

# “The Glory of the Lord”

by August Pieper

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## I

(Translation by Carl Lawrenz)

By setting the title of this article within quotation marks we want to indicate at the very outset that we do not intend to treat the real glory of God’s nature. The concept of the glow of God, occurring with such frequency in Scripture, is so broad that it sums up all the perfections of His essence and confronts everything created with His absolute transcendence as an inducement for adoration and as its object.

Even in all that He does, in His plans, in His mind, in His thoughts, also in His counsel of salvation and its execution in detail and as a whole, God is so “glorious,” so absolutely exalted and transcendent, that no creature in its finite limitations can comprehend Him. Just compare Isaiah 40:12–25 and Rom. 11:33–36. Also the angels indeed desire to look into the mystery of God’s counsel of salvation, yet they do not fathom it, I Peter 1:12. Moses had already beheld God’s glory in a special manifestation on Sinai, Exodus 24; we are told in Exodus 33:11: “And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend; and still Moses pleads, vs. 18: “I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.” What he had thus far come to know of God and His ways through word and figure did not satisfy him; he wanted to perceive more, behold God’s countenance, gaze into the very eyes of God, penetrate the innermost recesses of His heart, discern the details and the rationale of God’s plans concerning Israel; but the Lord says: “Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.” He is willing to let all of His goodness pass before him, while He Himself proclaims His name, namely that He dispenses His grace and His mercy in free determination; He is willing also to let His glory pass by, protecting and sustaining Moses the while; then he is to gaze after Him; “but my face,” i.e. my uncovered, unveiled divine perfection of glory “shall not be seen.”

In the same sense Paul speaks of the knowledge of God, I Corinthians 13, with reference to the revelation of God’s counsel of salvation through the Word. Otherwise he speaks in exuberant terms of the glory of the revelation and knowledge given to us. But he calls both, our present understanding and our proclamation of the Gospel mystery; partial over against that which in the future will be perfect (that, too, is to be understood in a relative way). Also the knowledge imparted to us through the human Word does not reveal God’s glory to us in an unveiled manner. All human speech with its concepts, with its style and pathos is but a faint, dim mirror and an imperfect picture of the reality present in God. We shall some day behold God “face to face;” we shall see Him as He is, I John 3:2, shall on the morn of the Resurrection, justified in Christ’s righteousness, behold God’s countenance and be blissfully satisfied by God’s likeness, Psalm 17:15; but it is and remains a heavenly picture (Hebrew, תְּמוּנָה - form) adapted to our glorified eye in which our soul will find satisfaction—Jesus Christ in heavenly glory. And when it is said of the angels that they “do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven,” Matthew 18, then these and similar words annul neither the statement of John 1:18, “no man hath seen God at any time,” nor the statement of Paul, I Timothy 6:16, “who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto: whom no man hath seen, nor can see.” God’s essence as such is invisible for all creatures, also the heavenly, is incomprehensible for them as finite beings, yes, a consuming fire. For this very reason we so frequently encounter the erroneous idea in the Old Testament that every manifestation of God—which after all was still some created earthly image or a revelation perceptible by the senses—meant death for sinful man.

Among the various manifestations, in which God revealed Himself as God to man, the one which Scripture in stereotyped form designates as “the glory of the Lord” (in Hebrew, *קְבוֹד יְהוָה*, in Greek, *δόξα κυρίου*) holds a particularly eminent and noteworthy position. We meet with it or at any rate find it mentioned and utilized throughout the entire Scriptures from Genesis 15 on to the Revelation of St. John. With particular frequency and significance it confronts us in the Pentateuch in the history of the march through the wilderness, especially in the revelation at Sinai, then in Ezekiel, and several times in the account of Jesus’ life. Moreover, the Revelation of St. John is almost wholly built up on it.

Its form is not always the same in all details. The most learned of all medieval Jews, Maimonides (1,135-1,204) describes it very correctly according to its essence as “*splendor quidam creatus, quem deus quasi prodigii vel miraculi loco ad magnificentiam suam ostendendam alicubi habitare fecit.*” Its simplest form was a flare of fire enveloped in smoke or a cloud, supernaturally produced by God at any given place, at times also merely visible as a bright cloud or as a bare fire. Thus (we find it) already in Genesis 15 at the consummation of God’s covenant with Abraham and likewise in the fiery bush when Moses was called to lead Israel out of Egypt, Exodus 3. But also in this simple form it is bound up with a simultaneous revelation through the Word. With many other accompanying circumstances does it occur in the divine revelations at Sinai; in Ezekiel its form is so complex that it is very difficult to interpret it correctly in all of its details; and in the Revelation of St. John the details from Ezekiel are in part employed for special new prophecies, in part changed, in part amplified in several points, so that the reader is often baffled over their interpretation.

In general its interpretation is not difficult. It is, to the degree that it is unfolded, a more or less complete image of the true glory, of the absolute and infinite transcendence of God over all creatures according to His all-pervading presence, His all-dominating power, His infinite grace, and His all-consuming holiness—a symbol of His absolute sovereignty, of the one and only true and perfect Lord, to whom all creatures ought to render willing obeisance and joyful service, and offer adoration, praise, and glory without end.

And where this manifestation appears, it constitutes a proclamation through an act—not only that the Lord God is there present in a special manner, but also that He is about to go into action in a supernatural way, that He will do something special, something that is otherwise not revealed but very momentous. And that which is thus announced invariably pertains to the plan of salvation from sin which He made in Christ and which is to be carried out through Him, pertains to the establishment, edification, preservation, and completion here in time of the eternal, future kingdom of God. God does not trifle with it, nor does He permit trifling with it. No man, no angel can call it forth; God on the other hand freely employs it, when and where He will. It serves Him as an aid for His revelation through the Word; it preaches grace and wrath, it inaugurates judgment and deliverance, it constitutes an instance in which Law and Gospel are put into effect in this temporal world order.<sup>1</sup> It is a faint reflection of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who is the visible image of the invisible God, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, the firstborn of every creature, by whom and for whom all things were created, by whom all things consist—the mystery of God, who in this present eon has been mirrored for our faith in an enigmatical Word, but who will be fully revealed on the last day when He will visibly appear—no longer in a foreshadowed Word but in His true heavenly glow, surrounded by all the holy angels, sitting on the throne of His glow as judge of the quick and the dead—Himself the blessed hope of our future glow, Matthew 25; Titus 2.

It is worthwhile to consider this picture of God’s glory more closely in its individual historical manifestations and to note its form and particular significance in each instance. Of course, we cannot take all of the manifestations under consideration; we must restrict ourselves to the most important ones.

In view of the very frequent occurrence of this manifestation in the Old Testament period of the kingdom of God between Abraham and Christ we find it striking that we never encounter it in the antediluvian era, or in the Noachian. Self-evidently it does not occur during the time of Paradise. It presupposes the entering

<sup>1</sup> (Translator’s Note). In this last clause it is very difficult to reproduce the exact thought of the original: “... *Sie verwirklicht ein Stueck Gestz und Evangelium in dieser zeitlichen Weltordnung.*”

or the entrance of sin and of the promise of salvation. But even after the Fall had taken place, which was certainly of all-surpassing importance for the future shaping of the kingdom of God, even upon the First Promise and when the curse was placed upon man's earthly life, no **יְהוָה כְּבוֹד** appears; not at the birth of the first human beings, not on the occasion of the fratricide, not amidst the obduracy of Cain and the blasphemous defiance of Lamech. Here the Lord throughout intervenes directly with the Word alone or remains silent. Among the devout generation of Sethites the proclamation of Christ is established at the time of the birth of Enoch, Genesis 4:26; but even upon the universal defection and moral corruption of this generation and its stiff-necked resistance against the Holy Ghost, chapter 6, yes, even after the earth has been filled with violence, God does not intervene with the appearance of His glory, but forthwith decides to wipe out the entire human race and, while preserving the one pious family of Noah, carries this out.

The very first appearance, which is not at all designated as such and yet clearly discernible as a manifestation of the **יְהוָה כְּבוֹד** confronts us in Genesis 15 in the story of Abraham. Previously it is nowhere to be found. To the primeval world in the person of the first parents the Redeemer had been announced under the designation of "the woman's seed"; but at the same time the curse of death had been imposed upon their earthly life as a chastisement unto the Promised One. We do not read that the promise became more detailed or concrete. It sufficed to obtain forgiveness of sins and eternal life, even as it did also for true fear of God and piety. Scripture gives us a long list of pious fathers who succeeded each other, among whom Seth, Enoch, and Noah are specially stressed as believers in the promise. Then the interminglement with the godless world set in and with it universal defection, violence and fleshly lust, and—the judgment. We hear of special attestations of God's grace for Noah and of the deliverance of his family in the ark but still not a word of a manifestation like the "glory of the Lord" as having announced the one or the other. After the destruction of the primeval world God made a new covenant with Noah and his sons; but it did not pertain directly to the promised Savior; it was a covenant likewise with all the animals which, having been rescued with Noah from the Flood, had gone forth from the ark, a covenant of God's goodness and forbearance with the sinful race also regarding its earthly existence—having as its content "neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth," Genesis 9:11. The motive for this covenant as well as its positive content are already mentioned at the close of the previous chapter. "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease." Graciously pleased over Noah's thank offering inasmuch as it was prompted by faith in the promised Savior, God has once and for all decided and ordained that no universal judgment of wrath shall come upon the earth to wipe out the human race, but that the original blessing of creation shall continue and be renewed until the day when he will judge the world by that man whom He hath ordained, Acts 17:31. This is the covenant of God's forbearance of which Paul speaks in verse 30, pertaining to the ignorance at which God winked and by virtue of which He in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, 14:16, in spite of the sin which hitherto had remained under the forbearance of God, Romans 3:23, of which also II Peter 3:9 treats. Yet no "glory of the Lord" appears to confirm the covenant with Noah, but: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth," Genesis 9:13.

In the apostate world of the Noachids we therefore find no judgment similar to that which was carried out upon the first world through the Flood, not even a judgment of annihilation executed upon an entire people. During the next period God rather prepared for putting the blessing and the prophecies of Noah concerning the future destiny of his descendants into effect. Included in this blessing was the preservation of the three great Noachian families of nations. Until the building of the tower of Babel they lived together as a single large group. But when with a pride and defiance of God like that of the tyrants and mighty men before the Deluge, Genesis 6:4, they presumed to assault heaven, God from heaven intervened, yet not with a renewed judgment of destruction, but with a confusion of their speech and their dispersion over the earth. The outcome was the development of the Noachids into nations as reported in Genesis 10. The Japhethites turned northward and

northeastward from Babel-Shinar; the Hamites according to their separate tribes remained in part in Shinar and the surrounding regions, in part established themselves on the west coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in part took possession of the South Arabian coasts and also of North Africa, in part spread out toward the East. Yet the Semitic tribes by and large clung to the region of the two great rivers of the Tigris and Euphrates, the cradle of the Noachian world, until God through Abraham, in keeping with the promise given to Shem, ushered in a new order among the nations of the earth. God with much patience suffered the nations of the earth to walk in their own ways, let them taste His goodness and gave them rain from heaven and fruitful seasons and filled their hearts with food and gladness, Acts 14:16–17, and “determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him,” Acts 17:26–27; but they merely continued to corrupt their way in efforts at human culture like the antediluvian race, Gen. 6:11–12, with the end result which Paul describes in Romans 1:18ff. Also the family Terah of the Semitic stock of nations trod, at least in part, on the path of corruption amidst the forbearance of God. “Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old times, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods,” Joshua 24:2. Only concerning one man of the family of Terah, Abraham, this is not stated.<sup>2</sup>

With him God began a new dispensation of His eternal counsel of salvation conceived in the Woman’s Seed. Terah and his family had to serve Him to this end. They dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, on the right side of the Euphrates, not far above its junction with the Tigris. In him God awakened the resolve to immigrate with his family to the land of Canaan on the Mediterranean. Yet in his migration he was detained in upper Mesopotamia, namely in Haran. This was again in accordance with God’s counsel, not for him and his family, but for Abraham and Abraham’s seed the Lord had intended this land as a permanent habitation, since He now meant to embark upon an altogether new course in putting His plans of salvation into effect. Characteristic in this new order of things is this that outwardly God now restricts the sphere of action for His grace and Spirit to one man, to one family and to one people, and that within this narrow sphere He is now active with greater energy than heretofore, is active with great zeal, cf. Isaiah 9:7; II Kings 19:31. When one compares God’s activity in behalf of His salvation in the pre-Abrahamitic period with that of the Abrahamitic and post-Abrahamitic period, then God appears—both as to the fullness with which he reveals His plan of salvation and as to its practical implementation—to be relatively inactive in the former, whereas in the latter He appears like a man who labors indefatigably day and night, in order to have his task finished at the appointed time. There amidst a scanty revelation He covers the entire creature world with a single calm but devastating universal judgment, and then in the covenant of forbearance gently withdraws His Spirit from the nations of the earth and lets them—each in its own foolish way—usher in their cultural bankruptcy until the fullness of time; here with great spiritual power He takes hold of (Isaiah 41:9, original text--**יְהוָה יִקְרָא**) one man “from the ends of the earth,” leads him with his family, though they have no inkling concerning God’s purpose, on the 500 mile journey to Haran, there arrests the completion of Terah’s travel plan and gives Abraham the express command to leave his country, kindred and father’s house and to go forth to an unknown country which He will show him. At the same time God gives him a promise of such unprecedented greatness that its very magnitude could have aroused nothing else but unbelief in Abraham, if God’s Spirit had not at the same time wrought a faith in him that was in keeping with the greatness of the promise. As to greatness of faith Abraham is unique in the history of God’s kingdom; in this he surpasses all antediluvian and postdiluvian believers, yes also all Old and New Testament believers who lived after him. In the Scripture of the Old and the New Testament he is therefore called the father of believers and the father of many nations, cf. particularly Genesis 12:3, 17, Romans 4 and Galatians 3. And even as his physical descendants boast of having him as their father, so he is held up for emulation in Scripture to all of his spiritual seed as a model and example of faith. That is what God wanted to make of him and that is what He did make of him by unfolding the promise, by testing him to the very limit of what man is

<sup>2</sup> In many of our parochial schools a type of presentation has been passed on, which puts it as though also Abraham had been an idolater before his call. This is undoubtedly done to emphasize his unworthiness and God’s free grace. Yet this is nowhere stated in Scriptures and does not serve the purpose intended, but can only do harm inasmuch as it is not truthful. In the history of his life, from the beginning to its end, Scripture knows Abraham only as a model of piety.

able to bear, by constantly repeating the confirmation of the covenant of grace into which He had entered with him, and by finally certifying it with the most solemn oath.

It is at the formal and solemn consummation of this covenant that the manifestation of “the glory of the Lord” shows up for the first time. God did not content himself with the promise alone, given to Abraham on one occasion in words that were still very general. Abraham had indeed believed it in all simplicity and in view of it had blindly carried out the command to journey forth. When he had come to Sichem, the Lord began to be more specific in His promise and assured him, first of all, that this was the land that he would give to his seed. In thankful faith Abraham brings an offering to the Lord. At Bethel he repeats the thank offering and proclaims<sup>3</sup> the name of the Lord. That certainly was faith and confession of faith. But that also Abraham’s faith could still be assailed may seemingly be concluded from his journey to Egypt in the Canaanite famine and from his adventure with Pharaoh (Luther, of course, also takes this to be an act of faith). Upon his return to the land of promise and his separation from Lot the Lord therefore repeats the promise both of the land and of the numerous seed with detailed, specifying, and assuring statements, 13:14ff. Yes, he now becomes a true hero of faith in his military expedition against Chedorlaomer. But that he was not without anxiety after this very victory over the enemies of the land given to him, enemies which were indeed defeated but not destroyed, may already be concluded from the words with which the Lord sought to strengthen him “after these things,” 15:1. “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” And now the anxieties that assailed him come to light. He comes to the Lord with the lament that all the earthly blessing which He showered upon him must needs fall into strange hands, since He is not giving him a son as an heir. Then he receives the firm and definite assurance: “He that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.” As numerous as the stars of heaven shall his seed be. And Abraham “believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.” And as the Lord—now for the third time—had confirmed the possession of this land for him, with the weighty assertion that it was He who led him out of Ur in Chaldea, Abraham’s heart, longing for even greater assurance, asks anew: “Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?” This man of faith still does not believe firmly enough. And the Lord condescends to his weakness and gives him the strongest outward guarantee for the fulfillment of His promises which was known to Abraham, reared as a Chaldean: also outwardly He concluded a blood covenant with him in Chaldean fashion, which meant unswerving mutual loyalty for both contracting parties or death through the other party. The ceremonies are described for us in chapter 15:9–10, and verse 17. The Lord Himself orders them. “Take me ...” It is His covenant; He is the originator of the covenant, not Abraham; yet it is a covenant with Abraham, established for his sake as a surety of the promises received and of God’s eternal friendship. Abraham is to take three clean sacrificial animals from his herds, slay them, divide them into halves, and lay these over against each other in such a manner that both contracting covenant parties, with torches raised aloft, could pass through between the several halves of the animals. In addition he is to lay a turtledove to the right and a young pigeon to the left, both un-severed, as symbols of the simplicity and sincerity with which the covenant was to be entered on both sides. The former were meant as a sign that a covenant unto life and death was involved here, and the passing through of the contracting parties with uplifted flaming torches between the slain birds and severed animals as the consummation of the covenant contract. Yet before it came to the consummation, some strange things still took place. “Fowls came down upon the carcasses,” but “Abram drove them away.” Here one cannot safely go beyond certain bounds in interpreting these manifestly significant occurrences. But this much is unquestionably clear that the birds of prey swooping down upon the carcasses are pictures of enemies who seek to hinder either the consummation or the implementation of the

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<sup>3</sup> Thus Luther invariably translates the Hebrew phrase **וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְהוָה** with full validity; whereas the modern translators just as invariably reproduce it with “and called on the name of the Lord”—without validity. This follows incontrovertibly from Exodus 33:19 and 34:5, where in both instances the **וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם** is put into the mouth of the Lord Himself, and the meaning “to call on the name of the Lord” leads to the absurdity that the Lord called on His own name. For this reason the modern translators also translate the **וַיִּקְרָא** these two instances with “to call out, to shout,” yet how improper, since at least in the last instance the Lord does not merely call out His name, but gives an actual discourse on it, 34:6–7.

covenant that is to be concluded. Are the contemporary Canaanite nations meant? Is it Pharaoh and Egypt, even as in the interpretation of the next figure, or are we to think of the later enemies of Israel, or of all the enemies of the Church taken together? That Abraham drives them away obviously signifies that the enemies will not succeed in hindering or destroying the covenant. The covenant and the promises will end up victorious in Abraham and his spiritual seed. This is Matthew 16:18 concerning the gates of hell. The next item, the deep sleep which fell upon Abraham, together with the terror and awful gloom which settled upon his soul, the Lord Himself interpreted as referring to the future bondage of Abraham's descendants in Egypt and to their deliverance through Moses. Abraham's seed would first experience the fulfillment of the promise of the land when the iniquity of the Amorites, inhabiting and controlling "this" land up to that time, would call for their own extermination. In the meantime he himself would go to his fathers in peace and be buried in a good old age. Abraham is to know that God's covenant with him brings back neither to him nor to all of his children the Paradise on earth lost through sin; it brings crosses. Yet it is a covenant of grace, whereby the believers may live at peace with God, experience many blessings of God, and go in peace to the grave. But the day passed by, the night set in, without the consummation of the covenant having taken place. Was the consummation not to come about? Or had it all been merely a dream-like fantasy of his deep sleep? For the Lord had omitted the final thing that was necessary for the ratification of the covenant bond, the bidding that with burning torch he should now pass through between the animal carcasses lying there. Abraham looks down upon the row of carcasses, and—"behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces." It was the Lord, who in visible fire and smoke passed through between the double row of carcasses and thereby visibly sealed the covenant made with Abraham and elucidated it with the words: "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

In this covenant ratification God above all things clarified His counsel of salvation with great clearness and with great emphasis. "By grace ... through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Everything that God did with Abraham, from the time that he was led forth out of Ur until his burial beside Sarah in the cave of Machpelah, his purchased possession in the field of Ephron the Hittite, was wholly free grace, God's gift and doing. God took such pains with the personality of no other man than he did with Abraham. Heaven and earth He promised and gave to him and his seed, Luke 16:22f; Romans 4:13; no other believer did He perfect in faith and in obedience of faith in quite the same measure as He did him, the father of believers. No one else among sinners is called God's friend (Isaiah 41:8, James 2:23); to no one, except Abraham, has God given such a great name. And all this is not of him, but of God alone. It is this point that is particularly brought out by the appearance of the glory of the Lord at the consummation of the covenant with Abraham. Abraham does nothing toward it, except that upon God's command he contributes the externals for the ceremonies from the rich earthly goods that God had given him. When the ratification of the covenant takes place, only the glory of the Lord passes through between the carcasses of the animals, speaking and promising, not Abraham; he did not even receive a summons to do so; he merely sees the Lord passing through in fire and smoke and hears His words of promise; he promises nothing, speaks not a word: he merely sees and hears and—believes, overwhelmed by the Lord. Now he knows in whom he believes; now he sees the day of Christ and is glad; now the Lord may lead him and his seed through terror and great gloom, he gives heed to the Word and places himself wholly into His hand, certain that God can raise up even from the dead, that his seed will possess the gates of his enemies, "By grace ... through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"—this order of salvation is now to be made clear to all the world in Abraham through this covenant made with him and confirmed by the manifestation of the glory of the Lord.

Now the Lord also kept watch over this order of salvation with such untiring zeal that His economy of salvation determined the destiny of all future generations. "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." This was bound to go into fulfillment upon all nations that came into contact with Abraham and his seed. And it did go into fulfillment upon them and still goes into fulfillment daily and will go into fulfillment as long as the time of grace continues. It was also bound to go into fulfillment upon the very people who came forth from his loins; yes, it went into fulfillment upon each generation, and upon each individual among this nation, even before the One Seed come, who was really meant in the promise. As zealously as God

had been absorbed in Abraham that He might shower His full blessing upon him, just so zealous was He in all subsequent times in preserving this blessing for His people, the physical and spiritual seed of Abraham. The way in which Israel was guided throughout with an abundance of gracious benefits, such as God bestowed upon no other nation, Psalm 147:20, its chastisements, which were often positively terrifying, and its ultimate rejection are accounted for only in the two statements of Isaiah: “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this,” 9:7; and “For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still,” 9:12, 17, 21; 10:4. A sign of this zeal of the Lord in behalf of His Gospel from Abraham onward is this ever-recurring manifestation, which Scripture calls **כְּבוֹד יְהוָה**, the glory of the Lord. Wherever God deems it necessary to confirm the grace anew which He swore unto Abraham and his seed, wherever His dispensation of grace is blasphemed, trodden under foot, and the execution of His thoughts of salvation are in danger of being hindered, there, providing a mere word of warning and punishment does not suffice God, this fire and the cloud are likely to appear, announcing God’s presence and His intervention with a deed. It proclaims that the covenant of grace concluded with Abraham remains unalterably in effect, and that it is also holy and inviolable. It is the seal which the Lord of Glory has in advance placed upon the concluding word of the one great Son of Abraham: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

We now want to direct our attention more fully to a few of the main appearances of the “glory of the Lord.”

The second one takes place at the calling of Moses, Exodus 3. Like the first one, it, too, lacks the designation as such, but by its form and other accompanying circumstances it can immediately be recognized as such. The four hundred years of affliction for Abraham’s descendants in a strange land, foretold at the first appearance, had in the meantime elapsed. Abraham and his promised seed, Isaac, had after their sojourning in the promised land long since gone in peace to their fathers. Abraham’s heir of the second generation, Isaac’s son with seventy souls and their wives, had been brought to Egypt under wonderfully prepared circumstances, that they might grow up into a great nation in the most fruitful part of the land under the protection of Pharaoh, the mightiest ruler of the world of that time, cf. Isaiah 54:4. “And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them,” Exodus 1:7. But under the next Pharaohs the oppression set in, which finally progressed to the violent slaughtering of all male Israelite children. “And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.” The hour had come when the Lord should fulfill the word spoken to Abraham: “And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance,” Genesis 15:14.

The Lord had already prepared the executor of His judgment and the deliverer of His people. In an unpretentious yet wonderful way he eludes the murderous decree of Pharaoh as a child, is trained at his court in all the wisdom and art of the Egyptians; then having made himself guilty of slaying an Egyptian taskmaster in ardent devotion to his own people, he has to flee out of the land and is received by the Midianite priest Reuel, also called Jethro. Then comes the day when as the keeper of his sheep he through God’s guidance comes to Mount Horeb.

There the glory of the Lord appears to him. Literally the text states: “And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” Nothing is said here, as at the first appearance concerning smoke; but it will hardly have been entirely lacking, even as later the cloud without fire and the fire without the cloud appear in such a way that the one permeates the other. Concerning this, however, there can be no doubt, that we are here dealing with an appearance of the **כְּבוֹד יְהוָה**. This follows with certainty from the fact that it is the angel of the Lord or the Lord Himself who speaks with Moses out of the flame of fire, and that in verses 6–8 He ties this appearance up with the first one involving Abraham. Time does not permit us to enter upon the special question here, whether it was an ordinary angel, who in his person merely represented God, or God Himself, who here

appeared to Moses. On this point it would be well to consult the commentary of Keil, or also of Delitzsch, on this passage and on Genesis 15. The latter agrees with Luther that it is an angel; the former holds that it is God. Finally the difference is not an essential one, since also those who contend for the first opinion admit that it was really God who spoke through the angel. In several other passages the decision may be difficult. To the undersigned this passage does not seem to leave room for an interpretation in terms of an ordinary angel; for one thing the statement in verse 6: "I am the God of Abraham, etc." is too strong for a mere angel; and at the very first appearance, Genesis 15, nothing is said about an angel. Throughout the Old Testament the designation "the angel of the Lord," when not specifically applied to an ordinary angel, is without exception a designation of the Lord Christ Himself, of the angel or messenger of God in the fullest sense, of the second person of the Godhead, through which the entire Holy Trinity generally reveals itself and particularly in the "glory of the Lord." Jesus Christ, who in His person as the God-man is the *εἰκὼν*, the visible image of the invisible God, Colossians 1:15, the spiritual rock that followed them, which was Christ, I Corinthians 10:4, is Himself the incarnate, personal "glory of the Lord." He it is therefore who personally presents and reveals Himself to Abraham in the past, to Moses here, and in this manifestation in the Old Testament and still in the New Testament—the incarnate "Word," John 1:1, 14. Christ's significance on the whole in God's plan is also His significance in each of these manifestations, which have been recorded for us, extending from the first to the final book of the Bible, except that each manifestation also has its specific significance. This also Luther asserts in his sermon on passages from Exodus (Vol. III), where he opposes the papistic interpretation that applies the burning bush to Mary as the immaculate virgin. But the burning bush has also been interpreted as applying to other persons: to the people of Israel in Egypt, and to Moses himself. Yet every interpretation is false, which does not agree with the word of Luther: "Therefore this flaming and burning bush is a figure of Christ." (Vol. III, 747, 4.)

What the manifestation specifically signifies here lies in the text. The first thing that He who had appeared says to Moses is a warning, not to draw near to the appearance but to take off his shoes. Also the priests had to perform their service in the sanctuary with bare washed feet as a sign of reverence toward the Lord who dwelt there. Every place where the Lord appeared was holy and threatened the irreverent with destruction. Thus (it is) here: "the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And why is it holy? That is indicated by the subsequent words: "I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, etc." As such He was, however, the God of all grace, as their history shows. Because of His grace God is the one who is to be hallowed by us, the inviolable One; because of His grace Christ is the Holy One of God, before whom also the devils tremble, for as such He is the Light of the World and a consuming fire to him who despises this grace, cf. the "holy" in Isaiah 40:25, the thrice holy of the seraphim in 6:3, the "be not deceived; God is not mocked," Gal. 6:7, and the "if we neglect so great salvation," Heb. 2:3; this is true of the God of the Law but even more so of the God of Grace, apart from whom there is "but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries," Hebrews 10:27–29. The Gospel of grace is also the ultimate message of judgment and condemnation, John 3:18f. In the presence of this divine holiness which is here revealed in the God of Grace Moses hides his face and is afraid to look upon God. With the fire in the bush God intimates what His spoken words express. He has come down, i.e., He has put Himself into this manifestation, in order to indicate that He intends to deliver His people from the hand of the Egyptians, lead them into the promised land, and "judge" the people whom they had to serve, even as He had sworn to Abraham in concluding the covenant. The appearance of the burning bush is a surety for the execution of this double work, for He who appears here in a fire of grace for Israel and in a fire of judgment for Egypt intends to be with Moses. At this very place Moses and his people, when they will have been brought forth, shall with praise and thanksgiving serve the Lord as the Deliverer of his people and as the Judge of their tormentors.

It indeed seems to be an utterly hopeless task that is assigned to Moses. Moses, now eighty years old, a fugitive from Egyptian justice, for forty years the shepherd of a Midianite priest, and as a desert dweller quite estranged from all the ramifications of civilization, was to deprive the mightiest potentate of the world of that day, who had what was considered to be an invincible military organization, of a slave people of more than 600,000 men, who could so readily be exploited by the Egyptian nation which had become rich, proud, and



imperious. No wonder that Moses refused and finally burst out in despair: “O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send”—only not me. No wonder that in the consciousness of his world dominating power mighty Pharaoh responded to the pretentious demand of Moses, when first addressed to him, with the scornful taunt: “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?” 5:2. But with Moses was He who had appeared in the burning bush, “that dwelt in the bush,” Deuteronomy 33:16, and who had promised him: “I will be with thee,” Exodus 3:12, and “I have made thee a god to Pharaoh,” 7:1. He “that dwelt in the bush” led Israel out of Egypt with a “strong,” “high” hand, 3:19; 6:1; 13:3,14; 14:8, and “with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments,” 6:6.

Israel had hardly gone out from Succoth, when also the glory of the Lord appeared again, not merely to Moses but to the entire people. “And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night,” 13:21f. The form of the appearance has changed somewhat. The burning and smoking torch in Abraham’s case and the burning bush of Moses adapts itself to the circumstances and divides into a pillar of a cloud for the journeying by day and a pillar of fire for the journeying by night, for it now meant journeying day and night without any halt. But it was the Lord who in this form went before them as a sure leader and protection of His people, which had been delivered from the tyranny of Pharaoh.

Then came the great need at the shore of the Red Sea. Pharaoh had pursued them with full military strength and had overtaken them. The people cried out unto the Lord and quarreled with Moses. Moses sought to quiet the people by pointing them to the Lord’s promise. In the meantime Moses himself stands before God in mute supplication. Then the voice of the Lord resounds: “Wherefore criest thou unto me, speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward; but lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it ... I will get me honor (וְאֶפְבְּדֶהָ), the same word as a verb in the niphal which is found as a noun in (פְּבֹד יְהוָה) upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen,” 14:15ff. Again the form of the manifestation changes: the “angel of God,” i.e. Christ, who went before the camp of Israel removed and went behind them, likewise the pillar of the cloud, and placed itself between the two camps, veiling God’s people for the Egyptians in the form of a very dark cloud, while as a bright light it illuminated the night for the camp of Israel, “so that the one came not near the other all the night.” Then followed Israel’s safe passage through the sea and the overthrow of the Egyptians. For Israel the פְּבֹד יְהוָה had become a deliverer, upon the Egyptians an avenger. “Thus the Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; ... And Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and his servant Moses,” 14:30–31. How successfully the Lord here glorified His majesty in the sight of the heathen is described by the Song of Moses, which follows in the next chapter. And the entire subsequent sacred literature of Israel is full of the praise of this deed of the Lord. The fact that Israel was led out of Egypt, which cannot be denied as a historical reality, is even today an insoluble problem for all scientific research.

On the 15th of Nisan the children of Israel had gone forth out of Egypt under the protection of the glory of the Lord. Only thirty days later it appeared again, namely in the Wilderness of Sin between Elim and Sinai. Once before after passing through the sea the people had already begun to murmur, when at Marah after three days without water they had found only very bitter and undrinkable water. The Lord had overlooked it in patience and had made the water drinkable, 15:25. At the same time, however, He had grasped the opportunity to warn the people against future murmuring. Just through their lack of food and water on the journey through the “great and terrible” wilderness, Deuteronomy 1:19 and 8:15, gave them much opportunity and occasion for it. Therefore the Lord admonished them to implicit trust in His guidance and to strict obedience toward His future ordinances, 15:26. Of course, the next station, Elim, gave them no opportunity for murmuring; for in this spacious and beautiful oasis they had everything in abundance. But they had hardly arrived at the next halting station in the Wilderness of Sin, when the murmuring started anew and brought reproaches against Moses and Aaron to their lips that were as bitter as those which they had voiced in theft dismay over Pharaoh’s army

before the Red Sea, 16:2f. The supplies that they had taken along were consumed; death by famine threatened them. Then God spoke to Moses; and he has to announce to the people that at even they shall know that the Lord their God brought them forth out of Egypt and that in the morning they shall see the glory of the Lord. In the evening they then receive the quails, and in the morning upon Aaron's address they see "the glory of the Lord in the cloud," cf. the text 16:6–10, and find the manna. It is difficult to establish whether the real glory of the Lord is meant in verse 7, or like in verse 10 its physical manifestation. In the entire presentation the text seems to have gotten into confusion. But verse 10 leaves no doubt about it that our manifestation did appear in the morning. Through Aaron the Lord had cited the entire congregation before Him. And while Aaron was still speaking, the congregation turned toward the wilderness, i.e. toward the east, from whence they expected God's manifestation; and behold, the "glory of the Lord" appeared in a cloud. This is the first time that it is called the "glory of the Lord" and that it is reported to have "appeared." Later on this sentence recurs quite often and becomes the technical term for this manner of God's manifestation. We call attention here once more to the different forms of the appearance. With Abraham it has the form of fire and smoke, with Moses that of a blazing flame, before the Red Sea it is light and a dark cloud in the form of a pillar of a cloud, and in 13:21f—obviously by way of anticipation—it is designated as a pillar of a cloud and a pillar of fire, whereas here, 16:10, it is spoken of as the "glory of the Lord ... in a cloud," not in a pillar of a cloud. Later, e.g. at the tabernacle, it frequently appears as a cloud, covering the outside of the tabernacle, while it lights up the inside. We take these special variations to be incidental and without significance, merely adapted to the outward circumstances, or even unintended in the account. The essential thing is the bright luster in the darkness of cloud and smoke, picturing God's glory in the midst of His inscrutableness.

What its appearance here in the Wilderness of Sin was particularly to impress upon the people is again to be concluded from the specific circumstances. Chapter 15:26 is an admonition to general obedience toward God, and to strict observance of all the ordinances which are about to be given to them. In spite of this the murmuring of the congregation appears again in Sin. For this reason Moses apprises them of God's impending self-glorification at even by producing meat and in the morning by furnishing bread in abundance. On the next morning, while the manna already covers the ground, comes the citation of the entire congregation before God and then immediately the appearance of the Lord in a light and a cloud. Thereupon Moses explains: "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat," and finally follow the ordinances of the Lord concerning the gathering of the manna with special regulations for the Sabbath, which the people had never heard heretofore. With these ordinances God wanted to put the obedience of the people to a test: "That I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no," 16:4. From this summation, particularly from the citation of the entire congregation that it might behold the glory of the Lord which would presently appear, it becomes very evident that God is very much in earnest about this self-manifestation, on the one hand concerning the assurance that He will not forsake His people, which He led hither, in any need during their wandering in the wilderness, particularly that He will provide them richly with food and drink and bring them safely into the Promised Land; on the other hand concerning His entire future legislation, for which He expects willing and strict obedience, of which they are now to give a sample in the observance of His ordinances concerning the gathering of the manna and the celebration of the Sabbath. The quails and the manna are here an earnest of their constant recurrence in every future want of food, even as the water at Elim had been that, and the water at Rephidim became that, in respect to any future lack of water. The legislation in Sin is a prelude to the legislation on Sinai, and through obedience over against these ordinances they were to show that they would obey those many and great laws. The limited solemnity of the appearance of the glory of the Lord here in Sin is a prelude of the much greater one on Sinai. Sin points altogether to Sinai. This accounts for the appearance of the Glory of the Lord with special solemnity.

## II

(Translation by Pastor John Schaadt)<sup>3</sup>

Between their departure from the Wilderness of Sin and their arrival at Mount Sinai, the Children of Israel pitched camp again, this time in Rephidim, a wide valley lying just northwest of Mount Horeb, Exodus 17. The events of this place are told us in order to emphasize the patience and goodness that the Lord has for His people. The first event was the murmuring of the people because of the recurring lack of water. The murmuring becomes so vehement here that Moses cries to the Lord: “What shall I do unto this people, they be almost ready to stone me,” Exod. 17:4. The “glory of the Lord” does not appear, but Moses is bidden by the Lord to strike a rock in Horeb and to provide water for the people. The need is past, but the place receives the name “Massah and Meribah,” temptation and strife, in memory of this sin against the Lord and Moses. Compare with this the similarity of the incident at Kadesh Barnea, Numbers 20, where the “glory of the Lord,” however, did appear. Paul bases I Corinthians 10:4 upon both these situations: “For they drank (spiritually) of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.” Here in Rephidim the Lord does not even punish the people, but simply relieves the need. And in the victory over Amalek, the “first (the most powerful of that time and the first to oppose Israel, filled with deadly and unquenchable hatred) of the nations,” Numbers 24:20, the Lord, through the outstretched hands of Moses, gave them such an obvious and wonderful demonstration of His almighty protection, that Moses must record it so that it may be remembered later as a guarantee that Amalek is to be completely exterminated. He calls the altar of thanksgiving that was built “Jehovahnissi,” the Lord is my Banner. In every need Israel is to learn to believe and trust the God who rescued them out of the powerful hand of Pharaoh, led them wonderfully through the depth of the sea, and now also subdued Amalek.

As we pass over the Jethro chapter (18), we now turn to that part of the history of Israel in which the “glory of the Lord” manifests itself most mightily. Involved are chapters 19 and 20 of Exodus, then chapters 24, 32, 33, 34, and the final 40th chapter. In order to do justice to the individual appearances, it is well to review the events at Sinai in their proper sequence and context. At Sinai occurs one of the most important events in the history of the world and in the history of salvation: the Lord’s covenant with Israel.

We divide this history as follows:

1. The Preparations for the Covenant, chap. 19.
2. The Giving of the Law of the Covenant, chap. 20 and to a limited extent 21ff.
3. The Ratification of the Covenant, chap. 24.
4. The Breaking and the Renewal of the Covenant, chap. 32–34.
5. The Confirmation of the Covenant, chap. 40.

We shall note the role that the “glory of the Lord” plays in each section.

As in the entire history of Israel, so also in the preparations for the ratification of the covenant, the Lord is the One who is dealing with Israel, and Moses is merely His instrument. Three months after the departure from Egypt, after a day’s march from Rephidim, the people camped near Sinai in the great plain south of the southern-most peak of the Horeb range. Then verse 3 tells us: “And Moses went up unto God.” He went up the mountain as God had commanded him, perhaps already in his call, 3:12, or else in a later, separate revelation. In any case, the cloud stood (according to 13:21f; 19:9, and as it later appeared over the Ark of the Covenant, 25:22; 30:6,36; Numbers 7:89; 10:33–36; 11:25, and often) over the top of the mountain, indicating the presence of the Lord. As Moses drew near God, He called to him “Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel.”—“House of Jacob” is the name of the people insofar as they are physically descended from Jacob (Isaac, Abraham); “children of Israel” expresses the ideal spiritual relationship with the Lord—it expresses the faith of the people. In the outer congregation is contained the inner, the communion of

<sup>3</sup> By a strange coincidence Pastor John Schaadt, Prairie Farm, Wisconsin, translated this second part of Professor Pieper’s article about the same time that the undersigned prepared the translation of the first part that appeared in the previous issue of the *Quartalschrift*. We are pleased to offer Pastor Schaadt’s translation to our readers. - Carl Lawrenz.

saints. For the sake of the latter occur all of God's subsequent deeds. As the shell about the kernel, the outer congregation (physical nation) shares outwardly in the blessing and the guidance of the inner congregation (believers), even as the inner congregation must share in the sins and chastisements of the outer; but the outer also enjoys the protection that the Lord gives the entire external nation.

For a proper understanding of God's covenant with the children of Israel, the following words of the Lord are of basic importance. They contain three things. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." The Lord first holds before them how they had so far experienced His faithfulness: they had been wonderfully delivered from the bondage of Egypt, they had been safely preserved in crossing through the sea, they had been provided with food and drink, a victory had been given to them in the overthrow of Amalek—He had carried them as an eagle carries its young, when it drives them out of the nest for the first time, flying under them that they may not fall and be crushed. The Lord reminded them how He had brought them unto Himself, that is, in His particular guidance and protection by means of the cloud and the pillar of fire, how He had adopted them as His own special people before all other people on earth. It is not something new that He now has in mind for them; it is the old covenant ratified with Abraham and his seed amidst the appearance of the "glory of the Lord," the covenant which He, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has carried out with their fathers and now in all faithfulness also with them through His servant Moses, the covenant which He now wants to confirm for them in due form and which He would have confirmed by them through their own personal consent. In the next words then follows as a second matter the condition which the Lord attaches to the continuation of His carrying out the covenant He had ratified with Abraham: "If ye will obey my voice." At the ratification of the covenant with Abraham nothing was said about this condition. Everything that the Lord said to Abraham is a pure, unconditional promise; Abraham believes; the Lord commands; and Abraham, of course, obeys. The only word in the whole history of Abraham that looks like a condition attached to the covenant is Genesis 17:14. Here the Lord, after He has instituted circumcision as an outward sign of covenant relationship, prescribes: "And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people." But this is simply the Old Testament form of the New Testament statement of the Lord: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16. It is the self-understood demand of the unconditioned promise, which can be received only through faith and which is produced by God alone through the promise. Abraham believed the Lord, believed everything without hesitation; and spontaneously from his faith flowed immediate, unqualified obedience, even as he passed with flying colors his greatest test when he was ready to sacrifice Isaac. The same is true of Isaac and Jacob. Also in their history there is not a word concerning their obedience as a condition, but only an unqualified repetition of the free promise given to Abraham.

Now suddenly the condition! But God is here no longer dealing with individual chosen believers, with examples of faith—and though they be ever so weak—but rather with an outward multitude, who as the "house of Jacob" were to share in the unavoidable externals of the promise and who must therefore also fit themselves under God's outward guidance if the promise is to go into fulfillment. He is dealing with a people who also as "children of Israel," as a believing congregation, were still minor children and who as such could be treated outwardly only as servants and were therefore in bondage under the external ordinances, Galatians 4:1–3. That which was self-understood with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as heroes of faith, namely, willing obedience over against every command and direction of the Lord, had to be expressly inculcated on this people, the majority of whom were "stiff-necked," the rest of whom were indeed believers, but not yet mature.

As to the third matter, the covenant promise which Moses was to announce to the people: "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure (Luther: *mein Eigentum*) unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine"—that is, as has already been stressed, not something essentially new, but only a repetition in fitting form of the promise given to the ancestor of the nation, Genesis 12 and 17 and 22:17, compare Romans 4:13; respectively, it is the concrete exposition of this promise. Deuteronomy 5:3, properly understood, does not contradict this. But the particular term that God here uses for "my property," and the closer explanation of it in verse 6, is of greatest importance to the understanding of the expression. Thereby the appearance of the "glory of the Lord," as it manifests itself just in connection with the ratification of the covenant on Sinai, gains its deepest significance.

The Hebrew word for “property” is סְגֻלָּה, derived from the verb סָגַל, which originally means, “to lay aside,” “to store up,” “to keep as a precious treasure.” When the Lord adds to these words: “for all the earth is mine,” He at the same time declares thereby that all people of the earth are His property, with whom He, according to Daniel 4:35, “doeth according to his will,” and that according to His own words in Exodus 33:19: “I ... will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy,” He has chosen this nation, the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as His particularly valuable and prized property in order to reveal to all nations all His goodness and his glory, v. 22. The people are, as Moses testifies to them, “the fewest of all people,” Deuteronomy 7:7, yes, a stiff-necked people, as the Lord Himself so often expresses it. Nevertheless the Lord has drawn them to Himself out of pure goodness (Jeremiah 31:3, Luther’s translation “above (comparatively) all people” because He “loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers,” Deuteronomy 7:8, so that Israel might “know ... that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him,” verse 9, 10. For visible evidence of this the Lord appears in a particularly impressive manner at the ratification of the covenant, and subsequently so often as in the “glory of the Lord.”

We find all the goodness, mercy, and faithfulness of God toward Israel, all the blessing contained in the covenant about to be ratified, concretely expressed and compressed in the words of verse 6: “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” Luther’s translation, “a priestly kingdom,” does not properly bring out the sense of the Hebrew. The Hebrew says literally, “a kingship (not kingdom) of priests.” That does not mean a domain in which the Lord reigns over priests as citizens, but as Peter reproduces the Septuagint, a βασιλειον ιεράτευμα, a royal priesthood, that is, an association of priests consisting wholly of kings, or as it is simply stated in Revelation 1:6 and 5:10: “Thou ... hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” Both designations, מַמְלֶכֶת and כְּהֻנִּים, are designations of dignity and might. The people of Israel are certainly also a kingdom, a domain of the Lord’s power; yet that is not to be expressed here in connection with this special covenant of grace, but rather that all of them, man for man, will through this covenant be elevated before the Lord their God as kings and priests. Luther in his explanation of this passage has: “Ye shall all be priests and kings.” Compare his commentary on I Peter (St. L. IX: 1022ff. and 1183ff.).

This is the concrete meaning of סְגֻלָּה: Israel is to be a valuable, precious, and well-guarded treasure of spiritual kings and priests, the pearl among all people of the earth. As priestly mediator it is to have the promise and the call of committing the nations to God through unceasing intercession. As priestly teacher it is to make known the virtues, the glory, of Him who has made them priests. As kings over everything earthly, even death and the devil, they are to bring to fulfillment the spiritual world-rule of Christ promised to Jacob in Shiloh, until He will appear in His full heavenly glory.

“And an holy nation.” This sentence is usually misunderstood in that it is taken as a legal demand that Israel should be holy, that is, without sin, without spot. But it is no independent clause at all. This is only another statement regarding these people, declaring that the priest-kings are at the same time a holy nation. “Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” is a single sentence. The sentence is a promise in both elements of the predicate, not only in the first. The nation is holy unto the Lord (unto me, in the text לִי) as a royal priesthood insofar as and because it consists purely of priest-kings or kingly priests. The “holy,” just as “kingdom of priests,” is an attributive designation of the nation. Indeed, the nation is holy “unto me,” the Lord, in its state of grace. It is holy before Him, in His eyes, He holds and declares and treats it as a holy nation.

For the basic meaning of the word “holy” we point chiefly to the use of the word by Isaiah, especially in chapters 1, 6, 10, 40, 41, 43, 45, 48, 49ff., (the Holy One of Israel), and to Hebrews 7:27 in connection with Ephesians 5:27. It means absolute moral perfection, shining, striking, spotless, brilliant, radiant purity among the morally unclean, the spotted, the soiled, the sinners, and in the midst of a creation that, though not really sinful and still glorious, has no moral excellence. The only absolute Holy One is God as He revealed Himself in

pure goodness, mercy, and grace as Jehovah, the “Lord,” to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As such, that is, as the God of salvation, of grace, of forgiveness of sins, of the reception of sinners into sonship (“brought you unto myself,” verse 4) and into His protection and fatherly care (“I bare you on eagles’ wings”), He is “the Holy One,” “the Holy One of Israel.” The attribute of holiness is never ascribed to God in the entire Holy Scriptures except in connection with His Savior’s work, whether it be that in grace He saves or that in His displeasure He rejects and condemns. The holiness of the Lord is the very core of His appearance to the “glory of the Lord.” In this special appearance and also apart from it His “glory” designates His absolute majesty, wisdom, goodness, and dominion over the entire creation, Psalms 8 and 19, 66:1–8; 93:1–4; 97:1–7; 104, 113, while His “holiness” or His “holy name,” as it is expressly mentioned in Psalm 99:3; 105:3, always has as its basis His saving work.

From this holiness of His essence and work, those people whom He has chosen before others as His own possession have the names “holy nation,” “His saints,” and “the communion of saints.” He has made them holy and has bought them as His own through the covenant blood of Jesus Christ. By Him they have been “washed ... sanctified ... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” I Corinthians 6:11. “Christ ... loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish,” Ephesians 5, compare Colossians 1.

This begins to materialize for the children of Israel at Sinai. The Lord, who has chosen this nation as His precious treasure forever, is holy, the one Holy One; therefore the nation which is to have fellowship with Him forever must also be made holy.

The earthly picture of this holiness of the Lord and His saints is light. He covers Himself with light as with a garment, see Psalm 104:2. Habakkuk sees the Lord as He comes from the south; he sees the Holy One as He comes from Mount Paran and says: “His brightness was as the light; bright beams went out of his hand,” chapter 3:4 (Luther’s translation). As the Redeemer of His people He is the Light of Israel, Isaiah 10:17, and the Light of the Gentiles, 42:6, 49:6, and often. The Lord Jesus calls Himself the Light of the World, John 8:12, 12:46. I John 1:5 calls God a Light in whom there is no darkness. But also his believers, as holy persons, are in their word and conduct the Light of the World, Matthew 5:14; II Corinthians 6:14; Ephesians 5:8, 9; Philemon 2:15. Likewise Ezekiel describes the form of the “glory of the Lord” as a great cloud full of fire that shone round about, and in the middle of this fire it was very bright. In this way he points to holiness as the very core of the appearance. Out of this arises still another aspect of the concept “holy nation” as it is ascribed to the royal priesthood that the Lord has taken as His own possession. It is connected with the name “the holy One of Israel” which appears already in Psalms 78 and 89, and then in the Prophet Isaiah as the standard designation of the Lord in the mutual relationship of grace between Him and His covenant associate Israel. He has linked Himself together with Israel “for better, for worse” against all of His and their enemies inside and outside of Israel’s territorial domain and dominion. “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee,” Genesis 12:3. “Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward,” 15:1. “Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies,” 22:17. For this reason after the chapters of blessing in Isaiah (9–12) there follow in chapters 13–23 the prophecies of destruction for all the nations who are hostile to Israel, and in chapter 24 the prophecy of the destruction of the apostate city. For this reason Moses, already in Deuteronomy 4 and 32, sets before the nation all the curses that will come upon them if they break the covenant made with the Lord. All the prophets are full of the severest threats against faithless priests, godless kings, and false prophets in their own nation—all this in order to protect His peculiar people. “He kept him as the apple of his eye,” Deuteronomy 32:10ff. “He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproveth kings for their sakes,” Psalm 105:14. And every enemy is told what is written in verse 15: “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” As this applies to the patriarchs, so it applies also to the entire people which He has drawn to Himself on the basis of the covenant with Abraham; it applies to it as a whole and in its individual members, insofar as they stand and remain in the Lord’s covenant; also now and for all times it applies to every New Testament Christian. In Isaiah 43:3,4 we read: “I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.” Promises like these, if not in the same words, fill the entire

Scriptures, the New as well as the Old Testament. We stand with Abraham under the same Shield protected against all enemies. Whoever hates, insults, slanders, or attacks us must deal with God who has accepted us into His grace. As His own we are holy, sacred, inviolable.

From the above it follows of itself that we on our part should be holy in all our life and work. “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness,” I Thessalonians 4:7. “He hath chosen us ... that we should be holy and without blame before him,” Ephesians 1:4. “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” I Peter 1:15f. Now not to be holy but to walk according to the lust of the flesh, after God by His grace has washed us clean and made us to be His saints, would mean treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace, Hebrews 10:29. For anyone who acts in this way, the grace of God becomes the reason for his damnation.

At the close of verse 6 we read: “These are the words thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.” In the above words God had set forth the basis, content, and demand of the covenant which was to be ratified, and had commanded Moses to lay these before the elders of the nation. Moses did this and brought the consent of the entire nation back to the Lord. Verse 9 then tells us: “And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud (in the thickness of the cloud) that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever.” We are thereby told that the Lord would speak personally with the nation in the same way as He had just spoken with Moses, namely out of the darkness of the cloud which hid the “glory of the Lord”—the fire and the brilliancy of light—from human eyes. They were not to see the Lord even in this reflected splendor of His essence, but were rather to hear His divine voice and from this recognize Him as the Lord and believe Him. This foreshows the method and way in which He wishes to work faith in the hearts of men. “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed,” John 20:29. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (through that which is spoken of God).” It is one of the most important teachings of Scripture which none of the apostolic and later church fathers since the time of the apostles has recognized in the same depth and clarity and asserted and written into the confessions of the Church as has Luther: “That God grants His Spirit or grace to no one except through or with the preceding outward Word,” Smalcald Articles, Part III, Art. VIII:3. Compare the article in its entire exposition.

From the time of Paradise to the present day God has revealed His counsel of salvation in no other way than through human speech, language, words, and concepts. True, He uses for a presentation of these things also symbolical manifestations such as the “glory of the Lord,” dreams, visions; but these remain uncertain unless the Word of God spoken or written by God in human language is added. Human speech, taken by God into His mouth, first makes intelligible, clear, and certain for us humans the picture seen by the eyes of the body or spirit. Jacob rejects indignantly Joseph’s dream about the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowing down before him, as long as Joseph cannot present a divine Word interpreting the dream. The Scriptures warn against those who vaporize concerning the things of God. Even through Balaam’s ass God or His angel must first speak in human speech before Balaam understands what he is to do. The Prophet Isaiah’s vision (chapter 6) first became clear to him through the spoken Word of God; and when Paul (II Corinthians 12) mentions that he was “caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful (margin, possible) for a man to utter,” these words benefited him, indeed. However he could not share them with us because he was not permitted, neither was he able, to express them in human speech. He rejected speaking with unknown tongues as long as this was not accompanied by interpretation for the natural human understanding, *νοῦς, φρένες*, by means of clear, unambiguous human speech, I Corinthians 14. Compare the picture used in I Corinthians 13 regarding clear or unclear melodies and signals of dead instruments. As upon an external foundation laid by God Himself—namely upon the grammatical-rhetorical clearness of the spoken or written Word of God—so all our knowledge and certainty of salvation, our entire faith and sanctification, the entire comfort and strength of Christians in distress and death, and the entire unity of the Church rests upon this human basis. It lives completely and solely on the Word of God comprehended in human speech. All appearances affecting the senses, even the *כְּבוֹד יְהוָה*, all signs and wonders can and should only strengthen and confirm the mental

impression that the spoken human word is in fact the Word of the almighty God—this to comfort the believers and to deprive the unbelievers and the disobedient of any excuse.

God has placed the spiritual power unto faith, unto conversion, and unto sanctification only in the human word spoken or written by Him. They are indeed words of human language and speech to which God adapts in order to be understood and accessible. However, the sense of the words, the thoughts, the counsel, the plan of salvation with its great Center, Christ, and with all details—all these are exclusively of God. It is as far above all human thoughts as heaven is above the earth; yes, it is to all Jews a stumbling block and to all Greeks foolishness, I Corinthians 1. It is the mysterious, hidden wisdom of God, which God ordained before the world unto our glory. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,” I Corinthians 2 and Isaiah 64. This Word is the power of God unto salvation, God’s fire, and God’s hammer (Jeremiah 23), “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” Hebrews 4. “It shall not return unto me void,” Isaiah 55. God has determined, it shall be so and has put His Spirit into the Word. For this reason it prospers in the thing whereto He sends it. For this reason we are absolutely bound to it.

Here in connection with Exodus 19:9 the promise that God would come to Moses in the thick cloud and would personally speak to the people had the additional purpose of certifying Moses before the people once and for all as His servant and the mediator appointed by Him, so that they would always believe him. In the same way the divine certification of the call issued to us by the Church lies not in signs and wonders, but rather in this that we permit God to speak through us.

Moses is now bidden to sanctify and prepare the people for the third day when God Himself will speak to them. He makes a fence around the mountain so that none of the people may touch it. They are to wash their clothes and keep away from their wives and wait for the appearance of the Lord.

As the morning of the great day came, “there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick (כֶּבֶד) cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud.” Particularly created for this purpose, this was a natural thunderstorm except that the thunder (קולות) and lightning (בִּרְקִים) were exceedingly strong. To this was added the particularly threatening black cloud that towered over the mountain and the shrill blast of a very loud trumpet. This blast of the trumpet is used later under varying circumstances: particularly for the announcing of the year of Jubilee and other festivals, then as war and battle signals, then in Matthew 24, I Corinthians 15, and I Thessalonians 4 as the trumpet of the judgment. (Compare the trumpets of the seven angels in the book of Revelation). Here it obviously had the purpose of strengthening the effects of fear and horror produced by the rising storm and was to call the nation together before the mountain. “All the people that were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount,” vs. 16,17.

These appearances were not yet the actual “glory of the Lord,” but were merely the majestic announcement of His coming, indicating the coming revelation of God as a most earnest matter. The appearance of the “glory of the Lord” is reported for the first time in verse 18 in the form, “Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire.” The fire, the light, the brightness is the actual picture of the glory of God. With the appearance of the Lord in the fire the accompanying signs of horror become stronger. Over the mountain are lightning and thunder and thick towering clouds. As if kindled by the fire in which the Lord descended, the clouds of smoke from the entire mountain roll toward heaven like the very thick smoke of a chimney (smelting furnace). The entire mountain shook as though it would fall apart. It seemed as though heaven and earth would be fused together and turned again to chaos. The sound of the trumpet became louder and louder, obviously in order to intensify the horror that had gripped the hearts of the people.

Verse 19 tells us further, “Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.” Moses knows that he is God’s mediator for the people; still he is himself completely terrified by the frightening events. He does not know how and at what moment he should intervene and asks for guidance from God. The answer is given him, not while God is descending, but only after the Lord has arrived on the peak of the mount. He then calls Moses



up to the top of the mount in order to tell him that he should once more warn the people most sharply against breaking through to the Lord. Moses was amazed because the first command had already made this impossible. But the repetition of this command is entirely consistent with all the matters here recorded. The Lord wishes to ratify His covenant with the people. He wishes to proclaim this law of the covenant, the keeping of which is decreed for them as individuals and as a nation, proclaim it with His own divine voice in their own ears in words which they understand. The covenant is to be holy and inviolable for them in every detail. But the Lord knows well how disobedient, unstable and stiff-necked they are. He knows in advance how soon and how often they will break the covenant. He therefore uses all these means that instill fear and trembling in order to guard them against transgression and destruction. For this reason we read in chapter 20:18–20: “All the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.” All these appearances, all the preparations of the people (19:10–15) are to impress on their hearts the holiness of God as their God of grace, the dreadful seriousness of His commandments, the zeal of the Lord (20:5–7) for His Word and His honor, so that they may be holy because He is holy. For this reason also the decree that the priests as well as the people are forbidden to break through to come up unto the Lord “lest He shatter them.” (Luther’s translation.) Only Moses and Aaron are to come up.

From this it becomes clear why in the ratification of the covenant the Lord or the “glory of the Lord” appears in such a terrifying form just in connection with the proclamation of the law of the covenant. We never again find it in this form in the history of Israel, and certainly not in the New Testament history. Here in the beginning the people whom God has taken to Himself out of grace for the sake of Abraham, in order to carry out for the entire world His great thoughts of salvation should learn to know, ahead of everything else, His frightening and menacing appearance. They must learn this because they are spiritually minor, ill-behaved, unruly, stiff-necked children, who could not be held in bounds except by an iron law and a constant threat of punishment. They must indeed learn to know God already now as the God of all grace and mercy; but the fullness of His glorious grace, as it is pictured in the **פְּבוֹד יְהוָה**, dawns on them only after they have experienced the glory of God’s law in their hearts. Only then, in chapter 24, after the giving of the Law, do we hear of this.

### III

*(Translation by John Schaadt and Carl Lawrenz)*

The appearance of the Glory of the Lord at the promulgation of the Covenant Law at Sinai is, when compared with the earlier appearances, purposely unprecedented in its terrifying effect for the people which indeed had already been received unto grace, and which as the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel lay so near to God’s heart. With a strong arm He had rescued it from the tyranny of Pharaoh, had borne it ever since on eagle’s wings, had supplied it wonderfully with food and drink, had just crowned it with victory over Amalek, and was now preparing to make it the most glorious people on earth, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, His own prized possession. Through the solemn ratification of a covenant He now meant to place it into His strong and gracious arm as a precious **סֵפֶר**, to be guarded with anxious care, that He might fulfill all the Abrahamic promises upon this people and execute His plan of salvation for all nations as comprehended in Christ, the seed of Abraham **κατ’ ἐχθξέν**. This was indeed a father and child relationship between the Lord and Israel.

Why, then, such terrifying signs just at this gracious ratification of the covenant? We find the answer first in the words of the Lord, Exod. 32:9: “I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people.” From this time on (idolatry with the Golden Calf) the expression extends as a characteristic national trait of Israel through the entire Old Testament, even to Acts 7:51 and 17:5, and is repeated almost countless times in similar expressions. In consequence of this national failing Israel finally perished, Matt. 23:37, Luke 19:41–44.

It is very noteworthy, however, that in Exod. 34:9 Moses also pleads this trait of the people before God as a reason for further bestowal of grace and forgiveness of sins. In spite of the stiff-neckedness of the people the Lord is personally to go with Israel that He might continually forgive its offenses, עֲוֹנוֹתָי and transgressions,

אֲנִי־אֶחְסֶה in contrast to the threat of 33:3, “lest I consume thee in the way.” Compare here the words concerning the patience of God over against the evil imagination of the human heart, Gen. 8:21. The Lord through His grace has adopted this people as His children in spite of the fact that He knew them to be stiff-necked; now, if His plan is to succeed, He must also have patience with them as a father with a stiff-necked son. And the Lord says “Yea” and “Amen” to this, 33:14–17, and carries it out—of course, with the reservation of 32:34, “in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.” The ratification of the covenant has such terrifying signs accompanying the grace-assuring “Glory of the Lord” for the reason that “God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not,” 20:20, as Moses by way of comfort tells the trembling people.

We emphasize this point so strongly because the proper understanding of the covenant ratified with Israel at Sinai, of the Old Testament economy of salvation in general, yes of the entire history of Israel, depends on the recognition of this very fact that the Lord in this covenant is dealing with the people of Israel as His dear children who stand in His grace. The economy of the Old Testament is often contrasted as the economy of the Law with that of the New Testament as the economy of the Gospel. If one bears in mind that an external church organization is here at the same time involved, this has its justification, but only to a limited extent; namely, in this respect that the children of the Old Testament covenant, as children still immature in understanding, faith, and sanctification, had to be kept under much stricter outward discipline than this is required for the mature children of the New Covenant, Gal. 4:1–7. Hence we have the entire Sinaitic legislation beginning with the basic ten commandments and extending through the “judgments”—the fundamentals of the theocratic constitution—as we find them recorded in chapters 21–24:2 and later repeated at the renewal of the covenant in 34–35:3, together with the most precise and minute regulations concerning the building of the tabernacle and the service of God, which fill chapters 25–31 in their entirety and 34 and 35 in part. Later, revisions and amplifications of the regulations are added for the conditions in the promised land which is to be conquered. All this, because they were indeed children who had been received unto grace, but still untrained children, whose outward position under the Law did not differ from that of a servant, Gal. 4:1–3. Hence we have on the other hand also the much quicker, more frequent, and more severe intervention of the Lord with external punishment as soon as their stiff-neckedness asserted itself in a manner that jeopardized God’s plans. Thus the entire Law with all its external ordinances became for them a custodian unto Christ.

This does not apply to us children of the New Covenant. Through faith in the Christ who appeared we have become mature children. God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son,” Gal. 4:6–7. The New Testament Church, having become mature, no longer has a single item of divinely prescribed external polity, even if one looks at the Church in its external form, “as it appears in the world.” It has only gifts: the Gospel and the Sacraments with the commission to administer them rightly; and for this it again has only gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, teachers, chaplains, schoolmasters, and sextons,<sup>4</sup> who are to administer their offices faithfully. This is God’s universal Moral Law, given to all stewards, I Cor. 4:2. Yet its external organization in external confessional and working units, in local congregations and parishes, synods, state and national churches, is not by divine institution but the result of the free work of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel in the hearts of the believers and free adaptation to external conditions, in practice unfortunately always impaired anew by the sin that is in us.

<sup>4</sup> A quotation from the *Kirchenordnung für Kursachsen* of 1580 may serve in reminding us of what belonged to the office of the sexton or sacristan in the church of the Reformation: “Afterwards each sacristan shall be obliged on Sunday afternoons and also in the week, upon a certain day, to teach the children the Catechism and Christian German hymns of Dr. Luther and afterwards to examine them about the sections of the Catechism that were taught them. And where one or more congregations belong to the parish he shall alternate in such instruction under the direction of his pastor that the youth in all the villages may be instructed in the Catechism.”

Since, however, the external organization of the Church in the Old Testament as well as in the New really has to do with children of God—there with minors, here with mature children; there with the stiff-necked, here as far as they themselves are concerned, also with such; there intermingled with evil persons, and here likewise—there is therefore, except in the aforementioned points, no essential difference between God’s economy of salvation in the Old Covenant and that in the New, either in the application of the Law or of the Gospel. The children of the Old Covenant, even as we of the New, had to be brought up for the kingdom of heaven through Law and Gospel, and we have to as much as they, because we have essentially the same Old Adam that they had. According to the Spirit the devout of the Old Covenant walked in the Old Testament laws and ordinances with the same freedom and joy, as do the devout of the New Testament in all the commandments of God. Compare Ps. 119. According to the Old Adam they suffered under these ordinances as under a heavy burden and sighed for the coming of help out of Zion, even as we suffer under the imperfections of our external church forms and long to be freed from them unto the perfect liberty of the children of God. The godless in the New Testament Church rebel against divine and human order just as those in the Old Testament Church did. Finally everything in the Old Covenant as in the New, Law as well as Gospel, punishment as well as blessing, is meant for the dear children of God.

We see this particularly by the tone in which the Law is given, chapter 20. It is God who speaks the ten “words.”<sup>5</sup> And the first “word”<sup>6</sup> which goes forth from His mouth is a confirmation of His relationship of grace and fatherhood with the people. “I am the Lord (Jehovah) thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” There is no purer, more affectionate Gospel in the entire Scriptures than just these words. They are based on chapter 3:13–17. There we have the etymological meaning of the name Jehovah: The Only, Eternal, Unchangeable One (compare Heb. 13:8; Rev. 1:17, 18; Rom. 9:5; I John 5:20 as application). This designation of Himself He ties up with the historic designation “the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” and adds, “this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.” This is the God of all grace in Christ, the God of the promise of grace and of the covenant of grace with the seed of Abraham from the midst of Israel and all nations, as this covenant is set forth in Genesis from chapter 12 to the end. As this God of grace He pledges Himself to the people not only before the deliverance from Egypt, often in a fundamental way like here (Exodus 3) and particularly in chapter 6:2–7, but throughout the history of Israel. The particular mention of the very recent deliverance out of the Egyptian house of bondage—as an addition to the words, “I am the Lord (Jehovah) thy God”—is to be nothing else than a factual proof that God has already shown Himself mightily as the gracious God of Israel. Similarly, the threefold repetition of “the Lord thy God,” in the midst of the promulgation of the Ten Commandments (verses 5, 7, and 12), shows throughout the fatherly tone in the giving of the Law. Next to the twofold threat of punishment in verses 5 and 7 the threefold promise of blessing asserts itself in verses 6, 11, and 12.

As we look at the repetition of the Law in Deuteronomy, particularly in chapters 4–11:5, the fatherly heart of God, out of which the legislation in its entirety flowed, meets us there in a way that is positively overwhelming. Just compare chapter 7:9, 10: “Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth *covenant* and *mercy* (hendiadys) with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them, etc.” Words like those in chapter 5:29: “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever”—or 33:3: “Yea, he loved the people,” and verse 16: “May the grace of him that dwelt in the bush come upon the head of Joseph (Luther),” leave no doubt that the Lord speaks in the Ten Commandments and in the entire legislation as the

<sup>5</sup> This has often been contested. The apparent lack of connection between 20:1 and the end of chapter 19 gives occasion for this. Deuteronomy 4 and 5 and many occasional remarks up to chapter 10 leave no doubt, however, that the Lord in His own person spoke with human voice and in human language to Moses and the people—intelligibly to all. This follows clearly also from 20:19, 20; and the repetition of the self-designation of God, verse 2, in verses 5, 7, and 12 raises the matter above any doubt for all who believe the Scriptures.

<sup>6</sup> On the basis of Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4, and other passages the Jews count verse 2 as the first of the ten “words” or commandments of the covenant.

God of grace to His dear children, whom He wishes to warn by means of threats against apostasy and sin and by means of promises invite and constrain to the fear of God and pious conduct.

In view of all the grace out of which the legislation at Sinai as well as the Lord's previous and subsequent miracles of kindness toward Israel had flowed, Moses cries out, Deut. 33:29: "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!" In the same tone Ps. 147:19,20 declares: "He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them." Compare Ps. 103:7.

To summarize: The Sinaitic legislation even as all later legislation does not have the import that through obedience to it Israel should first be justified before God, pardoned, and received into His sonship, but rather that as people who were already justified, pardoned, and received into His sonship through the Abrahamic covenant of grace they were now also to walk thankfully and faithfully in the gracious ways of their gracious God. The Law from Sinai had exactly that import which the Formula of Concord calls the third use of the Law—the *tertius usus legis*.

Thereby both other "uses" of the Law are not excluded: "First, that thereby outward discipline might be maintained against wild, disobedient men; ... secondly, that men thereby may be led to the knowledge of their sins," Formula of Concord, Epitome, VI, 1 (*Triglotta*, page 805). For the Lord made the covenant at Sinai with the entire physical seed of Abraham and Sarah. This seed had grown into a large people in Egypt. God had led it out of Egypt, and it was to be kept intact as a people until the one Seed, Christ, would come, even though it included much spurious seed, godless persons. According to God's plans Israel also had to become a nation, a theocratic nation (a theocracy), which held this people of Abraham together in an outward way. And to the godless in Israel the Law applied as a matter of course also according to the first use. The second use applied to the godless as well as the pious, to the latter insofar as they also had sin clinging to them. By all means, however, we must hold fast to this that the Law of Sinai, and the Sinaitic Covenant based on it, was meant in the first place for the pious seed of Abraham, God's dear children. For it was founded on God's covenant of grace with Abraham, which once and for all clearly revealed God's eternal and universal counsel of salvation regarding all nations and all individuals. There is but one, and it is always essentially the same for all sinners, be they Jews or Gentiles or what have you. God's will always stays the same, His holy will as well as His gracious will, His Law as well as His Gospel. When we speak of different uses of the Law, it is not as though they lay inherent in the nature of the Law, but rather in the different or similar nature of the people whom the Law, which in itself always remains the same, faces. This lies already in the word "use," which, after all, implies nothing else than a practical application to or through a person, which God *a posteriori* either desires or does not desire to be made because the one person is constituted this way, the other another way. But that which lies in the Law itself, applies to all men in like manner. For all sinners without exception it is a curb, a mirror, and a rule. It is the same way with the Gospel. It preaches grace to all men without any distinction, whether they accept it or reject it, to the godless in spite of their godlessness, and to the pious in spite of their piety. It is only the varied use of the same that makes the difference in the subsequent judgment of God, Mark 16:15, 16, while its *a priori* purpose and its inherent efficacy is never anything else than God's power to save. So the legislation on Sinai with all its commandments and all its gracious and threatening phenomena was meant for all the people without exception, the godless and the pious. God's heart was the same toward all as the heart of Jehovah, of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," Exod. 34:6. It was not meant thus, that the appearance of the "Glory of the Lord" was intended only for the pious and the attendant threatening phenomena for the wicked, but both were meant for both. That the one group made a false use, while the other a proper use of both phenomena determined their dissimilar fate.

What we would like to establish clearly in connection with God's revelation at Sinai, in view of the unique appearance of the "Glory of the Lord" in such an earnest and threatening framework, is the fact that grace is the real and only principle and—*sit venia verbo*—leitmotiv of all of God's dealings in the Church and world—if one will understand this aright.

We know only a revealed God. Insofar as He is a hidden God He does not concern us. And the revealed God is always and with all people and under all circumstances the same. He tells us that in Exod. 3:14: “I am that I am,” or “I shall be that I shall be,” or “I shall be that I am,” or “I am that I shall be.” These words, from which the name Jehovah is formed, express the eternal and unchangeable nature of the divine essence, of the absolute Being; I am the true God. And the historical designation given to this true God, “the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,” characterizes Him as the God of grace, as nothing else. The eternal, unchangeable God is the God of grace; and that not just since Abraham, but also from everlasting to everlasting. He never was anything else and is not now and never will be. He was the God of grace before all time and is this during all time and will be this at the end of all time and after all time. This is also what is expressed in the word of Heb. 13:8: “Jesus Christ (Luther: ‘And there’s none other God!’), the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” God is primarily and essentially not a God of wrath but exclusively a God of infinite grace, even as He proclaims Himself as such in Exod. 34:6. We human beings through our defection have turned His grace into wrath for ourselves, without this grace in itself becoming anything else. God has set up His grace as the eternally fixed “judgment” and “law” in His kingdom, through His servant Jesus Christ, Isa. 42:1–4; and this also in His government of the world. This “judgment,” this “law” of grace reaches as far as the heavens, and His truth unto the clouds, Ps. 36:5; 57:10; 108:4, and rules until man in his defection neutralizes its dominion. There would be no wrath and no punishment in God’s great creation if previously there had been no love, goodness, and grace of God. At first God approaches every person exclusively in goodness and grace, also the sinner in spite of his sin. Even his commandments for sinful men are in themselves, like the commandment or prohibition in Paradise, pure goodness and grace, power and Spirit, Rom. 7:7ff. Only sin, the flesh in man, makes the Law “weak,” impotent, and turns that which was given to us for life into something that brings death, *ibid.* and chapter 8:3. Only the rejection of grace on our part changes it for us into wrath and perdition.<sup>7</sup>

Grace—Jesus Christ and His Congregation—was before all time the first thought and plan of God (Col. 1, John 1, Heb. 1, Rev. 1), the alpha and omega of all His ways. Out of grace, in grace, unto grace God created the world—as the sphere of dominion for man whom He was to create. Out of grace He created man in His image and placed him as His sovereign representative (*Untergott*) over the earth. Out of grace He placed him into Paradise and forbade him the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Only upon sin against this grace, came—not wrath—but first the gracious promise of the woman’s Seed and then the curse upon the sinner’s

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<sup>7</sup> No understanding person will consider this a mixture of Law and Gospel. When Paul sets Law and Gospel, grace and wrath, over against each other as antipodes, he is solely concerned with the justification of man who is fallen from grace and guilty of wrath, concerned with his reinstatement into grace. Justification does not come about through works of the Law that the unspiritual man does, neither through remorse, “repentance,” or improvements that are self-made. We Christians need to know that *grace cannot be earned* by us human beings who are antagonistic to grace. And this in the first place, because the very desire to earn grace is itself really nothing else than a rejection of grace. For works and grace are conceptual and moral opposites and exclude one another, Rom. 11:6. In the second place, this is also true for the reason that between grace and him who is to be justified there is no room at all for the earning of grace. For before any earning or desire of earning on his part grace is already there for him who is to be made righteous. It amounts to the same thing. Whoever wants to earn grace denies that it is present before his works; he makes God into a God who is by nature harsh and cruel, and turns the Savior-God, who without distinction and without any condition invites all those who labor and are heavy-laden unto Himself, into a liar. Yet He is not a liar; He is the Truth and the Life. He did not come that He might condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved, John 3:17. God is never called wrath in Scripture; but Scripture does say, “God is love,” I John 4:16. He is merciful and gracious and longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, Exod. 34:6, and abideth faithful, and cannot deny Himself, II Tim. 2:13. If we are judged and ultimately damned, it is not because the gracious God has changed Himself into a wrathful God—no: I am that I am, and shall be that I am—Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever, Heb. 13:8—but we ourselves have prepared and fully earned judgment and damnation for ourselves because we did not want to be saved by grace. Grace was as close to us as our skin, yes, through the Word it was in our ears, our mouth, and in our heart, Rom. 10:8. We inhale it with the air that surrounds us; it fills heaven and earth, Ps. 108:4. It is as omnipresent as God, as Jesus Christ Himself. It goes after us and seeks us; it thrusts itself upon us and does not depart from us, just so that we do not turn our backs to it, but turn ourselves directly to it. It accomplishes everything alone. The Glory of the Lord clothes itself in a flashing fire and lightning and thunder and in the sound of a loud trumpet when it is meant to frighten, to impress hearts and minds with its inviolability, and to warn against apostasy; and it is enthroned in the serene splendor of heaven when it is meant to comfort and to strengthen. “His mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations,” Ps. 100:5. It says to everyone who seeks grace: Here I am, just believe!

earthly existence and his future dwelling place as a gracious cross, which as a constantly effective Law was to drive him to Christ because of his sinful depravity. And while this curse becomes for those who are enjoying grace through faith a blessing unto grace, the *despised grace* brings about the rejection and damnation of the Cainites. And so proceeds the subsequent history: Ever again new grace and only then, because of the grace that is despised, the rejection of generations—not because of their transgression of the Law, for in the eternal seed of the woman Jesus Christ, who in the future was to appear in the flesh, their transgression was indeed not charged against the sinners, but already forgiven from eternity. Grace for Noah and his family, patience and time of grace for the rest of the people, and then the Flood, because they no longer wanted the Spirit of grace to rule among them. Likewise we see grace toward the Noachids and then their rejection because of their despising of grace. New grace toward Israel in Egypt and at Sinai and the ultimate rejection of Israel—why? “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets . . . how often . . . *and ye would not!* Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,” Matt. 23. All prophets since Moses and the ratification of the covenant at Sinai proclaim to Israel their old God in His old grace, no new God with a different disposition from the one in which He revealed Himself to father Abraham; they come to Israel in no other way than in the name of Him who revealed Himself to the chosen nation through Moses by the name Jehovah—“the Lord.” Their credentials and their message was at all times and on all occasions “thus saith the Lord,” “the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,” “the Lord hath spoken,” “hear the word of the Lord.” This was the old name of the God of grace, who did not abandon His prized possession upon which He had lavished His grace until this people incurably hardened itself against the grace which was thrust upon it with ever greater richness and urgency. And each new revelation in Israel was a new demonstration of grace in promise, command, admonition, warning, threat, and invitation. He who in concisely summarized words wants to learn to know the fundamental law that is observed by the revealed God in His rule on earth, merely needs to move the beginning and the close of the book of Isaiah together: “I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me (their God of grace)” —“their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

And this same rule “the Lord” has observed in the New Covenant: New grace—rejection because of the despising of grace. John the Baptist, the incarnate Lord (Jehovah) Himself, and the Apostles—hardening of hearts against grace on the part of the Jews and then—Titus. And we point here to the familiar word of Luther concerning Word and grace as “a passing rainstorm, which does not return where it has once been,” in his writing: *To the Councilmen of all Cities in Germany that they Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*, St. Louis Edition, X 464, par. 10. He wrote the words as an earnest warning to his German brethren in the faith because contempt of the grace that he preached was spreading like a flood. “And you Germans must not think you will have it for ever (the rainstorm of the Word and grace); for ingratitude and contempt will not suffer it to remain.” It happened that way, and had to happen that way. It has been said by the God of grace: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked,” Gal. 6:7. “Gone is gone.” In the Church they now have compromise with every sin and every type of unbelief, and in their country they have the “peace” of Versa files and the mutual attrition of the parties like the Jews in Jerusalem during the siege of the Romans. The saying applies to our Church in America likewise, and to our country. We have now had the rainstorm of the Word of grace for almost a hundred years. Ingratitude and contempt, the sin against grace is rapidly advancing and will not let it stay. The “Glory of the Lord,” Jesus Christ, still shines for us in the heavenly brightness of the pure Word. But this Glory is encompassed for us today and always as at Sinai with its threatening signs for a warning “that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.” Indeed, it has not yet come to be Ichabod, for the Ark of testimony, the pure Word of grace, has not yet been taken from us. But if the despising of grace cannot be checked, then—as truly as God’s Word is the Word of grace—the universal rule of the kingdom of God will be fulfilled also upon us: “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations; and then shall the end come,” Matt. 24:14. This is what the special form of the “Glory of the Lord” at Sinai preaches to us.

#### IV

(Translation by John Schaadt and Carl Lawrenz)

“And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness ... also they saw God, and did eat and drink.” *Exod. 24:10,11.*

We return now to several very significant phenomena of the “glory of the Lord” at Sinai.

After the Lord amid those terrifying signs had with His own voice proclaimed the Ten Commandments as the basic law of the covenant which was to be ratified with the people, “Moses”—Aaron with him, 19:24—“renewed near unto the thick darkness where God was,” out of which the Lord had spoken to the people, 19:9,16,18. What Moses there received we read in 20:22–26 and in the following chapters 21–23, to the last of which belong the first two verses of chapter 24. The words in 20:22–26 are of a very general nature, valid for all future time, but refer also to the altar which was immediately to be built by Moses for the ratification of the covenant, 24:4ff. The *מִשְׁפָּטִים* recorded in chapters 22–24:2 are the basic laws of Israel’s national organization—the constitution, as we would say. They begin with the general manner in which the Lord wishes to be worshipped by Israel, treat in 21:1–23:13 of the conduct of the covenant people toward one another, teach in 23:14–19 the basic religious regulations including the three great festivals and sacrifices, and close with earnest warnings against infraction and with promises of blessing upon obedience.

Thereupon Moses came down to the people, told them all the words of the Lord, namely all these “judgments,” and immediately received the answer: “All the words which the Lord hath said will we do.” Then Moses wrote all the words of the Lord in a book, and so everything was ready for the formal *ratification of the covenant*. According to 24:1–11 it consisted of the following acts: 1. Moses builds an altar as the place of the Lord’s presence and, most likely around about it, places twelve pillars as a symbolical representation of the presence of the twelve tribes—a representation of the Lord and of Israel as the contracting parties of the covenant. 2. The presentation of burnt offerings and peace offerings of young steers, the former for the atonement (*Lev. 1:1–9*) or absolution of the people which was now to be received into the fellowship of the Holy One and which was to obligate itself to Him for holy service, the peace offering (*Lev. 3:1–3*) as an evidence of thankfulness for its reception into God’s fellowship. The blood of both offerings was in part thrown against the altar as a sign that now the entire life of those bringing the offerings belonged to the Lord in body and soul. 3. The public reading of the book of the covenant and the consent of the people, represented by the elders, to the demands and blessings of the book read to them. 4. The aspersion of the people, in the elders present, with the other half of the sacrificial blood as an actual cleansing from the guilt of sin and as a reception into God’s fellowship together with the gracious acceptance of the peace offering as a “sweet savor.” 5. *The covenant meal*, which followed in close relation to the peace offering.

In the peace offering the sacrificial animal was not wholly burnt, as was the case in the burnt offering (*Lev. 1:9*), but only the inner fat portions (*Lev. 3:3–5; 9–11; 14–16*), while the breast and the right shoulder went to the priest, who, after the waving of the former and the proper preparation of both, could together with his family and household eat them also at other “clean” places than at the altar, *Lev. 10:13,14; Deut. 16:10f.*

It was very likely from the arrangement made on this occasion (24:1) for Moses and Aaron, the latter’s sons Nadab and Abihu, and the 70 elders of Israel that the later practice stemmed. They ascended into the darkness, which still lay upon the mount, up to the Lord in order to observe the covenant meal in His presence—here likewise acting as representatives of the entire people. Now the thick darkness of the cloud changed into pure light. We are told: “*And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.*” Literally the last sentence reads thus in Hebrew: “And under his feet (it was) like a structure of sapphire stone and like the very heavens in clearness (purity).” Here are noteworthy peculiarities. It seems strange, first of all, that it is not said in the usual way, “they saw the glory of the Lord,” but “they saw the God of Israel.” Yet this designation has its special basis in this that through the ratification of the covenant just enacted at the foot of the mountain, the Lord, Jehovah, had also formally and outwardly become the God of this people, which was physically descended from the beloved Jacob but which—like him—had now also become spiritual; as such it was now to be regarded and

treated by Him. There lay in the ratified covenant not only all the special grace promised to the seed of Abraham but also the full moral obligation of a truly spiritual conduct based on faith and heartfelt fear of God. It is furthermore noteworthy that the feet of the God of Israel are spoken of here, concerning which nothing is said in the previous appearances of the **כְּבוֹד יְהוָה**. The words indicate that this time the Lord appeared in the form of a man, as this is stated by implication in Isa. 6:1 and expressly in Ezek. 1:26 and Dan. 7:9 and 13. There are a great variety of opinions among the exegetes as to why the Lord here and now is not already described as appearing in full human form, but these are nothing more than conjectures. We can only establish with certainty that in the course of history from Abraham to Luke 2; Matt. 17; Acts 7:55; 9:3ff; and the Revelation of St. John, the form of the **כְּבוֹד יְהוָה** becomes ever clearer and richer, as does the revelation of Christ on the whole.

The “structure of sapphire stone” under the feet of the God of Israel is conceived by the exegetes as a floor of sapphire stones, artfully pieced together, *representing the floor of the expanse of heaven*, as Ezek. 1:26 describes it, except that it there appears as borne by the four “creatures” or cherubim, vs. 22–25. Finally the color—the *sapphire or celestial blue*—is not to be ignored. It is the color of the *gracious majesty of God*, before which every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, Phil. 2:10. Therefore only the rulers and the high priest as the highest representatives of God on earth were permitted to wear it in their official robes. To visualize it properly, one must, however, picture the deep and at the same time brilliant blue of the southern sky. The Hebrew expression **לְטָהַר** “in clearness” does not seem very appropriate for this. It is inclined to turn the blue into a pale blue for us, because the sky looks that way to us. That is not what is meant, however. It is to depict the blue, though a deep blue, as transparent, lucid, brilliant, and radiant, because it here describes neither the deep blue of the royal and high-priestly robe nor the dull purple-blue in the “curtains” (hangings) of the Tabernacle (Luther: “*gel*,” *gelb*), Exod. 26:1–2—in other words as it is found in earthly things—but it symbolizes the very majesty of God.

God Himself was here present in His infinite majesty and in the serenity of His grace for the representatives of the congregation of Israel which had now been received into His divine fellowship, and let them behold, perceive, and apprehend Him—not indeed in His essential form as God, which Moses sought to behold, Exod. 33:18, but still in the radiant, dark blue of His no longer consuming but beatifying majesty. This beholding is a picture and an example of the heartfelt bliss, of the ineffable peace of God, which the majestic God, personally reconciled to the sinner, is wont to pour out into our soul, when He brings us to the conscious certainty of our state of grace—of which the faith of the saints in the Old Testament and New Testament Scripture, the Psalter, and our church hymns triumphantly sing and ring in the certainty of victory over all present sorrow and woe—a faint foretaste of eternal bliss and glory.

The next verse states: “And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand.” The Hebrew idiom **שָׁלַח יָד אֵל**, literally, “to send the hand toward some one,” means “to stretch out the hand against some one as an enemy,” here, to the destruction of the elders present. They, the sinners, saw the God of Israel with their physical eyes—even though only partially in the image of the footstool under His feet, yet still in an indescribable, heavenly indication of His personal essence, which without special protection would have consumed them as sinful, guilt-laden creatures just as well as the appearance of the glory of God which passed by Moses, 33:22.

This God did not permit to happen. The sentence itself is, however, a litotes and in its negative form expresses the positive counterpart in an emphatic manner and wants to say that the Lord stretched out His guarding and protective hand over the elders, so that they would not be consumed by the glory of the majesty revealed to them.

The end of the verse says, “*And when they had seen God, they ate and drank*” (Luther). For “God” we have **אֱלֹהִים** in conformity with the “God of Israel” in verse 10. Nevertheless it is Israel’s God, the Lord, He who is the Gracious One toward His chosen covenant people, but still the essential God, the absolute Divine Majesty.



The real statement of the verse is “they”—the elders of Israel—“ate and drank.” These few dry words contain a world, yes, a heaven of blessedness. For it was the eating and drinking in which the presentation of the peace offering culminated and had its real significance. With the burnt offering (עֹלָה) and the peace offering (שְׁלֵם), cereal and drink offerings were often connected (Lev. 2:6, 14ff.; 7:9ff; 7:29ff.), which gifts, together with those parts of the peace offering which were not to be burned, were to be eaten and drunk by the one offering, in fellowship with the priest as the servant of the Lord, either near the altar as the place of God’s presence or at another holy place where He had promised to be present. Thus the meal of the peace offering was to *portray the blessed fellowship of the one offering with the representative of God and with the Lord Himself*. But now it was no longer the offering as a deed and work of man, but the thing offered itself as the object of mutual enjoyment of the earthly and heavenly gifts and favors flowing to them from the fellowship of the reconciled God. The end and purpose of the meal of the peace offering was to *bless the participants in the enjoyment of the riches of the Kingdom of God*. In this sense the elders of Israel ate and drank the meal of the covenant offering here on the mount in the presence of the God.

Even as in general the appearance of the “glory of the Lord” in the form of the fiery brightness within a dark cloud portrayed the grace of the hidden God toward His chosen people, even as at the giving of the Law its form as fire in a thick smoke amidst thunder and lightning and the sound of a very loud trumpet signified, in a threatening and warning manner, the terrible earnestness of that grace, so here the appearance of Him who is enthroned over the clear and radiantly shining deep blue of heaven pictures the God of Israel in the serenity of the beatific majesty of His grace, which, even as once at the completion of creation, has come to a new Sabbath rest in winning lost mankind back for blessed fellowship with Him. In the heavenly reunion with those who had been lost through sin and in the restoration of the divine image in them the Savior activity of God has attained its goal. This appearance is a picture of the palingenesis of which the Lord Jesus speaks in Matt. 19:28 and Luke 22:30, and the Revelation of St. John in chapter 21:5. And the eating and drinking of this peace and fellowship meal points to the mysterious saying of the Lord recorded by three evangelists (Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; and Luke 22:18): “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” Just this appearance portrays in its totality the consummation of all things, the termination of the first creation, the new heavens and the new earth (Isa. 65 and 66; II Pet. 3), the new Jerusalem with its blessedness in the perfected fellowship of God, the tabernacle of God with men, when He shall dwell with them and they shall be His people, and He Himself, God with them, shall be their God and wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, nor any more pain, of which the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End of all things, says: “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely,” Rev. 21:1–6, and: “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life,” Rev. 22:14.

In the discussion of the covenant meal held at this manifestation of God one factor, however, needs special emphasis, a factor that is known to all of us but seldom fully appreciated. It is the factor of fellowship in the revelation of God Himself and of His plan of salvation, the idea of multiplicity in unity, respectively, of unity in multiplicity. This is not an incidental thought, but an essential factor in all of revelation, as it is so energetically expressed, for example, in the high-priestly prayer of the Lord, John 17. It is present already in the doctrine of God. God is one God, not three Gods, yet three independent persons in the One God, as though they were an association. And the fellowship within the essence of the three personalities shows itself as well as the unity in all the works of God. “What things soever (the Father) doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise,” John 5:19. But it is already a wonderful thought that the Triune God, who in the triad of His persons and the unity of His essence must surely be sufficient unto Himself and does not require any further fellowship, creates for Himself a heaven full of various kinds of angels and in addition a wonderful multiplicity of mundane, earthly beings, and enters into fellowship with them. In man He made Himself “an image that is like Him” (so Luther in Gen. 1:26), “in the image of God created he him,” in order to enter with him into a fellowship that is to last forever. Also the multifarious creature world constitutes a unity and fellowship within itself and with Him and man and under the dominion of the latter in a unique coherent order. And this fellowship is not just figurative,

but something real, inwardly cordial, and outwardly active. It is as though God in His solitude could not be blessed and complete, as though He must needs have creatures—angels, people, animals, heaven and earth with sun, moon, and countless stars—about Him in order to satisfy His heart, and must without ceasing be active in them and among them. He has created the social impulse in all creatures from angels and human beings, down to the atoms or as one now says in physics, protons and electrons. “It is not good that the man should be alone,” and now man seeks and finds his heart’s delight and his joy in the family, in the friendship and companionship of others, in fellowship with those who in one way or another are of one flesh and one mind with him. Hence arises the association of mankind according to every inward and outward relationship; hence also village, city, state, nation, and societies of the most diversified nature.

But that which concerns us most is the fellowship that God carries on with mankind. It begins with His personal intercourse with man in Paradise. Through sin man disturbs the intimacy of this fellowship, but he cannot entirely dissolve the bond itself that exists between God and him. Also the ground and what comes from it together with the entire physical creation suffers the curse with ultimate death, yet still remains the Lord’s until its transformation, energized and preserved by Him for His purposes. It is thus with the Cainites and the godless in general. Even hell with its inhabitants does not absolutely cease to exist. In a certain sense it is still true of all that is created: “In him we live, and move, and have our being.” The Scripture knows of no absolute annihilation of that which is created. It teaches the transformation of the nature of this world, the abolishment of sin, of sorrow, of death (cf. I Cor. 15:12–57; Rev. 21 and 22), but no termination of its existence. It teaches a “regeneration” of the creation (Matt. 19:28), new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17ff; 66:22; II Pet. 3:13), the resurrection of all the dead—not of all to eternal blessed life, but of all to eternal existence. And also the latter is possible only through maintaining something of an actual relationship with the Creator and Preserver of all things, out of which eternal torment flows for these, even as does eternal life out of His fellowship with the righteous, Matt. 25:46.

But the chief thing in God’s yearning for fellowship is the great mystery of godliness: “God is manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory,” I Tim. 3:16. Scripture most emphatically teaches the love, the kindness and gracious benevolence (philanthropy) of God our Savior, that in Christ God the eternal, incorporeal, pure Spirit enters into a personal union with human nature which is to last forever. God is now at the same time man “by nature” according to soul and body. The Spirit is now at the same time flesh, the Eternal temporal, the Omnipotent at the same time impotent, the Eternal Father a child, the entire human being in Him now “received into glory” forever! And in this most intimate—one might almost say essential—union with human nature He is the Mediator between God and the mass of humanity, which was indeed created in the likeness of God but which through free defection has in each individual become sinful, fleshly, detestable, and damnable.

Finally: “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church,” cf. Ephesians, Colossians 1, I Corinthians 12. He is the Head of the body, namely of the Church, He, by whom and to whom all things are created, yes, really all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, who is before all things and by whom all things consist, in whom according to the good pleasure of God all fullness should dwell, through whom all things in heaven and in earth should be reconciled unto Himself and are reconciled in that He made peace through His blood on the cross through Himself—who has now presented us to Himself holy and blameless and without rebuke through faith in Him, who has made known unto us the riches of the glory of this mystery which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God: Christ in us and the hope of our glory, who will also confirm us unto the end in His fellowship unto its blessed consummation in eternity as an imperishable congregation of saints.

All this is portrayed in this revelation of the “glory of the Lord” midway up Mount Sinai, as Moses describes it to us in Exod. 24:9–11. This is *Immanuel*, God again with us in the glory of His grace, and we, as such who have again been received into His blessed fellowship, enjoying the treasures of His grace in time and eternity. Nowhere is the Gospel more mysterious than in this point.

There is, however, also an earnest lesson and admonition for each individual Christian in this. Yes, even by virtue of creation we are each for himself an independent personality before God apart from our fellowmen.

But we do not stand in an exclusive private relationship to God. Even in the relationship arising from creation we form, with all such as we are, a fraternal family, a human *community*, by virtue of which we have become equal children of the same Father before God and partakers of the same benefits and the same fate, just as we are also inseparably united with them through the same sinful nature. Also simply as human beings who are all of one kind we constitute a brotherhood before God, the promotion of which is regulated by God in the Ten Commandments, a brotherhood which we dare never deny. “Hide not thyself from thine own flesh,” Isa. 58. If the world would even in a measure keep this relationship of social solidarity established through creation before its eyes—would let just a bit of social justice hold sway, it would not have come to our current “depression.” In the sinful presumption of absolute independence within mankind lie the real roots of the present calamity. “Who is my neighbor?” “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

We are each personally redeemed by Christ, justified and endowed with the Holy Ghost, but not alone, apart from one another. As such who are redeemed, pardoned, and sanctified, we together constitute the *congregation of God*, all members of the body of Christ, of which He is the Head, by one Spirit baptized into one body and given to drink into one Spirit, all equally partakers of the great universal saving benefits, even though each is specially endowed with particular gifts for service in the congregation, I Cor. 12, Eph. 4; one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above us all, and through us all, and in us all. No, we are not saved as lone individuals and apart from one another, but only in fellowship with one another, even though we are separated from each other in space by a thousand miles and in time by ten thousand years. There is no fellowship on earth that is so fully a unity as the communion of saints.

Out of this unity arises of itself, and on it is based—not the commandment of love of the neighbor, but rather—the special commandment of *Christian love of the brethren*, of which the Lord speaks so fervently in His final addresses in John, especially in chapter 17, and to which the three great apostles, Paul, Peter, and John, devote themselves so diligently throughout, and especially in the places already cited.

That is, however, also the thing in which Christendom of all times—one need only think of the Corinthians and Galatians—has been lacking, and in which the Church of the last times will especially be lacking. “Then shall many”—Christendom is under discussion—“be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another... And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many (Christians) shall wax cold. But he that shall endure (in faith and in love) unto the end, the same shall be saved,” Matt. 24:10, 12, 13. This is, of course, said of the circumstances amidst the last and most severe “depression” or need, which will come upon the Christendom of the last days; but the cooling of brotherly love, also aside from the minor depression of our time, is strongly noticeable in the Church of our day. And this constitutes a particular danger for the genuine Lutheran Church, which, in order that it may not allow purity of doctrine to waste away, is rightly a foe of all unionism, that is, of all false brotherly love, which in a spineless fear of cross-bearing and out of a superficial natural or calculated bonhomie permits any and every part of God’s Word to be trampled under foot by “brethren”; yet thereby it so readily falls a prey to ambition for personal honor, to a conceited satisfaction in its own prudence and piety, to a quiet pride in martyrdom or to a loquacious pride in outward success, but for the most part to the boast of unsurpassed orthodoxy, and according to experience gets involved in excessive exclusiveness in its contacts with fellow countrymen and fellow citizens, but especially over against unorthodox Christian Churches.—Still this last-mentioned point, which especially in its actual practice is such a sharp thorn in the eye for all those standing without, calls for a separate thorough treatment at some time. It is unavoidable that as individuals and as a fellowship we Christians separate ourselves from everything false and sinful in us, among us, and outside of us, or, as the situation demands, cleanse ourselves of it and put it away from us. The communion of saints cannot endure without constant discipline in doctrine and life; therefore every phase of modernistic unionism, pressing in upon us like a flood, must now as ever be and remain an abomination to us. On the other hand there is in these last times not a more pressing admonition for all orthodox Christians than this, that we walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love as one body and one spirit; and there is not a more earnest warning than this: “But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another,” Gal. 5:15.

And as it is true concerning our contacts with the civil world that we should not through false isolationism deprive ourselves of an evangelical influence on them, so it must always remain our greatest concern to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace with one another and, speaking the truth in love, to grow personally ever more fully into Him who is the head, namely, Christ, to the edifying and perfecting of His body, the congregation of God, which already here on Mount Zion, midway up the Mount of God, His heavenly kingdom, is called to the prerogative of enjoying the eternal benefits of his household in the serenity of the majesty of His grace.

## V

(Translation by John Schaadt and Carl Lawrenz)

*“I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.”* Exod. 33:18.

We return now to a discussion of the other principal appearances of the “glory of the Lord.”

After His appearance in the sapphire blue at the covenant meal (Exod. 24:9–11), the Lord called Moses to Himself on the top of the mountain in order to deliver to him “tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.” Thereupon Moses instructed the elders who had taken part in the covenant meal with him not to climb up the mountain with him, but rather to stay with the people and to assist Aaron and Hur in governing the people until he would return. Then he climbed up the mountain with his servant Joshua. What now follows in verses 15–18 in the text is not a recounting of a new appearance of the “glory of the Lord,” as one might conclude from Luther’s translation, but rather a description of that which Moses found obtaining on the top of the mountain. “And Moses went up into the mount, and—not ‘a’ but—*‘the’* cloud covered the mount,” and indeed not now for the first time but already for six days. And in the cloud “abode”—not “appeared”—for just as long a time the “glory of the Lord” and covered the mount—not Moses—with the cloud. It was now the seventh day after the first appearance of the “glory of the Lord” at the proclamation of the Ten Commandments. Verse 17 merely describes how the “glory of the Lord” looked to the children of Israel. Verse 18 once more recalls the ascent of Moses in order to add the information, which is the writer’s main point here, that Moses spent forty days and forty nights with the Lord on the mount. For he now wishes to relate what the Lord revealed to Moses and commanded him to do during this long time. This account then fills the following chapters 25–31. In those forty days the Lord gave Moses directions regarding the construction of the Tabernacle with its inner and outer appurtenances. After the Lord had finished His instruction of Moses, “He gave unto Moses”—so ends the account—“two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God.” In this way the writer attaches the reception of the tables of the Law through Moses (the end of Exod. 31) to the Lord’s command (Exod. 24:12) that he come up the mountain in order to receive them.

For our purpose the legislation contained in chapters 25–31 has no direct significance. We want to get to the portion (Exod. 33:18) in which Moses asks to see the “glory of the Lord” and received a very remarkable answer. In order to understand this section we need to comprehend the situation out of which Moses came to the strange request. It becomes clear to us from the context of the account in Exod. 32 and 33:1–6.<sup>8</sup>

We shall here give a sketch of the events related in chapter 32 in the historical order in which they present themselves with Exod. 33:1–6 taken into consideration.

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<sup>8</sup> To be sure, in most translations, also in Luther’s, the understanding of the situation has become difficult through this that 33:1–6 has been taken as a continuation of the history contained in chapter 32. According to our interpretation confusion is thereby produced in the succession of certain events and commands of God. In order to avoid this we must recognize this portion as being simply a subsequent clarification and supplement of certain events related in chapter 32. This is not the place to establish this more minutely on the basis of the peculiar nature of Hebrew composition. Let only this be said here that in 33:1–6 there are two involved sentences, each consisting of a protasis and apodosis, whose imperfects in the protases are to be translated with the pluperfect. They are the sentences of vss. 1–4 and vss. 5 and 6.

In 31:18 Moses at the end of those forty days receives the tables of the Law and gets ready for his return to the people. In the meantime the people had fallen away and had perpetrated the idolatry with the Golden Calf; the Lord tells this to Moses and reveals to him His plan of annihilating the nation as being stiff-necked, out of whom nothing can be made, and of making a great nation of Moses in its stead. Moses' intercession wins the Lord over to the extent that He halts the execution of His plan. Moses comes down to the people, sees the idolatry, shatters the tables of the Law which he has brought along, burns the Calf in anger, rebukes Aaron, and has the tribe of Levi cut down 3,000 of the people. The next morning he rebukes the people, and at this occasion he will very likely also have informed them concerning the Lord's wrath over their apostasy and His intention of annihilating the people as stiff-necked and unserviceable for His purposes. At the same time, however, he also tells them that he will yet once more go to the Lord and try to expiate their sins. He does this and asks the Lord for forgiveness with the addition: "And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." The Lord rejects Moses' plea with the words: "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee ..." Say to them: "In the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." "I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee in the way." If I should go up in the midst of thee for but a moment, I should have to consume thee. One of My angels shall go before thee. "Therefore now put off thy (idolatrous) ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee."—When the people heard these evil tidings, "they mourned" and "stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb."—Thus the Lord smote the people for what they had done with the Calf that Aaron had made.

It seems to us that this is about the way the supplement in 33:1–6 fits into the historical account of chapter 32. Let others do it differently, yet the supplement must be woven in, if, for example, even vs. 4b and 6 are to be brought into harmony with the events.

What is vital in this account is the fact so terrifying for Moses and the people that through the idol festival it had come to an estrangement between the Lord and His people, which put the entire future of Israel into question. God's wrath seemed for the present to have been allayed. But an assurance of pardon had not been given to them. The Lord had refused to go before them in person and dwell in their midst any longer. They faced an hour of terrible visitation, yes, annihilation, if the Lord should accompany them any further. Hence the granting of an angel as leader on their journey was a very weak comfort. The people were inwardly broken and dejected.

To this was added still another depressing fact. As the Lord had visibly withdrawn Himself from the people, so did Moses likewise. We read in 33:7: "But Moses took the tent and pitched it for himself outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the 'tabernacle (tent) of meeting' " (Pieper's translation). This was not the Tabernacle; that was not even in the process of construction; only the directions for its construction did Moses have in his hands. It was not completed and set up until a full year later. The tent which Moses "took" and pitched "for himself" (33:7, Hebrew) outside the camp in the distance was his own tent, which as the tent of the leader had up to this time stood in the middle of the camp, directly before the camp of the tribe of Levi. And now Moses had it taken out of the camp and pitched outside the camp. What did this signify? Without doubt He had done this at the Lord's command. Should and would also Moses now no longer be the leader of the people? He had called this tent the tent of meeting, but the meeting of whom? He had ordered that everyone who wished to consult the Lord would have to go out to this tent outside the camp. Then the Lord would needs come to Moses there and associate with him there. Was this actually the case? And did an individual's going out to consult with the Lord signify a renunciation of the people? Was it the Lord's intention, not indeed to withdraw Himself wholly from individuals, but to have nothing more to do with the people as a whole?

All these questions put the people into such a state of agitation that they observed Moses' withdrawal to this tent (ordinarily he must then still have remained in the camp—likely that of the Levites or of Aaron—as a private citizen) with the greatest of interest. As often as Moses went out to the tent, "all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle (tent)." The question was whether the Lord was again reconciled with the people or not; practically, whether or not the cloud, and with it the "glory of the Lord" as the great sign of grace toward the people, would come down upon

Moses' tent. And sure enough, as soon as Moses stepped into the door of the tent, they saw the cloudy pillar descend from heaven upon the tent. The Lord was there again! And immediately the entire sorrowing people cast itself in adoration upon the ground, confessing its sins and pleading for grace. The Lord's descent upon the tent indicated his continuing gracious and friendly association with Moses. Now they implored His grace also for themselves and His return also to them as their leader.

The people certainly knew what went on in the tent when the "glory of the Lord" was present. The Lord spoke with Moses face to face "as a man speaketh unto his friend"; but when Moses left the tent and returned again into the camp, then his young servant Joshua did not depart from the tent, watching and guarding it so that no one of the people would enter and profane it during Moses' absence. That looked again as though the people were still excluded from free association with the Lord. With Moses personally the Lord spoke so friendly; toward the people He acted so cold and repellent. Was it then still a moot question whether the nation would be rejected and a new one rise from Moses? Or was it still doubtful whether the Lord Himself or only an angel would go with them and before them?

Even for Moses it was still undecided; and it was evident to him that the stiff-neckedness of the people and the Lord's threat to visit their sin upon them at His own time (32:33, 34) meant the downfall of Israel. Moreover he also trembled before the statement made by the Lord in 33:5 that the inevitable consequence of His staying in the midst of the people, stiff-necked as they were, would have to be their annihilation. Any moment the catastrophe could set in.

In this desperate situation Moses besieges the Lord with new negotiations: But "see" (look)—we do not have the usual *הִנֵּה* or *הִנֵּה*, but *רְאֵה* "thou (Thyself) sayest unto me (Thou are insisting upon it—participle!), Bring up this people; and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me (breviloquence for: whether Thou Thyself wilt go along or whether Thou wilt merely send an angel). Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and also,<sup>9</sup> Thou hast found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me thy way (counsel, plan, intention—what Thou hast in mind with the people), that I may know thee, that I may find (also further) grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is (hath become) thy people" (which Thou canst not annihilate without being mocked by the heathen). Then He, the Lord, said: "(Yes), *my presence* (My person, I, Myself) *shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*" And Moses said to Him: "If thy presence (Thou in Thine own person) go not with me, carry us not (first) up hence. For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated (be something separate), I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." And repeating and confirming His assent the Lord says to Moses: "*I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.*"

In the sudden change of his emotions, in the exuberance of his joy over this turn in God's plans, and therewith over the retrieval and affirmation of Israel's destiny, Moses exclaims: "*I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*"

What did Moses mean? Was he clearly aware of what he had actually requested, yes, what he had meant deep down in his heart? No, for then he would not have made this request. The same thing happened to him here as when he prayed: "Forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book...!" (32:32). There the overwhelming force of his inner pain had driven him to words that cast his entire office, yes, his eternal salvation at the feet of the Lord. They were words of an almost desperate and indignant, yes, rebelling heart, which the Lord, according to Luther's translation, rejected with deep indignation. Here it was the exuberance of joy and happiness that led him to blurt out just as foolishly in the words: "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory!" For this reason Luther, who here even as there could sense and feel the compelling force of what went on in the hearts of Moses and the gracious God, there supplied for the latter the indignant "what?" and here added to the word of Moses the inferential "so." No, neither there nor here was Moses aware in faith of what his mouth was saying. It was in both instances the language of the childlike, if you will, childish heart,

<sup>9</sup> The "also" of the KJV has been transposed from the quotation of Moses, and the "thou" has been capitalized to indicate the quotation.

which in these sudden changes of fortune from the highest happiness to the deepest unhappiness and from the deepest unhappiness to the highest happiness had for the time being silenced reason with its reckonings. Was this sin? Was it virtue? The same thing doubtless happens to us Christians amidst sudden changes of fortune. We may perhaps be experiencing the very best of outward good fortune, following our earthly calling, also our spiritual office, in the peaceful confidence that all must go well because our destiny lies safely sheltered in the hands of our gracious God. Then as out of a clear sky a storm comes over us from the Almighty that destroys all thoughts of good fortune and God's blessing. Then we let our spirits sink or become indignant because we do not understand God's "way." The same thing happens to us in the other direction. When after much sorrow and trepidation and new experiences of the kindness of our God we again turn in new confidence to Him in prayer, then—still halfway in the old mistrust—we would like to know and comprehend the ways of God, what He has in mind concerning us, that we might properly submit to it and remain in His grace. We still want to see and understand and not have to believe so blindly. If then quite unexpectedly through this or that word of Scripture God again makes us certain in faith of His grace and help, as He did doubting Thomas, and opens our eyes as to the true state of affairs, that the mount is really full of fiery horses and chariots around us as around Elisha at Dothan (II Kings 6:17), then faith indeed shouts with joy to the Lord: My Lord and my God! And we would just as soon mount up immediately to heaven and see God's gracious glory in heavenly radiance.

But nothing will come of this on this wretched earth. The Lord said to Moses: "*I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee; and (namely that I) will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*" These three sentences all proclaim the same thing, only in ever-greater precision. If in the first sentence others wish to render "goodness" with "beauty" (the beauty of the Lord) then this is to parallel it with the expression "thy glory" in Moses' prayer. The Lord Himself contrasts that which He wishes to reveal to him concerning Himself with the "glory" of God so unconsciously desired by Moses. In the Hebrew the expression that is used can signify both. The goodness or the beauty of God is that which He proclaims regarding Himself in the next two sentences and in chapter 34:6, 7. Earlier (Exod. 3:14, 15) He has summed it up in the one name which He Himself revealed, the name Jehovah as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and its significance is *free but never vacillating* grace. He became the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob out of free, entirely free choice, because it so pleased Him, not because they had in any way deserved it of Him. He maintained this grace toward them and did not break it, though they fell into great sins afterwards. So He has had mercy on their children, this people of Israel, out of absolutely unmerited grace, though He knew their stiff-neckedness beforehand, and He wants to keep this grace toward them in spite of their stiff-neckedness until He will have fulfilled everything in them that He has promised them. That is His goodness or beauty. This goodness or beauty Moses should see, experience; this goodness or beauty He wishes to reveal to him in its entire fullness and *Himself* preach to him. This goodness or beauty Moses is also to preach to the people, and He will make it all come true upon them through actual bestowment of love and wrath, of blessing and chastisement, through the preachment of Gospel and Law.

"(But)," spoke the Lord further, "*thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.*" These words, taken in their context, are now clear in themselves. Not under discussion is the way in which we poor sinners shall see God face to face (I Cor. 13:12) when we shall one day be exalted with Christ to glory and shall see the Father "as he is," I John 3:2. Meant is that seeing of God which Moses sought in a lack of understanding, to comprehend Him through insight into His way, His secret divine counsel (verse 13), His mind, and His innermost thoughts. Concerning this God says later through Isaiah (40:13, 14), Jeremiah (23:18), and Paul (Romans 11:33, 34): "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" Who dwells, "in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see"? (I Timothy 6:16; John 1:18; I John 4:12.) To know God thus, to *comprehend* Him, would mean to push Him from His throne and to set one's self in His place. Since this is impossible, only the other thing could happen: the one beholding would have to die. The way Moses desired to see God no finite creature, no angel, no saint in heaven beholds Him. Also what Israel beheld in the so-called "glory of the Lord," what the prophets and apostles, Paul at Damascus and when he was caught up to the third heaven (II Corinthians 12), John in Revelation beheld of God was nothing else than pictures and human disguises of God.

But still the Lord does want to let Moses see His real glory. “Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory (כְּבוֹדִי) passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.” Yes, there is a way of beholding God’s glory, His way and counsel, His thoughts and plans. It consists in this that one looks after God from behind when He has already passed by. This is the knowledge of God’s ways and thoughts drawn from the past history of the great deeds of God in behalf of His people and the nations of the earth, compare Acts 2:11. The world has a history. It is not eternal and unchangeable; it has come into being, come into existence in and with time; and it exists only amidst ceaseless change in all of its parts and relationships. In a certain sense we speak quite properly of an evolution of things, except that with our tiny reason we are not able to foresee its extent and goal in advance. Even as the world has not called itself into being by itself, so it also does not evolve by itself. There is another who drives the wheel and does everything that transpires in, under, and above the heavens, both the great and the small. And even as the works of nature on the earth and in the heavens declare the glory of the great God, so also the footsteps of God are everywhere and at all times unmistakably imprinted as His and no one else’s upon the history of mankind in things great and small, there for anyone who wants to recognize them and is able to read them aright. There’s the rub, of course. The great majority of people let the great and wise, the scholars do their thinking for them and stupidly babble after them what pleases their evil hearts. In what is nowadays called the Church, often much of the same thing obtains, especially in this that with the modern coryphaei of a “rational religion of morality” people take Christian theology and, without having entered in upon it, dress it up in ever new forms of naked rationalism, just as the women of fashion dress up—and expose—their nakedness in the inadequate or all too scanty garments of the most modern Parisian designers, thereby getting back to the savages. Flesh remains flesh, also when it clothes itself in the elegant garments, of the highest culture and of human reason.

It takes a Christian to apprehend the glory of God in history, a Christian who has come to understand the Gospel, God’s revealed Word, as to Law and Grace in its very essence and who has experienced it in his heart as the great truth and wisdom which is accessible to us carnal, puny little human beings, stone-blind in spiritual matters, only through the Holy Ghost. It takes a man like Moses, not necessarily one who is his equal as a great human mind, but one like him in thorough humility and in having despaired of the ability to force God’s world and God’s people into wholesome thought patterns and social forms through his own measures and his own leadership, as the present-day dictators presume to do. Even Moses had to learn to give this up. God has more than *one* outward way of ruling the world or of fulfilling His Abrahamic promises of grace. He who “of these stones” could raise up children unto Abraham (Matt. 3:9) could certainly also do this by means of Moses, and could annihilate every last one of the 600,000 who had danced about the Golden Calf without letting anything be lost; could also through one of His angels lead Israel safely to the land promised to the fathers without necessarily revealing His personal presence to the people in ever recurring visible manifestations. He could, if it had been necessary, also in other ways than through the fiery and cloudy pillar which uninterruptedly went before them have made it clear to all people on earth that Israel was something special among the nations of the earth. He is never at a loss in finding ways and means of leading His chosen people safely to heaven. Only one thing God cannot do: lie and deceive, break His promises and retract His Law, change in even so much as one iota His revealed Word concerning our salvation through faith in Christ, the Lamb of God slain from eternity. But He can shatter all external forms of the human world and the Church without losing even a single soul of His elect or becoming unfaithful to them and His revealed Word. He has promised continued existence to the seven local congregations of the Revelation of St. John just as little as to the present synods of the Synodical Conference. All this must be clear to him who wishes to see God from behind and to apprehend and interpret His glory out of history. And in addition he must know that all of his interpretation dare not deviate either to the right or to the left from the revealed Word, fall short of it or go beyond it; he must know that there are thousands of details and relations in history whose specific significance for the execution of God’s plan of salvation simply cannot be understood with certainty even from the written Word because Scripture says



nothing about it. It must suffice for us to know this one thing: everything that happens must work to the glory of God and for good to them that love God. It is only a half-truth to say that history always repeats itself. There is no decisive natural causality in the things that happen. Only unbelief speaks of inexorable laws of nature and the human soul. Israel's national history is a history of miracles from the beginning to the present day; so is likewise the history of the New Testament Church. It exists only through the free, supernatural working of the Holy Ghost in the Word. And even the Word of God does not work mechanically like a machine driven by a specified quantity of dead power. God Himself works through the Word in those who hear it "where and when it pleases God," (Augsburg Confession V, *Concordia Triglotta*, page 45). He is gracious to whom He will be gracious, and shows mercy on whom He will show mercy, 33:19. The Lord does not let Himself be discerned beyond the earnestness of His Law and the truthfulness of His promises. He has the reins of all men in His power, Ps. 139, and even the heart of kings is like rivers of water in His hand, Proverbs 21:1. Therefore the so-called historical judgment in its application to the present and as prophecy of the future is at its best something very uncertain. How much of what is transmitted in a purely human way is actually truth? And all actual history regarding the judgments of God in the past is, according to I Corinthians 10, written merely for our warning, that we should not lust after evil things, or for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

That which is we can to a certain extent know and judge. That which is yet to be God in His goodness has graciously hidden from us and has directed us to His Gospel, which of course imparts to us neither a divine nor a human "knowledge" of the future, yet indeed a blessed faith in His great *goodness* through the Holy Ghost.

## VI

(Translation by John Schaadt and Carl Lawrenz)

Wherein does the "goodness" of the Lord consist?

"And the Lord said unto Moses ..." The relationship of grace between the Lord and His servant had not for a moment been disturbed through the episode of the negotiations concerning the apostasy of Israel and its further guidance. Even to the people itself the Lord again directed His kindness. He Himself proceeded with the reestablishment of the covenant broken by Israel, commanded Moses to make new tables in the place of those that had been shattered, so that He might Himself write on them the words found on the first ones. At the Lord's bidding Moses again ascended the mount the next morning with the finished tables in his hand. Then the Lord drew beside him in the gracious cloud, in all of His glory passed by him as he was placed in the cleft of the rock and shielded by His hand, and—in passing with His own mouth preached the name of the Lord. And what He preached was, in an exact translation of the original text, as follows: "*The Lord (Jehovah)—the Lord (Jehovah) is a merciful and gracious God, longsuffering and of great grace and faithfulness; who keeps grace for thousands, who forgives guilt and faithlessness and transgression, though He does not leave unpunished; who visits the guilt of the fathers upon the children and the children's children unto the third and fourth generation.*"

This sermon is unique, namely in this that the Lord Himself delivers it, that in what seems like a superabundant heaping of words it pours out His grace upon us and ties it up with His name Jehovah. This name is not an appellative like the word אֱלֹהִים, but a proper name. It is God who gave it to Himself with great solemnity and explained it. It means the personal, eternal, unchangeable *God of grace*. "This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."<sup>10</sup> (Exodus 3:13–15) With this name and no other does the entire Holy Scripture name Him. God can indeed find true delight in this that on the basis of this name He is designated as My Husband, My Beloved, My Bridegroom, My Fortress, My Rock, and by other designations that *interpret* this name, but He does not want His children to call Him by any other proper name of deity such as Baal, for Baal is the proper name of many idols. He wants to take the names of the Baals away

<sup>10</sup> RSV

from the mouth of those whom He has converted, that they shall no longer remember them, Hosea 2:16f. The New Testament has rendered the name Jehovah with the Greek “The Lord” and thus names the God *Jesus Christ* who was promised in the Old Testament and who became incarnate in the fullness of the time. This is also why Luther has regularly rendered the proper name Jehovah in the Old Testament with “The Lord” as the proper name of the true God, and the English and other translations do the same in their languages. Regarding this name the Lord says in Isaiah: “I am the Lord (Jehovah); that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images,” 42:8. Even as the Lord does not want to be called by the proper name of other “gods,” i.e. of idols, so He also does not want to surrender His name Jehovah to any idol; for in this name lie His personal, essential, exclusive, and inalienable attributes. There is no other God besides Him who is called and is Jehovah, the Lord. When in the catechism we answer the question, “What is God?” we say: God is a spirit, who is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy, righteous, merciful, and truthful. This can also be summed up more briefly. In chapter 40 the prophet Isaiah gathers up all the essential attributes of Jehovah (the Lord) in two. There the Lord in one respect calls Himself אֱל (vs. 18), in the other קְדוֹשׁ (vs. 25).

Also in Isaiah both sound like proper names, for they have no article. אֱל does not mean “the strong” (God), but Strong, and קְדוֹשׁ does not mean “The holy” (God), but Holy. Both proper names taken together are identical with the one name Jehovah; in Isaiah (chapter 40) the name Strong embraces the first four attributes in the catechism answer, and the name Holy the other four. Dogmatics, from which the catechism definition is taken, calls the first four the “physical” and the last four the “moral” attributes of God. The catechism, however, seems to have conceived its “holy” differently from Isaiah. It obviously means the holiness of God standing behind the Law, which threatens to punish sinners as transgressors (which is indeed also under discussion in the Lord’s sermon regarding Himself in Exodus 34:7, even as in 20:5, 7). But in Isaiah 40:25 the קְדוֹשׁ or Holy does not mean holy first of all according to its punitive aspect, but is a very emphatic designation for the loving and provident faithfulness of the Lord toward His own, as vs. 26–31, which follow upon vs. 25, show. In our text, Exodus 33:6–34:7 the Lord sums up all essential “physical” and “moral” attributes of God in the one name Jehovah. Jehovah means at the same time the Eternal (and therein also the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence are comprehended) and the Good; and the latter embraces all the attributes of grace that the Lord ascribes to Himself in His sermon.

“*I will make all my goodness pass before thee.*” And now we are not surprised at the many individual terms with which He describes and extols this goodness that is His.

“*Lord! The Lord* (both times Jehovah) *is a merciful and gracious God.*” This twin expression occurs as such in the Old Testament only with reference to God, never with reference to a man, not even in Ps. 112:4. That is to say that only God, no man, is in the full sense merciful and gracious. “There is none *good* but one, that is God,” Matt 19:17. Human beings, too, still have a bit of mercy, even a Samaritan, Luke 10; but it does not reach very far; selfishness often stifles it completely. We are also wont to speak of the benevolence of a king or anyone else of high repute toward any wretched person as grace; but it hardly deserves the name, because it is always at the same time mixed with disdain and other faults and comes from creatures who in the last analysis are of the same nature as the wretch himself. Only One can be truly gracious, He who alone is exalted, almighty, absolutely independent, who needs to seek no one’s favor or to fear anyone else, from whom grace flows forth out of unselfishness, out of the pure goodness, love, and mercy of His heart. This is only true of God as Jehovah. God is love personified, I John 4:16. And His compassionate grace is perfect, as infinite as His godhead or His eternity and omnipotence; it is free, it is God’s nature, called forth by nothing on our part. “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.” The Lord, Jehovah, is by nature so full of cordial affection, favor, kindness, and tenderness as no finite creature can be toward another, no father and no mother toward their children. His heart breaks for Ephraim, in Jeremiah 31:20; His mercy is exceedingly ardent, as in Hosea 11:8; His tender mercies are over all His works, as in Psalm 145:8, 9. Compare Psalm 103 and Isaiah 49.

“*The Lord,*” Jehovah—so He preaches on—“*is long-suffering.*” The original text has “slow to wrath.” The Lord, Jehovah (“and there’s no other God”—Luther) can indeed *become* wrathful, so wrathful that the fire

of His wrath burns unto the lowest hell, Deut. 32:22; but wrath is not an essential attribute of God, it does not *dwell* in His heart, it is “man-made,” called forth from without through contempt, disdain, and haughty, defiant trampling of His boundless love and grace. “They have *moved me to jealousy* with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities,” Deut. 32:21. Therefore the wrath ceases, cools, and evaporates, where the provocation ceases. The Lord is not wrath, He is *slow* to wrath, because His essence is goodness, mercy, and grace; this cannot pass away.

And He is “of great grace and faithfulness.”<sup>11</sup> The “great” does not mean very great here, but grace and—*faithfulness*—great in the absolute sense, perfect, boundless, which cannot be stifled by anything. For “faithfulness” the Hebrew text has אֱמֻנָה, a word of the same root as אֱמֶת, with which it is often interchanged. It is that attribute of God according to which He does not waver in His goodness, love, and grace. His name is אֱלֹהֵי אֱמֻנָה the God of truth (faithfulness), Ps. 31:5. That is why Moses calls Him a Rock, Deut. 32:4, 31, and the

Revelation of St John has Him proclaim concerning Himself: “These things saith the אֱמֶת, the faithful and true witness,” 3:14. But it must not be overlooked that here as often in Scripture the two words “grace and faithfulness,” just as the preceding “merciful and gracious,” form a pair which are inseparably bound up with each other. Thus in Ps. 89:14; 117:2, compare Ps. 92:2; 89:1, 2, 24, 33. Instead of faithfulness Luther has in most cases put “truth.”<sup>12</sup> Ps. 146:6 speaks of the Lord “which keepeth truth,” i.e. faithfulness, “forever.” Where the grace of the Lord is, there is also His faithfulness; what He promises in grace, that He most assuredly keeps.

The words that follow describe the goodness of the Lord in its activity. “Who keeps grace for thousands.”<sup>13</sup> The word grace is here a comprehensive term; it includes the mercy, kindness, longsuffering, and love of the Lord. It is chosen instead of the others because it is grace which as the disposition of the heart of God leads directly into His sin forgiving activity. We read, He *keeps* grace, i.e. He maintains it that at the right place and at the right time He may immediately put it into effect and continue it in effect. It is immaterial whether you translate the Hebrew אֶלְפִים with “thousands” or “a thousand generations”; it is not to be understood arithmetically but figuratively and means for “an unlimited number of individuals and generations,” Ps. 36; 108:4; Lam. 3:22f. This grace has no limits in any direction, is infinite like God Himself. It is great unto the clouds. It endures forever. This is in the fullest sense what the Lord does: He is a God who forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin. This is His real glory. The Hebrew words are to be translated differently.<sup>14</sup> They are not lined up climactically, considered from any single point of view. These are three different kinds of sins. עֲוֹן is sin as guilt before God, which does away with man’s original relationship of freedom toward His Creator, as it existed in the state of innocence, arrests him before God, makes him a prisoner, and takes him into judgment, also before his conscience as the judge in his own heart. Sin as עֲוֹן says to the sinner: What hast thou done?

Thou art the man! Wherefore it is rightly said, It’s conscience that makes cowards of us all. פְּשָׁע is sin insofar as it is directed against the “goodness,” the merciful, gracious heart of God, sin against the salvation extended in grace, unfaithfulness over against the faithfulness of God, breaking of the covenant, apostasy from grace, the sin against the work of the Holy Ghost, which the Lord declares to be unpardonable when it has reached its climax.

And חַטָּאת is sin insofar as it deviates from the law of pious conduct before God, errs, strays, and becomes lost

<sup>11</sup> A very literal translation is necessary here to follow Pieper’s comments. He follows Luther in rendering this phrase as “*von grosser Gnade und Treue*.” The AV has “abundant in goodness and truth.”

<sup>12</sup> In the vast majority of instances the AV translates *emeth* with “truth.”

<sup>13</sup> AV.: “Keeping mercy for thousands.”

<sup>14</sup> (In a footnote Pieper makes the following comment on Luther’s translation, which might also be applied to the AV): It is difficult to determine why Luther rendered the three Hebrew words עֲוֹן, פְּשָׁע, and חַטָּאת in German with *Missetat*, *Uebertretung* und *Suende* (misdeed, transgression, and sin)—just in the Lord’s own sermon which is meant to praise the sin-forgiving activity of His grace in all of its glory. The German expressions may have shifted their meaning somewhat in the course of time.

from God's ways; *in concreto*: the daily sin of God's children which proceeds from the weakness of the flesh which clings to them.

For what purpose are these types of sin lined up in the sermon regarding the forgiveness of sins? This is not merely to instruct us intellectually, but to teach us to rejoice with Luther:

Though great<sup>15</sup> our sins and sore our woes,  
His grace much more aboundeth;  
His helping love no limit knows,  
Our utmost need it soundeth.

We are to learn that the fullness of His goodness revealed in the name Jehovah is so boundless that no amount and no kind of sin stands up against it but melts away before its almighty blazing glow as do mist and clouds before the sun, Isaiah 44:22; for He indeed blots out our guilt freely, not for our sake, but for His own sake, 43:25.

*And now the other side.* The Lord continues His sermon regarding His wonderful grace with the words: “*And that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation.*”<sup>16</sup> The “and” of the first sentence makes the transition from the fervor of God's grace to the fervor of His wrath against sin, to His inner attitude and His practical handling of human guilt. We want to call to mind once more that the word translated here with iniquity (“iniquity of the fathers”) is nothing other than *guilt*. Of this the very first sentence treats, which in our language ought to be connected with the preceding, not with an “and,” but with some concessive conjunction. It should read something like this: “though He lets no one be entirely guiltless,” or “yet at the same time He lets no one go completely unpunished.” That is to say, the grace of the Lord, regardless how boundless and thoroughly affectionate it is, does not mean indifference toward sin or a complete overlooking of sin. Sin is *guilt*, no matter what kind it may be; it is in the last analysis an attack upon God's majesty, an abuse and infringement of His divine glory, His Jehovah glory, as the Lord has just depicted it so wonderfully, not merely an abuse and infringement of that which we are accustomed to calling the holiness and inviolability of His Law. And whoever is guilty of sin, be he a pious or a godless man, him sin hales into court for judgment so that he may receive according to what he has done in the body. The Lord permits no guilty person to be guiltless—in spite of the boundlessness and endlessness of His grace. If He did, He would have to abdicate as God and put the

<sup>15</sup> (also of many kinds)

<sup>16</sup> (Luther translates: “*Und vor welchem niemand unschuldig ist; der du die Missetat der Vaeter heimsuchst auf Kinder und Kindeskinde, bis ins dritte und vierte Glied*”. To this Pieper makes the following comments, which not only throw light on Luther's translation but also help clarify the text under discussion): Unfortunately Luther's translation is not fully exact here, even as a number of previous places in the sermon. The most serious matter is this that Luther has not made it clear whether the Lord or Moses is speaking in verses 6 and 7. He lets the Lord speak in the second person: *Du bewahrest, du suchst heim* (Thou dost keep, Thou dost visit), while the original text does not indicate any person. It operates with nouns, adjectives, and participles, without proceeding to any finite verb. But it is clear from vss. 5 and 6 and 8–9 that it is the Lord who is speaking here. Also Luther was well aware of this. He has correctly translated these words in connection with II Sam. 23:1–7 (“Concerning the last words of David”) and chides the Vulgate, that it puts this sermon into Moses' mouth instead of the Lord's. Compare Keil in his comment on this passage, Vol. 1, 608. Why Luther made this mistake in his own Bible, or permitted it to stand, is difficult to surmise.—Also the “*ich will lassen predigen*” (I will have proclaimed) in 33:19 cannot stand.—And here in 34:7 one may not take the Hebrew ׀ before the sentence “*vor welchem niemand unschuldig ist* (before whom no one is innocent) over into the German with an “and,” if the thought of the subsequent sentences is not to suffer harm. It puts the conduct of the Lord over against sin on one and the same level of zeal in the disposition of His heart with His boundless grace. The Hebrew text puts it far below. What Luther translates with “before whom no one is innocent” reads “he lets no one be wholly innocent” in the original text. The practical conduct of the Lord over against the guilt of the fathers is not rejection but simply visitation, and this does not extend to “a thousand generations” but is limited to three and four generations. All of this puts the zeal of the Lord's wrath far below the zeal of His love and grace here. Thus there is a limiting concessive circumstantial clause involved here, which compels us to render the Hebrew conjunction ׀, which can have so many meanings, with an “although,” “yet although,” or something of that kind.

guilty one on His throne. As long as He is God there will be no unpunished sinner. God's wrath is ultimately every sinner's death.

How then do God's grace and wrath harmonize with one another? They do not before our reason, nor are they supposed to. This is the prerequisite for all real distinction between Law and Gospel: that reason despairs and goes to rack and ruin over it. It sees in their coexistence only an absolute contradiction and rejects them both as foolishness. It constructs for itself a God after its own heart that is a bit severe and a bit good and finally condemns no one. With Him one can get along, if one exercises a measure of care, but not with a God who is gracious without measure and at the same time lets no one go unpunished.

It cannot be otherwise. Whoever looks into the bright sun with his naked eye becomes blind forever. And regarding His bare divine countenance, that is, regarding His bare divine essence and will He has said: "Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." Regarding His bare divine majesty He tells us through Nebuchadnezzar: "He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, 'What doest thou?'" (Daniel 4:35) Yes, understand, comprehend God, and become blind, raving, mad, and foolish. Up until now even all the philosophers and arrogant minds who on the basis of what lies before their eyes want to comprehend God's essence and will with their puny understanding have become fools. What then is going to happen to those who want to look directly into His countenance? The matter rests with Isaiah 40:12–14 and Rom. 11:33–36.

For us Christians all the mysteries in God's essence and will are solved—not in our understanding but in faith. We know no bare God, no abstract Deity, but only a God who is called Jehovah, the Lord, the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel, who has revealed Himself to us and is on most intimate terms with us, who in His Abrahamitic grace with His own voice from Sinai announced the Law amidst frightful threats to His children and to all the world and on the same mountain with His own voice preached to His servant Moses, and through him to His nation and to all nations, His boundless grace and forgiveness. In this Jehovah God His Law and His Gospel, His infinite grace and His dreadful wrath, are harmonized in such a glorious manner as no other two opposites are harmonized in this world and the next, in time and eternity; in that both are at the same time true: that He forgives "iniquity and transgression and sin" for a thousand generations and thereby still lets no one be wholly innocent and go unpunished, but visits the guilt of the fathers upon the children and the children's children. And the Man in whom this contradiction in God and in all His ways finds its solution is called *Jesus Christ*, the Jehovah-God, the embodiment and revelation of all mysteries in heaven and on earth, of eternity and time: *God manifest in the flesh*, I Tim. 3:16—He, He alone in our stead, willingly, with divine readiness placed and punished under the Law of sinners, until He had blotted out even the last shadow of our guilt, so that grace might reign in the world of sinners utterly free and unhampered and alone, with the exclusion of all wrath. Now He is our Peace. *There is now no longer a shadow of the guilt of sin remaining on earth and in heaven*; for He became the One smitten of God in our stead, He was pierced by our unfaithfulness toward God's faithfulness (מִפְּשָׁעֵנוּ), was crushed by our guilt (מִעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ). While we in our ways of sin were going quite unconcerned to our destruction, the God of grace cast all our guilt upon Him, Isaiah 53. He is the propitiation for our sins. Now there is peace forevermore.<sup>17</sup>

And still He lets no one be guiltless and go unpunished. No, not *still*, but just *therefore*. He punishes us sons of men, particularly us, who stand in His grace, not in condemnatory wrath, but rather in saving grace, because our guilt has now been paid and fully borne through Himself, so that we may not still and in spite of this finally be lost. It is indeed Jehovah, the Lord Jesus Christ, He who bore the sins of the whole world, who sits on the throne of majesty and who rules and smites all men according to His counsel of grace. He does not torment and grieve people from His heart, Lamentations 3:33 (margin), as though He had joy in their pain. He punishes the godless world dreadfully, and even more so His dear children (I Pet. 4:17); but His punishment is now pure visitation. And visitation is never final judgment unto destruction, but the Savior's action of our gracious God, in order to preserve from final destruction. Because we fail to judge ourselves, we are *chastened* by the Lord, that we may not be condemned together with the world, I Corinthians 11:32. In order to rescue His

<sup>17</sup> Pieper closes the paragraph with the hymn quotation: "Nun ist gross Fried ohn' Unterlass."

nation Israel He has since Sinai punished it more dreadfully than any other nation on earth. Also the visitation of the guilt of the fathers on the children is apt to seem cruel, but it is nevertheless nothing else than a demonstration of grace, the zeal of His holiness shrouded in grace and carried out in grace. Apart from the hidden God, who has forever veiled His “countenance” for our limited understanding and our wise reason, all temporal woe is nothing else than God’s wrath inflicted upon the world which despises all the fullness of God’s goodness (כָּל־טוֹבֵי - 33:19) and grace, which wrath of God is meant to lead the sinners to repentance and eternal salvation. Nowhere is this set forth more fully for us than in the 90th Psalm, the Prayer of Moses, the man of God. “Thou eternal God of Grace, who hast dominion over all things, whom time doth not touch, Thou who settest the *iniquities* of wretched men before Thee in the light of Thy consuming countenance, whose wrath hath made our life utterly vain and sorrowful and subject to death—*Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations*, because Thy grace remains unobscured for us. Satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” Compare Psalm 30:5; 117; 118; Isaiah 49:14,15; 54:7–10; Micah 7:18–20; Psalm 103. This is the true and blessed harmonization of the grace and wrath of God our Savior.

## VII

*(Translation by John Schaadt and Carl Lawrenz)*

Of the many appearances of the “glory of the Lord” during the activity of Moses the one depicted in Exodus 33 and 34 constitutes a noteworthy juncture. There, for one thing, the Lord explains its significance for Israel with His own words; then, too, He at the same time gives His servant, who has despaired of his own power, the assurance that He will continue personally to lead the people through the wilderness.

This was the prime concern of Moses, for everything depended on it. He had already learned to know the fickleness, the unfaithfulness, and the stiff-neckedness of this people to excess. Personally he considered himself wholly incompetent to keep this rebellious generation within the bounds of the covenant that the Lord had made with it. This disobedient nation could not be ruled with human authority. With alarming effect the threatening word of the Lord echoed in his heart: “In the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.” Almost like an ultimatum sounded his word to the Lord: “If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”

Then had followed the new promise of the Lord and the public repetition of the ratification of the covenant, the shining of Moses’ countenance at its proclamation serving as a confirmation. Now the promise given anew had to be fulfilled: “Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the Lord: for it is a wonderful (Luther’s translation) thing that I will do with thee,” Exodus 34:10.

After a brief admonition to keep the covenant and after a repetition of the chief covenant statutes come the directions for constructing the tabernacle, as well as the report regarding its construction, and finally regarding its dedication. “And it came to pass in the first month (Nisan=March–April) in the second year (after the exodus from Egypt), on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up,” Exodus 40:17. Moses himself places it into the service of the Lord by burning incense on the golden altar and by sacrificing burnt offerings and meat offerings. When Moses had thus completed everything that the Lord had commanded him,

*“then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle,”*  
Exodus 40:34.

The account then continues: “And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” In the subsequent verses the same cloud is finally described to us in its function as a signal for the journeying and resting of the people.

From this time forth the appearance of the “glory of the Lord” is strictly bound to the tabernacle and its surroundings (the altar of burnt offering), and the appearances that had previously been given exclusively and

specifically to Moses as the leader of the people cease. After this it still appears at the altar of burnt offering after Aaron had brought his first atoning sacrifice, Leviticus 9:23; when the Spirit was bestowed upon the seventy assistants of Moses, Numbers 11:25 (note verse 16); at the punishment of Miriam, chapter 12; when the people rebelled upon the report of the spies, 14:10; at the revolt of Korah, 16:19 and 42; at the water of Meribah, 20:6; when Moses transferred his leadership to Joshua, Deuteronomy 31:14, 15; and finally also at the dedication of Solomon's temple, I Kings 8:10, 11. Only in the case of a vision (in Ezekiel) it quite naturally does not attach itself to any particular place. The binding of this appearance to the sanctuary could not surprise Moses. The Lord had promised it immediately upon the proclamation of the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:24, then amidst the instructions for constructing the propitiatory, the mercy seat, 25:22. The latter statement, of course, applied to the constant dwelling of the "glory of the Lord" in the most holy place, but naturally did not exclude its appearance in the rest of the tabernacle and at the great altar if the Lord deemed it necessary.

Thus did the "glory of the Lord" here fill the entire tabernacle; and as long as it remained, Moses could not go into the tabernacle without being slain by it.

This observation strikes us as strange in connection with the person of Moses. Previously he had so often ascended into the midst of the cloud and the "glory of the Lord"; twice he had dwelt forty days in its midst, and instead of being slain by it had carried away from it a radiance of glory on his countenance. The cloud had visited him in his own tent outside in front of the camp without slaying him. Why did it now endanger his life? The answer is: Because now he no longer had a call to go into this appearance and therefore also no promise that he would be protected over against its consuming radiance. Heretofore he had had both. He had not gone into any appearance of the "glory of the Lord" into which the Lord had not Himself first called him. In each appearance the Lord had had to stretch out His protecting hand over him, even as over Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel, 24:10ff., in order to protect him from destruction. When without a special call from the Lord, upon his own initiative—even though in great anguish of heart—he asked for a special appearance of the "glory of the Lord," the Lord refused him, let His glory pass by him, and also then still held His hand over him that he might not perish. Moses had no call to enter now into the tabernacle filled with the "glory of the Lord" and therefore also no promise of protection.

The Lord's entrance into the tabernacle marked a new step in the administration of the Old Testament economy of salvation. Hitherto the man Moses had been everything in Israel: prophet, high priest, and king. With the construction and dedication of the divinely-appointed tabernacle with its two compartments and with the sanctifying of the altar of burnt offering, the basis was laid for the regulated divine service in the future and for its envisioned administration through the special priesthood of Aaron and his sons. Moses could not personally also still take this on in addition to the excess of administrative, commissarial, and judicial functions that lay upon his shoulders. "Now the man Moses was a much troubled man (Luther's translation), above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers 12:3). The Lord had already found it necessary to give him seventy men, specially endowed with the Spirit, to help him in the performance of the duties resting upon him, Numbers 11. But the ignorant, sinning, and stubborn nation was in need of thorough instruction, of daily sacrifice, of constantly repeated expiation, and of renewed propitiation. For this Aaron and his sons had been appointed from the beginning. Up till now Aaron had not been able to play any role in the nation. Yes, his prestige had suffered greatly through his conduct amidst the idolatry with the Golden Calf. He himself and his sons were ever and again in need of admonition to faithfulness and of warning against unfaithfulness in the execution of their office. The Lord even had to interpose in his family with painful chastisements. Thus the entire institution of the Aaronitic administration of worship required public confirmation and sanctification through special measures and arrangements that endowed it with divine authority and efficacious power for priests and people.

The first of these measures was the above-mentioned appearance of the cloud and the "glory of the Lord" in the dwelling of God, which the Lord Himself had ordained and now hereby publicly pronounced as holy. Then came the later reoccurrence of the appearance of the "glory of the Lord" in, before, and at the tabernacle for the purpose of God's intervention on occasion of grievous sinning on the part of the nation or of individuals. The same purpose was served by the divine arrangement that the same cloud, which as a pillar of

cloud during the day and as a pillar of fire during the night had been given to the nation as a signal of journeying on or for lodging, ever and again settled down upon the tabernacle and covered it, and then also lifted itself up from it as a pillar of cloud or of fire to serve anew as a guide through the wilderness. For thereby it not only showed itself before all the people as the accompanying presence of God, but it also marked the tabernacle ever anew as the abiding dwelling chosen by the Lord, from which blessing or punishment, as deserved, came upon the people. As often as it appeared, it was an impressive, visible testimony on the part of the Lord Himself either of His grace toward the people or of His dreadful earnestness which will not allow His grace to be mocked. For both aspects Leviticus 9 and the first verses of chapter 10 give us striking evidence. In chapter 9 we are told of the first official offering of Aaron. After he had prepared it according to directions as an atoning sacrifice for himself and for the people in the presence of the latter, and had brought it upon the altar of burnt offering, he blessed the people. But the question was whether Moses, as mediator and leader of the nation, and whether the Lord Himself would accept the offering of the newly installed high priest and confirm his blessing. In order to attest his personal approval before the people Moses went into the tabernacle together with Aaron, undoubtedly to commit their doings to the Lord in prayer. It is not stated that the “glory of the Lord” or the cloud filled the dwelling. But even as they had entered the sanctuary together, so they also came out together and together blessed the people—obviously in order to attest before them not only the approval of Moses but also that of the Lord. In the same instant “the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces” in the certainty that the Lord was committing Himself to the new arrangement of the Aaronitic service of sacrifices and that through it He would preserve His grace for them and let His blessing flow out to them also in the future.

In chapter 10, however, we also immediately have a testimony of the “glory of the Lord” to the holiness of this service. The incident recorded here is to be thought of as following immediately upon the effect of the manifesting glory as depicted in 9:23, 24. The two sons of Aaron, Nadab und Abihu, who according to God’s ordinance as priests had to take care of the service in the holy place, fail to heed one individual ordinance of the Lord—namely this one that they were to take the fire for igniting their censers from the altar inasmuch as it had been sanctified. They brought strange, that is, not sanctified fire before the Lord, fire “which he commanded them not.” In the same instant fire comes forth from the Lord and consumes them so that they die “before the Lord.” The same fire, which as an attestation of grace had devoured the burnt offering and fat that Aaron laid on the altar, now kills the priests who have sinned in just a single point. “This is it that the Lord spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.” “And Aaron—held his peace.”

In every detail the entire service had been given and prescribed by the Lord Himself. During the twofold forty-day sojourns with the Lord on the mount Moses had received from the Lord a picture of the tabernacle, of its appearance and furnishings, of its appointments and their arrangement, then the direction for its construction and the most detailed ordinances for its service through the high priest, the priests, and the Levites. Nothing, absolutely nothing, in the entire service was left to the freedom or discretion of any man. Not only the substance for the various kinds of offerings, but also every action and movement of the one offering, every piece of clothing of the high priest and the priests, even every step in their preparation for the sacrificial service was minutely prescribed, and for every—even the slightest—lapse on the part of the one conducting the service there followed immediate death or at least the sharpest chastisement of the Lord. Everything from the person and the official functions of the high priest and the priests down to the purely external services of the Levites with respect to the tabernacle and its furnishings was holy and inviolable. We shall first of all point only to two incidents here which lie quite far apart in history. After the occurrences told in Leviticus 9 and 10 the “glory of the Lord” withdrew behind the inner veil into the most holy place and dwelt there in the darkness (I Kings 8:12) over the Ark of the Covenant upon the mercy seat, namely in a cloud and radiant light. No one else than the high priest dared enter this room if he did not want to be killed, and even he not at “all times,” but only once a year on the great Day of Atonement “*that he die not*”; and even then not without special garments and many special measures (see Leviticus 16); and among these the chief thing was the sprinkling of the mercy seat with



the blood of the bullock and the ram. But before he got to this action he upon entering into the most holy place had to fill his censer with burning coals from the altar of burnt offering, had to sprinkle a good handful of incense upon it “*that the cloud (thick smoke) of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.*” Even though every other detail of the procedure had been observed, neglect in this one matter meant his death. Compare here Isaiah 6.

The other example of the sanctity of the Aaronitic service lies in the time of Samuel. It was not permitted that the Ark of the Covenant should be seen by anyone even outside of the most holy place. When the nation journeyed, it had to be covered by the high priest himself and the priests, had to be wrapped in coverings, and had to be carried by the Kohathites, without the latter touching it, Numbers 4. When later the Ark was but incidentally seen by the Bethshemites, the viewing of it smote 75<sup>18</sup> men, I Samuel 6:19.

The account of Perezuzzah offers another example, II Samuel 6. Uzzah had to die because, even though with good intentions, he had taken hold of the falling Ark, so that even David had misgivings about having it brought to him. Later on he perceived that the Lord had richly blessed the house of Obed-edom, in which he had had the Ark put down. Then he had it brought to Jerusalem with much solemnity and rejoicing, had a temporary tabernacle built for it, and through the high priest had the prescribed divine service carried out in it—with great blessing for himself and his people.

The hallowing of the name of God was involved in all the appearances of the “glory of the Lord.” The world had in truth lost the knowledge of God. It said then as today: There is no God! (Psalm 53) Thus it had become an abomination before God in its evil ways. All its culture was sin and shame even as today. There was none who did what was good, not even one. If the world was to be saved, it first had to be led back to faith in the living God. For this purpose the Lord had chosen the seed of Abraham, His friend. This nation, itself utterly corrupted in Egypt, was to become His servant, through whom He wanted to make His name and His majesty known to the nations of the earth again. But this nation had in fact itself lost its knowledge, lived in the idolatry of the heathen, and was as carnally minded and besides as stubborn and fickle as any of them. That is why God first had to reveal Himself to it as living and personal through all sorts of miracles (compare Exodus 34:10); the nation itself first had to be sanctified and rendered God-fearing through much experience of His undeserved grace and His inviolable holiness. Nothing could be accomplished here with natural means and measures of human prudence. So God had to condescend to their weakness and corruption and attest His glory so impressively before their physical eyes and ears that no unbeliever among them had any excuse for his unbelief and disobedience.

Among these visible signs and wonders the appearance of the “glory of the Lord” was the most glorious and impressive, and this as evidence of His beneficent grace as well as His chastening holiness in all the arrangements, precepts, and ordinances given by Him as they pertained both to the official duties of Aaron and his sons and to the kingly and prophetic activity of Moses. This appearance was not bound to any particular time or any particular offense, only to the tabernacle, in which God dwelt, and over which it was lifted up on high only as a guide by day and as a light in the darkness of the night. Many, also great offenses of the nation or of individuals the Lord punished in another way; thus the idolatry with the Golden Calf, Exodus 32; the blasphemer, Leviticus 24; the Sabbath breaker, Numbers 15; the murmuring of the nation at the lack of water, Numbers 21. It appeared freely and unexpectedly when and where the Lord saw fit; above all, however, where individuals or a part of the people or the entire congregation opposed the authority of the Lord in His leadership through Moses or in the priestly office of Aaron which He had ordained; thus at the previously mentioned violation of office by the two sons of Aaron, Leviticus 10; at Miriam and Aaron’s opposition to Moses, Numbers 12; at the rebellion of the entire congregation of the Lord and Moses and Aaron after the report of the spies, chapter 14, which the Lord, persuaded by the intercession of Moses, indeed left unpunished for the moment, but then punished with a forty-year sojourn in the wilderness permitting none of those who had left Egypt as adults to reach the Promised Land except Joshua and Caleb; at the rebellion of the band of Korah against the Lord and against His often attested leaders Moses and Aaron, the rebellion in which Korah and his

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<sup>18</sup> Professor Pieper considers the thousands in the text to involve a scribal error.

band were swallowed up by the earth and 250 men were destroyed through the fire of the Lord, and the nation that murmured about this was punished through the death of 14,700 men, chapter 16:19–40 and verses 41–50, whereupon the nation was so thoroughly shaken that, after the confirmation of the priesthood of Aaron through the budding of his rod, it cried out in despair, “Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the Lord shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?” chapter 17:12, 13. A long time later we see the phenomenon yet once more as a means of chastisement, namely in the Wilderness of Zin, at the water of Meribah, on which occasion even Moses and Aaron faltered in faith and forfeited their personal entry into the Promised Land.

Nevertheless we dare not forget that the “glory of the Lord” did not primarily serve as a means of chastisement in the training of Israel, but that it was above all to arouse the people to faith, that is, to a confident trust in the grace of the Lord as the one true God, and to confirm them in such faith. The nation was to recognize its unmerited election as His prized possession and its world-encompassing mission of saving the corrupted world. The idolatry of the apostate nations was to be overthrown, and the earth was again to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, Isaiah 11, Habakkuk 2:14, Zephaniah 2:11. As in the covenant with Abraham, Genesis 15, so the “glory of the Lord” always and everywhere signified above all else grace, and first of all grace and gracious faithfulness for this nation. Thus it signified deliverance from the hand of the Egyptians and induction into Canaan in the call of Moses, Exodus 3; thus safe protection and preservation from the hostility of all nations before the Red Sea and during its crossing, chapter 14; thus in the Wilderness of Sin it was a guarantee that the people would be provided with food and drink for their entire journey through the wilderness, 16:4, 10; then its frequent appearances at the ratification of the covenant and its repetition at Sinai served to attest and confirm the great promise: “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then *ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me* above all people: for all the earth is mine: and *ye shall be unto me a kingship* (KJV kingdom) *of priests, and an holy nation,*” 19:5,6. Then came the Lord’s own explanation of its significance as the heavenly affirmation of His grace and faithfulness and of His holiness which lets no sinner go unpunished, 34:1–7. It showed itself as grace and holiness in the radiant countenance of Moses while he explained the covenant laws, in the filling of the tabernacle with the cloud and the “glory of the Lord,” in the continued guidance of the nation by the pillar of cloud and fire, as grace in the consuming of Aaron’s first propitiatory sacrifice upon the altar of burnt offering, in the uninterrupted dwelling in the cloud and fire over the mercy seat in the most holy place, and at the close of the wandering in the wilderness in the solemn transfer of Moses’ leadership to Joshua in the tabernacle, Deuteronomy 31:14,15. During the trying circumstances of the exodus and the wilderness wandering it was the ever repeated wonderful and supernatural proclamation of the Gospel to this ignorant and unbelieving people, who through God’s direct revelation before their eyes and ears were to learn that there was a living God in heaven and that this God was among them as *their* gracious and faithful but also inviolably holy God, for whose sake they, too, were to be a pious and sanctified nation and fulfill their mission toward the world of nations.

Hence also we find the “glory of the Lord” so richly employed by Moses in Deuteronomy as a means of exhorting to faith, to fear of God, to thankfulness, to obedience, and to faithfulness toward the Lord, and as a warning against apostasy, unfaithfulness, and disobedience over against the Word of the Lord.

We read in Numbers 12: “But Moses was a much troubled man<sup>19</sup>, above all men which were upon the face of the earth.” The task of Moses was in fact a superhuman one. To tear away a nation of 600,000 men, not counting women and children, with all their belongings, from the dominion of the strongest world power of that day; to give it a law, the kernel of which to this day constitutes the foundation of all civilized nations, and also in the future must continue to do so if they are not immediately to go to ruin; to nourish such a mass of humanity in so desolate a wilderness for forty years; for the same length of time to restrain, at least into outward obedience, such an insubordinate, unfaithful and stiff-necked, constantly rebelling generation; with this nation to defeat the Amorites, Moabites, Midianites, and Ammonites and to possess their domain—how this was

<sup>19</sup> We need not be disturbed concerning the correctness of Luther’s translation by the modern translation “meek” (*sanftmütiger*). It is made in the interest of skeptical Biblical criticism that wishes to prove with this translation that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch because he could not have designated himself as the meekest of all men. Luther’s translation is above criticism.

possible is still today an inextricable enigma for all historiography. Moses himself often declares himself incompetent for this before God, and is again and again ready to despair under his burden. That he did not break down under this, that as an old man of eighty years he was able to keep faith and confidence, courage and strength, and carry through this superhuman task until the age of one hundred twenty is in the last analysis to be explained only by the fact that the Lord revealed Himself to him as He revealed Himself to no other mere man, also to no prophet, no David and no John the Baptist, nor will reveal Himself to any other man in the future: *in the appearance of the "glory of the Lord."*

Not once or twice, no, ever again the Lord had appeared to him and had permitted him to see His glory; twice for forty days He had instructed him as to everything that he was to ordain in Israel, as to how he was to lead and rule and teach it. And the Lord had spoken "unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," Exodus 33:11; "with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold," Numbers 12:8, compare Deuteronomy 34:10. Thus this man, who at the beginning had so energetically refused to carry out the work set before him (Exodus 4; 5:22; 6:12), had through the appearances of the "glory of the Lord" which he experienced become one willing, faithful, and strong, one who, faithful in all God's house (Numbers 12:7) did things, trusting in God's faithfulness and in the certainty of His almighty presence, which no man is able to do. Trusting in this faithfulness he had through his compelling prayer, in complete renunciation of his own glorification, yes, of the salvation of his soul, several times averted Israel's annihilation through the Lord's wrath, and through his intercession freed his sister Miriam from her terrible punishment. During the rebellion of Korah's company trust in this faithfulness had enabled him to say to the Lord: "I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them," and had enabled him, furious over the malice of this shameless slanderer, to pray: "Respect not thou their offering!" He had become divinely certain of the grace and faithfulness of the Lord toward himself and Israel.

Having arrived on the plains of Moab with the victorious host of Israel in the painful certainty that his course would come to an end here and that he would not set foot on the hoped-for land beyond the Jordan, there remained for him, besides the addition of a number of ordinances for the nation's future residence in Canaan, but two assignments still: the reiterated instruction and admonition of the nation to faithful obedience toward the Law which it had received, also to faith in the promise given by the Lord, and finally the public transfer of his office to Joshua, whom the Lord had long ago designated as his successor. Scarcely anywhere in the Old Testament do we find a longer discourse of such all-inclusive, well founded, evangelically cordial and earnest exhortation to faithfulness toward the Lord and of warning against apostasy than the addresses of this man of God so carefully recorded here. Here Moses has pulled all the stops of effective preaching to believing Christians. He speaks so simply and clearly that every listener and reader is bound to understand him; so directly and plainly that everyone is gripped in his conscience; with such dreadful earnestness and threatening force, that every heart must be shaken; and at the same time in such a cordial and heart-winning manner that no one can take offense at anything; all the while, however, with such confidence and joy that every listener has to become convinced of the divine truth and authority of his words. If we add to this his farewell address to the nation and the blessing of the various tribes, chapters 32 and 33, and then also his one single psalm that has been preserved for us (Psalm 90), which must have been composed in these last days of his life, then we have addresses and hymns which as to fullness of wisdom, as to depth of insight into life, and as to rhetorical beauty cannot be approached by any secular orator or poet.

How does this man come to this wonderful language and its penetrating power? Why, it is the Word of the great God that he is bringing; to this young generation which has seen but very little of the great works of the Lord he is telling the previous history of Israel; he is portraying for them the great deeds of God done to their fathers in such boundless grace and holy wrath, and the disobedience and wretched downfall of these fathers; and among the great deeds of the Lord again and again the various appearances of the "glory of the Lord" which he and the fathers had experienced. Fully ten times in his first address does he come back to the latter and in the midst of this his heart swells and his mouth overflows concerning the grace and faithfulness of the Lord, concerning His holiness and His dreadful earnestness. Thus he preaches the Word of God correctly, and the Word grips the hearts with the power of God. We have to forego quoting even a few examples from his

addresses here. He narrates and teaches; he points to the faithfulness of the Lord and the unfaithfulness and unthankfulness of their fathers; he opens the future to them and prophesies their future disobedience, apostasy, and destruction; he warns, scolds, sighs; he implores the Lord for grace and mercy in their behalf; he lauds the faithfulness of their God and shows the penitent the way of grace and comforts them with future victory. Read his farewell address, chapter 32, and the conclusion of his blessing upon the tribes, 33:26–29. Once he points here to the “glory of the Lord” dwelling in the clouds. And he closes with the highest praise of Israel: “Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.”