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### The Groaning Creation- An Exegetical Study of Romans 8:18-22

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**THE GROANING CREATION**  
**AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF ROMANS 8:18-22**

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**A Thesis Presented to**  
**The Faculty of Concordia Seminary**  
**Department of New Testament Theology**

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**In Partial Fulfillment**  
**of the Requirements for the Degree**  
**Bachelor of Divinity**

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by  
**Walter James Bartling**  
**May 1948**

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## INTRODUCTION

Though the title of our paper reads "The Groaning Creation", the purpose of our discussion will be, not so much to describe the nature of creation's groaning, but to ascertain the causes of the groaning (terminus a quo) with the special purpose of predicting and defining its end (terminus ad quem) on the basis of Rom. 8:18-22. It will be the story of sin and grace, death and life, damnation and redemption, paradise lost and paradise regained as this is reflected in the physical universe. Our chief interest, however, will be eschatological. How has God's saving activity affected nature? What end awaits her? Is she to share in the final redemption of God's people? But before we proceed, it might be of some value briefly to orientate ourselves in the general field of eschatology.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of preserving the eschatological outlook in any approach to the New Testament. The books of the New Testament were written by men who had such an outlook; they were originally read by men who had the same outlook; and I venture to say without much fear of contradiction, that they can be appreciated fully today only by men who, among other things, have recaptured that outlook. Gerhardus Vos, who has made a special study of Pauline eschatology, states quite dogmatically that eschatology "no longer forms one item in the sum-total of revealed teaching, but draws within its cir-



cle all of the fundamental tenets of Pauline eschatology."<sup>1</sup> Again

Vos says,

Not only the Christology but also the Soteriology of the Apostle's teaching is so clearly interwoven with the Eschatology, that, were the question put, which of the strands is more central, which more peripheral, the eschatology would have as good a claim to the central place as the others. In reality, however, there is no alternative here; there is a backward and forward movement in the order of thought in both directions.<sup>2</sup>

Vos' bringing together of the teachings of christology and soteriology with eschatology is significant. If it is true (and it is) that the chief teachings of the Christian religion are never more than one short step from Christ and the foot of His cross, then eschatology deserves something like preeminent rank among the teachings of Christianity. For in Christ and the cross we "recognize the eschatological process as in principle already begun,"<sup>3</sup> so intimately is it bound up with Christ and His work. Eschatology has to do with the end of all things, but "end", not so much in the sense of termination as of summation and perfection.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Vos, Gerhardus, "The Structure of the Pauline Eschatology", The Princeton Theological Review, vol. XXVII, no. 3, p. 413. Cf. Storr, Vernon F., Christianity and Immortality, p. 137: "No one can study the Epistles without seeing how the expectation of a speedy coming of Christ to establish the kingdom held an important place in the theology of Paul and the other Apostles."

2. Op. cit., p. 431.

3. Op. cit., p. 422.

4. Thus we cannot speak of "last things" in an absolute sense. The last things are in one way the first things. So Barth: "Last things, as such, are not last things, however great and significant they may be. He only speaks of last things who would speak of the end of all things, of their end understood plainly and fundamentally... The last word that is spoken here must be so understood that it can at the same time be understood as the first word, and, as such, the history of the beginning... Whoever clearly grasps this is removed from the temptation... to confuse eternity with a great annihilation," The Resurrection of the Dead, p. 104 ff., passim.



In the person of Christ this perfection has already been realized and in consequence of His soteriological work has been realized also in His followers. There remains only the final dramatic revelation and unveiling of God's already realized purposes at the Parousia.<sup>5</sup>

Although this is true, the Christian still feels himself a stranger in this world. There are the constant tensions between the old world and the new, the old self and the new. The Christian is perfect, but is still striving for perfection. He is renewed, but is still struggling against sin dwelling in the flesh. He is united with God, yet at the same time desires to depart and to be with Christ. The discrepancy between that which is and that which is yet to be revealed becomes most acute in the face of sufferings and persecutions. It is, therefore, especially the suffering Christian who achieves the eschatological outlook and takes comfort in the eschatological hope.<sup>6</sup> He looks forward to the day when everything that exists only "in part" will become whole and complete, perfect in fact as it already is in principle.

A question that naturally arises in the believer's mind when he reflects on the consummation of all things is, What will become of the physical universe? He has a very real concern for his old acquaint-

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5. Vos, op. cit., p. 438 ff., describes the Christian view of eschatology as a "semi-eschatological" view. In the Old Testament the antithesis is between "a world that is and a world that is to come. The point of view is dramatic, the new being the outcome and termination of the forces of supernatural history propelling towards it in the old. The ancient point of view, while quite in keeping with the Old Testament perspective to which the arrival of the Messiah still lay in the future, ceased to be in harmony with a state of fact and belief looking back upon the arrival of the Messiah." Nevertheless, the old scheme of successiveness was not discarded because "the Messianic appearance again had unfolded itself in two successive epochs, so that, even after the first appearance, and after making full allowance for its stupendous effects, the second epoch had, after the manner of cell-separation, begun to form a new complex of hope moving forward into the future."

6. Many of the most sublime eschatological passages are found in



tance, the source of so much of his suffering, and, as the good creation of God, the occasion for so many of his joys. The world - what will become of it? It clearly belongs to those things which as yet exist only in part, imperfect and incomplete. Will it one day become whole, perfect and complete? To some the question might appear to be foolish. And the answer would be as foolish as the question had not Paul given us a clue as to which direction our answer should take. What of this world? If you are not among those who consider the question foolish, you may wish to accompany us on our little excursion.

You must have tasted, however briefly, the pure water from beyond the world before you can become distinctly conscious of the hot, salty tang of Nature's current... She is herself. Offer her neither worship nor contempt. Meet her and know her. If we are immortal, and if she is doomed (as the scientists tell us) to run down and die, we shall miss this half-shy and half-flamboyant creature, this ogress, this hoyden, this incorrigible fairy, this dumb witch. But the theologians tell us that she, like ourselves, is to be redeemed. The 'vanity' to which she was subjected was her disease, not her essence. She will be cured, but cured in character: not tamed (Heaven forbid) nor sterilized. We shall still be able to recognize our old enemy, friend, playfellow and foster-mother, so perfected as to be not less, but more, herself. And that will be a merry meeting.

- Lewis

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the context of suffering. So also the passage that we are considering. Cf. especially 2 Cor. 4 and the whole of Revelation.

7. Lewis, C. S., Miracles, p. 81.



## CHAPTER I

### The Context (v. 18)

λογίζομαι ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι τι παρὰ τὸν νῦν καιρὸν περὶ  
τὴν κέλευσιν δόξης ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς.

I calculate that the sufferings of our present condition are infinitesimal compared with the glory that shall one day be ours. - Wand<sup>1</sup>

Luther prefaces his sermon on our passage with a word of caution, supplemented with a warning:

Der heilige Paulus Führet hier eine sonderliche Rede vor allen andern Aposteln, und lauten seine Worte, so zum ersten hergehen, gleich wunderlich und seltsam; darum wollen sie mit Fleisz gestudiert, und mit eigener Erfahrung erkennet werden: denn ein christlich Leben ganz und gar in Uebung und Erfahrung derer Dinge stehet, die man taeglich aus Gottes Wort hoeret und lieset. Darum, wer solche Erfahrung nicht hat, wird gar einen geringen Geschmack oder Geruch aus solchen Worten St. Pauli haben, ja sie werden ihn gar undeutsch sein.<sup>2</sup>

As a footnote to this statement we might add a remark by Nebe: "Es ist ein hoher Text, eine tiefe Rede, ein wunderbares Stueck neutestamentlicher Weissagung, Glossalalie und Auslegung der Zungen."<sup>3</sup> If caution is always a requisite of honest interpretation, it is all the more a desideratum when the text under consideration seems to sing a

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1. Wand, J. W. C., The New Testament Letters Prefaced and Paraphrased, p. 87.

2. Luther, Dr. Martin, Saemtliche Werke, neunter Band, p. 95 f. There are two published sermons of Luther on our text, both appearing in the ninth volume of the Erlangen edition.

3. Nebe, A., Die Epistolischen Perikopen des Kirchenjahres, dritter Band, p. 68.



strange, new song and strikes unexpected overtones, as is the case with the passage we are considering. A somewhat careful study of the context is, therefore, demanded and it should obviate some of the difficulties in the interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

At 8:12 Paul reaches a transitional point in his exposition. In the first half of the chapter (vs. 1-11) he advances arguments to justify the statements contained in the last two verses of chapter seven. There he expresses the heavy paradox that the same Christian, who, when looking at himself outside his relation to Christ, must exclaim  $\tau\alpha\lambda\alpha\iota\tau\omega\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$   $\xi\chi\omega\ \delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\omega\pi\omicron\varsigma$  (7:24), has at the same time the right to give thanks to God through Jesus Christ (7:25). The truth of the assertion (7:25) is assured by the indwelling Spirit of Christ, who has already brought with Him essential freedom from the law of sin and of death and who holds forward the hope of an eventually complete freedom also for the mortal body. In view of this vital relationship between the believer and the Spirit and with special reference to its bearing on the future state of the body (8:11), Paul draws the hortatory conclusion in 8:12 that the man who has come into this relationship should no longer live according to his sinful flesh ( $\kappa\alpha\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \epsilon\acute{\alpha}\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha$  ).

The necessary connection between the hope of bodily transformation and the duty to exercise holiness in living is carefully indicated by Zahn:

Ihre Richtigkeit (i. e. solche Folgerung der Pflicht der Heiligung aus der nicht dadurch zu gewinnenden, sondern durch die

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4. Zahn, Th., "Die seufzende Creatur", Jahrbuch fuer Deutsche Theologie, 1865, p. 512 ff. In the following paragraphs on the general context I am largely following Zahn.



Wiedergeburt gewissen zukuenftigen Herrlichkeit) leuchtet nur dann ein, suendiges Leben des Christen erscheint nur dann als ein Widerspruch in sich selbst, wenn einerseits anerkannt wird, dass alles Leben κατὰ ἐσθλα den Tod zur Folge hat, und andererseits die zukuenftige Herrlichkeit nicht als ein Accidens, als ein mit dem Leben κατὰ πνεῦμα willkuerlich verbundener Lohn erscheint, sondern als die im Christenleben selbst begruendete Vollendung desselben, als seine reife Frucht, als das Ziel, zu welchem es naturnothwendig fuehrt.<sup>5</sup>

Both arguments; namely, that the life κατὰ ἐσθλα ends in death and that the coming glory is intimately bound up with the life κατὰ πνεῦμα in the here and now, are stated by Paul in verses 13-17a. Since all who by the Spirit have put to death the works of the flesh are alive (v. 13), and since they are the children of God (vs. 14-16) and fellow heirs with Christ (v. 17b) by virtue of the Spirit, any wilful return to the life κατὰ ἐσθλα is a repudiation of the new life and involves the relinquishing of all claims upon the inheritance and the promised bodily transformation.<sup>6</sup>

Now, however, instead of reiterating the thought of verse 12, which has thus been affirmed, and using it as a transition to a larger hortatory section, as he does in chapter 12:1, Paul is arrested in his progress of thought by the reference to "heirship with Christ" ( εὐκλειστὸν υἱοῦ Χριστοῦ ). The idea of "heirship with Christ" leads Paul to the cognate idea of "suffering with Christ" ( συμπαθεῖν ). He who would be an heir with Christ may expect to suffer with Christ. As Meyer observes, this is "an actual share in the suffering endured by Christ."<sup>7</sup>

5. Opc cit., p. 513.

6. Cf. v. 23 where υἱοθεσία and ἀποδοτικότητα τῆς ἐσθλας are synonymous.

7. Meyer, Heinrich August Wilhelm, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistle to the Romans, p. 317.



Expatriating on this same thought, Luther has the following:

Wenn er sagt: "So wir anders mitleiden," ist seine Meinung, dass wir nicht allein mit andern ein Mitleiden haben sollen...; sondern wir sollen selbst auch leiden, non solum affectu, sed etiam effectu, das ist, dass wir auch mit in gleichen Leiden stecken, dass, wie unser Herr Christus verfolgt ist worden, wir auch also verfolgt werden, und wie der Teufel ihn gepeinigt und geplaget hat, wir auch also von ihm Tag und Nacht gepeinigt und geplaget werden.<sup>8</sup>

But the "suffering with Christ" is only the middle term between the  $\epsilon\upsilon\kappa\lambda\eta\epsilon\omicron\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\omicron\iota \chi\epsilon\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon$  and its correlative,  $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\acute{\omicron}\zeta\alpha\epsilon\upsilon\theta\alpha\iota$ . By being drawn into relationship with the "suffering with Christ" the  $\kappa\lambda\eta\epsilon\omicron\nu\acute{\omicron}\mu\iota\alpha$ , which necessarily follows from the  $\nu\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\delta\epsilon\omicron\iota\alpha$  (v. 15f.) is only made more certain.<sup>9</sup>

These brief notices on this important and difficult verse will have to suffice as we hasten over to verse 18 and the immediate context of our passage.

How is verse 18 bound up with the foregoing? What is the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  to confirm? Because of the root relationships between  $\pi\alpha\theta\acute{\omicron}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  and  $\delta\acute{\omicron}\zeta\alpha$  in verse 18 and  $\epsilon\upsilon\mu\pi\acute{\omicron}\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\nu$  and  $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\acute{\omicron}\zeta\alpha\epsilon\upsilon\theta\alpha\iota$  in verse 17 it would seem at first glance that Philippi is correct when he states that verse 18 "introduces the reasons which should encourage  $\epsilon\upsilon\mu\pi\acute{\omicron}\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\nu$   $\zeta\upsilon\alpha$  και  $\epsilon\upsilon\delta\acute{\omicron}\zeta\alpha\epsilon\upsilon\theta\acute{\omega}\mu\epsilon\nu$ ," and that the  $\gamma\acute{\alpha}\rho$  "specifies the reasons why the  $\epsilon\upsilon\mu\pi\acute{\omicron}\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\nu$  should not discourage us."<sup>10</sup> Upon closer examination,

8. Luther, op. cit., p. 97.

9. Zahn's remarks on this passage deserve special note: "Es wird in diesen Absichten nicht als Zweck des Leidens bezeichnet, was in Wirklichkeit nothwendige Folge desselben ist... Der Apostel beruft sich auf das notorische Leiden der Christen als ein Mitleiden mit Christo, durch welches sie Gott, was seinen Lesern ebenfalls bewusst ist, zur Herrlichkeit fuhren will, um dadurch seine Aussage ueber das Miterben mit Christo, vollends ueber allen Zweifel zu erheben," op. cit., p. 515 f.

10. Philippi, Friedrich Adolph, Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, vol. II, p. 2.



however, this connection seems somewhat forced. Paul's heroic statement that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" introduces a completely new thought and comes as final confirmation for the entire preceding argument, especially vs. 13-17. Once again we fall back upon the redoubtable Zahn:

Der Apostel begründet seine Hinweisung auf die Christen Hoffnung als Motiv zu heiligem Leben durch die im Vergleich zu den Leiden, welche ein solches Leben in der Jetztzeit eintraegt, ueberschwaengliche Groesze der zukuenftigen Herrlichkeit.<sup>11</sup>

Briefly, then, rehearsing Paul's argument in line with this interpretation: Do not live in conformity with the flesh, but with the Spirit's aid stifle the sinful leadings of the flesh. You should be encouraged to do this because of your future participation in the glory of Christ, for which you have the double assurance of your adoption and your sufferings with Christ. Thus I urge you, for incomparably great is the glory!<sup>12</sup>

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λογί ζομαι , with which Paul introduces his sentence, "does not", as Denney observes, "suggest a more or less dubious result of calculation; rather by litotes does it express the strongest assurance."<sup>13</sup>

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11. Zahn, op. cit., p. 514. The sentences immediately following the quotation are a somewhat free translation of Zahn's further argument.

12. Stoeckhardt, however, using 1Pet. 1:6 as a parallel, follows Philippi, finding in v. 18 "Ermunterungsgruende, welche die Christen bestimmen sollen, willig Christi Kreuz auf sich zu nehmen." Stoeckhardt, G., Commentar ueber den Brief Pauli an die Roemer, p. 371. Our interpretation does not repudiate this idea, but makes it subsidiary to the main thought, which is the greatness of the glory. Cf. the concluding paragraphs of this chapter.

13. Denney, James, St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in the Expositor's Greek Testament, p. 648. Cf. Rom. 5:28.



It is an assurance based on personal experience. Thus the first person singular is not "accidental and without any special design;"<sup>14</sup> It is used to enforce the argument. Everything that Paul had experienced of the suffering with Christ - so very like Christ's suffering that Paul claimed to bear the *επιγμματα του 'Ιησοῦ* in his body (Gal. 6:17) - he counted of no consequence in view of the glory which awaited him. He knew with a certainty that no misfortune could shake that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2Cor. 4:17. Paul records his experience of this conviction for his readers that they might "verify his calculations themselves, each making it over again for himself."<sup>15</sup>

Paul describes sufferings as *παθήματα του νῦν καιεός* . *παθήματα* are "sufferings (Leiden), not passions (Leidenschaften)."<sup>16</sup> These sufferings are limited by the phrase *τα νῦν καιεός* . Kittel defines *καιεός* as follows: "Das entscheidende, der wesentliche Punkt, und zwar erstens oertlich, zweitens saechlich, und drittens zeitlich verstanden."<sup>17</sup> Obviously the third meaning applies in the present passage. Nebe adds the thought that *καιεός* limits the concept of time to "eine bestimmte, abgegraenzte, gemessene (Zeit)."<sup>18</sup> There is evidently a contrast in this text between the present age and one that is to come, but not, as Ebrard observes, "das Leben des Einzelnen im Gegensatz zum

14. Meyer, op. cit., p. 318. Cf. Luthardt, Chr. Ernst, Der Brief Pauli an die Roemer, p. 487: "Deshalb auch singular: er rechtfertigt sich wegen dessen, was er gesagt."

15. Godet, F., Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, p. 87.

16. Philippi, op. cit., p. 5.

17. Kittel, Gerhard, Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament, in loco.

18. Nebe, op. cit., p. 69.



Tode des einzelnen, sondern das Leben auf Erden in der Zeit bis zu Christi Wiederkunft, im Gegensatz zum Leben auf der neuen, verklaerten Erde."<sup>19</sup> The ὁ τῶν καιρῶν indicates the "critical and final period of the dispensation of 'this world', a season of distress which is to end at Christ's coming."<sup>20</sup> The exact formula, ὁ τῶν καιρῶν, is used only by Paul, and by him in only two other passages, once more in Romans (5:26) and again in 2Cor 8:14. In both instances a contrast is also expressed, but the contrasted periods of time differ. In the Corinthians text Paul is contrasting two periods in the life of his readers: "that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want." The contrast in Rom. 5:26 is between the old dispensation and the new, which was ushered in at the coming of the Messiah. (Cf. 2Cor. 6:2) The use of ὁ τῶν καιρῶν in our passage parallels the use of αἰὼν οὗτος in its time reference.<sup>21</sup> (Mt. 12:32; Lk. 20:34,35) So Philippi:

In 5:26, ὁ τῶν καιρῶν stands in contrast with the past; here, in contrast with the future. And, indeed, this future period begins with the Parousia of the Lord, so that ὁ τῶν καιρῶν corresponds with the αἰὼν οὗτος<sup>22</sup>, whose opposite is the αἰὼν ἡμετέριος, ἐκεῖνος ἐρχόμενος.

Philippi further gives the reason why the αἰὼν οὗτος is here designated ὁ τῶν καιρῶν :

19. Ebrard, August, Der Brief Pauli an die Römer, p. 335. Cf. Mk. 10:30 for a similar use of .

20. Gifford, E.H., Romans, p. 154.

21. αἰὼν has a special reference in the sense of "world". Cf. Vos, op. cit., p. 420: Taking αἰὼν as a translation of the Hebrew עולם he has this to say: "As 'Olam "world" had received 'Olam "age" for its twin-brother, so the Greek term aion for "age" was liable to be pressed into double service. Originally a pure time concept, it now became an all-comprehensive space-concept as well.

22. Philippi, op. cit., p. 5.



The αἰὼν ὁρῶν is merely described as ῥῆ. καιρός in order to mark the brevity of its duration. However long it continue, in comparison with the eternal glory, it is still to be regarded merely as the present, rapidly-fleeting point of time (not χρόνος or αἰὼν ).<sup>23</sup>

ἐκ ἄξια --- πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν is Paul's verdict on the παθὴματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ . Taking ἄξια back to its etymology from ἄγειν , Thayer defines it "properly as drawing down the scale; hence, "weighing, of like value."<sup>24</sup> ἄξια εἶναι πρὸς τί , then, means to be "of equal weight when compared with something;" and ἐκ ἄξια (ἐκτάξια) means "of no weight, i. e. not worth mentioning in comparison with."<sup>25</sup> To preserve the original picture, we may conceive of Paul as weighing in his mind the sufferings of the present age against the future glory and finding that the glory far outweighs the suffering. When he fixed his attention upon the coming glory, the present with its hardships and afflictions faded even from his memory. (Cf. 2Cor. 4:17, where ἐλαφρὸν τῆς θλίψεως and βαρεῖς δόξης form an interesting verbal as well as thought parallel to our text) This necessarily follows from the nature of the glory which Paul in hope envisions.

δόξα , "as a translation of the Hebrew דְּבָרָה , in a use foreign to the Greek writers," means "splendor, brightness,"<sup>26</sup> or "glory" in the A. V. Preeminently this splendor belongs to God. As revealed to men in Old Testament times it became known in the Talmud as the נִפְיָהּ , "the visible majesty of the divine presence, especially when dwelling

23. Loc. cit.

24. Thayer, Joseph Henry, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, in loco. Hebe calls attention to a remark of Hermann on Sophocles' Electra, v. 19: "ἀγειν. usitatum in pendendo verbum... Hienach ist ἄξια, welches das Etymologicum magnum schon von ἀγειν ableitet, id, quod lancem trahit, quod pendit, i. e., quod pondus habet," op. cit., p. 70.

25. Philippi, op. cit., p. 3.

26. Thayer, op. cit., in loco.



between the cherubim in the tabernacle and Temple."<sup>27</sup> In the fulness of time the  $\text{ἄλφ} \text{᾽} \text{ῶ} \text{ῖ} \text{ς}$  was revealed when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory ( $\text{τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ}$ ), the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father," Jn. 1:14. In its true splendor, however, this glory abides in God and can never be fully revealed to men. Into this splendor Christ returned at His ascension (Lk. 24:26). The expectation of one day sharing in this glory is one of the chief elements of the believer's eschatological hope. Bauer-Preuschen: "Der Zustand im Jenseits wird als ein Teilnehmen an den Lichtglanz bezeichnet."<sup>28</sup> (Cf. 1Cor. 2:7; 2Cor. 4:17; 1Thess. 2:10; 1Pet. 5:10) The sharing in the  $\text{δόξα}$  will extend even to the body. In 1Cor. 15:43, Paul says of the body that "it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory" ( $\text{ἐκίρεται ἐν δόξῃ}$ ). Phil. 3:21 indicates the nature of the body's share in glory: "Who shall raise our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" ( $\text{σὺμμορφῶσιν τὴν σὴματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ}$ ). That it is especially this aspect of the  $\text{δόξα}$ , its effect on the body, which here engages Paul's attention would appear from the context. In the passage that culminates in the  $\text{ἐνδόξα ἐκδυστροφία}$  of verse 17, the body is described as "dead because of sin" (v. 10), "but if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies ( $\text{ζωοποιήσῃ καὶ τὰ στήθια σώματα ὑμῶν}$ ) by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (v. 11). The body that is here subject to sin, decay, and death, and that bears the marks ( $\text{στigmata}$ ) of suffering with Christ will one day share in

27. Davis, John D., and Gehman, Henry Snyder, The Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, p. 601, sub theophany.

28. Bauer, Walter D., and Preuschen, Erwin, Griechisch-Deutsches Woerterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testament, in loco.



His glory. Our contention that Paul especially has in mind the δόξα as it is related to the body is further supported in the verses following verse 18. In verse 19, the κτίεις is represented as "waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God," which, as we shall presently see, is coincident with the revelation of the δόξα. Now, in verse 23, the sons of God themselves are described as groaning as they wait for the "adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν); for only when the body is freed will they become manifest as the sons of God and enter "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (τὴν ἐλευθερίαν ἣν τῆς δόξης, v. 21). To sum up this rather elusive but, to my mind, very important argument, we have here a chain of closely related phrases: τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν, ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ, τῆ ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης, ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν

Drawing the two ends of the chain together (and it does not appear to be too violent a motion), we may link the glory with the redemption of the body as two practically interchangeable concepts in this context.

All this has not been pointless toying with words, for when the *universe* is represented as one day sharing in the liberty of the glory of the children of God, we shall see in this confirmatory evidence for a physical restitution of the universe. As the sons of God will experience freedom for their mortal bodies, so the κτίεις will in some way share in this physical renovation and freedom: quod est demonstrandum.

μέλλουσαν, preceding δόξαν, indicates that the glory "is destined to"<sup>29</sup> follow upon the sufferings of the present. As in the Greek writers from Homer down, it is used "of those things which will

29. Sunday, William, and Headlam, Arthur C., A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 206. Cf. Bauer-Preuschen: "bezeichnet die Gewisshheit des in Zukunft eintretenden Ereignisses!"



come to pass (or which one will do or suffer) by fixed necessity or divine appointment."<sup>50</sup> (Cf. 8:15) "The unusual order emphasizes the futurity"<sup>51</sup> as Bengel already observed: "praesens et futurum inter se oppomuntur."<sup>51</sup> This destined future glory "shall be revealed in us" (ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς). The root idea of ἀποκαλύπτω is that of the unveiling and discovering of something that has been hidden or concealed. Adhering to the root meaning of the word, Theophylact has this comment:

διὰ δὲ τοῦ εἰπεῖν τὸ ἀποκαλυφθῆναι ἔδειξεν,  
ὅτι καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, κρύπτεται δὲ, τότε δὲ ἀποκαλυφθῆσεται,  
τούτ' ἐστὶ τελείως φανερωθῆσεται. 33

Nebe, among others, favors this interpretation:

Wir werden darin dem alten Exegeten beistimmen müssen, dass sich von einem ἀποκαλυφθῆναι nur dann in der That und Wahrheit reden laesst, wenn das, was durch die ἀποκαλύψαι an's Licht treten soll, schon in irgend einer Weise vorhanden war.<sup>54</sup>

We cannot, however, accept this interpretation without reservation.

Neither the εἰς ἡμᾶς nor the particular coloring of δοξα in this passage favors it. While it is true that a certain glory is already ours and that its fulness is even now reserved in heaven for us (1Pet. 1:4), the idea in the passage evidently is that now we have παρθήματα but that one day we shall have δοξα, and that also for our mortal bodies, which are clearly not subject to glory in the here and now. Again we quote Philippi as favoring our interpretation:

50. Thayer, op. cit., in loco.

51. Denney, op. cit., p. 648.

52. Bengel, D. J. A., Gnomon Novi Testamenti, p. 567.

53. Nebe, op. cit., p. 70.

54. Ibid.



ἀποκάλυπτειν refers not merely to the discovery of that which already exists, although in temporary concealment, but also to the revelation of that which by this very revelation comes for the first time into existence, or which has previously a concealed existence merely in so far as it lies wrapped up in the divine counsel (Gal. 3:23).<sup>35</sup>

The time when the glory is to be revealed is at the Parousia of Christ. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (φανερωθήσεσθε ἐν δόξῃ Col. 3:4), for "he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," Phil. 3:21. The glory will come upon believers from without (εἰς ἡμᾶς) to transfigure them, so that, as Hodge says, they are "the subjects in which a great display of glory is to be made to others."<sup>36</sup> (Cf. v. 19) At the same time, what Godet observes on εἰς ἡμᾶς deserves attention: "The glory will consist not only in our transformation, but also in the coming of the Lord Himself, and the transformation of the universe. Thus it will be displayed at once for us and in us."<sup>37</sup>

Some commentators hold that Paul in this passage "makes use of a statement which may be held to support the compensatory view of the hereafter."<sup>38</sup> That, as we have seen, is exactly what Paul does not have in mind. The whole point of the sentence is that the future glory is incomparable with present sufferings. Bernard has beautifully stated the case: "Non sunt condignae passiones hujus temporis ad praeteritam culpam quae remittitur, non ad praesentem consolationis gratiam quae

35. Philippi, op. cit., p. 6. So also Meyer and Tholuck.

36. Hodge, Charles, Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, p. 422.

37. Godet, op. cit., p. 87. On this, see Sanday and Headlam, p. 206.

38. Storr, Vernon F., Christianity and Immortality, p. 40.



immittitur, non ad futuram gloriam quae promittitur nobis."<sup>39</sup>

Nevertheless, the thought of our verse has been introduced in the context of suffering. Paul points to the great future glory, not as the reward or compensation for suffering, but as a consideration which makes suffering endurable, nay, joyful. Indeed, when the Christian is under the chastening rod of his Father-God, he feels most deeply the love of his God, and the experience of that love makes of the future glory a present conviction. Sanday and Headlam summarize the matter very well:

It is nothing short of a universal law that suffering marks the road to glory. All the suffering, all the imperfection, all the unsatisfied aspiration and longing of which the traces are so abundant in external nature as well as in man, do but point forward to a time when the suffering shall cease, the imperfection be removed and the frustrated ambitions at last crowned and satisfied; and this time coincides with the glorious consummation which awaits the Christians.<sup>40</sup>

That, too, is the import of Barth's highly suggestive remarks:

Wo rechnet denn Gott mit uns, wo rechtfertigt er sich vor uns, wo lehrt uns sein Geist Abba! Vater! schreien, wo wird es klar, dasz die Zeit die Negation der Ewigkeit ist,<sup>41</sup> wo stoeszt der Mensch auf die ihm gesetzte Schranke und damit auf den ihm

39. Quoted in Alford, Henry, The Greek Testament, vol. II, p. 395. The Vulgate translates this passage, "Existimo enim, quod non sunt condignae passionis hujus temporis ad futuram gloriam." Lutheran theologians took the opportunity to attack the Roman doctrine of merit on the basis of this passage, for it is essential to the idea of merit that the service and reward be of equal value. "Wenn Bellarmin dagegen einwandte, die passiones seien nicht condignae mit Rucksicht auf ihre Substanz, weil sie nur so kurz dauerten u. s. w., wohl aber ex caritate, so wurde von Gerhard mit Recht erwidert: die caritas lasse sich von dem Werke selbst nicht so trennen, sondern sei die Seele desselben," Tholuck, A., Kommentar zum Briefe Pauli an die Roemer, p. 452.

40. Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 206.

41. It is essential for an understanding of this statement to note Barth's somewhat too philosophical treatment of  $\xi \nu \nu \nu \kappa \alpha \rho \rho \acute{o} \varsigma$ . "Die Wahrheit ist das Jetzt, der Augenblick ausser aller Zeit, in dem der Mensch nackt vor Gott steht, der Punkt, der kein Punkt neben andern ist, von dem wir herkommen, Jesus Christus der Gekreuzigte und Auferstan-



gegebenen Ausgang, wo wird der Beweis des Geistes und der Kraft geleistet, wenn nicht eben in der Tat Gottes, durch die er uns zu Mitleidenden... des Christus macht und also uns einbezieht in die unschauliche Freiheit und Herrlichkeit des neuen Menschen? Darum fallen die Leiden der Zeit des Jetzt nicht ins Gewicht, weil sie in Jesus Christus schon ins Gewicht gefallen sind, weil sie nicht nur bezeichnend sind fuer unser Leben in der Zeit, sondern eben damit bezeichnend fuer das dieses Leben begrenzende, nein, in sich aufhebende ewige Leben, weil die Zeit, in der wir leben und leiden, die Zeit des Jetzt ist, die Zeit der eben im Leiden sich an uns offenbarenden Herrlichkeit. So sehr offenbart sich die Herrlichkeit Gottes gerade im Geheimnis des Leidens und nur dort, dasz wir, weit entfernt davon, das Leiden um Gottes willen nicht sehen wollen zu koennen, es um Gottes willen durchaus gerade sehen muessen, sehen als den Schritt, die Bewegung, die Wendung vom Tode zum Leben, sehen als den Ort, wo Christus zu sehen ist. Am Leiden vorbeisehen hiesze an Christus vorbeisehen.<sup>42</sup>

**Through suffering to glory! Through the cross to the crown!**

The companion thoughts of present suffering and future glory now give Paul pause for the remaining verses of the chapter. Incomparably great is the glory! "All that follows tends to illustrate and enforce that idea."<sup>43</sup>

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dene. Was vor und nach diesem Augenblick aller Augenblicke ist, was diesen Punkt, der selber keine Ausdehnung hat, als Flaechen umgibt, das ist die Zeit. In diesem Jetzt, an der Ewigkeit entsteht als ihre Negation der Zeit, die immer schon gewesene Vergangenheit und die immer erst kommende Zukunft. Die 'Zeit des Jetzt' nennen wir sie nach dem, was sie verhuellt und worauf sie hinweist, woran sie gemessen ist und ohne das sie nicht waere," Barth, Karl, Der Roemerbrief, p. 287 f.

42. Barth, op. cit., p. 288. Cf. the very early commentator Ambrosiaster: "Nantes pro quibus commodis tantis se procellis et tempestibus credunt, cum sciant in his magis mortem ante oculos esse quam vitam! et milites spe praesentis praemii, cum incerta victoria sit, in gladios insurgere non dubitant. Quanto ergo magis pro Christo patiendum est, cuius etiam protelata sunt nobis beneficia," quoted in Nebe, op. cit., p. 72.

43. Hodge, op. cit., p. 425.



Or as Niebergall so ably says:

Der Rest des Kapitels, V. 19-59, enthaelt die allersiegreichsten Jubelklaenge ueber die grosze Aufwaertsbewegung, welche durch die Verbindung mit Christus begonnen hat. Es ist eine grosze Variation ueber das Sursum Corda. Der frohe Glaube an eine andere hoehere Welt draengt maechtig zum Ausdruck. Glockenklaenge aus der Ewigkeit toenen und brausen durch diesen einzigartigen Hymnus.<sup>44</sup>

But Paul's remarks on the greatness of the glory make beautiful nonsense outside of the context of suffering. Suffering is for us the necessary companion thought of glory. And it is only the suffering or, as Luther said, the experienced Christian who can appreciate what Paul now has to say.

Zum Troste, nicht zu mueszigem Gedankenspiel, redet der Apostel also, das laszt uns festhalten. Unsr Brueder in Rom, denen Nero's Schwert uebern Haupte hing, hatten keine Musze zu Spaziergaengen der Philosophie. Nur unterm Kreuze mag unser koestlicher Text recht schmecken und als Mittheilung geistlicher Gabe zur Staerkung erfahren werden.

- Besser<sup>45</sup>

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44. Niebergall, Friedrich, Praktische Auslegung des Neuen Testaments, p. 524.

45. Besser, W. F., St. Pauli Brief an die Roemer, p. 624 f.



## CHAPTER II

### Identity of the "Creation" (v. 19)

ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαταδοκία τῆς κτίσεως τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν πᾶσι υἱῶν  
τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται

The whole created universe looks forward with eagerness to the revelation of that glory, to the moment when the sons of God will be made known. - Wand<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding to an exegesis of this verse we must consider a view, which, if true, would radically effect our interpretation of the entire passage. The view, briefly stated, is that Paul is here speaking as a poet and that his statements are not to be regarded too seriously. Dodd has perhaps expressed this view as clearly as any of its proponents:

If we are to state in prosaic terms of metaphysics what Paul thought would happen, we must say that he shared with many of his contemporaries the belief that, in the Good Time Coming, the material universe would be transfigured into a substance consisting of pure light or glory, thus returning to its original perfection as created by God. But Paul has made of this a purely poetical conception, as little as possible dependent on any particular metaphysics. What it means in the realm of logic and fact, it is impossible to say, nor can one argue about its truth.

It would be useless to deny that this passage is fundamentally poetic. Indeed to make such a denial would be to rob the passage of its peculiar appeal. But what we can and must deny is the common but false

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1. Wand, loc. cit.

2. Dodd, C. H., The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 154.



conclusion that a poetic passage is eo ipso outside of the realm of fact and, hence, outside of the field of knowledge. Poetry, it is true, is never matter-of-fact, but it is not for that reason contrary to fact. In his most exalted moods the poet is carried beyond the realm of fact and sees into "the heart of things". In some such sense we may say that Paul is writing as a poet in our passage. He has left philosophy and science behind and speaks of matters which, though not verifiable as facts, lie at the heart of all verifiable facts. To prognosticate a bit, inasmuch as it has a bearing on the subject at hand, we quote Moule on Paul's teaching of a restoration of the universe:

With such a prospect natural philosophy has nothing to do. Its own laws of observation and tabulation forbid it to make a single affirmation of what the Universe shall be, or shall not be, under new and unknown conditions. Revelation, with no arbitrary voice, but as the authorized while reserved messenger of the Maker, and standing by the open grave of the Resurrection, announces that there are to be profoundly changed conditions, and that they bear a relation inscrutable but necessary to the coming glorification of Christ and His Church.<sup>3</sup>

As Moule indicates, there is a sense in which all of Revelation is in the highest meaning of the term poetic. It lies beyond ordinary matters of fact, but far from being for that reason untrue, it is very Truth itself.

But there are elements in our text which are poetic even in the more common understanding of the term. We refer, of course, to the poetic devices which Paul employs, the bold personifications and anthropomorphisms. It is something we might expect in a passage which is largely eschatological in outlook. The language of eschatology is a study in

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3. Moule, Handley, The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 227.



itself, but just a superficial and hasty glance through memory over the major eschatological passages will be sufficient to convince us of the highly figurative and poetic nature of eschatological language. This arises from the very nature of the case. The facts of eschatology lie entirely outside of our experience and can be made intelligible only by being in some way related to that experience through imagery, figure, type, and symbol. This is something we will have occasion to note again and again during the course of our discussion. We will dismiss the matter for the present by briefly quoting Mendenhall:

The eschatology of Scriptures, authentic and sufficient, is the region of light and darkness; the shadows of mystery fall upon us as we enter it. It is only a partial revelation of facts, conditions, estate, and life. The limitations, however, have respect to those conditions concerning which curiosity would prompt us to inquire, but a knowledge of which is not necessary to our inspiration or salvation. Frequently, the contents of revelation are overlooked in the belief that the truth is only incompletely set forth, and is by virtue of these limitations unreliable and without value... It must be remembered that the eschatology of Christianity is not on the surface, but in the depths; nor is it always clothed with the strait-jacket of literalism, but often appears in the beautiful robes of allegorical forms; and seldom is it discoursed or discussed, but hinted, hyperboled, reflected, and imbedded out of sight.<sup>4</sup>

Two extremes must be avoided in approaching the figures of speech in our text. One has already been indicated: to pass over them as poetic devices and ignore the underlying truths. The other is the opposite and perhaps more fatal extreme: to ignore the poetic element and press the interpretation to absurd lengths. The middle course, as so often, is the

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4. Mendenhall, J. W., Plato and Paul, p. 580 ff., passim. Cf. Niebergall, op. cit., p. 324. Speaking of the "Gotteswelt", he says, "Zu ihr Verhalten die gewöhnlichen Vorstellungen zeitlicher und räumlicher Art nur wie ungenügende aber notwendige Ausdrucksmittel." On the use of symbolical language to express spiritual thoughts, see Lewis, op. cit., pp 83-97, "Horrid Red Things".



best course, though by no means the easiest to pursue. Keeping these considerations in mind, we proceed to the interpretation of verse 19. Our immediate concern in the present chapter, after establishing the connection, will be to circumscribe the meaning of *κτίσις*.

Verse 19 again contains the connective *γάρ*. It will, therefore, once more be necessary to establish the precise relationship between our verse and the foregoing. Several suggestions have been offered. Weisz conjectures that this verse is introduced to show the "certain realization of the glory" promised in verse 18.<sup>5</sup> It is doubtful whether this can be adduced from the thought here expressed by Paul. Longing in itself contains no pledge of the attainment of the object hoped for. This is all the more evident since the longing is ascribed to the

. "Creation may, indeed, take to itself firm confidence from the promise given to God's children, but not the converse."<sup>6</sup> We do not hereby deny the certainty of the glory, but we would rest it on firmer ground. The certainty of glory is inherent in the promise of glory and rests, moreover, in the *πρόθεσις*, the *ἐκλογὴ*, in a word, in the *ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ* (v. 28ff.). Can we, then, follow Philippi, who contends that this verse refers "not so much to the certainty as simply to the futurity of the *δόξα*?"<sup>7</sup> He defends his view by pointing to *μελλούσαν* in verse 18. But Zahn is probably correct when he remarks, "Die betonende Voranstellung des *μελλούσαν* ist hinlaenglich erkluert

5. Weiss, Bernhard, A Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 3, p. 75. So also Meyer.

6. Philippi, op. cit, p. 7.

7. Op. cit., p. 8.



durch den Gegensatz zu τοῦ νῦν καιρω, gibt daher kein Recht, die causale Kraft des folgenden Satzes auf den einen attributiven Begriff zu beschränken."<sup>8</sup> Meyer's further objection that the futurity of the glory is quite "self-evident"<sup>9</sup> is not successfully met by Philippi when he says that "no doubt this is self-evident objectively, but not so subjectively for human impatience which would fain anticipate the future δοξα."<sup>10</sup>

Rejecting both these views, we follow the great majority of interpreters from Origen and Chrysostom to the present in holding that "the apostle does not intend to confirm our assurance of the truth of the future glory, but to exalt our conception of its greatness."<sup>11</sup> The incomparable greatness of the glory was, as we have seen, the chief emphasis in verse 18; here the thought is re-emphasized. Hofmann refines the idea of greatness somewhat:

Hinwieder ist es nicht sowohl die Groesse unserer zukünftige Herrlichkeit, als vielmehr die Groesse der uns in Aussicht stehenden Wandelung, welche daraus erhellen soll, dass das Herren der Schoepfungswelt ein Warten auf die Offenbarung der Kinder Gottes ist.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas Hofmann's observation limits the force of γάρ to verse 19, we shall follow Zahn in permitting the γάρ to govern the entire section, vs. 19-27. In these verses Paul summons three witnesses to testify to the greatness of the glory: the κτίσις which looks forward to the manifestation of the glory in the sons of God, the believers themselves.

8. Zahn, op. cit., p. 515.

9. Meyer, op. cit., p. 319.

10. Philippi, loc. cit.

11. Hodge, op. cit., p. 429. The underscorings are my own.

12. Hofmann von, J. Chr. K., Die heilige Schrift neuen Testaments, dritter Theil, p. 328.



who await the revelation of the glory in their bodies, and the Spirit who intercedes for the believers with sympathetic groanings. "Die *κτίσις*, die Christenheit, der Geist, das sind die drei concentrischen Kreise, aus denen ein Seufzen nach Offenbarung der Herrlichkeit gen Himmel steigt."<sup>13</sup> The use of the closely related words *ευστενάζει* (v. 22), *στενάζομεν* (v. 25), *στενάζουσι* (v. 26) already call attention to this parallelism. (Cf. also *οὐ μόνον δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ*, v. 25, and *ὡς αὐτῶς δὲ καὶ*, v. 26)

And so to the heart of the verse. What does Paul mean to designate by *ἡ κτίσις*? Up till now we have skirted this question or have assumed the answer, but before we can continue we must find a satisfactory answer to it.<sup>14</sup>

In classical usage *ἡ κτίσις* has the meaning of establishment (Cf. 1Pet. 2:13), founding, planting, etc. In a sense closely related to these, biblical usage in the great majority of cases refers *ἡ κτίσις* to the creative activity of God. This creative activity is divided into the two related concepts of the act of creating (creatio) and of the thing created (creatura). (1) Creatio - Paul uses *κτίσις* in this sense in Rom. 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world (*ἐκ τῆς κτίσεως κόσμου*) are clearly seen." (2) Creatura - This use of the word is again divided. (a) Where the context in no way limits it, it quite generally means what we understand by "creation": the whole created universe and all that it contains, Mk. 10:16; 13:19;

13. Zahn, op. cit., p. 515 f.

14. In the following paragraph I am largely following Meyer's useful summary, op. cit., p. 520 ff.



2Pet. 3:4; Rev. 3:14. (b) Where, however, the context does limit its meaning, *κτίεις* may refer to that portion of creation which consists of mankind, i. e., the rational part of creation, as in Mk. 16:15 ("Preach the gospel to every creature"— *πάντες τῆς κτίεις*); Col. 1:23. *κτίεις* may also parallel *κτίσμα* in usage (Cf. Js. 1:18) in the sense of the individual created thing, as in Rom. 1:25; 8:39; and Heb. 4:13. In a special sense *κτίεις* is also used of the *κτίεις*; 2Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15. So much, then, for the general use of *κτίεις*. It remains to be determined whether *κτίεις* in our passage is used in any of the above senses, and, if not, just what the precise meaning is.

As Hodge remarks, the "words *πάντες τῆς κτίεις* (v. 22), the whole creation, are so comprehensive, that nothing should be excluded which the nature of the subject and the context do not show cannot be embraced within their scope."<sup>15</sup> Of the many interpretations that have been espoused at some time or other through the centuries only three still find support among commentators. One takes *κτίεις* as meaning mankind, in whole or in part; another, as meaning the irrational creation, all nature. The third interpretation is a blending of the other two.<sup>16</sup>

The chief consideration which prompted many commentators to include mankind in the concept of *κτίεις* is the use of such words and phrases as *ἀποκαταστάσις*, *ἀπεκδέχεται*, *σὺχ' ἐκούσα*, *εὐετηνάζει*, *εὐωδὶνει*. They felt that such expressions could properly refer only to rational, volitional beings. Their attitude is expressed by Schlatter when

15. Hodge, op. cit., p. 423.

16. It would only tend to confuse our argument to enter upon a lengthy discussion of this matter here. For a convenient summary of the various interpretations, see Nebe, op. cit., p. 73 ff., also Tholuck, op. cit., p. 433 ff.



he says:

Die wir versuchen der Aussage des Paulus durch eine phantasievolle Personifikation Sinn zu geben, ist es exegetische Pflicht, zuerst die Geschaffenen, die unzweifelhaft Personen sind, in den Satz hineinzustellen.<sup>17</sup>

Frommann has perhaps stated the case as well as anyone for those who believe to mean mankind, apart from the rest of creation.<sup>18</sup> Relying heavily upon Paul's teaching of the natural knowledge of God, he finds in the above expressions the yearning of natural man for peace and fulfillment, a yearning which, Frommann correctly interprets, can be satisfied only in Christ. Until His death and resurrection (*ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν* v. 22), this yearning perforce continued, but after His appearance it was stilled in all who found Him and learned to love Him.

Frommann reconstructs Paul's argument as follows:

Er beruft sich auf die erfahrungsmaessig in dem Bewusstsein des Menschen liegende Sehnsucht nach einer Fortdauer in einem vollkommenen, von der Endlichkeit dieser Welt befreiten Zustande, welche er als Thatsache einer natuerlichen Offenbarung Gottes an dem Menschen nachweist (V. 19-21). Diese Sehnsucht war bisher eine unbefriedigte (V. 22) und hat ihr Ziel angewiesen erhalten und ihre Befriedigung gefunden in dem christlichen Bewusstsein der Gotteskindschaft, welches die Hoffnung einstiger vollkommener Erloesung und der Verherrlichung mit Christo einschlieszt.<sup>19</sup>

Thus believers also are to be included in the *κτίεις*.

Die Christen verhalten sich darnach zu der uebrigen Menschheit wie die, welche den Geist Christi bereits haben, zu denen

17. Schlatter, A., Gottes Gerechtigkeit, p. 270.

18. Frommann, Carl, "Ueber die seufzende Creatur", Jahrbuch fuer Deutsche Theologie, achter Band, 1863, pp. 25-50. Zahn's article, already often quoted, was written in opposition to Frommann's conclusions.

19. Op. cit., p. 49. Nebe, op. cit., p. 75 f., quotes Iyra to the same effect: "Expectatio creaturae, i. e., hominis, qui dicitur creatura, quia convenit cum angelis per intelligere, cum animalibus per sentire, per vegetari cum plantis et per esse cum inanimatis et sic per similitudinem omnis creatura."



welche desselben noch theilhaftig werden sollen... Gleichwie die Menschheit im Allgemeinen noch nach ihrer Erloesung seufzt, allerdings auch die Christen, obwohl sie schon den Geist Christ besitzen, auch noch seufzen, weil sie den der Sterblichkeit unterworfenen Leib noch an sich tragen.<sup>20</sup>

Though there is no purely theological consideration which rules out this interpretation, we shall have to study the context somewhat more carefully before we decide whether or not it is tenable. But first let us examine several views of a similar nature.

Schlatter's interpretation, though very similar to Frommann's, seems to be tendential in character. The interpretation is dictated by a preconceived idea. In the expressions  $\xi$  κτίσις and υφοί τοῦ Θεοῦ he finds man's double relationship to God. "Er ist das Werk des goettlichen Schaffens, κτίσις, und er ist durch den Christus in jenes Verhaeltnis zu Gott gebracht, durch das er sein Sohn geworden ist."<sup>21</sup>

For Schlatter, too, the tension between frustration and the aspiration toward freedom is loosed by Christ. But the tendential nature of his argument appears when we note the universalistic turn he gives to his conclusion:

Die Einrede, die die Verheissung des Paulus von der Menschheit weg in die Natur oder das Weltall hinausschob, stammt aus der Ablehnung des Chiliasmus und aus dem Entschluss der Kirche, keine Verheissung zuzulassen, die ueber ihren eigenen Kreis hinausging. Sie tat dies zum Schutz des Glaubens, und sie handelte dann, aber auch nur dann, folgerichtig, wenn der Glaube die Leistung des Menschen war, an die seine Rechtfertigung als an ihre Bedingung gebunden sei... Paulus spricht von der doppelten Offenbarung des Lebens, von einer ersten, die den Kindern Gottes zuteil werden und einer darauffolgenden die den Tod von der Menschheit wegnehmen wird... Dann sieht der Mensch, wozu Gott ihn, dieses nichtige und sterbliche Geschlecht geschaffen hat. Dann sieht er es, wenn nach der Offenbarung des

20. Ibid.

21. Schlatter, op. cit., p. 269.



Christus seine Gemeinde von ihm das ewige Leben empfangen hat, an dem er auch teilhaben darf... Dem ohnmächtigen und sterbenden Menschen bringt der Christus Gottes freie Gnade, nicht aber dem, der das Böse wirkt.<sup>22</sup>

Exactly what is meant by the very last phrase in this quotation must remain a riddle, for Schlatter does not expand on the thought there expressed. It constitutes, in fact, the conclusion of his entire argument on this point. On the surface, be it noted, the phrase seems neither very accurate nor very Christian.

Olshausen is far more outspoken in his universalistic interpretation of this passage. Though he does not exclude inanimate and irrational creation from  $\kappa\tau\iota\varsigma$ , as do Frommann and, to all intents, Schlatter, he insists that unchristian mankind be by all means included.

The witing and yearning of the creature cannot possibly be admitted to be mere allegory, nor is there any reason to regard it as applicable to men only, to wit, such as are destitute of the Christian principle. These certainly are not to be excluded, for, as "the children of God" can only be those regenerate by the Spirit of Christ, there would be a total silence (if the  $\kappa\tau\iota\varsigma$  were to signify the inanimate creation exclusive of man) as to the ultimate bringing in of the extra-Christian world; nay, it would be almost denied, which, in every respect is untenable.<sup>23</sup>

Before refuting these interpretations we shall briefly describe another which likewise finds mankind in the  $\kappa\tau\iota\varsigma$ , together with the rest of creation, without, however, coming to Olshausen's conclusions. Lange's

22. Op. cit., p. 275 f., passim.

23. Olshausen, Biblical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. IV, p. 52. Christians are not to be included in the  $\kappa\tau\iota\varsigma$ , because, says Olshausen, "they form, as it were, a new creation, different from the old," loc. cit. Neither are those who have known and rejected Christ to be included; "but all those, to whom it (the Gospel) has not come at all, who could not, therefore, refuse it, are of course to be considered on a level with men born anterior to Christ," p. 58. The assumption, for which Olshausen offers no proof, is that men born anterior to Christ will have an opportunity to claim Him before they are judged.



understanding of this passage is perhaps typical of those who follow this interpretation.

Lange, too, stumbles at the daring personification in the passage if *κτίσις* be referred exclusively to subhuman creation. If mankind be at least in some manner included, this difficulty is removed for Lange, for he feels that "the real personification of nature in man is the final ground for the poetical personification of nature."<sup>24</sup>

The Apostle assumes that this creature-sphere is in a state of collective, painful striving for development, which expresses itself as sensation only proportionately to the sensational power of life, and hence is more definitely expressed, appears more frequently, and reaches its climax in living creatures and in the natural longing which mankind feels.<sup>25</sup>

The least common denominator of all of the above interpretations is the inclusion of mankind, in some form or other, in the creation.

"It is readily apparent," as Philippi remarks, "how improbable is the inclusion of elements so heterogeneous in the one notion of *κτίσις*."

If we can further prove from the context, as I believe we can, that this

24. Lange, J. P., and Fay, F. R., The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, p. 270. This, too, seems to be the view of Foerster, in Kittel, although he places the emphasis on the inclusion of nature, man's participation being assumed: "Gerade bei diese Auffassung ist dieser Satz keine mehr oder weniger selbstverstaendliche oder abschweifende Aussage, sondern Hinweise auf einen merkwuerdigen Tatbestand, zuerst ein erstes Anklingen der *ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων θεοῦ*. Dann ergibt sich der Satz: 'Diese Schoepfung' ist alles das, was um des Menschen willen der Vergaenglichkeit unterworfen wurde (vorab der Mensch!)," op. cit., sub

25. Ibid. In a footnote to Lange's remarks, Riddle expresses the opinion that man is to be included in the *κτίσις*, at least as to his material body. He then makes the following interesting observation: "Nature waits, but natural man is indifferent or hostile. The very body, which, in his blindness, he deems the source of sin, waits for glorification, while his soul uses its power over it to stifle the inarticulate desire." Ebrard's view scarcely merits attention. In verses 19 and 22 he includes, but in verses 20 and 21 he excludes mankind. The assumption is entirely gratuitous. Only if such a shift in meaning were carefully indicated could this position be defended.



is not only improbable but impossible, then we may with a single gesture dismiss all of these interpreters.<sup>26</sup>

It is evident, first of all, that Paul is contrasting the κτίσις (v. 19ff.) with the sons of God (v. 25). Can these, then, be included in the concept of κτίσις? The attempt to include the sons of God, inasmuch as they have a material body, is clearly forced exegesis. As Nebe observes: "Diese niedere Seite laesst sich der hoeheren nicht in solcher Selbstaendigkeit gegenuebersetzen, dass sie neben die κτίσις (v. 25) die da seufzen und sich sehnen noch als eine besondere seufzende und sehrende Kreatur traete."<sup>27</sup> But can the contention of Frommann and Schlatter be upheld, that the contrast is between the whole and one of its parts, between all men as they are by nature and men as they become in Christ? This interpretation has a priori more in its favor than those which include mankind only in part in κτίσις, since when κτίσις means mankind it generally means all mankind. (Cf. Mk. 16:15) The οὐ μόνον-ἄλλὰ καὶ of verse 25, however, poses an insuperable difficulty for such an interpretation. Zahn has stated the argument in something like final form:

Es ist ebenso logisch unsulaessig als sprachgebrauchswidrig, dass ἀλλὰ καὶ einen Theil folgen liesze, dessen Ganzes durch οὐ μόνον eingefuehrt waere. Verneint doch der erste negative Theil dieser steigernden Partikelverbindung die Einschraenkung eines Urtheils auf Eins, waehrend der zweite positive Theil noch ausdruecklich die Erweiterung des Urtheils auf das Andere behauptet... Es wird also schon durch syntaktische Gruende die Christenheit von der κτίσις ausgeschlossen und dadurch die Beziehung auf die Menschheit in ihrem ganzen Umfang unmoeglich gemacht.<sup>28</sup>

26. Philippi, op. cit., p. 10. Cf. Hofmann: "Im Gegensatze zu den Kindern Gottes kann κτίσις nur zusammenfassende Bezeichnung desjenigen sein, was als Werk der schoepferischen Ehaetigkeit Gottes von ihr den Namen hat. Hiemit ist die Menschheit ausgeschlossen," op. cit., p. 329.

27. Nebe, op. cit., p. 74.

28. Zahn, op. cit., p. 517.



The sons of God are in no manner whatever contained in the *κτίεις*.

Can the contrast, then, be between the sons of God and the unchristian portion of humanity? In defence of this interpretation allusion is made to the common longing of mankind after immortality. But Paul is not here speaking of the common longing after immortality; he is speaking of a definite event, the *ἔποικίλυσιν τῶν τεκνῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ*, the great consummation of the Redeemer's kingdom. No argument is needed to prove that this is something quite different from the common longing after immortality.<sup>29</sup> A further reason adduced for including at least the unbelieving Gentiles in *κτίεις* is that Paul would be passing them by entirely if *κτίεις* meant only subhuman creation. This, it is stated, Paul would not do, since his first and primary concern was always for the Gentile world. The truth of the matter is that the Gentiles are included, not, however, in the *κτίεις*, but in the *οἱ τοῦ Θεοῦ*. This is Gifford's interpretation:

Before the "restitution of all things", he (Paul) expected that the "fulness of the Gentiles should come in", and "all Israel be saved". Mankind, therefore, so far as they fulfill their proper destiny, in accordance with the great promise "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," are all included among the "sons of God".<sup>30</sup>

There are also positive arguments from the context against including unchristian mankind in *κτίεις*. One of the most cogent is that "it cannot be said, in its full and proper force, that mankind were brought into their present state, not by their own act, or willingly,

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29. Cf. Watson, Philip S., "The Revelation of God" in Let God Be God!, pp. 75-96, for an excellent discussion on this and related subjects.

30. Gifford, op. cit., p. 155. Cf. DeWette: "If the Apostle had wished to speak of the enslaving and freeing of mankind, he hardly would have omitted reference to sin as the ground of the one and faith of the other, and the judgment on unbelievers," quoted in Alford, op. cit., p. 394.



but by the act and power of God<sup>51</sup> (v. 20). A further difficulty is presented by verse 21, where Paul states that the κτίσις awaits a day of deliverance. It is especially this verse that has led commentators of a universalistic bent to read mankind into κτίσις. But that is a faulty rendering of Paul's thought, for at another place he says that unbelievers approach, not ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τεκνιωτῶν; but ἄλλοθεν ἀπὸ προσώπου τοῦ Θεοῦ (2Thess. 1:9. Cf. also chapters 9, 10 and 11 of Romans, where a double fate is undeniably predicted for mankind). Whether God has other means of reaching men with His love than those revealed in Christ is not for us to judge, nor is it pious to speculate on the matter. Rather, it would be well to bear in mind Delitzsch's very serious words in reference to this:

Wird diese paedagogische Weltgestalt zerschlagen, so ist und bleibt der Mensch was er innerhalb derselben geworden. Er ist und bleibt, er wird nicht vernichtet, denn ebensowenig als Apokatastase der Boesen, lehrt die Schrift deren schliessliche Vernichtung. Die menschliche Vernunft moechte gern so oder so den Dualismus aufheben, mit dem die Weltgeschichte abschliesst. Mag sie es auf ihre Verantwortung thun, nur faelsche sie die Schrift nicht. Diese lehrt ewigen personlichen Leben und Fortbestand aller personlichen Wesen, und zwar einen durch das was sie zeitlich geworden principiell bedingten.<sup>52</sup>

Our text is speaking of one of the gifts of grace; unbelievers nowhere fit into the scheme.

We are thus left with only one possibility: in our passage κτίσις is "equivalent to all nature,"<sup>53</sup> the whole created universe, exclusive

51. Hodge, op. cit., p. 425.

52. Delitzsch, Franz, Biblische Psychologie, p. 471. Final and conclusive on this point is the argument from Pauline usage. Though St. Paul speaks of regenerate man as ἡμῶν κτίσις, he never speaks of unregenerate man as πάλαια κτίσις, much less simply as .

53. Vincent, Marvin R., Word Studies in the New Testament, vol. III, p. 95. So also Bauer-preuschen, Gremer, Thayer, and Robertson. There is no exact parallel use of κτίσις in the New Testament. In Rabbinical



of man. It is what we commonly understand by "nature" or the "created universe". There is no excuse for making a further distinction between animate and inanimate nature. Presumably, this is done to lessen the force of the personification. The personification is hardly less intense, however, if by *κτίσις* we understand animate nature rather than all nature. Stoeckhardt happily calls attention to Luther's explanation of the First Article and the phrase "me and all creatures". Here is almost an exact parallel to *οἱ οὐροὶ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ κτίσις*.<sup>34</sup>

The idea of the glorification of all nature cannot be said to be un-Pauline "for the simple reason that it is clearly expressed in our passage."<sup>35</sup> Nor can it be said to be unbiblical, for it is a constantly recurring theme, especially in the Old Testament prophets.<sup>36</sup> If further evidence is desired for our interpretation of *κτίσις*, attention might be called to the commentators, among whom the great majority take it in this sense. A list of those consulted would include Luther, Calvin, and alphabetically, Alford, Barth, Bengel, Besser, Denney, Gifford, Godet, Hodge, Kuehl, Luthardt, Maclaren, Moule, Nebe, Meyer, Philippi, Sanday, Stoeckhardt, Tholuck, Weisz, and Zahn, among others.<sup>37</sup>

literature, too, there is no identical usage for the Hebrew equivalent *שָׁמַיִם*. See Strack, Hermann, L., and Billerbeck, Paul, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, p. 245. In apocryphal literature there are several possible parallels, among which cf. Tob. 8:5, *ἐδούλησάντων εἰς οὐρανοὺς καὶ πλάσαι δι' κτίσις σου* (Note, however, the plural form).

34. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 572.

35. Meyer, op. cit., p. 321.

36. Cf. Chrysostomus: *ὅστε δὲ ἐμφαντικώτερον γινώσκειν τὸν λόγον καὶ προσομοίῃ τὸν κόσμον ὅπαντα τοῦτον ἅπερ αὐτὸν προφῆται ποιοῦσιν. ποταμοὺς κρητῶντας λήρην εἰσαγαγόντες κ. ε. λ.*

Quoted in Meyer, loc. cit. Biblical parallels will be noted as they are suggested by the discussion.

37. So already Irenaeus: "Oportet et ipsam conditionem (*κτίσις*) reintegratam ad pristinum, sine prohibitione servire iustis et hoc apostolus



Assuming that this much-discussed question has been answered, we are at last ready to resume the argument. How is it that Paul can introduce nature when he wishes to enhance our conception of the greatness of the future glory? How can nature contribute to this conception? "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Great is the glory, so great, in fact, that all nature remains in a state of constant and eager suspense until it is revealed. That is the reason why Paul introduces nature at this point. And that, too, forms the topic sentence for all that follows in regard to nature. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with a hasty glance at verse 19, leaving the discussion of its full implications for subsequent chapters.

*ἡποκαρδοκία* is one of those rare and beautiful words that convey a picture, whole and entire to the point of minute detail, to the mind of the attentive reader. Hodge contends that a man versed in the plastic arts could fashion a convincing figure of Hope, having but this single word for inspiration.<sup>58</sup> The picture is that of one who watches eagerly for something with outstretched head (*ἔπθ*, from *-καρδ*, head - *δοκέω*, watch). *ἔπθ* is prefixed to intensify the force of the word, as Chrysostum already noted: *ἔπθ ἢ σφοδρὰ προσδοκία*.<sup>59</sup> The expectation is characterized by eagerness, yet it does not permit itself to be

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facit manifestum in ea, quae est ad Romanos, sic dicens, nam expectatio, etc," quoted by Nebe, op. cit., p. 75. To complete our catalogue of testimonies we refer to the English versions. Goodspeed, Moffatt, Weymouth, the Catholic New Testament, the R. V. and the R. S. V. follow the A. V. in translation of *κτίσις* by "creation". The Twentieth Century translates it "nature"; Knox, "creation", "nature", and "created nature"; Wand, "the whole created universe" and "the physical world".

58. Hodge, op. cit., p. 422.

59. Quoted in Nebe, op. cit., p. 72.



"hurried to impatience or despair."<sup>40</sup> Anyone who has watched a child breathlessly note the progress of an approaching parade knows the picture behind the word. In literature this precise form of the word occurs only in the New Testament. It is used once more by Paul in Phil. 1:20.<sup>41</sup> In that passage, significantly enough, ἀποκαρδοκία complements . . . .  
Kittel makes a very helpful observation on this point:

Das Wort drueckt Phil. 1:20 mit ἐλπίς zusammen die zuversichtliche Erwartung aus, wobei an sich wohl ἐλπίς die begruendete Hoffnung bezeichnet, ἀποκαρδοκία das unbestimmte Abwarten; Roem. 8:19, jene kommt den Christen zu V. 24 f., dieses der uebrigen Schoepfung.<sup>42</sup>

Yet we do not wish to draw too sharp a distinction, for as we shall see (v. 21 f.) nature herself shares in the ἐλπίς of God's children. Were there no hope for mankind, there would be no eager expectancy in nature.

That is already affirmed in the present verse. The eager expectation of nature (τῆς πίστεως perhaps best taken as a subjective genitive) ἀπεκδέχεται τῷ δειῶν τοῦ θεοῦ . According to Bauer-Preuschen, ἀπεκδέχομαι is in the New Testament used exclusively in connection with the Christian hope and its several objects.<sup>43</sup> The use of the word in our passage need not be considered an exception. The object of the expectation of nature is, at the same time, one of the objects of Christian hope: ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ σώματος (v. 23) and its attendant ἐλευθερία (v. 21). (Cf. v. 24 ff.)

40. Philippi, op. cit., p. 9. Hence, Luther's "aengstliche Harren" is too strong. In his sermons he modifies this to "ein endliches Harren", op. cit., p. 109.

41. Milligan thinks that Paul may have made the substantive from the verb, ἠραρδοκίω, "which is common in Polybius and Plutarch, Robertson, A. T., Word Pictures in the New Testament, p. 375.

42. Kittel, op. cit., in loco.

43. "stets von der christlichen Hoffnung und ihren verschiedenen Objekten," Bauer-Preuschen, op. cit., in loco. Cf. especially Gal. 5:5.



ἀπεκδέχομαι signifies, as Stoeckhardt says, "dasz man ganz weg ist, ganz aufgeht in Etwas."<sup>44</sup> There is here a double prosopopeia: first an ἀποδάρκδοκί' is ascribed to nature; then the ἀποκάρδοκί' itself is presented as being completely absorbed in an object.<sup>45</sup> We must insist, however, for reasons to be elaborated later, that this is no mere personification, "mere allegory", as Olshausen charges against this rendering of the verse. Involved in it is the deep and essential truth that the fate of all nature is intimately bound up with that of man. Whether we look backward to the fall (v. 20), or forward to the consummation of Christ's kingdom (v. 21), we see nature reflecting the lot of man. Or may we even say that nature recapitulates in herself the history of her foremost child in a manner befitting her station?<sup>46</sup> We quote Denney in support of this interpretation:

He (Paul) conceives of all creation as involved in the fortunes of humanity. But this, if creation be personified, naturally leads to the idea of a mysterious sympathy between the world and man, and that is what the Apostle expresses. Creation is not inert, utterly unspiritual, alien to our life and hopes. What rises from it is the music of humanity - not apparently so still and sad to Paul as to Wordsworth, but with a note of hope in it rising triumphantly above all the pain of conflict.<sup>47</sup>

To conclude this chapter, let us examine a bit more closely the object of nature's longing and hope; namely, τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῆς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. Burton defines ἀποκάλυψις as a "disclosure of a person or thing such that its true character can be conceived."<sup>48</sup> Believers in Christ have

44. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 373.

45. Cf. Philippi, op. cit., p. 11: "constans mundi expectatio constantior expectat."

46. This is the theme of all that follows.

47. Denney, op. cit., p. 649.

48. Burton, Ernest DeWitt, New Testament Word Studies, p. 82.



by the very gift of believing become υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 14), having received the Spirit of adoption (υἱοθεσίᾳ v. 15), but the adoption is not yet complete, inasmuch as the inheritance remains to be completed by the ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ σώματος (v. 25). This will be accomplished at the Parousia.<sup>49</sup> The ἀποκάλυψις, the complete disclosure of God's sons is, hence, synonymous and synchronous with the revelation of the glory, referred to in verse 18. Calvin's interpretation is as accurate as any:

He (Paul) calleth that the "revelation of the sons of God", when we shall be like unto God; as John saith, for although we know we are His sons, it hath not appeared what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. His meaning is not, that the sons of God shall be manifested on the last day; but then it shall appear how happy and blessed their lot is, when they, having put off corruption, shall put on celestial glory.<sup>50</sup>

"This revealing of the sons of God will be the signal for the great transformation."<sup>51</sup> That is the real "why" of nature's eager expectancy. She is "impatient to see those new guests arrive, because she knows that to receive them she will don her fairest apparel."<sup>52</sup> We have here the first tentative statement of a theme which will be boldly announced in

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49. It is interesting to note that the same word ἀποκάλυψις that is used for the second coming of the Messiah is here used for the disclosing of the sons of God. (Cf. 1Cor. 1:7; 1Pet. 1:7) When Christ shall appear then shall those who are His be revealed together with Him. "It is a new expression of the deep-seated consciousness of fellowship with Christ, which leads the Apostle to call this 'the revelation of the sons of God', not of the Son of God," Riddle's note in Lange, op. cit., p. 271.

50. Calvin, John, Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, p. 216. Cf. Philippi: "The revelation meant is not that of the ~~565~~ of God's children, at present concealed but still existing, but the revelation or manifestation of the children of God themselves, which is accomplished by means of the then to be first committed to them," op. cit., p. 11.

51. Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 207.

52. Godet, op. cit., p. 90.



verse 21. The hope of mankind and nature alike, of *NATURE* in its broadest sense, is centered upon the glory and the freedom to be revealed at Christ's coming.

The issue will indeed be glory when He who is the head at once of "Nature" (Col. 1:15.16), of the heavenly nations, and of redeemed man, shall bid the vast periods of conflict cease, in the hour of eternal purpose, and shall manifestly "be what He is" to the mighty total.<sup>55</sup>

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55. Moule, *op. cit.*, p. 227.



### CHAPTER III

#### Occasion for Creation's Groaning (v. 20)

ὅτι γὰρ ματαιότητι τῆς κτίσεως ὑπετάγη, οὐχ ἐκῆρα,  
ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα, ἐφ' ἐλπίδι.

For the physical world was made subject to frustration, not by its own desire, but by the will of the Creator, who in making it so, gave it a hope.

- Wand<sup>1</sup>

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth on the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it," Gen. 1:26-28.

"The world of which the Bible speaks is always the world for man, the world in which the fate of man is of supreme importance. Man is in the center of the world, in spite of the fact that God is his Creator and Lord, as He is the Creator and Lord of the world. God has placed man as lord over the creatures. He has ordered the world for him."<sup>2</sup> To adopt a phrase from Brunner, whom we have just quoted, the biblical view of the universe is an "anthropocentric view", and it is so because God has

1. Wand, loc. cit.

2. Brunner, Emil, Man in Revolt, p. 409. Brunner does not say that man is the center of the universe, but that he is in the center. The real center is the Logos, cf. p. 417 f.



placed man at the center of the universe. Man is at the center, however, not by a mere arbitrary act of the divine will. It follows as a necessary consequence of the special dignity conferred upon man when he was created in the divine image. The goal of the creative activity was a being who could have fellowship with God. When this goal had been reached in man, all the lesser creation was made subservient to him.

"Man is master of the creation," as Branner says,

because and in so far as God makes him so, because through the fact that God creates him in His own image, he allows him to have the privilege of being subject and spirit, of freedom and of creative activity and endows him with those powers by means of which man can actually 'make subject unto him' 'that which is under him'... It is through his personality that, in virtue of the divine positing, he is lord of all the other creatures, and is the meaning and end of creation. For he alone, who is created as person, can give back to the Creator with a self-actuated, loving response the love with which he has been loved. The Creator, whose power is in all that exists, and who preserves all in existence, can be in communion with man alone.<sup>3</sup>

But we have been talking of "have-beens", of ideals of human existence which no longer agree with the facts. Except in moments of extreme self-complacency and self-sufficiency, man does not feel himself to be the center of the universe. As his knowledge of the physical universe advances, man progressively loses his control over it. The master has become the slave in a hideous reversal of the original scheme. Who, after reading Pascal's unforgettable description of man as lost between two infinities, would deny that it expresses a profound truth?

What is man in nature? A Nothing in comparison with the Infinite, an All in comparison with the Nothing, a mean between nothing and everything. Since he is infinitely removed from comprehending the extremes, the end of things and their beginning are hopelessly hidden from him in an impenetrable secret;

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3. Op. cit., p. 410 f.



he is equally incapable of seeing the Nothing from which he was made, and the Infinite in which he is swallowed up... Limited as we are in every way, this state which holds the mean between two extremes is present in all our impotence. Our senses perceive no extremes. Too much sound deafens us; too much light dazzles us; too great distance or proximity hinders our view... This is our true state; this is what makes us incapable of certain knowledge and of absolute ignorance. We sail within a vast sphere, ever drifting in uncertainty, driven from end to end. When we think to attach ourselves to any point and to fasten to it, it eludes our grasp, slips past us, and vanishes forever. Nothing stays for us... The whole groundwork cracks and the earth opens to abysses.<sup>4</sup>

It was not always so.

Evidently something has happened to upset the order of the universe, and Christianity alone has an adequate solution for this central mystery of existence; it finds the solution, neither in the original constitution of the universe, nor in the original constitution of man, but "in a free act of the creature, annulling the original relation of the creature to God."<sup>5</sup> This "free act" is sin, and its first instance Christian theology calls the Fall. Men wanted to call their souls their own. "But that means," as Lewis so ably says,

to live a lie, for our souls are not, in fact, our own. They wanted some corner in the universe of which they could say to God, "This is our business, not yours." But there is no such corner. They wanted to be nouns, but they were, and eternally must be, adjectives... The act of self-will on the part of the creature constitutes an utter falseness to its true creaturely position, is the only sin that can be conceived as the Fall.<sup>6</sup>

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4. Pascal, Blaise, *Pensées*, p. 17 ff., passim.

5. Orr, James, *The Christian View of God and the World*, p. 410 f.

6. Lewis, C. S., *The Problem of Pain*, p. 68. Cf. Delitzsch, op. cit., p. 478: "Der zur Herrschaft ueber die Erde berufene Mensch ist nun sein selbst nicht mehr maechtig. Der Friede des Geistes und der Seele und des Leibes hat sich in wirre Disharmonie verwandelt. Die Seele hat das Bild Gottes im Geiste verschlungen und zerruettet durch ihre Begierden den Leib, und der Leib reizt auch wider Willen die Seele." The following statement of Herder shows how vital is the Christian doctrine of the Fall for an understanding of human existence: "This is a wonder to which the worshippers of reason have not yet given a name - the story



Man is still the center of the universe, but only because God still considers him so. "He remains, even as sinner, in a distinctive, even if negative relation to God; before and afterwards alike, even if in another, that is in an altered sense, namely, changed by sin and law, he remains responsible."<sup>7</sup>

The centrality of man in the universe is of utmost consequence for the whole of creation, for because of it the fate of all nature is intimately associated with that of man. Since man was made to be "the priest and even, in one sense, the Christ, of the animals - the mediator through whom they apprehend as much of the Divine splendour as their irrational nature allows,"<sup>8</sup> the fall of man from God's favor necessitated a similar fall for the animals. And what is true of the animals is true of the entire created universe. The fall of man occasioned a universal groaning of creation. That is the topic which is before us in the present chapter. We do not intend to give a philosophically satisfying answer to the question of the relationship between moral and physical evil. Nor could we do so if we were so minded. But what we can do, on the basis of Rom. 8:20, is to indicate that such a relationship exists and that it is, by an almost hopeless paradox, associated with the redemptive purposes of God.

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of the fall of the first man. Is it allegory? history? fable? And yet there it stands, following the account of the creation, one of the pillars of Hercules, beyond which there is nothing - the point from which all succeeding history starts... And yet, ye dear, most ancient, and undying traditions of the race - without you mankind would be what so many other things are - a book without a title, without the first cover and introduction," quoted in Orr, op. cit., p. 164.

7. Brunner, op. cit., p. 411.

8. Lewis, op. cit., p. 61.



In verse 19, Paul stated the fact that creation is in a state of eager expectancy as she awaits the manifestation of the sons of God. In verse 20, he gives the historical basis for this fact. With great economy of expression Paul sketches three reasons for nature's expectancy, all of which center in one event - the Fall. (1) Nature has been subjected to vanity. (2) This subjection was not voluntary, but imposed by God. (3) The state of subjection was never designed to be final.

(1) τῇ ματαϊότητι ἢ κτίσις ὑπετάχθη are the words Paul uses to describe the first reason for the expectation and groaning in creation. The verb is a simple historical aorist. Some question has, however, arisen as to whether it should be taken as middle or passive in force.<sup>9</sup> If we were to take it as middle, we would, with Calvin, find in the very form of the word "an example of obedience in all creatures."<sup>10</sup> But it is more in keeping with the context to take ὑπετάχθη in its native passive sense. The οὐχ ἔκουσα and διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαι almost demand this.

The subjection of creation to ματαϊότης is almost universally regarded by commentators as a result of man's sin, but they disagree as to when this subjection took place. The majority hold that it occurred at the Fall, but a fairly large number feel that it was a condition imposed even at creation. Theodoretus already propounded the theory that

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9. The verb, though passive in form, could possibly be taken as middle in force. Middle/Passive lines are not so clearly drawn in 150173. Cf. Debrunner, Albert, Friedrich Blass' Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch, par. 307: "Aenderungen im Genusgebrauch sind vor allem durch die Neigung entstanden, Medium und Passivum zu einem Genus verbi zu verschmelzen."

10. Calvin, op. cit., p. 217. So also Lange.



God at creation subjected nature to corruption in view of man's subsequent fall:

διδάσκει δέ, ὡς πάσα ἡ κτίσις ἡ ὀρωμένην θνητὴν  
 ἔλαχε φύσει· ἐπεὶ δὲ ἕπερ τῶν ἄλλων ὁ ποιητὴς προ-  
 εώρα τοῦ Ἀδάμ τὴν παράβασιν καὶ τὴν ἐπενεχ-  
 θῆναι δοκούντων αὐτῶν τοῦ θανάτου ψήφον οὐ γὰρ ἦν  
 εἶκος οὐδὲ δόμιον, τὰ μὲν δὲ αὐτῶν χειροκείμενα  
 μεταλαβεῖν ἀφ' ἀρσείας, αὐτῶν δέ, οὐ χάριν ταῦτα  
 ἐπεποίητο, θνητῶν εἶναι καὶ παθῆτον.

This view has been upheld by many later commentators, usually for the purpose of keeping secure the sovereignty of God by avoiding even the appearance of a too severe dualism. God foresaw man's sin, and because He anticipated the consequences of sin, He created a disharmonious world.<sup>12</sup>

This view does not necessarily teach that matter and the physical universe are inherently evil, but that they were created imperfect by God, who foresaw the relationship that must some day exist between moral and physical evil. Strong expresses this view in unequivocal language:

This is not a perfect world. It was not perfect even when originally constituted. Its imperfection is due to sin. God made it with reference to the Fall - the stage was arranged for the great drama of sin and redemption which was to be enacted thereon... If sin had not been an incident, foreseen and provided for, the world might have been a Paradise. As a matter of fact, it will become a Paradise only at the completion of the redemptive work of Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Another reason many give for advocating this interpretation of ὑπε-  
 τάγη is that it is more congruous with natural science. By *ματαιότης*  
 and *φθορά* (v. 21) they understand the ebb and flow of the seasons; the  
 succession of generations by birth and death, and the elaborate system  
 of natural enemies in the animal kingdom; parasitism in the vegetable  
 kingdom; wind, weather, and erosion in inanimate creation. This, they

11. Nebe, op. cit., p. 77.

12. Cf. Bushnell's theory of "Anticipative Consequences", referred to by Orr, op. cit., p. 494.

13. Strong, Augustus Hopkins, Systematic Theology, p. 198.



then postulate, is not an abnormal condition, but the state of nature as created by God.<sup>14</sup>

Among those who for "scientific" reasons hold that the subjection antedates the Fall, there is also a considerable group of modern theologians who espouse the evolutionary theory, in some form or other. A very superficial summary of their argument will suffice to show that they cannot conceive of an original state of perfection in nature and must, hence, refer ὑπεράγ, to a point prior to the Fall. Their theme is the steady advancement of nature from chaos to perfection. There never was a Golden Age for the universe. Rather, nature has been in a constant state of becoming. Caird's reconstruction of Paul's thought is typical of this group:

We may fairly say that Jesus sets aside the old Jewish conception of the outward world as an external instrument called into existence to fulfill the divine design and regards the natural as in perfect continuity with the spiritual life. St. Paul merely gives the rationale of this way of thinking, when he declares that nature is but a stage in the process of the self-revelation - a stage which, indeed, is in itself imperfect and finite, but which points forward to the higher life of man as its complement and completion. "The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," for the fuller revelation of the divine in man. Hence, nature cannot come to its rights, cannot show its highest meaning, until, in the life of man, it becomes the servant of a higher design... In this way St. Paul is urged by the reconciling principle of Christianity to bring nature and man together. And he represents their whole existence as connected in one process, which has revealed in the past, is revealing in the present, and will reveal still more in the future, the one spiritual life which flows out from God to the creation, and which flows back to Him again through man - the highest of all the creatures.<sup>15</sup>

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14. So Frommann, et al.

15. Caird, Edward, The Evolution of Religion, vol. II, p. 123. For Caird the idea of evolution becomes central to theology. He classifies all religions as objective or subjective, pantheistic or monotheistic respectively. In Christianity he finds the nearest approach to a re-



The traditional evolutionary theory, which taught a gradual process of development, has today given way to the theory of emergent evolution. According to this theory the advances of nature which bring with them any really new features are by steps or by leaps and not by sliding over changes.<sup>16</sup> Many theologians have grasped at this theory as a way out of the dilemma. At the junctures in the evolutionary process where the scientist finds leaps the theologian posits God, notably at the creation of man. He thus assumes the pose of the Colossus; with one foot he stands on the biblical account, with the other on "speculative" science. Needless to say, he presents a very ungainly

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conciliation of these two opposite religious principles. It is found "in the use of the two kindred ideas of organic unity and evolution. The former idea satisfies our demand for universality, in so far as it enables us to think of the world, as pantheistic religion thought of it, as one great whole or system, whose principle of unity lies in God; but at the same time to conceive of this unity, not as absorbing all of the differences of the world into itself, not as fatal to the independent individual existence of any of God's creatures, but as a principle of life manifested in each and every one of them... On the other hand, the idea of evolution enables us to escape from the conception of this unity as a substance, to which all things are equally related, and which, therefore, is not truly revealed in anything... But the idea of evolution carries with it the conception that, while all existences manifest their Divine Original, they do not all manifest Him equally; but that there are grades of existence, rising from the inanimate to the animate, and from animal to man, and in man's history from the stage in which he is nearest to the animal to the more and more full realization of that which distinguishes him as man. It bids us to regard the highest point to which creation reaches as the clearest revelation of what it all means. It bids us, in short, to find the key to the beginning in the end, and not the key to the end in the beginning," p. 75 ff. To catch the full implications of this it is necessary to read Caird's entire presentation up to this point. No theologian today would give such prominence to the evolutionary "principle". The quite usual attitude is expressed by Brunner when he says, "The ancient view of the world is only the alphabet in which the man of the Bible, who had no other, had to write down the Word revealed by God... What a fool anyone would be to think that when the old alphabet was destroyed the Divine revelation was destroyed as well," op. cit., p. 423.

16. Prof. Lloyd Morgan, quoted in Graebner, Th., God and the Cosmos, p. 247.



figure. Also needless to say, he can in no way reconcile himself to a belief in a pristine ~~s~~tate of perfection for the universe. Hence, ὑπετάγη, for him, refers away back to the first creative impulse of God.

Can any of these interpretations of ὑπετάγη be maintained? Let us, first of all, consider the last mentioned. This is no place to enter upon a lengthy refutation of the evolutionary theory. We shall only note what is most relevant to our discussion. The chief argument against an evolutionistic interpretation of our text has already been noted: this interpretation proceeds from the preconceived notion that there could be no primitive state of perfection for the universe. The exegesis, therefore is governed by a prejudice of the interpreter. Such an a priori judgment is fatal to a correct reconstruction of Paul's thought, for it is certain that, whether rightly or not, Paul believed in an original paradisaical state of the universe. Our second argument against this interpretation is closely related to the first. It is only by a strange inconsistency that the theory of evolution can be adapted to the Christian doctrine of the Fall.<sup>17</sup> The evolutionistically inclined commentator would, therefore, hesitate a long time before making the Fall the crucial point in the history of the universe. Most agree that it is crucial for the human race, but the subhuman creation, they would contend, moves along an almost separate line of development. Hence, their refusal to relate the κατασίγη to the Fall merits but slight attention.

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17. See Lewis' highly apocryphal account of the Fall in Problem of Pain, pp. 65-76, in which he attempts to harmonize the biblical account with evolutionary principles, without any notable success.



They are not concerned with faithfully rendering Paul's thought, but are attempting to bolster a favored theory.

What about the view, not necessarily related to the evolutionistic theory, that *καταβολή* was involved in the original constitution of the universe and that *ὑπάρχων* must, hence, be referred back to creation? We may answer that it depends upon what one understands by *καταβολή*. As we shall presently see, it means far more than the proponents of this view would acknowledge. Or we may answer, as Zahn does, by contending that even their concept of *καταβολή* does not necessarily form part of the original constitution of the universe. We can speak with certainty only of the world as it is now fashioned; the world as it existed before sin entered is for us terra incognita.

Der Satz, dass es zum Wesen der unpersoenlichen Creaturen gehoere, dass ihr Einzeldasein der Gattung geopfert werde, ist ein philosophisches Dogma und nicht ein Ergebnisz der Naturforschung. Warum es kein ins Unendliche fortgesetztes vegetatives und animalisches Einzelleben geben koenne, hat wohl noch kein Naturforscher gezeigt. Wenn auch in jedem einzelnen Falle die physischen Ursachen angegeben werden koennten, welche das Verloeschen des Lebens herbeifuehrten, warum diese Ursachen eintreten muszten, warum sie immer eintreten, wird nie erkluert werden koennen... Es ist und bleibt ein Zerstoeren der Naturzwecke durch die Natur.<sup>18</sup>

The view that God in His foreknowledge created the world in reference to sin is also not in keeping with the facts of the case. The repeated *וַיֵּבְרַח אֱלֹהִים מִפְּנֵי אָדָם* in the creation account and the *וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם* with which that account closes (Gen. 1) are meaningless if we ascribe an original state of vanity to nature. A too fond dwelling on the foreknowledge of God invariably leads to an impasse. That God

18. Zahn, op. cit., p. 530, passim.



foresaw man's fall we may accept as certain. But if He created the universe in reference to that Fall, why did He not create man in reference to it? If He could pervert His original intention of creating a perfect universe to the extent of subjecting it to futility, what should have hindered Him from perverting it still more by creating man just a little less man? In other words, we are back to the old question, Why did God not create man impeccable? One of the best answers to this question is the one that sees moral action as conditioned by the capacity for moral choice. God wished man to be a moral creature, but "the only capacity capable of moral good must itself be moral... But this involves the second and correlative quality in the creature - capability, freedom, the power to give or to withhold, to welcome or to cast out, to obey or to refuse obedience."<sup>19</sup> Now, while this argument may be philosophically satisfying, it in no way satisfies the man who has made the false choice and is suffering the consequences of that choice. Let us, therefore, forsake this bootless argument and return to the simple revealed facts.

As created by God, man and the universe were "very good". But man was not satisfied with the good; he wanted what he thought was the better, to "know good and evil", to be a god unto himself. As a result, he lost the good, and found that the better lot he had sought was the worst possible lot - sin, rottenness, death. When Paul now ascribes a corresponding state of wretchedness to the whole of creation and points, moreover, to an historical event as the occasion for that state, we best understand him as referring to the same event that occasioned man's wretched state - the Fall. This is perfectly in keeping with our introductory

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19. Fairbairn, Andrew Martin, The Philosophy of the Christian Religion, p. 156 f.



remarks on the anthropocentricity of the universe. "Weicht das Centrum aus seinem Orte, so versteht es sich von selbst, dass die Peripherie auf das tiefste davon betroffen wird."<sup>20</sup>

*μᾶταιότης*, "prefixed with emphasis,"<sup>21</sup> is a strictly biblical term, used in the Septuagint as the translation of  $\text{לְבַטָּל}$  and  $\text{סְוֵיָהוּ}$ . "The idea is that of looking for what one does not find - hence of futility, frustration, disappointment."<sup>22</sup> (Cf. Eph. 4:17; 2Pet. 2:18) The word is further defined by *φθορά* in verse 21 - "decay", "corruption". If we should wish to distinguish *μᾶταιότης* and *φθορά*, we might consider the former the ground of the latter, the condition in nature which makes corruption necessary. Besser calls attention to the name Abel, derived from the same root as  $\text{לְבַטָּל}$ : "Der Name Abel ist ein Bekenntnis Adams und Eva's, er heisst Eitelkeit."<sup>23</sup> Abel shall be his name because he is born out of futility into a life of corruption. Thus is here a one-word description of the fallen world of fallen creatures. Witness the preacher:-  $\text{וְהָאֵלֹהִים בָּרָא אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּטַב$ , *μᾶταιότης μᾶταιότης*, *vanitas vanitatum*. "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; all is vanity," Ecc. 1:2.

According to Orr, *μᾶταιότης* evidences itself in two ways in the universe. First, it is evidenced in this that" nature is in a state of arrested development through sin, is frustrated of its true ends, and has a destiny before it which sin does not permit it to attain." Then,

20. Nebe, op. cit., p. 78. Very few commentators consider this matter even debatable. Cf. 4Esra 7:11f. "Als aber Adam meine Gebote uebertrat, ward die Schoepfung gerichtet, da sind die Wege in diesem Aeon schmal, und traurig und muhselig geworden," quoted by Lietzmann, Hans, Die Briefe des Apostels Paulus I, p. 44.

21. Meyer, op. cit., p. 323.

22. Denney, op. cit., p. 649.

23. Besser, op. cit., p. 628.



it is evidenced "in the very presence of man and his sin upon it; in being the abode of a sinful race; in being compelled through its laws and agencies, to subserve the purposes of man's sin."<sup>24</sup> Orr perhaps followed Luther, who saw the same twofold effect of *καταίσιος* : nature is herself frustrated and corrupted and she must serve frustrated and corrupted men. Though perhaps not a complete statement of the case, this remains a useful summary, and we shall follow it in our further remarks on *καταίσιος* and *φθορά*.

(a) Nature is herself frustrated and corrupted.- By this we understand everything that is short of perfection in nature. While it is true that, in comparison to the vileness of man, every prospect in nature pleases, it does not take too keen an eye to see her imperfections, nor too sharp an ear to catch the elements of discord. Nothing in nature is exempt from *καταίσιος*.

The curse devoureth the earth (Is. 24;6)

That which befalleth the sons of man befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth so dieth the other; yea they have all one breath... for all is vanity (Ecc. 3:19).

The grass groweth up, in the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth (Ps. 90:5,6).

The waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up; the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is moved out of his place; the waters wear the stones (Job 14:11f)

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24. Orr, op. cit., p. 195. Ebrard successfully combines these two elements: "Eine unendliche Menge von Kraefte[n] und gottgeschaffenen Anlagen ist in der Natur, die vom Menschen in Dienst genommen d. h. in den Dienst Gottes gestellt werden sollten - und als Resultat zeigt sich nur Kampf, Stoerung, Tod. Jede neue Entdeckung und Erfindung bringt neues Verderben. Eine unendlicher und einfoermiger Kreislauf, wobei die Natur ein fuer sich abgeschlossenes Reich bildet, durch das der menschliche Geist befriedigt zu werden wuenscht, aber nicht befriedigt wird, weil er in der Natur zwar das Abbild seiner eigenen Kraefte[n] und Anlagen, aber auch das seiner eigenen Zerspitterung und Zerrissenheit gewahr wird," op. cit., p. 336.



Animal, vegetable, mineral kingdoms - all are included. "Wohin," asks Barth, "mag denn der Mensch in seiner unausrottbaren Beunruhigung ueber das, was er ist, in seiner unstillbaren Sehnsucht nach dem, was er nicht ist, seine Augen richten, ohne dass ihm andre Augen entgegenblicken, die in derselben Beunruhigung und Sehnsucht, ja noch mehr, die sich direct an ihm wendet, auf ihn gerichtet sind?"<sup>25</sup>

Besser describes this aspect of *μωτηδότης* with a few telling examples:

Die Suende des Menschen hat freilich mit dem Abgeschmack schoeden Eigennutzes auch die Creatur vergiftet, und wenn wir ihre Sprache verstuenden, so wuerden wir in dem Bruellen des Loewen, der auf Raub ausgeht, in dem Heulen des Wolfes, der die Laemmer wuergt, in den Gekreisch des Weihen, der die Tauben erhascht, die Klage ueber das Unterworfensein der Eitelkeit ebenso deutlich vernehmen, wie in dem Angst- und Wehegeschrei der gemorderten Thiere selbst und wie in dem Seufzen der Erde unter den Flagen, womit Gott seit dem ersten Fluche die Behausung eines Suendergeschlechts schlaegt und heimsucht.<sup>26</sup>

(b) Nature must serve frustrated and corrupted man.- Nature's God-ordained status is that of servant to man. However, when man forsook his Lord, nature lost her rightful master. For Luther this is the real heart of *μωτηδότης* :

Wenn nun die Sonne selbst reden koennte, und ihre Legenden von Adam her erzahlen, was fuer Jammer und Elend sie erlebt und gesehen haette, sie wuerde ohne Zweifel von einem grossen Kreuz sagen, wie sie so manchem Ehebrecher, Dieb, Moerder, ja dem ganzen Regiment des Teufels habe dienen mmeszen. Und ist doch so eine feine, edle, reine Creatur, die billig niemand sollte dienen, denn allein Gott, seinen Engeln, und den frommen Christen, die Gott dafuer danken; so muss sie dienen denen, die Gott laestern und schaenden, alle Bosheit und Unzucht treiben. Wiewohl sie nun solches nicht gerne thut, ist sie dennoch Gott gehorsam, und nicht allein sie, sondern die ganze Creatur.<sup>27</sup>

25. Barth, op. cit., p. 290.

26. Besser, op. cit., p. 632.

27. Luther, op. cit., p. 110.



The reins have been loosed. Nature has none who can rightly "subdue" her. In revolt against the violence done her by unholy hands, she turns upon her former master. Sin in man begets disorder in nature; moral evil carries physical evil in its wake.

It is all too evident that there has been an outrage done somewhere against which nature reacts and demands correction. Floods, earthquakes, tornadoes are among the most dramatic of natural evils; sickness, slow decay, and death, though less dramatic, take their remorseless toll. Man sits helplessly by while nature mocks him with her double aspect of benignity and severity. In a moment she snuffs out a life that she has tended for threescore years and ten. In a single night she destroys what it has taken her centuries to build. The warm sun and gentle rains cause the seeds to sprout and the fields to be covered with lush, green life; hailstones reduce all to muddy ruin in the time it takes a swift-moving cloud to be driven past. Small wonder that a poet, confronted by this mystery, should wail in frustration:

Like a young child who to its mother's door  
 Runs eager for the welcoming embrace,  
 And finds the door shut, and with troubled face  
 Calls and through sobbing calls, and o'er and o'er  
 Calling, storms at the panel - so before  
 A door that will not open, sick and numb,  
 I listen for a word that will not come,  
 And know, at last, I may not enter more.

Silence! and through the silence and the dark  
 By that closed door the distant sob of tears  
 Beats on my spirit, as on fairy shores  
 The spectral sea; and through the sobbing - hark!  
 Down the fair-chambered corridor of years  
 The quiet shutting, one by one, of doors. 28



When we consider the wide implications of *ματαιότης*, we might be inclined to lend some credence to the opinion that Paul is here teaching a deep sort of pessimism. The pessimistic mood "is never very far from any of us. The first impulse of the man angry at the emptiness and unrealities of human life, is to rage at it all as vanity and vexation of spirit."<sup>29</sup> This petulant sort of pessimism can certainly not be charged against Paul, who, as we had occasion to note in our first chapter, cheerfully faced whatever life had to offer. Nor can a philosophic pessimism be ascribed to him, that form of pessimism which holds that "evil is, as it were, the whole of existence; it composes and constitutes the whole picture, occupies the eye and prospect of the soul, which cannot see life save through evil."<sup>30</sup> If, however, by pessimism we mean that long, hard look at reality which sees deeper than every shallow optimism and uncovers the anguish and frustration that lie somewhere near the heart of all existence, we may certainly say that Paul here speaks in a pessimistic mood. The pessimism of Paul is, moreover, heightened by the proper Christian estimate he places on the universe, as the perverted abode of sinful men. Yet Paul's is no unrelieved pessimism, limited as it already is. Above and beyond the *ματαιότης*, the transiency of our present existence, he sees God "with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning" (Js. 1:17). And when he looks to God his pessimism is turned into the highest possible optimism. The sentence that begins with *ματαιότης* ends in *ἐλπίς*.<sup>31</sup>

29. Fairbairn, op. cit., p. 114.

30. Op. cit., p. 111. On this, see Barth, op. cit., p. 290 f.

31. Cf. Kittel, op. cit., "Vor ihrem Anfang und Jenseits ihres Endes steht Gott und eine *ἡτίως* ohne *ματαιότης*," sub *ΜΑΤΑΙΟΤΗΣ*. Vos has a



(2) Some may feel that we have read too much into the single phrase, τῆς ματαιότητι ὑπετάγη; for my part, I believe that more might and perhaps should, be said. Be that as it may, we shall now continue with the second reason Paul finds for nature's sighing. He expresses it by means of two complementary phrases: nature sighs in eager anticipation because she was subjected to frustration οὐχ ἐκούσα, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ ὑποτάξαι.

The phrase οὐχ ἐκούσα (equal to ἀκούσα) is adjectival in form, but more nearly resembles an adverb in force.<sup>32</sup> The sense is that nature was subjected without her volition, not by an act of her own will. She was a "passive sufferer (Cf. ὑπετάγη), sharing in the curse which fell on man for his apostasy."<sup>33</sup> This phrase evidently is a continuation of the prosopopeia. Calvin suggests that "will" is to be understood as the "natural inclination, whereby the whole nature of things is carried to its conservation and perfection."<sup>34</sup>

When Paul says that nature's subjection to frailty was not voluntary, he does not say that it was unmerited, but, as Zahn observes, this necessarily follows: "ἀίρων und ἀγέμων zwar nicht unverschul-

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very pertinent comment: "The intense revulsion from the world and the age, such as they are, affords convincing proof that without a secure anchorage in the world beyond, the spiritual poise which the Apostle everywhere maintains would have been impossible. It has become customary to speak of "pessimism" in this connection. The term is badly chosen, not because it is too strong in degree, but because in philosophical nomenclature it denotes the assumption of an absolute, irreclaimable, metaphysically grounded despair of things. Such a belief was a priori impossible for Paul; in fact it forms a contradiction of terms with eschatology itself. As the outcome of the eschatological process was sure, nothing but unqualified optimism could have existed in the Apostle's mind, not to speak of the optimistic, because soterie implications of his teaching as a whole," op. cit., p. 432.

32. See Robertson, A. T., Grammar, p. 298.

33. Hodge, op. cit., p. 429.

34. Calvin, op. cit., p. 217.



det heiszt, aber ein Thun oder Geschick als ein solches bezeichnet, welches nicht Verwirklichung eigener Willensentschliessung ist, womit allerdings nicht gesagt ist, woraus aber folgt, dass es auch unverschuldet sei."<sup>35</sup> This can, however, never be predicated of man. He chose sin of his own free will; *ματαιότης* and *φθορά* were the necessary and merited consequences (Cf. Gen. 2:17). They were involved in the choice. We may properly say that in the same act of the will with which man chose sin, he voluntarily (*ἐκων*) chose frustration and death. We, indeed, suffer justly, but nature has in herself done nothing amiss. Why, then, her subjection to *ματαιότης*? Paul answers this question with the phrase *διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα*.

And so we have arrived at another much-debated point of exegesis. Who is the *ὑποτάξας*? The use of *διὰ* with the accusative (equal to propter) is cited as an objection to the usual interpretation which refers *ὑποτάξας* to God. Zahn states the objection as follows:

Es wird sich kaum ein Beispiel finden, wo Gott als die be-  
 gruendende Ursache eines von ihm verhaengten Leidens bezeich-  
 net wird, abgesehen natuerlich von den zahlreichen Faellen,  
 wo es sich um ein im Dienste Gottes und so um Gottes willen  
 uebernommenes Leiden handelt, wovon hier ja nicht die Rede  
 sein kann.<sup>36</sup>

Zahn himself refers *ὑποτάξας* to mankind, thus extending an inter-  
 pretation, as old as Chrysostom, which finds in the word a reference to

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35. Zahn, op. cit., p. 519. I find no justification for Stong's asser-  
 tion that "the universal prevalence of suffering and death among ir-  
 rational creatures cannot be reconciled with divine justice, except on  
 the supposition that it is a judicial infliction on account of a com-  
 mon sinfulness of nature belonging even to those who have not yet  
 reached moral consciousness," op. cit., p. 353. Bucer again favors our  
 interpretation: "Contra quam fert ingenium eorum - a natura enim omnes  
 res a corruptione abhorrent," in Philippi, op. cit., p. 12.

36. Op. cit., p. 520.



Adam: γενομένου φθάρου (σου), γεγονός φθάρη και<sup>37</sup>

If correct, this interpretation would fertify the argument that physical evil is the result of moral evil. By his sin Adam dragged nature down into a common ruin. And since all men were implicated in Adam's sin, all mankind is to be included in ὑποτάξας . So also Ebrard: "Unter dem ὑποτάξας (ist) nur Adam zu verstehen, allenfalls Inbegriff der durch und mit Adam suendig gewordenen Menschheit ueberhaupt."<sup>38</sup>

We shall use Godet as the representative of a view which finds in ὑποτάξας a reference to Satan. Godet assumes that διὰ τοῦ ὑποτάξασα refers to the moral cause of evil and of nature's curse. Since God can in no way be conceived of as the moral cause of evil, Godet must look elsewhere for an interpretation of this phrase. Now, ὑποτάξας implies conscious, active agency. But man, "so far as nature is concerned, played a purely passive part."<sup>39</sup> Hence, Godet applies the term to Satan, "who, either by his own fall or that of man, dragged creation into the miserable state here described."<sup>40</sup> That this can with all confidence be affirmed is attested to by the use of such phrases as ὁ ἀρχαὶ ἰσθ

37. Nebe, op. cit., p. 80.

38. Ebrard, op. cit., p. 337.

39. Godet, op. cit., p. 91.

40. Ibid. Godet here follows Hammond. It is interesting to note how Godet expands the phrase "prince of this World" to include a highly fanciful interpretation of the evolutionary theory: "He who believes in the personal existence of Satan may therefore also hold that this earth belonged originally to his domain. Has it not been from the first steps of its development the theatre of the struggle between the revolted vassal and his liege-lord?... From this unceasing struggle resulted the constant progress which culminated in man, and in the relatively perfect condition in which he first appeared. But the power of deviation showed itself anew immediately on the very theatre of paradise, and in the domain of liberty produced sin, which involved all again under the law of death, which is not yet finally vanquished," p. 94 f. Satan is here difficult to distinguish from the Gnostic Demiurge.



κόσμου τούτου, ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου, κοσμοκράτορες τοῦ σκοτους τούτου,

(Jn. 12:31; 2Cor. 4:4; Eph. 6:12) in reference to Satan.

What shall we say to these things? In themselves there is nothing objectionable in either of the above interpretations. That man is the immediate and Satan the ultimate cause of moral evil, especially also when we speak of the moral cause, is a biblical teaching. But is Paul here speaking of the moral cause of evil?

Διὰ with the accusative does not necessarily point to the moral cause, or (what is only slightly different) to the originating or direct cause (Zahn). It here means "by reason of", "the proper and direct cause" being better expressed by διὰ with the genitive (equal to per). Winer, therefore, interprets the passage as follows:

Here διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα constitutes an antithesis to οὐχ ἐκούσα, not voluntarily, but by reason of him that subjected, - by the will and command of God. Probably Paul intentionally avoided saying διὰ τοῦ υποτάξαντος, equivalent to ὁ θεὸς ὑπέταξε αὐτήν. Adam's sin was the proper and direct cause of the ματαίωσις.<sup>41</sup>

This seems to be the best rendering of Paul's thought. It is the most obvious interpretation, for "ὁ ὑποτάξας, without any more exactly defining adjunct, assumes God as the well-known subject."<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the appearance of ἔλπις in close connection with the rest of the sentence seems to point directly away from man and from Satan and upwards toward God.

41. Winer-Thayer, footnote to p. 399. Jn. 6:57 is cited as a parallel.

42. Philippi, op. cit., p. 13. Et multi. Cf. especially Bengel: "propter Deum: Adamus eam obnoxiam vanitati fecit, non subiecit," op. cit., p. 368. Also Alford: "διὰ is so far from losing its proper meaning by the reference of τὸν ὑποτάξαντα to God, that it gains its strictest and most proper meaning by that reference," op. cit., p. 394. It might be noted that the implications are, nevertheless, substantially the same if ὁ ὑποτάξας be referred to man.



If we follow this interpretation we find a great and baffling truth expressed in this phrase. God in His holy and inscrutable will "bade physical evil correspond to the moral evil of His conscious fallen creatures."<sup>43</sup> Our thoughts go back to the horrible judgment pronounced by God: "Cursed be the ground for thy sake," Gen. 3:17. We see God's will and His powerful and effective Word actively engaged in punishing sin with ruin. This fact forbids us to accept a thorough-going dualism, which resolves the problem of evil by postulating the eternal existence of two influences, the one evil, the other good.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, an absolute monism is also excluded. God is not the final cause of evil as the words "for thy sake" testify.

Many problems remain unsettled. They all center in one question: How can God in any way will evil and remain good? To distinguish between an antecedent and a consequent permissive will in God, and then to say that God wills evil according to His consequent will, is hardly intellectually satisfying, though it may be theologically sound. To expedite matters (which is a euphemistic way of saying that the problem is beyond me), let us leave the question to the philosophers and satisfy ourselves by calling attention to several of the more significant meliorating considerations.

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43. Moule, op. cit., p. 228. This, of course, remains true no matter how we might choose to interpret  $\delta \sigma\mu\omega\delta\epsilon\iota\sigma\mu\omega\delta\epsilon\iota\sigma\mu\omega$ .

44. The different dualistic systems differ in what they consider the evil influence to be. For some it is a sort of other God, who sets himself against the god of good; for others it is matter, which is looked upon as being essentially evil. In the one case the imperfection is due to the demi-god maker (Cf. footnote no. 40), in the other it is due to the material. But in both cases evil is viewed as necessary because of the existence of two eternally opposing forces. See introduction to the next chapter.



At the very head of this discussion we must place the undeniable and unquestionable sovereignty of God. Any other consideration must find its place in the light of this. God does what He will with what is His, and any peevish questioning on the part of the creature is impertinent and unseemly."Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. 9:20,21) And yet God has disclosed enough of His will and purposes even with respect to evil that we can at least make a stumbling way into this forbidding region.

We shall let Hofmann express one of the chief meliorating considerations for us:

Es muss ausgedrueckt sein sollen, dasz er (God) mit dieser That, nach der er benannt wird, etwas gewollt hat, was dadurch erzielt werden sollte. Hienach verstanden stellt sich der Gegensatz so, dasz die Unterwerfung der Welt unter die Nichtigkeit ein ihrerseits lediglich leidenschaftlicher Vorgang war, der nicht einem eigenen Willen derselben entgegenkam, wie es bei dem Menschen der Fall war, als er etwas werden wollte, wozu ihn Gott nicht geschaffen hatte, sondern der lediglich Gottes wegen geschah, weil er Etwas damit bezweckte.<sup>45</sup>

What that "something" was that God wished to accomplish we do not fully know. We do know that He wished to punish sin (Gen. 3:17 f.) And we also know that He wished to use natural evil as a curb for man's evil propensities and as a means of crushing opposition to His will. We need only to think of God's dealings with His Covenant people. They poured out a prayer when His chastening was upon them. Nature was made to serve man

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45. Hofmann, op. cit., p. 331 f.



and through the wisdom and mercy of God, who ultimately turns all evil to good, even fallen nature continues to serve him. This idea is strikingly expressed by Nebe:

Die Dahingabe der Kreatur in die Eitelkeit hinein ist fuer den gefallenen Menschen sonach ein heller, durchsichtiger Busspiegel; er zeigt ihm im Bilde, wie tief er gefallen ist. Und diese Eitelkeit der Schoepfung beschraenkt sich nicht auf solch ein Veranschaulichen, sie fordert den gefallenen Menschen zur Arbeit, zur Anstrengung seiner physischen und sittlichen Kraefte maechtig auf. Waere nicht der Acker verflucht worden, so haette der verlorene Sohn nicht Hunger leiden muessen draussen bei den Saenen auf dem Felde, so haette er aber auch nicht in sich geschlagen und zu sich gesprochen: ich will mich aufmachen und zu meinem Vater gehen! Der Vater wartete jetzt noch auf den verlorenen Sohn!<sup>46</sup>

The second meliorating consideration is alluded to by Weisz when he says, "If this subjection resulted as a consequence of sin, then thereby the hope has already been given that together with the deliverance from sin, the purpose of this subjection has been attained, and then will be again removed."<sup>47</sup> The central word in this quotation is deliverance, and at the center of all deliverance we see a Cross. Concentrating our perplexities in the cross, we see several things which have a direct bearing on our problem - God and the fact of evil. First of all, in its blinding reality we see, in spite of every seeming contradiction of the fact in nature, history, and human misery, that God is love. The Cross is redemptive activity on the part of God in response

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46. Nebe, op. cit., p. 80 f. Fairbairn lists four ways in which natural evil may be beneficent: It fosters creativity, makes men humane, demands common brotherhood in the face of a common enemy, and trains men to struggle on toward ever greater domination over the powers of nature, op. cit., p. 136 ff. The list is not exhaustive, but is suggestive as far as it goes.

47. Weisz, op. cit., p. 75 f.



to a world's need. Secondly, we see that God is righteous, that He is not indifferent to moral considerations, although it may at times seem that He is. Thus the goodness of God is finally vindicated: good because He is loving, good because He is righteous.

But there is a third thing that we see at the Cross of Christ. We see involved here the action of God. God is doing something about the world's need. On the Cross God has Himself vanquished evil, thus vindicating His omnipotence. All the forces of evil were there united against the good; the good won out in the victory of Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup>

(3) Much that we have just said has been in anticipation of the third reason Paul gives for nature's yearning. Nature yearns and awaits the revelation of God's children because she has been subjected to vanity and because her subjection was not voluntary, but imposed by God. But there is a far different element in her ἀποκαρδοκία; nature waits in eager expectancy because her subjection was "grounded in hope":

Syntactically, ἐφ' ἐλπίδι can be related, either to the verb, ὑπετάφη, or to ὑποτάξας. The Vulgate translates the verse, "Vanitati enim creatura subjecta est non volens, sed propter eum, qui subiecit eam in spe." Luther and the A. V. have similar translations. If God is understood to be the ὑποτάξας, this rendering is tolerable. Yet Philippi does not seem to be drawing an over-nice distinction when he says "this connection would only be probable if God, not creation were the subject of the hope."<sup>49</sup> True, the Subjector is the Author of

.. 48. For a valuable discussion of this, see Robinson's chapter "The Vanquishing of Evil", op. cit., pp. 78-110.

49. Philippi, op. cit., p. 13. Most modern commentators construe the sentence in this manner. But note Forbes' interesting conjecture on the



the hope, but the subjected is its recipient. This construction is also rendered doubtful by the fact that οὐχ ἔκωσα ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαται forms a thought complete in itself. Better is the construction which makes ἐφ' ἐλπίδι depend on the verb. The precise form of the expression should also be noted. "Am häufigsten bezeichnet ἐπὶ τινι den Grund," says Blaszyk-Debrunner; hence, "auf Grund der Hoffnung."<sup>50</sup> Nature was subjected on the ground of hope. The innocent sufferer is one day to find relief. In the meantime she is sustained by hope. This explains the note of eagerness in nature's longing (ἀποκαρδοκία). "The hope is latent, so to speak, in the constitution of nature, and comes out, in its sighing, to the sympathetic ear."<sup>51</sup> Stoeckhardt agrees with this

construction of the passage, Lange, op. cit., p. 267:

- a. ἡ γὰρ ἀποκαρδοκία τῆς κτίσεως  
 b. τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπεκδέχεται  
 τῷ γὰρ ματαιότητι ἡ κτίσις ὑπετάχθη  
 οὐχ ἔκωσα ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαται  
 A. ἐπ' ἐλπίδι ὅτι καὶ αὐτῷ ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθερωθήσεται...  
 B. εἰς τῶν...

"This makes the whole of the verse (20), except 'in hope' parenthetical, and connects v. 21 with that phrase, as giving the purpose of the hope. On this last view Forbes does not insist, however. 'In hope' is thus made to refer to both lines of the parenthesis, yet with the main reference to ἀπεκδέχεται. The two lines of v. 19 find their parallels in v. 21, while aA refer to the expectation or hope that animates creation, bB to the final consummation to which it points." While helpful in showing the essential unity of the passage, the assumption that Paul would make such an extensive parenthesis seems far-fetched.

50. Blaszyk-Debrunner, op. cit., par. 235, 2.

51. Denney, op. cit., p. 649. For this reason I prefer not to follow Zahn on this point, who says that the hope is not clearly defined as to its subject: "Wer die Hoffnung hege, ob die Creatur, ob der Mensch, ob Gott, ist nicht gesagt, sondern nur, dass jene Unterwerfung so stattgefunden habe, dass dabei eine Hoffnung geblieben sei, dass man hoffen koenne, die Creatur, wenn sie hoffen koennte, der Mensch, der ihre Schmerzen sieht, Gott, der all' seiner Geschoeepfe mitleidig erbarmt," op. cit., p. 521.



interpretation:

Indem Gott den Fluch der Sünde auch ueber die Creatur verhaengte, die unschuldige Creatur mit dem schuldigen Menschen leiden liess, hatte er zugleich eine kuenftige Wanlung dieses Miszverhaeltnisses ins Auge gefasst, so dass die leidende Creatur eine Aenderung und Besserung ihres Zustandes erhoffen kann.<sup>52</sup>

Bauer-Preuschen says that ἐλπίς is here used without special reference to the Christian hope, which is elsewhere the almost universal reference of the word in the New Testament.<sup>53</sup> This is not at all satisfactory. The close relationship between ἐλπίς and God - and that whether we connect it immediately with ὑποτάξας, or not - should already give us pause. Futhermore, in our discussion of ἀπεκδέχεται (v. 19) we noted the close relationship between the object of the Christian hope and that of nature: both are directed toward the manifestation of the sons of God and the ensuing glory. Perhaps if we briefly review the Christian concept of ἐλπίς the issue will become clarified.

Harlesz beautifully defines ἐλπίς as "sehnde Liebe".<sup>54</sup> In this definition of ἐλπίς we find the other two partners of Paul's deathless triumvirate: πίστις, ἐλπίς, ἀγάπη (1Cor. 13). Hope is love, yearning for the object which has become beloved through faith. It is thus bounded, in experience, as well as in Paul's expression, by πίστις on the one side and ἀγάπη on the other. And all three are bounded by God as their source and ultimate goal (Rom. 15:13). Harlesz correctly distinguishes between a subjective and an objective aspect of hope:

52. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 374.

53. Bauer-Preuschen, op. cit., sub ἐλπίς.

54. Harlesz, G. Chr. Adolph, Christliche Ethik, p. 217.



"Was die dem Christen eignende subjektive Hoffnung charakterisiert, ist eben dies, das sie nicht menschlichen Ursprungs ist und nicht irdische Ziele verfolgt... Die Hoffnung ist hiermit dem Bereiche des bloß subjektiven ganz entnommen. Sie ruht auf objektivem Grunde. Das Christen Herz wird mit seiner subjektiven Hoffnung auf den Boden einer objektiven Hoffnung gestellt."<sup>55</sup> Therefore, Christ is Himself the hope (1Tim. 1:1; Col. 1:27), especially also in connection with His resurrection, the ground of all living hope (1Pet. 1:3.21). Now the goal of this subjectively-experienced, objectively certain hope is the coming complete salvation, "ganz und gar... das zukommende Heil."<sup>56</sup> (Rom. 8:23 f; 1Thess. 5:8 f; Heb. 9:28) This "embraces the entire sphere over which the results of sin have spread. New Testament hope, in a word, includes the prospect of a state wherein all needs shall be supplied, all wants satisfied, all the hindrances of life and results of sin removed, raising upon the basis of trusted Scriptural promise and the facts of redemption, a future full of bliss, in contrast with the unsatisfying present."<sup>57</sup>

Does not nature's ἐλπίς fit into this picture of Christian ἐλπίς?

Both are set in the context of present suffering and future deliverance. Both are derived from God as their source (which will become more apparent in our exegesis of verse 21). Both have future restoration as their goal. Both look to Christ as the Deliverer. Why, then, the hesitancy to relate the two? Certainly, we do not wish to press the relationship to the point of identity. ἐλπίς, as well as πίστις and κληθή, are

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55. Op. cit., p. 217 f., passim. Cf. Luther: "Einmal heisset es der grozse Mut, der in aller Anfechtung fest bleibt und harret des Sieges und der endliche Seligkeit. Zum andern heisset es derselbe Sieg und die endliche Seligkeit," quoted in Harlessz, p. 218. 56. Ibid.

57. Gremer, Herman, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, in loco.



in their full and proper sense expressions of the new relationship existing between God and the sons of God. Nevertheless, when Paul ascribes to creation, he is giving final expression to that which we have noted again and again in this chapter - the anthropocentricity of the universe. Nature shared man's curse; she also shares his hope (Cf. v. 21).

Die Hoffnung der Creatur ist ein Abglanz der Hoffnung der Kinder Gottes, sie heisst Jesus Christus. Darum ist es schoen, wenn man das Kreuz, welches auf unsern Altaeren steht, auch auf Bergen oder sonstwo unter freiem Himmel aufgepflanzt findet. Das Blut, welches von da hingeronnen ist, hat sammt dem Fluche ueber uns Suender auch den Bann des Erdbodens aufgehoben.<sup>58</sup>

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58. Besser, op. cit., p. 636.



#### CHAPTER IV

##### Termination of Creation's Groaning (v. 21)

διότι καὶ αὐτὴ ἡ κτίσις ἐλευθερωθήσεται ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς  
φθορᾶς εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Because creation itself also will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the sons of God.<sup>1</sup>

"A strange dualistic, spiritualistic conception of the relation of soul and body," says Koeberle, "runs like a hidden stream through the history of human thought. Notable leaders of thought in ancient times (Plato, Pythagoras, Philo, Plotinus) and in the east (Buddha, Zarathustra, Mani) are its spiritual fathers; great occidental thinkers have followed them... The fundamental idea that unites them all, irrespective of time or place, is their teaching of the soul which denies the cosmos. The spiritual, as incorporeal, and the immaterial are considered holy and good; the natural, on the other hand, because it is earthly is regarded as essentially low, evil and devilish."<sup>2</sup> since the misery of sin arises primarily from the entanglements of the soul with matter, redemption is conceived of as freedom from the body and everything material. The dualistic idea has dogged Christian theology throughout the centuries. "Christianity was early beset by the temptation to adopt a thorough-

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1. The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Edition, p. 421.

2. Koeberle, Adolf, The Quest for Holiness, p. 28 f., passim.



going dualism. This took the form of a subtle 'vain philosophy' which is known by the general name of Gnosticism, which carried on a kind of 'fifth column' activity within the Christian churches. It was 'in the air' in the first age of Christianity. It was fertile in the dreams and fancies in which vast theories of the universe clothed themselves in magic shapes."<sup>3</sup> Although the Church officially renounced Gnosticism, it did not completely shake off the subtle spell of the dualistic solutions of the problem of evil. The cell of the ascetic, the excesses of the religious libertine, mysticism's "ladder" of spiritual ascent - all bear solemn witness to the persistence of the dualistic view of matter and spirit.

Though it would be a little awkward to attempt to prove that Paul was refuting an early form of Gnosticism when he wrote Rom. 8:18-22, it can without hesitancy be stated that, in a positive way, his statements regarding nature knock the props from beneath every extreme form of dualism. Our exegesis of verse 20 has made this clear beyond dispute. Dualism must be rejected on two scores: first, nature and matter, as created by God were "very good"; second, the evil now resident in matter can be traced to a revolt of spirit, of the soul of man, against God. Thus we can rightly understand Koeberle when he says that "the body and the senses could be quite pure in themselves... Every healthy child is still a hymn in praise of the divine miracle of creation. Yet it is just to the body and its activities that we find clinging those demoniac passions that rob it of its original likeness to the Creator."<sup>4</sup> And what is

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3. Robinson, op. cit., p. 34 f.

4. Koeberle, op. cit., p. 32 ff., passim.



true of a child is true of the "meanest flower that grows."

(1Tim. 4:4) - until it is abused by the perverted spirit of man.

Perhaps someone is wondering why we have introduced this matter here. There is a view, still current in theological circles, which holds that the present universe will be annihilated in an absolute sense at the last judgment, that the "new heaven and the new earth" will be absolutely new. While many hold this opinion on the basis of serious and honest Bible study, the suspicion lurks in my mind that with some it is a vestigial remnant of the Gnostic Weltanschauung, or, at best, a symptom of a thoroughgoing idealism.<sup>5</sup> Does the Bible really warrant such a view? Is it really consonant with the Christian faith? It seems to be out of harmony with a faith which is based on the resurrection of its Founder, who by that resurrection gave the strongest expression to the "positive relation of God to nature."<sup>6</sup> It is apparently inconsistent with a faith which teaches the resurrection of man's own body. It is offensive to reason and sentiment. And, as we shall see, it is a view which, if held, does violence to Paul's teaching in Rom. 8: 21.

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5. Cf. Brunner: "From the point of view of Idealism existence in time and space is indeed only apparent, whereas true existence is above time and space. But to the extent in which Idealism frees man from the bondage to the Cosmos it also severs him from history, and in so doing destroys the decisive character of human life," op. cit., p. 426.

6. Schlatter, Das Christliche Dogma, p. 310, quoted in Koeberle, op. cit., p. 33 f.



The longer one studies this extraordinary passage the more one is impressed by its perfect unity and symmetry. So intimately are its several parts related that every phrase, almost every word, is related to every other word and phrase in the paragraph. Janus-like, each section looks back over everything that has preceded it and ahead over all that is to follow. When Paul says that "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," he at once sums up his entire argument up to that point and, at the same time, carries it forward. Yet the immediate connection evidently is with the  $\epsilon\varphi' \epsilon\lambda\pi\iota\delta\iota$  with which verse 20 closes.

Although the Nestle text accepts the reading  $\delta\iota\omicron\tau\iota \kappa\alpha\iota \kappa.\tau\lambda.$ , there is good textual evidence for the  $\omicron\tau\iota$  reading of the Textus Receptus. The argument is not, however, materially effected by the choice of connectives.<sup>7</sup> Since, moreover, the great majority of those commentators who follow the  $\omicron\tau\iota$  reading take it in its conjunctive force (nam -  $\delta\iota\omicron\tau\iota$ ) we shall without further consideration follow the Nestle text.<sup>8</sup>

Reading  $\delta\iota\omicron\tau\iota$ , we find that Paul here assigns a reason for creation's hope. Stoeckhardt would add the thought that this statement more closely describes the content of that hope: "Jedenfalls wird hier das Hoffnungsgut, dem die Creatur entgegenwartet, die grosse Wandlung, auf welche hin Gott sie der Eitelkeit untergeben hat, naeher beschrieben."<sup>9</sup>

7. Hodge says  $\omicron\tau\iota$  could be rendered "that" without altering the sense, op. cit., p. 431.

8. Cf. Alford: " $\omicron\tau\iota$  is equal to "because", not "that" after  $\epsilon\lambda\pi\iota\delta\iota$  - "for then it is not likely that  $\delta\epsilon\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\eta \eta \kappa\tau\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$  would be so emphatically repeated," op. cit., p. 394. Tholuck: "Mir scheint es... dasz, wenn einen neuen Satz beginnt..., das Ganze um vieles Kraft und Nachdruck gewinnt," op. cit., p. 441. So also Luther: "denn", and the A. V. and R. S. V. "because".

9. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 374.



Although this is undoubtedly true, and although a description of the "Hoffnungsgut" will comprise the greater portion of this chapter, it would seem that this is not the major emphasis in the verse. Paul does not intend, primarily, to describe the hope as to its object but to show its validity. The immediate object of the hope was already mentioned in verse 19: *τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τῶν υἱῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ*. Here the purport of the hope is expressly stated "in order to show the ground of the expectation in v. 19, as directed precisely to the manifestation of the sons of God."<sup>10</sup> Whatever else he says concerning the content of the hope, though highly significant, is almost incidental to this main idea. How, then are we to reconstruct Paul's thought?

"Nature anxiously awaits the Parousia and the manifestation of the glory in God's sons, because she is now subjected to frustration. Her subjection was caused by man's fall, not by any fault of her own. Therefore, God has left her a hope, associated with the revelation of the glory in God's children. This is not mere poetry or manner of speaking for "creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." - So considered, verse 21 becomes, in effect, Paul's statement of doctrine. That nature is to share in man's glory is reasonable because of the conditions attending her subjection to frailty, but there is nothing in the constitution of nature which would absolutely demand this. It is true, as any doctrine is true, not, in the first instance, because Paul has written it, but because it is a revelation of the Divine will. "And since it is God's will,"

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10. Gifford, op. cit., p. 156.



Paul says, as it were, "I did not overstep the bounds when I ascribed a hope to nature. She hopes because ( *διότι* ) she will most certainly share the glory of the children of God. For that is God's intention." This is the thought that most naturally arises from the connection of verses 20 and 21, and it is upheld by Nebe:

Der Inhalt der Hoffnung ist am Ende doch auch durch das Vorhergehende hinlaenglich erklart und angedeutet... Der Eitelkeit wurde die Schoepfung unterworfen auf Hoffnung, diese Eitelkeit ist also nur ein dazwischentretender, fuer eine bestimmte Zeit in Aussicht genommener Zustand, denn nicht bloss die in Suende gefallenen Gotteskinder, sondern auch *αὐτῆς ἢ κτίσις κτλ*<sup>11</sup>

*Διότι καὶ αὐτῆς ἢ κτίσις ἔλεν δερωδῆσεται* Paul begins. Theophylact, following Chrysostom, held that *καὶ αὐτῆς ἢ κτ.* indicates a climax and that *καὶ* is to have the force of "even": *ὅτι ἐὶ μάλιστα, ἀλλὰ καὶ-κατὰ δεξιότερον ἔστι καὶ τὸ σφύλλον* .<sup>12</sup> But Meyer (et al.) correctly refuses this interpretation on the grounds that "there is simply expressed the similarity; not a climax; of which the context affords no hint."<sup>13</sup> *κτίσις* contains an epexegetis of *αὐτῆς* , "not essential, indeed, as *καὶ αὐτῆς* , in allusion to *ἢ κτίσις* , v. 20, would have sufficed."<sup>14</sup> (Cf. Mk. 6:17 - *αὐτὸς ὁμοῦ ὁ ἠρώης*) It is added, no doubt, to call special attention once more to the *κτίσις* and, moreover, to set it definitely over against the *υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ* , v. 19, and its parallel *τέκνοι τοῦ θεοῦ* , v. 21. Thus the phrase is not equal to ipse quoque, but, as Philippi says, it should be translated "et ipse (Ik. 1:36) it also, creation, like God's children,"<sup>15</sup> bringing to the fore once more

11. Nebe, op. cit., p. 83, passim.

12. Quoted in Tholuck, op. cit., p. 411.

13. Meyer, op. cit., p. 324.

14. Philippi, op. cit., p. 14.

15. Ibid.



more the idea of kinship between nature and man.

Nature is like God's children in two respects, both associated with the idea expressed in the verb ἐλευθερωθήσεται (future passive of ἐλευθερώω). Like God's children, nature "shall be freed" from something and for something. (1) What she is to be freed from is expressed by the phrase ἀπο τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς (2) what she is to be freed for, by the phrase εἰς ἐλευθερίαν τῆς δόξης τῶν τέκνων τοῦ θεοῦ

(1) ἀπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς - Commentators differ widely on the use of the genitive in this phrase. Something can be said in favor of most of the interpretations. Thus Hofmann, supported also by Nebe, interprets it as a subjective genitive. Taking exception to the usual interpretation which holds that τῆς φθορᾶς is an appositional genitive, he says, "Nicht Appositions-genitiv kann τῆς φθορᾶς sein sollen, da δουλεία ein Stand, φθορά ein Widerfahrniss ist, sondern die Knechtschaft der Schoepfung wird nach dem benannt, was ihren Stand zu einem Stande der Knechtschaft macht."<sup>16</sup> Hofmann's distinction between "Stand" and "widerfahrniss" seems to be somewhat over-refined in this instance. More might be said in favor of the interpretation which takes τῆς φθορᾶς as an objective genitive, "subjection to corruption as a law,"<sup>17</sup> rendering the idea of enslavement very emphatic. This gives a very good and natural sense to the passage and is, furthermore, sup-

16. Hofmann, op. cit., p. 333. Nebe gives the following additional reason for rejecting the appositional genitive: "Wenn naemlich die Knechtschaft in der Verderbniss bestehen soll, so musz dann die Freiheit nothwendiger Weise auch bestehen in der Glorie der Gotteskinder. Ist dies aber der Fall?" op. cit., p. 84. We believe it is.

17. Godet, op. cit., p. 92. Cf. also Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 208. All of the recent English versions translate the genitive as objective. This may be due, in some instances, to the fact that the exegetical idea can only with difficulty be translated into English.



ported by the *ὁμοίωσις τῆς μεταβολῆς* of verse 20. *δουλεία* corresponds to *ὁμοίωσις*, and the dative *τῇ μεταβολῇ ἐν τῇ φθορᾷ*

But while this construction exactly parallels an expression in verse 19, it destroys what to many seems to be the obvious parallelism in verse 20 itself. The genitive in the phrase *ἐκ δουλείας τῆς σαρκὸς* cannot possibly be understood as an objective genitive. To preserve the parallelism many commentators, therefore, take *τῆς φθορᾶς* as an appositional genitive, "from the bondage that consists in corruption."<sup>18</sup> I am inclined to accept this last interpretation, though a lingering glance still rests on the interpretation of Godet (objective genitive). It might not be assuming too much to say that the Greek mind might very well have at once assimilated the ideas expressed in both relationships of the genitive.

The concept *φθορά* includes the ideas of "corruptibility, decay, transiency." In the New Testament it has primarily an ethical connotation. 2Pet. 2:19 is an interesting parallel to our passage, for the same image is used. Those who follow the lusts of the flesh are slaves to corruption (*αὐτοὶ δούλοι ὑπερῶσιντες φθορᾷ*) "for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." To this Paul adds the thought that "he that soweth to his flesh (ethical *φθορά*) shall of the flesh reap corruption (*φθοράν* - Gal. 6:8)". Moral corruption, in other words, brings with it physical corruption - sickness, old age, and death. *Δουλεία τῆς φθορᾶς* is *δουλεία τοῦ θανάτου* (Cf. Heb. 2:15; and Rom. 5:14) As applied to creation, *φθορά* is practically synonymous with *μεταβολή* (v. 20). Speaking for all of the earliest commentators (and for us), Theodoretus says, *μεταβολή τε καλεῖ τὴν φθοράν*.<sup>19</sup> We shall not quarrel, however, with

18. Meyer, loc. cit.

19. Nebe, op. cit., p. 83.



those who think of *ματαιότης* as the ground of *φθορά*, "die Zerstoerung, Vernichtung, welche sich aus jener *ματαιότης* entwickelt: die zur Reife gekommene *ματαιότης* ist *φθορά*"<sup>20</sup> As "sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (Js. 1:16), so *ματαιότης* when it has had its full effects bringeth forth *φθορά*.

In our last chapter, to which the reader is referred for a more extended discussion of this matter, we noted especially two aspects of *ματαιότης* and *φθορά*: nature's own imperfection, and her subservience to wicked men. From both, says Paul, she "shall be freed". A quotation from Besser will serve once more to sum up this argument and to form a bridge to the next:

Wenn die Kinder Gottes, beide die schon gesammelten und die noch zerstreuten (Joh. 11, 52), um deretwillen Gott Himmel und Erde noch erhaelt, das verheissene Erbe der Herrlichkeit offenbarlich empfangen werden mit ihres Leibes Erloesung (V. 23), dann wird auch sie, die Creatur, freiwerden von beiderlei Verderbenskechtschaft: kein Tod, kein Schmerz, keine Krankheit, keine Ungestalt, kein Schmutz, kein Schade, kein Verwesungsgreuel wird im neuen Himmel und auf der neuen Erde seyn, darinnen Gerechtigkeit wohnt (2Petr. 3:13), und entronnen der Gewalt der Gottlosen, wie ein Vogel dem Strick des Voglers, wird die erneute Creatur mit Lust sich zu den Fueszen Gottes und seiner Kinder schmiegen, wie im Paradise, aber noch schoener geschmeckt und lieblicher anzuschauen, als im Anfang, so viel groessere Ehre der Gottes- und Menschensohn werth ist, dem Gott Alles untergethan hat zu seinen Fueszen (Hebr. 2, 18), als der erste Mensch von Erde war, und Alles, was Himmel und Erde vermoegen, wird Gott und Gottes Kindern dienen ganz allein.<sup>21</sup>

(2) ἔλε υδερ οὐδὴ σέται --- εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν τῆς σῆς τῶν τεκνῶν

τοῦ θεοῦ, Paul continues. What was stated negatively in the first half of the verse is now stated positively. Nature's hope is a valid

20. Ibid. Nebe here speaks for Meyer, Philippi, et al.

21. Besser, op. cit., p. 637.



and a certain one, not only because it is God's purpose to free her from her bondage to corruption, but because it is His further purpose to grant her a freedom analogous to the glory of His children.

The construction presents some difficulty because of the repetition of the verbal idea in εἰς ἐλευθερίαν . "Shall be freed in (or into) the freedom," though a possible translation, gives a somewhat strange sense. This has led some commentators to assume that is here used in its temporal force. The translation would then be "Creation herself shall be freed at the time when God's children shall receive the liberty of their glory." Those who favor the annihilation mundi view find this interpretation very congenial, for they are relieved of the embarrassment of explaining away the very obvious implications of the more natural interpretation. Gerhard already ignored the last phrase of the verse and centered his attention on the first, which readily adapts itself to the annihilation view:

Servitii abolitio non solum per renovationem fieri potest; ac proinde ab indeterminato ad determinatum, a genere ad certam speciem, a liberatione ad modum liberationis per renovationem non debet fieri progressus.

The last phrase must, however, be taken into account, for as Stoeckhardt remarks, "Die Dogmatiker des 17. Jahrhunderts, welche die Befreiung der Creatur von der Knechtschaft der Vergaenglichkeit als Vernichtung der Creatur auffassen, indem sie sich sonderlich auf 2 Petr. berufen, muessen den Worten Pauli Gewalt anthun. εἰς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν kann unmoeglich Zeitbestimmung sein."<sup>23</sup> Δουλεία and ἐλευθερία must be

22. Quoted in Philippi, Friedr. Ad., Kirliche Glaubenslehre, p. 147, vol. VI.

23. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 377.



related to the same subject in a parallel fashion. But that is impossible if this interpretation is followed. The more natural way of resolving the difficulty in construction is to assume a slight ellipsis, as does Hodge: "Delivered, or liberated into the liberty, is an elliptical form of expression for 'delivered and introduced into the liberty'."<sup>24</sup>

Another difficulty is presented by the genitive τῆς δόξης. Both Luther and the A. V. translate it as a qualitative genitive: "der herrlichen Freiheit", "the glorious liberty". But "beware of the fatal hendiadys," warns Alford: "the 'freedom of the glory' is not in any sense equal to 'the glorious freedom'."<sup>25</sup> Conclusive is the argument of Sanday; namely, that "the glorified state is the leading fact, not a subordinate fact."<sup>26</sup> There is evidently an "allusion to δόξα, v. 18, for the ἀποκαλυψήν of which the κτίσις waits, v. 19."<sup>27</sup>

A number of commentators simply take τῆς δόξης as a possessive genitive. So Godet: "Paul does not say that nature will participate in the glory, but only in the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Liberty is one of the elements of their glorious state, and it is the only one to which nature can lay claim."<sup>28</sup> Aside from the fact that Godet's final assertion is quite arbitrary, it should be clear from our discussion of δόξα in verse 18 that the glory Paul here ascribes to the children of God is precisely liberty, especially ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ σώματος.

24. Hodge, op. cit., p. 431. Cf. Philippi, op. cit., p. 14: a constructio praeagnans for ἐλευθερωθήσεται ὑπὸ τῆς δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς καὶ κατασκηθίβεται εἰς τὴν ἔλ. κ. τ. λ.

25. Alford, op. cit., p. 395.

26. Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 208.

27. Philippi, Commentary, op. cit., p. 14.

28. Godet, loc. cit. So also Alford



Hence, if we are ready to grant the ἐλευθερία of God's children to the κτίσις, we are compelled to grant her also the δόξα.<sup>29</sup>

Because of the coloring of δόξα in this entire section, we do best to take the genitive as appositional, "into the freedom which shall consist in the glory of the children of God."<sup>30</sup> In this interpretation τῆς δόξης is exactly parallel to τῆς φερόμενης. Although the proper antithesis to φερόμενης is ἀφροσύνη, as in 1Cor. 15, "the expression δόξα, which includes in it ἀφροσύνη as its negative basis, is selected because it corresponds with δόξα, v. 18."<sup>31</sup> As for the heaping of genitives τῆς δόξης ἡμῶν γένων τοῦ Θεοῦ, we find in this, beyond a purposeful attempt to add a "certain solemnity",<sup>32</sup> the idea of inevitable concatenation, which is so prominent in this chapter (e. g. vs. 29-30; cf. also 2:5; 2Cor. 4:6; Eph. 4:13). - The time when the ἐλευθερία and δόξα will come upon the children of God has been indicated by the phrases πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν

29. For obvious reasons, a commentator who favors the annihilatio view would be prone to take the genitive as possessive.

30. Meyer, op. cit., p. 324. So also Philippi; Stoeckhardt: "Ihre Herrlichkeit ist zugleich Freiheit," op. cit., p. 375; Zahn: "Wie τῆς φερόμενης zu τῆς δουλείας so gehoert τῆς δόξης, als ein gen. appositionell zu τὴν ἐλευθερίαν und dieses ist durch εἰς mit ἐλευθερωθήσονται verbunden, um auszudruecken, dass die Freiheit, zu welcher die Creatur gefuehrt werden soll, nichts anderes ist als ihre Teilnahme an der Freiheit der Gotteskinder, welche mit deren Herrlichkeit gegeben und geradezu identisch ist wie die Knechtschaft mit der Vergaenglichkeit," Der Brief des Paulus an die Roemer, p. 405. Hofmann again considers this to be a subjective genitive, but his conclusions are substantially the same as ours: "Ist naemlich das innere Wesen der Gotteskinder nach auszen entsprechend offenbart, so ist ihre Erscheinung ganz und lediglich Selbstdarstellung und nicht mehr, wie vordem, durch solches, das ihrem Wesen fremd und fremdartig ist, zwangsweise bedingt. Und einer solchen Freiheit ist dann auch die Schoepfung mittheilhaft. Die Herrlichkeit der Kinder Gottes erstreckt sich ueber sie und macht ihre Daseinsweise zu einer durch nichts Fremdes beeintraechtigten Offenbarung ihres im Schoepferwillen Gottes begruendeten Wesens," op. cit., p. 334.

31. Philippi, op. cit., p. 14.

32. Meyer, op. cit., p. 325.



ἀποκαλυφθῆναι (v. 18) and ἀποκάλυψις πᾶσι υἱῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ (v. 19).

It is to occur at the Parousia, as Stoeckhardt observes: "Wenn Christus in seiner Herrlichkeit wiederkommt, werden die Kinder Gottes seiner Herrlichkeit theilhaftig werden. Und wenn die Kinder Gottes dann verherrlicht und verklaert sind, dann sind sie zur vollendeten Freiheit durchdrugen."<sup>33</sup>

Now to repeat, the special freedom and glory to be manifested at the Parousia in the υἱοὶ and τέκνοι τοῦ Θεοῦ is the ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ σώματος. The body will be freed from the entanglements of sin (δουλεία τῆς φθορᾶς) and become fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, immortal and incorruptible, ἀφθαρσία (Phil. 3:21). And this ἐλευθερία will at the same time be the δόξα of God's children.

Much more should be said concerning the nature of the resurrection body, but we shall content ourselves with a few brief notices. The resurrection body will be a true physical body, freed, indeed, from the σάρξ, but σάρξ understood in an ethical sense (Cf. use of σάρξ and σαρκικός in

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33. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 375. This is perhaps the proper place briefly to discuss the millennialists' use of our passage. As might be expected, this text has played quite an important role in the history of millennialism. The interpretation, of course, depends upon the time conceived of as the Parousia. Irenaeus looked for the fulfillment of this prophecy after the premillennial coming of Christ. Joseph Seiss, to pass over many centuries of interpretation in a single leap, looked for the fulfillment also after the premillennial coming. He predicted a transformed state for the universe during the millennial reign, but envisioned this state as continuing after the thousand years, on into the ages of eternity. See Last Times, pp. 63-87. Yet one is struck in even a superficial overview of the various millennialistic systems (and no two are alike) with the comparative silence on the state of the universe during the millennium. The reason for this is stated by Kromminga, D. H., The Millenium in the Church, p. 19: "The renewal of the universe plainly is set at the end of the long process of transition from the present to the eternal state... It is distinctly in the social-historical realm, that the question lies to which chiliasm in its various forms has tried to give its own definite though diverse answers. Primarily it has no distinct answer to the deliverance of the 'creature', as Paul says in Rom. 8:18-25."



Rom. 7 and 1Cor. 3, respectively).<sup>34</sup> Yet this physical body will be entirely dominated by the spiritual principle. "The human body," Swete paraphrases Paul in 1Cor. 15:44 ff., "is sown a psychic body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a psychic body, there is also a spiritual. So also it is written, The first Adam became (ἐγένετο εἶς) a living soul (ψυχὴ ζώων); the last Adam became a life-giving spirit (πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν). But not first the spiritual, but the psychic, and then the spiritual."<sup>35</sup> (Cf. Rom. 5:12 ff.) According to Paul's trichotomy, both the *σὰρξ* and *ψυχή* dominate the present man at the expense of the freedom and the glory of the ἀπολύτρωσις will consist in a reversal of this order of things. The following quotation from Swete will summarize and, I believe, clarify what we have said and might still say on the nature of the resurrection body:

Our present bodies are psychic, our bodies when raised from the dead will be spiritual. But our present bodies are not psychic in regard to their material; from that point of view they are carnal - *σαρκικά* or rather *σαρκινά*. They are 'psychic' only in so far as they are adapted to the purposes of that lower rational life which St. Paul calls the psyche; the passions

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34. Cf. Delizsch, op. cit., p. 374: "Der ganze natuerliche Mensch heisst *σὰρξ*, weil er ganz und gar in die Gewalt der schlimmen Potenzen seines Naturgrundes geraten ist, welche die Ursuende entbunden hat. Diese Entbindung ist das Werk widergoettlichen Wollens, aber, einmal geschehen, ist sie eine nur durch Palingenesie zu beseitigende Thatsache. Nur so erklart sich die Weitherrschaft des Begriffes *σὰρξ* in ethischem Sinne. *σὰρξ* in diesem Sinne ist das tastbare materialische Fleisch mit Einschluss seiner vom Anfang menschlichen Daseins an ihm gleichartigen und in Wechselbeziehung zu ihm stehenden seelisch-geistigen Innerlichkeit und selbst mit Einschluss des von der angeborenen fleischlichen Natur sich bestimmen lassenden Ich, welches, indem es den suendhaften Anlagen, Hemmnissen und Reizen dieser Natur nachgibt, das angeborne Verderben derselben steigert."

35. Swete, Henry Barclay, The Holy Spirit in the New Testament, p. 190.



affections, and emotions of the soul are revealed and work themselves out into act through the body as it now exists. Similarly, the risen body for which we look will be the expression and instrument of the higher spiritual nature which is in us, when that has been developed and matured by the Spirit of God. The Spirit dwells in our mortal bodies (Cf. ἀποχὴ τοῦ πνεύματος, appositional genitive, v. 23), but does not make them 'spiritual'; to the end they will yield themselves readily to the desires of the flesh, and thus express the psyche rather than the pneuma. This will be reversed by the resurrection. It is reasonable, St. Paul argues, to expect that as there is a body adapted to the present visible order, so there is, in God's purpose, a body akin to the spiritual and invisible order... The risen and ascended Christ is not 'psychic' but 'pneumatic'; He is the Heavenly Man, and those who are heavenly (Cf. Heb. 3:1) ought to wear the image of the Heavenly in every part of a renewed manhood.<sup>36</sup>

"The elevation of the children of God," says Lange, "from the corruption to the condition of glorification, constitutes the center of the deliverance into this state of glory (for the κτίσις); but the creature is drawn upwards in this elevation, in conformity with its dynamical dependence on the center, and its organic connection with it."<sup>37</sup> What does this all imply for the κτίσις? How, specifically, is the κτίσις to share in the ἐλευθερία and δόξα of God's children? Paul's statement is by no means exhaustive and does not give us material for a detailed description of nature's state after the Parousia. But there are several direct implications.

By the same token that the freedom of the resurrection body will not consist in freedom from the physical, the freedom of nature cannot be looked upon as a destruction of her physical material basis. Rather, her freedom will consist in a removal of the effects of the Fall (everything contained in the concepts ματαιότης and φθορά) and an elevation to

36. Op. cit., p. 190 f.

37. Lange, op. cit., p. 272.



the state originally intended for her by God. We are tempted to compare the state of nature in the coming Paradise with her state in the original Paradise. But that would not be a complete statement of the known facts. Scriptures give us reason to assume that there will be an additum in the heavenly Paradise. As the heavenly man will be "spiritual", so nature will be wholly "adapted to the spirit, and therefore not only exempt from the corruption, but also the constraint of nature..., an organ, an expression, and an image of the spirit."<sup>38</sup> So Lange, whom we have just quoted:

According to the nature of the ἀνθρώπου, χοϊκός, his whole sphere stood in need of development - in need of a metamorphosis (2Cor. 5:1 ff; 1 Cor. 15:50); but this development has become abnormal through sin; and the metamorphosis has, by a metastasis, become death in the pregnant sense, *φθορά*, corruption. But from this correspondence of nature with the human world in the state of the fall and decay, there also follows an expectation of their correspondence in the delivering restoration which will also be the completion of the normal development.<sup>39</sup>

Therefore, Scriptures very appropriately speak of "a new heaven and a new earth", renovation being perhaps a better word to describe nature's future state than restoration.

It should now be sufficiently clear that Paul definitely teaches a conversio, rather than an annihilatio mundi. "Liberatio non fit per plenam destructionem," says Bengel.<sup>40</sup> As already suggested, we do not know in what the conversio will consist, any more than we know what it

38. Lange, op. cit., p. 287.

39. Op. cit., p. 286. Lange has written an entire book on this subject, but unfortunately it was not available to the writer.

40. Bengel, op. cit., p. 368. Cf. Philippi: "Certainly the present passage does not suggest an absolute annihilation and subsequent new creation of the *κτίσις*; but, in harmony with ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ σώματος v. 23, merely a transformation of existing nature," op. cit., p. 15.



will mean for us to have a spiritual body.<sup>41</sup> Nor do we know how it is to take place. But Zahn's reference to the conversio of the living saints is at least suggestive of how this might take place:

Der Christ aber hofft nach der sonst bekannten Anschauung des Apostels eine Verklaerung seines leiblichen Lebens, welches entweder durch den Todesszustand hindurchgeht und in der Auferstehung wiederhergestellt wird oder, wenn er den Tag der Parusie erlebt, durch Verwandlung, durch ein *ἐπιπέσει*, aus dem einen Zustand in den andern uebergeht. Was der Natur bevorsteht, wird dem letzteren Falle eher als dem ersteren analog werden muessen, weil sie ja im Leben steht, wenn der Herr kommt, und kein Todesszustand zwischen ihre gegenwaertige und ihre zukuenftige Gestaltung tritt, woraus aber nicht folgt, das nicht ein das Sterben irgendwie ersetzender Akt vom einen zum andern ueberfuehrt.<sup>42</sup>

More than this we shall not attempt to say. In fact, nothing more need be said than has already been said so well by Stoeckhardt:

Die Creatur soll und wird an der Freiheit und Herrlichkeit der Kinder Gottes Antheil bekommen. Wie sie jetzt mit die Schmach und den Fluch der suendigen Menschen traegt, so wird sie dann mit den vollendeten, verklaerten Menschen zu Ehren kommen. Alle Spuren der Vergaenglichkeit und des Todes werden dann ausgemerzt sein. Die Creatur wird als das, was sie ist, offenbar sein, als Creatur Gottes. Sie wird ihrem eigensten Triebe, ihrer eigensten Natur gemaez im Dienste Gottes, ihres Schoepfers, leben, weben, und sich bewegen und reiner noch und schoener, als es im Anfang war, die Ehre und Herrlichkeit Gottes widerspiegeln.<sup>43</sup>

One of the most significant arguments in favor of this natural interpretation of Paul's thought is expressed by Orr in the following words:

The doctrine of the Christian consummation carries with it, further, the idea that, together with the perfecting of the believer, or the sons of God, there will be a perfecting or glori-

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41. Luther's well-known portrayals of the new Paradise are not to be despised as childish, or, at best, as meant only for children. They have a deep core of biblically-founded truth. It is true that they are merely approximations in human language, but we can do no better.

42. Zahn, "Die seufzende Creatur", op. cit., p. 535.

43. Stoeckhardt, loc. cit.



cation even of outward nature. This is implied by the possession of a corporeity of any kind, for that stands in relation to an environment, to a general system of things.<sup>44</sup>

I shall also quote Storr on this matter, not because I feel the need of further support, but because he states the argument in unmistakable terms:

If we are to live on as persons in the hereafter, our life must have relationships with matter. And surely it is a very real part of the Christian's hope, and one fraught with religious significance, that our relationships with matter will hereafter be richer. Nature here reveals the glory of God. The argument from beauty and the argument from design both lead up to God. The renovation of nature is part of the hope both of the prophets and of St. Paul.<sup>45</sup>

But the opinion that matter is a hindrance continues to haunt some minds. As though we were able to "estimate the powers and capacities of matter, when brought by God into complete subjection to the spirit!"<sup>46</sup> Such passages as Jn. 14:2 and Eph. 1:20 and the analogy to Christ's resurrection body indicate that the heavenly man will not be confined to any narrow limits, and the question whether the renovated universe will be the heaven of God's saints is not wholly relevant. Yet our text gives us reason to assume that it is of the very nature of the renovated universe, herself free, to be exactly suited to the free state of God's

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<sup>44</sup>. Orr, op. cit., p. 333.

<sup>45</sup>. Storr, op. cit., p. 183. Nebe's exegesis of 1Cor. 15:42 merits attention: "Der Leib, welchen der verklaerte traegt, ist nicht eine Gabe von dem Himmel her, wenn auch der Geber der Herr von dem Himmel ist, sondern die Morgengabe, dass ich so sage, der verklaerten Erde an das Gotteskind in seiner Klarheit; denn was hier gesaet wird ἐν φθορᾷ, wird am Ende hier auferstehen ἐν ἀφθαρσίᾳ," op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>46</sup>. Strong, op. cit., p. 580. He continues: "That the soul, clothed with its spiritual felicity, in a spiritual body, will have more exalted powers and enjoy greater happiness than would be possible while it maintained a purely spiritual existence, is evident from the fact that Paul represents the culmination of the soul's blessedness as occurring, not at death, but at the resurrection of the body."



children. Be that as it may, it is nonsense to speak of matter as a hindrance to the saints, for all things shall once more be subject to the "spiritual" man, so that "the creature, even in its deliverance, will remain in a state of δουλεία in relation to the children of God."<sup>47</sup> (Cf. Js. 1:18) Yet a blessed and glad servitude it will be, as Luther says in his sermon on our text:

Weil sie (die Sonne) aber musz unserer Suende willen dienen, und den aergsten Buben eben sowohl, ja mehr, leuchten als den Frommen; darum verlangt sie herzlich nach jenem Tage, da sie wieder soll ausgeputzt werden, und allein den Seligen mit ihrem Lichte dienen.<sup>48</sup>

A second and, for me, conclusive argument in favor of our interpretation centers in the Incarnation of the Son of God. ὁ υἱὸς ἐκεῖ ἐγένετο (Jn. 1:14). God became Man and in the same act associated Himself with the physical universe. That God should so limit Himself by His own creation is the mystery of Divine love, and it is a mystery we dare not subject to an analysis of reason. How ably Milton describes nature's shame on the evening of the nativity!

Only with speeches fair  
 She woos the gentle air  
 To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;  
 And on her naked shame,  
 Pollute with sinful blame,  
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;  
 Confounded that her Maker's eyes  
 Should look so near upon her foul deformities.<sup>49</sup>

Those "foul deformities" in nature, too, He came to erase; "He came to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found." εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη

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47. Lange, op. cit, p. 272.  
 48. Luther, op. cit., p. 106 f.  
 49. From "Ode on Christ's Nativity".



ὁ ἄμωμος καὶ ἁγνός, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔθνη τοῦ διαβόλου, 1 Jn. 3:18.<sup>50</sup> As

the Lamb "without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19), He offered Himself for the sins of the world, thereby giving nature the hope that, with moral evil atoned for, natural evil would one day cease. If Christ had not atoned for sin, Paul could never have ascribed that hope to nature.

But even as man's hope of a bodily resurrection rests its certainty upon the resurrection of Christ, so nature's hope of renovation is based on the Easter gospel. "If Christ be not raised," nature would be most miserable. "But now is Christ risen," and the significance of that stupendous fact for nature is beautifully expressed by Milligan:

Looked at in the light of the resurrection of our Lord, what a prospect even for nature opens on the view! It is true that in one respect there is decay. The mountains are gradually crumbling into the valleys; "the waters wear the stones;" and different species both of animals and plants have passed and are passing away....Neither the philosopher nor the poet can give us hope. The resurrection of our Lord, which derives its greatest value from this, that it is not a mere miracle of the past, but is full of the promise of the future, alone can do so. In its light not decay but advance, not pulling down but building up, not falling back but reaching forward, become the main characteristics both of nature and of human history....The purpose of the ages was an increasing purpose as the world hastened onward to the Resurrection of our Lord; and looking back upon that event, we read in it not something peculiar to Him, but the token of a higher destiny towards which both the spiritual and the material creation are moving on. We cannot therefore join either philosopher or poet in their desponding moods. The culminating point of the world's

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50. Zahn remarks on this passage: "Sollte es dann ein so seltsamer Gedanke sein, wenn Paulus von der Wiederoffenbarung Christi eine Aufhebung all' derjenigen Wirkungen Satan's erwartet, durch welche die auszermenschliche Welt sich gegenwaertig in einer Knechtschaft des Verderbens befindet?" op. cit., p. 534.



progress has not yet been reached. But in due time it will be reached, and, in "sharing the liberty of the glory of the children of God," whatever may be the way in which we may endeavor to conceive it, its final purpose will at last be gained. "The mountains and the hills will break forth into singing, and all the trees of the forest will clap their hands." Is. 52:12. 51

Even after His resurrection Christ did not forsake His "organic union" with the physical universe. He is and remains true man with a physical, though glorified body. Ἴδετε τὰς χεῖρας μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου . . . ὅτι πνεῦμα σὰρκα καὶ ὅστεν οὐκ ἔχει καθὼς ἔμε θεορεῖται ἔχοντα (Ik. 24:39). "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11) He now sits "on the right hand of the Majesty on high," from which vantage point, as "heir of all things" (κληρονόμον πάντων) and Creator of "the worlds," "He upholds all things (τὰ πάντα) by the word of His power." Unto Him God "has put in subjection the world to come" (οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν). "What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all things in subjection under his feet, he left nothing that is not put under him (καὶ πάντα has thus the widest possible application). But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus." All things, from man to the lowliest of created things, are now subject to ματαιότης, but an entirely different subjection awaits them for the sake of Him who "was

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51. Milligan, William, The Resurrection of our Lord, p. 225 ff., passim. See Besser, op. cit., p. 639 ff. for a remarkable description of the part nature played in the earthly life of Jesus.



made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death."

πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω πᾶσι πόδων αὐτοῦ Jesus, of whom and through whom and to whom are all things, ὡς ὡτ' ἀπόδημα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτῆρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ, shall rule over the transformed universe, He and the many sons whom He leadeth to glory (Heb. 1 and 2, passim. Cf. Rom. 5 and Col. 1:20). "And Jesus said unto them, ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὑμεῖς οἱ ἀκολουθήσαντες μοι, ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ, ὅταν καθίῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐπὶ θρόνον δόξης αὐτοῦ καθύπεσθε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐπὶ δεκάθρονον (Mtt. 19:29). On this entire matter we shall let Lewis have the last word:

The doctrine of a universal redemption spreading outwards from the redemption of Man, mythological as it will seem to modern minds, is in reality far more philosophical than any theory which holds that God, leaving once entered Nature, should leave her, and leave her substantially unchanged, or that the glorification of one creature could be realized without the glorification of the whole system. God never undoes anything but evil, never does good to undo it again. The union between God and Nature in the person of Christ admits no divorce. He will not go out of Nature again and she must be glorified in all ways which this miraculous union demands. When spring comes it 'leaves no corner of the land untouched;' even a pebble dropped in a pond sends circles to the margin.<sup>52</sup>

Some have tried by means of a reductio ad absurdum to scout the idea of a renovation (conversio) of the universe. They charge that restoration implies the renewal and reappearance of every form of life - and of each individual representation of every form of life - that has inhabited the world from the dawn of creation to the dawn of the new creation. The argument destroys itself by its own extravagances. Zahn very correctly says,

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52. Lewis, Miracles, op. cit., p. 149.



Es ist ein arges Mißverständniß, wenn man meint, daß daraus eine Verklärung der Individuen der κτίσις, eine Auferstehung der einzelnen Bäume und Thiere oder auch nur ihrer Gattungen gefolgert werden müsse. Es werden ja nicht die einzelnen Geschöpfe mit den einzelnen Gliedern der christlichen Menschheit parallelisirt, sondern die der κτίσις als Einheit bevorstehende Verherrlichung wird neben die von jedem Christen ersehnte individuelle ἀπολύτρωσις τοῦ σώματος gestellt. Was jeder Christ an seinem leiblichen Wesen zu erleben hofft, dem Aehnliches wird auch dem "Leibe Adam's im grösseren Sinne" (Stier) widerfahren.<sup>53</sup>

Paul teaches a restoration, of that we may be certain. It is, however, useless and needless for us to anticipate what changes this might imply. "What kind of integrity shall be as well in beasts as in plants and metals it is not meet curiously to search," observes Calvin very soberly, "neither is it lawful; because the chiefest part of corruption is utter decay. Certain subtle, but scarce sober men, demand whether all kind of beasts shall be immortal; but, if these speculations may have loose reins, whither will they carry us? Therefore, let us be content with this simple doctrine, that there shall be such a temperature, and such a decent order, that nothing shall appear either deformed or ruinous."<sup>54</sup> Hewitt, another writer on this matter, is also very sober in his discussion, but he ends by meeting the objection on its own ground and having the last laugh:

I do not believe that the immortality of man, a self-conscious, reasoning, moral personality, in any way involves that of the beast - there are such essential differences between them.... The whole question hinges on the one point of personality; a bundle of automatic instincts is one thing; self-conscious, volitional, moral, aesthetic personality is another. I do not believe the personal element is in the beast. His continuity is not necessitated by mine, but I should be glad if every little creature of God could live forever. I can see no harm

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53. Zahn, op. cit., p. 149.

54. Calvin, op. cit., p. 218.



which the doctrine of their immortality could possibly do to the doctrine of ours. And I should not fear that the colossal universe would be choked with feathers and fur.<sup>55</sup>

Science teaches that the universe is running down like a clock.<sup>56</sup>

We need not dispute the claim. Perhaps the world as now constituted will run down to an absolute standstill; man, too, must pass from death to life. But that would not be the end of the epic of the universe. God will once more set everything in motion - the same universe, but how changed! If we could see it now, we would not recognize it as at all related to the universe we now inhabit. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9) But with the changed universe will come a changed vision in the beholder. The new man (and yet the old) will inhabit a "new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." There will be continuity in his experience, and what hinders us from assuming that he will recognize his old friend?

With that <sup>the</sup> problem of conversio vs. annihilatio is solved for us.

To sum up the argument: Paul's teaching is evidently that of a conversio mundi. To this the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and the fact of Christ's resurrection lend support. Science proves nothing to the contrary, if we are at all inclined to give her a voice in the matter. And reason and sentiment, as supplementary, not primary witnesses, say yea! and amen!

Frommann whose view we discussed in our interpretation of verse

55. Hewitt, Arthur Wentworth, Jerusalem the Golden, p. 61.

56. But consider the cosmic rays, which many scientists feel indicate the perpetual activity of some sort of creative energy, See Graebner, op. cit., p. 31.



19, gives unwitting confirmation to our exegesis of this verse. In declining the interpretation of *κτίσις* as referring to all nature, he states as his chief objection that Paul would be teaching a restoration of the universe if *κτίσις* means nature. But this, says Frommann, Paul would not wish to teach.

Beginnen wir nun unsere Pruefung mit dem aus de,angefuehrten Erklaerung sich ergebenden Lehrgrhalte der Stelle, so waere allerdings der in derselben ausgesprochene Gedanke von einer Erloesungsbeduerftigkeit und einer einstigen Verklaerung auch der Natur schon insofern merkwuerdig genug, als er in solcher Bestimmtheit ein *ἐπί τῆς λεγόμενης* nicht nur innerhalb des paulinischen Lehrbegriffs, sondern selbst der ganzen biblischen Lehre sein wuerde.<sup>57</sup>

Since *κτίσις* (as has been proved beyond the possibility of contradiction)does refer to all nature, Frommann's judgment must stand: Paul teaches a renovation of the universe, "eine einstige Verklaerung auch der Natur."

We thank Frommann for his assistance, but our chief purpose in quoting him was to call attention to the view that the teaching of a renovation, if correct, would be a *ἐπί τῆς λεγόμενης* in Scripture. If that can be proved, and if it can, moreover, be shown that the Bible explicitly teaches something quite different, we shall have to resort to some drastic form of exegesis in order to bring Paul into line. Perhaps we have confined ourselves too narrowly to an isolated text. What Hunter observes in another connection has its application here:

In his zeal for analysis the expert isolates a portion of the New Testament for microscopic study - the Synoptic Gospels, or the Pauline corpus perhaps(not to speak of an isolated text) and too often fails to reveal the connexions of his study with

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57. Frommann, op. cit., p. 31.



the rest of the New Testament. Here, as elsewhere, "isolationism" involves dangers; it leads to a piecemeal treatment of early Christian thought; it makes men propound unreal dilemmas.<sup>58</sup>

The idea of a renovation of the universe did not come as a new thought to Paul's readers. If they were at all acquainted with Old Testament prophecy, the thought must have been very congenial to them.<sup>59</sup> One might open the אֲשֶׁר בְּיָמֵינוּ almost at random and find an

58. Hunter, Archibald M., The Message of the New Testament, p. 15 f.

59. Rabbinical literature has much to say of a restoration. Weber summarizes his findings as follows: "Himmel und Erde wird Gott kuenftig vergehen lassen. Seine Absicht ist aber nicht, die Schoepfung zu vernichten, sondern zu erneuern. Aus der alten Schoepfung soll eine neue, durch und durch reine und vollkommene, hervorgehen. Und auf der neuen Erde soll eine neue Menschheit wohnen," Weber, Ferdinand, Juedische Theologie, p. 398. See also the following pages for complete documentation. Strack-Billerbeck offer a wealth of material to the same effect. We shall quote only from the summary, p. 247 f., but see also pp. 248 - 255. "Die Welt ist um des Menschen Willen, d. h. fuer ihn oder zu seinen Dienst erschaffen worden; deshalb wurde, als der Mensch, der Herr der Schoepfung, suendigte, auch diese in sein Verbeben mit hineingerissen....Unter den Guetern, die dem ersten Menschen infolge seiner Suende entzogen wurden, werden besonders sechs genannt: der Glanz seines Angesichts, die Laenge seines Lebens, die Groesze seiner Gestalt, die Fruchtbarkeit des Erdbodens, die Fruchtbarkeit der Baeume und die Helligkeit der Himmelslichter. Die drei ersten betrafen den Menschen selbst, die drei letzten die uebrige Schoepfung....Alle Dinge, die in ihrer Vollkommenheit erschaffen waren, sind durch Adams Suende verderbt worden. Ueberall geht hier die Meinung dahin, dass die Schoepfung ohne eigene Schuld und deshalb wider ihren eigenen Willen lediglich infolge der menschlichen Suende ins Verderben hineingeraten sei ....Volle uebereinstimmung herrscht betreffs der Annahme, dass erst der Messias den Fluch von der Schoepfung nehmen werde: er bringt die sechs durch Adam verlorengegangenen Gueter wieder, damit also auch die Fruchtbarkeit des Erdbodens und der Baeume nach Sach. 8, 12 und die Helligkeit der Himmelsleuchten nach Jes. 30, 26." For a convenient summary of this in English, see Edersheim, Alfred, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, vol. II, p. 343 f. Upon this general foundation was built an elaborate superstructure, which puts to shame the wildest dreams of a modern millennialist. Hodge is, no doubt, correct when he says that "this was the germ whence the extravagances of the Millennarians arose" in the early church, but he goes on to say that "almost all such errors contain a portion of truth, to which they are indebted for their origin and extension." He finds in the very errors "presumptive and confirmatory evidence that the sacred writers did teach a doctrine, or at least employed a mode of speaking of the future condition of the external world which easily accounts for these errors," op. cit., p. 428.



allusion to the restoration. Isaiah is especially rich in this regard (Cf. Is. 35; 65:17 ff; 66:22.23).<sup>60</sup> Someone will argue that many of these passages have reference to the Messianic Kingdom, to be ushered in at the arrival of the Messiah. But we must bear in mind that the first and second coming of the Messiah are frequently viewed as one in the prophetic vision. "Bald verdeckt die naehere Zukunft die fernere, bald bildet diese selbst den Horizont der prophetischen Aussicht."<sup>61</sup> The prophets' immediate reference was almost always the first coming of the Messiah; that event was for them the turning point in the history of the world. And so, in fact, it was - and is. But the Messianic era has, as we briefly noted in our introduction, again unfolded itself in two dispensations, the αἰὼν τοῦ νόμου and the αἰὼν τῆς χάριτος. Therefore, the Old Testament prophecies of a restoration have, in many instances, received a further application for New Testament believers. (Cf. Rom. 15:4) The הַיְיָ יֵשׁוּעַ יְהוָה (Joel 2:1.11; Zeph. 1:14 ff.) has become ἡμέρα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (Phil. 1:6.16; Heb. 10:25; 1Jn. 4:17), the day of the Parousia, of judgment and of restoration.

It is true, however, that much of the prophet's language in regard to the restoration is a poetic description of the New Testament Church. But Paul's teaching gives us every reason to see in this description something more than mere poetry and gives us the further right to reapply

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60. Besides numerous other passages in Isaiah, we might list Joel 4:18; Amos 9:13-15; Ps. 98:8.9; Hos. 2:21.22, and many others.

61. Zahn, op. cit., p. 538. Zahn espouses a modified form of millennialism, cf. pp. 538-542. He distinguishes between a millennial restoration and the final renovation at the last judgment. It is interesting to note that Zahn's millennialistic outlook does not mar or even intrude itself upon the greater portion of his exegesis of this passage.



it to the future state of the universe at that time when Christ's Kingdom will finally have come to its complete realization. Most of the commentators agree that this procedure is not too far-fetched and quote the prophets as proof that Rom. 8:21 is no *ἄναξ λεγόμενων* in Scripture.

There are, we must admit, other passages which seem to uphold the annihilatio view. We dare not ignore them. We shall quote a few of the more drastic statements: *ὁ οὐρανὸς καὶ ἡ γῆ παρελεύσονται.* (Mtt. 24:35; Lk. 21:33), *οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἀπολοῦνται* (Heb. 1:11), *ὁ κόσμος παράγεται* (1Jn. 2:17), *ἔφουγεν ἡ γῆ καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς, καὶ τὸ πᾶν οὐχ εὐρέθη αὐτοῖς* (Rev. 20:11). There is no denying the fact that the nearest meaning of these passages favors the annihilatio view. Gerhard depends largely on these texts and says, "Literali verborum sensui in explicatione scripturae tandiu inhaerendum, donec evidens necessitas ab eo discedere nos cogat"<sup>62</sup> - a principle of interpretation which might apply equally as well to our passage.

But there are other texts which temper these statements considerably. Note especially Is. 34:4: "All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll;" Ps. 102:26, 27: "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vestment shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end;" and the New Testament parallels: Heb. 1:11, 12 *οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἀπολοῦνται ὡς ἱμάτιον περιβόλαιον, ὡς περιβόλαιον ἐλίξεις αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀλλάξῃσιν* ; Rev. 6:14, *ὁ οὐρανὸς ἀπεχωρίσθη ὡς βιβλίον ἐλεόμοινα*. Philippi makes the following observation on these passages:

62. Gerhard, John, Loci Theologici, tomus nonus, XI. 57, p. 158.



Wird in diesen Stellen das Vergehen des Himmels mit dem Zusammenrollen eines Buches, dem Verwelken der Blätter, dem Veralten und Zerfallen eines Gewandes verglichen, so scheint das Vergehen nur im relativen, nicht im absoluten Sinne, nur von dem voelligen qualitativen Zerfall, nicht von der Vernichtung der Substanz verstanden werden zu sollen.<sup>63</sup>

This interpretation can then, as Philippi would have it, be extended to the other passages quoted above, without doing any great violence to their sense. Consider also what Luther has to say on Matt. 24:35, one of the most drastic texts of all:

Das ist gemeint mit dem Wort: "Himmel und Erde werden vergehen," nicht hinsichtlich ihres Bestandes ueberhaupt, sondern hinsichtlich ihres vergaenglichen Wesens. Wie sich das die Philosophen zurechtlegen, moegen sie selber sehen. Ich verstehe dies Wort nicht von dem Bestand, dass sie fuerderhin ueberhaupt nicht mehr sind, sondern in Herrlichkeit sein werden. Das zeigt das Wort an: "Sie werden vergehen," d. h. sie werden verwandelt werden.<sup>64</sup>

Scripture also gives us the key to a fuller understanding of 1Jn. 2:17. Whereas John says  $\delta \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma \pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ , Paul, in 1Cor. 7:31, refines this statement to  $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota \tau\acute{o} \epsilon\chi\theta\eta\mu\alpha \tau\omicron\upsilon \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ .  $\epsilon\chi\theta\eta\mu\alpha$  refers to the "foul deformities", before mentioned, and inasmuch as the  $\kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma$  had come to be identified with those deformities, John could very well say  $\delta \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\varsigma \pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\gamma\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$ .

Those who refer to 2Pet. 3:10 ff. as final proof for the annihilatio view likewise affirm too much. The sensus verborum literalis would point rather to the conversio view.<sup>65</sup> No fire completely destroys matter and it is frequently employed as a purifying agent. Upon the ashes of the old universe God will raise up the new heaven and the new earth. "So sei die

63. Philippi, Glaubenslehre, op. cit., p. 146. I confess great indebtedness to Philipp's highly useful excursus on this matter.

64. Luther, Martin, Vorlesung ueber den Roemerbrief 1515/1516, p. 321 f.

65. In his sermons, Luther quotes 2Pet. 3 as a parallel without noting any discrepancy, op. cit., p. 115.



Aufloesung und Wiederherstellung des Menschen als Mikrokosmos die Aufloesung und Wiederherstellung des Universums als Makrokosmos vergleichbar."<sup>66</sup> We quote Stoeckhardt as a final witness:

Da (2Petr. 3) wird nur gelehrt, dass der gegenwaertige Bestand der Welt im Feuer zergehen wird... Aus dem Weltbrand, aus den Atomen, in die sich dann Himmel und Erde aufgeloeset haben, wird die Creatur neu verjuengt, verklaert hervorgehen, wird die neue Erde und der neue Himmel hervorgehen, in welchen Gerechtigkeit wohnt.<sup>67</sup>

What more shall we say? Perhaps we have already said too much. The day will declare it.

Die Freiheit in der Herrlichkeit, auf die der neue Mensch, Gottes Kind, der, der ich nicht bin, wartet, seufzend und doch selig, sie ist das Verheissene, an

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66. Philippi, op. cit., p. 146.

67. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 375. The commentators almost universally uphold the conversio view. Few, however, go to the lengths that Stoeckhardt does in defending the view, inasmuch as it is not for them a point at issue. - Interesting is the lack of unanimity among Lutheran dogmaticians. Gerhard has a long discussion of our passage in which he states the opinions of a great number of the Fathers, medieval scholars, and Reformation theologians. Among the early Lutheran theologians who followed Luther in contending for the conversio mundi view we find Brenz, Ph. Nicolai, and Althamer. But the majority followed Gerhard: so Quenstedt, Calov, and, in a later generation, Hollaz. Philippi was among the first to reassert the conversio view. Stoeckhardt seems to have been much impressed by his arguments; see Glaubenslehre, op. cit., pp. 143-148. And so the difference has continued. Baier-Walther, Compendium Theologiae Positivae, vol. II, pp. 264-266, takes the position of Gerhard. (But in my grandfather's book there is the following note, dictated by Dr. Pieper: "Hoc est problema theologicum.") Pieper weighs both views with sobriety and seems to favor the conversio view, Christliche Dogmatik, vol. III, p. 609 ff. Among other American dogmaticians, Adolph Hoenecke, Dogmatik, vol. IV, p. 344 ff., again sides with Gerhard, but Lindberg and Stump follow Philippi. Th. Kliefoth, in his Christliche Eschatologie, p. 292 ff., also declares himself in favor of the conversio view, largely on the weight of Rom. 8. And finally, Werner Elert, in his very suggestive Outline of Christian Doctrine, p. 86. 108 f., holds forth the hope of restoration for the universe. - We could have gone to great lengths in describing the views of these and other theologians, but upon reflection it seemed that the labor would be entirely gratuitous, inasmuch as the arguments have already been summarized so well in the various dogmatics texts.



dem auch der Leib, auch der Mensch, der ich bin, mit seiner Welt teilnimmt. Denn eine gesegnete Welt, die Welt der Schoepfung und ihres Lebens ist ja das Erbe, das mir, dem Kinde Gottes verheissen ist. Ist der Mensch frei, dann ist auch die Welt frei. Ist der Mensch eins mit sich selber, weil eins mit Gott, dann ist auch im Kosmos kein dies und das, kein innen und aussen, kein Werden und Vergehen. Beim Erscheinen der Kinder Gottes, "und durch ihr Erscheinen; macht die Natur, die nie springt, ihren einzigen Sprung und zwar einen Freuden-sprung, denn sie fuehlt sich zum erstenmal an ihrem Ziele" (Nietzsche).

- Barth



## CHAPTER FIVE

## Nature of Creation's Groaning (v.22)

οἴσαμεν ὅτι τὰ πάντα ἐκτίσθησαν ἐν ἡμέρᾳ καὶ ἐγενήθησαν ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν.

We know that the created universe has been travelling in the pangs of a new birth right up to this present moment. - Wand<sup>1</sup>

In verse 22 we come at last to the fundamentum dividendi of our paper, the groaning of creation. Not much remains to be said, however. In our discussion of verse 20 we determined the terminus a quo of nature's groaning to be the Fall, and in verse 21 we found its terminus ad quem to be the renovation at the Parousia. What few remarks we still have to add will be by way of summary and conclusion.

The precise connection between verse 22 and the foregoing is difficult to determine. Stoeckhardt, perhaps following Philippi, finds in verse 22 a restatement of the leading thought of the paragraph: "Dieser Satz setzt sich mittelst *ἡμε* an die Hauptansage des Abschnitts, V.19-22 an, die Aussage V.19, welche V.20 und 21 begründet ist, naemlich, dass die Creatur auf die Offenbarung der Kinder Gottes harret und

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1. Wand, loc. cit.



wartet."<sup>2</sup> While it is true that such a restatement is contained in this verse, Meyer is probably right when he says that ἀποκαρδιὰ τῆς πίσεως is "much too distant" and that its "goal remains quite unnoticed here."<sup>3</sup> Meyer himself connects the thought of verse 22 with the preceding verse, "for if that hope of glorious deliverance had not been left to it, all nature would not have united its groaning and travailing until now."<sup>4</sup> But to this Zahn counters, "Nicht zur Begründung des Vorhandenseins einer Hoffnung dient der 22. Vers, denn aus dem Seufzen und Schmerzempfinden laeszt sich das am allerwenigsten erschlieszen."<sup>5</sup> He looks upon verses 20b and 21 as a sort of parenthetical statement and connects verse 22 with δουλείας τῆς φθορᾶς : "Von einer Knechtschaft des Verderberes rede ich - denn wir wissen ja, dasz die ganze Schoepfung in allen ihren Theilen zusammenstoehnt und in Geburtswehen liegt bis auf diesen Tag."<sup>6</sup>

All of these attempted connections seem too artificial and limit the force of the statement unnecessarily. This is already indicated by the fact that all of the conjectured interpretations can be justified so readily. I would rather look upon verse 22 as containing an additional observation, suggested by everything that has preceded. It is introduced as a natural and easy transition to the thought of verse 23,

2. Stoeckhardt, op. cit., p. 376.

3. Meyer, op. cit., p. 325.

4. Loc. cit.

5. Zahn, op. cit., p. 523.

6. Loc. cit. So also Lange, Ebrard, et al.



where Paul brings the second witness to the greatness of the future glory - the Christians, who, like nature, groan in their present state of bondage.

*οἰδομεν γαρ* is a favorite introductory formula with Paul (Cf. 2:2; 3:19; 7:14; 8:26.28; 2 Cor. 5:1; 1 Tim 1:8).

In most instances where this expression is used Paul is "appealing to the Christian consciousness."<sup>7</sup> So also here.

"We know" - we who have the Spirit as the first-fruits of the future glory (v.23), we know *οτι πασα ζ' κτις ευνηθητω και ευωδισει*

How Christians know this, remarks Denney,

Paul does not say. Perhaps we may say that the Christian consciousness of sin and redemption is in contrast with the ultimate realities of the universe, and that no interpretation of nature can be true but one which, like this, is in essential harmony with it.<sup>8</sup>

The Christian's deep conviction of sin and the guilt it incurred leads him to read in nature, as well as in his own natural condition, the verdict of God's wrath. But at the same time his experience of the love of God in Christ opens his eyes to the signs of breaking day in the gloom that darkens the universe. Such a vision only the Christian can have.

"To modern philosophical unbelief," says Lange, "the beginning of the world, as well as its end, is sunk in mist and night, because to it the center of the world - the historical Christ - is sunk in mist and night."<sup>9</sup> And because the un-

7. Lange, op. cit., p. 273.

8. Denney, op. cit., p. 650. Cf. Luthardt: "Da die Christen die gottgewollte Bestimmung der Welt kennen, so koennen sie auch danach die Gegenwart richtig - naemlich als Wider-



believer knows neither beginning nor end, he cannot possibly interpret what lies between.

Though the Christian alone is prepared to interpret correctly what he sees and hears in nature, men have always sensed the discords and imperfections in the universe. And in that sense Paul is expressing a universally recognized truth. "Der Thierwelt spricht das populaere Bewusstsein aller Zeiten und Voelker, nicht etwa bloez im Scherze der Fabel, welche die Thiere reden laeszt, Empfindung des Schmerzes zu und unterscheidet deutlich die mannigfaltigen Aeuszerungen ihres Wohlbehagens. Das Heulen des Hundes, das Mark und Bein durchschneidende Geschrei der Thiere, welche geschlachtet werden, das aengstliche Umherflattern alles Gefluegels beim Herannahen einer wirklichen und eingebildeten Gefahr hat wohl noch Niemand fuer etwas Anderes als ein Zeichen schmerzlicher Empfindung genommen."<sup>10</sup> Nature, says Schelling,

with its melancholy charm, resembles a bride who, at the very moment when she was fully attired for marriage, saw the bridegroom to whom she was to be united die on the very day fixed for the marriage. She still stands with her fresh crown and in her bridal dress, but her eyes are full of tears.<sup>11</sup>

She stands before us, so beautiful and yet so incomplete, struggling against the laws of decay and death, lashing out

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spruch dazu - beurteilen. Denn die Macht des Todes, welche jetzt das allgemeine Gesetz des kreatuerlichen Lebens bildet, weisz der Christ im Widerstreit mit dem urspruenglichen Willen Gottes und seiner zukuenftigen Verwirklichung stehen," op. cit., p. 489.

9. Lange, op. cit., p. 288.

10. Zahn, op. cit., p. 524.

11. Quoted from memory by Godet, op. cit., p. 95.



in fury against her human oppressors.

We think of the poets who have felt the pulse-beat of the universe and have discovered the sadness and the pain that lie at its heart. Schlegel has given classic expression to this poetic apprehension:

Es geht ein allgemeines Weinen  
So weit die stillen Sternlein scheinen,  
Durch alle Adern der Natur;  
Es ringt und seufzt nach der Verklaerung,  
Entgegen schmachend der Gewaehrung,  
In Liebesangst die Kreatur.<sup>12</sup>

Nebe quotes Geibel's "Geheimniss der Sehnsucht", in which the poet confesses to have felt a cosmic homesickness:

Dies ist die Stunde, da das Lied  
Der Sehnsucht durch die Luefte zieht,  
Die tief im Wald, Gestein und Flur  
Der Kern ist aller Kreatur;  
Der Sehnsucht, die durch Felsen dicht  
Den Quell emporzwingt an das Licht,  
Die nach dem Himmel aus dem Wald  
Mit tausend gruenen Armen greift,  
Aus hartem Stein als Echo schallt,  
Im irren Wind den Wald durchschweift.-  
Dir selbst bewusst kaum ist dein Leid,  
Ein Heimweh nach der Ewigkeit.<sup>13</sup>

Arnold bitterly portrays another aspect of nature's sickness, her enforced hostility to man:

Nature is cruel, man is sick of blood;  
Nature is stubborn, man would fain adore;  
Nature is fickle, man hath need of rest;  
Nature forgives no debts, and fears no grave;  
Man would be mild, and with safe conscience blest.  
Man must begin, know this, where nature ends;  
Nature and man can never be fast friends.  
Fool, if thou canst not pass her, rest her slave!<sup>14</sup>

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12. Fr. Schlegel, "Geistliche Lieder", no. 1.

13. Quoted in Nebe, op. cit., p. 89.

14. From Matthew Arnold's "In Harmony with Nature". There is an unwholesome morbidity in these lines, reminiscent of



But let us return to Paul's statement - poetry, too, poetry divinely inspired.

The exact compounds, *συστενάζει* and *συνωδίνει*, though they contain familiar stems, are *ἀπὸς λεξιόλογον* in Scripture. What does Paul mean to express by the prefixed preposition, *σύν*? Calvin feels that "it joineth them (the creatures) for companions to us."<sup>15</sup> It is better to take it as signifying nature (*πάντα ἢ κτίεις*) "together in all its parts",<sup>16</sup> for the reason given by Hodge:

The word together may have reference to the whole creation which groans together, all its parts uniting and sympathizing; or it may refer to the sons of God. On account of the following verse, in which Christians are specially introduced as joining with the whole creation in this sense of present misery and desire for future good, the former method of understanding the passage seems preferable.<sup>17</sup>

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the "Weltschmerz" of some of the romantics. One is reminded of Platen's despairing lines:

Es liegt an eines Menschen Schmerz, an eines Menschen  
Wunde nichts,  
Es kehrt an das, was Kranke quaelt, sich ewig der  
Gesunde nichts!  
Und waere nicht das Leben kurz, das stets der Mensch  
vom Menschen erbt,  
So gaeb's Beklagenwerteres auf diesem weiten Runde nichts!  
Einfoermig stellt Natur sich her, doch tausendfoermig  
ist ihr Tod,  
Es fragt die Welt nach meinem Ziel, nach deiner letzten  
Stunde nichts.

- Ghazel XXV

"Weltschmerz", says Ebrard, "nennt es die unglaeubige Welt und ist dabei ueber den Weg einer Besserung so starrblind, dass sie á la Schopenhauer und Hartmann von einer Weltvernichtung als dem einzigen Rettungsmittel faselt. So gibt sie selber in ihrem Wehgeschrei Zeugnis von dem *συστενάζει* und *συνωδίνει*," op. cit., p. 339.

15. Calvin, op. cit., p. 219.

16. Sanday and Headlam, op. cit., p. 209.

17. Hodge, op. cit., p. 432. So already Theodore of Mop-suestia: *Βούλεται δὲ εἰπεῖν ὅτι συμφώνως ἐπιδείκνυται τὸ τοῦ* -



Especially remarkable is the word *συνωδίει*. The question arises how much to read into the figure of a woman in pains of travail. (Cf. Jn. 16:21). Hofmann prefers not to find in this word an allusion to travail pains of deliverance from the old world to the new: "nur ihren Leidenstand vergleicht er dem einer Kreissenden, wenn gleich zuvor von ihrem Harren auf eine Wandlung der Dinge die Rede gewesen ist."<sup>18</sup> Yet it is just the proximity of this word to verse 21 that suggests the thought that "as the new man, in all his distinctness from the old, still is in the old, so is the new creation in the old world. The old creation, therefore, is like an impregnate mother that bears a new world in her womb."<sup>19</sup> We find in this word another echo of hope, another harbinger of spring, another anticipation of the new heaven and the new earth. Once again we quote Zahn as favoring our interpretation:

Der Vergleich selbst ist ein passender, weil die Schmerzen der Creatur, wie aus dem Vorigen klar ist, die Geburt einer neuen Welt aus der alten hinweisen. Auch Jesus nennt in seiner weissagenden Rede Matth. 24, 8, Mark. 13, 9. die dem Ende aller Dinge vorausgehenden gewaltsamen Bewegungen in Menschenwelt und Natur *ὄδ/ναι*. Dasselbe aber, was dann seinen Gipfel erreichen wird, geht schon durch alle vorausgehenden Zeiten hindurch, kann daher mit gleichem Recht so genannt werden... Es ist eben kein ausgeführtes Gleichniz, sondern Paulus begnuegt sich damit, an die thatsaechlich vorhandenen Schmerzen zu erinnern

*πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις*. Also Estius: "gemitum et dolorem communem inter se partium creaturae." Both quoted by Philippi, op. cit., p. 16.

18. Hofmann, op. cit., p. 335.

19. Olshausen, op. cit., p. 54.



und sie mit Geburtswehen zu vergleichen, weil sie nicht vorhanden sein wuerden, wenn sich nicht die Welt seit jenem Factum in einem Zustand des Elends befaende, welcher um der Umstaende willen, unter welchen er eingetreten, nothwendig in eine Befreiung und Verherrlichung auslaufen musz.<sup>20</sup>

If the question arises whether Paul is here ascribing actual consciousness and sentiency to the creature world, the answer must simply be, No. Paul is describing the condition of nature as she presents herself when subject to *μεταβολα*, and he is interpreting that condition in terms of human experience.<sup>21</sup> But that in no way detracts from the force of his statement. The condition he describes is all too real and nature, if she had a voice, would utter audible groans.<sup>22</sup> Lange has perhaps discovered as well as anyone what was in the Apostle's mind when he ascribed a universal and sympathetic groaning to creation:

The apostolical, as well as the modern Christian and humane apprehension of nature, extends still beyond the perception of the real groaning of brutes.

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20. Zahn, op. cit., p. 525.

21. There is, of course, the fact of animal pain and suffering, but *πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις* includes vegetative and insensate nature. For a suggestive discussion of animal pain see Lewis, The Problem of Pain, op. cit., pp. 117-131.

22. There is nothing unusual in Paul's ascription of sensation also to inanimate nature. Consider especially Wordsworth: "Ye presences of Nature," he exclaims, "Ye employed Such ministry,

Haunting me thus among my boyish sports...  
 Impressed upon all forms the characters  
 Of danger and desire; and thus did make  
 The surface of the universal earth  
 With triumph and delight, with hope and fear,  
 Work like a sea. (Prelude 1. 464-75)

For an excellent study of the influence of nature upon a poet, see Raymond Dexter Havens, The Mind of a Poet, especially pp. 39-121 (A study of Wordsworth).



and the degeneration of vegetable life. The sense of the most profound life perceives a groaning of the creation in the most general sense, first, as a longing, developing impulse of the creature-world toward perfection and to the second higher form of existence, and secondly, as a painful suffering under the law of an abnormal and more intense corruptibility, and thirdly, as a mournful concert, a harmony of all the keynotes of the *ἰστορία* in its homesickness for a new paradise.<sup>23</sup>

This condition has prevailed in nature *ἀρχὴ τῶν πάντων* .

"Von langen Zeiten her bis jetzt seufzt und kreist die Schoepfung und jetzt ist noch kein Wandel darin eingetreten; seit dem Sundenfall des Menschen, da sie der *ματαιότης* unterstellt wurde, ist sie in diesem schweren Leide."<sup>24</sup> Nature's hope began to dawn with the coming of the Messiah, but like the children of God (Cf. v. 23) she will continue to groan throughout the *τῶν καρπῶν* , the *αἰῶν ὀδύνης* , the period of suffering (v. 18), until the Day of His reappearing.

It was not then a poet's dream,  
An idle vaunt of song,  
Such as beneath the moon's soft gleam  
On vacant fancies throng;

Which bids us see heaven and earth,  
In all fair things around,  
Strong yearnings for a blest new birth  
With sinless glories crowned;

Which bids us hear, at each sweet pause  
From care and want and toil,  
When dew eve her curtain draws  
Over the day's turmoil,

In the low chant of wakeful birds,  
In the deep weltering floods,  
In whispering leaves, these solemn words-  
"God made us all for good."

23. Lange, op. cit., p. 287.  
24. Nebe, op. cit., p. 87.



Nor could the enchantress Hope forecast  
 God's secret love and power;  
 The travail pangs of Earth must last  
 Till her appointed hour;

The hour that saw the opening heaven  
 Redeeming glory stream,  
 Beyond the summer hues of even,  
 Beyond the mid-day beam.

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 Why mourn'st thou still as one bereft,  
 Now that th' eternal Son  
 His blessed home in heaven hath left  
 To make thee all His own?

Thou mourn'st because sin lingers still  
 In Christ's new heaven and earth;  
 Because our rebel works and will  
 Stain our immortal birth.

Because, as Love and Prayer grow cold,  
 The Saviour hides His face,  
 And worldlings blot the Temple's gold  
 With uses vile and base.

Hence all thy groans and travail pains,  
 Hence, till thy God return,  
 In Wisdom's ear thy blithest strains,  
 O Nature, seem to mourn.

- Keble<sup>25</sup>



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