

The Challenge of the Christian Theology and more ...

By Missionary

E w a l d F r a n k

Preface

With this publication, I would simply like to address all people of good will. The use of impressive words has been avoided as much as possible. True convincing power does not lie in human expressions but in the power of God's creative Word. At the beginning of creation God spoke, and His Word had creative power. Humanity needs that word now, creating something in us and separating the light from the darkness. Although things seem to be running smoothly in the religious realm, if one takes a good look, it becomes obvious that spiritual darkness is covering the nations. When God, by His all powerful Word can speak into our lives, »Let there be light!« there will be light. He always does things in the same way. Only after the light had come into existence, was it separated from darkness. Then He continued with His work of creation. It is the same with the spiritual creation. The Lord Himself speaks, and His light shines in the darkness to illuminate each one of us (John 1). The time has come for God's mighty Word to be heard, and the truth to be separated from deception, for the Lord is now bringing His plan of salvation to completion.

This brochure is especially addressed to all theological faculties; it is there where the great responsibility lies for those who are trained to be the spiritual leaders of humanity. Initially all people trust scholars. In no uncertain terms do I wish to bring forth Bible teachings, not to discredit the teachings or traditions of religions which others hold dear. But if there is discrepancy between those teachings and the Word of God, one must conclude, God is right and not a religious institution. I write with respect, considering the dignity of man, which cannot be touched. I also respect what others believe. Of course, God's majesty is far above human dignity and His Word must have pre-eminence over men's words.

Born in 1933, I have a treasure of experiences from which I can draw. Since my calling to the ministry on April 2nd, 1962, I have taught Bible seminars, preached in over 130 countries, and led evangelistic crusades. In some countries I had the opportunity to speak to entire nations via TV, holding large meetings attended by thousands. For ten years, each Sunday morning, I have broadcast 20-minute radio speeches via the famous Radio Luxembourg here in Europe. In all my travels into other nations I've had the opportunity to meet renowned personalities of religious, political, and economic position. Through my extensive travelling, I have also become knowledgeable about world religions.

I have availed myself to study church history, learning the views of various religions and denominations. I am convinced, people have the right to believe as they desire. Faith is a personal matter, and no one should force his or her faith on someone else.

My task is to show the right way as made known to us in the Book of Books. To find this way and to walk in it is a personal decision. I do not belong to a particular denomination, I am not obligated to please others and can boldly proclaim the teachings of the Bible. Each one has a duty to compare this exposition with the original Word of God and prove whether it is right and if so, be persuaded. No force is executed in the Kingdom of God, especially in teaching. Divine enlightenment will be with those who open themselves before God.

The following account will be accepted by some, rejected by others. Those who step into public view must live with this. I only desire to be true and accomplish my commission with sincerity. The rest I leave to God, Who can work and perform all things in each person.

It is noteworthy that with God there is only one right answer, and one possibility. Man's answers hold many possibilities, but which of them would be right? I have decided to let God answer, and I beg you, don't hold this against me.

Introduction

There is increasing tension in the world, as we are nearing the turn of the century. People are asking what the next millennium will bring. The expectations for the immediate future are of course very different. The majority of the experts show optimism; they are confident that it will be possible to solve the threatening problems humanity is facing, and that everything will continue as it has until now. Others seem to be in the end-time mood, being in distress because of social injustice, unemployment, the drastic rise in crime, drug abuse, illnesses which were not known before, natural catastrophes of every kind over which we have no influence, disturbances and daily news about wars and turmoil. The ongoing changes are unstoppable, including the climate and the environment. Many say, »We do not understand this world any more!«, others confess fearfully to see the scriptural »Menetekel«, the handwriting on the wall, which obviously announces something. It takes people who find grace in the sight of God like Daniel, to read and understand this handwriting correctly, the message of warning showing the way of escape. **It must be the message of the hour, based on the predictions of God's Word for our time.**

Faith once inherited has been lost since the age of illumination, as the many atrocities performed in the name of Christianity became known. Faith in science has become matchless. Creation they cannot refute, but have taken their stand against the Creator, denying Him because they don't have eyes to see Him (Rom. 1: 18-23). In the natural every work praises the master and speaks of him. How can one separate the Creator from the majestic work of creation? In our generation many theologians have spread unbelief. Instead of placing their criticism on the institution called »the church« they, in spiritual blindness, direct it towards God and His Word. Being accepted by the public, they've made reputations for themselves. Simultaneously they have succeeded in causing many to doubt God's Word, mocking the Lord of Glory and putting him to shame. Through achievements and multiple inventions, man became proud. Especially since the space age he has made himself the center of the universe. Young people are especially susceptible to doubt, which is being spread like never before. Finding disappointment in the established church, they turn away from the faith. Asking for reasons in life and seeking satisfaction and solutions for their problems, they turn to many things including drugs and Eastern religions.

»Global economy«, »world community«, »multicultural society«, these are all slogans for today. The separating lines between religion and ideologies are swept away and the common things are emphasised in order to move with the trends of the time. The human spirit of reconciliation is at work everywhere, but, sad to say, no one wants to be reconciled with God or His Word, on the contrary: they are separated from it, and seek to be reconciled with the confessions of other religions. At the same time the desire for truth, still in the conscience, is being put aside and the longing is being filled with religious or worldly substitutes. Everybody believes as he likes. In 1994 the United Nations, headquartered in New York, established a religious commission, which must play a part in the realisation of the New World Order. Among other things, their intent includes worldwide, uniformed worship. »New Age« is in!

Does all happen by chance?

Natural and religious history has been accompanied by turmoil and blood shed. In our century we had World War I, and II, there was the terrible »Holocaust«, the splitting of the East and West, and »Hiroshima« and »Nagasaki« and much more. The two »superpowers« divided the world since 1945. The »cold war« reached its climax in Europe in August 1961, when the »Berlin Wall« was built, and almost escalated into a real war. Those who saw it, remember it vividly. Because of the initiative of Willy Brandt at the end of the sixties, the desired détente, known as »Ostpolitik«, finally set in. Another milestone was the historic Poland pilgrimage of the Polish Pope in 1979, which initiated the fall of communism. During the celebrations of the 750th anniversary of Berlin in June 1987, US-President Ronald Reagan visited the divided city. Looking towards the Brandenburg Gate in the East Sector of Berlin,

which had been closed since 1961, he spoke the historic words to the Soviet Party leader Michail Gorbatchev:

»Mister General Secretary, if you seek peace, if you wish prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you wish liberalisation, then, please, come here to this gate! Mister Gorbatchev, open this gate! Mister Gorbatchev, tear down this wall!«

In November 1989 it happened: change came, the wall fell and the two German states were united. The divided Europe was, thanks to God, overcome peacefully and »reconciliation« and »peace and safety« became the main words for this epoch. Whatever belongs together, will finally grow together! The uniting of Germany was the prerequisite for the »United Europe«. Once again the maps had to be drawn anew. The time has come, the Euro-currency will replace those of participating countries. The whole world is somehow in the process of fulfilling Bible prophecy as predicted for the end-time. No one can stop the course of history. The developments are signs of the times and we should take heed and watch.

Now the historic »Roman Empire« is coming into existence again, as foretold in the Scriptures, is becoming soon world power number one. It is the »United Europe«, already called »Euroland«, with over 370 million inhabitants. Germany, one of the seven leading heads, which was wounded, has recovered, as seen symbolically in Revelation, chapter 13 (first part) and is the engine. The United States of America with 266 million inhabitants must be willing to share its super power status playing the role of the world-policeman, accepting second place, as also predicted symbolically in Bible prophecy (Rev. 13, second part). Political might is already represented by the United Nations — under one roof. Now the national and international economic powers join together: financial institutions, insurance companies, car factories, steel concerns, oil companies etc. In this way the world-capital on earth merges. The same applies to the religious power of the World Council of Churches, and especially to Rome, where the actual united world power is based. Does this happen only by chance all at the same time or is it the uniting of times and signs? Do things move toward a climax and finally wind up a one world government, which is also predicted for the last phase of the present age?

This uniting process which includes nations, religions, political powers, and world commerce is supposed to bring peace and prosperity to humanity. But in spite of all the agreements and efforts, tragedy will suddenly strike as announced in the Holy Scriptures, »... *For when they shall say, **Peace and safety**, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.*« (1 Thess. 5: 1-3 a. o.). When this uniting peace process reaches its climax, the concern will be with Israel and the Near East. In the final stage the world community will stand against Israel. »**Jerusalem**« will be the burden stone (Zech. 12: 3), as foretold 2,500 years ago. Whatever is predicted is going to happen, even after all the concessions Israel makes for peace. Millions of praying believers will not hinder it.

The time is near

Someone must dare to expose the time in which we live, being willing to bear the criticism for it.

Those of us, no longer so young can remember the words which were commonly uttered by God-fearing people around the time of World War II, »A Thousand years or no more thousand years!« Indeed, many are expecting something special to happen at the turn of this century. Some believe in the predictions of the astrologer Nostradamus for the coming millennium. He has in part taken thoughts from the words of the prophets, inspired by the Spirit of God, found in the Book of Books.

The ages have taken their course, as our drawing shows. Since Adam 6,000 years have passed. With the Lord — in terms of the prophetic Word — it has been six days. For it is written, »... *one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*« (2 Pet. 3: 8). The Lord God said to Adam, »... *for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*« And so it happened just as it was spoken and he died being 930 years old. The coming seventh millennium is the »last day«. In the Old and in the New Testament we can read repeatedly of this day; in John, chapter 6 alone four times. At the beginning of this last and final day the first resurrection will take place; at the end of the same, the last — the second resurrection (Rev. 20). Between the two are the one thousand years — the seventh day, the »day of the Lord« (Isa. 13: 6-13; Zeph. 1: 14; Mal. 4: 5; 1 Thess. 5: 2; 2 Pt. 3: 10 and others). In

Rev. 20 it is described as the millennial reign of Christ. Whether we believe it or not, when His timing is fulfilled, God will bring His plan to completion. His counsel shall stand. *»For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness; because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.«* (Rom. 9: 28).

Of course, it is true that no one knows the time or the hour of certain events, but we are advised to watch the *»signs of the times«* as given in the Bible, heeding its message. Concerning the people of Israel we are told they would be scattered among all nations (Dt. 4: 27-29; Dt. 28: 64-68; Lk. 21: 20-24 a. o.). At the end of *»these days«* they would be regathered. It says, God will once again choose His people and bring them back into their homeland (Isa. 11: 11-12; Isa 14: 1). *»Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the coasts afar off, and say, He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.«* (Jer. 31: 10). ***»For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.«*** (Ezek. 36: 24). The Prophet Hosea also foretold the return of the children of Israel. He even gave the span of time they would be scattered and announced, *»Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.«* (Hos. 6: 1-2).

The **two prophetic days** behind us are the two thousand years in which the people of Israel were scattered. Now they are gathered from over 140 countries and have returned to their homeland. In 1948 the state of Israel came into existence. Once again Bible prophecy was fulfilled before our very eyes. But as the Scripture says, **on the third day** after their dispersion, that means, in the breaking forth of the next millennium they will receive life. This will happen after the Gentile Bride-Church is completed (Acts 15: 13-18; Rom. 11: 25-32) and taken up to be with the Lord in Glory (1. Thess. 4: 13-17). Only then will Israel receive life from God through believing in their Messiah. *»For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?«* (Rom. 11: 15).

A well-known man of God emphasised, *»Whoever wishes to know the time of day should look at his wristwatch. If someone wants to know the day of the week he needs to look at the calendar. But to see the progression of time one must look to Israel.«*

Israel has **divine right** to the land, which the Eternal God gave to Abraham as an inheritance according to the promise. Others only have the **right to live** there. Jerusalem was never the capitol of another nation. Mohammed does not mention it a single time in his 114 surahs, which are the chapters in the Koran. In Rev. 16, from verse 12 onward, we find recorded what will take place at the *»Armageddon«* inferno. The angels of judgement are ready for the hour, day, month, and the year at the river **Euphrates**. *»Loose the four angels who are bound in the great river, Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men.«* (Rev. 9: 14b-15).

As soon as that hour strikes, *»the great day of God Almighty«*, as stated in the text, commences, and one third of humanity will die. The river Euphrates has its course through Syria and Iraq. These are the archenemies of Israel. They will not only use tanks and rockets, but chemical and biological weapons also. The Prophet Zechariah described vividly how the destruction, planned against Israel, will be turned towards their enemies. *»And this shall be the plague with which the Lord will smite all the peoples that have fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.«* (Zech. 14: 12). ***»And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples ...«*** (Zech. 12: 3).

The Scriptures predict what will take place, and surely, it will happen. Sadly to say, before the swords are changed into ploughshares, (Isa. 2: 1-5; Mic. 4: 1-5), ploughshares will be turned into swords and pruning hooks into spears to fight that decisive battle, as told in Joel 3: 9-17. All agreements, made by Oslo, Dayton, Wye or others, will not prevent that great battle.

A number of scriptural references could be given to show what will take place. But that is not our concern in this exposition. I have already published books and brochures, dealing with biblical topics. The time of grace is coming to an end. The countdown has started, and the Lord is not slack concerning the promise of His Return, as some seem to think, He only waits

for the final ones to be saved (2 Pt. 3: 9). The promise of the Lord will soon be history, »Behold, I come quickly!« That event is closer than ever before.

We are living in such a decisive time moving from one millennium to another. The climax of world history is before us; therefore the fundamental truths of God's Word must be made apparent in its original intent. From its conception Christianity began to depart from apostolic doctrine, forsaking the narrow way, living in traditions instead of the Word of God. Most people aren't even aware of this fact. Jews, Muslims and people in other religions have the right to hear the divine original Truth of the everlasting Gospel.

Apparently the developments of this century are part of eschatological predictions in Bible prophecy. Those who know the prophetic Scriptures understand the history of mankind from beginning to end, as foretold in God's Word. Everything pertaining to the end of this age is coming to fulfilment. The scriptural »end-time message« produces sober, not panic-stricken believers who live a normal life. At the same time they prepare themselves to be ready for the Return of Christ. They neither specialise on themes of the apocalyptic nor threaten others with »doomsday« theories but wish to be made ready as the adorned Bride for the heavenly Bridegroom when He returns.

The only valid measuring rod

***If Thy Word is no more valid,
Whereupon should my faith rest?
I'm not concerned with a thousand worlds,
But only try to do thy Word the best.
(N. L. Earl of Zinzendorf)***

Our goal in this exposition is to **place the Bible teachings alongside church theology** to show the contrast between the two. Some say this is not loving, for truth to be published in such a direct manner, but it has to be, since only revealed Truth will set us free from all error (Jn. 8, 32). Only then can light be separated from darkness and right from wrong.

Each faith has its own creeds, divulging its teachings. The apostles whom the Lord commissioned gave us all the doctrines of the New Testament Church. It is essential to heed the biblical criteria, as the Apostle James pointed out in the Jerusalem council before the brethren: »**And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written ...**« (Acts 15: 15). This being true it can then be said, »**For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us ...**« (v. 28).

When the words of the prophets and teachings of the apostles were tampered with, sometimes not even considered, then we find creeds of men, which come into existence not by the Spirit of revelation but instead by the influence of the spirit of antichrist. The true Church of the living God only has one foundation, namely that of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief-cornerstone (1 Cor. 3: 10-15; Eph. 2: 19-22 a. o.). She remains forever founded upon God's Word according to the pattern of early Christianity. »**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**« (Acts 2: 42).

The Apostle Paul warned that men from their own midst would rise up teaching heresies (Acts 20: 30). He pointed out that even then another Jesus was being preached, another spirit was already at work (2 Cor. 11: 4). Those who deviated from the original teachings did so with cunning, as mentioned in Gal. 1: 6-10. The Apostle emphasised that the Gospel entrusted to him was not from man. The deviations occurred when men added their own thoughts and words; such was the case then and is now. The Gospel was given to Paul by a direct revelation of Jesus Christ (vv. 11-12). The others who deviated could not make this claim. In place of the spiritual gospel, which man forsook, he has developed or invented a mental gospel. Comparing the Holy Scriptures with these strange teachings we can clearly see the difference between the true, everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ and the one changed by men.

The old dispute

The Godhead has always been a challenge for theologians. Why people fuss over God isn't easily understood and why so many different views exist about Him is totally incomprehensible.

The teaching about God is so important to each denomination that it is always found in the first article of faith. Within Christianity a dispute always arises about whether there is one, unique God, a two-person God, or a triune God existing in three separate persons of the same nature from eternity. In reality many different views and concepts are in existence which people are not even aware of. And within these different views exist many variations; each group is convinced they are right. We shall deal with this subject only **from the standpoint of God's Word** letting **the Scriptures speak** for itself. What is not explicitly expressed within the Scriptures is not real Truth but instead man's interpretation.

Everything begins with God. The Bible is the only book on earth where we find the testimony of the Almighty from the very beginning. Therefore the Bible is the only required absolute, the measuring rod of all things, in reference to God. The Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testament alike, are divine legacies for us. Nothing can be added or taken from it. The testimony of God is complete and final. It starts with the Creator and the creation report including the whole course of human history, the salvation plan, and ends after the last judgement, in the new heaven and the new earth (Isa. 65: 17; 2 Pt. 3: 13; Rev. 21: 1). The single epochs during the span of the Old and New Testament clearly show their significance and goal. From these we are also told where we came from and where we are going.

About God and God's Word uncounted volumes have been written and are still being published. The christological disputes, known as the »Arianic dispute«, from the 4th century are well known to all who are acquainted with church history. People have tried to understand what cannot be understood, they tried to explain what couldn't be explained. Men in church history began to use philosophical terms to describe the revelation of God in Christ which is the actual stumbling stone and rock of offence (Ps. 118: 22; Isa. 28: 16; Mt. 21: 42-44; 1 Pt. 2: 6-8 a. o.). Calling it theology, they have imposed their own ideas into scriptural teachings. To this day they are part of the problem, causing arguments and trying to give explanation, without divine revelation.

As announced in the Old Testament the religious builders would reject the stone. They did not know where to place Him. He did not fit into their building. What our Lord has said is still valid, »*The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*« (Lk. 20: 17-18). Peter has referred to the same Scripture (Isa. 8: 14-15; Ps. 118: 22) before the High Counsel, »**This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.**« (Acts 4: 11). For some He is set to fall upon and for others to raise them up. So it was prophesied by Simeon (Lk. 2: 34). Only where He builds His own Church will He also have pre-eminence in all things (Col. 1: 14-20). There He is known as the chief-cornerstone and also as the headstone, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. There His Own serve Him, believe Him and they stand with Him. Where men are building their own church, He is never given His rightful place, and becomes a stumbling stone (1 Pt. 2: 6-8).

Self-evidence?

Many things considered self-evident have been found to be just the opposite. In reality, nothing is self-evident.

For the overwhelming majority within Christendom the traditional teaching about the Trinity is »self-evident«, moreover, if someone does not believe this doctrine, that person will certainly not be recognised. For the Jews it is absolutely unacceptable. They can only believe what God said and what the prophets taught. For them strict monotheism — the belief in only one unique God, besides Whom there is no other — is the highest and first commandment which must never be broken. The teaching about different persons is seriously in opposition to the first commandment, which came forth from the lips of God Himself. For Muslims to

believe that God, whom they call Allah, has a son in heaven is the most terrible blasphemy on earth. The main utterance of faith in Islam is, »There is no God except Allah!«

What is self-evident for some, is not for others. Conformity is found in the respective religions and denominations of which there are many, proclaiming they are right.

If the unscriptural terminology »Trinity« was in the New Testament and signified that God manifested Himself for our salvation as our Father in heaven, as our Redeemer in Christ the Son on earth, and through the Holy Spirit, then one could tolerate the same. But when it means that the eternal God brought into existence a second and a third person of God, and these three are one in everything, then we have to research such a teaching and ask, »Where is it found in the Bible?« The answer to this question is, »Nowhere!« Secondly we must know when and how such teachings and ideas began. In literature concerning this theme many things, which never occurred, can be read. We cannot go into detail about them, but it should be understood by all **that »unscriptural terminology« cannot contain »scriptural truth«**. Many have had the courage to deal with this subject critically and are asking, if those who represent the Trinity, even know what they believe and how they can comprehend one God in three persons?

In the »*Catechism of the Catholic Church*« concerning the subject of the Trinity, on pg. 66, § 251 we read the following, »In order to articulate the dogma of the Trinity, the Church had to develop its own terminology with the help of certain notions of philosophical origin: "substance," "person" or "hypostasis," "relation," and so on. ...« Admittedly hypothetical, philosophical terms were used to formulate the Trinity dogma. Paul warned us against philosophy (Col. 2: 8). Philosophers can use their philosophy as they like, but please, not about God. What has philosophy to do with the Almighty?

Some state, the first person is the »**origin without origin**«; and the other two have their origin in Him etc. It must be seriously asked: Does God, how ever understood, exist from eternity in heaven as three individual divine persons of the same substance? Is that even possible?

There are different teachings among the Orthodox Church and the Church of Rome: For instance, how the Holy Ghost as a person came into being, namely whether from the Father alone or proceeding from the Father and the Son. On page 65, § 247, in the same catechism we find the following statement, »**The affirmation of the *filioque** does not appear in the Creed confessed in 381 at Constantinople.** (This is very interesting in regards to time). **But Pope St. Leo I, following an ancient Latin and Alexandrian tradition, had already confessed it dogmatically in 447 (so late?), even before Rome, in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon, came to recognise and receive the Symbol of 381. The use of this formula in the Creed was gradually admitted into the Latin liturgy (between the eighth and eleventh centuries)** (that means about a thousand years after the apostles). **The introduction of the *filioque** into the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed by the Latin liturgy constitutes moreover, even today, a point of disagreement with the Orthodox Churches.**«

All versions of how the Holy Spirit came into existence and about the Godhead in general are concepts of the mind. What has a Latin liturgy, a creed that was made into a dogma so late in history, to do with Christ and the apostles? Nothing. Every revelation of God is a reality and is found and witnessed in His Word. God did not explain Himself, He is too glorious for our knowledge (Job 36: 26). He revealed Himself, but still remains hidden to many.

Men have fought even unto death over this theme. What does God Himself have to say? That is our question. Men say many confusing things about God; what He says about Himself is **clear**, and that is what we wish to look at. Is **He one God only who manifests Himself in the New Testament as Father above us, in the Son with us, in the Holy Spirit in us**, or are there three different persons who agree as one? What does the Scripture have to say? There is no other authority for anyone who truly believes God.

The classic teaching of the Trinity has been believed and adopted by all churches including those held by the state, that all three persons are equally great, equally almighty, equally omniscient and also equally eternal. Where do we find this taught in the Bible? Nowhere! It is called »**the mystery of God's life within the Blessed Trinity**«, a »**theologia**« which is revealed unto us by the »**oikonomia**« (Catechism of the Catholic Church, pg. 62, § 236). This is in itself contradictory, because if the Almighty is divided into three, we no longer have one Almighty. We also would love to think that one Almighty, Eternal, Omniscient God who is omnipresent would be sufficient by Himself. This one Eternal God has, as Scripture overwhelmingly reports, only spoken by Himself, never to another person. Even when He swore, He only did it by Himself. The following serve as examples: Thus saith the Lord, »*By myself have I sworn ...*« (Gen. 22: 16). »*I have sworn by myself ...*« (Isa. 45: 23). »*The Lord God hath sworn by*

himself ...« (Am. 6: 8). Heb. 6: 13 confirms that whenever God wants to emphasise something with an oath, He always does it by Himself. God's concern is that we hear the penetrating words of His mouth, »*Unto thee it was shown, that thou mightest know **that the Lord, he is God; there is none else beside him. Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord, he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else.***« (Dt. 4: 35 + 39).

The testimony of historians

It is significant that secular writers hit the target, reporting more precisely than their religious counterparts.

Those who defend the Trinity doctrine should do as others, and use books from neutral and independent sources rather than just from their own denominations. Ultimately they should regard the Bible as the only valid word. It is unanimous. Each encyclopædia, which deals with the Trinity states that no such doctrine is found in the Old Testament, New Testament, or in the documents of the first two centuries. The christological dispute became a state council, after the last general persecution of Christians under Cæsar Diocletian (302-312) ended. It was Constantine I who especially for that purpose called the Council of Nicaea (325). He as a politician had the interest of his kingdom remaining united. Agreement was not reached at all between the two leaders Athanasius and Arius or the more than 250 others present, which represented different factions. Other councils followed. There was dispute, disagreement and fighting in formulating the Godhead more and more after man's own concepts.

Many have desired to know the Truth, some of which were excellent theologians. Unfortunately they did it without forsaking wrong thoughts and concepts that they had learned. You cannot have the Word and the interpretation, the right and the wrong cannot coexist, one via revelation the other from the mind. If the point of origin is not right and does not spring forth from the Bible, how can the result be right and merge into oneness with the origin?

Professor Emil Brunner has dedicated a whole chapter to this theme under the title »*The triune God*«. From his book, chapter 16, pg. 208-244, we take the following statements. »**Judaism, Islam and rational theism are Unitarian. Otherwise we must be honest and confess that the Trinity was never in the early New Testament Christian theme or proclamation nor was it a central point of content but has crept into the faith of the church at another time. Therefore: The Center of Christian theology but not of the Christian faith. Is such a discrepancy between theology and faith possible? Or is it owing to a wrong development of the whole doctrinal structure of the church?**«

»**The early Christian Church lives by the fact that through the Son, she has the Father and is connected with the Father and the Son by the Holy Spirit.**«

»**As the prophet was the one who made known the Word of God, which came to him, and he brought it to validity, so now it is Jesus Himself Who came.**«

»**He, Who is the true image of God, is the One who transforms us into that image of God.**«

»**The Son is the revelation of the Father. Inasmuch as we call upon Jesus as the Lord, we call upon Him Who is from eternity and Lord alone, Whom we only came to know in Jesus as He would be known and have Him as He has given Himself unto us.**«

»**That was the point, that in the Son and only in Him do we have the Father, that through the Son and only through Him do we receive the Holy Spirit, that only through the Son do we know the Father and become partakers of the Holy Spirit.**«

»**The concept of a ›triune God‹ does not belong to the testimony or proclamation of the original Church.**«

»**In Jesus Christ the holy merciful God revealed Himself to us, self-revealing, reconciling, redeeming. By His Holy Spirit He makes the historical fact an inward experience, even in this He does the work, and draws us.**«

»**Only if it is true that God Himself was in Christ, is it true that He reconciled us with Himself.**«

»**Only the self-speaking, self-acting, personal Presence of God is the complete revelation and reconciliation, and this has happened in Jesus Christ.**«

»**A Son exists only from the time of incarnation. This one is truly God. Therefore Christ is a kind of theophany and God Himself, the Father, stepped into the sufferings of death.**« Most certainly Professor Brunner must have known about the testimony of Paul, »**God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself**« (2 Cor.

5: 19). Such wonderful application originates with a professor of theology, who belongs to the Trinity camp!

Please allow me a few more historical publications from which I shall quote, in reference to this theme. Please reflect for they will be helpful, possibly even taking someone out of self-assurance and lead them into divine assurance. In the history book »*The Paganism in Our Christianity*«, we find the BOLD statement: »**The origin of the Trinity is entirely pagan.**«

In the *Encyclopedia of Religion* we read the following, »**Theologians today are in agreement that the Hebrew Bible does not contain a doctrine of the Trinity. ... Theologians agree that the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity.**«

The Jesuit Edmund Fortman states in his book »*The Triune God*«, »**The New Testament writers ... give us no formal or formulated doctrine of the Trinity, no explicit teaching that in one God there are three coequal divine persons ... There is no evidence that any sacred writer even suspected the existence of a Trinity within the Godhead.**«

The *New Encyclopædia Britannica* writes, »**Neither the word Trinity nor the explicit doctrine appears in the New Testament.**«

In the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* the writer states, »**At first the Christian faith was not Trinitarian ... It was not so in the apostolic and sub-apostolic ages, as reflected in the New Testament and other early Christian writings.**«

In the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* it is written, »**The formulation 'one God in three Persons' was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century.**«

In the *Encyclopedia Americana* we find the following statement, »**Fourth century Trinitarianism did not reflect accurately early Christian teaching regarding the nature of God; it was, on the contrary, a deviation from this teaching.**«

Many centuries before Christ, there were triads, or trinities, of gods in ancient Babylonia and Assyria. The French *Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* notes one such triad in the Mesopotamian area: »**The universe was divided into three regions; each of which became the domain of a god ... the triad of the Great Gods.**«

The historian Will Durant makes the following remark, »**Christianity did not destroy paganism; it adopted it ... From Egypt came the ideas of a divine trinity.**«

The book »*Symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals*« states, regarding a Hindu Trinity that existed centuries before Christ: »**Shiva is one of the gods of the Trinity. He is said to be the god of destruction. The other two gods are Brahma, the god of creation, and Vishnu, the god of maintenance ...**«

The writings of »*The Church of the First Three Centuries*« carry the following statement: »**The doctrine of the Trinity was of gradual and comparatively late formation; ... it had its origin in a source entirely foreign from that of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures; ... it grew up, and was engrafted on Christianity, through the hands of the Platonizing Fathers.**«

The *New Shaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* confirms this: »**The doctrines of the Logos and the Trinity received their shape from Greek Fathers, who ... were much influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Platonic philosophy.**«

What an overwhelming testimony these sources have given! May such statements compel everyone to consider the subject.

History confirms it

One can hardly comprehend it, but history and secular writers truly confirm the Bible to be correct, not the interpretations of theologians.

The various sources about the subject in question agree and comply with the Bible. We can no longer avoid such statements, at least not with a good conscience. We must be allowed to ask what dealings a Christian has with the images and concepts of the Godhead, which came from ancient heathenism where knowledge redeems, instead of the sacrifice. This should be our concern. In the Mithras cult wherein the triune doctrine is being taught we have the following thesis, »In a second creation the ›Father of Greatness‹ has begotten the living Spirit. The ›Father of Greatness‹ has sent a third one who conquers the demons.« (Chronik der Menschheit). By looking at the multiple pictures of the trinity, especially in a book titled »Die dreiköpfige Gottheit« (=»The three-headed Godhead«), written by Willibald Kirfel, one finds many similarities with the trinity doctrine within Christianity. From the Catholic oriented *Herder Lexikon* we only illustrate one page. These photos show different Trinitarian pictures and should alarm us. We see from the actual developments that God let not only fall Himself into the hands of men as *Immanuel*, but also His Word has fallen into human hands.

Hands off God! We don't shape Him; He shapes us! He is not as we portray Him; He is as presented and introduced to us by Himself!

Not only theologians and historians but other high-ranking personalities have something to declare about the Trinity. In our country we have a list of prominent men from Moses Mendelssohn right to the ex-chancellor Helmut Schmidt. M. Mendelssohn wrote, »I cannot trust a testimony that according to my conviction is against a set, unmovable truth. According to the teachings of the New Testament (at least as it is found in official books and explained in their teachings) I must believe 1) in a Trinity in the Divine Being, 2) in the coming into humanity of a God of the Godhead, 3) in the suffering of one person of the Godhead which has relinquished Himself of the Divine Majesty, 4) in the satisfaction and gratification of the first person in the Godhead through the sufferings and the death of the humiliated second person, and many more such similar things: I reject them even if I will loose eternal salvation. If I found these teachings in the Old Testament, I would have to reject also the Old Testament. Although a worker of miracles would try to confirm them before my very eyes and would raise all the dead which have been buried for centuries, I would say, ›The worker of miracles has raised the dead, but his teaching I cannot accept.« (H. -J. Gamm, »Das Judentum« — »The Judaism«). Helmut Schmidt said in an interview, »I believe that God is the Lord of history, but why He should be triune has not become clear to Me.« (ACP Magazin 4/1997).

Clarity can only come from truth. Whatever is false will remain unclear. **God contradicts all »Trinity« doctrines by the apostolic word:** »Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.« (Gal. 3: 20). It is a fact: **not a single time** in the Bible do we find it written that He is *tri-une*. That may shock some, because until now that is all they have heard. The word *Trinity* is the most frequent word used in the »mother church« and the »daughter churches« as well; it is the holiest of their theologies. But in the expressions of God it doesn't even exist and is directed against Him.

Dealing with the subject of the Godhead we must be aware of the fact, that we are stepping on holy ground, called »revelation«. This subject is not within reach of the mind, it remains hidden. Of all the different schools of doctrine within Christianity each make reference to the Bible. Referring to God's Word is utterly important. But if it is done with a mind lost in thought, whereby Bible quotes are taken out of context and placed into one's own realm of concepts, **it is equivalent with what the enemy did in the garden of Eden with the words spoken by God.**

The Word of the Lord was very clear, »Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat ...« The enemy turned it around adding one word to it, »Yea, hath God said, Ye shall **not** eat of every tree of the garden?« The enemy always remains with the subject, but never in Truth. It also reminds us of Satan speaking to our Lord during the temptation. He said, »It is written!« but it was incorrectly applied and taken out of context, to cause Jesus to fall. Jesus answered him, »It is also written ...« That is so very important. We must never use Bible verses for empty decoration. Those who merely emphasise certain verses do this. Everyone should find passages in the Scriptures, which they try to avoid, and then the picture will become complete.

Not a single word, or even one utterance in the Bible can be exchanged and taken out of context. Everything belongs *where* it is and must remain *as* it is. For instance, if it is written »God« one cannot replace it with »Lord«, it must remain the way it was written. If there is »Father«, you cannot replace it with »Son«, because »Father« belongs in that context. And the same for »Son« etc. The Father didn't die for us, but the *Son*, Who is also the Lord.

But we are not children of the Lord or of the Son, we are *children of God* and have the privilege to call Him, »Abba« »Father«. The same applies to the »Son of man«, »Son of God«, »Son of David« and all other titles or names: They should remain as they are. Whoever does

not respect this divine order does not yet comprehend that God has placed everything in His Word as He intended it to be. To take it out of this order and design will only result in confusion.

Sooner or later everyone is confronted with the subject of God. Especially theologians, trying to comprehend and explain Him. But theologians are not prophets and apologists are not apostles. They have the letter of the Word and try to master it with their intellect. But it remains for ever, just as Paul wrote concerning mysteries, »... *God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*« (1 Cor. 2: 10).

God's confession

Whatever God says in His Own Word is His confession. He has revealed Himself in His Word and has also manifested His attributes.

We have to deal seriously with this subject which penetrates our heart and our soul. The question is, Does the overwhelming majority of Christianity believe in a God who was produced by a formula? Fundamental questions are before us, which we can no longer sweep aside. Not interpretation of scripture, or tradition, which have a beginning in time and space, but »Sola scriptura« — **alone the Scripture** with its eternal, unchanged validity is the only foundation of true faith. **We have to map and follow the footsteps of God right from the beginning, when He stepped out of eternity into time. Eternity has no beginning and will have no end; time began and time will end.** Man cannot search out eternity, it is pure speculation. God, the Eternal One, is not an object for our guesswork. We only know as much as He revealed unto us.

He who is the Highest speaks for Himself. Here we shall give opportunity for Him to answer us by His Word. Every Bible question has a Bible answer. After all the disputes within the course of church history, all the arguments about the Godhead have to be put to the test, and be evaluated from the Scriptures which alone give light. The unshakeable foundation of the apostles and prophets, as found in God's Word, is the only valid measuring rod. Men have erred from the beginning, as Paul so fittingly writes, »... *yea, let God be true, but every man a liar* ...« (Rom. 3: 4). Whether dressed in purple or in shining white, as a prince or as a pauper: every human being, without exception is born into this world as a liar, and whoever does not say precisely what God says is still lying.

Only if the Eternal One manifests Himself, can we follow Him in His revelations. At the beginning we meet Him as Creator, not as Father. In all of the Old Testament He is referred to 6,700 times as the »Lord God«. Only in the New Testament is He introduced as Father through the Son. This fact is of countless importance; because only in Jesus Christ, the Son, God has become our heavenly Father.

We have to start with the Old Testament; it's the foundation of the New. The Lord Jesus and the apostles only taught from the Old Testament, since the New was not yet written. They proved that everything concerning the first coming of the promised Messiah was fulfilled. If Dr. Clarence Larkin, a famous historian, counted correctly, 109 predictions from the Old Testament were fulfilled at the first advent of Christ. Altogether 845 quotes from the Old Testament are found in the New and exactly 333 of them refer to Jesus Christ. In the announcements of the Old Testament both sides of the Redeemer were spoken of, the divine and also the human.

Let us look at God in His manifestations and revelations (theophanies) since the beginning of time through the Old Testament until His self-revelation in the Son in the New Testament and finally right to the moment when time ceases and eternity begins. Then the manifestation of the Son merges into God from Whom He came forth, »*And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*« (1 Cor. 15: 28). As God was throughout eternity so will He be forever despite the various manifestations and revelations. The timely interruption by the fall of man has made the numerous revelations necessary to accomplish His plan of salvation.

On Mount Sinai the words of the Almighty bound His people forever. »**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might ...**« (Dt. 6: 4-9). In the New Testament: »**Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: ... And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is no other but he.**« (Mk. 12: 29-32).

The most important creed for Israel exists in four words: Adonai Elohenu Adonai Echad — Lord Elohim Lord alone. Correctly translated it should read, **Yahweh Elohim, Yahweh one**. This is the true witness of God and His prophets, agreeing with the witness of the Old and the New Testament. Thus saith the Lord, »**Ye are my witnesses ... and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and beside me there is no saviour ... I am God.**« (Isa. 43: 10-12). God never speaks of Himself in the plural, let alone as different persons. Neither was this done by any prophet. It is a teaching, an interpretation, which gives birth to misunderstanding. God's people in prayer never addressed God in plurality.

Paul emphasises this fact concerning God in this way, »... **seeing it is one God ...**« (Rom. 3: 30). There is no uncertainty in his following statement; on the contrary, he emphasises »seeing« — in reference to the **only one God** and ends his letter with the following utterance, »**To God, the only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.**« The Apostle Jude also finished the writing of his epistle, »... **to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.**« (v. 25).

God manifests Himself

In the beginning was the Word, not the interpretation. We see the term »beginning« several times. »**In the beginning God created ...**« (Gen. 1: 1). »**And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.**« (Heb. 1: 10; Ps. 102: 25). »**In the beginning was the Word ...**« (Jn. 1: 1). »**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ...**« (1 Jn. 1: 1). The Greek word »Genesis« is used for the first book of Moses and means »beginning«. The Hebrew word for it is »bereshit« and means »origin«. In the book Genesis we find the origin of all things — the beginning of God's manifestation, the origin of the creation, the creation of the universe, the origin of life and so on. Before the »beginning« was eternity.

In the first verse of chapter one in the Bible we meet God as the Creator. In the Hebrew text we find the name for God is *Elohim*. »**In the beginning Elohim created ...**« Within this word lies a plurality in the singular, for God — *Elohim* — is not only Creator, He is much more: He is Sustainer, Saviour, King, Shepherd, Redeemer, Judge — all in all. *Elohim* is shown forth in connection with His main attributes, which we find expressed in *Yahweh*. The abbreviation *El* already stands for the Almighty, for instance Immanu-El = »God with us«, as also the abbreviation *Yah* signifies *Yahweh*, as with Hallelu-Yah = »Praise Yahweh«, Eli-Yah »God is Yahweh«; Dani-El = »Judge is God«; Isra-El »God's fighter«, Isa-Yah »Yahweh is salvation«, Jedid-Yah »Beloved of Yahweh« etc. »*Elohim*« is not a name, but rather God Himself, His very nature. »*Yahweh*« is the *covenant name* in and through which God revealed Himself in the Old Testament.

To Abraham the Lord God revealed Himself as *El Shaddai* (Gen. 17: 1), as the »All-sufficient One«, »the One Who cares«, after He had met with him in Gen. 14: 18-20 in the person of Melchisedek, the »King-Priest«. According to Heb. 7 this Melchisedek is the King of Peace Himself, the King of Salem, the King of Righteousness. In the Old Testament the Lord had not yet become man, and was not yet manifested as the Son, therefore we find it written correctly of Him that He was »King-Priest« and had no father and no mother, no ancestors, no beginning of time. »God the Highest« — *El Elyon* said, »**Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.**« Then God met with Abraham as *El Olam* — the

»Eternal God«. In Isa. 9: 6 in connection with the birth of the Son He is spoken of as *El Gibbor* = »Mighty God« etc.

The special theophanies/self-manifestations of God as *Yahweh* — »Lord« happened previous to His coming as Redeemer: *Yahweh-Jireh* = »the Lord provides a sacrifice« (Gen. 22: 14); *Yahweh-Rapha* = »the Lord healeth« (Ex. 15: 26); *Yahweh-Nissi* = »the Lord, my banner« (Ex. 17: 15); *Yahweh-Shalom* = »the Lord, our peace« (Jud. 6: 24); *Yahweh-Rā-ha* = »the Lord, my shepherd« (Ps. 23); *Yahweh-Tsidkenu* = »the Lord, our Righteousness« (Jer. 23: 6); *Yahweh-Shammah* = »the Lord is present« (Ezek. 48: 35). God manifested Himself as the »Lord« to meet all the needs of creation and provide redemption. He manifested His own attributes and revealed Himself in them, but remained always the same.

From Gen. 2: 4 we find the words combined »*Elohim-Yahweh*« — Lord God. Over thirty times in the first chapter, till 2: 3, we meet only the expression *Elohim*. This mystery concerns the two creation accounts, which we cannot deal with here. *Yahweh* is the visible form or appearance of the invisible God. God Himself is Spirit (Jn. 4: 24). He is immortal, invisible, the only wise God (1 Tim.

1: 17), »... **Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach; whom no man hath seen, nor can see ...**« (1 Tim. 6: 16). The beloved disciple of our Lord testifies, »**No man hath seen God at any time.**« (1 Jn. 4: 12a). But in the form and shape God manifested Himself people have seen Him! Adam, Abraham, Moses, Micah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the other prophets have seen the »Lord God«. In the New Testament the same God *Elohim* was manifested in the visible body of the Son, Who is the »Lord«, »... *Who, being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power ...*« (Heb. 1: 3). Thomas, seeing the Lord after His resurrection, cried out, »*My Lord and my God!*« (Jn. 20: 28).

The invisible Elohim came forth from His eternal Glory, out of the fullness of light and life in the beginning, and appeared as Yahweh in visible form. In this beginning the Word, the Logos, the »Lord« is seen outside the eternal fullness of God — the Word, which was with God (Jn. 1: 1) acting, creating, the One Who brought all things into existence (Col. 1: 16).

The »Lord« is God, not another, but always the Same. The **Spirit of God** was already hovering over the deep in the creation as radiating heat, **bringing forth power, and the life of God** (Gen. 1: 2). The same **Spirit of God** came down on the day of Pentecost as the **Power of God, creating new life in the redeemed**. Both manifestations of God, the one as Lord in a visible shape and the one as the Holy Spirit moving over the waters, were never spoken of or looked upon as different persons. God is Spirit and God is the »Lord«, and the »Lord« is God and the »Lord« is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3: 17). Only if this is revealed to us, one can state according to the Scripture, »**Jesus is the Lord**« in agreement with Paul testifying, »... *that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Spirit.*« (1 Cor. 12: 3b).

In heaven and on earth

The omnipresence of God should not be disputed, for everything He created lives and exists only because of Him.

The Lord God came to Mount Sinai accompanied by thunder, lightening and the sound of a trumpet, surrounded by fire (Ex. 19). »*Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and didst speak with them from heaven, and gavest them right ordinances, and true laws, good statutes and commandments*« (Neh. 9: 13). The Lord God came **down upon Mount Sinai**, but His voice was heard **from heaven**: »... *Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.*« (Ex.

20: 22). God can do all things: He can appear in a bodily shape as Angel of the covenant, surrounded by fire, speaking to Moses face to face and let His voice sound mightily from heaven to the earth. Of course, **as Spirit He is omnipresent, even if He at the same moment reveals Himself in bodily form**. Who dares to say what He may or may not do, or how He should manifest Himself? As the Angel of the covenant He could be with Israel and guide His people in the pillar of cloud and fire during day and night (Ex. 13: 21), at the same

time He could sit on His throne in heaven. The Lord could even accompany His people as the spiritual rock Moses struck, supplying them with water (1 Cor. 10: 4).

The same God can appear as a dove upon His Son on earth and have His Voice again sound from heaven saying, »*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*« (Mt. 3: 17). The same words were heard on the Mount of Transfiguration, »*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*« (Mt. 17: 5), as Peter testified, »*And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*« (2 Pt. 1:18). The cloud of Glory overshadowed them (v. 5) and the Voice was heard from heaven, and the Apostles were eyewitnesses also hearing His Voice.

The Lord visits His prophet

In the Old Testament the Lord came to visit, in the New He came to be with us until the end of the world (Mt. 28: 20), as He promised, »I go away, and come again unto you.« (Jn. 14: 28).

According to Gen. 18 the Lord and two angels visited His servant Abraham, who suddenly saw **three men** approaching (v. 2). He addressed only one of them saying, »*My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant.*« (v. 3). The conversation took place between the Lord and Abraham, who served the heavenly visitors with an earthly meal, »... *which he dressed, and set before them; as he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.*« (18: 6-8). In the Old Testament the Lord took a bodily shape as the Son of man, eating and drinking with His friend Abraham.

In verse 16 we are told that the **three men** rose up and looked toward Sodom. The Lord remained with Abraham, His prophet (v. 17). He could not hide what He was about to do, for it is written, »*Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants, the prophets.*« (Am. 3: 7). The two angels, who are also called »*men*«, went on to Sodom (v. 22) and arrived at the city in the evening (19: 1). The teaching that these three men were the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost is blasphemy. The two angels were so much men and not God — that the ill-famed men in Sodom would have had their way with them (Gen. 19). It is tasteless and blasphemous to insinuate that the Son and the Holy Ghost would have been the desirable objects of the homosexuals of Sodom. Such teaching is the zenith of the Trinitarian blasphemy, causing loss concerning God's holiness.

Every time the word »angel« is used, it comes from *angelos*, which means »messenger«. There are heavenly messengers who bring a message, and there are also human messengers who do have a direct commission from God (Hag. 1: 12-13 a. o.). In Rev. 2 and 3 we read seven times, »*And to the angel of the church write,*« when the Almighty gave a message, He also appeared as an **Angel**; as **Lord** He commands, as **God** He is worshipped.

In Exodus 3 the Prophet Moses records his supernatural experience at the burning bush. The one God Who is a consuming fire appeared as **the »Angel of the Lord«** in the flame of fire (v. 2). Three different terms are used in connection with this event, »Angel of the Lord«, »Lord« and »God«: »*And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.*« (v. 4). Of course, only one was present: the Lord God, Who speaks of Himself, »**And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians**« (v. 8). He did so **in a visible form, bringing the salvation message of deliverance.**

At the giving of the law, as at the creation, the angels were present. This is repeated several times, »*For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast ...*« (Heb. 2: 2a) and : »... *who have received the law by disposition of angels*« (Acts 7: 53). But Moses was only the mediator between »**the angel** who spoke to him in Mount Sinai« and the people (v. 7: 38). Although the angels were present, it was the Lord Himself Who spoke to Moses as the »**Angel of the covenant**«. »*For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us.*« (Isa. 33: 22).

The same context must exist in Genesis 1. The »us« in the first chapter, »*Let us make man in our image ...*«, prophets and apostles **never** interpreted to apply to different persons in the Godhead. Also the comparison of Spirit, Soul, Body equalling the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

never entered their mind. If somebody thinks so then, please, show me where? Paul writes, »... *that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written ...*« (1 Cor. 4: 6b). Whoever goes beyond the written Word, stumbles and falls into the bottomless pit of his own thoughts.

The answer for the expression »*Let us make ...*« is given by the Lord Himself and recorded in the Holy Scripture. The Lord asked His servant Job: »*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? ... When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*« (Job 38: 4-7). The angels who are the created sons of God and all who are in heaven were present with the Lord God, when He created the earth and made Adam in His Own image. That is what the testimony of God's Word says. Angels are created sons of God, who appear before him, »***Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord***« (Job 1: 6; Job 2: 1). In Genesis 11 the Lord uses the same wording »let us« in a humanly comprehensive form. In verse 7 we read, »*Come, let us go down ...*« The Lord Himself was again accompanied by angels who were with Him and even appeared in Bethlehem at the time of His birth (Lk. 2: 8-14).

The Prophet Isaiah describes in chapter 6 that he saw the Lord sitting on the throne surrounded by the heavenly hosts, crying out, »*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts*« (v. 3). In verse 8 he records the conversation the Lord had with the angels, »*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, **Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?***«

In 1 Ki. 22 and 2 Chr. 18 we find the experience the Prophet Micah had when taken up in the spirit into heaven. He testifies, »*I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him **on his right hand and on his left.***« (22: 19b). As the text clearly states, the conversation took place between the Lord and those angelic beings around Him. Angels are ministering spirits (Heb. 1: 14) who have bodily form. With the statement »*Let us make ...*« the enemy has invaded humanity, has taken people from 4th century spiritually into Babylonian captivity and has distorted it in the minds and mouths of the scribes. In regards to all scriptural themes, spiritual confusion has run rampant similar to the natural experience of the tower of Babel. Scriptural terms remain, but were given another meaning. Is it not strange that from that time till now the religious church has put up buildings with steeples? In the first century of Christianity they had the synagogue-shape. The »us« is always in connection with the angelic beings who are with the Lord. After the Lord came forth victoriously from the temptation, angels ministered unto Him (Mt. 4: 11).

The Lord God walked in the garden and spoke with Adam whom He had created in His Own image. The image of God is the form of a man, which also is the image of the angels. This is overwhelmingly witnessed to by God's Word. When the angel Gabriel was sent to Daniel, the Prophet records, »... *behold, there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.*« (8: 15b). »*While I was speaking in prayer, even the man, Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me ...*« (9: 21a). Cherubim and Seraphim are living creatures with wings, which constantly do praise God (Isa. 6: 2+3 a. o.).

The Prophet Ezekiel saw the Lord in the form of a man, sitting on His throne, »*And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, like the appearances of a sapphire stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness of the appearance of **a man** above upon it.*« (1: 26-28). John on the isle of Patmos also saw only one sitting upon the throne, Whom he could describe perfectly (Rev. 4). When did a prophet or an apostle ever see three divine persons on the throne? Never! John states, »*He that sat upon the throne said, **Behold, I make all things new.***« (Rev. 21: 5).

Speaking of angels the text is often in the plural; of God always in the singular. »*And Jacob went on his way, and **the angels** of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host; and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.*« (Gen. 32: 1-2). He wrestled with God in the form of a man until the sun came up. The Lord even struck his hip, Jacob limped from then on. Jacob was changed through the experience with God and was called Isra-**el**, that means »God's fighter«. And Jacob called the place Peni-**el** (=face of God); »... *for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*« (v. 30). In Gen. 48, 15-16 he gives this testimony, »...*God, before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, did walk, the **God who fed** me all my life long unto this day, an angel who redeemed me from all evil ...*« The Prophet Hosea has also written about the special experience Jacob had, »... *and by his strength he had power with God. Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel, and there he spoke with us — even the **Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial.***« (12: 3b-5).

To follow God's footprints in His many manifestations becomes more and more glorious for us. We have to know the goal connected to His various manifestations. In Ex. 23: 20-21, God said, »Behold, I send an **angel** before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place, which I have prepared. **Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him.**« As an angel He appears when bringing a message, therefore He is also called the »Angel of the covenant« (Mal. 3: 1; Acts 7: 30-38) and the »Angel of His presence« (Isa. 63: 9). God personally appeared to His people as the **Angel of the covenant** : »And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up from here.« (Ex. 33: 14-15). Thus the Lord God Himself speaks of Himself. In the last prophecy concerning His first coming we are told in Malachi 3: 1, »Behold, I will send my angel (»messenger«), and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the **Angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in.**« John the Baptist was the messenger, the forerunner who prepared His way, as Malachi and Isaiah had prophesied (Mt. 11: 10; Mk. 1: 1-3 a. o.), and Jesus Christ is the Lord, the Son of God Who established the New Covenant and shall in due time come to Israel as the **Angel** with the rainbow over His head signifying the covenant, according to Rev. 10.

The »I am«

It shows the majesty of the Lord God Who manifests Himself according to the requirements of His great plan of salvation.

In Exodus 3 the Prophet wanted to know the name of the God of his fathers Who was sending him. »And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, **The God** of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, **What is his name?** what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, **I am that I am:** and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I am** hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.**« (Ex. 3: 13-15). Who sent His servant? Certainly the great »I am«. He is the God of the fathers!

In spite of the different designations and manifestations, whether in the Old or New Testament He always remains the same. Before establishing the covenant with His people Israel, God made known His covenant name. This Hebrew name »YHWH« is so holy to the Jews that they do not speak it (Am. 6: 10), rather using *Adonai*. But the name of God for Israel remains valid. »And God spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Lord God — **Elohim-Yahweh was I not known to them.**« (Ex. 6: 2-3). Thus saith the Lord, »... **in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.**« (Ex. 20: 24b).

The »I am« of God is found in each of His manifestations. It is the personal, ever present premier utterance. At the same time it is addressed toward mankind, »I take care of you; I am with you with My never failing presence!« In the »I am« God's name YHWH — *Yahweh* — is embedded. **He is** the »in Himself existing One«, **the Eternal**, the source of all life. The origin of all and everything consists in Him. To His prophets and His people He speaks as the »I am« in various associations. Majestically He says, »I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt ...« (Dt. 5: 6). »Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of hosts: **I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is no God.**« (Isa. 44: 6). The Lord God is the only »I am« and what He will be, He already is. Only in Him and through Him will we be like Him (1 Jn. 3: 2). So we do not forget He says it once more, »**Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.**« (Isa. 48: 12).

In the New Testament we find the »I am« manifested in the Son. The seven occurrences of »I am« are well known. The Lord Jesus said, »**I am** the light of the world.« »**I am** the good shepherd.« »**I am** the way, the truth, and the life.« »**I am** the door.« »**I am** the bread of life.« »**I am** the resurrection and the life.« The same Lord says, »Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, **I am.**« (Jn. 8: 58).

In the book of Revelation we read His testimony stating, **»I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty ... I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of hades and of death.«** (Rev. 1: 8; 17-18).

The knowledge of God's revelation as the »I am« in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer is necessary for our salvation. He emphasises this Himself, **»I said, therefore, unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.«** (Jn. 8: 24). Here we are not dealing with doctrine and knowledge, here the decision falls upon our faith in the Redeemer who saves and grants us our eternal destination. Only in the Son of God do we have the Saviour and Salvation.

The »Lord«, Who was the image of God, **»made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man ...«** (Phil. 2: 7). To save humanity He had to be a human Himself: He was born as a Son and put into a cradle. To be more natural and human was not possible. **Thus the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.** It happened for our sake, thus fulfilling Rom 8: 3, **»... God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh«.**

At the birth of the Son the testimony was, **»For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.«** (Lk.2: 11).

Paul was chosen as a special vessel. He had a supernatural calling and therefore a divine responsibility. He writes about the mystery of God in Christ, **»... that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ... For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power«** (Col. 2: 2-3 + 9-10). How wonderful: Prophets and apostles did not reason about God in Christ, they didn't have to, for He made Himself known to them.

In the Old Testament the Lord God is the Redeemer, the Saviour, the King, the Shepherd and so forth. In the New Testament all these attributes are realised in the Son for our salvation, as He became the center of the redemptive plan. **»No one comes to the Father except by me!«** and **»Whosoever sees me sees the Father!«** If someone does not see God in Christ, the same is not looking at Him by means of divine revelation. After Jesus had spoken so much about the Father, He said, **»If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been such a long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?«** (Jn. 14: 7-9). That is the clear answer from the lips of our Lord. Do we still ask like Philip, **»Show us the father«?** Do we also not see the father?

In the Old Testament the Lord, »Yahweh«, gave the promise to His people, **»Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.«** (Zech. 9: 9). In the New Testament Jesus is the King Who on Palm Sunday rode into Jerusalem with great jubilation, on a foal of an ass. Read it in Mt. 21 and parallel Scriptures. For Israel the Saviour and King was the Lord Himself, but at His first coming they did not recognise Him in His humanity, as they did not look upon Him from the perspective of the salvation plan and therefore expected Him to restore the Kingdom to Israel. Even His disciples asked Him, **»Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?«** (Acts 1: 6). They did not realise that redemption through suffering and death (Isa. 53) and the overcoming of death (Hos. 13: 14) was necessary first.

From the Old Testament we know Him by the Hebrew »tetragram« YHWH, from which the name *Yahweh* originates. In the New Testament the name of the Lord was announced by the angel Gabriel to be *Yahshua*, which in itself means »Yahweh-Saviour«. Everyone please note: the tetragram of the Old Testament covenant name is found in the Hebrew text of the headline written in three languages above Jesus Christ on the cross. Please regard the Hebrew text of John 19: 19:

Yahshua Hanozri Wumelech Hajehudim

Jesus of Nazareth, King of Jews

The first letter of each word constitutes the tetragram YHWH, as the Lord God revealed it to Moses. The God of the Old Testament is also the God of the New Testament! It is as perfect as can be. Whoever has an ear let him hear, and who has eyes to see let him see! Blessed are the eyes and the ears that see and hear the God of heaven, Who was made manifest on earth!

The Kingdom of God is an eternal one without death (Isa. 25: 8; Rev. 21: 4 a. o.) and all therein must have eternal life. According to the prophecies at His first coming, He had to be born as Son, becoming a man, so He could suffer and die. The time to establish His Kingdom on earth is now very near. *»And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one.«* (Zech. 14: 9).

»... And there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.« (Rev. 11: 15). How wonderful! He has revealed Himself unto us as Lord in the Anointed One. And Yahweh of the Old Testament is Jesus of the New Testament — the same yesterday, today and forever.

Was the Son born in heaven?

In the Nicene/Constantinople creed we find the following statement about Jesus Christ, **»... God's Son, born of the Father before all time: God from God, light from light, true God from the true God, begotten, not created, of one nature with the Father ...«** Where do we find this in the Bible that God in heaven has brought forth another divine person, a Son, who was begotten and born in eternity? Nowhere! Such a thought is not only totally unscriptural; it is also against reasoning. Until now only mothers have given birth to children, who were begotten by fathers. The **birth of the Son, the Messiah**, Who is **the Anointed One**, was foretold throughout the Old Testament since the first promise in Gen. 3: 15 after the fall in paradise. In Micah 5 we find the prediction that He would be born in the city of Bethlehem, which means *»House of bread«*, as we find confirmed in the Gospels. He is the living bread who came down from heaven (Jn. 6: 48-58). In reference to the Son of God we must not only remain with the subject, we must stay with the Truth of God's Word.

As God manifested Himself throughout the Old Testament period in visible form as the Lord, so He came in the New Testament into a body of flesh. *»... A body hast thou prepared me ... to do thy will, O God.«* (Heb. 10: 5+7; Ps. 40: 7-8). From this moment we not only see the Son but also the Father. The *»I am«* is now also the *»thou art«*, the second Adam (1 Cor. 15: 45-49), the beginning of the new creation of God (Rev. 3: 14), the first-born among many brethren (Rom. 8: 29) as well as the first-born from the dead (Col. 1: 18; Rev. 1: 5). All this happened for our sake. He had to be the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world (Jn. 1: 29). He had to be the High Priest, Who went with His Own blood into the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9: 11-12). He has to be the Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2: 5). He has to be the Advocate with the Father until the redeemed have reached their completion (1 Jn. 2: 1).

Everything written in the Old Testament in reference to the Son was still in the future:

»... Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting. Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she who travaileth hath brought forth ...« (Mic. 5: 2b-3a).

»I will be his father, and he shall be my son.« (2 Sam. 7: 14; Heb. 1: 5).

»... Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.« (Ps. 2: 7; Acts 13: 33; Heb. 1: 5; 5: 5). Eternity has no today and no tomorrow. The *»today«* according to Hebrews 4: 7 and other Scriptures is the *»day of Salvation«*, the *»acceptable time of grace«* (2 Cor. 6: 2).

»I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's body.« (Ps. 22: 10; Lk. 1: 26-38).

»Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.« (Isa. 7: 14; Mt. 1: 18-25).

» For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.« (Isa. 9: 6; Lk. 1: 31-35).

»He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn ...« (Ps. 89: 26-27). Many more Scriptures could be listed.

The fulfilment of these Bible prophecies concerning the birth of the Son of God is clearly shown in the Gospels and can be easily read. Luke records: When Mary heard the announcement given by the Angel Gabriel about the birth of the Son she was very surprised and said, *»How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered, and said unto her, The **Holy Spirit** shall come upon thee, and **the power of the Highest** shall overshadow thee; **therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.**«* (Lk. 1: 34-35).

A Father in heaven did not give birth to the Son, but rather the virgin who conceived here on earth. That is the only true doctrine of the Bible about the birth of the Son. The Father has begotten the Son, therefore the Son is the one begotten in the womb of Mary. The emphasis in Scripture is placed on the *»only begotten Son of God«* (Jn. 3: 16-18 a. o.).

The promised Son was begotten once and born here on earth. There is no dual sonship, also there is only one fatherhood. Before appearing as the *»Son«* He was the Word, the Logos, the Lord Who now took upon Himself the shape of a servant. *»God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds«* (Heb. 1: 1-2).

The church fathers that came from heathenism remained with the theme but not with the revealed truth of the Holy Scriptures. With their Babylonian, Egyptian, and Greek concepts about gods and deities they made a grievous mistake, which later became a common church doctrine and also was adopted as a *»tenet«* by all other churches. In their declaration they invented the totally unscriptural, and yes, paradoxical thesis that the Son already existed in heaven as a divine and separate person and that the preexisting Son then became a Son on earth. Where does the Bible teach such a doctrine? Nowhere! From that followed more oriental-mesopotamic mythology, calling Mary the *»mother of God«* as was proclaimed in the Council of Ephesus (431 A. D.), but is not found a single time in the Bible.

The argument concerning God **sending** the Son is pointless without the revelation that before He was born as Son He was the Word, *the Logos*. Is it written, *»In the beginning was the Son.«*? No, but rather: *»In the beginning was **the Word** ... And **the Word** was made, (became) flesh.«*

In all the ages God did send His servants and prophets. Moses was a man sent from God: *»... The Lord God of the Hebrews hath **sent** me unto thee, saying, Let my people go ...«* (Ex. 7: 16).

John the Baptist was a man sent from God to prepare the way of the Lord. *»Behold, I **send** my messenger before thy face ...«* (Mk. 1: 2).

Also the twelve apostles were sent ones (Mt. 10: 5), the seventy were also sent (Lk. 10: 1). Paul was a **sent** one, as he was told, *»Depart; for I will **send** thee far from here unto the Gentiles.«* (Acts 22: 21).

The Lord Himself said, *»Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I **send** receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that **sent** me.«* (Jn. 13: 20).

Thus saith the Lord, *»... **as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.**«* (Jn. 20: 21).

He also said, »*I **sent** unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes ...*« (Mt. 23: 34).

»*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are **sent** unto thee ...*« (Mt. 23: 37). All these who were **sent** were born on earth as was the Son of God. Therefore He could say, »...*for I am not alone, but I and the Father that **sent** Me.*« (Jn. 8: 16b).

Spirit and Truth

With Bible doctrine one must always go back to the place of origin.

In connection with the origin of creation we must go back to the Creator, in connection with redemption we must go back to the Redeemer. The great plan of salvation that God has provided is realised in the fact that He brings His sons and daughters back to their original position. To them He gives eternal life and they will be eternally with Him. God unfolds His Plan of Redemption before us and we are partakers of His provision. Not just knowledge about God — it must be accurate knowledge, namely that God was in Christ, His only begotten Son, the anointed One, to reconcile the world with Himself (2 Cor. 5: 19). The Son said, »*Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake.*« (Jn. 14: 11). The Father, Who is God the Spirit, was in heaven on the throne and on earth in the Son at the same time. Doctrine, knowledge or religion does not bring salvation, God Himself did it through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

It is totally absurd to think that God would give salvation depending on a religion or a church. How well we know that everyone tries to present salvation in a way they prefer! The mother church, claiming salvation admits that after death her followers go on to purgatory; where those from other churches go to is uncertain. This isn't right! Were we born locked into a religious culture of unscriptural tradition? The challenging message sounds forth: »Back to the beginning! Back to the Word!«

Almost all theologians apparently made the same mistake: They assumed designations for God are the same as names. This is the premise upon which all their arguments are based, starting with the church fathers. For instance, they took for granted that *Father* and *Son* are names. They never understood the spirit of the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures and they never found the tie, which binds both together, as the promises merge into fulfilment. God is the Father, but that is not His name, that is what He is. His name is not Creator, He is the Creator. His name is not judge, He is the judge etc. etc. The same applies to the Son. Son is not a name, the Son is who He is.

When His promised birth was about to take place we read, »... **and thou shalt call his name Jesus**« (Lk. 1: 31). He was born as a son, but only one week later at His dedication He was given His name: »*And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his **name was called Jesus**, who was so named by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.*« (Lk. 2: 21).

God became »the Father« with the birth of the Son, as a man becomes a father who has begotten a child after it is born.

Would the Holy Spirit, Who is responsible for begetting the Son, be another person altogether? If so then the Son should have to be called accordingly the Son of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power of the Most High which overshadowed Mary. Paul did not come with philosophical arguments about the sending of the Son. He had the divine purpose in view: »*But, when the fullness of time was come, **God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.** Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*« (Gal. 4: 4-7).

Jesus repeatedly emphasised having been **sent by the Father** and said, »*But the Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said unto you ... Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you.*« (Jn. 14: 26+28).

The resurrected Lord was taken bodily into heaven before the eyes of His disciples (Lk. 24: 50-51). In the Spirit He came back on the day of Pentecost to indwell His Own. Through the Holy Spirit the Redeemer comes into the redeemed, that is »Christ in us — the hope of Glory«. **As He came forth from the Father to be with us, so the Holy Spirit came forth from the Father**, to be in us. As it is written, »*But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me ...*« (Jn. 15: 26).

»*For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; ... His disciples said unto him, ... Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.*« (Jn. 16: 27-30).

»**At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.**« (Jn. 14: 20).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. For God has promised , »... *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ...*« (Joel 2: 28). This He did as recorded in Acts 2. According to Acts 1: 4-5, the Lord commanded His disciples »... *not to depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which saith he, ye have heard from me. For John truly baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*« That happened on the day of Pentecost and continues till now (Acts. 10 + 11 a. o.) Peter confirmed this event to be the fulfilment of the promise given through Joel before thousands who gathered and heard his first sermon. He said, »*Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.*« (Acts 2: 33). For those who accepted Christ at the very beginning, the infilling of the Holy Ghost was an experienced reality. It was the endowment with the power from on high for service (Acts 1: 8).

At first the Redeemer was the **anointed One**, »... *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him*« (Acts 10: 38).

Since Pentecost the redeemed are **anointed** with the same Holy Spirit . »*Now he who establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God*« (2 Cor. 1: 21). »*But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*« (1 Jn. 2: 20). In Luke 4: 18 our Lord refers to the Prophet Isaiah, chapter 61, and states, »*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor ...*«

The Hebrew Word **Mashiach** and the Greek word **Christos** is the English word »**anointed**«. In Antiochia the believers who were filled with the Holy Ghost were first called »anointed«, that means »Christians« (Acts 11: 26). In the same way as the Son Who was begotten by the Spirit and anointed with the Spirit did not glorify the **anointing**, but gave praise unto **Him, that anointed Him**, so do all sons and daughters of God who are begotten by and filled with the Spirit even today.

»*By this know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh — as the Messiah — Ha Mashiach, Christ, the Anointed One — is of God*« (1 Jn. 4: 2).

Jesus said to the woman at the well and says the same to us who are willing to hear His Voice, »*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*« (Jn. 4: 23-24).

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Truth and the Word of God is the Word of Truth. Real worship of God can only be done by people who are in the Spirit and in the Word of God. The Spirit inspires the Word — holy men have spoken as the Holy Spirit moved them (2 Pt. 1: 20-21). Only whoever is moved by the same Holy Spirit and led as they were (Rom. 8: 14) has access to whatever was written as revealed to them.

The argument that the Spirit of God would be self-existing because He can *speaks, guide, comfort and can be grieved* etc. confirms what comes from the human mind which has no

access to the divine realm. Why should the Spirit of God not be able to do all these things? Even the spirit of man can do all that!

All who fear God have left everything found in the Scripture unchanged, even the Lord's prayer. They did not add to »*Our Father, Who art in heaven*«, »*Our Son, Who art ...*« or »*Our Ghost, Who art ...*«, not a »Father-Mother« edition. Only those who celebrate themselves, using God and His Word and interpret the same as they like, lift themselves up even as does the antichrist above God and His Word and do as they please. In spite of that, with God all things remain in the original form. Even today true Bible believing Christians pray respectfully, »*Our Father Who art in heaven ...*« No one has a right to change the Scriptures or to add anything to it. No one can pray, »*Heavenly Son ...*«, because such a thing does not even exist; but all can pray, pleasing unto God, »*Heavenly Father ...*« or »*Lord Jesus Christ ...*« or »*Son of God, I thank you, I praise you ...*«

The manifestation of God as Father is heavenly, His manifestation in the Son is earthly. In the Holy Scripture we only find the term »everlasting Father« — for the everlasting One became our Father — but never »everlasting Son«. We do read about the Son who is perfected forever (Heb. 7: 28b). All sons and daughters of God are perfected in Him for all eternity. Humanity was led astray through false teachings. Prophets and apostles never explained God, they did not divide Him, and they received Him the way He manifested Himself. Only those to whom God reveals Himself, they know Him and He knows them.

Very peculiar

In our generation, the worship of the so-called Trinity is emphasised in a peculiar way. The Pope announced the years 1997, 1998 and 1999 to be very special in which, as the declaration goes, the three divine persons are worshipped in a successive order, and in the »holy year 2000« all three are to be worshipped together. The Pentecostal and charismatic preachers have their place in the inter-denominational meetings. Their eloquent speech is obviously influenced by the spirit of this age, especially the way they speak of the »person« of the Holy Ghost, from »*Good morning, Holy Spirit! I greet you! I embrace you! I love you!*« right to »*Holy Spirit, I glorify you, I worship you!*« Those attending such meetings are taken by passion; they stream together from all different denominations and expect a new move of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes even using loud music, creating an atmosphere uncondusive to God's Spirit, not discerning that this kind of worship of the Holy Spirit was totally foreign to the Church of the living God. There has never been anything like this. Also they give no consideration to God's Word. According to the testimony of the Scriptures, there is to be no detached glorification of the Spirit, for Jesus Himself said, »... *Nevertheless, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come.*« and, »*He shall glorify me ; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.*« (Jn. 16: 7-15).

We are not splitting hairs, we are anxious concerning the Truth. In general the formula about the Trinity, which developed into a teaching from various councils, reads like this, »One God in three persons: the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God, and these three divine persons are one God«. Where do we find this taught in the Bible? Nowhere! In eternity and throughout the Old Testament there is neither trace nor indication of the worship of three persons. In the New Testament writings we see the terminology, »*God the Father*« — for instance: »*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ ...*« — but not a single time the term »*God the Son*« is used. Rather we find »*Son of God, Son of the Most High, Son of man, Son of David*« etc. Also not once do we find in God's Word the term »*God the Holy Ghost*«, rather »*the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ*« etc. In the Old Testament »*the Spirit of the Lord — Ru'ach Yahweh*« is used 378 times. Such facts are of great importance. Why dispute for the Trinity doctrine without realising that only God has no point of reference? His manifestations, the Son of God, Spirit of God, and the Holy Ghost, are His reference points as He is the origin. If they were eternally self-existing persons of God, they would not need God as a reference point. Word of God, love of God, grace of God etc. all point to the only One, true God.

Not one prophet or apostle has ever spoken a benediction using the triune formula as being practised in churches world-wide today where the clergy say, »The blessing of God the Father, of God the Son and God the Holy Ghost be with you.« The same applies to the form of prayer, »Glory be to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost«. Such a terminology is nowhere mentioned in the Bible. We never find any prayer or action recorded in the Bible using the esteemed formula, »In the name of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Ghost«. Paul, being commissioned supernaturally, said that all we do in word and deed should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3: 17). The proclamation of the Gospel, prayer, salvation, healing, and deliverance — all these take place in the name of Jesus Christ.

Some know and practice the Aaronite way of benediction ordained of God Himself, »**The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!**« (Num. 6: 24-26). The Apostle Paul mentions blessing and grace at the beginning of each of his letters, at least fourteen times, and pronounces the same at the end, but each time in a different way. Paul didn't attempt to introduce a creed, or formality, as all denominations have done. The apostles and those in the first century church were not an organisation, but instead were a living organism of Christ. They stood under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit and knew to whom worship was due: »*To God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.*« (Rom. 16: 27).

Respect for the Great Mystery

Indeed, it must be revealed, for it is a mystery and is hidden. As we can see life manifested in creation, yet we don't see life itself, only its manifestation, so it is with God in Christ: We do not see God, the Spirit, we see Him manifested: »He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father!«

Paul had deep respect for God, He expressed this great mystery simply yet to the point: »*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*« (1 Tim. 3: 16).

In Romans 1: 1-4, the Apostle gives the following testimony, »*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, which he had promised before by his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, **who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead***« (Rom. 1: 1-4).

In Romans 9, Paul emphasises the spiritual or divine part: »... *Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the **adoption**, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the **promises**; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, **Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.***« (Vv. 4-5).

The Son of God speaks about this great divine mystery, »*I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast **hidden** these things from the wise and prudent, and hast **revealed** them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me by my Father, and **no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, except the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.***« (Mt. 11: 25-27; Lk. 10: 21-22). Jesus desires to reveal this to us also, but we must be ready to accept this great revelation.

Everyone defends his or her own doctrine

It is easily understood that men defend their own doctrines. But blessed are those who can say like the Master, »My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.« (Jn. 7: 16-17).

People who are faithful to the creeds have the right to defend what church fathers have said and written in religious books. But this is not their divine right. Leaving the impression that God agrees with their doctrines. People involved with religion have the right to take their stand on whatever their respective religion believes and teaches. The question arises, **What's being taught by religious institutions and denominations, does it have anything in common with God?** If they do not agree with His Word then their beliefs and creeds set them apart from the ground and foundation promoted by Paul without them even realising it. The original Church was built upon the foundation that Paul spoke of in 1 Cor. 3: 10-15. Everyone claims to be right, making others to be wrong. If this were not so then they would have forsaken their religion already. It's always the others who teach heresy and have fallen into apostasy.

There is particularly one church claiming that salvation can only be received through her institution. This universal church teachings do of course not agree with the Holy Scripture. In the »*Catechism of the Catholic Church*« we find the following, »**The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism explains: »For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the universal help toward salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. It was to the apostolic college alone, of which Peter is the head, that we believe that our Lord entrusted all the blessings of the New Covenant, in order to establish on earth the one Body of Christ into which all those should be fully incorporated who belong in any way to the People of God.**« (Pg.215). Apparently it is her present task to bring all back into the mother's lap. The whole declaration is presumptuous and has no biblical foundation. Such belief and statement of doctrine has nothing to do with what the Holy Scripture says.

Those bound to the Word of God must reject such a decree, because it is simply untrue. The fullness of salvation does not rest in a church institution; on the contrary: salvation is only found in the Saviour. Before Constantine (306-337), there was no Catholic* uniformed, common church in existence. There were about 130 different sects of faith, which varied doctrinally. In the first centuries there were no popes, no cardinals, no monasteries, no monks, no nuns, no liturgy and so forth. Everything introduced through the state church has its origin in the heathen Caesar Constantine and the council fathers, not with Christ or the first century church. The Bible does not speak of the church as the method of obtaining salvation. Also the statements, »The church is the universal sacrament of salvation« or »outside the church there is no salvation« do not exist in the Bible. The statement, »Only he who has the church as mother has God as Father« also is not found in the written Word of God. The notion of a successor to Peter is a dishonest invention. There is no »apostolic succession« and no hierarchy promised in the Scriptures. In reality the whole religious institution from the very beginning is outside the Gospel and not found in God's Word.

Now the question arises, Are the dignities of today in the various Christian denominations guilty? What about the Pope, the cardinals, the bishops, the whole clergy, the pastors, the preachers, the evangelists? Are they all guilty? Since they are not founded in the Word of God, but rather remain in traditions passed down through time, it's hard to say since they were born into and remained in these doctrinal structures. Their whole study being tainted by church statements and creeds, they never heard the real Truth. Also those churches that separated from the church of Rome, especially since the Reformation, have retained a portion of her doctrines and remain therein, taking for granted and believing everything is all right with them. But now the hour of truth has come. The comparison between true Bible doctrine and practice and the inherited traditional teachings are forcing us to make a decision. From now on no one will have an excuse. Only what the Bible teaches is correct — not how it is interpreted. With God are no extra holy traditions, verbal or written. Such tradition exists only within religious institutions, Catholic, Orthodox and others, who remain bound to them.

Are we actually dealing with a Christian church, a Christian culture, a Christian inheritance all connected to the history of papal dogmas and yet totally outside the Word? Are the Protestant churches also found in their traditions, which in reality have nothing in common with Christ?

There are many questions. Is it all well-meant religious deception? Were we misled in the name of God? How are things in reality? What is Truth, divine Truth, and how does it differ from what was established as church and religious doctrine? Why were statements of faith formulated in various councils which even bear the distinction »apostolic creed«, although the apostles had no involvement, since they were invented hundreds of years later and don't agree with the apostles' doctrine in the least? If the Word of God had been accepted as the rule of faith, there would have been no need for any creed to be added.

For a child of God only one thing is compulsory, namely to believe the ever valid Word of God and share it with others. Taking this stand without compromise, one has to reject everything which does not originate with God. In Christianity and other religions we are confronted with strange teachings, therefore everything must be seen and judged in the light of the Holy Scriptures. Whoever does not receive the love for the truth personally will continue in error and be called into judgement (2 Thess. 2). The time has come for a divine jurisdiction and clarification. The command of this hour is: »Return to God and His Word!«

The rock

The Lord asked His disciples, »*Who do men say that I, the Son of man, am?*« (Mt. 16: 13 b). Different answers were given by the people. The Apostle Peter received a divine revelation and therefore could give the right answer, »*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*« (v. 16). **The concern is this revelation, not its explanation.** »*And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ...*« (vv. 17-18). The Lord did not say, »... and upon you, Petros (= a stone) ...«, but rather: »... upon this rock (=Petra, a massive rock) *I will build my church.*« That is the actual rock-revelation Peter received, namely, that Jesus Christ is that rock. How could the Lord build His Church upon a man he had to rebuke only four verses later?

The Lord Himself is the rock in the Old and the New Testament, and no one else. Thus it is written, »*For who is God, save the Lord? Or who is a **rock**, save our God?*« (Ps. 18: 31). Peter confessed Christ to be that rock »... *the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a **rock** of offence, even to them who stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.*« (1 Pt. 2: 6-8). Paul refers to Christ as the **spiritual rock** Who was smitten by Moses and accompanied Israel (1 Cor. 10: 4).

According to the Scripture Christ is the **rock** and the **chief corner stone** upon which the New Testament Church is founded. Peter and members of the true Church, who are truly born again and therefore became sons and daughters of God, are built as living stones upon the original foundation (1 Pt. 2: 1-10 a. o.). This is according to the plan of salvation from the very beginning and will continue until the end of the age of grace. The same authority to bind and to loose which the Lord had given to Peter, He immediately gave to the whole Church according to Mt. 18: 18. What He spoke to Peter He later said to the whole Church. Speaking to Peter He said, »*And I will give unto **thee** the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever **thou** shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever **thou** shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*« (Mt. 16: 19), but then in plural, »*Whatsoever **ye** shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever **ye** shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*« (Mt. 18: 18).

The words of the Lord to Peter in Mt. 16 have remained a general belief with all that preach the Gospel. It was Pope Leo I (440-461) who suddenly claimed to be the successor of Peter and therefore could have the pre-eminence as the Bishop of Rome; he took this office for himself. Not one of the church fathers in the first centuries ever made such a claim, not even Athanasius or Augustine.

The journeys of Peter and Paul are written in the Bible in great detail. But there is never a record of Peter having visited Rome. It was Leo I who imagined him there, so he could claim this great position for himself. So the legend of Peter being a Pope and having spent time in Rome has become a tradition without scriptural support. Paul has written a number of letters to the church in Rome; in one he at the end mentions 27 persons by name. He also from Rome wrote most of his letters to the assemblies and individuals, but Peter was not mentioned throughout all these years a single time. There is no record of Peter having written *to* the church at Rome, and of course not *from* there to others. Also in this point we find a suitable church invention. The Bible knows nothing about an Apostolic See, about a vicar of Christ. All that is self-made tradition without scriptural foundation.

Especially since the state church came into existence in the 4th/5th century after Christ, various teachings and practices were invented which sprang from the minds of men and from false inspiration. The confessional box and the practice of the church to remit sins are also

fabrications. The utterance of our Lord used for justification does not apply, »**Whosoever's sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever's sins ye retain, they are retained.**« (Jn. 20: 23). This statement has nothing to do with the remission of sins, which everyone personally receives from God by believing in Jesus Christ. Only if someone has sinned against us we should forgive him or her. For instance, if someone is commissioned to proclaim the Gospel and somebody sins against him, that can be forgiven. But if the person has sinned against the Holy Spirit working through a servant of God, that cannot be forgiven. Jesus our Lord said, »*Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies with which they shall blaspheme; but he **that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation***« (Mk. 3: 28-29). Such sin a servant of God cannot forgive. Whoever sins against the Holy Spirit falls under God's judgement. No one should take this lightly, for God is not to be mocked.

Furthermore, every testimony in the Holy Scriptures, including the great commission, regardless to whom it was addressed, is to be for all those commissioned by the Lord. Also if someone speaks under false inspiration, what Jesus said to Peter still applies.

Whoever reads Mt. 16 will find that shortly after the confession of Peter he was reprimanded sharply, »*Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that are of God, but those that are of men.*« (v. 23).

When the Apostle spoke under divine inspiration the Lord praised him, when he later spoke in an argumentative way he became a trap and received the rebuke. God permitted it for our benefit, so no one would make Peter into something special. To those who come with human arguments without revelation the second utterance does apply. There are those who understood what the Lord said, others misunderstood and gave a wrong interpretation. Those who have experienced the Lord personally, to them He has revealed Himself. They knew Him and had fellowship with Him. To those who only heard and spoke about Him, He remains hidden, strange and far removed.

The Great Commission

*When receiving a commission, or an order, it is very important to listen carefully and understand the one who gives the commission. It is essential to receive the commission directly from the lips of the one giving it. Hearing it through another person makes it possible for different thoughts to be added. **In His great commission Jesus also mentioned baptism. The »name« into which we are to baptise is the kernel of the commission.***

As the triune practised baptism is directly connected with the teaching of the so-called »divine persons«, we shall briefly touch on this subject also. In different publications not only the common practice is questioned, but also that the triune formula was ever commissioned in Mt. 28: 19 is doubtful. Dr. Karlheinz Deschner writes, »**Jesus did not know a Trinity. The commission put into the mouth of the Resurrected One, according to Matthew, to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit the critical research unanimously declares this to be a falsification.**« (»*Abermals krähte der Hahn*«). The overwhelming majority of church historians who search thoroughly assign this formulation to the Trinitarian church fathers.

As commonly known, the four Gospels and the letters of the apostles were mainly written in Hebrew and Aramaic and were circulating in the Jewish-Christian assemblies. The first compilation as canon in the Greek New Testament was already the work of men from heathenism holding the triune concept. This is obvious when reading carefully. In some translations we still find the addition in 1 John 5: 7. Which is not in the original manuscript at all, not in the Hebrew, not in the Greek and not in other languages: »**For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.**« The footnote in the Scofield Bible confirms it, stating, »**It is generally agreed that this verse has no ms. authority and has been inserted.**«

version of Mt. 28: 19, as delivered by Eusebius, which reads: **»en to onomati mou« = »in-to My name«**. The same version is found in the *»Greek New Testament«*, Second edition, 1954, London, Bible House. This original commission, *»... and baptise them in-to My name«* would have avoided any error and later misinterpretation. Matthew 28 can remain as it is, for we know that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are not names but designations, titles and baptism was to be administered into the *name* (singular), into the New Testament covenant name, in which God revealed Himself as Father in the Son through the Holy Spirit. This name is **Lord Jesus Christ**. It remains therefore, **»en to onomati mou« = »in-to My name«**.

It is also hard to comprehend that the meaningful New Testament covenant name of our Lord in Whom all salvation lies, namely Yahshua, which indeed means *»Yahweh-Saviour«* was transferred into Greek as *»Jesus«*. The knowledge of the original significance was thereby lost, namely **that »Yahweh« of the Old Testament is »Yahshua« of the New Testament**. We can be thankful that God recognises and respects the name in each language, He knows whom we mean thereby. To God names and designations are very important, since through them the actual meaning is being expressed. In Isa 7: 14 and 9: 6 the birth of the Son is announced Who would be *Immanuel*, *»God with us«*. The child which would be born and the Son given to us, upon Whose shoulder the government lies, has everything embedded: Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. God has permitted that insertion, so He could from the very beginning reveal His Name to His Own.

In baptism the redeemed are dedicated to the Redeemer who paid the price for them. They are His and know His *name*. The actual concern is the name which must also be called upon for the salvation of the soul, as it is written, *»And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.«* (Acts 2: 21 a. o.). The Hebrew word *»yasha«* is the English word *»saved«* (Ex. 14: 30 — Scofield Bible). In the faith life everything happens in this name: salvation, healing etc. At **His name**, that is to say at the name of Jesus (Yahshua), all knees will bow and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord (Phil. 2). In **His name** the seventy were sent forth and testified that even the demons were subject unto them (Lk. 10: 17). Giving the great commission the resurrected Lord said, *»In my name shall they cast out demons ...«* (Mk. 16: 17). In **His name** repentance and the forgiveness of sin was to be preached to all nations (Lk. 24: 47). The concern in baptism is **the name** of whom Peter testified that **no other name** under heaven is given unto men by which they must be saved (Acts 4: 10-12).

The Son came in the name of the Father (Jn. 5: 43a) and has in baptism fulfilled all righteousness (Mt. 3). Whoever does not receive Him by calling upon **His name** receives another who comes with positions and titles but always in his own name (Jn. 5: 43b). In the high priestly prayer in John 17 the concern is also the name: *»I have manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world«* (v. 6), as it was foretold in Ps. 22: 22 *»I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.«* He prayed, *»Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me ...«* *»And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it ...«* (Jn. 17: 11b + 26), the name He has obtained by inheritance (Heb. 1: 4). Obviously the name of the Son is the name of the Father!

Peter, the man of the first hour, whom the Lord gave the keys of the Kingdom, which also includes divine authority, has revealed unto us the mystery of baptism. When the Church of the living God, on the day of Pentecost was brought into existence he commanded, **»Repent, and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ ...«** (Acts 2: 38). This original pattern is forever bound upon the New Testament Church.

In early Christianity and in the post apostolic time only those who believed were baptised, as required: *»He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ...«* (Mk. 16: 16). This took place by immersing the person once and exclusively in **the name of the Lord Jesus Christ** (Acts 2: 38 — Peter in Jerusalem; Acts 8: 16 — Philip in Samaria; Acts 19: 5 — Paul in Ephesus; a. o.). Three witnesses. In the beginning it never was administered as outlined by the triune formula, as all church history books testify. John the Baptist had preached and all that repented of their sins had been baptised in the Jordan River (Mt. 3: 1-12). He administered baptism as emphasised where there was **much water** (Jn. 3: 23), that is to say, in a place where the water was deep enough, so the person being baptised could be immersed properly. The water must reach at least to the hips. Of Philip and the eunuch we read in Acts 8, *»... and*

written that infants should be sprinkled or poured upon.

The Apostles never mention godparents as witnesses of confirmation. It is noteworthy that sprinkling and pouring instead of baptising was introduced as part of the triune formula. **Not once is it recorded in church history that believers who were baptised according to the Scriptures in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ were ever sprinkled or had water poured over them, but instead were baptised by immersion.** This should be known to all, unscriptural baptism was forced upon people in the Roman Empire when the Christian religion became mandatory. The Gentile nations were not converted by the preaching of the Gospel, they were forced by state law to accept this new religion, being sprinkled or poured using the triune formula: young and old alike. It was explained that through this baptism grace was being offered to all people. But the biblical order follows: first the preaching to offer grace, second belief and accepting, third to confirm true faith and obedience in baptism, *»Then they that gladly received his word were baptised«* (Acts 2: 41).

In baptism we testify that God's work of grace has been done within us. First we receive the forgiveness of sins, the justification by faith, then we are baptised. Baptism is like a covenant with God having a good conscience (1 Pt. 3: 21). Nowhere does the Bible teach that forgiveness or even the new birth comes through baptism. The forgiveness was given unto us through the death of Christ, through the shed blood of the Lamb of God, which took away the sins of the world. When we are baptised we testify of God's gift of forgiveness and salvation.

Truly, there is not a single case in the entire Bible, where anyone was baptised, sprinkled or poured upon using a triune formula. The Apostle Paul did not only teach about baptism, he testified that he himself was also baptised in the right way. *»Know ye not that, as many of us as were baptised unto Jesus Christ were baptised into his death?«* (Rom. 6: 3). If Mt. 28: 19 exists in the original or in another form, one thing is certain: that the disciples understood the commission and practised it correctly. Should the church fathers have changed the original words, *»en to onomati mou«* = *»into My name«* in the Greek text into the formula, *»in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost«*, then they were deceived by the adversary and beguiled and have taken great guilt upon themselves which can never be justified. They will have to answer at the day of judgement and suffer the final consequences. If we consider that the teaching of the Trinity goes hand in hand with the triune baptismal formula, then the critical church historians in their judgement about Mt. 28: 19 are right. In spite of this God's children even in the Dark Ages and today have had the true faith and the light about the original baptism. The true Church of Jesus Christ remained unmoved in the doctrine of the apostles, never as a state church but always in the minority as *»the little flock«* which was persecuted by the government church.

When Christianity was forced upon the masses, everyone had to accept the state religion, and this, without having experienced a personal relationship with Christ. The infant sprinkling up to this day is enforcement. An infant cannot make decisions of faith. The multitudes leaving the state churches are proof that they are not in agreement with church rituals or dogmas. Others continue as members and this only to have a funeral and remain in good memory. In true faith the concern is the personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour in whom alone we have the salvation of our soul. **He will receive those who receive Him.** The Bible does not speak about a sacrament. Jesus never mentioned a baptismal sacrament of any kind as a religious practice.

Those who believe according to the great commission are baptised, after they have made a personal decision for Christ, and are then immersed only once. This signifies being buried with Christ, *»... buried with him in baptism, in which also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.«* (Col. 2: 12). Only those dead with Christ to themselves, to their own ego, can be buried with Him. This is signified by the total immersion of the body. The lifting out of the watery grave symbolising that the one who was baptised now is resurrected with Christ to live a new life (Rom. 6: 4).

In water baptism the believer identifies with God. In Spirit baptism God identifies Himself with the believer. The Bible condones the baptism of those who through hearing the Word, believe in Christ as their personal Saviour. Faith comes by the preaching of the Word of God (Rom. 10). Whoever argues that the jailer in Acts 16 was baptised with his household assumes that children were baptised, must consider that a certain

the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.« (Acts 16: 32). Only after this was he baptised with his household together with all who believed (v. 33). First was the preaching, second faith, third baptism.

In the great commission the concern is to understand and to obey accordingly, as did the apostles in early Christianity. When we treat the baptismal commission like a magic formula, it shows that we do not comprehend its true essence. Furthermore anyone arguing that the word of Jesus is more important than that of the apostles, asserting that there is a contradiction, undermines the whole foundation of the New Testament Church. Every word in the Bible remains forever. With God there are no arguments, the method, thesis, synthesis and antithesis — for Him and His Own the Thus saith the Lord of His Word is the only thing we can stand upon. Teaching error cannot exist within itself. There has to be truth mixed with it, which in reality then becomes a lie, which has only a similarity with truth. So some remain with the theme about baptism, others remain with the truth and the correct practice thereof.

Among many church historians the original baptismal practice is documented. Also reference can be made to the »KATOLICKA ENCYKLOPEDIA« of the university at Lublin/Poland (pg. 354). One on the committee of honour is Karol Wojtyła, Pope John Paul II.

True understanding comes when the resurrected Lord walks with us and reveals truth to us by the Holy Spirit concerning the kingdom of God, as he did with the disciples. A prime example is the disciples who were on their way to Emmaus (Lk. 24). Those who know Hebrew, Greek, Latin and other languages have come to different conclusions via intellectual knowledge. Knowing languages is not enough. The Spirit of God must reveal it.

How can it be: We know how baptism was administered in apostolic times and yet most remain in tradition? Who is erring? Certainly not the apostles who heard the commission from the lips of the resurrected Lord and were placed into their offices by Him. After His resurrection He was with them and taught them for forty days. The heathen church fathers still err not knowing the Lord and continue in error following traditions with no scriptural foundation. Faithful Bible believing Christians practise what the resurrected Lord commissioned and what is documented from the apostles. The early church is the only valid pattern for the dispensation of grace in the New Testament Church (Acts 2: 42).

People have always had their doubts concerning the Trinity, and the triune baptism. Can we accept that strange teachings are being declared to be biblical and biblical practice is being declared amiss? Can it remain thus, as though it originated with Christ but has no connection to Him? And did not originate with Him yet it continues to be called true Christian doctrine? Is it even called apostolic yet they had no agreement with these strange teachings? For instance the so-called »apostolic creed« or the unscriptural publication called »Doctrine of the Twelve Apostles« known as »Didache«? God only gives His approval to divine revelation and the Scriptures. Not declarations of a council or its various dogmas, being legends. From the misunderstanding of the great commission came the teaching of the three persons bringing the baptismal formula. Both are foreign to the Scriptures and practice of the apostles. The teaching of the Trinity and the triune baptism are the foundation, the pillars upon which the state church is founded. Biblically speaking it is the very »mark« of the mother church and is carried also by all her daughter churches.

Thou shalt have no other gods ...

Whole chapters are dedicated to this theme in the Scriptures. Man created by God has always made gods for himself; he worshipped the sun, the moon, the stars and nature. In reality God alone is worthy of worship, for everything was made by Him, for Him and exists through Him. Any person or object being worshipped is an abomination to Him. Humanity does desire to give glory to God alone, but was deceived to honour other objects and therefore has fallen away from Him and lost fellowship with Him. Rather mankind was misled and has become the prey of a religious deception.

have no other gods before Me.« (Ex. 20: 2-3).

He continued with His commandments and included images, statues, icons etc., which are being worshipped in different religions and cultures. Thus saith the Lord: *»Thou shalt not make unto thee any **carved image**, or **any likeness** of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt **not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them**; for I, the Lord thy God, am **a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them **that hate me**; and showing mercy unto thousands of them **that love me**, and keep my commandments.*« (Vv. 4-6). God classifies those who prepare such objects for worship as those who hate Him. Guilt rests upon them and is hunted down unto the third and fourth generation.

Again the Lord saith: *»**Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.***« (v. 23). Time and again God warned His people through Moses and the prophets not to make any images, any symbol which are idols (Lev. 26: 1). Thus saith the Lord Who is utterly displeased and pronounces judgement, even the direct curse upon those who disobey: *»**Cursed be the man who maketh any carved or melted image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place.***« (Dt. 27: 15). The word remains valid even if people prostrate before such an image, making the sign of the cross thinking that they can bless themselves. Only God can bless and He will bless but those who live according to His Word.

God knew man would make carved images, therefore He was very specific about the subject. Thus the Lord hath said in Dt. 4: 16 prohibiting the making of images resembling male or female. If done, the covenant with Him is broken (v. 23). For this reason Israel under the wrath of God was driven from the Promised Land and scattered among the nations who then asked, *»Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land?«* *»**Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, which he made with them, when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt; for they went and served other gods, and worshipped them ...***« (Dt. 29: 24-26).

Has Christianity not done the same? Has she not broken the New Covenant? Did she not fall away from the one God by inventing and forming a tri-unity? Did she not make statues of Mary and the apostles, which she calls upon? Thus saith the Lord, *»I am the Lord, your **Holy One**, the creator of Israel, your King.*« (Isa. 43: 15). God's people only know **One Who is holy**, Who is worthy of worship, and they are sanctified by Him. Has not Christendom as a whole fallen into apostasy leaving God, with unscriptural canonisation and beatification of the dead?

Whoever teaches the Father to be the first person of the Godhead, the Son to be the second, the Holy Ghost to be the third, has in reality concealed the **one unique God**, even affirming that these three compose one God. Until now one and one is two, plus one is three. If we consider the multitude of saints and patrons, which observed the triune image, one wonders why God's multiple word of warning went unobserved. Consider the veneration of Mary, the statue of Peter at St. Peter's in Rome being kissed daily by multitudes who make their pilgrimage from all over the world. One has to consider the many images, statues, icons, and altars in catholic and orthodox sanctuaries the world over before whom people kneel down, making crosses and calling upon them, kissing images, lighting candles and worshipping! Pope John Paul II when elected into his office dedicated himself totally to Mary. In his hand he carries the shepherd staff with the image of the man-made Christ. That Christ is dead, he can't walk, see or hear. Such practises are totally foreign to the Church of Jesus Christ and are directed against God. And according to the Scripture it is heathen idolatry. One also considers the idolatry in Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions the world over.

Even if you only believe the smallest portion of God's Word you should, as a consequence comprehend that such worship of saints is breaking the commandments of the Most High. In the Reformation, the validity of God's Word was placed into the centre by preaching, and therefore an end was made of emphasising icons, selling indulgences and to every other cultish practice. These two cannot exist together. When the Word, which is contrary to such tradition, is being preached, then action has to follow. Possibly no one dares to say it, but a

only be where God alone is worshipped in Spirit and Truth in the name of Jesus Christ! Where Mary, Peter and the multitude of canonised saints are called upon and even worshipped, such is, according to the Scriptures, practising idolatry.

Every crucifix and images are part of the respective churches but have no place in the ecclesia of Jesus Christ. They should not be hung up in municipal buildings, in schools, courthouses, parliamentary rooms etc. The crucifix originates from the 5th century A. D. The true Church of Jesus Christ never recognised such symbols.

The resurrected and living Christ is not in the dead Eucharist. He is not even in the consecrated wafer, where He is supposed to be present bodily in the tabernacle. He ascended into heaven bodily and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty. Transubstantiation is not reality either through the ringing of bells or through the practised consecration. Every priest knows that the wafer and the wine remain unchanged as they were before. **Where is it written** that Christ should be sacrificed anew over and over again? Certainly not in the Bible! Such practices only confirm that the final sacrifice of Christ has not been accepted. The Holy Scripture express this plainly, *»... by which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all ... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.«* (Heb. 10: 10-14). Whoever reads Hebrews, chapter 9 and other parallel Scriptures will see that the work of redemption was done once for all. Christ as High Priest went with His Own blood into the heavenly sanctuary and put it there on the mercy seat and thereby accomplished the eternal redemption (Heb. 9: 11-12 a. o.). Through the power of God the redeemed are changed into a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5: 17). In the Lord's Supper bread and wine represent the Body and the Blood of Christ. As in the Passover Israel celebrated their deliverance for a memorial (Ex. 12), until Christ returns true believers in the New Testament celebrate the Lord's Supper and their deliverance and redemption, which happened through the sufferings and death of Christ till He come (1 Cor. 11: 26).

Christ is no longer the child in a manger, He is not on Mary's breast or in her arms, He does not hang on the cross, and He does not lie in the grave. He was raised victoriously and declared with majesty, *»All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.«* (Mt. 28: 18). He was taken up into heaven and will return with great glory and power. All images whether of Christ, Mary or any other saint have no part in original Christianity and have no place in any true worship service today. They are typical for the ecumenical churches. In the Assembly of Jesus Christ no relics, holy garments, or any other dedicated objects are to be found. Worship is not to be given to a man, place, or object. The living God is the only One worthy of all the praise in the name of Jesus Christ.

How long will the holy God who declares Himself to be jealous look upon these things? Multitudes all over the world, out in the open and also in dedicated buildings and places of pilgrimage, are still falling down before images. They recite prayers but do not speak to God, Who alone is omnipresent and hears prayer. The made holy ones, including Mary, who are long ago deceased do not hear you when called upon. She is in Paradise and does not hear and certainly does not answer prayer. The supposed appearances of Mary didn't happen not even in Fatima, because they are not promised in the Holy Scripture.

Furthermore the communion with dead saints and the prayers to them is totally unscriptural. God's Word addresses living saints — who are sanctified in Christ, as can be seen from the epistles: *»... to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints ...«* (1 Cor. 1: 2; 2 Cor. 1: 1; Eph. 1: 1). Paul writes, *»Greet every saint in Christ Jesus ... All the saints greet you ...«* (Phil. 4: 21-22). The communion with and calling upon the dead is occultism and spiritism. Although everything is done with fanfare and celebration, the Bible declares it to be religious deception. People are sacrificing time, money for vain things, enduring hardship. All should know and understand: The veneration of saints in the religions of the world is not of faith, for then it would be united with God and His Word, it is ancient superstition!

The great falling away from Christ and His Word into heathenism, the separation from the only one true God, and the involvement of idol worship has taken place. Something terrible has happened and humanity is deceived. Using forms of celebration and oratory still leaves us with superstitions and folly from the minds of man. In Israel the turning away from the only true God to other gods has taken place plunging them into idolatry. Thus saith the Lord : *»They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God; for the **spirit of harlotry** is in the*

Scriptures people cannot turn to God unless they are set free from the spirit of idolatry. This can only take place through a real conversion to Christ. Paul warns, »*Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry ... Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons.*« (1 Cor. 10: 14-22). The apostle ascribes idolatry to demons. One can only be a guest at the Lord's table or otherwise at the table of demons. Apparently the enemy has deceived all that are under his influence into various idolatries.

Anyone taking time to consider this subject must admit that all the statues, carved images, and icons of gold, silver and various material have ears but cannot hear, a mouth which cannot talk, hands that don't move, feet which cannot walk (Ps. 115: 1-8; Isa. 44: 12-20 a. o.). They are dead objects, which are set up for admiration. They do not represent nor have any association with the living God. The Apostle John earnestly warned about this, when he spoke about the true God who revealed Himself in the Son who is the eternal life: »*Little children keep yourselves from idols.*« (1 Jn. 5: 20-21).

In many countries on earth there are special places of pilgrimage. In Europe, Turin, the so-called »shroud of Christ« is exhibited, although independent tests in Switzerland, England, and the USA have proven that this shroud dates back to the 16th century. Many go to worship at the shrine of the so-called »Holy Coat of Trier«, others make their way to Lourdes, and again to Fatima and to Czenstochowa and so on. The number making the annual pilgrimage is given as follows: 6 millions to Guadeloupe, Mexico; 5 millions to Lourdes, France; 4 millions to Fatima, Portugal; 3.5 millions to Loretto, Italy, and so on. Never have we heard about a single person having found Christ in such a place. That is the shocking account of this treacherous deception.

Since the Reformation many articles have been written about the significance of relics. About their veneration Luther said, »**The Word of God is the only sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yes, and the only one that we Christians know and have. Even if we had all the bones of the saints, their clothing in one pile, we would obtain no help, for it is dead, bringing satisfaction to no one. But the Word of God is the treasure, by which all things are sanctified, ...**« The Lutheran theologian and member of the church counsel, Karl-Hermann Kandler, adds , »**Our faith is not in relics, not attached to some left over of saints. Their veneration and the pilgrimage to the holy places do not strengthen the faith, for there unto, as Luther said ›many open lies and invented nonsense were found. They were not commanded, or even suggested, for they are unnecessary and vain. Things, which cannot give indulgence or work forgiveness of sin to anyone, Luther said.**« (Magazin Idea-Spektrum 17/1996).

More recently the spirit of reconciliation is at work; this does not proceed from God and His Word through Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is rather the ecumenical spirit who has penetrated into many protestant denominations.

In 1996 a group of German, Lutheran, high ranking clergy made a pilgrimage to the Holy Coat of Trier. As the legend goes, Helena, the mother of Constantine brought the seamless coat of Christ, being over ninety years old, in 329 A. D. to the city of Trier. For the first time this coat, called the shroud of Christ, was shown in 1512. Over twenty such relics exist in various places around the world.

In the same publication »Idea Spektrum« we read , »**The reformer called such a pilgrimage ›a new cheating, a very peculiar masterly cheating with our Lord's cloth. In his last sermon, 1546, in the city of Eisleben he referred to this relic and said, "In Trier is the cloth of our Lord. Run there, have all your money devoured and buy indulgence on the Pope's jumble market".**«

All Bible believing Christians must cry out »My God!« with great pain, »what have all these things — the places, relics, statues, carved images, and icons, which are being venerated — have to do with you?« What have such dead objects in different cults in common with the living God? Whoever seeks Him can only find Him in Christ. And to find Him requires no special place or image. Instead they are the actual hindrance which must be removed. In view

Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba!« (Amos 5: 4-5).

Maryology

»They are declared the wise

Who journey through error to the truth.

Those who remain in error

They will be the fools.«

A scriptural clarification and challenge regarding Christian theology and church practice is desperately needed. You should have already gathered this from the contents of this exposition. That is even more obvious when the following became news. The international press has reported that 42 cardinals, 500 bishops and high ranking personalities of the Roman church, supported by more than four and a half million Catholics world-wide, have demanded of the pope that by the year 2000 a new dogma should be proclaimed, having Mary elevated to co-redeemer. This would mean that Mary is embodied into the Godhead as expressed by the following quote:

»The goal of the supporters are three new creeds of faith:

that Mary in redemption through her son has co-acted with Him;

that all mercies which flow from the suffering and death of the Saviour can only be effective through Mary's intercession,

that believers' petitions and prayers can only reach Jesus through Mary's mediation.

... out of the Tri-unity comes forth a quadrinity with Mary as daughter of the Father, mother of the Son and bride of the Holy Ghost ...«

Just imagine such a picture for a moment: Daughter of the Father, mother of the Son, bride of the Holy Ghost! What a constellation! Especially in Judaism and Islam, many shake their head when thinking about the Christian Trinity. And now this quadrinity! Who can even comprehend such a thing?

As far as dogmas are concerned, it needs to be mentioned that they have nothing in common with the Truth and the testimony of the Scripture. The dogma now being demanded exceeds all others, and is the summit of presumption. For the sake of people in different religions and denominations, who sincerely search for Truth, God's Word must be expressed without compromise.

In the same press article of 31st August, 1997, it states , **»The new dogma would not only change maryology, the theological reflection about the significance of the mother of Jesus for the Christian faith, but also the whole matter of faith. More than any other in two thousand years.«** Surely, that is so! All the changes the church has made go beyond the Holy Scripture. Before proclaiming a dogma, the Word of God had to be ignored for the creed to take its place. The addings to the Word, the transgressions, the ungodliness of the man of sin, the lawless one, who lifts himself up above God and His Word are now made full (2 Thess. 2). The falling away from the true faith founded **on the Holy Scriptures alone**, as Paul foretold, is being fulfilled.

*teaching for doctrines the commandments of men ... Full well **ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition ... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered; and many such things do ye.***« (Mk. 7: 7-13). It could not be said more clearly: Where commandments and teachings of man are introduced the Word of God is being looked upon with reproach and the worship is declared to be in vain.

Of all the church dogmas and creeds being proclaimed not a single one has a Biblical foundation, but no other is so unbelievable as the one demanded now. It's obvious that Protestants don't protest anymore. Indeed leaders of different churches do not aim to be in agreement with the Word of God, but rather seek the acknowledgement of the mother church, trying to comply more and more with her. These **four alone**:

- **Alone by grace**
- **Alone Jesus Christ**
- **Alone through faith**
- **Alone the Holy Scripture**

which were the foundation at the time of reformation and are the pillars, the declarations of faith in the free proclamation of the Gospel, no longer have their place with us.

The confession of a small minority, of true believers, who believe the full Gospel, is that **»The Holy Scripture is the only source, guide for faith, doctrine, and for life. Only by grace can mankind be saved in believing on Jesus Christ.«**

Whether this new dogma will be instituted or not isn't the issue. The great number of those who demand the same speaks for itself. Indeed Mary already holds that position in the world of the Roman Catholic Church, whether by declared dogma or not. In discussions before instituting a new creed there were some pro and others were con. The fight was on. In the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), when the dogma of the Pope's infallibility was declared, the German bishops were against it. They were politely asked to leave. Then the vote took place and the proclamation was made.

Within the history of the church many creeds were proclaimed. The three last were: In 1854 Pope Pius IX proclaimed the »Immaculate Conception« of Mary which does not exist, as there is no witness in the Holy Scriptures. Also there is no mentioning of the »immaculate« heart of Mary. It is also not found in God's Word.

In 1870 the »papal infallibility« was declared and became a creed of the church of Rome. Long before the papacy has placed itself as »Vicar of Christ« above God's Word.

Only recently, in 1950, Pope Pius XII proclaimed the dogma of the »bodily assumption of Mary«. It was said, that she **»... when the course of her earthly life was completed, was taken up body and soul into the Glory of heaven ...«**. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, § 974). That is in direct contradiction to the infallible everlasting Word of Christ: **»And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man who is in heaven.«** (Jn. 3: 13).

It is so obvious, no apostle and none of the church fathers in the first centuries knew anything about it. In that period there were no popes, infallibility, Immaculate Conception, bodily assumption of Mary — no one knew anything about it. Only after hundreds of years and up till now, two thousand years later, people have such incredible thoughts, because it is fitting and helpful to the Pope's church. As already mentioned, every time a new creed was invented, the Word of God was purposely set aside. And those who remained with the Scriptures were put under the anathema. They were cursed, persecuted, deprived of their property and put to death.

belong to the Roman Church in the entire world to their creeds and dogmas. People are demanded upon to make an important decision, whether they will believe God or the Pope. Both are not possible. One excludes the other and is opposite as Christ and the Antichrist, light and darkness. **Only that which is written in the Bible is valid before God and is part of the true faith.** All should have the courage to ask whether church teachings can stand the test of God's Word.

In this decisive time for the Church of Jesus Christ, for Israel and the nations God has ordained that somebody must speak up. Attention needs to be given to these important matters so people can recognise whom they are believing, and whom they are following: The head of the Roman Catholic Church, Patriarch of the Orthodox church, bishop or any other church authority, founder of a religion, general overseer, charismatic person, or the Head of the redeemed Church, **»the Lord Jesus Christ«** according to the teachings of the apostles. *»The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.«* (Isa. 40: 3). It must be that voice from above to be heard in this spiritual desert on earth to prepare the way of the Lord. That is the sole purpose of this exposition.

Mary, since the 5th century has been honoured more and more in a non biblical way and given the various titles of honour which actually belong to Christ alone, is now according to the will of millions of Catholics and also high ranking influential personalities being elevated to an object of faith. It is very strange, Matthew and Luke wrote the genealogy record and don't even mention her father and her mother. Nobody knows the name of her parents, so unimportant was it to God. Matthew starts his genealogy with Abraham, mentions three times fourteen generations and ends with the statement, *»And Jacob begot Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.«* (Mt. 1: 16). Luke goes backward in his genealogy record even to Adam who is the father of humanity. But Mary's parents are not mentioned. Mary was a human like all of us, and only by **divine choosing** was she the **very special vessel** God ordained for the birth of His Son. From **the view of the plan of salvation** her ordainment was fulfilled. She gave birth to Jesus and this of course was the **only once** for all purpose. To her there are no further promises or requests given. If somebody thinks so, **it certainly cannot be confirmed in the Bible.**

The Redeemer had to be born into this fallen creation, otherwise He could not have taken humanity out of the fall through redemption. For the love of Maryology even Luke 1: 28 was translated wrong. In the original text the angel salutes Mary with the words, *»Hail, thou who art endued with grace ...«* The catholic catechism carries the text as follows, *»... thou who art full of grace«*. The difference is monumental! God alone is the merciful One full of grace, *»And of his fullness have all received, and grace for grace.«* (Jn. 1: 16). Mary found favour, that is to say, grace with God, so His promise could be fulfilled. The Bible does not illustrate Mary with the power to work miracles. In fact, both Old and New Testament prohibit creating a cult around a person or an object.

Ephesus was the city where the heathen goddess Diana was being worshipped as the goddess of fertility. The trade of the silversmiths was blossoming, bringing prosperity because of this cult. They feared that Paul through preaching would bring an end to their handicraft: not only was their craft in danger of being despised, but the temple of the great goddess, Diana, was in danger, and her magnificence would be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipped (Acts 19: 27). The same applies for the cult of Mary who is being worshipped by Catholics and Orthodox alike. It was believed that the image of Diana fell directly from heaven: *»Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess, Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?«* (v. 35).

When Paul was preaching **Jesus Christ** to them, the newly converted turned away from the worship of the queen of heaven and the goddess of fertility. Later in the same city of Ephesus during a church council, Mary, not by accident was lifted up as the fertile one and received the title as queen of heaven. The cult and the superstition remain the same. Later, history records Jupiter being taken down and Peter being lifted up. This and much more is a continuation of heathen practice in a Christian dress.

Mary is not the mother of God, she can't be, she was the mother of our Lord. So reads the true testimony, *»... and Elisabeth was **filled with the Holy Spirit** . And she spoke out with a*

*And why is this granted to me, that the **mother of my Lord** should come to me? ... And blessed is she that **believed**; for there shall be a performance of those **things which were told her from the Lord.**» (Lk. 1: 41-45). The same testimony is confessed by all that are truly filled with the Holy Spirit. They not only remain with the theme, but stay in the Truth.*

There was no »Immaculate Conception« of Mary, only the Immaculate Conception of the Son of God and Mary who was »unspotted« and »a virgin«. God placed the seed of Himself within Mary through the divine act of begetting by the Holy Spirit. She was not infallible, but rather the same as all human beings. This we gather from the following record: When Jesus was twelve years of age He remained behind in the Temple of Jerusalem, where they found Him three days later. God permitted Mary, being upset, to utter words of complaint. Of course, she was a mother who took care of the child, and therefore reacted this way, »*Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing.*« With this she was not aware that she had spoken the most terrible untruth, calling Joseph the father of Jesus. Jesus, Who was twelve years, was not in the *carpenter's shop* of Joseph at that time, but in the Temple. At the very spot He corrected what Mary had said and put it right, »*How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*« Even Mary did not understand what Jesus said: »*And they (Mary and Joseph) understood not the saying, which he spoke unto them.*« (Lk. 2: 48-50).

That applies even today to all that worship Mary. They do not understand what Jesus said. Not a single time did Jesus call her »mother«, but rather »woman« (Jn. 2: 4). For He was the Seed promised to come by the »woman« (Gen. 3: 15), as foretold in the first prediction. At the wedding in Cana in Galilee He even used harsh words in speaking with her, »*Woman, what have I to do with thee?*« The words she addressed to the servants are still valid to all true believers, »*Whatever he saith unto you, do It.*« They did what He said and the miracle happened. At His Word water turned into wine.

Mary needed to be filled with the Holy Ghost as the rest of the believers. She is only mentioned in the Gospels and in Acts 1: 14 in connection with the 120 gathered to experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, »*These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and **Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.***«

Mary who found grace and was blessed in a special way was **no exception**, hers was not a privileged position, she was part of the fallen creation and therefore in need of redemption. The same is true of all that believe and experience the promises of God. They are the blessed ones, as our Lord repeatedly said in the Sermon on the Mount. The Son, Who was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of her, is the resurrected Lord Who was taken up into heaven, Who in the Spirit indwells the redeemed. In Mt. 13 our Lord declares the eyes and the ears of the disciples blessed, because they saw and heard. Right to the Revelation, the last book and chapter in the Bible, the blessings are pronounced upon those who will overcome all things and enter the holy city of God.

From the day, the New Testament Church was inaugurated, Mary isn't mentioned a single time, by Peter, Paul, John, James or by anyone else. Mary had to be a virgin, so the promise spoken by the Prophet Isaiah 7: 14 could be fulfilled, »***Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son ...***« (Isa. 7: 14). As recorded in the Bible, Mary was engaged to Joseph who almost separated himself from her, when he found that she was expecting. This shocked him. An angel of the Lord spoke to him saying, »*Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to **take unto thee Mary, thy wife**; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit ... Then Joseph ... **took unto him his wife, and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son**; and he called his name **Jesus.***« (Mt. 1: 20-25).

The Bible clearly shows that after Mary had Jesus she also had sons and daughters with Joseph (Mt. 13: 55-56). From that point Mary ceases to be "the virgin". The names of the daughters are not mentioned, but the names of the sons are James, Joseph, Simon and Jude, who also had part in the ministry. In John 2: 12 we read, »*After this he went down to Capernaum, he, **and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples** ...*« In chapter 7: 5 it is mentioned that **His brethren** at first did not believe in Him. The Apostle Paul refers to them, »*Have we no right to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as **the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?***« (1 Cor. 9: 5). He further writes, »*But other of the*

introduces himself as servant of Jesus Christ and as brother of James, who was a brother of the Lord (v. 1).

God from the very beginning has entrusted men with tasks and gifts according to His Plan of Salvation. The adoration and worship He reserved for Himself. Thus saith the Lord: »**I am YAHWEH: that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to carved images.**« (Isa. 42: 8). The whole practise of Maryology is outside of the Word and the Kingdom of God. It is orthodox-catholic but not biblical-christian!

Believe as the Scripture says

Many think they believe the Scripture, but in reality they don't. To believe the Scripture means to respect every Word of God and act accordingly. The phrase is used, "No other Gospel." but in reality they have a totally different gospel, not the original of Jesus Christ and the apostles. Every Christian church claims to be biblical, but more or less have deviated from the Bible. It is necessary to search the Holy Scripture honestly to verify that the teachings and practice truly do agree with the Word of God.

Those who believe the Scriptures will defend what is written on its pages. They do not interpret anything into it to later read out of it. To them the words of our Lord apply, »*He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.*« (Jn. 7: 38). They are not even interested in what church celebrities have left behind, who were contradicting, blaming, slandering and cursing one another. Those who truly stand with the Bible do not even care about what they said. Much of what they have written is pure nonsense, fantasy and tradition.

The esteemed church fathers didn't stand on Biblical ground in the Council of Nicea (325) and afterwards they did not step on scriptural soil. They believed and taught whatever they wanted. Its not recorded that any of these men had a personal relationship with Christ, a true conversion or a call to the ministry from the Lord. They looked upon Christendom as a mere religion and brought heathenism into Christianity. In their writings they were still using Bible terms, but have given them totally different meaning and designation, which are still in practise today in these formal churches. It is sad, as people remain with the theme but are not in the original Truth.

They apparently did not know the Old Testament or the plan of salvation, wherein Christ was appointed to suffer and die. They didn't understand the Apostle Paul's emphasis, »*that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures ...*« (1 Cor. 15: 3). They did not comprehend the weight of Peter's writings, »... *Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness ...*« (1 Pt. 2: 24). They are responsible for losing true doctrine, namely that the Redeemer had to take upon Himself our sin, guilt and even the curse that had come upon humanity which needed to be redeemed (Rom. 4: 25; Gal. 3: 13). Reconciliation and forgiveness through the atoning death of Christ, is the only way to eternal life. They didn't even seem to take notice of this fact.

The »Shmah Israel« = »**Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord!**« (Dt. 6: 4) is an imperative, a command, but was not even considered by the church fathers. They spoke and thought with no regard to God or truth, this shows they had no personal relationship with God. Only through a true experience with Him do we receive this connection and have direct access to His Word.

Whether it is Tertullian, Clemens, Hippolyt, Julian, Origen, Marceon, Montanius, Sabellius, Athanasius, Arius, Hieronymus, Chrysostomos, Augustine and the rest of them: what they taught is not for Bible believing Christians. These men have left us a spiritual tohuwabohu, (a total mess). They didn't know the only true God, the God of Israel, having no revelation of the salvation plan and no understanding of the self-manifestation of God in Christ. The foundation and everything else they laid in formal Christianity was wrong. The command for us now is: Get back to the original Word of God — to the true foundation of the apostles,

prepared for us to walk on it (Lk. 20: 21; Acts 18: 24-26).

An unbelievable tragedy

An unbelievable tragedy has occurred within established Christianity. In theological seminaries they don't teach from the original Word, but teach from books compiled by mere churchmen. They speak mainly about the »innertrinitarian relation« which in reality does not even exist. It is a speculation, which came up in the 4th century whereupon they base their theology. This is not valid before God. What counts is what He said and what His servants left behind in the Old and New Testament. Whatever is not written in the Scriptures does not have a divine origin. The Old and the New Testament **are complete testimonies of God, and no one should dare to add anything to it**, as is also true with a natural testament — the last will, after it becomes valid nothing can be changed or added. In the last chapter of the New Testament we have the warning that those who would **add to or take away from** the words of prophecy of the divine book, their part would be taken from the tree of life and they would have to suffer the apocalyptic plagues. So serious is the whole matter that even names which are written in the book of life can be removed, if someone becomes guilty by adding or taking away from the Scriptures.

Even before the end of the first century Paul with much pain states, that another Jesus was being preached, another Gospel proclaimed and another spirit was at work (2 Cor. 11: 4). In the same chapter the Apostle refers to those men, who deviated from the original teachings, *»as the truth of Christ is in me ... such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore, it is no great thing if his ministers also were transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.«* (Vv. 10-15). John admonishes us to prove the spirits, because many false prophets have already entered the world. Only those who confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh as the Messiah are of God. *»... And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist«* (1 Jn. 4: 1-3). **This Word must be applied to all denominations that do not confess Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, but instead are teaching that an eternal Son preexisted. They speak about »Jesus« as the »Son« but in a different way. They do not remain with the testimony of Scripture in accordance with the Spirit and Word of prophecy** (Rev. 19: 10b). Now the pure doctrine and the plain Truth are placed again upon the candlestick, and everyone is able to test for himself what kind of spirit is leading.

In his message to the church of Ephesus John records the words of the Lord, *»I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them who are evil; and thou hast tried them who **say they are apostles**, and are not, and hast found them **liars**«* (Rev. 2: 2).

In Gal.1 Paul emphasises that all who preach another Jesus, another Gospel are under a curse. **Another** Gospel is that which is different to the **original** Gospel of Jesus Christ and the apostles and does not coincide with their teachings and practice. Bearing great responsibility, Paul being directly commissioned, the Apostle was worried that Satan would beguile the church as he did Eve (2 Cor. 11: 2-3). God's enemy has not only thrown humanity from the beginning of the creation into death, he has done so spiritually after our redemption was accomplished with those who did not take God's Word seriously. Both live on: the **sin** through **disobedience** and the **true church** through **obedience by faith**. The enemy always tries using the same method. He questions the Word of God. *»Should God have said ...«* *»Surely, you will not die!«* Satan is the big liar and the most religious perverter, the destroyer of the Word of God from the beginning. Using the religions of the world he has been very successful. He is the prince of the air and the god of this world and acts under a religious cloak, always interpreting Scripture his own way. In this respect he is the father of all lies and the first theologian.

The end-time

In the Holy Scriptures we find the terms »ages«, »end-time«, »last days« among others. Such designations are important to the time line of God as they show various ages. It is something wonderful, that we are now in and experiencing the last part of the New Testament era. The final call in this time of grace is going forth.

Viewing the promised Return of Christ in God's Word and the fulfilment of Bible prophecy, we understand the signs of the time. It is imperative to write an exposition about God and His Plan of Salvation with humanity. God's Word, which does not change but remains forever, is the only valid authority. Thus saith the Lord, *»Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.«* (Lk. 21: 33). The Apostle Peter connects the Old with the New Testament and brings both as one whole, as he quotes the Prophet Isaiah, *»But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.«* (1 Pt. 1: 25; Isa. 40: 8).

John, the seer, on the isle of Patmos predicted that the **everlasting Gospel** would be faithfully proclaimed to all the inhabitants of the earth (Rev. 14: 6). Our Lord has actually said the same, *»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.«* (Mt.24: 14). These predictions are being realised and fulfilled, as the same Gospel is now preached before the end. All peoples, tribes and languages are included, even those who do not have an understanding about God or a totally different one in comparison to the Holy Scriptures. The Gospel, which is now proclaimed, cannot be another one — it has to be the same original proclamation that existed at the very beginning. **The Gospel carries the main proclamation: God was in Christ reconciling the world with Himself** (2 Cor. 5: 19).

All prophets and men sent by God had to stand against the trend of their time. If God had not been with them, surely the tidal waves would have covered them. Every time God sent one of His servants, He made history. Those He sent were always like a foreign object and never fitted into the existing religious systems. They were divinely commissioned, doing the service and will of the Most High.

These men always had to swim against the religious current. They searched diligently in the Old and the New Testament until they reached the source itself. That is how they could see the difference between real Biblical teaching and the doctrines handed down by church tradition.

Inasmuch as in post-apostolic times after Polycarp and Ireneus the men in Christendom, who exclusively came from heathenism, distanced themselves from Judaism and the Old Testament, they explained the New Testament according to their own views resulting in a totally different concept. It is significant that when the breaking away from Judaism occurred that was the same time when the Trinity doctrine came into Christendom. Not a single Christian who believes in the one God has ever hated the Jews. Deadly hatred and terrible accusations against the Jews were being heralded, claiming they were blind and rejected by God and so forth by those who represented the teaching of the trinity. During this transition period they were categorically accused as being guilty of killing Christ and even having murdered God. Of course, there was no more original foundation of the apostles and prophets left. This branch which had fallen away from the Word was united with worldly power. Thus began the most disastrous era in church history, known as the "dark ages".

The Trinity-dogma was proclaimed on 1st May, 381 A.D. by Cæsar Theodosius I as the »state religion« in the Roman Empire. In the year 443 Pope Leo I declared it to be binding to all Christians. Around the year 500 the priesthood began to wear uniformed cloth and were made civil servants. Thus the dividing line between clergy and the congregation was drawn. According to the testimony of the Scripture, the whole assembly of the redeemed is the »holy priesthood« (1 Pt. 2: 9; Rev. 1: 6). Then began the terrible thousand-year reign of the Roman State church until the breaking forth of the Reformation.

Since Christianity became a state religion, all Roman citizens had to bow to it. During the first century the Roman government had persecuted the Christian church, regardless of what type of branch it was. Now all were forced into the unity of this one church. History records the terrible crusades, which go into the account of the Trinity-church. The Roman Catholic

inquisition and the persecution of the Waldensers, the killing of the Huguenots in France and much more.

Just at the turn of the first Christian millennium the worldly power totally submitted to the religious power, which won the upper hand and claimed superiority. Up till then the cæsars installed the Popes, then the Popes installed the cæsars. It was Pope Nicholas II who proclaimed this degree in the year 1059. Under the banner »In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost« all the crusaders received the churches orders and massacred uncounted innocent victims with the crucifix in one hand and the sword in the other hand. In the year 1096 Pope Urban II had given the order, as was agreed in the Council of Clermont in 1095, to capture Jerusalem and to occupy the tomb of Christ and set the whole area under Christian rulership. Altogether about 330,000 crusaders left France and Germany, of which only 40,000 under Gottfried of Bouillon finally reached Jerusalem. The Pope had said: »Deus lo vult« – »God wills it!« and so his subjects had to submit. The murderers received papal absolution for all the atrocities they would perform. Not only in Jerusalem, the blood streaming through the streets, whole areas were soaked with blood for centuries. In one crusade the man who wrote the biography of King Frederic II, who later was crowned king of Jerusalem, wrote into his diary, **»Wading through blood we entered the holy city and fought until we reached the tomb of Christ – this is truly a holy war.«** Human beings were slaughtered in mass like animals »in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost«. The Trinity-church has used her doctrine like a three-edged club without mercy to slay and to murder whole tribes.

The Popes being the main propagators of the Trinity teaching, as history ascribes, are responsible for all the atrocities done in the name of »Christian«/Catholic religion. They also ordered the public burning of the Talmud in the year 1244 and the burning of all Hebrew literature in 1731. They are responsible for all the expulsions of the Jews, for the persecution of those who believed differently. The massacres were part of their program. The Jews they cursed forever and those who did not join this state church were also cursed as heretics and persecuted.

Whole nations in Europe were declared by this church to be free from Jews: Spain 1492, Portugal 1496, and so on. In Poland alone 200,000 Jews were actually chopped to pieces in the year 1648. The history of the Popes is soaked with blood, with the blood of the Jews and the blood of faithful Bible believers who died as martyrs. The »final solution« was meant to take place in our time, when 6 million Jews, among them 1.5 million children, were killed.

Sad but true, the accusations propagated against the Jews by the Roman Church are still in the heads of the people today. Also Luther, born and raised as a Catholic, could not free himself from this attitude, even after having experienced conversion. Finally the hatred was manifested in the holocaust of the Catholic dominated Hitler-regime. Only since the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the accusing statements against the Jews were finally taken out of the mass.

In an agreement the Vatican recognised Israel only on June 15th, 1994. From then on diplomatic relations exist between the two states. But whether the attitude is changed is questionable. Obviously the Vatican takes sides with the enemies of Israel.

The Jews have always preferred death, as they could not accept the Trinity, neither teaching nor the tri-une baptism. The same can be said with uncounted faithful Bible believing Christians. All who are honest should think about this fact. Right up till now fanatical trinitarians, whether in state churches or other churches, have the same hatred and express it towards those who believe the Bible.

If a teaching is right and has divine origin, then the outcome of it will leave behind the footprints of love, peace and blessing. The Jews never required the nations to be converted to their faith in the only true God. They did no mission work. Force is the mark of the Roman State churches in Christianising the nations. Wherever there is much power, there is also much misuse of power. That can be traced throughout history.

A challenge to all

The Prophet Elijah gathered God's people on Mount Carmel. Also 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the idols came to witness the decision. The Prophet declared, »The God Who answereth by fire is the true God!« And behold God answered. We also need a divine decision. If the Lord is God we should serve Him. If His Word is true, then let everything else be false. The time is nearing; it is at hand, when God is going to complete His work. In that decisive moment we must be on the right side. Through His Word He now addresses and challenges all.

Now a worldwide call to all people in all faiths and religions must be heralded. So many different faiths cannot be right and lead to God. Only whatever comes from Him leads back to Him. **We can meet Him only where He met with us. There is only one way from God to us, and that is our way to God.** Only One could say, **»I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.«** (Jn. 14: 6).

Do the terms treasured on earth »Trinity« »tri-une God« etc. exist with God in heaven, as He never uttered them, never mentioned them? They are in reality strange formations, deriving from gnostic philosophy and have crept in as theories. One must ask, What is the truth about the Trinity? The truth about the Trinity is that it did not exist in eternity, not in the course of time and will not be throughout eternity!

In the Old Testament the term »Lord God« is found together. In the New Testament up to the Epistle of Jude it is not found together a single time, unless it is a quote of the Old Testament. Here we meet this great revelatory mystery of God in the New Testament, which cannot be explained or searched out by anyone. We read for instance in 1 Cor. 6: 14, *»God hath ... raised up the Lord.«* The divine remaining and the human expressed revelation runs alongside one another, together, wrapped up into one another, until in the completion the redeemed who are pleasing God are deified and will be in the likeness of the Redeemer (1 Jn. 3: 1-3).

In the New Testament »God« and »Lord« appear separately, as does also Father and Son right until the last prophetic book of the Bible, the Revelation. There we find again the term **»Lord God«**.

The religious leaders of that day accused Jesus of blasphemy (Jn. 5 and 10), because He, as their argument went, made Himself equal with God. They didn't understand that the Redeemer had to be born as a man, so He could suffer and die and still remain Lord to overcome death and hell. They justified themselves, *»For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.«* His answer was, *»Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? ... That ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.«* (Jn. 10: 33-38).

The Apostle Paul speaks of the »mystery of Christ and the Church« and the realisation thereof, as God, the Creator of all things, has purposed from all eternity and bringing it about through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Eph. 2 and 3 a. o.). In eternity, when there was no time, God ordained all things in advance. Long before man was formed and fell, **before** the foundation of the world the Omniscient laid out His Plan of Salvation and decided to redeem humanity through the Lamb of God, *»... Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world ...«* (1 Pt. 1: 20-21). Also before the foundation of the world the names of the redeemed were written in the Lamb's book of life. Before the foundation of the world all sons of God were predestinated in Jesus Christ (Eph. 1: 4-5). Before the foundation of the world the Father already loved the Son and all His sons and daughters in Him and through Him. The same eternal glory, by which the Son of God was transfigured, was there for Him and His Own before the foundation of the world: *»And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one«* (Jn. 17: 22-24). God is eternal; therefore His plan of salvation must have eternal character. Therein many thinking with their natural mind have a great problem. For God all things in eternity were already done and finished, even if they are realised only in the course of time.

The Saviour was not only the Messiah, which means the »Anointed One«, He also had to destroy the one who had the power of death, that is the devil, and set us free. Therefore He

Testament foretold , »I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O Sheol, I will be thy destruction« (Hos. 13: 14).

Paul is already giving the shout of victory, as it will be proclaimed fulfilled with the Return of Jesus Christ. »... *Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ...*« (1 Cor. 15: 50-58). Through the death of Christ, death itself was conquered. The triumphant resurrection is the proof thereof. Soon it will be swallowed up in victory and the redeemed will not hear about death throughout all eternity. »**He will swallow up death in victory** ; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; ... *And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.*« (Isa. 25: 8-9).

»Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; **and there shall be no more death ...**« (Rev. 21: 3-4).

No one can bypass Jesus Christ

As we cannot explain God in His nature, His manifestations, we cannot explain our Lord in the realm of salvation.

If the Lord is shown in any way concerning His Kingdom, in His Church, we see Him as Son of man, Son of God, Son of David, Lamb of God, High Priest, Mediator, Advocate and so on. When He is shown in such a way we see Him as man besides God, but never as another divine person. This is clearly shown in all the Scriptures.

When Jesus spoke as the Son of man He had to say, »*the Father is greater than I*« — only the Father does know the time and the hour, not the Son of man — and »*He can do nothing but what He sees the Father do*« (Jn. 5: 19-20 a. o.). He was the promised Prophet, the seer (Dt. 18: 15-18). To Him was shown by vision what was and would take place. The very thoughts and intentions of man's heart were revealed to Him »*Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.*« (Jn. 1: 48).

»... *For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband; that saidst thou truly ... The woman saith unto him, I know that **Messiah cometh, who is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things.** Jesus saith unto her, **I that speak unto thee am he.***« (Jn. 4: 16-26).

»*But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for **he knew what was in man.***« (Jn. 2: 24-25).

So the scripture of Dt. 18: 18 was fulfilled, as shown by Peter in his second sermon after Pentecost, »*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord, your God, raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things, whatever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass **that every soul, who will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.***« (Acts 3: 22-23). As »**Son of man**« he was **the Prophet** and **servant** (Isa. 42: 1-4; 52: 13; Acts 4: 23-31 a. o.). As »**Son of God**« He is **Saviour and Lord**. As »**Son of David**« He is **King**. He is King, High Priest and Prophet — all in the right order and place.

Whatever our beloved Lord did, what He said, and what is written about Him, must always be seen in connection with that part of the plan of salvation. The terms used of Him can never be exchanged one with the other. For instance, almost eighty times we find in Ezechiel and in the Gospels the term »Son of man«. Where it is, is where it must remain. When we find written »Son of God«, that is where it needs to be. The same applies to »Son of David« and all the other terms associated with Christ. In God's Word everything is connected to the Plan of Salvation and is in divine order.

God did not multiply within Himself. He is still the only One true God. Through the Son, Who is the firstborn, He has through the begetting by the Spirit, performed the spiritual multiplication of all the firstborn. The Word of Truth brought them into being, through the working of the new birth by the Holy Spirit (Jas. 1: 18; 1 Pt. 1: 23 a. o.) they were adopted as sons and daughters of God. **»And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.«** (Jn. 17: 3).

»And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.« (1 Jn. 5: 20).

Stephen saw Him as the Son of man standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7: 56). John saw Him as the Son of man walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks (Rev. 1). Daniel saw Him coming as Son of man with the clouds of heaven (7: 13-14 a. o.). He had to be High Priest, Mediator, Advocate, Saviour and so on, manifesting His attributes. The Apostle writes to his co-worker Timothy, *»for there is **one God and one mediator** between God and men, **the man, Christ Jesus.**«* (1 Tim. 2: 5).

The Apostle John expresses it like that, *»and if any man sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ **the righteous.**«* (1 Jn. 2: 1b).

Viewing God's plan of salvation we see redemption in the New Testament is in and through the Son. Even in His humanity the Son is the object of true living faith which saves men: *»... ye believe in God, believe also in me!«* (Jn. 14: 1). **Only whoever believes in the Son of God truly believes in God.** Living, saving faith is only possible in the manifested God. Everything else is religious activity bypassing God. **Only in the Son has the Father met us, only in Him can we meet the Father.** With this in mind we are able to place the following references in a proper order: *»Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he is angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they who put their trust in him.«* (Ps. 2: 11-12).

*»... Who **by him** do **believe in God**, who raised him up from the dead and gave him glory that **your faith and hope might be in God.**«* (1 Pt. 1: 21).

The salvation given by God in **His Son** is received by all the sons and daughters of God. Therefore the apostolic condition is still valid today, **»Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.«** (Acts 16: 31).

»He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.« (Jn. 3: 36).

*»And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is **in his Son. He that hath the Son** hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.«* (1 Jn. 5: 11-12).

»Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also.« (1 Jn. 2: 23).

New creation

Our Lord says, «Behold, I make all things new.« The beginning was made with the New Covenant. All who truly believe are renewed and born again, they receive new life from God. Paul stated, »Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation ...« (2 Cor. 5: 17). God has given us a new life, a new heart, a new spirit, as promised in the Old Testament, through the New Covenant in Christ Who is the beginning of this new divine creation (Rev. 3: 14).

Upon humanity which multiplied by natural begetting through unbelief and disobedience came death and separation from God and the fellowship with Him — the expulsion from

had to be wrought in the same body of flesh and blood. Life is in the blood (Lev. 17: 11), therefore it was necessary that His sacrificial blood and life was given for our reconciliation and salvation. In the Son begotten by the Holy Spirit was the Life of God. *»In him was life; and the life was the light of men.«* (Jn. 1: 4). In the flesh He became mortal and died. In the Spirit He went down into the lower regions of hell (1 Pt. 3: 18-23) to conquer death, hell and Satan and to give that great victory to all His sons and daughters. The damage caused by Satan through the serpent God turned around and made good as Father through the Son. The way to Paradise is again free. When dying on the cross, the Lord spoke the following words, *»Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.«* (Lk. 23: 43).

In the garden of Gethsemane the Son of God was praying, fighting the greatest battle when He said, *»O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.«* (Mt. 26: 39).

*»Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. **Father, glorify thy name.**«* (Jn. 12: 27-28).

Dying on Golgotha's cross, the Son of God cried vicariously for all the sons and daughters of God, bearing their guilt and sin, suffering separation from God as they. We were the ones, forsaken by God. There He took our place and cried in our stead, *»My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?«* (Mt. 27: 46; Mk. 15: 34), as it was already predicted through the mouth of David in Ps. 22: 1. Dying on the cross, He said, *»It is finished«* (Jn. 19: 30). Everything happened as foretold in the Old Testament.

All this was necessary according to the Plan of Salvation. From His birth to His death we see the Son of man among men, Who finally in dying spoke the words, *»Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit«* (Lk. 23: 46). We were the ones who were separated from God; now He stepped in and took our place. He was the One who came forth from God to unite us with God. Since then all of God's children can say the same when their earthly pilgrimage ends, *»Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!«*

To the redeemed the following Scripture applies. *»And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he made alive together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.«* (Col. 2: 13-15). Amen! So it is!

The Son and the sons and daughters of God

With the birth of the Son Who was begotten by the Holy Spirit God became the Father of all His sons and daughters that He adopted. That is the whole purpose of the plan of salvation; that was His intention. The created son — Adam — was disobedient and became a child of death. And all the descendants of Adam are children of death. Everyone knows it: Nothing in life is as certain as death. The begotten Son, the second Adam, was obedient until death on the cross. He has accomplished redemption and is the mediator between God and men who brought reconciliation. He suffered death in order to overcome it. He rose triumphant as the great Conqueror over death, hell and Satan.

It is written, *»And it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God.«* (Rom. 9: 26; Hos. 2: 23).

The manifestation in the Son had the highest purpose, that we in Him were made the sons and daughters of God. From the single Redeemer, *»I will be **his father**, and he shall be my son«* (2 Sam. 7: 14; Heb. 1: 5), to the plural of the redeemed, *»... and will be a **Father unto you**, and **ye shall be my sons and daughters**, saith the Lord Almighty.«* (2 Cor. 6: 18). The same Holy Spirit through Whom the Son was begotten, creates the new life of God in us through the new birth (1 Jn. 5: 4). The Son of God is the **firstborn** of many brethren, in Him the relationship of Father-child was established. Therefore He could say, *»But go to my*

God and your God.« (Jn. 20: 17).

God has accepted us in the Son. Therefore it is written, *»For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in **bringing many sons unto glory**, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. **For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one**, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them **brethren** ...«* (Heb. 2: 10-12).

*»... Having predestinated us unto the **adoption of sons by Jesus Christ** to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will«* (Eph. 1: 5).

*»For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be **the firstborn among many brethren**.«* (Rom. 8: 29 a. o.)

The two beginnings

The two beginnings are realities; one natural, one spiritual. As certain as there was a natural beginning in creation and mankind which still exists today, there was a spiritual beginning which is a reality with all who truly believe.

We do see Eve who received the seed of the enemy — the serpent, and pulled Adam into the same transgression. We also see Mary who received the divine seed and gave birth to the Redeemer, the second Adam, Who brought eternal life back for us (1 Cor. 15: 45-49). God has placed His Seed into Mary, so the Son of God appeared in the flesh to bruise the serpent's head and to give redemption unto us. *»Seed«* means posterity.

Because the serpent beguiled Eve, the natural seed was left behind in Cain of whom the Bible does say, *»... Cain, who was of that wicked one ...«* (1 Jn. 3: 12), God said to the serpent, *»And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between **thy seed and her seed**; he shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.«* (Gen. 3: 15). God had to bring forth a natural seed, so the sting of death could be pulled out from this body delivered unto death. In the resurrection and transfiguration of the Son of God, the resurrection and translation of all the sons of God is guaranteed through Jesus Christ.

As the first Adam was disobedient and brought death, the second Adam through obedience brought eternal life to fallen humanity. As the following Scriptures plainly teach, *»For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit«* (1 Pt. 3: 18).

»And you, that were once alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unprovable in his sight« (Col. 1: 21-22).

»Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins ...« (Rom. 3: 25).

*» **For since by man came death, by man came the resurrection of the dead.** ... And so it is written, **The first man, Adam, was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit ... The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven** ... And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.«* (1 Cor. 15: 21, 45, 47 + 49).

*»Therefore, as by the **offence** of one **judgement** came upon all men to **condemnation**, even so by the **righteousness** of one the free gift came upon all men unto **justification of life**. For as by one man's **disobedience** many were made sinners, so by the **obedience of one** shall many be made righteous.«* (Rom. 5: 18-19).

The course of church history

At the very beginning of the New Testament Church every doctrine and practice was God-ordained. But soon deviations and changes came. The developments over the centuries were tragic and reached such a dimension that original Christianity was no longer found to resemble its former self. We must find the original path which the Bible calls »the narrow way« and follow the same. If we remain on this broad way, we certainly will not reach our God-ordained destination.

Both, the right and wrong, run parallel through the church ages. Already in apostolic days men who had no divine call have introduced their personal opinions from which the strange doctrines originate. We now have to compare every teaching, testimony and practice with the original at the beginning to verify whether they agree. A true prophet, a real apostle, a teacher sent by God into the Church of Christ (1 Cor. 12: 28; Eph. 4: 11) must and will proclaim today exactly the same as the prophets, apostles and teachers who were sent by God previous to us in the Holy Scriptures. Revelation and inspiration always comes from the only true divine source.

Men of God have never presented their own knowledge, but were led and inspired by the Holy Spirit, speaking the words of God. This must be the criterion set forth in the Bible, and whoever preaches or teaches must be tried accordingly, regardless of faith or denomination. Many try to do God a service without knowing the will of God and not being found therein themselves. Honesty can be attributed to all those in the various religions. They sacrifice their time and themselves, living for their conviction with all sincerity. But there is apparently the possibility **to be sincerely wrong**. The so-called »church fathers« certainly meant well when they presented their own opinions which then became doctrines. The thoughts from heathenism were brought into Christianity. Their aim was to serve humanity as a whole, and therefore they did not wish to exclude the heathen worshippers. But as one looks upon the matter, they brought about a mixture of *heathenism/christianity*. Admittedly they had good intentions which already testify of the ecumenical spirit. But it was not in the will of God. They themselves departed from God's way, as they tried to bring others into this way. Inasmuch as they compromised with the heathen traditions, they distanced themselves more and more from God and His Word.

With God all things remain the same way from the beginning to the end. He Himself and His Word will never submit to the changes of time, but remain unchanged for all eternity. God is bound to His Word and all that do believe Him have also the duty to be obedient to it. It is divine substance by which those who receive it have obtained the divine nature and are one with Him (2 Pt. 1: 3-4).

With the post-apostolic times and the dark ages, the original Bible teachings were almost drowned completely; we shall not deal with this at length. We need to jump from the very beginning to the Reformation and show the course of the New Testament Church from then right up to our time. After the one thousand years of rule by the Roman State church from the 6th to the 16th century, the breakthrough to the free proclamation of the Gospel was achieved. Many names from the Reformation time could be mentioned. Martin Luther is well known and esteemed Jan Hus was encouraged by John Wyclif and prepared the breakthrough of the Reformation by sacrificing his own life. He died on a stake in Konstanz where the Church Council at that time took place. Also Zwingli, Calvin, Schwenkfeld and others had their part in the Reformation.

People again experienced what grace really means. It was the first step out of total darkness into the direction towards a new beginning: the justification by faith. Everyone who does have this experience is led by the Holy Spirit to repent about all things, which were not right before God in his life and calls upon the Name of the Lord. In the Holy Scriptures the term for it is »repentance« and »conversion«. Thus one receives the assurance of salvation of the soul: through belief in the finished redemption work. Forgiveness and **justification** are experienced by faith (Rom. 1: 16-17; Rom. 5 a. o.). Everyone who truly believes receives peace with God (Rom. 5: 1).

Those who are converted also have further experiences. As known, after the breakthrough of the Reformation other spiritual revivals followed and those who believed were led deeper into the Word of God. Under John Wesley and many others who lived at the same time a new revival broke forth, wherein emphasis was placed upon **sanctification**, which means that the believers live according to the Word of God. In the same way as people got the assurance that their sins were forgiven, having received justification, so now they prayed to be sanctified and experienced it. Faith always came by the preaching of the Gospel. This second movement is known in church history as the »Methodist revival«, wherein the believers were led another step forward.

Those who began to baptise by immersion also date back to the reformation period. The various denominations came from it: the Mennonites, Baptists, Pentecostals and others who practise baptism of the believers by immersion. The ones who believed during that period did not stop with the experience of justification but also moved on with sanctification and now were obedient to the commission of the Lord, being baptised by immersion. In all these spiritual awakenings since the Reformation, the Spirit of God obviously brought back one Bible truth after the other. The final goal is that the New Testament Church at the end of the time of grace, when Jesus Christ will return is found in the same shape as at the very beginning in apostolic days. The Lord has promised in His Word times of refreshing to come from His presence, that He would restore and give unto us the latter rain before the Return of Christ (Acts 3: 19-21 a. o.).

Soon after the beginning of the New Testament Church in the centuries that followed the church in general distanced itself more and more from the Word, winding up in traditions. Again since the Reformation exactly the opposite takes place: in each of the revivals Bible believing Christians have come out of inherited traditions and are returning step by step back to the very beginning.

Around the turn of our century a mighty move of God began, world over. Every country in this revival of course has its own history. The Spirit of God was at work worldwide, but the event which occurred in Los Angeles at Azusa Street in 1906 is commonly called »the birth of the Pentecostal revival«. Trinitarian Pentecostals do not mention that this certain meeting at Azusa Street was a oneness fellowship, a group who believed in one God. In October 1900 a preacher, Charles F. Parham, started his Bethel College in Topeka, Kansas. In 1905 he began with a seminar in Houston, Texas, in which William J. Seymour also participated who later became renowned as the church leader in Azusa Street where this mighty move of the Spirit began which actually spread over the whole earth. Later this movement chose the designation »United Pentecostal Church International«.

It's sad to say, but in Germany – as in no other country on earth – the majority of the spiritual leaders have condemned the Pentecostal movement. They did so because of some experiences ascribed to two »prophetesses« from Norway in the city of Kassel. They judged something they had not experienced themselves. On 15th September, 1908, these leaders signed a paper known as »The Berlin Declaration«. The names of those who signed are listed therein. On this declaration the Pentecostal movement along with their leaders were accused of being possessed and it was actually stated, that a demon spirit was at work. Did these men not know that the Spirit of God moves where He is pleased? With those who pronounced such a judgement, we can definitely say God's Spirit was not at work in them. Without being aware of it, they became the prey of their own arguments and are guilty of the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost (Lk. 12: 10).

Some even believe that because of it the blessings of God were turned away from Germany and the curse of World War I and II has come upon our nation. Berlin was the headquarters of the destroyer, from where the most horrible holocaust of all times was initiated. In any case it remains true, »*Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*« (Gal. 6: 7)! This also applies to spiritual leaders who do not recognise the merciful visitation of God. It is shameful when men who take the Bible into their hands and preach from it lose respect for those chapters, which deal with the working of the Spirit. They just do not want to receive it and thereby pronounce their own judgement.

In the early Church they searched in the Scriptures whether the things were so. Pious men stumble over their own piety. If they had compared their own ministries with the Scripture,

that God had to give more than they had received. There are too many who got stuck in dead religious forms. God is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Wherever He is at work by His Spirit and Word, the spiritually dead experience revival and by faith in Jesus Christ are brought to life.

Right after World War II God made a new beginning. This time He used as a chosen vessel William M. Branham (1909-1965) who was ordained by Dr. Roy Davis in the »Southern Baptist Convention« in 1933. As Paul he could testify about a heavenly calling and say, »... and it came to pass!« (Acts 22: 6). It happened on May 7th, 1946, when the supernatural light like a very big spotlight shone into his room in which suddenly a heavenly visitor walked towards him. He could give the precise description of the one who stood before him saying, »Fear not! For I am sent from the presence of Almighty God to commission you ...« As Paul testified so did William Branham about that extraordinary experience. It truly happened, and his commission is justified through the confirmed ministry itself. Millions have witnessed to this. As far as is known, he was the only one in our generation who could testify of such a direct heavenly call and commission.

The New Testament did indeed begin with supernatural events: an angel came to Zacharias to announce the birth of John the Baptist. The angel came to Mary to tell her about the birth of Jesus Christ. All the heavenly hosts — the angels came down over Bethlehem at the birth of Christ. One angel gave the announcement, »*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.*« (Lk. 2: 11). Like a red thread it is seen throughout the New Testament that angels gave advice right to the last book of the Bible, when the angel appeared to John on the isle of Patmos. Wherever God truly is at work, even today the supernatural occurs.

It pleased God to start this salvation and healing revival in our time through His humble servant. All other evangelists — Oral Roberts, T. L. Osborn, Tommy Hicks and many others — who later became renowned in the healing revival, started years later. If they are honest, they will confirm that it was in a Branham meeting, where they received their inspiration and faith and then started their ministry. The only exception is Billy Graham, who was chosen to be »an evangelist« by the »Southern Baptist Convention« in 1950, but has no healing ministry. The spiritual movements existing today, as well as the healing ministries in the various revivals go back to the ministry of William Branham, who started in 1946 and actually spearheaded this revival. Even the Full Gospel Businessmen and also the various charismatic movements, however they may be formed, actually result from that ministry.

Since the days of our Lord and the apostles there was not given such a direct commission which could be compared with his. After the preaching the call to repent was given and people surrendered their life to Christ as they were prayed for. After this he started praying for the sick. No one was turned away, he prayed for each one, regardless of what type of illness they had. He took God at His Word, emphasising Heb. 13: 8, »*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*« and also Jn. 14: 12, »*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do ...*« He believed what the Lord said. Great healing miracles, true signs and wonders took place, which millions can testify of.

The meetings quickly gathered attention, for the blind were made to see, deaf could hear, the dumb could speak and cripples were healed on the spot while being prayed for on the platform before the whole congregation. All illnesses were healed, especially cancer cases, for when W. Branham was given the commission he was told that a gift of divine healing is given to him and that nothing would withstand his prayer, not even cancer, if he only remained sincere and the people would believe him. As in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, the same signs and wonders have happened in this generation. Over and over again from the congregation the statement was heard, »*No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*« (Jn. 3: 2).

The man sent from God did not belong to any of the Trinity or Oneness denominations. His special ministry, sad to say, was misunderstood and internationally defamed by religious leaders, as was the case with Jesus Christ Himself. And again it was a German, Dr. So-and-so, who in his book was criticising especially William Branham, but also other healing evangelists, which he put under the category of the evil one. It is peculiar that such critics

words. They can not testify of a divine calling. As the scribes were convinced of themselves and called the Lord Jesus »Beelzebub«, because of His extraordinary ministry, so there colleagues have done in our time.

All the evangelists who had their healing ministries since the late forties up to the middle of the sixties have first-hand knowledge of what God has done. Because William Branham was preaching the Full Gospel, the two main Pentecostal denominations, the Assemblies of God and the United Pentecostal Church, profited very much from it. When a day was set that he should speak with the representatives of these two fellowships and decide for one of them, because everyone wanted him to be only with them, God showed him a vision. He saw two trees full of ripe fruit. One had the label »Trinity« and the other »Oneness«. In this vision he saw himself standing between the two trees, one on his left hand, the other on his right. As he was shaking these two trees mightily, behold, all the fruit from these trees fell upon him. This experience he related to the brethren who would not even speak to one another before. He said, »Brethren, you see, God does not permit me to take sides with one of you. He is sending me to His people who are scattered in the two Pentecostal camps and in all the others, everywhere.« Then the two shook hands and Brother Branham prayed for them. The result was a co-operation throughout years wherein a rich harvest of souls through the proclamation of the Gospel was brought into the Kingdom of God.

The Pentecostal churches gladly received the multitudes, which came to them through that ministry. Later they started to reject him, because he had taken his stand firmly on God's Word and taught Bible doctrine. David DuPlessis was mainly responsible to discredit W. Branham, whom he had met in the historic meetings in South Africa in 1951. Later he followed him into the USA and became known worldwide as »Mr. Pentecost«, but apparently had more of the ecumenical spirit than the Holy Spirit. He propagated the paradox statement, »Branham is a great and true prophet of God whom the Lord reveals everything; but do not listen to his teachings!« How does that fit together? Can one source give sweet and bitter? Gordon Lindsay, Kenneth Hagin and others made similar statements. Should it not have been the duty of these men to search God's Word and acknowledge what the Scripture said about the doctrines in question? But instead they have judged from their own point of view. This is going on up till now, as ridiculous statements are still being published.

No man's influence

It needs to be mentioned that no human has influence upon the sovereign working of God. This applies also to the photo with the supernatural pillar of light, which certainly did not appear because William Branham desired it. He certainly had no influence over it. In the natural two press photographers, Mr. Ayers and Mr. Kipperman, who were critics, took pictures during the meeting; spiritually speaking, the Lord came down in the supernatural light as in Bible times. It happened on January 24th, 1950, in the Houston Colliseum, Texas, in the presence of about 8,000 people. A debate had taken place between Dr. Best, who denied that healings, and signs and wonders occur today, and Rev. F.F. Bosworth, who of course knew his Bible and had the upperhand in the debate.

This peculiar photo was developed in the Douglas Studio in Houston, Texas. Because of the extraordinary light appearing on it, Rev. Gordon Lindsay submitted it to the Examiner of Questioned Documents, Dr. George J. Lacy. In his expertise he confirmed that no retouching or double exposure was done. The light was there, the camera took it and it appeared on the film. This photo is the only certified document about a supernatural appearing on earth and was exhibited in the Art Gallery in Washington, DC. In December 1969 I saw it for myself there, when I visited Washington.

This supernatural light descended as Brother Branham began to pray for the sick. He saw in detail things from the life of that person he was to pray for, just as it happened in the ministry of our Lord. Hundreds of recorded sermons with prayer lines are still the available proof. It has pleased the Lord to have His promised presence in His church even confirmed to unbelievers beyond any shadow of doubt in visible form after 2,000 years. William Branham testified, that it is the same light in which the Lord appeared to the Apostle Paul (Acts 9: 22-26). He had the same ministry, the same confirmation, the same fundamental teachings about

10 years (1955-1965), I am an eyewitness before God of what happened in our time and my testimony must not be withheld from the public. I am therefore a true witness having seen, heard and experienced these things personally.

Even Evangelists, who esteem him highly and call him the »father of the healing revival«, do not comprehend that his ministry was directly connected to the Plan of Salvation through which everything was restored and brought back into its original state as it was in early Christianity. They also do not understand that the confirmation of a prophet does not exist in signs and wonders, but in what he speaks, the Words of God as they came from the lips of the Almighty. It is a pity that the majority of church leaders did not recognise the gracious visitation in our time and the high purpose connected to it. To them applies the saying of the Lord to the spiritual leaders in His day. He would have gathered His people, but they were the actual hindrance. History repeats itself indeed. Many of the healing evangelists have made themselves a great name and have established their own empire within the Kingdom of God. They preach theoretical deliverance, salvation and healing sermons, at the same time proclaim prosperity and have made themselves millionaires. God be merciful, for Mt. 7: 21-23 must also be fulfilled. Doctrinally they remained in the old traditional leaven and with it in the Babylonian captivity. They did not recognise that God, in His love and faithfulness, now in the end-time, before the »day of the Lord« breaks forth, has sent, as He promised, a true prophet of the calibre of Elijah (Mal. 4: 5-6; Mt. 17: 11 a. o.) to restore all things. Everyone knows that John was the messenger of Mal. 3: 1, not of chapter 4.

In conclusion I leave you with the following: the masses never joined the move of God in any revival, it was always a minority which was ready to walk on with Him. It was so with Israel in the beginning, and later in the course of church history repeated by all denominations , »*What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the **election** hath obtained it ...*« (Rom. 11: 7). As it was with the Jews, so it is with Christians. Always only a small minority recognised what God was doing in their time. What He did in the past is known to all. But whoever lives in the presence of God will recognise and have part in what He presently does. The admonition of our Lord, »*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!*« (Lk. 19: 42) does apply in all times. Everyone must recognise the actual work of God in connection with the promised Word and the Plan of Salvation. Whoever rejects it will have to be satisfied with the indictment, »... *ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?*« (Lk. 12: 56).

I cannot withhold what God has done. The ministry He ordained and placed must be brought to public attention, because it happened according to the promised Word of God. As a servant of the Lord, I must be faithful and cannot deprive God's people of the blessings from heaven. No one can demand of me that I should despise and bypass my call. On the contrary, I would like to address all in saying, »Give God the glory! Let Him be right!«, for Scripture is fulfilled before our eyes. Now we must receive the pure Bible message before the Return of Christ, the everlasting Gospel which after 2,000 years is preached in its fullness. The calling out of the Bride-Church goes forth. Everything is restored unto her, and she is being prepared and shall experience the completion.

A messenger is someone showing the way; he is not the way. The message of the Word shows us the way — Jesus Christ is the way. After reading this booklet all will have to make a decision. Whoever is not agreeing should at least be tolerant enough to let others live according to their faith and convictions. No one, not even those who speak about movements in the term of being a sect, has the right to declare fellowships who have separated from the traditional churches and their teachings to be heretics. From now on everybody knows what heresy is: it is a doctrine which does not agree with the Holy Scripture, leading astray. All denominations are full of such.

In publishing this I cherish the expectation that God, as He moved since the Reformation stepping over all religious and political boundaries, will move in His sovereignty by His Holy Spirit and give the final breakthrough to original Christianity.

Verily, we are already in the transition period to the last biblical revival. Now it is important not to miss the connection to it. For »he that comes too late will be judged by life itself!« In this case negligence can never be made right; one will have to suffer the consequences in the

Amen!

Conclusion

Honoured reader,

The frame of this exposition did not allow me to go into detail on all the chapters and topics. In summary, it needs to be emphasised that the state church, which came into existence in the 4th/5th century, does not agree at all with the teachings and practice of the apostles and therefore is not the church of Jesus Christ. Also all other churches, which separated from the Church of Rome, do not agree with the original teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ. This ascertainment can be very painful. May the sadness caused lead to the knowledge of the will of God and bring forth the joy of the Lord, which is our strength. It cannot be left without contradiction that the right teachings are declared to be false and the false are placed as though they were right.

Everyone according to tradition is born into the organised church, baptised and observes the regulation therein: communion, confirmation, the last sacrament, and receiving the Lord's Supper before death etc. It is done in good faith for salvation of the soul. In church traditions most remain to the end, but they are of no avail, as they have nothing to do with God, because He did not ordain them. Concerning Christ and the salvation of the soul these things are quite distant. As in the natural we are born into this world, so we must be born again by the Spirit. Only then do we have eternal life as a child of God. The true Church is made of these, who, regardless of their church affiliation, personally experience salvation through Jesus Christ. Everyone can have this experience regardless of colour and religion. God does not deal with an institution, but rather with each one personally.

Not one of the over three hundred different Christian churches united in the World Council of Churches or anyone else for that matter could transmit salvation. On the contrary: the works of men is obstructing the view of the Redeemer. Through all the unscriptural religious activities, handed down by tradition, people are only put off.

The true scriptural proclamation establishes the connection from God to men and from men to God. Only those who take God's Word alone have received undefiled divine substance. As the Word remains forever, so will they who believe it remain with it forever.

After reading the manuscript before handing it over to the printer I said like Paul in 1 Cor. 13, »It is only done in part, not perfect.« But may God have His perfect way with each one and give light while reading. I was also reminded on what the Queen of the South said, »Not half of it was told.« The Bible is of such a character that after we are finished with a subject we can start all over again. It is a living Word and when illuminated by the same Holy Spirit who inspired the writers, divine revelation flows without ceasing.

Should the transatlantic English we use not suit every taste we apologise, but we need to serve all the ends of the earth and not just a particular country. Please overlook any grammatical and punctuation shortcomings. Thank you.

May all readers be blessed mightily. The grace and peace of God be with you.

By His commission in His service

* The »filioque« is the teaching about the origin of the Holy Spirit

* Catholic means »common«