1, οπταθέκαι καὶ αποκολύψεις).

#### Visions

According to 2 Corinthians 12 Paul had ecstatic-visionary or ecstaticauditory experiences. He does not mention what he may have seen, but only

<sup>53</sup>Albrecht Oepke, "ode," TW, V, 229.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 236.

<sup>55</sup> Thid., p. 235.

that he heard "things that cannot be told, which man may not utter" (2 Cor. 12:4). Since Paul mentions only revelations in verse 7, Michaelis is probably correct in saying that outdood and durations are the subjective and objective side of the same thing or that durational is at least the category under which outdood belong. 56

Angelophanies are twice called on tobia! (Luke 1:22; 24:23). Luke calls the appearance of Christ to Paul outside Damascus ouldvios on tobia (Acts 26:19), even though Paul does not count that appearance as an outside Ga.

phany to Moses in the burning bush (Acts 7:31; Ex. 3:3). It usually designates the vision itself (Acts 10:17,19; 11:5; 12:9; 16:9f.) or the state of being in which a person receives a vision (Acts 9:10,12; 10:3; 28:19). Peter's of the Acts 10 is unique on two counts. It is expressly stated that it occurred in a trance (Acts 10:10; 11:5). And outside of the Book of Revelation it is the only New Testament example of a dream or vision, the content of which is an optical puzzle requiring interpretation. Such visions were, however, common in the Old Testament.

Dreams and visions play only a small role in the New Testament. Compared with mystic religiosity of all times and places the New Testament is most reserved in the matter of ecstasies and trances and appearances in dreams. They are there, all right, but they are only "ancillary links in the chain of the deeds of God, whose goal lies far beyond individual extraordinary experiences." The angelophanies, dreams and visions are

<sup>56</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., p. 353.

<sup>57</sup> Julius Schniewind, Das Evangelium nach Matthäus, in Das Neue

are neither so massive nor so numerous as to draw too much attention to themselves. They point rather beyond themselves to the inbreaking and advent of God's ultimate revelation in His Son Jesus Christ. They do not compete with Jesus but serve Him.

Reliable tidings came in dreams and trances. But the New Testament exercised control over visions and all other kinds of revelation. Paul wrote, "Even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). The early church had its problems with charismatics (2 Cor. 11: lff.), but it never decided cases on the basis of the form of the revelation. It tested the content to see whether it agreed with the gospel.

## Jesus' Inaugural Vision

Jesus, too, saw and heard revelations from His Father. At Jesus' baptism "behold, the heavens were opened (cf. John 1:51) and He saw (Σίδεν) the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on Him" (Matt. 3: 16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22).

Julius Schniewind comments that almost everywhere in the world men seek to come into immediate contact with the deity by means of extraordinary experiences of seeing and hearing. A person who has such an unusual experience is believed to be blessed or even divine. It is not so in the Bible, where special visions and voices are merely the means which serve God when He invades the world. The subjective element

Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Paul Althaus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1952), p. 14. This work will hereafter be cited as NTD II. Schniewind has written another commentary, one on the Gospel according to St. Mark, in the same series. It will be cited as NTD I.

recedes.58

Schniewind hesitates calling the baptismal revelation a vision. To him that would seem to be an anachronistic judgment of the event as a subjective, psychological experience. Such a view would not occur to the ancients, who would accept the vision as real, but would ask, "Is it God who is revealing Hinself through this event or is it a lying spirit?" 59

The baptism is analogous to the inaugural visions of the Old Testament prophets, and like theirs, consists of visual and auditory elements.
The words from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well
pleased," are not an audible interpretation of the visible features of
the event, the opened heaven and the descending Spirit. In other words,
the vision is not merely a framework for the audition. The otic and optical elements together constitute a whole.

The voice from heaven designates Jesus as the Son of God, not in the sense of the majestic and exalted figure of Psalm 2, but in the light of the Servant (Tak) of Isaiah 42 and the other, related Servant Songs, including Isaiah 53. The voice declares in effect, "You are My only Son; you must fulfil the role of the Servant of God." 60

According to Mark Jesus sees not only the Spirit descending but also sees the heavens opened. Through the opened heaven Jesus sees the new world of God, the coming seon (cf. Rev. 4:1; 1:1).61 All Jesus' words

<sup>58</sup> Schniewind, MTD II, 26.

<sup>59</sup> Schniewind, NTD I, 46.

<sup>60</sup> Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament, translated by Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 281-290.

<sup>61</sup> Schniewind, NTD I, 46.

and deeds are shaped and motivated by the coming world. In fact, where Jesus is the new world is coming into being.

The descent of the Spirit does not mean that Jesus was at His baptism adopted into Sonship. It means that the Son is strengthened and equipped with the fulness of the authority and power of God, that He is appointed by His anointing to begin His Servant's ministry. The Spirit is the dynamic of the new aeon, empowering the Son to act by the finger of God and so inaugurate the kingdom of God (Luke 11:20).

# Seeing in the Fourth Gospel

The vision and audition at Jesus' baptism stand in closest connection with two sets of Johannine passages, in which Jesus talks of His seeing the Father. Jesus is the perfectly obedient servant of God in word and deed. He says of Himself, "The Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing" (John 5:19; 8:38; 15:15; 3:32). And He is the unique Son of God, and therefore He says that He who is from God "has seen the Father" (John 6:46; 1:18).

Hence "he who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 12:44f.; 14:9; cf. Luke 10:16). That is to say, God has revealed Himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ and is accessible in Him. In Pauline language Jesus is the "image of the invisible God," the one in whom "all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1:15,19; 2 Cor. 4:4; cf. John 14:10). He is the Son, who "reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature" (Heb. 1:3).

God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and therefore He is essentially invisible (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27; John 3:8; 14:17). But God has given men an eternal image of Himself in His Son (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3), who has entered history as a man of flesh and blood and has thereby become the object of our seeing. Thus the invisible can be seen by men even now; the time of salvation has come. Those who have seen Jesus are therefore blessed (Matt. 13:16; Luke 10:23).

And yet seeing Jesus in the Fourth Gospel and elsewhere in the New Testament is more than mere sense perception. It is not less than sense perception as some would have it. That the holy and invisible God revealed Himself and showed His glory in just this historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, is not only paradoxical. It is scandalous and foolish (1 Cor. 1:23). God's glory can be seen in Jesus (John 1:18) only by him who believes. Therefore Jesus says, "For this is the will of My Father, that every one who sees (Jewew) the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life" (John 6:10: 12:11-15: 11:9-10).

Michaelis interprets Johannine seeing, not as sense perception, but as "a spiritual perception of the scandal which compels one to confront the scandal and make a decision." Seeing is "a confrontation with the Son which issues in faith." For Michaelis Johannine seeing is therefore a believing bowing before the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, a seeing in which is stressed, on the one hand, the connection with history, with the incarnation of the Revealer, and, on the other, the pre-existence and post-existence. John has chosen the verbs of seeing as terms of revelation in order to stress the personal existential character of the encounter with Jesus. Of Rudolf Bultmann says that seeing is neither something

<sup>62</sup> Michaelis, op. cit., pp. 362ff.

<sup>63&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, p. 362.

<sup>64</sup> Toid., pp. 364ff.

physical nor something intellectual. It is rather that seeing whose content is believing. 65

This interpretation, however, moves too far from the mooring in history. The Fourth Gospel contains passages which stress the absolute necessity of seeing and passages which underline the necessity of faith, or rather of arriving by faith at a more perfect comprehension. Michaelis and Bultmann have resolved the tension by interpreting sight as a species of faith. Surely bodily sight alone is insufficient. The Fourth Gospel makes that clear not only in the case of those who see and must yet believe (John 20:8,28), but especially in the tragic case of those who see and yet do not believe. Sight must be followed by faith (John 2:23; h: h8ff.; 6:30,36; 7:3,5; lh:7ff.).

Nevertheless, seeing Jesus and visible testimony are by no means unimportant. On the contrary, it was necessary that there be some who saw
Jesus during His earthly career. It is necessary also that Christians
who have not seen with their own eyes be able to place themselves on the
testimony of those who have really seen with their own eyes (1 John 1:13; John 15:26-27).

John's purpose is set down in the words, "that they might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (John 20:30). Oscar Cullmann writes that it would be false to conclude from this theological principle that the historical events of the incarnate life of Jesus have only a

<sup>65</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, Das Evangelium des Johannes, in Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament, begruendet von H. A. N. Meyer (Gött-ingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1953), p. 45; cf. p. 341. See also the same author's article, "θέον οὐδάς εωρακεν πωνοτε: Untersuchungen zum Johannesevangelium," Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft, XIX (1929), 185.

Secondary interest for the evangelist. The affirmation, "Jesus is the Christ," is of such a nature that it postulates history. Cullmann characteristically conceives the connection between Jesus and the Christ not as the connection between a historical person and a metaphysical entity, but as that between a visible history limited to a very brief period, that of the life of Jesus, and a particular history which unfolds throughout all time, that which is called the "history of salvation." The events of Jesus' history are the object of sight, and those of salvation history are the object of faith. The Evangelist writes to persuade men that the incarnate Jesus is the eternal Christ. 66

## The Transfiguration

"the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. 16:16), a testimony and conviction resting on revelation from God (Matt. 16:17), Jesus was transfigured before His inner circle of Peter and James and John (Matt. 26:3; Mark 5:37; 13:3). His form was altered. The change was signalled by the shining of His face and the luminous whiteness of His garments. His face shines like that of the angel at the tomb (Matt. 28:3), like that of the victorious Son of man in the Apocalypse (Rev. 1:16).

It was a part of Jewish and Christian eschatology that the pious would in the end be transfigured and shine like the sun (Natt. 13:43; 1 Cor. 15:51f.; Dan. 12:3; 2 Baruch 30:4; 51:3ff.; Eth. Enoch 38:4; 104:2;

<sup>66</sup> Oscar Cullmann, "Είδεν και ἐπίστευδεν, La vie de Jesus, objet de la 'vue' et de la 'foi,' d'après le quatriéme Evangile," Aux sources de la tradition chrétienne: Melanges offerts à M. M. Goguel (Neuchatel: Delachaux et Nestle, 1950), p. 53.

4 Eara 7:97) and wear "garments of glory" (Enoch 62:15f.; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 3:5; 4:4; 7:9). The transformation from the form of this world to that of the coming world gave the disciples a proleptic vision of Jesus' fucture glory (Luke 9:31; 2 Peter 1:16-18; 1 Peter 5:1).

Then the disciples received further visible revelation (who, Mark 9:4). They saw Moses and Elijah, neither of whom was thought by Jewish apocalyptic to have died (2 Esdras 6:26). Moses was the great mediator of the covenant and also a type of the Messiah. The rabbis contemporary with Jesus had a slogan: "As was the first redeemer (Moses), so will the last redeemer (Messiah) be." Elijah was expected as the precursor of the Messiah (Mal. 3:1; h:5). These two talk with Jesus about His "exodus" (Luke 9:31), used here with the double signification of Jesus' death and the redemption and new covenant to be established by that sacrificial death.

A cloud enveloped (Emickia Zew) 68 the three eschatological figures.

The brilliant cloud is the visible manifestation of God in His gracious presence for His people (Natt. 17:5).

From the cloud came a voice addressing the disciples with the words

Jesus had heard at His baptism (Mark 9:7). Added to the declaration that

Jesus is the elect Son, who is to fulfill the Servant's role, is the ad
monition, "Listen to Him" (Mark 9:7). Those words declare that Moses'

promise of an eschatological prophet (Deut. 18:15) has found its fulfill
ment in Jesus.

The Transfiguration is not so much a theophany, although the Father

<sup>67</sup> Joachim Jeremias, "Mwuen," IN, IV, 864.

<sup>68</sup> Albrecht Oepke, "veléhn, vélos," IV, 910f.

appears or reveals Himself in cloud and voice, as it is a Christophany, through which Jesus is revealed to His disciples in the eschatological splendor of the triumphant Son of man (Mark 9:9; Rev. 1:17). The Father revealed to Peter, James and John that "the resurrected One, and here the one who is transfigured in brightly beaming glory, is the very presence of God." The disciples saw Jesus' glory (Eldar Thr 50 gar, Luke 9:32).

The event apparently occurred on the eve of the Feast of Tabernacles, when the air was charged with the electricity of nationalism and people longed more fervently than usual for the Messiah to come and restore God's people to independent station. 70 The Transfiguration as a whole testifies to the inner circle of disciples that Jesus will enter the glory of the Son of man by way of death.

The entire event, although composed both of visible and audible phenomena, is called "a vision" (aga, Matt. 17:9). And when the disciples are on the downward path from the mountain once again, Jesus charges them not to tell anyone what they had seen (a sidov, Mark 9:9; Eweakav Luke 9:36). They later recalled that they had been eyewitnesses of His majesty (swowar μεγαλειότατος, 2 Peter 1:16), partakers of the glory (δοξως κοινωνος, 1 Peter 5:1; John 1:14), as they proclaimed Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory (James 2:1). It would be reckless to attempt reducing the visual elements in the transfiguration story to the status of a framework for the word spoken out of the cloud. The optical features of the narrative require to be interpreted in co-ordination with the word and not in subordination to it.

<sup>69</sup> Schniewind, NTD II, 194.

<sup>70</sup> Heinrich Baltensweiler, Die Verklärung Jesu (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1959), pp. 59ff.

## The Resurrection Appearances

The resurrection appearances are the controlling and central events in the story of the faith of the disciples, as in the history of the revelation of God's will in Jesus. Faith prior to Jesus' resurrection was tentative and temporary. After the resurrection the disciples look forward with unshakable faith to the ultimate unveiling in the consummated kingdom of heaven, guaranteed and inaugurated by the resurrection. Before the resurrection all Jesus' deeds and words were signs. After the resurrection the next and last great deed of the Lord is the parousia, the full public assumption of that power which belongs to Jesus since the resurrection and exaltation.

St. Paul reports that one of the twin pillars of the gospel is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (1 Cor. 15:3-4). The resurrection itself had no witnesses, but men aplenty saw the resurrected Jesus. He was raised from the dead on the third day, and He appeared (appla, 1 Cor. 15:5,6,7,8) to Peter (Luke 24:34), to the twelve, to more than five hundred at one time, to James and then last of all to Paul.

The resurrection is fundamental to primitive Christian faith and to all subsequent testimony and faith. Paul plainly states that unless Christ has been raised, Christian faith is futile and men are still in their sins. And he asserts finally that Christ has as a matter of fact been raised from the dead (1 Cor. 15:17,20). To His chosen apostles Jesus appeared and presented (magetathetal) Himself alive after His passion by many convincing proofs and irrefutable signs (TEKAMQ1015), in the forty day period between resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:3). Jesus was definitely visible (ontolophios) to His disciples (cf. Acts 10:40).

The meetings with Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, are not described as ecstatic visions. The disciples knew what a trance or ecstasy was (2 Cor. 12:lff.), but they never report their encounters with Jesus in such terms.

Sometimes skeptics or scoffers charge that the Christian faith, especially belief in the resurrection, is an invention of the disciples, who were either complete frauds or the amiable victims of their own wishful thinking and fanatic delusions. But the inescapable impact of the narratives of the New Testement is the exact opposite of a wish and a dream turned into a dogma. The disciples were driven by something or rather by Someone outside themselves to accept the astounding fact of the resurrection.

After the crucifixion the disciples were nor grasping at straws,
eager to believe anything, anxious even to create a faith to comfort themselves. To consider them so gullible flies in the face of the evidence.
Unbelief and incredulity ruled their hearts, even when the first reports
of the resurrected Jesus had come in. When the women said they had seen
angels at the tomb, which now stood empty, these words seemed to the men
to be "an idle tale, and they did not believe them" (Luke 24:1-11).

The doubt and skepticism of the disciples were not crushed and overcome until they had met Jesus in face to face encounter. Jesus appeared
to them, identifying Himself by offering Himself to their touch and hearing and then also to their sight: Matthew 28:17, 150v7f5; Mark 16:9,10,
14, 20ava, Epaveewoln; Luke 24:31, "their eyes were opened and they
recognized Him; and He vanished," approvero; Luke 24:37, Jewellv;
John 14:21-22, 24 dv/2w; John 20:14, Jewell; John 20:18, Ewpoko;
John 20:20, 750v7f5; John 20:25, 76w; John 20:25, Eupakoko; John 20:29,

εωρακας; 1 Corinthians 9:1, ευρακα; 1 John 1:1-3, εωρακαμεν του οθθαλ-

Seeing the resurrected Lord is reported with a variety of words, which make clear the fact that the appearances are not mere subjective experiences transpiring only in the consciousness of the disciples with no corresponding objective referrent. K. H. Rengstorf believes with reason that the choice of vocables and the stressing of the seeing (and the hearing and the touching) were rendered necessary by an attempt already in the primitive Palestinian church to interpret the resurrection appearances as visions or hallucinations and so to rob them of their objective character and thus turn God's deed into a human invention. 71

In 19th W. Michaelis published a study of the resurrection appearances. 72 In the preface he says that his work was prompted by an earlier publication of Emanuel Hirsch. Paul Althaus had already entered the lists with a book of his own, in which he called for additional, exegetical refutation of Hirsch's position. The battle was joined between Althaus and Hirsch and was carried on in the journals.

According to Hirsch only two choices are possible. Either the appearances are some kind of ecstatic visionary experience of the disciples,
or they are literal, physical encounters occurring on the level of ordinary sense perception. Hirsch asserted that work is "the classic
term for the appearance of heavenly figures in visions" and that the

<sup>71</sup> Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, Die Auferstehung: Form, Art, und Sinn der Urchristlichen Osterbotschaft, zweite Auflage (Witten-Ruhr: Luther-Verlag, 1954), p. 45.

Wilhelm Michaelis, Die Erscheinungen des Auferstandenen (Basel: Heinrich Majer, c.1944). Hereafter this will be cited as Erscheinungen. The same author's article on  $o(a\omega)$ , op. cit., will be cited as IN, V.

resurrection appearances are of the same order. 73 Michaelis is not willing, as Markus Barth is, 74 to accept the notion that the resurrection
appearances transpire on the everyday level of ordinary seeing and hearing. Nor does he care to agree with Hirsch. He seeks to demonstrate a
third possibility.

Michaelis says that who is not a genuine passive in which the subject does not act but is acted upon. It is an intransitive passive.

The subject is the only one who acts, and that dative used with who designates those to whom the action refers. Who therefore means that the subject appears or shows himself. No emphasis at all is put on the fact that those designated by the following dative see or perceive. 75

Furthermore a study of the use of well in the Septuagint shows that it does not say anything about actual visibility, but merely indicates the presence of God in support of His revelation. 76 Michaelis believes that to see Jesus means to meet Him as the resurrected one and to stand in His revelatory presence. 77 Michaelis does not think that the reports of the resurrection appearances have any interest at all in the question of how the resurrected one is perceived. 78 The narratives do make plain, of course, that the appearances are not more visions, but the appearances still cannot be regarded as occurring in such a way that the

<sup>73</sup> Michaelis, Erscheinungen, pp. 108 and 148f.

<sup>74</sup> Barth, op. cit.

<sup>75</sup> Erscheinungen, p. 104.

<sup>76&</sup>lt;sub>Ibid., p. 108.</sub>

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup>Tbid., p. 120.

resurrected Lord is seen in the ordinary manner with no further ado. 79

The chief thought is that the appearances are revelatory events, encounters with the resurrected one, who reveals Himself. Will does not mean to become visible but to be revealed. 80 The whole emphasis is on the revelatory act of Jesus, not on the seeing of the disciples.

Rengstorf goes to the crux of the matter when he agrees with the statement of Michaelis that well designates revelation but insists that it means revealtion of a visible kind. Well means to become visible and must be understood as indicating perception with the eyes, and the word presupposes that what is perceived is accessible to visual perception. 81

and incontestable way and that the entry into the realm of the visible depends on the person or thing itself and not on the observer. Rengators surthermore takes who with eymyseral as numinous passives, veiled expressions concerning an act of God. He would therefore translate this way: "God has let Him become visible, or God has made Him accessible to human perception with the eyes." In other words, Acts 10:40, Edwker autor explain yereday is an ancient and correct interpretation of wells. God let Jesus step out of the invisibility into which He had passed after His resurrection and let Him enter time for the sake of those who had been chosen as the instruments of His will and the bearers of His gospel. 82

In support of this interpretation Rengstorf offers a number of

<sup>79&</sup>lt;sub>Tbid., p. 121.</sub>

<sup>80&</sup>lt;sub>TW</sub>, V, 360.

<sup>81</sup> Rengstorf, op. cit., pp. 94f.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. bl.

examples from the Septuagint and rabbinic literature. The mountains covered by water "appeared" ("Alucav) at the receding of the flood.

Jonathan and Ahimaaz could not let themselves be seen (office), lest they endanger their lives (2 Sam. 17:17). But the word is used time and again of the appearance of God or of His glory or of His angel. In all these cases the meaning is that something which was present but not perceived becomes visible. In each instance the thought is that of accessibility to the bodily eyes.

Mishnah. He discusses the rules for the sighting of the new moon in the tract, "Rosh ha-Shanah." This is a good case to select, because the Jews insisted on precise and exact observation established by the agreement of witnesses. The new moon becomes visible and is seen (nir'ah), and the witnesses report that they have seen it (ra'ah). The correspondence of nir'ah and ra'ah with well (1 Cor. 15:8) and Eventor (1 Cor. 9:1) is happily noted by Rengstorf. 84

John's use of Laviewin instead of Lan emphasizes the fact that the resurrected Jesus steps out of His invisibility when He appears. 85

Rengstorf correctly understands the appearances not as the cancellation of human history and not as that which merely makes possible a correct understanding of oneself in history. The appearances are the continuation and completion of the earthly-human history of Jesus from His birth to His burial. They are therefore themselves to be understood and

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp. 95f.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 96.

<sup>85</sup> Thid., p. 97.

as they are that, as genuine history (Historie). In this sense the appearances contain decisive kerygmatic meaning for the Easter proclamation. They testify that the hidden God did not step back into His hiddenness once more after the crucifixion but remains turned toward His creation as long as it lasts, that is, until the parousia. 86

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the first in a series of acts by which God is openly assuming His power and declaring His glory.

God has done a new thing in giving Jesus a body whose marks are imperishability, power, and glory, in giving Him a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42ff.).

The resurrection therefore means that the new acon has begun. Easter was the first day of the new creation. The resurrection is not merely a sign that God is pleased with His Son or that God will some day create the world anew in His Son. The resurrection is the intrusion into history of the new world of God. 87

Jesus, the first-born from the dead (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5), the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8:29), is another Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), the beginning and foundation of the new covenant people of God (Col. 1:18) and the beginning of the new creation of God (Rev. 3:14). The resurrected Jesus testifies of Himself, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last" (Rev. 21:6; cf. 1:8; 22:13).

F. C. Oetinger is responsible for the famous dictum, "The end of the

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>87</sup>william Manson, "Eschatology in the New Testament," Eschatology (London and Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1952), p. 6. See also Herman Sasse, "Wiw, " TW, I, 207.

ways of God is corporeality."<sup>88</sup> That corporeality is, of course, a transfigured and perfected bodiliness, but corporeality nonetheless. The resurrection is an act of God in which He begins to assert His Lordship and perfect His creation. And "there is no seisure of power which does not assume physical form," writes Karl Heim. <sup>89</sup> Just because Jesus' lordship achieved physical expression, the message of Faster was bound to appear as folly to the Greeks, however. They were bound by the Platonic view of the world, according to which the eternal ego of man and his ideas are distinguished from the current of changing phenomena as sharply as possible. The Greeks regard the fate of the physical empirical world as ultimately irrelevant. The message of Easter directly contradicts Greek metaphysics.

powers that presently shape it. His will shall materialize, opposition notwithstanding. In the resurrection God's will began to assert itself decisively and empirically against the powers which oppose His purposes. The resurrection of Christ is the beginning of a new and perfected physical life. The entire existing physical world is merely its shadowy preliminary stage. Those who saw the resurrected One really did see something tremendous and ineffable. The disciples had no language to describe what they had seen. But they were aware that they had been granted a glimpse into the new world of God, when they saw Him who holds in His hands the future of nature and the destiny of men. 90

<sup>88</sup> Quoted by Emil Brunner, Eternal Hope, translated by Harold Knight (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1954), p. 203.

<sup>89</sup> Karl Heim, Jesus the World's Perfector, translated by D. H. van Daalen (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1959), p. 167.

<sup>90</sup> mid., pp. 170f.

#### The Parousia

The Jesus who has come also will come. The same Jesus who was crucified and resurrected, who appeared to His chosen witnesses, "will appear (OPINGETAI) a second time" (Heb. 9:28). Jesus is "the first and the last and the living one" (Nev. 1:17f.; 21:6; 22:13). The past, present and future are linked, united and summed up in Jesus. Paul wrote to Titus, co-ordinating the past with the future coming of Jesus,

For the grace of God has appeared (ἐπεθάνιν) for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions. . awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing (ἐπιθάνειαν) of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:12-13; cf. 3:4).

The underlying figure in "revelation" (anokalunta) is that of removing a weil or covering (kaluma). Noun and verb are used of disclosing a confidence or betraying a secret (Josh. 2:20; Sirach 22:22; 27:16).

Jesus said, "Nothing is covered that will not be revealed," and continues with a parallel, "or hidden that will not be known" (keunta) of ou your for the continues.

6570(), Matt. 10:26).

Synonymous with anokaluntwis faction, as a comparison of passages shows (cf. Matt. 10:26; Luke 8:17; Mark 4:22; 1 Cor. 3:13). The mystery of Christ was not made known in Old Testament times, but has now been revealed (anokalula, Eph. 3:5); it was hidden and has now been made manifest

(Efarequela, col. 1,26).

Words formed from the root fow contain the idea of shining or giving light, on the one hand, and stepping into the light or becoming visible, on the other. What is \$\Pi\text{06}(V) \int \particle V \text{00}(V)\$ is public knowledge, plain and visible to all (Acts 4:16).

Now the Christian's life is hidden with Christ in God, but when Christ appears and reveals Himself (Arreful?), then Christians will also appear in glory (Col. 3:4). That day will be the time of His appearing and presence (EUI Pavers and TISCOUGH, 2 Thess. 2:8). In the Pastorals EUI Pavers is the regular word for Jesus' final revelation (1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1,8; Titus 2:13).

Parousia designates "the arrival of Christ in His messianic glory."91

Parousia is the classic expression for the future coming of the Lord in

His glory, that is, in the splendor of His unconcealed presence, "in the

true mode of His being, which is no longer subject to the law of contraria

species."92 In Hellenistic times the word was used technically of an

official visit of a ruler or other high official (cf. 3 Macc. 3:17).

Such arrivals were festive occasions, and were made impressive with pomp

and pageantry.

The word passed easily from the political to the religious realm.

It designated the coming of the god to heal or otherwise give aid as well as the presence or participation of the god at a sacrifice or among worshipers. The political and cultic uses "can approach each other closely

<sup>91</sup> Albrecht Oepke, "TOQUOGO," IW, V, 863.

<sup>92</sup> Brunner, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>93&</sup>lt;sub>Оерке, " по сооби, " ту, у, 857f.</sub>

in meaning, can shade off into one another, or even coincide."94

Jesus used the word of His advent in glory as the Judge of the world (Matt. 24:3,27,37,39). And the New Testament writers followed suit (1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 2:19; 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1,8; 1 Cor. 1:8, variant reading; 2 Peter 1:16; 3:4; 1 John 2:28; James 5:7f.). Unusual is the use in 2 Peter 3:12, which says that Christians wait for and hasten the parousia of the day of God. Christ is the epiphany of God, and the coming of Christ means the coming of God's day, the final revelation of God as King.

Jesus, crucified and resurrected, the invisible advocate and Lord, will one day step out of His present invisibility and reveal Himself.

While the present age runs its course, Jesus manifests Himself only to the believer (John 14:18ff.). But when this age runs out and Jesus comes with the clouds, "every eye will see Him" (O46761, Rev. 1:7). That is the terrible destiny of all those who pierced Him, and it will mean weeping and wailing (Rev. 1:7). But the faithful will not shrink from His coming (Heb. 10:39; 1 John 2:29). For them the parousia will mean the joy of rescue (Luke 21:28). There will be no mistaking or disregarding His return, not even by His enemies. "As the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming (not 2006/d) of the Son of man" (Matt. 24:27).

The turning of the acons has already occurred in His life and death and resurrection. Ocpke describes the parousia as "the ultimate revelation of the eschatological reality which has already been established." 95

<sup>94</sup>Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit.

<sup>950</sup>epke, "посочей," IV, V, 868.

The words used to describe the future advent of Christ make it unmistakably plain that what is expected is neither puzzle nor novelty, but the Christ who has already come and conquered. Faith already knows Him as Savior and Lord. On that day every eye will see what faith now knows without seeing.

Men have always boggled at the parousia as a delusion (2 Peter 3:4), or they have tried to interpret it as already fulfilled in a spiritual rather than a more literal manner. But the New Testament rings with the affirmation that He is coming surely and really. He comes "soon" (Rev. 3:11; 22:7,10,12,20), unexpectedly like a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2-3; Rev. 3:3; 2 Peter 3:10; Matt. 24:43; Luke 12:39). "Salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed" (Rom. 13:11). The time is near (Rev. 1:3). The parousia is an essential element of the kerygma and of New Testament faith.

Emil Brunner has written that faith is empty of meaning if it does not attain its goal in the fulness of revelation, "in the apocalypsis which is called Parousia, in the Parousia which is called apocalypsis."

He calls faith in Jesus Christ without the expectation of His Parousia

"a voucher that is never redeemed, a promise that is not seriously meant."

If Jesus were not to return visibly, and if He were content to limit Himself to the "spiritual" work of His followers, then He would have surrendered God's creation and "ceded the realm of visible manifestation to the power of destruction directed against God."

<sup>96</sup>Brunner, op. cit., p. 138.

<sup>97&</sup>lt;sub>Heim, op. cit., p. 185.</sub>

# The Final Epiphany of God

The events of the end cannot be described directly and literally.

Human beings have no empiric experience of the end. Eschatology deals with the absolute future and not with the ordinary future, which is susceptible of description by way of analogy with the past and present.

The church does not yet see face to face but only partially and mediately.

Both human sin and the nature of the end render the consummation incapable of literal description in ordinary language.

No history of the end can yet be written. The last things beginning with the parousia will not be a direct and easy continuation of the present world order and its history. The end will not arise in the distant future as the result of a gradual maturation and evolutionary process within the present system of things. Nor will the end present itself as the complete reverse of the entire historical process and of creation. There will be both continuity and discontinuity.

While the documents of the Old Testament and New Testament are remarkably reserved and never claim to offer literal, photographic descriptions of the life of the world to come, they do give hints, and they do describe that life and that world indirectly. Furthermore the resurrected Lord appeared to His first disciples, confirming His prior deeds and words, and interpreting the future. The kingship of God, promised already in the Old Testament, has been inaugurated through the incarnate life of Jesus and openly displayed in the resurrection appearances, even though it will be consummated and realized in all its splendor only at the parousia. An examination and explication of the parousia and its ramifications reveal something of the content of the kingdom. Concerning the

doctrine of the last things in general Heinrich Ott has set down the basic methodological dictum that eschatology is nothing but the theological unfolding of the theophany of the resurrected Lord. He believes that everything which is to be said in the locus on eschatology concerning the final advent, the advent of God, is to be deduced from Jesus' theophany. 98 This paper accepts the axiom.

Jesus' advent is described in the traditional pictures long associated with theophanies. Note Luke's account of the ascension:

He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11).

This brief passage, abounding in nouns and verbs of sight (BLEHOVTW, BODAMWY, RTEVIZONTES, 1800, BLEHOVTES, EVERGEDE), expresses with the whole New Testament the firm conviction that the parousia means the advent of God's power and glory as palpable and empirical realities.

As Jesus ascended into the cloud, so will He come "with clouds," standing features of Old Testament epiphanies. Clouds are often mentioned in connection with Jesus' advent (Rev. 1:7; cf. Dan. 7:13; 1 Thess. 4:17). He Himself spoke threateningly of the Son of man who would come with the clouds of heaven (Mark 14:62; Matt. 26:64), and that means "with power and great glory" (Luke 21:27; Matt. 24:30; Mark 13:26). The Seer of Patmos beheld the Son of man enthroned on a white cloud, ready to come and judge (Rev. 14:14,16; cf. Acts 7:56). In the New Testament clouds are both the veil and revelation of the Father of Jesus Christ, who is

<sup>98</sup> Heinrich Ott, Eschatologie: Versuch eines dogmatisches Grundrisses (Zollikon: Evangelischer Verlag, 1958), p. 25.

offering Himself for fellowship and working to bring that fellowship victoriously to consummation.99

The final revelation of God brings about the final revelation of sin and its definitive judgment. The victory of God's ways therefore includes the complete and utter defeat of all His opponents. All the enemies of God will be destroyed (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

In the Great Assize the Son of man will sit as Judge (Matt. 25:3146; John 5:27). When the Son of man comes in glory, He will repay every
man for what he has done (Matt. 16:27). He will settle accounts with all
who have ever lived (Rev. 20:13; John 5:25-29). "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," said St. Paul (2 Cor. 5:10). Nothing
can be hidden from Him whose eyes are "like a flame of fire" (Rev. 1:14).
He is the searcher of mind and heart, who gives to each what he deserves
(Rev. 2:32), impartially and justly (1 Peter 1:17; 2:23).

The movement which began with Jesus' mighty works, the casting out of demons, the healing of the lame, the halt and the blind, victories over death, and the forgiving of sin, will reach a crashing climax in the final judgment. Then God will speak His eschatological "No" to all that is sinful and demonically opposed to His purposes. The negation of all imperfection is expressed symbolically in the passage, "And the sea was no more" (Rev. 21:1). Helmut Traub says, "There is no 'new' sea as there was no 'first' sea, only 'the' sea, which, as designation and dwelling place of the powers hostile to God (Dan. 7:3; Rev. 13:1), has no place in the eschatological consummation." Tears and sorrow, pain and death,

<sup>990</sup>epke, "veftin," IW, IV, 912.

<sup>100</sup> Helmut Traub, " ove avos, " Tw, V, 515.

and everything sinful and unclean will be done away (Rev. 21:4,8; 1 Cor. 15:24ff.). The entire old order of things will be dissolved (Rev. 21:4; 21:1; 2 Peter 3:7,10ff.). Earth and sky will flee away, and no place will be found for them (Rev. 20:11).

But all the statements of Scripture on the passing away of heaven and earth, marked by corruption (2 Peter 1:4) and lust (1 John 2:17), merely form the negative backdrop for the positive proclamation of that which is coming. Out of the ashes of this world a new world is born (Matt. 19:28). In the consummation of the aeon (Matt. 13:49), when the judgment is complete, God will create a new heaven and a new earth (Rev. 21:1; 2 Peter 3:13; Is. 65:17; 66:22). A new heaven and a new earth are the older terms for the xiwv peldwv, the future world of eschatological expectation. On the new heaven and the new earth designate the coming aeon, the new creation, the kingdom of God.

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<sup>101</sup> Herman Sasse, "Koopes," TV, III, 893.

<sup>102</sup> ott, op. cit., p. 33.

In the coming acon the beatitudes of the Lord will be present fact instead of future promise. Then the pure in heart (1 John 3:3f.; Ps. 2h:4; 51:12; 73:1; Heb. 12:14) "will see God" (Tov Jeov o portal, Matt. 5:8). For the impure to see Him will mean terror and judgment (Rev. 1:7; 20:11).

The New Testament, of course, says that God has not been seen (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12,20) and that He is indeed invisible (doedtos, 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27). And yet the New Testament says that men will see God. Now they believe and trust and hope. Or else they eat and drink and make merry, thinking nothing but death lies ahead (1 Cor. 15:32). But the time is coming when faith and hope will give way to sight (1 Cor. 13: 12; 2 Cor. 5:7). And that sight (BLETEN) will not be partial, reflected or distorted but magnificently intimate, "face to face," immediate. No more will the Christian see only an imperfect reflection of the heavenly splendors. He will see directly and with no intervening mirror. Paul contrasts the object itself and the sight of a reflection of it. 103 E. Fascher says the mediating mirror which the redeemed will no longer need is Jesus, the tikwv, the mediator through whom God has created and rede-med. When the Son subordinates Himself to the Father and God becomes all in all (1 Cor. 15:28), then the Deus invisibilis becomes the Deus visibilis. God is no longer doedtos. 10h E. Stauffer says all faith is living in hope, waiting for an ultimate future in which temptation disappears. To

<sup>103</sup>Frederick W. Danker, "The Mirror Metaphor in 1 Cor. 13:12 and 2 Cor. 3:18," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXI (1960), 428f.

<sup>104</sup> Erich Fascher, "Deus Invisibilis," Marburger Theologische Studien, herausgegeben von Heinrich Frick (Gotha: Leopold Klotz Verlag, 1931), pp. 76f.

have faith is to bow the head before the hidden glory of God (2 Thess. 1:4-8; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:6; Col. 1:15; John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46). But to see is to lift up one's eyes to behold the Lord as He manifests Himself and appears in glory among His saints (2 Thess. 1:10; cf. Luke 21:27f.).

Already in this aeon the Christian is God's adopted child and therefore God's heir. What he now possesses is not the fulness of his inheritance (Phil. 1:23; Rom. 8:23). That cannot yet be given him, as long as the present scheme of things persists and endures. As for the future, however, "It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears ( $\int dv \ell \ell \omega \sqrt{\hat{\gamma}}$ ), we shall be like Him, for we shall see ( $\partial \psi \dot{\alpha} - \mu d \dot{\alpha}$ ) Him as He is" (1 John 3:2; Col. 3:4; Matt. 5:8f.; cf. 2 Cor. 3:8). "As He is" underlines the immediacy and boundlessness of this seeing. 106 And so it will be that men see not only the returning Jesus but also the heavenly Father (Matt. 5:8; Heb. 12:14; 1 John 3:2; Rev. 22:4; cf. Matt. 18:10).

# The Eschatological Vision

What does the "seeing" of God mean? At least a half dozen different interpretations have been offerred. There is some truth in each of them, but perhaps no one of them tells the whole truth.

Karl Heim proposes an intellectual and esthetic view. He believes the consummation will consist of the deliverance of creation from the bondage of decay. The demoniacal devastation and ugly deformation of

<sup>105</sup> Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology, translated by John Marsh (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955), p. 171.

<sup>106</sup> Michaelis, TW, V, 367.

creation caused by sin and pain will cease. Greation will appear in pure beauty. God will lift the veil and let Himself become visible. He Himself will be the sun in which creation shines in overwhelming splendor. 107

Heim's language is Biblical. Indeed it is really a paraphrase of the New Testament witness. He goes on to interpret it. He says that in the present human condition spiritual impotence has erected an insuperable barrier in the way of scrutinizing human eyes and human understanding. But in the eschaton spiritual weakness will be done away, and the ultimate depths of life will be open to the eyes of the saved.

tacked by Baudissin long before Heim proposed it. Baudissin declares that "we are by no means dealing with an esthetic perception." Nor does it mean an intellectual attainment of special knowledge. 108 Von Bobschütz echoes Baudissin and says the Sora is not an esthetic experience of transcendent beauty. Sora always conceived as an expression of majesty and as a tremendum (Heb. 12:29). Von Bobschütz refers to the fact that verbs of seeing are used of visiting between friends (Rom. 1:11) and declares that the thought of fellowship, of communion, is fundamental to the notion of seeing God. 109 To see God "designates approach to God unhindered by any limits and the fulfillment of all spiritual longing and yearning. 110

<sup>107</sup>Heim, op. cit., p. 196.

<sup>108&</sup>lt;sub>W. W.</sub> Grafen Baudissin, "'Gott schauen' in der alttestamentlichen Religion," Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, XVIII (1915), 174.

<sup>109</sup> Debschütz, op. cit., p. 405.

<sup>110</sup> Baudissin, op. cit., p. 174.

Seeing God means having a gracious God and being with God. Nötscher, Baudissin, and von Dobschütz are in full agreement on that score. And Nötscher adds that "life, seeing God, and future beatitude are in the New Testament by and large synonymous expressions."

Emil Brunner gives the phrase an existentialist thrust. Also for him the vision of God is communion and fellowship. It means perfect life in the eternal plenitude of God's timeless present. It does not mean a mystical submerging of oneself in God, but life in loving communion and encounter with God. Everything which stands in the way of that communion will be set aside. Nothing will separate the Greator from the creature.

The vision of God is often and wisely interpreted as unhindered and immediate confrontation of and communion with God. 113 And such communion and fellowship are certainly a large part of the Biblical hope. But do the Scriptures mean nothing more when they speak of the vision of God? Is the phrase really synonymous with sonship, living in the Father's house, eating at the Father's table? The expressions do not seem to be synonyms. And yet the interpretation has this in its favor, that the whole context of the face to face seeing of 1 Corinthians 13:12 is the Pauline hymn on the superiority of love over faith and hope. Love is to faith and hope, as future sight is to present perception. The vision of

<sup>111</sup> Friedrich Mötscher, "Das Angesicht Gottes schauen" nach biblischer und babylonischer Auffassung (Würzburg: C. J. Becker, 1924), p. 175.

<sup>112</sup> Brunner, op. cit., pp. 204-207.

Allmen, translated by P. J. Allcock et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 391. See also Heim, op. cit., p. 199.

God certainly means no less than fellowship with God, the fellowship of perfect love. 11h

Another distinct possibility is that the vision of God means participation in God's victory over the enemies of the righteous and sharing in the fruits of that conquest. In many passages in the Old Testament seeing God could easily mean having God as one's vindicator. The Psalms spoke of seeing God in the sense of seeing God's justice triumph; it meant to see evil and sinfulness receive their comeuppance. In some of the Psalms and in parts of the book of Job seeing God means having God answer one's fervent prayer and experiencing in one's life the grace and favor of God (Ps. h.6; 22:2h; 27:7-8; 69:3; 80:2-3; Job h2:5). And it is certain that God's hiding of His face is an expression of His anger and displeasure, on the other hand.

Related to this view but going beyond it is the interpretation of Budolf Bultmann. For him seeing God means the certainty of God's grace. Because Jesus Christ is the Christian's righteousness and sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30), He is also the one who makes approach and access to God possible (Rom. 5:1f.; 1 Cor. 8:8; 2 Cor. 4:1h; Col. 1:22; Eph. 2:18; 3: 12; 1 Peter 3:18; Hab. 6:18-20; 7:25; 10:19-22). And the Christian must thank Christ for the gift of boldness and confidence (Tolognama) before God (Eph. 3:12; Heb. 4:16; 10:19). Jesus is the concrete deed of God's grace. When He says to Philip, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father," He declares that God is nowhere to be seen except in the revelation of His love in Christ. To grasp that revelation means to see God.

<sup>11</sup>hott, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>115</sup> Bultmann, "Dier oubeig éweaker nu note, " op. cit., p. 185.

Julius Schniewind largely adopted Bultmann's interpretation. That one can see God means that one can look the world's Judge in the eye and not be ashamed (1 John 2:28; Matt. 25:41ff.; of. Job 19:27; Ps. 17:15; 11:7). Schniewind differs from Bultmann, of course, in that he declares that the beatitude on seeing God, as all the others, refers not the present condition of the believer but to the future judgment by God in God's future world.

The orthodoxy of the Reformed Church made glorificatio Del the end and goal of salvation history and the rubric under which all other symbols of the life of the end were categorised, analyzed, and interpreted. The notion that seeing God means worshiping God is certainly supported by the Scriptures. Ethelbert Stauffer, for example, reads history as a constant conflict between the gloria Del and the gloria mendi. Christ and the church give God the glory, but their devology takes place in a world with no room for the fulness of God's glory. Therefore the coming of Christ and the life of the church point beyond themselves to another world, where the dexophany will come at last into unlimited display. God will unveil His face and pour out the fulness of His glory over heaven and earth. Then at last every creature will prostrate itself before His glory and exalt His name. 11.7 Stauffer gathers together many of the varied Biblical strands concerning the consummated worship in the new acon and weaves them together into an impressive liturgical tapestry.

For corroboration of his view of the vision as glorification of God Stauffer could appeal to the Psalms (Ps. 27:4; 25; 63:2) and to the

<sup>116&</sup>lt;sub>NTD</sub> II, 47.

<sup>117</sup>Stauffer, op. cit., pp. 229ff.

Judaistic equation of seeing God with being in the temple or the synagogue. And then, on the other hand, some interpreters believe that adoration and cultic worship are legitimate symbols of the consummation in the kingdom, but they believe that the vision of God has other than developical content. 118

Is it possible to add anything to these various interpretations or to subtract anything from them? In the first place it is not possible on the basis of the available evidence to single out any one of them as the only possible or correct solution. That much is certain. All of the attempted explications have some truth to them and can be supported by a line of Biblical thought, and none can honestly be sloughed off as expendable or inconsequential.

But in the second place something further might be said on the basis of the origin of the notion of the eschatological vision of God.

Michaelis attributes the notion of seeing God directly and solely to Jesus. He believes that Jesus created the idea. He did not find it in the Old Testement, and it has nothing in common with Hellenistic visions and mystical seeing. However, this paper has shown that the Old Testement does talk about seeing God and more frequently about seeing God's face or God's glory. With His usual directness and simplicity Jesus cut through the mass of Judaistic eschatological speculation and pious excess verbiage. As He taught His disciples to pray simply, "Our Father," He also says that "the pure in heart will see God."

What would be the connetations of seeing God for an audience raised from childhood on the Old Testament? It is possible on the basis of the

<sup>118</sup> Brunner, op. cit., p. 207.

Old Testament section of this paper to draw some conclusions.

The form of Old Testament hope in the future was shaped primarily by the Enedus. The seeds of Israel's eschatology have been discovered in the experiences at the Red Sea and Sinai. 119 Israel may have borrowed much in the way of language and form from her pagan neighbors. But she certainly did not borrow her eschatology itself from other religions. 120 Furthermore it has been shown that Israel's covenant faith, deriving from the Execus events, was celebrated in the temple cult. 121

The hope in a great theophany at the end of history had its source in the Exodus experience of Israel and was transmitted and refined by means of the cult. From the Old Testement point of view, the past theophany at Sinai was in the present celebrated in the temple and shaped and determined the form of hope in the future. The correctness of this view is supported by a word put into Jeremish's mouth by Judaism of the second century B. G. Jeremiah is supposed to have said concerning the whereabouts of the ark and the tent,

The place shall be unknown until God gathers His people together again and shows His mercy. And then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated (2 Macc. 2:7-8).

The fact that the eschatological vision of God is bound up with the Exedus and the Sinai covenant, that it inspired psalmists and prophets, lived on into Judaism and was given new life by our Lord and His apostles

<sup>119</sup> See Paul Volz, Die Eschatologie der jädischen Gemeinde im neutestamentlichen Zeitalter (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1934), p. 359.

<sup>120</sup> John Bright, The History of Israel (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), p. 136.

<sup>121</sup>G. W. Anderson, "Hebrew Religion," The Old Testament and Modern Study, edited by H. H. Rowley (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), pp. 292f.

is sufficient evidence of its power and importance. The historical framework and quasi-chronological approach of this paper have enabled it to show that visions, epiphanies and theophanies are present or hoped for in every stage and age of Biblical history. They are especially prominent at great turning points in the history of salvation. And it has been shown that these phenomena cannot therefore be relegated to the sidelines but are essential to a full understanding of the richness of Biblical history and hope.

The Old Testament held that the eschatological vision would take place on the Day of Yahweh, that it would in fact constitute the Day of the Lord. Descriptions of the Day of the Lord in the Old Testament are shifting and kaleidoscopic, but in spite of the variety of conceptions and the fluidity of expression some such summary as the following is certainly justified: 122

- On that day Yahweh will reveal His purposes in history. Wondering and waiting are displaced by knowing.
- 2. It is the Day on which Yahmeh will decisively act and reveal Himself as Lord of all, as the God of effective action.
- 3. That Day is not the cancellation of history but history's fulfillment.
- 4. The Day of ahweh will usher in a new aeon in which God's justice, peace and prosperity will be fully apparent.

Psalmist and prophet commonly held that that day will dawn with the shining forth of the glory of God for every eye to see. And when the glory of the Lord appears in perpetual theophany God will make a new and eternal covenant with His people (Jer. 31:31ff.; Ezek. 34:25; 37:26-28;

<sup>122</sup>H. Wheeler Robinson, Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 144f.

Is. 61:8). He will subdue all His enemies (Zech. 14; Ezek. 38-39), rejuvenate the earth (Is. 65-66), and pour out charismatic gifts upon all flesh (Joel 2).

In the temple the theophany was the center of the cult and the ever renswed guarantee and sign of God's favor. To live perpetually in the light of God's glory is to bask in His grace forever, and to worship Him willingly and freely. The vision of God always has about it the air of a festival celebration. 123

The gift of sight is greater than that of hearing, in that it implies a more intimate relationship (Num. 12:8; Deut. 34:10). Men will no longer have to be told, "Know the Lord" (Jer. 31:34). Communion between men and God will lack nothing but will be perfect and whole. Men will see God and not die, for their sins will be remembered no longer (Jer. 31:34). They will not only see God after He has acted in His deeds, but they shall behold Him immediately in His acting and hear Him as He speaks. God's rule will be unmistakably plain to every eye and ear, and no one will dream of challenging Him.

The earthly coming and appearance of Jesus result in a whole series of significant dreams, visions, and angelophanies. Jesus Himself is revealed to the disciples after Easter as the Consummator of the world.

Various features of theophanies appear in connection with Jesus, in whom God's glory is manifested. He is the glory of God by which a new Exodus and a new covenant are accomplished.

It is not as though a single additional element had accrued to the future hope of God's people by the resurrection of Jesus and the promise

<sup>123</sup> Baudissin, op. cit., p. 238.

of His parousia. Henceforth that hope received a new heart and controlling center. Jesus Himself is the eschatos; for He is the theophany of God.

His parousia will mean the full and unlimited display of God's glory (doxophany) and the immediate presence of God (theophany). When God's glory shines forth and He Himself comes and is present perpetually with His people, then all the promises of God will be fulfilled without let or hindrance.

Seeing God is one element in the eschatological hope of the Bible. The theophany as the dawning of a new creation is the introduction into the full possession of the inheritance of the sons of God. The vision will not be for a day as at Sinai, nor will it be intermittent and then interrupted as after the resurrection, but it will continue without opposition or surcease.

Glory does not mean only cultic glorification. It means much more. It means that God will step out of His hiddenness and act to rescue His people. With uplifted arm He will lead them forth from their enemies, whom He will utterly destroy. All outer and all inner hindrances to the life of sonship will be done away, so that God's people, His son or His bride, will be forever faithful. The prototype for the eschatological vision is the majestic theophany at Mount Sinai at the beginning of Israel's history.

When all sin has been cast into the sea and God appears in His glory, the redeemed will stand before Him justified by His grace. They will know the Lord, live in free and willing communion with Him and one another in a new and eternal covenant, and confess that to Him belong dominion and power and glory, world without end.

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