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# THE LIBERATION OF THE CREATURE:

# A STUDY OF THE INTERPRETATION OF ROMANS 8:19-22

# BY REPRESENTATIVE LUTHERAN THEOLOGIANS

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

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS


| Chapter | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | INTRODUCTION. . . . . | 1 |
| II. | PAUL ALTHAUS. . . . . | 3 |
| III. | JOHANN GERHARD. . . . . | 26 |
| IV. | MARTIN LUTHER . . . . . | 54 |
| V. | CONCLUSION. . . . . | 78 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . . | | 91 |

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

The present "study of the interpretation of Romans 8:19-22" was prompted by the following reasons. First, the passage is somewhat of a puzzle to the unprepared reader of the epistle to the Romans. Second, the passage has been quoted to enhance the struggle for a better world. The question arises whether such a use of the passage is legitimate. Third, the passage has become in Lutheran theological tradition the centre of the controversy on the "destruction or renewal" of the present world. The need arises to verify whether the passage actually teaches the renovation of the world and whether it stands in necessary contradiction to the idea of a radical destruction of the world.

In order to find an answer to these problems, the writer chose to study Paul Althaus, Martin Luther and Johann Gerhard. The selection of Althaus was determined by the following reasons: (a) He was a theologian concerned with the problem of eschatology; (b) he made a special effort to understand and use Romans 8:19-22 in his dogmatical works; and (c) he traced the history of the interpretation and use of the passage in the theological tradition of the Lutheran church. He attempted to demonstrate that from Luther to Gerhard a complete change occurred in the interpretation and use of Romans 8:19-22. In view of the importance of Luther and Gerhard for Lutheran theology, the need arose of checking the accuracy of Althaus' hypothesis. Consequently, Luther and Gerhard were chosen as the other two theologians to be studied.

Beyond the immediate purpose of checking the views of Althaus on Romans 8:19-22, the attempt was made to discover the presuppositions which underlie the differing interpretations of the passage. The specific question asked was: What makes a theologian emphasize or disregard the passage in his theology and teaching?

The procedure in answering the formulated questions is as follows. The writer first presents and evaluates the views of Althaus, Gerhard and Luther. In a concluding chapter he summarizes the findings and attempts to show that the hope of a new world has a strong theological basis in Romans 8:19-22. Furthermore, that a correct theology of creation is of vital importance for the proper understanding of the passage.

The major sources used are Die Letzten Dinge by Althaus, references to Romans 8:19-22 in the Weimar edition of the works of Luther, and locus twenty-nine of Gerhard's Loci Theologici.[1]

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[1]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge; Lehrbuch der Eschatologie (5th revised edition; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949). Johann Gerhard, "De Consummatione Seculi," Loci Theologici (Lipsiae: J. C. Hinrichs, 1875), IX, 127-204.

## CHAPTER II

## PAUL ALTHAUS

The major reference by Paul Althaus to Romans 8:19-22 appears in his discussion of the theological basis for the hope of a new world.[1]

Althaus is convinced of the essential corporeity and mundaneness of human existence (die wesenhafte Leiblichkeit und Weltlichkeit unseres Daseins). He conceives human existence as essentially conditioned by and related to the world.[2] He concedes, it is true, that in the encounter with God man transcends the world. Man knows more than the world and receives the content of life from a source other than the world. But Althaus adds that even in the noetic and ontological transcendence produced by the encounter with God, man is still related to the world. Man knows God only through the mirror of the creature. Althaus knows that in eternal life man will see God face to face. Consequently he

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[1]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge; Lehrbuch der Eschatologie (5th revised edition; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), pp. 340-365. Cf. Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrhrheit; Lehrbuch der Dogmatik (2nd revised edition; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), II, 493-506.

[2]Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, p. 342: "Wir koennen, wenn wir unsere Existenz bedenken, keinen Augenblick von der Welt absehen. Ihre Wirklichkeit als Natur und Geschichte traegt und naehrt unser Dasein, nicht nur das leibliche, sondern auch das seelische und geistlige Leben. Sie gibt unserem Leben Inhalte, sie fuellt unsere Gedanken, ist Grund unserer Freude und unseres Leidens; sie stellt uns wesentliche Aufgaben unseres Daseins: zu erkennen und zu gestalten. Wir haben unsere Existenz nur in dieser Bedingtheit durch und staendigen Bezogenheit auf die Welt."

raises the question: Will the presence of the world still be necessary for man? It might be that the world is nothing but a scaffold for constructing a spiritual temple of God. If this is the case, the world becomes entirely dispensable as soon as the kingdom of God reaches completion. In answering the question raised, Althaus attempts to demonstrate that the world must not be conceived exclusively as a means subservient to the development of God's kingdom.

The beauty of nature and man's capacity for enjoying it derive from a specific dimension of the Creator's reality. God is truth and love. But he is also beauty. God creates human, living hearts. But he produces also form and shape, sensible beauty and corporeity. The glory of God shines in the living temple of the adoring community. But it is present also in the cosmos of nature. The beauty of nature is an expression of God's beauty. Consequently the world of forms has a meaning independent of the life and struggle of man.[3]

The variety and the plenty of nature show that the world exists first of all for the sake of God himself. Before serving and delighting man, nature is an embodiment of God's glory, a reflection of his infinite power and an expression of his inexhaustible richness of ideas and forms. Even before man comes into consideration, God enjoys the existence of nature. In fact, the enjoyment of nature by God is the condition of possibility for man's enjoyment of the beauty, variety and

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[3]Ibid., p. 344: "Die Schoenheit laesst sich schlechterdings nicht als Mittel fuer das Gute und fuer die Wahrheit verstehen . . . . Die Welt der Gestalten hat selbstaendigen Sinn, sie ist--wenn wir die Begriffe verwenden wollen--nicht Mittel, sondern selber Zweck."

plenty of the world. And thus one must conclude that the world has the meaning and purpose of showing that God's eternity includes also corporeity and beauty, sensible variety and plenty. In short, the eternity of God contains a world.

In a similar way, the world of history has a meaning independent of the life and struggle of God's people. Cultural activity, it is true, produces the presuppositions of the life with God. Externally it makes ordered life possible. Internally it demands for man sacrifice, self-discipline, respect for reality--qualities that are of help for the development of God's kingdom. Human culture produces also the presuppositions and "material" for man's decision against or in favor of the kingdom.[4] But the content and meaning of history are not exhausted by man's self-realization and spiritual decisions. Besides serving man, cultural products have an objective meaning. They are embodiment and "materialization" of the spirit.[5] In short, the cultural content of

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[4]Ibid., p. 172: "Der Wille Gottes an uns fordert immerdar die Erfuellung der Stunde mit bestimmtem Dienste. Die Stunde aber hat eine Doppelbeziehung: sie ist als die vergehende unmittelbar zur Ewigkeit und sie gehoert zugleich, gedingt und bedingend, in den Zusammenhang geschichtlichen Werdens hinein." P. 172: "Jeder Akt bedeutet ein Ja oder Nein in unserem Gottesverhaeltnis, Erfuellung oder Verletzung des ersten Gebotes, d. h. er hat den Charakter einer Entscheidung von uebergeschichtlichem Sinne, und jeder Akt is zugleich Begruendung eines geschichtlichen Werdens." Life in history is life of decision and consequently life under the judgment of God.

[5]Ibid., p. 348: "Die Geschichte hat offenbar nicht nur den Sinn, dass Geister fuer Gott werden, sondern auch den, dass Geist werde, sich verwirkliche, Gestalt gewinne."

history cannot be reduced to the personal dimension. The world of history is more than merely means for a personal kingdom of God. The world of history is a sign and promise of a new world. In this new world the domination of matter by the spirit will be total and perfect.[6]

Summarizing, one can say that Althaus has attempted to demonstrate two assertions: (a) Human existence implies corporeity and therefore a world; (b) nature and history cannot be conceived as simple means for the development of God's kingdom. From these two assertions Althaus derives two conclusions: (a) After the destruction of the present world there must appear a new world; (b) the new world will result from the renovation and completion (Vollendung) of this present world. Althaus further grounds the second conclusion on the intimate connection between the destiny (Schicksal) of the world and the destiny of man. He finds the connection expressed by Paul in Romans 8:19-22.

The shape of the present world, the essence of history, is the struggle of conflicting pretensions and positions, the "not yet here" of the ultimate decision (das Immer-noch-ausstehen der Entscheidung), and, consequently, the controverted character of every historical reality. The tyranny of death marked nature and history.[7] Living

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[6]Ibid., pp. 347-348. Althaus is speaking of the gnoseological, technological and artistical struggle of man. It never reaches completion in the present life. In the new world matter will subdue to the spirit.

[7]Ibid., p. 42: "Die Gestalt dieser Welt, das Wesen unserer Geschichte ist der Kampf widerstreitender Ansprueche und Setzungen, also das Immer-noch-ausstehen der Entscheidung, damit die Fraglichkeit und Umstrittenheit jeder geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit. Die Gestalt dieser Wlet in Natur und Geschichte ist der sie durchherrschende Tod, der alle ihre Erscheinungen zeichnet: alles Lebendige in ihr verdraengt einander, jede noch so grosse Stunde stirbt unter dem Todesgesetz unserer Zeitlichkeit in das Vergangensein hin."

beings repress each other. Great moments of life "die" inexorably under the law of human temporality.[8] Both man and the world suffer from their "exposedness" (Preisgabe) to the transience, ambiguity and nothingness of being. They also have in common the revolt and struggle against death.

The specific insight of Paul, according to Althaus, is that the destiny of the world--its shape of death (Todesgestalt) derives from man's destiny and is conditioned by man's history with God. The world is subjected to nothingness because it is the world of man, the "place" of man's decision in favor of good or evil, faith or unfaith, God or Satan. The sickness of the creature is the sickness of man. The "not yet" (das Noch-nicht) that makes the creature sigh derives from the "not yet" that characterizes human existence. At the same time, however, man's hope is the hope also of the creature. Solidarity in promise and hope corresponds to solidarity in distress and ambiguity. As soon as the disruption (Zwiespalt) and struggle of man ends, the death-shape of the world disappears. Man's resurrection and redemption to "glory" represent freedom for the world, solution of its enigmatic character, and transformation of its brokenness (Gebrochenheit) into wholeness (Ganzheit). Hence, "the yearning expectation of the creature

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[8]Ibid., p. 172: "'Geschichte' hat ihre Voraussetzung einmal an der Nichtumkehrbarkeit der Zeit, d. h. an dem unwiderruflichen Stranden jeder Stunde an die Ewigkeit, sodann aber an dem Zusammenhange von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart zwischen jedem und allen."

waits for the revelation of the children of God."[9]

The conclusion drawn by Althaus from the above consideration reads: "God does not create another cosmos out of nothing but makes the present one free at the day of the Resurrection."[10]

One can see quite clearly that Althaus established the connection between the destiny of the world and the destiny of man with the purpose of demonstrating that the new world will consist in the rebirth and renewal of the present world.[11]

## Romans 8:19-22 in Tradition

According to Althaus, the primitive church preserved the insights of Paul. From the first centuries to the Middle Ages the doctors of the church consistently taught that the world will be not totally destroyed

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[9] Ibid., p. 350: "Unsere Auferstehung, unsere Erloesung zur "Herrlichkeit" wird auch sie frei machen, auch ihre Raetsel loesen, auch sie aus der Gebrochenheit in die Ganzheit bringen. Daher 'wartet das sehnsuechtige Harren der Kreatur auf die Offenbarung der Soehne Gottes'". In Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 504, Althaus includes mankind in the action of longing: "Das Reich Gottes ist nicht eine Ueberwelt ueber der irdischen Geschichte, sondern ihr Ziel. Die Geschichte kann das Reich nicht aus sich gebaeren, aber sie liegt in Wehen auf das Dommen des Reiches hin (Roem. 8,22), die ganze Kreatur und Menschheit, ohne es zu wissen; die Gemeinde Christi bewusst." Adolf Schlatter insisted that ktisis must include mankind. Cf. Gottes Gerechtigkeit: Ein Kommentar zum Roemberbrief (Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1935), p. 270 and Erlaeuterungen zum Neuen Testament (2nd edition; Stuttgart: Calwer Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1921), II, 117-118.

[10] Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, p. 350: "Gott schafft nicht einen anderen Kosmos aus dem Nichts, sondern macht diesen jetzigen frei am Tage der Auferstehung."

[11] Ibid., p. 349: "Mit allem Vorigen ist schon gesagt, dass die zu erwartende neue Welt die Vollendung dieser unserer Welt bedeutet. Die neue Welt is die erneuerte, wiedergeborene Welt."

but changed into a glorious form. They emphasize Psalm 102:26 and 1 Corinthians 7:31; based on these passages they maintain that the world will disappear in its "form" or "shape," but not in its "nature" or "matter" or "substance." They underline the analogy between the end of the world and man's end. The world, they say, will experience a resurrection akin to that of man. Basing their conclusion on Romans 8:19-22, the teachers of the church stress that the final redemption of man has an influence on the creature that balances the damage caused by the Fall. "Transformation, not destruction is the unanimous teaching from Irenaeus through Augustine and Gregory the Great, through Thomas and the whole of medieval theology, to present-day Catholic dogmatics."[12]

Luther, according to Althaus, breaks off the tradition. He refuses to apply the Aristotelian categories of essence and form to the world's end. However, he does preserve the analogy between the transformation of the body and the transformation of the world. Death and resurrection change the very essence of the human body. In a similar way the final transformation strikes the world's very essence. The end of the world is first of all destruction. Nothing can pass through fire undestroyed. Against every attempt to water down the transformation with philosophical categories, Luther affirms the radical character of man's death and the world's end. At the same time he affirms that God recreates both man and the world to the original identity of their being (zur Selbigkeit ihres Seins). The identity of the future with the present world does not rest on metaphysical continuity of substance. It rests exclusively

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[12]Ibid., p. 350.

on the miracle of God's creative will and power. Continuity between the present and the future world can be postulated only in a theological, not in a metaphysical sense.[13]

Despite his rejecting the traditional understanding of world transformation, Luther is at one with tradition in hoping for the renovation of the world. Such hope, says Althaus, becomes very lively in Luther, a consequence of his feeling of intimacy with the creatures. The biblical basis for the renovation is found in Isaiah 65:17, 2 Peter 3:10 and especially in Romans 8:19-22. Man and creature suffer together under the curse of sin. They will together experience redemption and attain glory. The sun, the heavens, and all the creatures will be renovated. Eternal life is not worldless. It includes the relationship with and the joy in the creatures.[14]

The Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth century, according to Althaus, preserve the hope of the world's renovation. They even recover the distinction of matter and form in the description of the end. The common understanding is that the world will be transformed and not destroyed in a total and definitive fashion.

In the seventeenth century, however, Lutheran theologians bring about a significant breach with tradition. They conceive the world's end in radical terms, as did Luther, but they do not proceed with him to the affirmation of a renewal. They neglect the correspondence between

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[13] Ibid., p. 352.

[14] Althaus, ibid., pp. 352-353, has the following references to Luther: WA 41, 307-311; 45, 205-250; 49, 503-510; 40 III, 531; 36, 660; 45, 356. Most of them will appear in the next chapter of this paper.

the hope of a new life and the hope of a new world. They invert the traditional formula, "not destruction but renovation." It now reads: "Not renovation but destruction." They justify their position by making clear that only man and the angels have been created in the image of God and are destined to incorruptibility. The other creatures are not destined to incorruptible life. Consequently, these theologians conceive the destruction of the subhuman world as total and definitive. The passage of the epistle to the Romans which furnished Luther the basis for the hope of renovation receives an artifical reinterpretation. The world, it is said, exists to keep man alive and to lead him to the knowledge of God. Once man receives a glorious body and knows God face to face, the cosmos becomes dispensable. It is true, says Althaus, that these theologies still mention new heavens and a new earth, but now "new heavens" designates only the "place" of the blessed, and "new earth" is just another name for the spiritual kingdom of heaven. Eternal life is conceived as worldless. God is all in everyone. Man does not need the creatures, not even for enjoyment.

Althaus maintains that the decisive reason for surrendering the hope of a new world was the influence of medieval mysticism.[15] It is

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[15] Ibid., pp. 356-357. In order to demonstrate that mysticism dispenses with the world, Althaus gives the following quotation from the book 3, chap. 2, 1 of Arndt's Sechs Buecher vom wahren Christentum: "Gott allein lassen seine hoechste Begierde, Wunsch und Verlangen, Lust und Freude sein, alle Kreaturen ausgeschlossen, nichts wuenschen, nichts begehren denn Gott allein, das das hoechste, ewige, unendliche, vollkommene Gut, das alles Gut ist, ohne welches kein wahres Gut sein kann im Himmel und Erden, in Zeit und Ewigkeit."

not by chance, says he, that Johann Gerhard was the first to perpetrate the change. His Meditationes Sacrae reveal the deep imprint of Bernard, Anselm and Arndt. The influence of mysticism on Gerhard comes through also in his interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:28, which is radically different from Luther's.

The Reformer believed that in eternal life man will receive directly from God the satisfaction of all needs. Consequently man can dispense with the creature as a means of existence. But Luther also believed that man will have joy in the creatures and will praise God for creation's beauty. In fact, Luther believed that God himself has joy and delight in the works of his hands. Consequently, for Luther there is room for a world of creatures in eternal life.

Gerhard, quite to the contrary, conceives eternal life as the vision of God, with exclusion of the creatures. God is the supreme good, and man's bliss is the contemplation of God alone. There is no room for joy and praise mediated through the creatures. There is no place for a world in eternal life.[16]

According to Althaus, Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century also reinterpret the affirmation that the earth is man's place of pilgrimage. In the preceding century Lutheran theologians had considered the earth a place foreign to man (Fremde) inasmuch as the earth is spoiled by sin and death. But at the same time they understood

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[16]The references of Althaus to Johann Gerhard are limited to Vol. IX of the Loci Theologici (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrich, 1875) and include pp. 157b, 162b, 163, 319b, 380. Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, pp. 353-358.

that, inasmuch as it is a creature of God, the earth is indeed man's home (Heimat). Under the influence of mysticism, seventeenth century Lutherans consider the earth foreign to man simply because it is not heaven, a creature and not the Creator. Althaus, therefore, concludes: "the surrender of the world in [Lutheran] eschatology goes back to the penetration of mysticism into Lutheran theology."[17]

Althaus observes furthermore that the surrender of the hope of a new world in Lutheran eschatology is in direct opposition to its "realistic" faith in the resurrection of the body. Lutheran theologians failed to see the intimate connection between the corporeal and the cosmic character of human existence; otherwise they would have perceived the connection between the hope of a new life (Lebendigkeit) and the hope of a new world. Fortunately theologians of the nineteenth century rediscovered the connection. The faith in the renovation of the present world reappears with Philippi, Frank, Kliefoth, August Althaus and others.[18]

## A Theological Task

From the preceding discussion Paul Althaus derives the necessity of reaffirming the traditional teaching of the church on the new world, as preserved by Luther and Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth century. Theological mysticism has deeply conditioned the representations and the language of Christian people. Therefore the "return" must permeate

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[17] Ibid., p. 358.

[18] Ibid., p. 359.

the whole teaching of the church and affect the very piety of the Christians. The worldless hope of "heaven" must give place to the biblical expectation of a new "world."

The first step for the "reconstruction" is the theological clarification of the concepts "heaven" and "transcendence" (Jenseitigkeit).

The concept "heaven" appears in a double theological meaning, according to Althaus. First it designates the "place" of God; secondly, the "place" of the eternal life of the blessed saints and angels. In both cases, heaven is transcendent to the earth. With the incarnation of Christ, the "heavenly man" appears on earth. He brings the "there" down "here." Such a new order of things is hidden and will be disclosed only at the Parousia.[19] Then the "there" will definitively become a "here." The duplicity, separation and opposition of heaven and earth ends. The transcendence of heaven with regard to the earth disappears. Heaven is present in the renewed world.

The transcendent character of heaven, says Althaus, must also receive clear definition. The kingdom of God represents the suspension

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[19] Ibid., p. 360: "In Christus war der 'himmlische' Mensch auf Erden. Seither sind die Seinen mit ihm im 'Himmel'. . . . Wie in ihm das Dort Hier wurde, aber in der Verborgenheit der Knechtgestalt, so wird seine Parusie endgueltig das Dort zum Hier machen." Cf. p. 248: "Man kann von der Erloesung der Welt im Reiche Gottes beides sagen: sie ist da, und: sie ist noch nicht da. Sie ist da, weil Christus da ist und eine Gemeinde schafft, die im Glauben und in der Liebe schon jenseits der Todesgesetze des geschichtlichen Lebens stehen darf. . . . Und die Erloesung ist nocht nicht da, weil der Dienst der Gemeinde immer durch Suende gehemmt und durch die fortwaltenden Todesgesetze . . . begrenzt wird. . . . So bleibt die Spannung zwischen dem 'schon' und dem 'noch nicht' der Erloesung. Sie ist die eigentlich eschatologische Spannung."

(Aufhebung) of the world's "laws"--death and sin. Efforts of man cannot bring about the kingdom of God, because it is beyond the possibilities of nature and history. But the affirmation of the kingdom's suprahuman and supramundane character need not imply the loss or denial of a new world. To define the kingdom of God as transcendent is merely to conceive it as opposed to the present shape of the world, which is conditioned by death and sin. It does not imply that the kingdom is in opposition to the world "as such," to the world as creature of God. The kingdom is indeed transcendent, but one must not forget that the kingdom enters the immanence of history (unser Diesseits). The new aeon, according to the New Testament, penetrates and transforms the old.

In short, Althaus does not object to the use of the term "heaven" to designate the new world, as long as the use of the term does not imply the surrender of the world as world, that is, as creature of God. Proper use of the term implies and affirms only that the new reality is transcendent to the shape of this world, conditioned by death and sin.[20]

### The Future and the Present World: Relationship

After the critical consideration above, Althaus describes in a positive way the relationship between the future and the present world. In a preceding chapter he had established that man's future corporeity (Leiblichkeit und Lebendigkeit) will be at the same time identical with

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[20] Ibid., p. 361.

and different from the present corporeity.[21] Now he applies the same categories of "identity" (Selbigkeit) and "difference" (Andersheit) to the relationship between the future and the present world. He starts out with the difference.

Between the present and the future world there is the end, a breach comparable to death.[22] The new world is eternal. It will not

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[21]Ibid., pp. 130-131: "Wir werden . . . die beiden Zuege im Gedanken der Auferweckung zu betonen haben: Abbruch einerseits, Zusammenhang andrerseits; Neuschoepfung und Bewahrung. Beides kommt bei Paulus stark zum Ausdruck. Einerseits sagt der Apostel: "Gott wird unsere sterblichen Leiber erwecken" (Roem. 8,11), Christus "wird verwandeln den Leib unserer Erniedrigung zur Gleichgestaltung mit dem Leib seiner Herrlichkeit" (Phil. 3,21)--also diese Leiblichkeit ist Gegenstand der Verwandlung, der Verherrlichung durch Christus. Darin ist Selbigkeit, Seinszusammenhang ausgesagt. Andrerseits kann Paulus den Auferstehungsleib als schon im Himmel fuer uns vorhanden ansehen (2. Kor. 5,1); das ist staerkster Ausdruck der Andersheit der neuen Leiblichkeit: sie ist offenbar ausser Zusammenhang mit der jetzigen. Das Bild des Samenkorns (1. Kor. 15,35ff.) betont beide Seiten der Sachen, den Zusammenhang, aber staerker die voellige Andersheit der neuen Leiblichkeit. Cf. Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 479: "Es ist nicht moeglich zu sagen: dieses und das an uns wird vergehen, dieses und das wird erhalten, wiederhergestellt. Sondern: alles an uns muss verwesen und aufhoeren--und wir werden doch in unserem Personsein ganz bewahrt. Das ist das grosse Mysterium wirklichen Todes und wirklicher Erweckung und Erneuerung."

[22]Althaus leaves no doubt, there must be an end to the present world. Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, pp. 42-43: "In dieser Welt ist Gottes Gegenwart notwendig und unaufhebbar Entaeusserung seiner Majestaet, Eintritt in die Unsichtbarkeit und Fraglichkeit und Verharren in ihr. . . . Diese Kenosis Gottes, diese Verborgenheit seines Heiles, seines Reiches aufheben, heisst: die Gestalt dieser Welt zerbrechen, die ursuendige Bestimmtheit unseres Seins aufheben. Das aber sind keine menschliche Moeglichkeiten." Cf. Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 496: "das letztere Wissen [um eine kommende neue Welt] ist eigentlich das fruehere und grundlegende: weil die neue Welt, in Christi Auferweckung und seinen Erscheinungen sich schon bezeugend, kommen wird, muss die jetzige zu Ende gehen." Ibid., p. 498: "Die Geschichte, in der Jesus gekreuzigt wurde und in der er der Verkannte und Gekreuzigte bleibt, muss enden und einer Welt Platz machen, in welcher die Herrlichkeit des Auferstandenen erscheint und seine Liebe alles Lebens Gesetz wird."

be subject to the laws of our space and time. The new world is glorious. It will not be subject to "nothingness" (Romans 8:20), instability (Ungesichertheit) and fragility of being. The new world is a new creature. It will not be exposed to the necessity of dying and killing. The new world is characterized by the paradisiac peace of the creatures with each other (Isaiah 11).

In view of all these attributes, the new world is as unthinkable as the new life (Lebendigkeit) beyond death. For the same reason, it is impossible to project the present nature into the future world. It is also impossible to extend the present culture into that world. Marriage, justice, state and economy are orders given for a world of conflict and death. They must disappear with the world's end.[23] The achievements of political and cultural activity are immanent (diesseitig), transitory and exposed to death (dem Tode geweiht). Consequently, the new world cannot be described as a "glorified outcome" (verklaertes Ergebnis) of the earthly cultural process. The new world comes into being by the creative act of God. In correspondence to Paul's statement on the new body, Scripture knows of the city of God as being ready already now, in heaven.[24]

Regardless of all breach and difference, there still is identity and connection between the two worlds, for the simple reason that this

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[23]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, p. 362.

[24]Ibid.: "Die Bibel weiss die kommende Stadt Gottes, ganz dementsprechend, was Paulus 2. Kor. 5,1 von dem Auferstehungs-Leibe sagt [supra, n. 21], im Himmel schon vorhanden (Apok. 3,12; 21,2)."

world is renewed.[25] God's act of re-creation (das Neuschaffen Gottes) is at the same time an act of preservation (ein Bewahren). The "how" of the preservation and the "how" of the relatedness of man's historical achievements to the new world is a mystery as great as the connection between our coming and our present corporeity.

Notwithstanding the mystery, Althaus still believes that one can affirm the connection and preservation. Present nature is a sign and promise (verheissendes Gleichnis) of the eternal creation; that is, of the radiance of God's glory in the new world.[26] The eternal glory of God includes sensibility (Sinnlichkeit) and corporality (Leibhaftigkeit). The beauty of the present world is a promise and foretaste of the new world's beauty. The spiritual tasks and achievements of man at present are promising signs of the eternal tasks to be performed in the eternal world. Man's mission of knowing and shaping (gestalten) the world never reaches completion in history. The promise implied in the present mission and struggle will find its fulfillment in the new world. Man will have before him a world completely open to the penetration of the spirit and totally shaped by God's spirit of eternal love. The dynamic

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[25]Paul Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 505: "Das ewige Reich steht also nicht nur in negativer, sondern auch in positiver Beziehung zur Geschichte. Es bricht die Geschichte ab und ist jenseits ihrer, aber es setzt sie auch voraus und bringt sie zum Ziele."

[26]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, p. 363. Cf. Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1931), I, 455: "Aber wie es eine letzte Identitaet des Menschen der Zeit und der Ewigkeit gibt, so auch aller Kreatur Gottes. Denn er schuf keine um sie am Ende zu vernichten. So sieht das Auge der Hoffnung in der Welt der Schoepfung das Gleichnis, den Hinweis, die Vorbereitung auf die ewige Welt Gottes."

character of the new world implies for man the eternal task of knowing and shaping the new reality. The happiness of that eternal activity is signified already now by the joy a man has in the success of his work.[27]

In short, Paul Althaus bases his description of the relationship of the future with the present world on the eschatological meaning and direction of culture (der eschatologische Sinn aller Kultur).[28] The cultural efforts of governing, building and shaping the world point beyond history to the eternal city of God, in which there is no frustration for the God-appointed tasks of man.

At the same time Althaus is very emphatic in saying that only faith knows of a relationship between the historical and the eternal tasks of man. The connection between the coming reality and the present world

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[27]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, pp. 363-364: "Sind wir zum Erkennen und Gestalten dieser Welt berufen, so duerfen wir darin die kommende Welt ahnen als Erfuellung der Verheissung, die uns in der jetzigen Aufgabe gegeben ist: als ganz dem Durchdringen des Geistes offen, ganz von Gottes Geiste ewiger Liebe gestaltet und ihn kuendend; ganz 'Wort' gewordene Wirklichkeit, ganz Wirklichkeit gewordenes Wort, und das doch nicht in starrem Gewordensein, sondern in lebendiger Aktualitaet ewigen Werdens, so, dass Gott uns zu unerschoepflichem Erkennen und Gestalten ruft. Fuer solchen Wirkens Freude ist uns die jetzige Freude des Gelingens, die edle Freude, zu erkennen und zu gestalten, ein Vorschmack, eine Verheissung."

[28]Ibid., p. 364: "Unser Erkennen und Bilden erzeugt nicht die ewige Welt vollendeter Leiblichkeit, aber es bezeugt sie, es bekennt sich zu ihr, bewusst oder unbewusst, durch sich selbst als zu dem Sinne seiner selbst [sic]. Das ist der eschatologische Sinn aller Kultur."

can be postulated and expressed only theologically, that is, as a relationship of promise and fulfillment.[29]

## Critical Observations on the Views of Paul Althaus

The foregoing presentation shows quite clearly that Romans 8:19-22 plays a decisive role in the eschatology of Althaus. The passage undergirds nothing less than his fundamental principle of the theological connection between the destiny of the world and the destiny of man.

Althaus takes the connection in a very specific sense.

The world's "shape," its subjection to death and nothingness, derives from the sinful character of man. The implication is clear. Once man becomes free from his sin and death, the world will also become free.

Althaus however postulates the connection in a still more positive way. The world was man's partner in his disgrace. The world must also become partner of man in his glory. The glorification of man must in some way or another benefit the world.

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[29] Ibid.: "Wir koennen diesen dem Glauben bewussten Zusammenhang nicht irgendwie natur- oder geschichtsphilosophisch als metaphysiche Kontinuitaet ausdruecken, das verbietet uns die Wirklichkeit des Endes dieser Welt. Wir koennen den Zusammenhang nur theologisch ausdruecken, naemlich als das Verhaeltnis von Verheissung und Erfuellung." Cf. the statement on the continuity, which exists in man's death, Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 479-480: "Die Selbigkeit und Durchgaengigkeit laesst sich nicht ontologisch, sondern nur theologisch-existential bestimmen: es ist die Einheit eines Gerufenseins als dieser bestimmte Mensch, einer mir zugewandten Treue Gottes, einer Verantwortung. Gott ruft mich aus dem Tode bei meinem Namen. Wir fassen uns in unserer Selbigkeit diesseits und jenseits des Todes allein so, dass wir an Gottes Liebe glauben."

Althaus goes farther. Since this world became the victim of man's corruption, it is not enough to affirm that God will provide glorified man with a new world created out of nothing. No, this world here, which suffered under man, must with man receive the benefit of renovation and "glory." And here lies the ultimate basis for establishing a theological identity (Selbigkeit) of the future with the present world.[30]

One could underline at least three factors that make possible such an understanding and use of Romans 8:19-22.

The first is Althaus' theology of creation. He conceives nature and history as having a meaning independent of the life and struggle of man. The world exists first of all for the sake of God himself. Consequently the world may have an existence beyond the history of man.

The second factor is Althaus' conception of God. He views God as Creator of things and believes that God is sensitive to corporeal beauty and perfection. Consequently, the existence of a world becomes possible even in eternal life, for the simple reason that God himself enjoys the presence of creatures.

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[30]In Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 505-506, Althaus bases the difference of the future with regard to the present world on 2 Peter 3:13. He derives the identity from Romans 8:19-22: "Sehnen wir Menschen uns aus dem Kampf- und Verdraengungsgesetze unserer irdischen Lebensgestalt heraus in die ungebrochene Gemeinschaft des Reiches Gottes, so tun wir es namens der ganzen Kreatur, deren Struktur wir verhaftet sind; die wir mit uns, um unsertwillen, als unsere Welt, der Nichtigkeit unterworfen wissen. Mit uns draengt die gesamte Kreatur hinaus ueber ihren jetzigen Seinsstand zu ihrem wahren, von dem Schoepfer vorgesehenen Stande. Die neue Welt wird ebensowenig wie unsere ewige Lebensgestalt durch Schoepfung aus nichts, sondern so, dass die jetzige Kreatur 'befreit wird zur herrlichen Freiheit der Kinder Gottes' (Roem. 8,19ff.). Was das konkret bedeutet, vermag unser irdisches Denken nicht vorzustellen und auszusagen." [Emphasis added.]

The third factor is the "anthropolgy" that issues from Althaus' faith in the resurrection. He conceives the new corporeity as "real" enough to require an adequate world. For him, faith in the resurrection of the body and faith in a new world belong together.[31]

As will appear from the fourth chapter, the same factors are active in Luther's understanding and use of Romans 8:19-22.[32]

The present writer feels bound to raise one question with regard to the argumentation of Althaus: Does the description of the new world stand the test of criticism? The description is based on the relationship of promise and fulfillment between the present and the new world. One can recognize in it the basic approach of Althaus to the whole question of eschatology.[33] If it were not for his fear of "biblicism,"

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[31]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge, p. 341: "mit unserem Bekenntnis zur Auferstehung des Leibes ist die Erwartung einer neuen Welt notwending gegeben. Sind wir wesenhaft Leib, so sind wir auch wesenhaft in der Welt.

[32]The "coincidence" is not surprising. Cf. Paul Althaus, Die Theologie Martin Luthers ([Gütersloh]: Gutersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, c.1962), p. 9: "Er [der Autor] kann . . . bekennen, dass er mit Strenge dem widerstanden hat, Luther in die eigene Dogmatik einzufangen. . . . Sollte man dennoch an wichtigen Punkten die Naehe dieser Darstellung Luthers zu der Dogmatik des Verfassers bemerken und etwa verdaechtig finden, so koennte der Grund umgekehrt darin liegen, dass ich fuer die eigene Arbeit besonders viel von Luther gelernt habe."

[33]Paul Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 474: "Ueberall [im Neuen Testament] regiert nicht einfach die Autoritaet von Einzelworten des Alten Testamentes oder Jesu [ueber das Kommende], sondern die innere Notwendigkeit, die Logik des Glaubens an den in Christus offenbaren Gott. Das schreibt uns den eigenen Weg vor. Die Eschatologie sucht, staendig geleitet von den ausdruecklichen Zukunftsworten des Neuen Testamentes, die Verheissung oder Weissagung aufzuzeigen und zu entfalten, die in Gottes gegenwaertiger Begegnung mit uns durch Gesetz und Evangelium liegt. Das jetzige Verhaeltnis, in das Gott uns zu sich gesetzt hat, ist in sich die Verheissung, auf die unsere Hoffnung und Erwartung des Letzten sich gruendet." P. 475: "So befolgen wir auch in der Eschatologie die dogmatische Methode und sind damit biblischer als der Biblizismus."

Althaus could have used some further evidence furnished by August Althaus and Theodor Kliefoth.

August Althaus makes the point that the renovation of this world is demanded by the justice of God himself.[34] He describes the new world based on the intimate connection between man and world, as expressed in Romans 8:19-22.[35] Man received in the beginning the mission of subduing the earth to the service of God. The earth, for its turn, had the potential of becoming "glorified" by the activity of man. With his fall into sin, man lost the conditions indispensable to subdue the earth, and the earth developed all kinds of resistance to man's activity. With the coming of the new world, which presupposes the end of the old, the situation changes. The image of God is fully restored to man, and man is given the power of permeating the earth with the Spirit of God. The new reality is an instrument adequate and open to the activity of man. In short, the relationship between man and the

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[34]Aug[ust] Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge (Verden: Steinhoefel'sche Buchhandlung, 1858), pp. 119-121. Since man fell into sin by his own free choice, his liberation is an act of God's mercy. The creature, however, was subjected to nothingness by God himself, in hope. Therefore, the liberation of the creature is but an act of God's justice. And the justice of God demands that this world, which suffered under the sin of man, become renewed into glory. A total annihilation of the world or even the creation of a totally other world would leave a gap in the justice of God. The present world must attain the glory to which it was determined in the beginning.

[35]Ibid., p. 121: "die materielle Welt steht mit dem von ihr umgebenen Menschen in genauer Verbindung und gegenseitiger Wechselwirkung. Wie sie um des Menschen willen vorhanden ist und Mittel zur Verwirklichung seiner Bestimmung, so ist sie auch Bedingung seiner leiblichen Existenz und seines geistigen Lebens."

world does not end with eternal life, it is rather brought to completion (Vollendung).[36]

Theodor Kliefoth affirms the intimate connection of man and world, based on Romans 8:19-22, and from it derives three major consequences. First, that God was forced to change the earth in order to make it a place suitable to a sinful humanity.[37] Second, that God will destroy the present earth, which is conditioned by the sin of man, and produce a new world, that is adequate to the glorious life of the elected.[38] Third, that the world will attain the "glory" which it would have

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[36]Ibid., p. 122: "Diese Herrlichkeit der neuen Welt ist nicht die urspruengliche, worin sie erschaffen ist, das hier nur waere eine Wiederherstellung des Ersten. Wohl aber ist es die Herrlichkeit, zu welcher die alte Welt erschaffen war. Das zweite Paradies wird das erste ueberstrahlen. In dieser Herrlichkeit wird die neue Welt die Herrlichkeit ihres Schoepfers auf das ungetruebteste abstrahlen. Sie wird zu dem volkommenen Dienste Gottes durch das Organ des Menschen bereitet. . . ."

[37]Th[eodor] Kliefoth, Christliche Eschatologie (Leipzig: Verlag von Doerffling und Franke, 1886), pp. 292-293: "Dass die Erneuerung Himmels und der Erde in den goettlichen Heilsplan wesentlich gehoert, ist die Folge davon, dass Mensch und Erde zusammengehoeren. . . . Ist aber die Erde auf den Menschen und der Mensch auf die Erde geordnet, so konnte auch der Suendenfall des Menschen nicht ohne Rueckwirkung auf die Erde bleiben. . . . Die Erde konnte kein Eden bleiben, ja konnte keinen Platz fuer ein Eden behalten, nachdem der Mensch nicht mehr wuerdig war ein Eden auf ihr zu finden . . . . Denn ein Wohnplatz muss seinen Bewohnern angemessen sein. . . ."

[38]Ibid., pp. 293-294: "wie der Leib des suendigen Menschen sterben muss, so muss seine Wohnstatt vergehen." "Ist die Erde auf den Menschen und der Mensch auf die Erde geordnet, so wird auch die neue Menschheit, welche das Ergebnis des ausgefuehrten Erloesungsrathschlusses sein soll, eine neue ihr angemessene Erde zum Wohnplatz haben muessen."

achieved if man had accomplished his mission of subduing the earth.[39]

The basic contention both of August Althaus and Theodor Kliefoth is that, in the new world, there will be fulfillment of the good purposes of God which were frustrated by the fall of man into sin. Presupposing that the contention is biblically and theologically legitimate, the present writer sees no reason why Althaus should not have used the same argument. Here too there is "promise" and "fulfillment."

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[39] Ibid., p. 326: "Die Schaedigung, welche durch die Suende dea Menschen auch der Erde und ihrer Creatur widerfahren ist, wird von ihr genommen werden, dass sie frei wird wie die Kinder Gottes (Roem. 8, 18-24), und auch in dieser Beziehung wird es gelten, was 2 Petr. 3, 13 von ihr sagt, dass auf ihr Gerechtigkeit wohnen wird. Und nicht das allein, sondern auch von ihr wird gelten, dass die Vollendung nicht blosse Wiederherstellung des urspruenglichen Schoepfungszustandes sein wird: sie wird nicht bloss das sein, was sie in den ersten Tagen Adam's war, sondern das was sie gewesen sein wuerde, wenn der Mensch, statt in Suende zu fallen, seine Aufgabe, die Beherrschung der Erde, erfuellt haette."

## CHAPTER III

## JOHANN GERHARD

To understand Johann Gerhard's position on Romans 8:19-22, one must consider his whole discussion of the form of the world's consummation.[1] In this discussion Gerhard presents the reasons why he cannot affirm the liberation of the creature in the positive sense of the term.

### Statement of Position

Johann Gerhard states his view of the consummation in unmistakable terms:

> We maintain the form of the consummation to be not a simple alteration of qualities, but the abolition, in fact, the total annihilation of the substance itself, so that the consummation's or destruction's terminus a quo is being, and the terminus ad quem is not being or nothing.[2]

He adds certain qualifications:

First, he concedes that many teachers of the church have taught that the world will not pass away in its substance (kat' ousian), but

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[1]Johann Gerhard, Loci Theologici (Lipsiae: J. C. Hinrichs, 1875), IX, 155-178. The presentation is limited to such aspects of the subject that are relevant to the present study.

[2]Ibid., p. 155b: "Formam consummationis dicimus fore non nudam qualitatum alterationem, sed ipsius substantiae abolitionem, adeoque totalem annihilationem, ut sic terminus a quo consummationis sive destructionis sit esse, terminus vero ad quem non esse sive nihil."

rather be changed in its appearance (kata poiotetas);[3]

Second, he presents his view on the world's destruction not as an article of faith, necessary to be known and believed for salvation, but as a position more adequate to the Scriptures' emphatic statements on the world's end;

Third, he does not brand as heretics those who describe the world's end in terms of change and alteration (alloiosis);

Fourth, he observes that many theologians have perferred to abstain from judgment instead of stating a definite position on the end of the world;

Finally, he concedes that several Lutherans have maintained the position that the world will suffer only a change of qualities and not a radical destruction.[4]

Gerhard supports his position with evidence derived from Scripture, theological and philosophical "reasons" (rationes), declarations of the church fathers and of the sponsors of the theory of renovation. Only the scriptural and "rational" evidence are of interest for the present study.

Biblical Evidence

Gerhard examines most of the biblical passages on the end of the

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[3]Ibid., Gerhard quotes, among others, Irenaeus, Cyrill of Jerusalem, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, Cyrill of Alexandria, Gregory the Great, Beda.

[4]Ibid., p. 157. Heerbrand, Mylius, Hutter and Meisner are quoted as abstaining from judgment. Brentz, Althamer, and Philipp Nicolai, as affirming the change of qualities. Gerhard is definitely mistaken in classifying Luther among the latter. The least he should have said is that Luther is undecided.

world. He concludes from his investigation that the verbs used by the biblical writers affirm nothing less than the abolition of the world's substance.[5] He finds also that the world's end is compared to the passing away of things that suffer total and substantial corruption. The comparison implies that the world will be substantially destroyed.[6] He finds further that many passages oppose the world to the essential incorruptibility of, for instance, God and his Word. The opposition implies that the world perishes in its very substance or essence.[7] Finally, Gerhard argues that the disappearance of the present world is implied in the promise of a new heaven and a new earth. Scripture states that God will create a new world. The verb "create" means primarily to produce something out of nothing. Scripture says that the

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[5]Ibid., p. 158a: "Quidquid ita transit, praeterit, abit, consumitur, inflammatur, exuritur, perit, tabescit, dissolvitur, ut conflagret, finiatur, consummetur et non sit amplius nec locus ei inveniatur, illud non qualitatum duntaxat immutationem sed ipsius substantiae abolitionem sustinet." Cf. p. 158b: "In quo to esse coeli et maris consistit, illud in fine mundi abolebitur, quia de coelo et mari dicitur, quod non amplius erunt [Revelation 20:11; 21:1]. Jam vero esse coeli et maris consistit . . . in forma essentiali. Ergo in fine mundi . . . ipsa essentialis forma coeli et maris abolebitur. . . . Scriptura simpliciter et absolute pronuntiat, coelum et mare non amplius futura, hoc non est temeraria audacia mutandum in eam loquendi formulam, quod non amplius sint talia futura."

[6]Ibid., pp. 159b-160a. Biblical references include Psalm 97:5, Psalm 102:26; cf. Hebrews 1:11, Isaiah 51:6, Isaiah 34:4; cf. Revelation 6:14, Matthew 24:29; cf. Revelation 6:13.

[7]Ibid., p. 161. On Psalm 102:26-27. "Quo sensu ac respectu Deus dicitur permanere, eodem sensu ac respectu coeli dicuntur perire, alias non esset oppositio directa. Jam vero Deus dicitur permanere essentialiter. Ergo coeli intelliguntur perire essentialiter." Cf. Matthew 24:35.

present heavens, earth and sea will be no more--there will be no memory of them. Such could not be the case if the substance of the present world remained. Scripture affirms that God will make all things new. The term "new" applies not only to something new in its qualities, but also to something that is altogether new and different.[8]

"Rational" Evidence

Johann Gerhard finds further support for his position in the concept of incorruptibility, the cessation of time, the suppression of the present world's purpose, the description of the New Jerusalem, the consideration of absurdity, and the gradations of beings.

The concept of incorruptibility. With the help of Wisdom 2:23 Gerhard establishes that immortality and incorruptibility are components of the divine image. Since only man and the angels were created in the image of God, it follows that no creature besides them can achieve incorruptibility. Consequently, all creatures other than the angels and man must disappear with the world's end.[9]

The cessation of time. Based on Revelation 10:6, Isaiah 66:23, and the general consensus of the theologians, Gerhard establishes that

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[8]Ibid., pp. 161b-162. Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1-5. "kainon usurpatur non solum pro renovato ac secundum qualitates mutato, sed etiam pro alio ac secundum essentiam novo."

[9]Ibid., p. 162b: "nulla creatura corporea animata, solo homine excepto, ad immortalitatem [athanasia] et incorruptibilitatem [aphtharsia] condita, nec resurgent creaturae animatae in die novissimo, sed et individua et species earum in consummatione seculi abolebuntur. Ergo nec inanimes creaturae, coelum, sol, luna et stellae etc. erunt incorruptibiles."

eternity excludes succession of time. Now time is defined as the measurement of duration according to the heavens' movement. Therefore, the end of time presupposes the stoppage of celestial movement. Since movement is an essential operation of the heavens, the end of movement implies the end of the heavens themselves.[10]

The elimination of the purpose of heavens and earth. According to Gerhard the world was made for two reasons: to furnish man with the means for his existence and to serve man as means for the knowledge of God. In heaven the bodies of the saints are glorified, and the saints see God face to face. Consequently, there is no need and no use for the present world. It must disappear altogether.[11]

The description of the New Jerusalem. Scripture says that there will be no temple in the heavenly city. It follows, according to Gerhard, that there will be no other physical dwellings. Scripture also says that the saints will not need the service of the sun and the moon, which are the most noble of the creatures. It follows that the service of lesser creatures is even more dispensable. Scripture declares that God will be

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[10] Ibid., p. 163: "Cessante ergo motu coeli, cessabit finis, propter quem coelum conditum, cessabit propria formae operatio, in qua et cum qua coelum conditum. . . . Cessante ergo hoc motu naturali, interibit etiam ipsum coelum, unde subjungimus rationem."

[11] Ibid.: "In vita eterna beati Deum videbunt facie ad faciem, ergo non opus habebunt creaturarum magisterio. . . . corpora beatorum glorificata nec victu nec vestitu nec terreno quodam domicilio indigebunt, nec in speculu amplius et aenigmate, sed clare et intuitiva visione Deum cognoscent . . . ; ideo etiam non indigebunt amplius hujus vitae adminiculis." Cf. p. 140.

everything to everyone. The declaration implies that the blessed will seek neither nourishment nor enjoyment in the creatures.[12]

The reductio ad absurdum. Gerhard argues as follows. If one postulates a renovation of the heavens and the earth, there is no reason for not postulating also a renovation (apokatastasis) of all the other creatures. If the renovation of the elements is conceded, one must also concede the renovation of bodies composed of these elements (corpora mixta). If one affirms the renovation of such corpora mixta as plants and animals, the question arises whether the renovation applies to all the plants and animals which existed since the world's beginning, or only to the plants and animals that will be living at the time of the end. In the first case, it would be inconceivable how the new world would be able to contain such a large number of bodies. In the second case, it would be impossible to conceive why God should confer the privilege of renovation only to some creatures and neglect all the others. If all creatures suffer under corruption and yearn for liberation (Romans 8:20), how can anyone say that only a limited number of creatures will become free? Again, if one did concede the renovation of all creatures, one would have to face the problem of their propagation and service to man. If they propagated, generation and corruption would be introduced into eternal life. If they would not procreate, it would be inconceivable how a limited number of plants and animals could suffice the multitude of blessed saints. In short, the inevitable

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[12]Ibid.: "Deus erit omnia in omnibus 1 Cor. 15, v. 28. Ergo nec sustentationem nec delectationem quaerent a creaturis." Isaiah 60:19; Revelation 21:22-23 and 22:5.

absurdities and contradictions involved make untenable the theory of the renovation of the world and its creatures.[13]

The gradation of beings. In the order and gradation of beings, God holds the highest place. He is uncreated and infinite. He has no beginning and no end. He is absolutely eternal. In the second place come the created spirits, man and the angels. They have a beginning, but no end. They are eternal (aevum belongs to them). In the last place come the physical and corporeal substances. They have not only a beginning but also an end. They are subject to corruption and annihilation. They are as incapable of incorruptibility as the spiritual incorporeal substances are incapable of corruption. The only exception are the bodies of the believers. They are composed of physical elements. But they will live forever. God gave them a special promise and gift--resurrection. The promise, however, does not apply to the other corporeal creatures.[14]

Johann Gerhard has no doubt. The destruction of the world will be substantial and total.

## Discussion of the Antithesis

Gerhard observes that his opponents have in common nothing more

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[13] Ibid.: "Sed et brutorum atque arborum illa individua renovata, quem praestabunt hominibus usum, quod ministerium, quale servitium? num speciem suam per generationem ac plantationem propagabunt? Si quis affirmet, statuenda erit denuo generationis et corruptionis in futoro seculo quaedam vicissitudo; si neget, cogitandum ipsi erit, quomodo tot myriadibus hominum ad vitam aeternam resuscitatorum tam pauca brutorum et vegetabilium individua sufficiant?"

[14] Ibid., p. 164a.

than the affirmation that the world will not pass away in its substance, but rather be changed in its appearance and qualities.[15] Beyond this fundamental consensus, their views differ widely.

Some of the opponents, says Gerhard, maintain that the world will be destroyed "essentially" (essentialiter), but not "totally" (totaliter). They appeal to the parallelism between man and the world. Man, the microcosm, ceases to be essentially, as the compound (compositum) of soul and body is dissolved, and the soul-deprived body turns into ashes. Nevertheless, man does not disappear totally. The immortal soul continues to be and is finally reunited with the resurrected body. In a similar fashion the macrocosm, the heavens and the earth, will perish essentially, but not totally. The creating and preserving power of God, which is so to say the soul of the world, produces new heavens and a new earth out of the ashes of the final conflagration.[16]

Others, says Gerhard, besides affirming a general renovation of the creatures, distinguish creatures to be transformed, creatures to be abolished, and creatures to be restored to the original state.[17] Consequently, the most discrepant views of the renewed heavens and earth

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[15] Ibid., p. 168a: "Quidquid tamen sit, in eo plerique omnes ex Pontificiis et Calvinianis consentiunt, quod mundus non secundum substantiam interiturus, sed secundum qualitates duntaxat sit immutandus."

[16] Ibid., pp. 166b-167a. Gerhard's evaluation of the position described: "Atque eorum sententia veritati quam proxime videtur accedere."

[17] Ibid., p. 167. Some say that the heavens remain the same, but lose their movement. Some, that fire and water will disappear, the earth and the air will remain. Others again state that all the elements will be renewed.

are proposed.[18]

Gerhard discusses one by one the biblical passages used by the opponents to support their contentions. For the purpose of the present study it suffices to mention certain aspects that bear on the interpretation of Romans 8:19-22.

Luther and others have frequently used Isaiah 30:26 to prove the renovation of the sun and the moon. Gerhard makes the attempt of showing that the passage does not serve that purpose.[19] In its literal sense, he says, the passage describes nothing more than the liberation of Israel from the Assyrians. The prophet had characterized the oppression in terms of darkness; now he describes the liberation in terms of brightness of the sun, moon and stars. Typically and mystically, one can apply the passage to the splendor of the Gospel in the church, as it dispels the shades of the Law. Moreover, passages like Isaiah 60:19 and Revelation 21:23 clearly state that the New Jerusalem does not need the light of the sun. It follows that Isaiah 30:26 does not teach the sun's eschatological renovation.

Gerhard also undermines the "proof" of 1 Corinthians 7:30. The purpose of the Apostle is to show that there is nothing firm and permanent

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[18] Ibid., pp. 167b-168a. Anselm describes the earth as full of flowers, which grow forth from the blood of the martyrs. "Sed Thomas ac reliqui theologi arbitrantur, mixta omnia abolenda. Ille vero novus status rerum est incorruptibilium. Plantae, inquit Thomas additam q. 91. art. 5. et animalia sunt de perfectione universi, secundum statum istum mutabilitatis, non secundum statum novitatis."

[19] Ibid., pp. 168b-169a.

in the world. Therefore the believer should attach his heart to the permanent things of heaven. The purpose of the passage comes through more clearly if one assumes a substantial destruction of the world. The same principle, according to Gerhard, applies to 2 Peter 3:10-13. The purpose of the Apostle is better obtained by presupposing a radical destruction of the world.[20]

Gerhard further discusses the promise of new heavens and a new earth as stated in Isaiah 65:17 and 2 Peter 3:13. He maintains, based on Isaiah 64:4 and 1 Corinthians 2:9, that no man is able to conceive the nature and character of the new reality.[21] He adds that "new heavens" and "new earth" are nothing but a figure of speech to designate the glory and happiness of the future world. Man is unable to conceive life apart from a world. Scripture condescends to human powers of conception and uses expressions like "new heavens" and "new earth" to designate the future dwelling place of man. Consequently, no argument

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[20]Ibid., pp. 176b-177a: "Coelum, terra, mare et omnia, quae in illis sunt, ultimo illo orbis incendio conflagrabunt. Ergo terrenis et transitoriis rebus non adhaereamus amore inordinato, sed coelestia et aeterna bona quaeramus, id vero aliter fieri nequit quam serio ac sedulo pietatis studio." Here as elsewhere the preaching of the Law predominates. The Gospel is absent from the ch. de fine consummationis, ibid., pp. 178a-180a. God is seen not in creation, but out of and in opposition to the transitory creature.

[21]Ibid., p. 177b: "Oculus non vidit, quia non est color; nec auris audivit, quia non est sonus; nec in cor hominibus adscendit, quia cor hominis debet illuc adscendere."

in favor of the renovation of the world can be derived from these terms.[22]

Johann Gerhard copes with the problem of the connection between man and the world, used by his opponents to support the world's renovation. The creatures exist for the sake of man, they say. As man is renewed, the creatures should also receive the blessing of renovation. The world must be purified from the consequences of sin and made new on account of (propter) man's glorification. The world must become adequate to the glory of man. Gerhard refutes such argumentation by underlining the difference that exists between man and the world. Man was created for spiritual, celestial and eternal life. Therefore God will recall man's body from death. The creatures, on the contrary, were made to serve man in his animal life, during the present age. God has already determined the end of the world at a

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[22]Ibid., pp. 177b-178a: "nos nihil praestantius nihilque nobilius animo concipere possumus quam coelum tot astrorum lampadibus exornatum ac terram tot arborum et fructum speciebus decoratam; Scriptura igitur per sygkatabasin nobis condescendens verbis hujus seculi gloriam et felicitatem futuri seculi describit ac duo hujus universi extrema, summum scilicet coelum ac infimam terram, nominat, ut typo hujus mundi, in quo nunc vivimus, mellousan illam oikoumenen Hebr. 2, v. 5. in qua aeternum victuri sumus, utrumque nobis adumbret. Quodsi in typicis, parabolicis ac mysticis illis descriptionibus to rheton arcte quispiam tenere velit, statuere etiam cogetur aurum, margaritas, gemmas, arbores cum nostris specie convenientes in coelesti Hierosolyma futuras." But Gerhard knows to be "literalistic" when it serves his purposes. Cf. the preceding note.

certain moment in time.[23] It does not help to postulate that the creatures must receive reward for their services to man. If this were the case, all living creatures, like trees, plants, birds, fishes, that served man with sacrifice of their own life, should partake of the renovation--a possibility excluded by the principle that there will be no corpora mixta in eternal life.[24] Moreover, Scripture knows of no such promise of reward supposedly given to the creatures.[25]

## The Discussion of Romans 8:19-22

Gerhard quotes and discusses Romans 8:19-22 as the main passage used by the sponsors of the world's renovation.[26] After interpreting the passage, Gerhard gives the reason why, according to his understanding,

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[23] Ibid., p. 178: "Microcosmum sive hominem Deus creavit non solum ad hanc animalem et transitoriam, sed etiam ad spiritualem, coelestem et aeternam vitam, ideoque etiam corpora hominum ex mortuis suscitabit; sed macrocosmum sive totam visibilium creaturarum universitatem condidit duxtaxat propter praesens seculum, ut in vita animali hominum usui inserviret, ideoque aphtharsias et aeternitatis eam minime participem fecit, sed . . . certum temporis articulum aeterno decreto ei praefixit, in quo et cum quo durationis suae finem obtinere debeat."

[24] Cf. supra, p. 34, n. 18.

[25] Ibid., p. 178b: "Coelos novos ac terram novam gratuiti praemii loco piis promissa esse apostolus asserit 2. Petr. 3, v. 13. sed de praemio renovationis creaturis inanimatis vel animatis reliquis promisso altum in Scripturis est silentium."

[26] Ibid., p. 169b: "Hic locus apostolicus primarius est, quem pro contraria sententia vel maxime urgent. Expresse enim videtur apostolus asserere, quod creatura aeque ac filii Dei a corruptione sit liberanda et ad libertatem ab omni corruptione immunem traducenda."

the passage does not serve to disprove the essential annihilation of the world.

On Ktisis

Gerhard quotes and examines the different interpretations given to ktisis in the teaching tradition of the church. He discards the possibility of taking ktisis as a reference to the angels, the departed souls, the unbelievers, the Christians, or man in general. He maintains that ktisis must be taken as a reference to the totality of corporeal and irrational creatures.[27] The reasons, among others, are the following:

a. The noun ktisis, as it appears from Romans 1:20 and other passages, properly denotes the visible creation of God, that is, the totality of the machina mundi;[28]

b. The fourfold repetition of ktisis in the passage becomes unintelligible if the word is taken in a sense different from "creature";

c. The subject ktisis is opposed to the sons of God.[29]

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[27]Ibid., p. 172a: "Dicimus autem, intelligi creaturam corpoream, visibilem et irrationabilem [sic], ut ab hoc subjecto propositionis apostolicae excludamus angelos et homines."

[28]Ibid.: "Ktisis proprie significat, quidquid est a Deo creatum, totam scilicet mundi machinam cum omnibus partibus et contentis."

[29]Ibid., p. 172b. In view of Revelation 6:11 Gerhard is willing to include the souls of the martyrs in the subject, provided that their expectation does not cause suffering. Ktisis in v. 19 would then refer to the visible creation and pasa hē ktisis in v. 22, to the totality of finite beings.

On Vanity and Corruption

Gerhard sees three members in the predicate of the passage. The first member affirms the creature's subjection to vanity (v. 20) and to corruption (v. 21).[30]

Gerhard projects his view against the background of traditional interpretations. He maintains that the vanity under which the creature suffers is more than the "defect" (defectus) of mutability, corruption and mortality. It is first of all the service that forces the creature to suffer the misuse of the ungodly.[31] Service to corruptible man, especially to the impious, is vanity, bondage to corruption.[32]

The creature, adds Gerhard, many times must pay for the crimes of man, as it appears from the curse of the ground (Genesis 3:17-18), the devastation of the world by The Flood, the destruction of the "garden of God" around Sodom and Gomorra, and the punishment of the land of Egypt on account of Pharaoh's obstinacy.

Gerhard observes further that the main purpose (finis praecipuus) of the creature is to serve man as means for the knowledge of God

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[30]Ibid., p. 173a: "Praedicatum tria membra complectitur, 1. subjectionis servitium, 2. exspectationis desiderium, 3. liberationis beneficium."

[31]Ibid., p. 173b: "Vera et genuina interpretatio . . . per vanitatem . . : intelligitur . . . etiam ac cumprimis servitium illud, quo creaturae in hac vita abusibus impiorum coguntur esse subjectae."

[32]Ibid.. Psalm 39:6; Matthew 5:45. The only example given is that of the wine, a good creature of God, which is forced to suffer the cupidity of the drunkards. According to the apostolic personification, it wants to attain freedom. "Eligit enim potius non esse et in nihilum abire, quam abusui ebriorum inservire et hac ratione contra creatorem suum quasi militare." [Emphasis added.]

(theognōsia, Romans 1:20). Since the impious do not acknowledge God, the creature's service is frustrated (frustraneum).[33]

In keeping with his interpretation of vanity and corruption, Gerhard asserts that the creature is unwilling to serve man, because it abhors the misuse by the ungodly. He points out that the creature serves the ungodly for the exclusive reason that, in the beginning, God made the creature for the sake of man. The creature submits to God's ordinance and rule.[34]

On the Creature's Longing

According to Gerhard's division, the second member of the predicate comprises the creature's longing (v. 19) and groaning in travail (v. 22).

Gerhard understands that in v. 19 Paul is underscoring the statement of the preceding verse by showing the greatness and the certainty of the future glory. The Apostle portrays the irrational creature as waiting anxiously for the revelation of the future glory. He wants the believers to realize that this glory is inestimably great. For its sake, the believers should endure all burdens and sufferings of the present life. God himself implanted in the creature a longing for the manifestation of the coming glory. Therefore the believers can have the assurance that the God-given hope is not vain (frustranea).

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[33]Ibid., pp. 173b-174a.

[34]Ibid., p. 174a: "quia primitus ad usum hominis condita, ideo Dei creatoris imperio et ordinationi [creatura] obsequitur."

The glory will ultimately appear. The Apostle wants the Christians to realize also their dignity as children of God. They were given the first fruits of the Spirit. God makes all things work together for their good. Even the irrational creatures suffer and sigh with them for the manifestation of the future glory.

Gerhard calls attention to the emphatic character of the Apostle's words, as it appears in the root and composition of apokaradokia and in the personification of the creature as a woman in pains of labour.[35] He observes that the Apostle does not describe the suffering in absolute terms, but affirms that the creature groans in travail together with man. The groaning itself receives a questionable interpretation. At the Parousia, says Gerhard, the earth will bring forth the sons of the resurrection which are enclosed in its womb.[36]

On the Creature's Liberation

The third member of the predicate, according to Gerhard, affirms the liberation of the creature from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God (v. 21). Gerhard describes and discusses the interpretations given to the statement by the teachers of the church.

Chrysostom understood that the creatures will become free through (dia) or on account of (propter) the liberty and glory of the sons of

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[35]Ibid., p. 174b: "Auget emphasin, quod apostolus non simpliciter dicit creatura exspectat, sed exspectatio creaturae exspectat. . . ." Cf. p. 175a on systenazei kai synōdinei.

[36]Ibid., p. 175a. Matthew 19:28; Luke 20:36.

God. A foster-mother is exalted with the prince she nourished. The creature which served man will partake of his glory. Gerhard objects that the contention of Chrysostom presupposes the renovation of the world, which is the point at issue.[37]

Others have maintained that the expression eis eleutherian tēs doxēs must be taken in an "exemplary" sense. The creature will receive a liberty and immortality akin to that of man.

Ambrose takes eis eleutherian in a temporal sense. The expression denotes the time in which the creature will become free from the bondage of corruption.

Gerhard himself is inclined to take the expression in a consecutive sense (ekbathikōs or eventualiter). The meaning of the sentence would be: As soon as the creature becomes free from its vanity and corruption (by reverting into nothing), the glorious liberty of the sons of God will become manifest to all men and angels.[38]

The Conclusions

Gerhard concludes from his study of Romans 8:19-22 that the passage does not serve to demonstrate the change of the present world into a better state. His reasons are seven.

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[37] Ibid.,

[38] Ibid., p. 175b: "Posset etiam particula eis exponi eventualiter, ekbathikōs, creatura liberabitur a servitute corruptionis in libertatem gloriae filiorum Dei, h. e. quando creatura in consummatione seculi ab illa vanitate et servitute corruptionis liberabitur, tunc libertas gloriae sive gloriosa libertas filiorum Dei in publico angelorum et hominum conspectu manifestabitur."

1. If ktisis denotes the human or angelic creatures, there is nothing in the passage that supports an abolition only of the accidental qualities of the world. But such an interpretation of ktisis, even if maintained by some teachers of the church, is not the most adequate to the text.[39]

2. The Apostle states that the creature will become free from the bondage of corruption. He does not say that the creature will become free from corruption itself. The believers are free from the bondage of sin, and still they are not free from sin itself (Romans 7:17). If a captive soldier dies, he becomes free from his captivity, but not from corruption. The creature becomes free from its compulsory subjection to the abuses of the impious. Such a liberation does not imply that the creature is or will become free from corruption itself.[40]

3. The creature's liberation happens by its very corruption or annihilation and not by some kind of restoration, renewal or transformation. One must understand the freedom of the creature in terms exactly opposite to the characterization of its bondage. The creature is forced to suffer the misuse of its service by the ungodly. The creature's liberty, therefore, must consist in the cessation of its compulsory service, at the end of the world. Now, the consummation can happen either by destruction or by renovation. Consequently, the passage does

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[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.: "addimus . . . apostolum nequaquam dicere, quod liberanda sit creatura a corruptione, quae phrasis substantiali interitui opposita videri poterat, sed a servitute corruptionis, quae eidem minime adversatur. . . . Si creaturae liberantur a servitute corruptionis, h. e. a servitio, quod hominibus impiis in hac vita mortali impendere coguntur, interim tamen ipsae non sunt nec fiunt liberae a corruptione."

not serve the purpose of establishing how the world will end. It states only that the creature will become free.[41]

4. Epicurean thinkers have defined death as the end of all suffering and misery. The statement does not apply to man, because he is created for immortality. But there is no reason why the statement should not apply to the irrational creatures. They were made for man's use in this life. The final destruction will put an end both to their service and to their misuse by the impious. In nothingness there is neither service nor misuse.[42]

5. As it appeared above, the Apostle understands by ktisis the totality of corporeal and irrational creatures. If one affirms that the creatures will become free from bondage through the communication of incorruptibility, one must affirm that even corpora mixta, such as trees and animals, will become incorruptible. But this even the sponsors of renovation conceive as impossible.[43]

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[41]Ibid., pp. 175b-176a: "Quo enim sensu vanitas et servitus corruptionis ipsis [creaturis] tribuitur, eodem sensu opposita liberatio a servitute corruptionis ipsis assignanda, ut ostendit oppositio. . . . servitium illud [creatura] una cum hac vita mortali desinat, quae servitii abolitio non solum per renovationem ac restaurationem, sed etiam per annihilationem fieri potest, ac proinde ab indeternimato ad determinatum, a genere ad certam speciem, a liberatione ad modum liberationis per renovationem non debet fieri progressus."

[42]Ibid., p. 176a: "Interitus creaturae servitii illius, cui in hac vita subjecta est, et solutio est et finis, ultra quam servitium illud non exit." Seneca: "Non potest esse miser, qui nullus est."

[43]Ibid.

6. The Apostle preferred to say that the creature will become free from the bondage of corruption, rather than stating that it will be destroyed. The reason, according to Gerhard, is either that he wanted to use a statement that can be predicated of man also, or that he wanted to extend the personification of the passage and suggest that, if the creature had will and reason, it would choose not to be, rather than serve the abuses of the ungodly.[44]

7. It is impossible to deduce from the expression eis eleutherian that the terminus ad quem of the liberation is one and the same for the creatures and the sons of God. If this were the case, it would follow that the creature will partake of eternal life and heavenly glory. But the promise of eternal life is limited to the children of God. The expression denotes rather the time of the creature's liberation, as Ambrose has shown.[45]

The position of Gerhard on Romans 8:19-22 is clear. If there is for creatures a liberation other than the final annihilation, Scripture does not say how and when it will happen. The passage affirms exclusively the fact of the liberation. The passage does not serve to demonstrate that the creature's liberation happens by transformation and renewal. The passage does not serve to prove that the end of the world will consist in an alteration of qualities, which leaves the substance more or less untouched.

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[44] Ibid. The explanation is forced and artificial.

[45] Ibid.: "Ex phrasi eis eleutherian colligi nequit, terminum ad quem liberationis fore unum ac eundem creaturae cum filiis Dei, alias enim sequeretur, creaturam etiam vitae aeternae et coelestis gloriae fillis Dei promissae fore participem, sed denotatur duntaxat liberationis tempus, ut ex Ambrosio monuimus."

## Critical Comments on the Views of Johann Gerhard

In answering the question of how the world will end, Johann Gerhard had two possibilities open before him. He could have affirmed, with most of the Calvinist and Roman theologians, that the world will undergo a change of its qualities, but remain substantially the same. He could affirm that both the essence and the shape of the world will be reduced to nothing. Gerhard chose the second position. The question is: Why did he make such a choice?

1. Gerhard himself believed that the determining factor of his decision had been the emphatic statements of Scripture regarding the end of the world. (There is no doubt that he does have strong scriptural support.)

2. However, the hope of new heavens and a new earth is just as scriptural as the teaching of the world's end. Therefore a second question must be asked: Why did Gerhard not take the hope of a new world just as seriously as he took the world's destruction? The question is justified by the consideration that Gerhard reduced "new heavens" and "new earth" to a figure of speech, which suggests the perfect life of man with God.[46]

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[46] Ibid., p. 319, Gerhard states that efficienter, finaliter et objective heaven is God himself; formaliter ac principaliter, heaven is the celestial glory and eternal laetitia of the elect; finally, if taken subjective, heaven designates "illud pou, in quo beati Deum videbunt et coelesti illa gloria ac laetitia perfruentur. . . ." The pou of the blessed can be called a place only in a general, not in a strict sense; man cannot know whether it is created or not, corporeal or spiritual, in or out of this world. Ibid., p. 291b, the "heaven" of eternal life is identified with the "place" in which the blessed souls await the resurrection.

3. It seems evident that a theologian's view of the ultimate destiny of the world must derive from his view of the nature, character and purpose of the world. As one turns to Gerhard's theology of creation, one observes that he postulated a radical difference between man and the world. The human being was made in the image of God. Man is therefore immortal and incorruptible. He is destined to live eternally with God. The life in the body and in the world is not the real life of man. Even if he had not fallen into sin, man would have been changed and translated into heaven, to live forever with God. The world, to the contrary, was made temporal, mortal and corruptible. Even if man had not sinned, the world would have been destroyed, to give room to eternal life.[47] The basic ontological difference between man and the world underlies Gerhard's understanding of the purpose and function of the present world. It exists exclusively to serve the pilgrimage of the homo viator, by providing his bodily needs and calling him to the knowledge of God. The world has no independent meaning

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[47] Ibid., p. 179b: "mundus non erat a Deo hoc fine conditus, ut in aeternum perduraret, sed ut completo eorum numero, quos Deus ab hominibus generari et consortes regni coelestis habere voluit, iterum annihilaretur, quia cessante animale omnium hominum vita nullus amplius futurus erat mundi usus." The only difference is that the world would not have been destroyed in a conflagration, but would have ended with a simple annihilation, and a new earth and new heavens would have been created in its place [ejus loco]. Cf. p. 139a: "mundus coepit esse, per primam scilicet creationem. Ergo etiam desinet esse, cum non sit ad imaginem Dei conditus nec supernaturali Dei virtute in aeternum conservandus."

apart from the pilgrimage of man.[48] Therefore, the world has no sufficient reason to exist after the pilgrimage of man is completed, his body glorified, and his knowledge of God made perfect by the relationship with God face to face. One can conclude that Gerhard's theology of creation, both his cosmology and his anthropology, determine the neglect or even the denial of the hope of new heavens and a new earth.

4. Going a step farther, one must say that a man's theology of creation is first and foremost conditioned by his theology. (The existence of the world goes back to the creative will of God. Consequently, a man's interpretation of the world's existence must have its roots in his conception of God himself.) And here one may raise the following question: Is Gerhard's conception of God different from that of Luther? The God of Luther has joy and delight even in the "mortal and corruptible" creatures of his hand. The God of Gerhard apparently wants a "kingdom of spirits" only. The creatures are completely dispensed with. The question, more specifically, is: To what extent did Gerhard's conception of God as ens supremum condition

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[48]Johann Gerhard, Loci Theologici (Berolini: Sumtibus Gust. Schlawitz, 1864), II, 15-16. The treatment of creation's purpose is extremely brief and developed exclusively with quotations from the fathers. P. 15b: "Hic ergo ultimus finis creationis, Dei gloria. . . ." But the gloria Dei is entirely referred to man. P. 16a: "Ultimus ille ac primarius finis creationis includit alterum istum secundarium, quod scilicet omnia propter usum et utilatatem hominum sint condita." Cf. p. 108a: "Etenim sicut factus homo propter Deum, ut Deo serviret; ita mundus factus propter hominem, ut homini serviret. Positus ergo homo in medio, ut et ei serviretur, et ipse serviret. . . . Totum ergum bonum hominis erat, et quod factum est propter ipsum, et propter quod ipse factus est."

his theology of creation?[49] The prominent role played by such concepts as immortality and incorruptibility sounds foreign to a Lutheran theology of creation. One may conclude that a further reason for the neglect of the hope of new heavens and a new earth may be found in Gerhard's view of God.

5. Eternity is in some way the "negation" of the present world. It is marked by the manifestation and presence of God. Consequently, a theologian's view of eternity must have an intimate connection with his view of the world and his conception of God. Gerhard could not conceive the possibility of a renovation of the creatures, because such renovation did not fit into his conception of eternity as immortal, changeless and incorruptible.

6. The present study did not envisage verifying the influence of mysticism on Gerhard's views of the cosmos, of God, and of eternity. But it does underline another factor, also called attention to by Althaus, that is, the impossibility of defining the world's end in terms of change of qualities and permanence of substance.[50] Gerhard was working within a philosophico-theological disjunction, formulated as follows: Either the world will be reduced to nothing, or it will end by a change of appearance. He attempted to make Scripture bear on the

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[49]Werner Elert, Morpholgie des Luthertums (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1931), I, 50: "Gott ist bei ihm [J. Gerhard] wieder wie bei den mittelalterlichen Scholastikern summum ens, actus purus."

[50]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge; Lehrbuch der Eschatologie (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), p. 364; cf. pp. 351-352.

the problem. In doing so, Gerhard did not ask the more radical question: Is the formulation of the question adequate to the content and message of Scripture? Does Scripture speak to the question thus formulated on the basis of philosophical categories of substance and accidents?[51] It seems that Gerhard did not see the possibility of affirming both the radical destruction of the world and the appearance of new heavens and a new earth, making the continuity rest in the will and power of the Creator. Gerhard seems unable to maintain, in faith, the "contradiction" between a radical destruction and a radical recreation.

With regard to Johann Gerhard's views on Romans 8:19-22, one can say the following:

1. As Franz Pieper correctly understood, the spearhead of Gerhard's interpretation lies in the statement that the creature will become free, not from corruption, but merely from its bondage.[52] There are, however, at least three difficulties in the conclusion of Gerhard. First, Gerhard

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[51]F. A. Philippi, Kirchliche Glaubenslehre (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1879), VI, p. 147, concludes his examination of the Biblical evidence with the words: "Fassen wir zusammen, so scheint nach den bisher betrachteten Stellen ein non liquet auszusprechen, und ut in dubiis libertas zu statuiren. Denn sowohl das "Vergehen" kann im relativen qualitativen, nicht im absoluten essentiellen Sinne, also von einem Vergehen kata poioteta, nicht aber kat' ousian genommen werden, als auch umgekehrt die Bilder vom Veralten, Verwelken, Verbrennen, nach dem bekannten omne simile claudicat, in Bezug auf das Universum die voellige Aufhebung desselben in Sinne der absoluten Vernichtung bedeuten koennen."

[52]Franz Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik (St. Louis, Mo.: Concordia Publishing House, 1920), III, 610, n. 1842.

does not take seriously the opposition between the declarations introduced by the prepositions apo and eis. Paul states that the creature will become free from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God. Second, Gerhard does not consider the possibility of taking "corruption" as genetivus epexegeticus to "bondage." The expression douleia tes phthorās can then be rendered by "the bondage that consists in corruption." Consequently, the creature could indeed become free from corruption.[53] In the third place, the Apostle makes a word-play with eleutherōthēsetai and eleutheria (the creature will become free into the liberty). The repetition underlines that the creature will become free in or with the liberation of the children of God. One cannot well conceive that Paul would call the annihilation a liberation, without explaining more carefully his thought. Therefore, one must take the liberation of the creature in the proper sense of the word. Only in this way can one coherently maintain with Paul that God subjected the creature in hope. Or else one must postulate with Gerhard that a longing for self-annihilation can properly be called hope.[54]

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[53]Walter James Bartling, "The Groaning of Creation; An Exegetical Study of Romans 8:18-22" (Unpublished Bachelor's Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1948), pp. 74-80, takes both (douleia) tēs phthorās and (eleutheria) tēs doxēs as appositional genitives.

[54]F. A. Philippi, Kirchliche Glaubenslehre, VI, 147-148: "Nur ueber Roem. 8, 19-21 vermag ich nicht mit Gerhard hinwegzukommen. . . . in der Roemerstelle ist nicht nur negativ von einer Sehnsucht der Creatur nach Befreiung von der douleia tēs phthorās die Rede, welche durch annihilatio erfuellt werden koennte, sondern auch positiv von der apokaradokia, mit welcher sie tēn apokalypsin tōn hyiōn tou theou apekdechetai, so wie von ihrer Unterwerfung unter die mataiotēs ep'

2. In answering the arguments of the renovationists, Gerhard frequently asserts that Scripture does not know of a promise of "redemption" and "reward" given to the creature. Therefore, one must find a different interpretation of Romans 8:19-22. The question arises: What if exactly this passage voices the promise? If Romans 8:19-22 does postulate a hope which is valid for all creatures as a whole and for every creature as an individual, another question arises: What prevented Gerhard from reading the passage properly? Was it perhaps his theological and philosophical framework?

3. It is hard to avoid the impression that the decisive reason behind Gerhard's understanding of the creature's liberation in terms of radical and final annihilation is the philosophical and theological impossibility of having corpora mixta in eternal life.[55] Gerhard

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elpidi, und namentlich V. 21, dass sie befreit werden wird von der Knechtschaft der phthora zur eleutheria tēs doxēs tōn teknōn tou theou, welcher eleutheria tēs doxēs sie also auch selber teilhaftig werden soll. Und darum findet nach V. 22 ein systenazein und synodinein der Creatur mit den Kindern Gottes statt, welche gleichfalls nach V. 24 tei elpidi esōthēsan. Wird also der Creatur nicht nur Befreiung durch Vernichtung, sondern Befreiung durch Verherrlichung verheissen, so kann unseres Dafuerhaltens von keiner absoluten annihilatio derselben und von keiner neuen creatio ex nihilo die Rede sein, denn die neue verherrlichte Welt waere dann ein ganz anderes Subject als die alte vernichtete, der doch eben selbst die Herrlichkeit verheissen ist."

[55]Aug[ust] Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge (Verden: Steinhoefer'sche Buchhandlung, 1858), p. 118: "So wenig das Seufzen der Creatur in eigentlichem Sinne zu nehmen sei, so wenig die Erneuerung der Creatur, es muessten sonst auch--das ist Gerhard's stetiger Gegengrund--die Thiere und Baeume erneuert werden."

presupposes that bodies composed of different elements are by the same fact corruptible. Therefore, they cannot exist in a "world" characterized by changelessness, immortality and incorruptibility. Such an impossibility makes necessary the "reinterpretation" of Romans 8:19-22. The liberty of the creature cannot be taken seriously.

4. In consequence of his interpretation of Romans 8:19-22, Johann Gerhard can use the passage only to describe the greatness and assurance of the coming glory of God's children.

5. On the basis of the evidence examined, one can conclude that Paul Althaus is fundamentally right in maintaining that with Johann Gerhard a "new" interpretation of Romans 8:19-22 finds its way into Lutheran theology. Concomitantly, the hope of a new world loses consistency.[56]

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[56]Heinrich Schmid, The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (3rd edition, revised; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1899), pp. 655-663, has no word about the hope of a new world!

## CHAPTER IV

## MARTIN LUTHER

The present chapter aims at summarizing Luther's views on Romans 8:19-22 and at verifying whether Paul Althaus is accurate in his characterization of Luther's position on the passage. The study is limited to the references quoted and used by Althaus.[1] An attempt was made to understand the references in their original context.

Most of the Luther statements are taken from his sermons. Consequently, they present a pictorial language and a practical pastoral concern. It may be proper to recall also that Luther was very much aware of the difficulty and unique character of Romans 8:19-22. He states, for instance, that the Apostle's words have a strange sound, that one must work diligently on them, and that only thorough familiarity with Scripture makes a person able to understand them correctly.[2]

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[1]Paul Althaus, "Das Reich als neue Welt," Die Letzten Dinge; Lehrbuch der Eschatologie (5th revised edition; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), pp. 340-356. Cf. Althaus, "Die Letzten Dinge," Die Theologie Martin Luthers ([Gütersloh]: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, c.1962), pp. 339-354.

[2]Martin Luther, "Predigt am 4. Sontag nach Trinitatis," [20. Juni 1535] Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1910), XLI, 301, 14-21: "Der heilige Paulus fueret hie eine sonderliche rede fur allen andern Apostlen, und lauten seine wort, so zum ersten her gesehen, gleich wuenderlich und seltzam, Daruemb wollen sie mit vleis gestudirt und mit eigener erfarung erkennet werden. . . . Daruemb

## On Ktisis

As will appear throughout the quotations, Luther consistently understood ktisis as referring to the "creatures," animate and inanimate. He mentions specifically the yearning and longing of heavens and earth, sun and stars, air and water, plants and flowers, and animals of several kinds. He did exclude man, however. He maintained that the unbelievers do not long for the creature's liberation.[3]

## On the Creature's Bondage

Throughout the references examined, there is no significant change in Luther's approach to the creature's bondage under vanity and corruption.

The Creator made the creature essentially good. The creature becomes vain and evil only through the influence of an extrinsic factor.

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ein Christ, der solche erfarung nicht hat, wird gar ein geringen geschmack oder geruch aus solchen worten Pauli haben, ja sie werden jm gar undeudsch [unverstaendlich] sein." N. B.: Only the first reference to a specific work of Luther gives full bibliographical information. The second and subsequent references make use of the abbreviation WA, which stands for "Weimar Edition," followed by the number of the volume in Roman characters, and by the number of the page and line(s) in Arabic numerals. The subdivisions of the volumes are given in low case Roman characters (e. g. note 20, second reference).

[3]Martin Luther, "Predigt am 4. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, nachmittags [6. Juli 1544]," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1913), XLIX, 509, 31-33: "wir Christen hoffen mit ihr, sie mit uns, Aber die gottlosen hoffen gar nicht, das die Creatur sol ledig werden. . . ."

Man, who is created to find fulfillment in God, seeks spiritual satisfaction in the creature. "Subjection to vanity" means subjection to the sinful judgment and fruition of man, which brings about the perversion of the creature's nature and purpose.[4]

The creature was made for man's good, but he uses it to harm himself and others.[5] The creature exists to promote man's service and praise to God, but man uses the creature to serve the devil.[6] The creature exists for man to glorify God in and through the same,[7] but the ungodly misuse

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[4]Martin Luther, Diui Pauli apostoli ad Romanos Epistola. Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1938), LVI, 373, 2-12: "Fit ergo [Creatura] sine suo vitio et extrinsece vana, mala, noxia etc. Sic scil., Quod opinione et erronea aestimatione seu amore et fruitione peruersa ab homine reputatur altius quam est in veritate, dum homo, qui Dei capax est et solo Deo saturari potest, quoad mentem, spiritum, praesumit in rebus hanc quietem et sufficientem habere. Huic ergo vanitati subiecta est creatura (i.e. peruerse fruitioni), Sicut fenum in se res bona et non vana est, Iumentis bonum, necessarium et vtile, Sed homini ad cibum est vanum et inutile, Et si in cibum hominis sumeretur, altius et dignius haberetur, quam est sua natura. Sic facit omnis homo, qui ex Adam natus est et sine spiritu sancto viuit." Biblical references include 1 Timothy 4:4 and Titus 1:15.

[5]WA, XLIX, 27-34: "die Sonne ist nit darumb geschaffen, das du bey ihrem schein wolst huren, morden, stelen &c. Sondern du solt dabey erbeiten, gott loben. . . . Und du wilt ihres diensts dahin gebrauchen, das gott geschendet und den leuten schaden gethan werde, Damit machstu ihren dienst zu schanden. Denn sie ist geordenet zu deines gottes lob und deiner noturfft und wolfart, so brauchst dus gott zu schand, dir und ander zu schaden."

[6]WA, XLIX, 509, 24-26: "der armen Creaturn und unser dienst erlangt das ende nit, darumb sie geschaffen, Gott wirt nit, sondern dem Teuffel damit gedienet. . . ."

[7]WA, LVI, 79, 24-27: "[Creatura] seruire cogitur impiis in abusu et ingratitudine Dei, Cum sit creata, ut per eam et in illa Deus glorificetur a sanctis."

it in a way that prevents God from having his name sanctified, his kingdom expanded and his will done on earth as it is in heaven.[8]

For the creature, such a situation is extremely "frustrating." The service rendered by the creature fails to attain its proper aim.[9] Still worse, it is misused for purposes contrary to the good will of Creator and creature.

The frustration increases by the fact that the creature is denied the freedom of choosing the objects of its service. The creature wants to serve only the saints and angels of God, such people as Peter and Paul, who would receive the creature's service with praise and thanksgiving.[10] Instead, the creature must serve rascals of all sorts, men such as Judas, Pilate and Herod, who repay by persecuting the saints,

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[8]Martin Luther, "Predigt am 4. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, nachmittags [20. Juni 1535]. Die ander predigt," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1910), XLI, 313, 20-24: "alle creatur . . . ist unwillig dazu, das die Gottlosen jrer misbrauchen wider Gottes ehr, das Gott nicht kan dazu komen, das sein Name geheiliget, sein Reich gemehret wuerde und sein wille geschehe auff erden wie im himel."

[9]WA, XLIX, 501, 3-4: " Die Creatur ist unterworffen in einen schweren Dienst, unnuetzlich, vergeblich." Cf. WA, XLI, 310, 5-6: "es ist . . . ein vergeben dienst, der an jnen [den Buben] nicht angelegt ist."

[10]WA, XLI, 310. The gold, noble creature of God, is used by prostitutes. The sun must give its light for murder and robbery. Ibid., p. 311, 25-27: "und ist doch [die Sonne] so ein feine, edle, reine creatur, das wol billich were, das sie niemand solte dienen denn allein Gott, seinen Engeln und den fromen Christen, die Gott dafur danckten. . . ."

cursing the Gospel, and blaspheming the holy name of God.[11]

According to Luther, then, the creature's subjection to vanity and corruption means: (a) It is forced to submit to and serve the enemies of God; (b) it is not permitted to serve good people only.[12]

Luther adds that the creature abhors the situation. If the creature had its way, it would stop serving, rather than suffer the misuse of its service.[13] The creature serves man only because it is the Creator's will, who submitted the creature to bondage in hope.[14] By forcing the creature to serve all kinds of people, even his own

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[11]The problem of the sun typifies the problem of gold and silver, wine and beer, meat and fish, grain and butter, wool and all other creatures. They must serve "verzweifelten buben, die dafur Gott lestern und schenden, sein heilig Euangelion verdamnen, seine Christen ermorden, Druemb ist jr dienst gar verloren . . . ." WA, XLI, 310, 13-15.

[12]Ibid., p. 310, 1-2: "Sie gehen nicht im rechten dienst, wie sie gern wolten." Also ibid., p. 308, 22-27.

[13]WA, XLI, 307, 32-37: "wenn sie [die Sonne] ein vernuenfftige creatur wer, und solte nach jrem willen gehen, nicht nach unsers Herr Gottes schoepffung, der sie on jren willen der eitelkeit unterworffen hat, so moechte sie leiden, dass alle lose buben ein glentzlin [Strahl] von jr kriegten, Das sie es aber nu thun mus, das ist jr leiden und creutze, darueber sie sufftzet und achzet." Ibid., p. 308, 31-37: The earth would become barren, the sea and rivers dry out, rather than serve the evil world. Sheep would prefer to grow thorns instead of wool; cows, to produce venom instead of milk.

[14]Ibid., p. 310, 23-26: "Aber die edle creatur mus solchs leiden umb des, das ist: Gottes willen, der sie hat der eitelkeit unterworffen on jren willen, doch auff hoffnung, das der selbige jr dienst sol ein mal ein ende haben."

enemies, God shows himself a merciful God and Father. And so the creature submits.[15]

## On the Hope of Liberation

Luther's description of the creature's hope forms an antithesis to his description of the creature's bondage. The creature, he says, longs for freedom from its compulsory subjection to the devil and his evil world.[16] At the same time, the creature waits for the opportunity to enter a service which is adequate to its nature and purpose. In other words, the creature yearns for a new life and order, in which it will have the freedom of serving exclusively the angels and saints of God.[17]

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[15] WA, XLIX, 506, 12-16: "Deus dicit: Sol, Terra, Coelum, servi propter me, quia ego sum misericors pater . . . qui etiam benefacio impiis . . . ." Ibid., p. 506, 19-21: "Sed dat pluviam, Solem bonis, malis. Das ist ein grundlose barmhertzigkeit Gottes, et post etiam creatura." Cf. also WA, XLI, 310, 22-33.

[16] WA, XLI, 316, 30-34: "[Die Creatur] harret, Worauff? Auff die herrliche freyheit der kinder Gottes, das sie nicht allein von jrem dienst erloeset, . . . sondern auch frey und viel schoener, denn sie jtzt ist, sol werden und allein Gottes kindern fort an dienen, nicht mehr unter dem Teuffel gefangen sein, wie sie jtzt gefangen ist." Ibid., p. 312, especially lines 23-26: "die Sonn eins andern schmucks wartet, den sie haben sol sampt der erden und allen andern creaturn, nemlich, das sie gereinigt sollen werden von allem misbrauch des Teuffels und der welt."

[17] Martin Luther, "Predigt am Tage Stephani [26. Dezember 1537]," Werke (Weimar: Herman Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1911), XLV, 353-354: "Ideo Christus richt an, quod omnis Creatura sol uns frid lassen . . . et tota terra, creatura zu lachen und williglich zu dienen . . . ." Cf. WA, XLIX, 509, 19-22: "Ab . . . servitute Creatura libera erit, non serviet Diabolo et impiis, sed Deo et sanctis eius et Angelis. . . . tantum serviet den freien, herrlichen Kindern Gottes."

Luther believes that the creature's hope finds partial fulfillment already in the present life and world. As people become Christians and daily abolish the old nature, they learn to make correct use of the creature.[18] The coming of the Son of God into the world is the beginning and promise of a perpetual peace between man and the creature.[19]

Luther adds another series of considerations. He knows of the creature spoiled by man's sin and misuse. The sun and the moon, the stars and the clouds, the earth and the water, have all lost their original beauty and loveliness.[20] Consequently, as the creatures are

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[18]WA, LVI, 373, 23-26: "dicit . . . Quod Creatura Liberabitur scil. a vanitate, quando Impii damnati fuerint et sublati Vel vetus homo abolitus, Quae Liberatio fit nunc quotidie in sanctis." Cf. WA, XLV, 354, 21-22: "Hoc incipit in fide, et Deus opere beweist. . . ."

[19]Luther interprets the Gloria in excelsis of the angels as proclaiming a cosmic peace. WA, XLV, 354, 7-10: "Dues dedit quietam conscientiam, ut nulla creatura terribilis, sed sol frid werden. Ego [sic] bund frid, mit den vogeln, mit himel und erden, all zu mal lachen und guter ding. Et praecipue Christiani inter se pacem." Ibid., p. 356, 26-29: "Canimus ergo nunc cum angelis deum habere suam gloriam et pacem habere cum omnibus creaturis. . . . Aber inn jenem leben wirds viel besser und herrlicher &c." Ibid., p. 356, 19-23: "Da wirstu denn ein recht wolgefallen haben an Gott, allen Creaturen . . . . Dis wesen fehet nu an durch Christum im glauben, nulla creatura amplius inimica et terribilis. . . ."

[20]Martin Luther, "Predigt am Tage Allerheiligen [1. November 1537]," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1911), XLV, 231, 29-31: "alle Creaturn sind der Eitelkeit unterworffen. . . . Sonn, Mond, Sterne, Wolcken, Lufft, Erde, Wasser sind nicht mehr so rein, schoen und lieblich, wie sie gewesen sind. Aber an jenem tage wird allen wieder new und schoen werden . . . ." Also "Enarratio Psalmi XC. Sextus versus," Werke (Weimar: Herman Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1930), XL, iii, p. 531, 4-11: "Unser Herr Gott hat im [dem Himmel] ein sack angezogen: Nubes nigras et cerulae. Mus im die Munichs kappen ausziehen, mus gulden stuck et weisen sammat; erit serenissimum. Das heist Coelum immutari, non perire . . . ." Comments on Ps 102:27. Ibid., p. 531, 14-17, a similar image is applied to the earth: it is not yet dressed in its true ornament.

purified from the consequences of sin and renewed, they will be many times more beautiful and glorious than they are now.[21] The earth will be prettier and merrier than paradise.[22] The sun will be seven times brighter. Even trees and grasses will display a new beauty and glory.[23]

For Luther, then, the creature awaits not only redemption from bondage, not only restoration to proper service, but also purification and renewal.[24]

On the Revealing of the Sons of God

The relationship between the creature's hope and the revelation of the sons of God receives a peculiar interpretation.

There are sons of God on earth, says Luther. But their existence is known only to faith through the Word.[25] The life of God's children

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[21]WA, XLI, 312, 11-13: "der heilig Apostel S. Paul [gibt] klar zuverstehen, das die gantze creatur noch viel schoener und herrlicher sol werden, denn sie jtzt ist . . . ." Ibid., p. 314, 11-13: "Diese Hoffnung [auf Herrlichkeit, I John 3:2] . . . haben wir und die gantze creatur mit uns, welche auch umb unsert willen auff das schoenest gereiniget und vernewert werden . . . ."

[22]WA, XLV, 233, 18-19: "Das wird ein weiter, schoener Himel und lustige Erde sein, viel schoener und lustiger, denn das Paradiss gewesen ist."

[23]WA, XLIX, 509.

[24]WA, XLI, 309, 20-22: "[Der Erde] verlanget . . . sampt allen creaturn nach jhenem tage, das sie moege sampt jnen geendert und vernewert werden."

[25]WA, XLIX, 504, 32-34: "Ich hore es und gleub es auch [dass wir Kinder Gottes seien], alle Creatur horens, Ich sehe es aber nit, tappe und fule es nit . . . ." 1 John 3:2. Cf. ibid., p. 514, 37-38: "es geschicht alles noch verdeckt unnd verhullet im glauben."

is hidden in Christ. It will appear only with his coming.[26] The sons of God are redeemed according to the soul, but their bodies still are subject to death and evil.[27]

The creatures watch God bearing sons into eternal life, as they see people receiving Baptism, learning the Gospel and becoming children of God in Spirit and faith.[28] At the same time, the creatures witness the world treating the sons of God as if they were children of the devil himself.[29] Therefore the creatures send to heaven a unison cry: "Lord, will there be no end to the misery? will the glory of the children of God finally appear?"[30]

In short, Luther sees creatures and believers united in the eschatological prayer: "Lord, let your kingdom come!"[31] The reason for the prayer is that only with the Lord's coming the masquerade of the present life will have its end. The Lord will unmask the children of the devil and reveal God's sons. As the elect inherit both heaven and earth, the ungodly are cast out and forever deprived of the service

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[26]WA, XLI, 312-313. Mark 16:16; John 1:12; Colossians 3:3-4.

[27]WA, XLIX, 510, 6-11.

[28]Ibid., p. 504, 10-13.

[29]WA, XLI, 315-316: "dis leben auff erden ist ein lauter fasnacht spiel, da man jnn der larven leuffet und einen fur ein andern ansihet. . . . Dis fasnacht spiel mus man gehen lassen bis an jhenen tag, da wird denn den Gottlosen die larven abgezogen werden, das sie sich nicht mehr fur heilige leute werden koennen ausgeben."

[30]Ibid., p. 309, 31-33.

[31]Ibid., p. 317.

and enjoyment of the creatures.[32] Then finally the creature will receive its freedom to serve God and his children only. The peace promised by the prophets and proclaimed by the angels at the Incarnation of the Son, becomes full reality. Fears and uneasiness vanish. The relationship of creature and man is perfect, rewarding and joyous.[33]

## A Matter of Faith

Luther does not ignore objections to the Apostle's words. As it looks at the creature, human reason believes that the creature's present condition is the best possible. Human wisdom cannot understand or believe that the creature abhors its present condition, is suffering as a woman with child and longing for a better life. Only "spiritual and apostolical eyes" have an insight into the creature's real

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[32] Ibid., p. 315, 5-17: Commenting on 2 Peter 3:10-13, Luther says that the devil will be cast out from the earth, "das eitel heilige leute jnn himel und erden sein, die alles jnn voller freude besitzen werden. Solches meinet S. Peter . . . S. Paul aber setzet hinzu, das . . . auch die gantze creatur warte drauff." Ibid., p. 316, 10-14: "[Die Creatur] wartet auff die offenbarung der kinder Gottes, da der Teuffel sampt allen Gottlosen jnn die helle gestossen sol werden und jnn ewigkeit weder Sonne noch Mond nimmermehr sehen, keins troepfflin wassers geniessen, nicht ein lueftlin brauchen, sondern mus aller creatur in ewigkeit beraubt sein." Cf. WA, XLIX, 509, 34-37.

[33] WA, LXV, 353, 33: "Cum deus habet gloriam, tota creatura fit amica." Luke 2:14; Isaiah 11:6-9; Hosea 2:18.

situation.[34]

Luther points out the radical difference which exists between the speculations of philosophy and the Apostle's intuition. Philosophers consider the essence and qualities of things. The Apostle makes use of a theological concept--the expectation of the creature. Since the Apostle opened the new dimension, good philosophy of nature must describe the creature as waiting, sighing and having labour pains; that is, abhorring what is now, and desiring the things to come.[35] The fact is that, even if the creature does not speak as man does, there is communication between the creature and God, through a language which the Spirit understands.[36]

## The Use of the Passage

Luther's use of Romans 8:19-22 is conditioned not only by his interpretation, but also by his understanding of the passage's context and scopus.

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[34] WA, XLI, 317, 28-35: "Da sage mir nu, wer kuendte der creatur solchs ansehen, das sie jnn kinds noeten solte liegen? Kein vernunfft noch menschliche weisheit . . . kan solchs gedencken odder glauben, Nein, sagt sie, die Sonn ist so ein schone, liebliche troestliche creatur, das sie nicht kondte schoner noch lieblicher sein, Also auch was feilet dem Monde, den sternen, der erden etc., ists nicht alles fein und zierlich geschaffen?" Cf. ibid., p. 318, 1. Also WA, XLIX, 505, 2-9.

[35] WA, LVI, 371, 28-32: "Igitur optimi philosophi, optimi rerum speculatores fueritis, Si ex Apostolo didiceritis Creaturam intueri expectantem, gementem, parturientem i. e. fastidientem id, quod est, et cupientem id, quod futura nondum est."

[36] WA, XLI, 307, line 39 to p. 308, line 3.

Paul makes clear, says Luther, that through faith in Christ we acquire the confidence of trusting God as our Father. The Holy Spirit gives us the boldness of calling God "our beloved Father in heaven." It follows that we are indeed children of God and, if children, also heirs. Paul also underlines that whoever wants to become an heir with Christ, must also become a martyr with him (ein mitmerterer und mitleider). Christ came to glory through suffering. His brothers must follow the same path.[37]

Luther maintains that the intention of Paul is to comfort the Christians in the sufferings inherent in their present life and condition. Paul shows (a) that the present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory to come and (b) that the creatures, as one person, suffer together with the believers and hope with them for the revealing of God's hidden glory.[38]

In keeping with such understanding, Luther uses the passage for the consolation and the admonition of the saints. He derives consolation from the solidarity of the creatures with the believers, and admonition from the example of the creatures in their submission to bondage.

The creature and the Christian, writes Luther, partake of the same cross and hope. Together they suffer oppression by Satan and the world. Together they hope to become free from bondage and changed into a

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[37] Ibid., pp. 301-302.

[38] Ibid., p. 303, 35-38; p. 311, 11-16.

better state.[39] The Christian, therefore, has a double assurance: (a) He never is alone in his suffering; (b) his hope is shared by all creatures. Instead of despairing at the intensity of his sufferings, the Christian ought to direct his eyes to the glory so eagerly desired by all creatures and endure, for the sake of glory, all the present hardships, for they indeed are nothing compared to the greatness of the coming glory.[40]

The creature shrinks away from bondage and nevertheless submits to the gracious will of the good Creator. It serves all men without distinction and patiently endures the misuse of its good service. The Christian must learn the lesson and humble himself under the will of God, suffering with patience, endurance and hope the injustice of the world.[41]

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[39] Ibid., p. 308, 19-24: "Dis Exempel der creatur zeucht S. Paul hie an zum trost der Christen, Als wolte er sagen: Seid nicht so trawrig uber ewerm leiden . . . Alle creatur leidet mit euch und schreiet drueber, das sie der argen welt unterworffen mus sein . . . ." Cf. WA, XLIX, 503, 5-16.

[40] WA, XLI, 311, 4-9: "Also thut jr jm auch, spricht Sanct Paul, lieben Christen, und denckt, gleich wie sich die creatur mit euch am Juengsten tag frewen wird, so trawrets jtzt mit euch, Daruemb seid jrs allein nicht, die da leiden muessen, Sondern die gantze creatur leidet mit euch und wartet auch auff ewre erloesung, welche so herrlich und so gros sein wird, das ewer leiden nicht werd ist, das mans dagegen sol rechen." Cf. WA, XLIX, 510, 14-17: "Sic sollen wir unser hertz richten in aliam vitam, leiden, was uns widerferet, ut Creatura propter Deum. Adest spes, quam habemus cum creatura, ut liberetur a servitute et nos von unsers Leibs jamer, den wir noch an uns haben."

[41] WA, XLI, 307, 10-13: "Dis ist der ander trost, da er uns die gantze creatur furbildet zum Exempel und vermanet uns, das wir auch wie sie gedueltig leiden sollen alle gewalt und unrecht, so uns vom Teuffel und der welt widderferet, und uns troesten der kuenfftigen erloesung." Ibid., p. 315, 26-31, Luther uses the sun as an example of submission to the will of God.

Luther also sees in Romans 8:19-22 a warning to evil man. The creature longs for redemption. Its yearning shows clearly that it will not forever suffer the abuses of man. There will be an end to it. The creature's temporary service gives man the opportunity for conversion and betterment. After that comes judgment, which nature signifies by sporadically denying its service, through the action of droughts, floods and other calamities.[42]

Finally Luther uses the creature's longing to encourage the believers. Seeing how the creature yearns for the new order, the believers must join in and pray with all creatures: "Lord, let your kingdom come. Hasten with the great day of liberation!"[43]

The consolation of the Gospel is the dominant note in Luther's use of Romans 8:19-22. And the consolation--let it be said again--rests on the solidarity between creature and man.

## Specific Problems

Certain questions regarding Luther's view of Romans 8:19-22 must now receive specific treatment. The first such question is: Did

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[42] WA, XLIX, 507-308.

[43] WA, XLI, 318, 7-11: "sollen die, so an Christum gleuben, sicher und gewis werden der ewigen herrligkeit und sampt aller creatur suefftzen und schreien, das unser Herr Gott eilen wolle, den seligen tag herzu zebringen, da solche hoffnung erfuellet sol werden, Denn eben daruemb hat er uns auch beten heissen im Vater unser: 'Dein Reich kome.'" Cf. WA, XLV, 233, 28-33, where Luther employs the expression widerbringung und Ernewrung der Creatur.

Luther believe that the world will only undergo a change of its appearance or did he believe that the world will be destroyed in its very substance?

Luther's answer to the problem is not as precise as one would like. The presentation, therefore, follows a chronological rather than logical order.

In his commentary on Romans, Luther relates the creature's liberation to the passing away of the heavens and the earth. He mentions the possibility of a permanence of substance and change of qualities but refuses to work with these categories. He proceeds to state his interpretation of the "passing away." It is that heavens and earth will no more be corruptible; they will be glorious.[44]

In a sermon on Luke 21:32-33, Luther ridicules people who attempt to understand the word of Christ on the basis of Aristotelian categories. Instead of formulating his answer on the same basis, Luther develops an analogy between the resurrection of the body and the renovation of the world. He states that the corpse of the believer is changed in its very essence and again created essentially the same. In a similar way the heavens and the earth will be dissolved

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[44] WA, LVI, 80, 10-20. Luther relates "et ipsa creatura liberabitur" to "coelum et terra transibunt" (Matthew 24:35). "Hoc est, quod dicitur. 'Coelum et terram transitura,' non secundum substantiam, Sed secundum corruptibilitatem. Quod quomodo intelligant, viderint philosophi. Ego intelligo non secundum substantiam (non quod amplius non sint), Sed quod amplius non corruptibilia sint, Sed gloriosa. Hoc enim indicat verbum 'transibunt' i. e. mutabuntur." Biblical references include 2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17; Psalm 101:27-28.

by fire and again recreated in glorious fashion. The implication is that the end of the world consists in a dissolution of substance, not in a change of qualities only.[45]

In his commentary on the second epistle of Peter and the epistle of Jude, Luther describes the end of the world in terms that imply radical destruction. In one moment, he says, everything will be afire and reduced to dust and ashes. Curiously enough he adds that all things must be "changed" by fire. He also states that there will be new heavens and a new earth, but that we do not know how God will

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[45]Martin Luther, "Evangelium am andern sontag ym Advent. Luce. 21.," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1925), X, i, ii, p. 116, line 10 to p. 117, line 1: "es haben auch ettlich sich bemuehet, wie hymel und erden vorgehen sollen, nemen den blinden heyden Aristot. zu hulff, der muss yhn Christus wort auslegen, und sagen, das hymel unnd erden nicht nach dem wessen, ssondern nach der gestalt vergehen werden, wissen viel was sie sagen. Wenn sie es alsso vorstunden, das hymel und erden werden ettwas seyn [aliquid semper futura], sso were es wol recht, abber lass die blinden faren, du solt wissen, das gleych wie unssere leychnam auch nach dem wessen vorwandelt werden [1.Cor 15:51-52], und doch eben dieselbigen widderumb auch nach dem wessen gemacht werden, alsso wirt hymel und erden am iungsten tag mit allen elementen und was allenthalben ist, durchs fewr zuschmeltzt und zupulvert werden, sampt aller menschen corper, das nichts denn eyttel fewr allenthalben seyn wirt, unnd alsbald drauff alles widderumb new auffs aller schonest geschaffen, das unsser corper hell leuchten werden wie die ssonne, und die ssonne sieben mal heller, denn sie itzt ist . . . ." P. 117, 13-16: "Darumb ist diss vergehen nicht alleyn nach der gestalt, ssondern auch nach dem wessen, es sey denn, das du nit wolltist das vorwesset beyssen, das zu pulver wirt, biss man es nit finden noch sehen kan, wie die vorbranntten corper tzu asschen und tzu nicht werden."

establish them.[46]

An apparently strange statement appears in the Disputatio de Iustificatione. Basing his argument on the analogy between the resurrection of man and the renovation of the world, Luther affirms that God will use the creature as "matter" for its future and glorious form, just as the present man is used as "matter" for the future form of his life. In the same document Luther maintains that the universal conflagration will purify the world and our bodies. As we are reduced to dust, original sin will definitely be extinguished.[47]

The references studied do not give an entirely satisfactory answer to the question posed. They show that Luther refused to furnish an answer on the basis of Aristotelian categories of substance and accident. Luther attempted a strictly theological treatment of the

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[46]Martin Luther, "Die ander Epistel Sanct Petri und eine S. Judas gepredigt und ausgelegt," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1895), XIV, 69, 23-26: "Also wenn der iungstag herbricht und hereyn platzt, wird es ynn eynem augenplick eyttel feur seyn, was ym hymel und erden ist, zu pulver und aschen werden, und mus durchs feur alle ding verendert werden . . . ." Ibid., p. 72, 3-6: "Quomodo id [se facturum novos celos] fiet, hoc ignoramus . . . . Hic potest se bekhumern qui velit, an electi sint futuri in celo an in terra, quam textus ita clingt."

[47]Martin Luther, "Disputatio . . . de iustificatione," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1926), XXXIX, i, p. 177, 3-6: "Quare homo huius vitae est pura materia Dei ad futurae formae suae vitam. Sicut et tota creatura, nunc subiecta vanitati, materia Deo est ad gloriosam futuram suam forman." Ibid., p. 95, 16-21: "Nos autem hic dicimus, quod peccatum originale, quamquam est remissum imputative, et ita submovetur, ut non imputetur, tamen non tollitur substantialiter aut realiter, nisi in conflagratione ignis, quo omnino purgantur totus mundus et corpora nostra in novissimo die. Cum sumus in pulverem redacti, tum demum et peccata penitus extinguentur."

subject, to uphold both the radical destruction of the present world and the promise of new heavens and a new earth. All he does say about the new world in the references studied is that the new world in some way or another will be the same as the present world. The question of the "how" remains open, in order that faith may have room.[48]

Luther's understanding of 1 Corinthians 15:28 is the second problem to be treated. For one thing, Paul Althaus maintains that the interpretation of the passage changes from Luther to Gerhard. For another, Luther's discussion of the passage gives him the opportunity of speaking about the function of the creatures in eternal life, a question that has strong implications for the interpretation of Romans 8:19-22.

Luther understands the statement "God will be everything to every one" in the sense that in God himself the blessed saints will have, immediately and completely, all they now have mediately and partially in individual creatures. The saints will have complete satisfaction in the contemplation of God. And since God does not come alone, but with his gifts and blessings, he will satisfy the desires of every

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[48]The writer applies to the end of the world the answer of Luther to the problem of the intermediary state of the soul between death and resurrection. WA, X, i, ii, pp. 117-118: "Wenn wyr wissten, wie die seelen behallten wurden, so were der glawbe aus, aber nu wyr faren, und nitt wisse wohynn, wagens auff gott und yn seyne hende, bestehet der glawbe yn seyner wirde."

heart.[49] Consequently, the creatures become dispensable inasmuch as they are means for the satisfaction of the needs of man.

At the same time, Luther maintains that God himself finds pleasure and joy in the contemplation of the creatures. The same, believes Luther, will happen to man. He will admire the beauty of the new heavens and the new earth, and he will love and praise God on account of them.[50] Man will have joy and pleasure in the creatures. He will play with the sun, the earth, the animals, and the plants. And this also according to the body.[51]

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[49]Martin Luther, "Predigt am 24. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, nachmittags [10. November 1532]," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Bohlaus Nachfolger, 1909), XXXVI, 593, 22-31: "als denn (spricht er) wird Gott sein alles jnn allen [1 Corinthians 15:28], das ist: Ein jglicher wird an Gott selbs alles haben, was er itzt an allen dingen hat . . . ." P. 594, 15-18: "Summa: was wir itzt bey allen Creaturn hin und her einzelen und stuecklicht mussen nemen, wie wol es auch von jm her kompt und gegeben wird, dafur werden wir on mittel jn allein haben, on allen mangel und auffhoeren." P. 599, 24-27: "Woran dein hertz wird lust und freud suchen, das sol reichlich da sein, Denn es heisst: Gott sol selbs alles jnn allen sein, Wo aber Gott ist, da muessen alle gueter mit sein, so man jmer wundschen kan."

[50]Ibid., p. 596, 17-25: "er lebt jnn jn und durch sich selbs, Warumb solt ers denn nicht auch jnn uns thun, das wir alles allein jnn und durch jn selbs haben konden? . . . Und wie er, wenn er die Creatur ansihet, sein lust, freude und gefallen dran hat, Also werden auch wir der Creatur nicht mehr beduerffen, denn das wir freude daran haben als an einem schaw essen, wenn wir die schonen newen himel und erden ansehen werden und Gott darinn loben und lieben, Aber an jm selbs werden wir alle notdurfft und gnuege haben."

[51]Martin Luther, "Predigt am 2. Sonntag nach Epiphanias [19. Januar 1533]," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1909), XXXVI, 660, 25-28: "Darnach aber, wenn er [der Leib] also geistlich jnn Gotte lebet [1 Corinthians 15:28], wird er auch eraus gehen, jnn himel und erden, mit sonn und mond und allen andern Creaturn spielen und auch seine freud und lust daran haben . . . ." Cf. WA, XLV, 356, 16-19: "Quando voles, venient ad te omnis generis animalia, arbores, herbae, flumina, terra, et omnes creaturae longe erunt elegantiores quam nunc, werden lust, lieb, freuden haben und mit dir lachen, et tu e contra cum illis, etiam secundum corpus."

If the question is raised whether the saints will live on the earth or in heaven, Luther answers that both heaven and earth will be a new paradise, a place of God's continued and perpetual presence. The saints will be in his presence. That is, everywhere.[52]

It appears clearly that Luther by no means excludes the creatures from eternal life. They perform not only an "esthetic" function, as they serve for the enjoyment of God and man. They exist also for "doxological" purposes: their presence and beauty is an "excuse" for man to praise the wisdom and power and goodness of the Creator and Renewer of all things.

## Critical Comments

As shown above, Luther believed in the need of Christian experience and serious study for an adequate understanding of Romans 8:19-22.[53] He himself did not lack the qualifications. He lived the life of an outcast. He was constantly faced with persecution. Consequently, he found

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[52]WA, XIV, 72, 26-30: "Hie mag man sich bekummern, ob die seligen ym himmel oder auff der erden schweben werden, Der text klingt hie [2 Peter 3:13], das man auff erden wonen werde, also das gantz hymel und erde eyn new paradis seyn wird darynne Gott wone, denn Gott wonet nicht alleyne ym hymel, sondern an allen orten, daruemb werden die auserwelten auch seyn wo er ist." Cf. WA, XLV, 232, 18-25: "Es wird nicht ein jrdisch, zeitlich Leben sein, Soendern ein Himelisch, ewig Leben, Nicht das wir im Himel allein sein werden, Soendern werden sein, wo wir woellen, im Himel, auff Erden, oben und unten, und wo wir wollen. Denn werden wir uns nicht mehr schleppen mit diesem schweren Leibe . . . ."

[53]Supra, p. 54, n. 2.

deep consolation in the words of Paul.[54] One can conclude that the suffering and liberation of the creature together with man constituted an important dimension of the Reformer's faith and teaching.

The evidence examined shows that Paul Althaus is substantially correct in his description of the views of Luther on Romans 8:19-22 and related matters:

First, Luther did refuse to describe the world's end in terms of a preservation of substance and change of qualities. But for the sake of truth one must say also that he was ready to make concessions. Obscure as they sound, they nevertheless are concessions.[55]

Second, Luther did ground the "identity" of the present with the future world in the creative will and power of God. He does not attempt to describe the "how" of the creative act.

Third, Luther did base the hope of the creature's renovation on the solidarity that, according to his understanding of Romans 8:19-22, exists between creature and man, both in suffering and glory. And "renovation" here means not only freedom from the bondage of evil, not only liberty to serve only the sons of God, but also positive "glorification."[56]

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[54]Luther has references to Romans 8:19-22 in places where one would not expect them. The most striking examples are the sermon on Psalm eight, (WA, XLV, 229-233) and the sermon on the Gloria in excelsis (WA, XLV, 351-356).

[55]Supra, pp. 68 and 69, nn. 44 and 45.

[56]Further evidence in Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, c.1931), I, 447-456.

Finally, Luther did believe that eternal life includes the presence of creatures and the existence of a "world." His position can be explained by his view of the glorified body of man, by his view of the creature's nature and purpose, and first and foremost by his conception of God.[57]

There is one important point which Paul Althaus failed to mention in Die Letzten Dinge but which appears in Die Theologie Martin Luthers.[58] Luther related Romans 8:19-22 to the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians and based the creature's renovation on the resurrection of Christ. Through his resurrection, Christ became Lord of all things, including death and hell. Death has a cosmic character. Consequently, Christ will "bring with himself" not only the members of his body, the believers, but also the entire creation. In short, Luther

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[57] WA, XXXVI, 660, 21-26: "er heisst nicht darumb ein geistlicher leib, das er nicht leiblich leben noch fleisch und blut haben solt, sonst kunde er nicht ein warhafftiger leib heissen, Nu aber heisst er ein geistlicher leib, also das er sein leben sol haben und doch nicht mehr ein essender, schlaffender, dewender leib sein wird, sondern geistlich von Gott gespeiset und erhalten werden und das leben gar an jm haben." Cf. p. 662, 10-16. Also p. 660, 11-13: "Erit facies, oculi, nasus, bauch, bein, arm, die werdens sein, Sed spiritualia i. e. non wird so viehisch zu ghen, ut hic essen, trinken, dauen. Das wird durt auffhoren." According to p. 595, lines 7-9 and 26-27, the difference of sexes remains. On the conception of God cf. supra, n. 50. Cf. also the ch. on Erdverbundenheit in Werner Elert, Morphologie des Luthertums, I, 393-406.

[58] Althaus, Die Theologie Martin Luthers, p. 353: "Christi Auferweckung verbuergt nicht allein unsere, der Christen, leibliche Auferweckung, sondern auch die Erloesung und Vollendung "aller Kreaturen mit uns" nach Roem 8;21." The Luther reference is WA, XXXVII, 68, 37.

understood that the glorification of our bodies and the renovation of the world rest together on the lordship of the Risen Christ.[59]

In the same context Luther reaffirms his conviction that the eschatological realities of resurrection and renewal are already present here and now by faith. Through Holy Baptism, he says, the believer resurrects with Christ. He receives "spiritual" and eternal life. The soul of the believer, according to the new dimension thus received, already lives with the risen Christ in heaven.[60] The statement has two implications. First, the soul is the "better part"

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[59]Martin Luther, "Von Jesu Christo eine Predigt zu Hofe zu Torgau gepredigt. Die Dritte Predigt, auff den Ostertag," Werke (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1910), XXXVII, 68, 26-39: "Weil nu Christus, das Heubt der Christenheit, durch welchen sie lebt und alles hat und so gros ist, das er himel und erden fuellet, aus dem grabe erstanden ist und da durch ein mechtiger herr worden aller dinge, auch des tods und der helle . . . So muessen auch wir als seine gelieder durch seine aufferstehung troffen und angerurt werden und eben des teilhafftig werden, das er da mit aus gericht hat, als umb unsern willen geschehen, Und wie er durch sein aufferstehen alles hat mit sich genomen, das beide, himel und erden, Sonn und Mond mus newe werden, so wird er auch uns mit sich fueren, wie Sanct Paulus jnn der ersten zun Thessalonichern am vierden [4:14] und zun Roemern am achten [8:11] sagt, Das der selbige Gott, der Christum von todten aufferweckt hat, wird auch unsere sterbliche leiber lebendig machen und mit uns alle creaturn, die jtzt der eitelkeit unterworffen sind und sich engstlich sehnen nach unser herrlickeit, auch von dem vergenglichen wesen frey und herrlich werden sollen . . . ."

[60]Ibid., p. 69, 5-11: "wir sind durch die Tauffe im glauben schon geistlich aufferstanden, das ist: nach dem besten stuck an uns, Und also nicht allein leiblich das aller best daran geschehen, das unser Heubt aus dem grab gen himel gefaren, sondern auch nach dem geistlichen wesen unser seele jr teil hinweg hat und mit Christo im himel ist . . . und allein noch die huelsen und schalen odder scherben hie nidden bleiben, aber umb des heubtstucks willen auch hinach faren muessen . . . ."

of man. Since the better part has already risen to eternal life, the "lesser part," man's body, must necessarily follow after the soul and also become renewed.[61] Second, Luther explicitly affirms that death cannot destroy the spiritual "nucleus" of the soul. It follows that such "nucleus" is continuous with the new age. In other words, according to Luther there is "continuity" between the present and the future world not only in the creative will and power of God, but also in the spiritually reborn souls of the believers.[62]

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[61] Ibid., p. 68, line 39 to p. 69, line 3: "Also das wir schon mehr denn die helffte unser aufferstehung haben, weil das Heubt und hertz bereit droben ist und noch umb das geringste zuthun ist, das nur der leib unter die erden beschorren werde, auf dass er auch moge vernewet werden, Denn wo das heubt bleibet, da mus der leib auch hinach, wie wir sehen an allen thieren, wenn sie zu diesem leben geboren werden."

[62] Althaus failed to mention this point, which is suggested for future study.

# CHAPTER V

## CONCLUSION

If one considers the findings of the present study from a historical standpoint, the following picture arises:

Luther understood that Romans 8:19-22 affirms the solidarity of the creature with believing man, both in suffering and in hope for liberation. He found comfort for the Christian in this solidarity. He believed furthermore that the passage affirms the future liberation of the creature. As soon as the sons of God become manifest, the creature will become free from its compulsory service to the impious and will serve freely and exclusively the blessed saints, the holy angels, and the Creator himself. Luther believed finally that the freedom of the creature involves not only the elimination of the consequences of sin, but also positive renewal and "glorification."

Gerhard maintained that the creature suffers from the misuse of its service by the ungodly and longs for freedom. However, in striking contrast to Luther, he considered illegitimate the use of Romans 8:19-22 to postulate a renewal of the creature. He restricted the use of the passage to the affirmation that the creature will become free. He argued that the passage does not state <u>how</u> the liberation will occur. Gerhard himself was inclined to say that the creature will become free by being annihilated. Two dogmatical considerations prompted his

position: the teaching of Scripture on a radical end to the world and the impossibility of having corruptible beings in changeless eternity.

Lutheran theologians of the nineteenth century, like August Althaus and Theodor Kliefoth, recovered the original Lutheran interpretation of Romans 8:19-22. They used the passage to postulate an intimate connection between man and the world. They derived three inferences from the connection. First, the subjection of the world to vanity and corruption issues from a divine action of judgment upon the sin of man. Second, the justice of God demands the restoration of this world. Third, the faithfulness of God requires that the world obtain the state of fulfilment originally intended by God.

Paul Althaus elaborated on the position of these nineteenth century theologians and also recovered the teaching of Luther. He used Romans 8:19-22 to establish his fundamental principle of the intimate connection between the destiny of the world and the destiny of man. The connection implies three statements. First, the present "shape" of the world is "accidental"; the world is subjected to death and nothingness only because it is the "place" of man's decision against or for the kingdom of God. Second, the ultimate redemption of man from death and ambiguity implies the "rebirth" or renewal of the present world. Third, the life of man in a glorified body requires a "glorified" world.

The changes in the interpretation of Romans 8:19-22 did not happen as isolated phenomena in the individual theologies. Rather they were

accompanied by significant changes in matters which are closely related to the teaching of the passage. Some of the more significant of these changes are the following:

1. The hope of a new world.

Luther believed that God will create new heavens and a new earth. It was his conviction that the blessed saints will spend eternal life in a world and enjoy with God the glorified beauty of the renewed creatures.

With Gerhard the hope of a new world virtually disappeared. He conceived "new heavens" and "new earth" as nothing but verbal symbols to denote the blessed life of the saints in the presence of God. He defined the "place" of blessedness as pou, "somewhere."

Althaus reacted against the teaching of Lutheran orthodoxy. He went so far as to say that the hope of a new world must replace the belief in a worldless heaven. According to his understanding, the confession of a new world is implicit in the confession of a resurrected body. He conceived the new world as reality completely open to the penetration of the spirit and as the fulfillment of the promises implied in the tasks of the present life.

2. The reason for an end to the world.

Luther maintained that the world will be destroyed because it is spoiled by the sin of man. He believed that the final conflagration will destroy original sin with all its consequences.

Gerhard affirmed that the world would have suffered annihilation even if man had not sinned. God created man to live with him in heaven.

The world, however, was made essentially perishable. The original intention of God was to destroy the world and translate mankind into eternal life, as soon as the number of the elect was completed.

Althaus affirmed that the world must end, not because it is a creature, but because its present "shape" prevents the full manifestation of God's glory. The present world is permeated by sin and, as such, opposed to the kingdom of God. The world in its present shape must disappear and make room for a new reality, completely transparent to the glory of God.

3. The character of the end of the world.

Luther affirmed that the world will be transformed and renewed. Such an affirmation, however, did not prevent him from saying that the world will undergo radical destruction and be restored to its original being.

Gerhard believed that the world will be reduced to nothing. After the consummation, nothing but the glorified saints, the heavenly spirits, and God himself will remain.

August Althaus, following the Lutheran dogmaticians of the sixteenth century, affirmed that the world will undergo a change in its accidental qualities, which will leave unimpaired the substance of the world.

Paul Althaus doubted and denied the possibility of defining the world's end as a mere change of qualities. According to his understanding the final destruction must be conceived in terms more radical than metaphysical categories of accident and substance permit. Althaus

postulated a certain continuity between the present and the future world. He underlined, however, that it is a theological continuity of promise and fulfillment, based exclusively on the creative will of God.

4. The view of creation.

According to Luther, God takes delight and enjoyment in the works of his hands. Consequently, one can say that in his view the creature does not exist for the sake of man alone.

Gerhard, on the other hand, limited the meaning and purpose of the creature to the life and history of man. It is true that he assigned to the creature the primary function of serving the glory of God. But even in its primary function the creature ultimately serves man. It is man who beholds the glory of God through the creature.[1]

Althaus reaffirmed that first of all the creature exists for the sake of God, as an expression of his power and wisdom. He argued that there are dimensions to the universe which human eyes will never

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[1]Paul Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit; Lehrbuch der Dogmatik (2nd revised edition; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), II, 63-64: "Die altlutherische und altreformierte Orthodoxie finden das letzte oder hoechste Ziel der Schoepfung in der Ehre Gottes . . . . Diese Ziel-Bestimmung ist nicht im gewoehnlichen Sinne anthropozentrisch zu nennen. Denn die Ehre, der Preis des Schoepfers greift ueber die Bedeutung der Welt fuer den Menschen ueber. Aber in anderem Sinne bleibt doch auch der Gedanke der Orthodoxie anthropozentrisch: der Preis Gottes um seiner Schoepfung willen geschieht in erster Linie durch die Menschen. Entscheidend ist also ueberall, das der Kosmos sich im menschlichen Bewusstsein spiegelt. Von einem moeglichen Eigen-Sinn des Kosmos, abgesehen von dem, was er dem Geiste des Menschen sagt, ist nicht die Rede."

see.[2] Consequently, the universe cannot exist for the sake of man only.

5. The view of God.

Luther believed that God intends to have a world of creatures in the eternal realm. On the contrary, Gerhard affirmed that God desires nothing but the presence of human beings and heavenly spirits. Althaus emphasized that even in eternity God wants sensible beauty and abundance.[3]

6. The conception of the resurrected body.

For Luther and Althaus the resurrected body is so "real" that it implies or demands the existence of a world. August Althaus believed that the glorified man actually needs a world as a field and object of his activity. Gerhard, however, dispensed with a new world.

The existence of these developments in the interpretation of Romans 8:19-22 and related matters leads to the following conclusions:

The passage has the peculiar virtue of drawing together the doctrines of creation, redemption, and eschatology. For this reason, it is virtually impossible for a theologian to interpret the passage without having his entire theological "system" involved in the

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[2]Paul Althaus, Die Letzten Dinge; Lehrbuch der Eschatologie (5th revised edition; Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), p. 344.

[3]Paul Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 52-53. Althaus recovers the teaching of Luther on the immanence of God to the creature. God is conceived as immediately present to the world. Here one could have another aspect in which the difference between Luther and Gerhard appears.

interpretation. It follows that the study of a theologian's interpretation of Romans 8:19-22 raises questions regarding his entire theology.

Lutheran theologians have voiced two basic objections to the idea of a renovation of the creature. The first is that the existence and purpose of the creature is limited to the present life and world. The second is that the biblical teaching of a radical destruction of the world prevents a renovation of the creature. The position of both Luther and Althaus provides an answer to these objections. The creature exists not only for the sake of man, but also for the sake of God. Consequently, the creature has reason to exist even after the earthly pilgrimage of man. Furthermore, the affirmation of a renewal of the creature need not imply a denial of the world's radical destruction. The "continuity" of the creature through the final conflagration ultimately rests not on ontological identity of substance but on the faithfulness of the Creator. God destroys the creature. God returns the creature to its individual and essential being. Once these two objections are dismissed, there is no reason to deny the renovation of the creature and the hope of a new world.

August Althaus, Theodor Kliefoth and Paul Althaus have used Romans 8:19-22 to postulate the existence of an intimate connection between man and the world. They draw different implications from this connection. August Althaus, for instance, infers the existence of an ontological continuity between the present and the future world. Paul Althaus, however, denies the possibility of such an inference. In

spite of the divergences, the three theologians concur in drawing three conclusions. They are the following: The creature will actually become free from bondage; the creature will actually experience renewal; the new creation will in some way be "the same" as the present one. Luther derived similar conclusions from his understanding of the solidarity between the creature and the believers. The agreement of these theologians suggests that Romans 8:19-22 is not hopelessly obscure.

The intimate connection between diverging interpretations of Romans 8:19-22 and differing views of creation points to the fundamental necessity of approaching and considering the passage in the light of a New Testament theology of creation. Such a theology must face up to the following problems, among others:

a. Why did God will and produce a world of creatures? Did he make creatures for the sake of man alone or did he give them meaning and purpose apart from the life and history of mankind? Is God a God of being or a God of nothingness?

b. What does it mean that all creatures were made in or through Christ?[4]

c. What implications are there for the creature in the view that Christ is the second Adam? The first Adam was intended by God to be

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[4] Ibid., p. 65: "Die Welt ist nicht von einen anderen Gott geschaffen als dem, der uns erloest. . . . Der Erloeser und der Schoepfer sind einer und derselbe. Das heisst: wir werden nicht aus der Welt erloest, sondern mit ihr. . . . Im Schoepfungsglauben ist . . . die Solidaritaet, die bruederliche Haltung des Menschen zu aller Kreatur begruendet."

the crown of creation but he brought disgrace upon the creatures. The second Adam is the head of a new humanity. Will he restore the damage caused by the first Adam and bring about a renewal of all things along with the rebirth of humanity?[5]

d. The risen Christ is Lord of all things, even of death and corruption. Death and corruption, however, are predicated not only of man, but also of the creature. Does this mean that the renovation of the creature is given and assured in the resurrection and lordship of Christ? Does this mean that the creature will actually become free from corruption understood in a metaphysical sense?[6]

e. The Nicene Creed confesses the Holy Spirit as Lord and Giver of Life. Life, however, is an attribute not only of man, but also of

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[5]Peter Brunner, "Gott, das Nichts und die Kreatur; Eine dogmatische Erwaegung zum christlichen Schoepfungsglauben," Kerygma und Dogma, VI (1960), 191: "Jesus Christus ist der zweite, der endzeitliche Adam. Damit hat die Kreatur eine neue, ihr Geschick bestimmende Mitte. Im Umkreis des zweiten, endzeitlichen Adam breitet sich ueber die Kreatur wieder etwas von dem Frieden des Paradieses aus. . . . Vor allem aber gewinnt in Christo der gerechtfertigte und wiedergeborene Mensch jene kosmische Schluesselstellung des Ersterschaffenen wieder zurueck. . . . Damit oeffnet sich auch fuer die vom Gericht Gottes getroffene aussermenschliche Kreatur der Ausblick auf ihre Befreiung von dem Leerlauf, von der Hinfaelligkeit, von der Preisgabe an die Macht des Nichtigen."

[6]The answer of Peter Brunner is positive. Ibid., p. 193: "In . . . der Endvollendung wird auch die der Kreatur von ihrem Ursprung her anhaftende Inklination zum Nichtigen hin endgueltig aus ihr ausgeschlossen werden. 'Und das Meer ist nicht mehr', heisst es bedeutungsvoll in der Endvision des Sehers (Apok. 21,1). Wo das Meer nicht mehr ist, hat der Durchgang des Geschoepfes durch das Urchaos hindurch seine Macht verloren. Die Bedrohung durch das Chaotische ist im Ende selbst als Moeglichkeit ausgeschlossen, sie ist ein fuer allemal definitiv ueberwunden."

the creature. The question arises, What is the relationship of the Holy Spirit as lord and giver of life with the being of the creature?

f. As soon as man is born again, he enters into a new relationship not only with God, not only with his fellow man, but also with the creature. He no more fears and trusts the creature instead of God. He does not misuse the service of the creature to harm others and himself. He accepts the creature with prayer and thanksgiving. He respects the creature as a gift of God. He uses the creature to the original purpose of glorifying God. The question is, Will eternal life improve the new relation, or will eternal life destroy the relationship altogether by eliminating the creature? In what does eternal life consist? Is eternal life in radical opposition to what is now, or does it disclose and intensify what faith already has and does, although in hiddenness?[7] In short, the creature must be seen not only from the point of view of creation, not only from the point of redemption, but also from the point of view of eschatology. The creature must be viewed not only in the light of what it was and

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[7]Regin Prenter, Schoepfung und Erloesung; Dogmatik (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), p. 540: "Das ewige Leben als Zukunft ist dasselbe wie das ewige Leben als Gegenwart. [John 17:3] Der Unterschied zwischen dem ewigen Leben als Gegenwart und dem ewigen Leben als Zukunft ist nicht sein Inhalt, sondern nur, dass es als 'Gegenwart' mit Christus in Gott auf der Wanderung zum Tode verborgen ist (Kol. 3,3); verborgen im Zeichen des Wortes und Sakramentes, einzig Gegenstand des Glaubens, waehrend es in der Zukunft der Vollendung sichtbar sein und im Schauen besessen wird."

is, but also in the light of what it will be.[8] An eschatological view of creation is necessary to understand Romans 8:19-22.

Several aspects of Romans 8:19-22 did not receive due treatment in the present study. Two of them must receive special attention.

Luther, Gerhard and Althaus interpreted ktisis as referring to the subhuman creature. Althaus, however, suggested that also the unbelievers long unwittingly for the manifestation of the sons of God as they yearn for a better order of things. Important at this point is the fact that Hildebrecht Hommel arrived at a similar conclusion. In an essay on Romans 8:19-22 he attempted to find out how the readers of Paul understood ktisis.[9] Based on the evidence furnished by literature of the first century, he concluded that the readers must have understood ktisis as referring to the whole creation, but especially to the living creature and above all to man. Consequently, Hommel maintains that the action of longing for liberation must be attributed also to unbelieving man, not only to the irrational

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[8]Paul Althaus, Die Christliche Wahrheit, II, 50: "die Anfechtung des Schoepfungsglaubens [wird] ganz ueberwunden erst durch die letzten Dinge. So koennte man sagen: der Schoepfungsglaube haengt and der Eschatologie." Cf. Peter Brunner, "Gott das Nichts und die Kreatur," p. 193: "Das Protologische und das Eschatologische verhalten sich zueinander wie Verheissung und Erfuellung, wie Verheissung und Ziel. . . . Die eschatologische Hoffnung auf den neuen Himmel und die neue Erde ist . . . die Bewaehrung des Glaubens an Gott den Schoepfer."

[9]Hildebrecht Hommel, "Das Harren der Kreatur," Schoepfer und Erhalter; Studien zum Problem Christentum und Antike (Berlin: Lettner Verlag, 1956), pp. 7-23. It is presupposed that Paul's readers were predominantly heathen proselytes.

creature.[10] The problem with such an interpretation is: How will the unbelievers become free from "corruption?" For the purposes of the present study, it suffices to underline that even in the position of Hommel the subhuman creature is not excluded from the action of longing and the attainment of liberty.

A second aspect which deserves further study is what may be called the "liturgical" or "doxological" function of the creature. Regin Prenter has called attention to the fact that Christian worship is complete only with the participation of the creature. Flowers from field and garden are on the same altar with the body and blood of our Lord. The expression of praise and thanksgiving through the forms of art points to the final and perfect harmony between man and the universe in eternal life.[11] Peter Brunner has underlined that the mysterious cosmic language of the creature will be transformed into a doxology in eternal life. The creature will join the liturgy of the ecclesia triumphans.[12]

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[10]Ibid., p. 20: "Wir duerfen . . . ktisis . . . so deuten, dass zwar in weiteren Sinne die ganze Schoepfung vorschwebt, das aber doch das Auge des Betrachters ganz spezifisch auf der 'lebendigen' ktisis, naemlich auf Tier und Mensch ruht, und dass hier wiederum der Mensch unausgesprochen im Mittelpunkt steht." Cf. p. 21: "Dass in Roemer 8 unter der ktisis in der Tat die 'ausserchristliche' Menschheit in allererster Linie verstanden worden sein muss, sollte . . . klar sein."

[11]Prenter, p. 543. In art man and creation meet each other in a temporary relationship of friendship.

[12]Peter Brunner, "Gott, das Nichts und die Kreatur," pp. 192-193: "Angesichts der eschatologischen Erloesungstat Gottes wird das Seufzen der Kreatur verwandelt zum toenenden Lobpreis. Der Lobpreis des Schoepfers, den die aussermenschliche Kreatur von der Erschaffung her

The vision of John answers the doubts which Romans 8:19-22 may have left:

> Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, "To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!"[13]

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nur mit dem ihr eingestifteten Wesensgesetz darbringt, wird im Ende aller Dinge selbst endzeitlich verwandelt zur toenenden Stimme." [Quotes Revelation 5:11-13] "Die geheimnisvolle kosmische Sprache der Kreatur, die Psalm 19 andeutete, wird in der Endvollendung angesichts des vollzogenen Mysteriums der Erloesung entbunden zum doxologischen Hymnus, der sich als toenende Stimme responsorisch einfuegt in die ewige Liturgie der ecclesia triumphans. Diese responsorisch-liturgische Einfuegung der aussermenschlichen Kreatur in die Doxologie der ecclesia triumphans ist das unausloeschliche eschatologische Siegel fuer die unzerstoerbare Gemeinschaft, die durch Gottes Schoepfer- und Heilswillen zwischen kreatuerlicher Person und aussermenschlicher Kreature gestiftet ist."

[13]Revelation 5:11-13. RSV.

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