

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. IV.

APRIL, 1924.

No. 4.

Notes on 1 Cor. 15, 20—28.

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The past years have witnessed a remarkable revival of interest in eschatological problems, especially in the apocalyptic hope of Christendom, the *parousia* of the Lord. The late war with its terror and distress may largely account for this. The agony suffered by those whose beloved ones perished on the battlefields of Europe or in the hospitals, the cruelty and magnitude of modern warfare, the universal commotion and unrest among the nations, the anxious desire for peace on earth — all these factors cooperated in directing the vision of man to Christ's second coming. Both millenarians and antimillenarians have evinced the same interest in matters eschatological, and preachers who have centered their message in Christ's speedy return have gathered about this single issue thousands of followers, whose daily discussion has been the end of the world, and whose avidity for further information scores of periodicals have fed with undiminished zeal.

Now, we admit that no one ought to find fault with a sane and Scriptural discussion of this subject. The Bible itself treats it in various places and with becoming earnestness. Nevertheless, the discussion becomes downright wrong and harmful when it departs from the explicit information which the Word of God offers on this score. In the aggregate, that information does not comprise a great deal. With regard to the millennium we have no conclusive evidence whatever; all that is taught concerning it by the millenarians is merely conjecture. But even the Scriptural information as regards the final judgment of the world is limited. Though Christ and the holy writers frequently speak of the end of the world and the second coming of Christ, they are more interested in urging their hearers to escape the doom of Judgment than in recounting the details of that awful manifestation of wrath

upon unbelievers. All in all, we are able to gather so much from Scripture that the Day of Judgment will be a day of unspeakable agony to the enemies of Christ and His Word, while to believers it means the final triumph of their faith in glory and the supreme realization of perfect bliss in communion with God. Hence Christians should rejoice in, and earnestly pray for, the coming of the Lord, because His advent means their consummate redemption. That is the preeminent lesson which the Scriptural passages dealing with eschatological matters would teach.

The much-disputed and fairly outraged passage, 1 Cor. 15, 20—28, should serve no other purpose. It should not inspire the Christian reader with a morbid curiosity in things he can never understand, but strengthen his hope and picture to him the ineffable glory of Christ and His Church in that everlasting day of blissful eternity. What induced the apostle to pen the passage is evident from the context. Arguing with unbelievers who denied the resurrection, Paul was obliged to treat at great length this paramount article of Christianity. To the apostle the Savior's resurrection is an undeniable fact. That Christ rose from the dead God has shown to be certain, and with equal certainty He has proved that all who die in Him will rise also, vv. 1—11. 20. Hence men err who declare: There is no resurrection. That denial controverts the entire Christian hope; for the article concerning the resurrection is the great foundation doctrine of Christianity. Those who deny it destroy the faith and leave nothing but miserable despair in the wake of their vicious infidel propaganda, vv. 12—16. "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept," v. 20. Like a paean of triumph these words ring out, ushering in an amazing series of joyous events that will take place when "in Christ shall all be made alive," v. 22. To delineate these glorious happenings is properly the burden of the message in vv. 20—28. Which are these? We may summarize them as follows: The whole race died in Adam, so the whole race will be raised from the dead in Christ, v. 22. "But every man in his own order: Christ the First-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming," v. 23. Then comes the end, when Christ will deliver up His kingdom to the Father after having subjected all hostile powers; for His reign must continue till this has been achieved. The last of these hostile powers is death, as foretold in Scripture, which says that God has put all things in subjection to His Son. Obviously, God, who has put

all things under Christ's feet, is not included in the powers made subject to Him, vv. 24—27. So, when Christ shall have subdued all things, unto Himself (at the *end*, v. 24), He will Himself be subject to God, in order that He (God) may be all in all, that is, "the indwelling power animating and controlling the whole universe," v. 28. Such is the gist of Paul's teaching in this remarkable passage.

As we reflect on the various facts here pointed out, we notice that the whole narrative is as grand and sublime as it is simple and clear. Let the reader bear in mind that this passage is the culmination of the entire epistle, in which Paul, in the main, discusses practical subjects. He is compelled to feed his readers with *γάλα* (milk) and not with *βρωμα* (meat), chap. 3, 2. However, in the fifteenth chapter the great teacher of Gentile Christendom soars to the highest pinnacle of doctrinal conception. Nevertheless, Paul even now preserves that sanity and soberness which characterize him as a true teacher. He writes to be understood. His words are not those of a self-made frenzied prophet. He speaks with clearness, force, and precision, so that even the simplest Christian mind is able to follow his arguments. Only one statement, in a way, defies human comprehension, namely, the solemn declaration that the Son will deliver up the kingdom and Himself be subject to God. True, the words are clear enough; but is there a human mind on this side of eternity that can comprehend the height and depth of the transcendently sublime thoughts which they suggest? As long as we move in this vale of hope, we can at best but stammer a few incoherent words concerning that paramount mystery of godliness which is here revealed. Verily, the Day of Judgment will be not only a day of surpassing joy, but also one of marvelous surprises, when the veil will fall from our eyes, and we shall behold in midday splendor the marvel of God's being. Not until then will the last word be spoken in explanation of this great passage. In the mean while, however, we may clear the text of all misrepresentations and outline, though dimly, the great truths which Paul would here impress upon our hearts. There are, in the main, two errors which have been interpreted into this passage, the first imposing upon the text a *millennium*, the second declaring Christ's subordination to the Father. Let us consider these errors.

1. Does Paul in this passage teach the millennium? That is a common claim made by premillenarians. Thus we read in

Clarke's *Commentary* concerning this point: "The apostle mentions three orders here: 1) *Christ*, who rose from the dead by His own power; 2) *those that are Christ's*: all His apostles, martyrs, confessors, and faithful followers; 3) then cometh the end, when the *whole mass* shall be raised." Jamieson's *Commentary* says: "The second coming of Christ is not a mere point of time, but a period beginning with the resurrection of the just at His appearing and ending with the general Judgment. Then — after that, next in the succession of 'orders' or 'ranks' — the end, the general resurrection and final Judgment. Matt. 25, 46." Other commentaries support the same view. Peake's *Commentary* puts it thus: "This universal resurrection will not be accomplished all at once, but in stages, according to the different classes concerned. In the first stage there is Christ Himself as First-fruits; in the second, at His return, Christians; in the third stage, the rest of mankind, when He delivers up His kingdom to the Father after *He has abolished all hostile powers*." All these statements prove the essential weakness of the millennialistic position. Their views are based upon conjecture and not on direct text evidence. Even Clarke admits: "I must confess I find nothing in the sacred writings distinctly enough marked to support this opinion of the millennium, or thousand years' reign; nor can I conceive any important end that can be answered by this procedure." This is certainly an honest confession, and every unbiased student will agree that there is nothing in the text to support the opinion concerning the millennium. The words are clear: "But every man in his own order: Christ the First-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father," vv. 23. 24. *Ταγμά*, or order, means a military division, and of such *τάγματα* the apostle mentions two, namely, Christ the First-fruits, or, according to Heb. 2, 10, the *ἀρχηγός*, the Captain, who arose in solitary glory; and *οἱ Χριστοῦ*, those who are Christ's, the great army of believers who are now sleeping and will rise at the sound of the trumpet, v. 52. Premillenarians are mistaken when they make a third *tagma* out of *τέλος*, v. 24, and refer this to the resurrection of non-Christians. This is a manifest violation of the *usus communis* of the word. *To telos* is not a synonym of *tagma*. The word means "end" and nothing else. Also this interpretation violates the context. The *εἶτα* in v. 24 clearly refers to *ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ*. What the text says is simply this, that at

Christ's coming the believers in Christ will rise, after which will be the end, which concludes the world's history. True, the apostle does not especially mention the resurrection of the non-Christians. Rightly *The Expositor's Greek Testament* remarks: "Their introduction is irrelevant. Paul has proved the resurrection of Christ and is now making out that the resurrection of His sleeping ones is bound up with His own. Christ and Christians are the participants in the resurrection of life." What will happen to non-Christians the apostle clearly states in other places of his epistles. Here, where he purposes to comfort those who believe, he simply stresses the consolatory hope that is wrapped up in Christ's resurrection. As Christ rose, so shall also they rise to glory when Christ's *parousia* will bring about the end of the world. Very clearly Heinrici expresses this thought when he says: "Lag es hier ferner in seinem [des Apostels] Gesichtskreis, in einer Verhandlung, welche Zweifel an der Auferstehung bei Christen beseitigen will, Aufschlusse einzufuegen, welche τοῦς ἔξο angehen? Ist ueberhaupt die Annahme eines zwischen der Parousie und dem *telos* 'fortgesetzten Siegens Christi ueber alle Feindesgewalt' statt-haft, da doch die Parousie, wie auch die Erlaeuterung des *telos* V. 24. 25 zeigt, der bereits vollendete Sieg ist? Daher entspricht es vielmehr der Tendenz des Abschnitts, mit den meisten Auslegern *to telos* von dem Ende des gegenwaertigen Weltalters, der End-vollendung, dem schliesslichen Ausgang der Dinge, und zwar mit Beziehung auf die ἐν Χριστῶ, zu verstehen. Zieht man dazu in Betracht, dass *to telos* eintritt, wenn der Sohn das von ihm eroberte und verwaltete Reich dem Vater uebergibt, so darf der Begriff naecher bestimmt werden als Vollendung des Werkes Christi." (*K. E. Kommentar* von Dr. H. A. W. Meyer, 1888.) Considering these facts, it is evident that Clarke is fully justified in declaring: "I find nothing in the sacred writings distinctly enough marked to support this opinion of the millennium, or thousand years' reign."

2. Another question that arises in connection with the text is: Does this passage teach subordinationism in the Trinity? In particular, does it in any way suggest any essential inferiority of the Son to the Father? Advocates of subordinationism have regarded v. 28 as one of the *loci classici* supporting their view. From the statement: "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him," they have concluded that the *Logos* must needs be inferior to the Father. In making this

inference, however, they forget some important truths which must be borne in mind in interpreting this passage.

a) In his epistles St. Paul nowhere teaches, but rather precludes the idea of, subordination in the Trinity, by teaching the numerical sameness of the essence in the persons of the Godhead; as, for instance, in chap. 1, 3, where he wishes his readers grace and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. With regard to the force expressed in this parallelism *The Expositor's Greek Testament* quotes Ellicott, who says: "The union of $\theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ and $\nu\upsilon\gamma\iota\omicron\nu$ under the *vinculum* of a common preposition is one of the numberless hints scattered through St. Paul's epistles of the consciously felt and recognized coordination of the Father and Christ." (Cp. also 1 Cor. 12, 4—7; 2 Cor. 13, 14, etc.)

b) This passage does not speak of that subordination which the advocates of this peculiar doctrine profess; it only tells of a willing subjection, which takes place at the end of time. In support of their argument they therefore cite a passage which in no wise treats of the matter they wish to prove. They contend that the *Logos* is essentially inferior to the Father, whereas the passage in question does not at all speak of an essential relation of the Son to the Father.

c) Paul clearly emphasizes the fact that Christ will be subject to the Father *in connection with His voluntary surrender of the kingdom to God*. Clarke rightly remarks: "Our Lord Jesus is represented here as administering the concerns of the Kingdom of Grace in this lower world during the time that this divine economy lasts; and when the end — the time determined by the wisdom of God — comes, then, as there is no longer any need of this administration, the kingdom is delivered up to the Father." This must be borne in mind if we are to gauge the text correctly. According to God's Word the Father has delivered all things unto the Son, Matt. 11, 27. He has appointed Him King, Savior, and Judge of all men. John 5, 22; Acts 17, 31. To Him He has given all power in heaven and in earth. Matt. 28, 18. It is this truth to which Paul refers in v. 24. Christ must reign in His capacity of Savior-King until He has fulfilled the predictions concerning Himself, and especially until He has conquered all enemies, v. 25. Ps. 2, 6—12; 110, 1. When this has been accomplished, — the last enemy being death, v. 26, — then Christ will present to God the kingdom, v. 24, "a realm dominated by God's will," God's holy Church, of which Christ is the Head, and with which He is united

in mystic union. This, evidently, is the meaning of vv. 24 and 28. In a manner not clearly revealed to us, Christ will subject Himself freely and willingly in connection with the delivering up of the Church, which is His body. Of course, this does not mean that Christ will cease to rule, for His kingdom is eternal. Dan. 7, 14. It does, however, mean that *God's* eternal Kingdom of Glory will then be inaugurated. Since the object of Christ's mediatorship has been attained, the *present mode* of Christ's rule will cease, or rather, it will be exalted to that perfect form in which God is all in all. The Son, as Savior and Ruler of a kingdom the purpose of which was to glorify God (Luke 2, 49; John 4, 34), will no longer exercise any *distinct dominion*, since the persons of the Trinity will no longer act distinct or separate parts, but *God will be all in all*, that is, "God will be everywhere regnant and His Being everywhere imminent." Very aptly Gerhard remarks: "Scriptura enim duplex corpus Christo tribuit, personale, quod in *Λόγου ὑπόστασις* assumpsit, et spirituale sive mysticum, quod spiritus sui vinculo sibi copulavit, cujus corporis membra sunt omnes vere credentes. De hoc mystico corpore apostolus proprie loquitur, quando Christum Patri suo in die novissimo subjiciendum asserit." (*De Jud. Extr.*, § 112; quoted in Dr. Pieper's *Dogmatik*, Vol. II, p. 470.)

We repeat: Does this free and willing subjection in connection with the Church involve any essential inferiority on the part of Christ? *The Expositor's Greek Testament* answers this question as follows: "It affirms no other subjection of the Son than is involved in sonship. This implies no inferiority of nature, no extrusion from power, but the free submission of love." Again: "This solemn conclusion (*πάντα ἐν πᾶσι*) most fitly expresses the loyal purpose of the Son in His self-subjection, *whose submission exhibits the unity of the Godhead* (John 10, 30—36; 17, 22) and constitutes itself the focus and uniting bond of a universe in which God's will is everywhere regnant and His being everywhere imminent." This is true; for the text nowhere states that the distinction in the persons of the glorious Trinity will cease, or that the relation of the Son to the Father will undergo a change. In fact, such an idea is excluded. The *θεός* who will be all in all is the *Triune God*, who *never changes*, but is invariable *in being* as well as *in purpose*. Mal. 3, 6; Jas. 1, 17.

Hence only those who deny the doctrine regarding the true relation of the Son to the Father, as taught in John 10, 30, etc.,

distort this text to prove subordinationism. To those who accept the clear Scripture-passages teaching the numerical unity in trinity this passage presents no difficulties, although there remain mysteries which will not be solved until we shall see God face to face. We therefore find that all Christian scholars who accept the essential deity of Christ are in substantial accord in interpreting this passage, as the following quotations will show.

The *Weimarische Bibel* sums up the matter thus: "Er wird das Reich, welches er bisher mitten unter seinen Feinden in der streitenden Kirche gefuehrt, seinem Vater, von dem er es empfangen hat, wieder ueberantworten (V. 24) und hiermit oeffentlich bezeugen, dass er nach seiner menschlichen Natur, nach der ihm die Macht zu herrschen vom Vater in der Zeit gegeben ist, ihm untertaenig sei, und alsdann wird auch sein geistlicher Leib Gott dem HErrn voellig untertaenig sein, weil er ohne alle Widersetzung der Feinde und sonderlich der Suende in ihnen voellig und ruhig herrschen wird. 'Auf dass Gott sei alles in allen,' dass er nicht mehr durchs Wort, sondern ohne Mittel, durch sich selbst, in ihnen herrsche, aller seiner himmlischen Gueter sie teilhaftig mache, sich voellig ihnen zu erkennen gebe und sie an Leib und Seele durch sein seligmachendes Anschauen saettige." 1)

Bengel (tr. by C. F. Werner) *ad locum*: "Der Sohn wird dem Vater untertan sein, und das freiwillig. . . . Es ist jedoch hier nicht die Rede vom Sohne, insofern der Vater und der Sohn eins sind — diese Einheit des Wesens wird in unserer Stelle vorausgesetzt —, sondern es ist hier von dem Sohn die Rede im Hinblick auf die goettliche Haushaltung, sofern der Vater dem Sohn alles untergetan hat. Wenn aber gesagt wird, der Sohn werde dem Vater untertan sein, so ist dieses Wort viel angemess-

1) The *Weimar Bible* sums up the matter as follows: "He will again deliver the kingdom, which He has hitherto governed, surrounded by His enemies in the Church Militant, to His Father, from whom He has received it (v. 24), and thus He will publicly testify that according to His human nature, according to which the power of ruling was given Him by the Father in time, He will be subject to Him. Then also shall His spiritual body be altogether subject to the Lord God, because He will fully and gloriously reign in them [those who constitute His spiritual body] without any opposition on the part of His enemies and especially of sin. "That God may be all in all," that is, He will no longer rule in them through the Word, but without means, through Himself, making them partakers of His heavenly gifts, revealing Himself to them in His supreme glory and satisfying them both as to body and soul by their beatific vision of Him."

sener und wuerdiger, als wenn es hiesse: *unterworfen*. . . . Es ist also nicht so zu verstehen, als ob es hiesse: er wird untertan *gemacht werden*, sondern er wird sich selber untertan machen. . . . Die Untertaenigkeit und der Gehorsam des Sohnes gegen den Vater heben die Gleichheit der Macht nicht auf und beweisen keine Verschiedenheit des Wesens. Der Sohn erkennt mit hoechster Ehrfurcht in alle Ewigkeit, dass er von Ewigkeit vom Vater gezeugt sei; er erkennt auch, dass er ein geistliches Reich vom Vater empfangen habe und zum HErrn der ganzen Welt eingesetzt worden sei. Diese seine allerheiligste Ehrfurcht, Untertaenigkeit und kindliche Liebe wird er aller Kreatur kundmachen, damit alle Ehre dem ewigen Vater dargebracht werde. Aber damit geht dem Sohn nichts ab, denn der Vater will, dass alle den Sohn ehren, wie sie den Vater ehren, Joh. 5, 23; Roem. 14, 11. . . . 'Auf dass Gott sei alles in allen.' Hier kommt wieder etwas Neues, und zwar das Hoechste, das Ewigbleibende, der immerwachrende Zweck, zur Sprache. Alles und also auch alle werden dem Sohn untertan sein, der Sohn aber dem Vater, und wird keine Einsprache geschehen, keine Kreatur sich dazwischenlegen, kein Feind es hindern. Alles wird sagen: Gott ist mir alles. Und dies ist das letzte Ziel, der aeusserste Endpunkt des Ganzen, ueber den auch ein Apostel nicht weiter hinaus weiss." 2)

2) Bengel (*Gnomon*, ad loc.): "The Son will be subject to the Father, and that of His own choice. . . . This, however, is not predicated of the Son in so far as He and the Father are one; for the unity of the divine essence is here presupposed. But it is said of the Son respecting the divine economy, inasmuch as the Father has subjected all things to the Son. Likewise, when we are told that the Son shall be subject to the Father, this is far more appropriate and adequate than if the text would read: He shall be subjected. . . . We are indeed not to take the expression in the sense of: He shall be *made* subject, but rather as saying: He *will subject Himself*. . . . The subjection and obedience of the Son to the Father do not destroy the equality of divine power, nor do they prove a difference in the divine essence. With due respect the Son will eternally acknowledge that He has been generated from the Father; so also will He declare that He has received His spiritual kingdom from the Father and has been constituted by Him Lord of the whole world. This most holy deference, subjection, and filial love He will make known to every creature, in order that they may give all honor to the eternal Father. However, in doing so, the Son shall not forego anything; for the Father wants all to honor the Son even as they honor the Father. John 5, 23; Rom. 14, 11. 'That God may be all in all.' Here the apostle mentions something new, and indeed that which is highest and forever remaining, the everlasting purpose and goal. All things, and therefore all creatures, will be subject to the Son, but the Son will be sub-

Heinrici (Meyers *Kommentar*, 1888): “Der Zweck aber des goettlichen *ὑποτάσσειν* ist die absolute Gottesherrschaft: ‘damit Gott das Saemtliche in Saemtlichen sei,’ das heisst, damit Gott das einzige und unmittelbare, allbestimmende Prinzip im innern Leben aller Mitglieder des bisher von Christo beherrschten Reiches sei. Nicht als ob das bis dahin dauernde Herrschen Christi die Erreichung dieses Ziels gehindert haette, aber gedient hat es diesem Ziel als seiner schliesslichen Bestimmung, deren vollendete Erfuellung die vollendete ‘Ehre Gottes des Vaters’ (Phil. 2, 11) ist in Ewigkeit.”³⁾

Luther: “Das scheinen eitel dunkle Worte, ist aber alles, wie ich gesagt habe, dahin geredet, dass er einen Unterschied setze des Reichs Gottes und Christi, wiewohl es doch an ihm selbst einerlei Reich ist. Aber darum heisst es jetzt Christi, dass wir hier darin leben im Glauben und nicht ihn leiblich sehen noch hoeren, wie man einen weltlichen Koenig sieht vor Augen sitzen in seinem Reich mit der koeniglichen Krone und grosser, herrlicher Pracht. Denn es ist noch nicht offenbar, was wir an ihm haben und durch das Evangelium, Sakrament und Glauben erlangen sollen. Danach aber wird’s heissen Gottes Reich, wenn es nicht mehr verborgen, sondern vor allen Kreaturen offenbar werden und der Glaube aufhoeren soll; welches er heisst, das Reich dem Vater ueberantworten, das ist, uns und seine ganze Christenheit offenbarlich darstellen vor dem Vater in die ewige Klarheit und Herrlichkeit, dass er selbst regiere ohne allen Deckel. Doch nichtsdestoweniger wird Christus in seiner Herrschaft und Majestaet bleiben, denn er ist derselbige Gott und Herr, ewig und allmaechtig mit dem Vater. Aber weil er jetzt so regiert durch sein Wort, Sakrament usw., dass es die Welt nicht sieht, so heisst es Christi Reich und muss alles ihm untertan sein . . . bis an den Juengsten Tag, da er’s alles wird aufheben und sich alsdann mit seinem ganzen Reich dem Vater untergeben und zu ihm sagen: Ich habe bisher mit dir

ject to the Father. There will be no opposition, for no creature will intervene, and no enemy will prevent it. All will say: God is all to me. And this is the final goal, the extreme point of the whole, beyond which even an apostle does not know anything.”

3) Heinrici (Meyer’s *Commentary*, 1888): “The object of the divine *ὑποτάσσειν* is the absolute rule of God. ‘That God may be all in all,’ that is, that God may be the only and immediate all-determining principle in the inner life of all members of the kingdom hitherto ruled by Christ. Not as if the rule of Christ till then had hindered the reaching of this goal. It has rather served this object as its final end, the consummation of which is the perfect and eternal ‘glory of God the Father,’ Phil. 2, 11.

regiert im Glauben, das gebe ich dir ueber, dass sie nun sehen, wie ich in dir und du in mir seiest samt dem Heiligen Geist in einer goettlichen Majestaet, und alles dir offenbarlich haben und geniessen, was sie bisher geglaubt und gewartet haben." (St. L. VIII, 1186).⁴⁾

"Siehe das ist der Trost, so wir auf jenes Leben haben, dass Gott selbst soll unser und alles in uns sein. Denn nimm dir vor alles, was du gerne haettest, so wirst du nichts Besseres noch Lieberes finden zu wuenschen, denn Gott selbst zu haben, welcher ist das Leben und ein unausschoepflicher Abgrund alles Guten und ewiger Freude. . . . Summa, woran dein Herz wird Lust und Freude suchen, das soll reichlich da sein. Denn es heisst, Gott soll selbst alles in allen sein. Wo aber Gott ist, da muessen alle Gueter mit sein, so man immer wuenschen kann." (St. L. VIII, 1192 f.)⁵⁾

4) Luther: "These things appear to be nothing else than incomprehensible words. However, as I have said before, they are to show us that he [the apostle] differentiates between the kingdom of God and that of Christ, although it is really but one kingdom. Nevertheless it is called Christ's kingdom, since we now live in it by faith and neither see nor hear Him bodily, nor behold His royal crown and His great and glorious majesty. For it is not yet made manifest to us what we possess in Him and what we shall obtain through the Gospel, the Sacraments, and faith. Then, however, it will be called God's kingdom, because it will be concealed no longer, but will be revealed to all creatures, and faith shall cease. What he calls 'delivering up the kingdom to the Father' means nothing else than that He will present us and all Christians to the Father in eternal glory and majesty, so that He Himself shall rule without a veil. Nevertheless, Christ will remain in His kingdom and majesty, for He is the same God and Lord, eternal and omnipotent, as the Father. Since, however, He now so rules by His Word, Sacraments, etc., that the world cannot see it, it is called Christ's kingdom, and all things must be subject to Him . . . until Judgment Day, when He will put down all rule and subject Himself together with His kingdom to the Father, saying: I have hitherto reigned with Thee in faith; now I am delivering the kingdom to Thee that they may see that Thou art in me and I in Thee together with the Holy Ghost in one divine majesty, and that they may have and enjoy in full manifestation all things in Thee which hitherto they have believed and longed for." (St. L. Ed. VIII, 1186.)

5) "Behold, that is the comfort which we have in yonder life, namely, that God Himself shall be ours and all within us. For think of all things which you may desire, and you will neither find nor wish anything more precious than to have God Himself, who is Life and the inexhaustible Fountain of all blessings and of eternal joy. . . . In fine, whatever your heart may desire to enjoy, that you shall fully have. For we are told that God Himself will be all in all. But where God is, there all blessings must be which one may desire." (St. L. Ed. VIII, 1192. 1193.)

This interpretation by the great Reformer satisfies both the content and the purpose of the text. The purpose is to direct the believer's attention to the ineffable glory which shall be his in communion with the Triune God, the Author of salvation and the Source of supreme bliss. If the discussion of matters eschatological serves to increase faith in our adorable Redeemer and hope in the glorious salvation prepared for us by the Triune God, it is not in vain; for "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom. 15, 4.
