

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 112th Year
(1909–2021)

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FIRST QUARTER, 2021

Volume 112

Number 1

Concordant Version of the Old Testament

Over a century has passed since a “concordant version” of the Scriptures was first proposed by A. E. Knoch and Vladimir Gelesnoff. When the translation of the Greek Scriptures, or “New Testament,” was then published in 1926, an announcement was made that work had begun on the Hebrew Scriptures (“Old Testament”). Now after all these years, with thanksgiving to God, we announce that the entire CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT is now in print and available to order.

By analyzing the contextual usages of each Hebrew and Aramaic word, a single English word was first selected as its most suitable equivalent. Then, to achieve readability, some words were given a limited number of idiomatic variants that are harmonious with the sense derived from the investigations. English words used as the common translation of particular Hebrew words, and even idiomatic variants, were not used for other Hebrew words.

Boldface type was used for words (or even parts of words) having exact counterparts in the Hebrew. And lightface type was used for words (or parts of words) which were added to clarify the meaning of the respective word in the Hebrew text. In addition small symbols and abbreviations were inserted between or attached to words to represent omitted terms, to indicate grammatical features and the sources of emendations to the Hebrew text.

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Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS
WORD

VOLUME 112

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and
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A Chart of Ephesians

FRAMEWORK OF “EPHESIANS”

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, FIRST QUARTER 2021
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED TWELVE

EDITORIAL

WITH this issue of our magazine we turn our attention to the book of Ephesians, which from the first issue one hundred and twelve years ago was, to A. E. Knoch, the focus of his attention and concern. It is an epistle of love delighting in secret surprises and gifts which gather grace “as they are undeserved and unexpected” (p.15).

It was given to Paul to dispense the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret which has been concealed from the eons in God. Yet this evangel is in accord with the gratuity of the grace of God (Eph.3:1-9). All that Paul makes known, including that which had been concealed from the eons in God *accords* with his previous dispensing of the gratuity of the grace of God. The transcendent riches of God’s grace in vivifying those of the Circumcision and those of the Uncircumcision together, *jointly*, in Christ, and rousing us together and seating us together among the celestials in Christ Jesus (Eph.2:4-7) have their harmonious contact with the superabounding grace made known in Romans and the earlier epistles. And that grace as it concerns Jesus Christ, our Lord, is traceable to the law and prophets (Rom.3:21) while being a message “apart from law” (Rom.3:21). It is God’s operation of love in and through the giving of His beloved Son that gives unity to all of God’s Word.

Yet indeed Ephesians (along with its companion epistles) reaches to heights of God’s grace and measures of His love that were unknown before, although preparations had been laid down for them.

Hence in taking the theme of “His Achievement Are We” (Eph.2:10), which flows from the fact that God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11), James Coram points to the basic issues of “faith, choice, foreknowledge, voluntary action, judgment and trials” (p.35), as they are dealt with throughout Scripture. But he does so especially in relation to “the evangel for today” which is *the evangel* of the grace of God, “through Jesus Christ’s faith” (p.36).

Finally we reprint an abridgement of Brother Knoch’s article, “In Grace and Out” (first published in volume 31, pages 137-148), which begins: “Grace is a fundamental characteristic of the present administration of the secret (Eph.3:2,9). It is the favor of the previous transitional era continued and intensified and enriched Grace, undiluted by law, unspoiled by works, unconfined by aught of man, is the fullest, freest outflow of God’s essence, which is love” (p.42).

Here, as is fitting, much attention is given to Ephesians 2:5,8, where our salvation is twice located “in grace.” Yet it was not given to our brother (or previously to me, or most others I know of) that Paul was referring to Christ’s faith, not our faith, in verse 8. Thus we insert a lightface “His” in our revision of the CV (p.7). We are saved in God’s grace (both superabounding grace as found in Romans, and transcending grace as found in Ephesians) through the channel of Christ Jesus’s faith, and this whole operation of salvation is not of ourselves. It is altogether God’s approach present. Regarding this, I hope, God willing, to prepare a defense for our next issue. It has become clear to me that Paul had in mind (and those receiving the letter) that the words “through faith” recapitulate the phrase “through Jesus Christ’s faith” in Romans 3:22 (*cp* Rom. 3:26; Gal.2:16; 3:22, as well as Eph.3:12).

D.H.H.

PAUL TO THE [EPHESIANS]

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through God's will, to all the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus:

² Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing, among the celestials, in Christ,

⁴ according as He chooses us in Him before world disruption, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love ⁵ designating us beforehand ^{io}for the place of a son ^{io}for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, ⁶ ^{io}for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved: ⁷ in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of His grace, ⁸ which He lavishes ^{io}on us; in all wisdom and prudence ⁹ making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposes in Him) ¹⁰ ^{io}to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth—in Him ¹¹ in Whom our lot is cast also, designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, ¹² ^{io}that we should be ^{io}for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ.

¹³ In Whom you also—on hearing the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation—in Whom on believing

also, =you are sealed with the holy 'spirit of 'promise¹⁴ (which 'is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, ^{io}to the deliverance of 'that which has been procured) ^{io}for the laud of His 'glory!

¹⁵ Therefore, I' also, on 'hearing of 'this faith ^{ac} of =yours in the Lord Jesus, and 'that ^{io}for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not 'cease° giving thanks ^{ov} for =you, making° mention ^{on} in my 'prayers ¹⁷ that the God of our 'Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of 'glory, may give =you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of =your 'heart having been enlightened°, ^{io}for =you to °perceive
 °What 'is the expectation of His 'calling,

And °what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints,

¹⁹ And °what the 'transcendent greatness of His 'power ^{io}for us 'who are believing,

in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, ²⁰ which is °operative in the Christ, 'rousing Him °from among the dead ones and 'seating Him 'at His right hand among the celestials, ²¹ up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is being named°, not only in this 'eon, but also in 'that which is impending: ²² and He subjects all under His 'feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia ²³ which^a 'is His 'body, the complement of the One completing° the all in all.

² And =you, being =dead to =your 'offenses and 'sins, ² in which once =you 'walked, in accord with the eon of this 'world, in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now 'operating in the sons of 'stubbornness ³ (among whom we' also all 'behaved ourselves once in the lusts of our 'flesh, doing the =will of the flesh and of the =comprehension, and 'were, in our nature, children of indignation, 'even as the rest), ⁴ yet 'God, being rich in mercy because of His vast love with which He loves us ⁵ (we also being =dead to the offenses and the lusts), vivi-

fies us together in 'Christ (in grace =you 'are ones having been saved) ⁶ and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the oncoming° 'eons He should display° the 'transcendent riches of His 'grace in His kindness ^{on}to us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For in 'grace, through His faith, =you 'are ones having been saved,

And this is not out of =you;

It is God's 'approach present,

⁹ Not out of works, lest anyone should boast°.

¹⁰ For His achievement 'are we, created in Christ Jesus ^{on}for good works, which 'God makes ready beforehand, that we should walk in them.

¹¹ Wherefore, 'remember that once =you, the nations in flesh—'who are 'termed "Uncircumcision" by 'those 'termed° "Circumcision," in flesh, made by hands—¹² that =you 'were, in that 'era, apart from Christ, being °alienated° from the citizenship of Israel, and guests of the promise 'covenants, having no expectation, and =without God in the world.

¹³ Yet now, in Christ Jesus, =you', who once 'are far off, are become near 'by the blood of 'Christ. ¹⁴ For He' 'is our 'Peace, 'Who makes 'both one, and razes the central wall of the barrier (the enmity in His 'flesh), ¹⁵ 'nullifying the law of 'precepts in decrees, that He should create the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, making peace; ¹⁶ and He should reconcile 'both in one body to 'God through the cross, 'killing the enmity in it. ¹⁷ And 'coming, He brings the evangel° of peace to =you, 'those afar, and peace to 'those near, ¹⁸ 'for through Him we 'both have had the access, in one spirit, to^d the Father.

¹⁹ Consequently then, no' longer 'are =you guests and sojourners, but 'are fellow-citizens of the saints and belong to 'God's family, ²⁰ built ^{on} on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, the capstone of the corner being Christ

Jesus Himself, ²¹ in Whom the entire building, being connected^o together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord: ²² in Whom =you' also are being built^o together ^{io}for 'God's dwelling place, in spirit.

3 On this behalf I, Paul, the prisoner of 'Christ Jesus ^{ov}for =you, the nations—² since =you surely hear of the administration of the grace of 'God 'that is given to me ^{io}for =you, ³ 'for ^{ac}by revelation the secret is made known to me (according as I write before in brief, ⁴ ^{td}by which =you who are reading are being able^o to apprehend my 'understanding in the secret of the Christ, ⁵ which, in ^dother generations, is not made known to the sons of =humanity as it is now revealed to His 'holy apostles and prophets): in spirit ⁶ the nations are to 'be

Joint enjoyers of an allotment,
And a joint body,
And joint partakers of the promise
in Christ Jesus,

through the evangel ⁷ of which I =became the dispenser, in accord with the gratuity of the grace of 'God, 'which is granted to me in accord with His 'powerful 'operation. ⁸ To me, less than the least of all saints, is granted this 'grace: to bring the evangel^o of the untraceable riches of 'Christ to the nations, ⁹ and to enlighten all as to ^awhat is the administration of the secret, 'which 'has been concealed^o from the eons in 'God, 'Who creates 'all, ¹⁰ that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of 'God, ¹¹ in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in 'Christ Jesus, our 'Lord; ¹² in Whom we are having 'boldness and 'access ⁱwith confidence, through His 'faith. ¹³ —Wherefore I am requesting^o you not to be 'despondent ⁱat 'those of my afflictions ^{ov}for =your sake which^a 'are =your glory.

¹⁴ On this behalf am I bowing my 'knees to^d the Father

of our 'Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ ^oafter Whom every kindred in the heavens and on earth is being named^o, ¹⁶ that He may give =you, in accord with the riches of His 'glory, to be made staunch with power, through His 'spirit, ^{io}in the human within, ¹⁷ 'Christ to dwell in =your 'hearts through 'faith, that =you, having been rooted^o and grounded^o in love, ¹⁸ should be strong to grasp^o, together with all the saints, ^awhat is the breadth and length and depth and height ¹⁹ —to know the love of Christ as well which is transcending 'knowledge—that =you may be completed ^{io}for the entire complement of 'God.

²⁰ ^yNow to Him 'Who is 'able^o to do superexcessively above all ^wthat we are requesting^o or apprehending, according to the power 'that is operating^o in us, ²¹ to Him be 'glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus ^{io}for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!

4 I am entreating =you then,
I, the prisoner in the Lord,
to walk worthily of the calling with which =you are called, ² with ^aall humility and meekness, with patience, bearing^o with one another in love, ³ endeavoring to 'keep the unity of the spirit ⁱwith the tie of 'peace:

4 One body and one spirit,
According as =you are called also ⁱwith one expectation of =your 'calling;
5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,
6 One God and Father of all, 'Who is ^{on}over all and through all and in all.

⁷ ^yNow to each one of us is given 'grace in accord with the measure of the gratuity of 'Christ. ⁸ Wherefore He is saying,

'Ascending ^{io}on high, He captures captivity
And gives gifts to =humanity. ^{Ps 68:18}

⁹ ^yNow the "He ascends," ^awhat is it except that He first descends also into the lower parts of the earth? ¹⁰ He

Who descends 'is the Same Who ascends also, up over all who are of the heavens, that He should complete 'all. ¹¹ And the same One gives 'these indeed as apostles, yet 'these as prophets, yet 'these as evangelists, yet 'these as pastors and teachers, ¹² toward the adjusting of the saints ^{io}for the work of dispensing, ^{io}for the upbuilding of the body of 'Christ, ¹³ unto the end that we should 'all attain ^{io}to the unity of the faith and of the realization of the son of 'God, ^{io}to a mature man, ^{io}to the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ, ¹⁴ that we may by no means still 'be minors, surging° hither and thither and being carried° about by every wind of 'teaching, 'by 'human 'caprice, 'by craftiness with a view to^d the systematizing of the deception.

¹⁵ ^yNow being true, in love we should make 'all grow into Him, Who 'is the Head—'Christ—¹⁶ out of Whom the entire body, being articulated° together and united° through every assimilation of the supply, in accord with the operation in measure of each one's part, is making° for the growth of the body, ^{io}for the upbuilding of itself in love.

¹⁷ This then I am saying and attesting° in the Lord: By no means are 'you still to be walking according as those of the nations also are walking, in the vanity of their 'mind, ¹⁸ 'their comprehension being °darkened°, being °estranged° from the life of 'God because of the ignorance that 'is in them, because of the callousness of their 'hearts, ¹⁹ who^a, being °past feeling, in greed give themselves up with 'wantonness ^{io}to °all uncleanness as a vocation.

²⁰ ^yNow 'you' do not thus learn 'Christ, ²¹ since surely, Him 'you hear, and 'by Him are taught (according as the truth 'is in Jesus), ²² to put° off from 'you, °as regards your 'former behavior, the old humanity 'which is 'corrupted° in accord with its 'seductive 'desires, ²³ yet to be 'rejuvenated° in the spirit of 'your 'mind, ²⁴ and to put° on the new humanity 'which, in accord with God, is created in

righteousness and benignity of the truth. ²⁵ Wherefore, 'putting° off the false, let each be speaking the truth with his 'associate, 'for we 'are members of one another.

²⁶ Are 'you 'indignant°, and not sinning? Do not let the sun be sinking on 'your vexation, ²⁷ nor yet be giving place to the Adversary. ²⁸ Let him 'who is stealing by no means still be stealing; yet rather let him be toiling, working with his 'hands at 'what is good, that he may 'have to be sharing with one 'who is having need. ²⁹ Let no tainted word at °all be issuing° out of 'your 'mouth, but if any is good toward 'needful edification, that it may give grace to 'those hearing.

³⁰ And do not be causing sorrow to the holy 'spirit of 'God 'by which 'you are sealed ^{io}for the day of deliverance. ³¹ Let °all bitterness and fury and anger and clamor and calumny be taken away from 'you ^{tg}with °all malice, ³² yet 'become° kind ^{io}to one another, tenderly compassionate, dealing graciously° among yourselves, according as 'God also, in Christ, deals graciously° with 'you.

5 'Become° then imitators of 'God as beloved children, ² and be walking in love, according as 'Christ also loves 'you, and gives Himself up °^{ov}for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to 'God, ^{io}for a fragrant odor.

³ ^yNow °all prostitution and uncleanness or greed—let it not ^yeven be 'named° among 'you, according as is becoming in saints—⁴ and vileness and stupid speaking or cruel jesting, which are not proper, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For this 'you 'perceive, knowing that no' paramour at °all or unclean or greedy person, who 'is an idolater, is having any enjoyment of the allotment in the kingdom of 'Christ and of God. ⁶ Let no one be seducing 'you with empty words, for because of these things the indignation of 'God is coming° on the sons of 'stubbornness. ⁷ Do not then 'become° joint partakers with them, ⁸ for 'you 'were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord.

As children of light be walking ⁹ (for the fruit of the light is in ^aall goodness and righteousness and truth), ¹⁰ testing ^awhat 'is well pleasing to the Lord. ¹¹ And be not joint 'participants in the unfruitful 'acts of 'darkness, yet rather be exposing them also, ¹² for it 'is a shame ⁺even to ^{ls} speak of the hidden things occurring^o, done by them. ¹³ ^yNow all 'that which is being exposed^o, by the light is made 'manifest^o, for everything 'which is making manifest^o 'is light. ¹⁴ Wherefore He is saying,

'Rouse! 'drowsy one,

And rise ^ofrom among the dead ones,

And 'Christ shall 'dawn upon you!

¹⁵ Be observing accurately then, brethren, how ⁼you are walking, not as unwise, but as wise, ¹⁶ reclaiming^o the era, ^ffor the days 'are wicked. ¹⁷ Therefore do not 'become^o imprudent, but 'understand ^awhat the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And be not 'drunk^o with wine, in which 'is profligacy, but be 'filled^o full ⁱwith spirit, ¹⁹ speaking to yourselves; in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing music in ⁼your 'hearts to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always ^{ov}for all things, in the Name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to our 'God and Father, ²¹ being subject^o to one another in the fear of Christ.

²² Let the wives be 'subject^o to 'their own husbands, as to the Lord, ²³ ^ffor the husband 'is head of the wife ⁺even as 'Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He' 'is the Saviour of the body. ²⁴ ^{bt}Nevertheless, as the ecclesia is being subject^o to 'Christ, thus are the wives also to 'their husbands in everything.

²⁵ 'Husbands, be loving your 'wives according as 'Christ also loves the ecclesia, and gives Himself up ^{ov}for its sake, ²⁶ that He should hallow it, ⁺cleansing it in the bath of the water (⁺with His declaration), ²⁷ that He' should present to Himself a glorious 'ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any 'such things, but that it may 'be holy and flaw-

less. ²⁸ Thus the husbands also 'ought to be loving 'their ^sown wives as 'their ^sown bodies. He 'who is loving his ^sown 'wife is loving himself. ²⁹ For no^t one at any time hates his ^sown 'flesh, but is nurturing and cherishing it, according as 'Christ also the ecclesia, ³⁰ ^ffor we 'are members of His 'body. ³¹ ^{id}For this "a ^hman shall 'leave his 'father and 'mother and shall be 'joined to ^{td} his 'wife, and the two will 'be ^{io} one flesh."^o *Gn 2:24*

³² This 'secret 'is great: yet I' am saying this as ^{io}to Christ and as ^{io}to the ecclesia. ³³ Moreover, ⁼you also 'individually, each be loving his ^sown 'wife thus, as himself, yet that the wife may be fearing^o the husband.

⁶ 'Children, be obeying ⁼your 'parents, in the Lord, for this 'is right. ² "Honor your 'father and 'mother" (which^a 'is the first precept 'with a promise), ³ that it may become^o well with you, and you should 'be a long time on the earth.^o *Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16*

⁴ And 'fathers, do not be vexing ⁼your 'children, but be nurturing them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.

⁵ 'Slaves, be obeying your 'masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in the singleness of ⁼your 'heart, as to 'Christ, ⁶ not ^{ac}with eye-slavery, as human-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of 'God ^ofrom the soul, ⁷ with good humor slaving as to the Lord and not to human beings, ⁸ being ^oaware that, whatsoever good each one should do, for this he will be 'required^o ^hby the Lord, whether slave or free.

⁹ And 'masters, be doing the same toward them, being lax in 'threatening, being ^oaware that their 'Master as well as ⁼yours 'is in the heavens, and there 'is no^t partiality ^hwith Him.

¹⁰ For the rest, brethren mine, be 'invigorated^o in the Lord and in the might of His 'strength. ¹¹ Put^o on the panoply of 'God, to^d 'enable^o ⁼you to stand up to^d the strat-

agents of the Adversary, ¹² *t*for it *'*is not ours to *'*wrestle *td*with blood and flesh, but *td*with the sovereignties, *td*with the authorities, *td*with the world-mights of this *'*darkness, *td*with the spiritual forces of *'*wickedness among the celestials. ¹³ Therefore take up the panoply of *'*God that *'*you may be enabled to withstand in the wicked *'*day, and *'*having effected^o all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand then, girded^o about *'*your *'*loins *'*with truth,
+ With the cuirass of *'*righteousness put^o on,

¹⁵ And your *'*feet *'*sandaled^o *'*with the readiness
of the evangel of *'*peace;

¹⁶ *'*With all *'*taking up the large shield of *'*faith,
*'*By which *'*you will be *'*able^o to extinguish
all the *'*fiery^o *'*arrows of the wicked one.

¹⁷ And receive^o the helmet of *'*salvation
And the sword of the spirit,
which *'*is a declaration of God.

¹⁸ *th*During every prayer and petition be praying^o *'*on every occasion (in spirit being vigilant also *io*for it *'*with *'*all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints, ¹⁹ and *ov*for me), that to me expression may be granted, in the opening of my *'*mouth *'*with boldness, to make known the secret of the evangel, ²⁰ *ov*for which I am conducting an embassy in a chain, that in it I should speak boldly^o, as I *'*must speak.

²¹ *y*Now that *'*you' also may be *'*acquainted with my *'*ac affairs, and *'*what is engaging me, all will be being made known to *'*you by Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, ²² whom I send to^d *'*you *io*for this same thing, that *'*you may know our *'*concerns, and he should be consoling *'*your *'*hearts.

²³ Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴ Grace be with all who are loving our *'*Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption! Amen!

THE ADDRESS ON THE ENVELOPE

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to call the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:1)

LOVE delights in secret surprises. Its gifts gather grace as they are undeserved and unexpected. This precious quality greatly enhances the riches of God's love. From its hiding place in the inmost recesses of His affections He has brought forth a surprise such as He only could have planned, so wondrous is the wisdom it reveals, so fathomless the affection it unfolds. Among the many secrets of Holy Writ we have chosen to meditate upon the one which most closely concerns us in this eon, that secret economy or administration which God concealed from previous eons in Himself, but which is now made known in the Ephesian epistle, by which the very heavens are apprised of the variety of God's wisdom, and the whole universe will yet learn the transcendent wealth which is found in His favor. The object of such love is love responsive. The secret that reveals the activities of His heart should kindle a kindred flame in ours, and lead to the adoration which is His due. This is the goal before us in these meditations. Let us not rest satisfied until the flood of His affection overflows our swelling hearts in appreciation and praise.

EPHESIANS 1:1

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through God's will, to all the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus:

God has revealed Himself in many ways in His Word. The historic, prophetic and literary portions are usually in the form of short scrolls or pamphlets. His latest and

highest communications have come to us in the form of letters, or, being formal and of a public character, *epistles*. When the postman brings a large stack of mail, we must first sort it out, if several receive their letters at the same address. Before we open it and read it we must make sure for whom it is intended.

In early days there were no envelopes, so the address of an epistle was always the burden of its opening lines. So the epistolary portions of the Scriptures are usually introduced by some specific indication as to the particular person or persons from whom the epistle comes and to whom it is to go. Peter and James are especially particular on this point. Paul always prefixes his name, and usually follows with the character he assumes in writing and a concise description of those he is addressing.

The name "Paul" has a strange sound to one accustomed to the Hebrew titles of so many of the ancient scrolls. Of course, Paul was an Israelite, like most of the other sacred penmen, but God changed his Hebrew name, Saul, to a foreign one, "Paul." This change was made at that crisis in his career when he was severed from his associates for a special ministry to the nations (Acts 13:2,3). Not only that, but the *very first time that we read of the evangel being proclaimed directly to a gentile*, not a proselyte, we are told casually that Saul "is also Paul." Furthermore this gentile was also called by this name, for he was the proconsul Sergius Paul. Still more significant are Paul's dealings with Elymas, the magician, who sought to pervert the proconsul from the faith. He undoubtedly is representative of Israel, and foreshadows the opposition to Paul's ministry for the nations. The climax is capped by Paul's miracle, so unlike his other gracious deeds. He brought blindness on the apostate Jew "until the appointed time." What a marvelous miniature of Paul's ministry! During Israel's blindness he brings salvation to the nations (Acts 13:6-12).

The name "Paul" is in full accord with his ministry. Though usually taken as a Roman name meaning "little," it seems far more likely that it is Greek, (though the Latin also had this root) from the element *pau*, meaning CEASE, from which our English word *pause* is derived. His name should always suggest to us the *pause* in God's dealings with Israel, the *interval* during which the nation is blind, like Elymas, until the appointed time. How suggestive this is! Every time we attempt to enter one of Paul's epistles we are notified that what follows is to be applied during the period of Israel's blindness. And the fact that all of his epistles are thus marked, stamps them as one, and identifies them with this period, when God's grace goes out to the nations.

Paul introduces himself according to the character of the epistle. Is it concerned with *service*? Then he speaks of himself as a slave. Is it *authoritative*? Then he appears as an apostle. Where *fellowship* is the theme he associates others with him in his salutation. The Perfection epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, are fine examples. As he alone is the *authoritative* revelator of the mystery, he presents his credentials in Ephesians as an *apostle*; as service and fellowship are uppermost in Philippians, he introduces himself as a *slave*, along with Timothy; as Colossians is concerned with correction and communion, he is again an *apostle*, along with Timothy.

The revelation of the secret depends on the authority of Paul as an apostle. There were not wanting those who questioned or denied his right to the title. He was not one of the twelve. He could not qualify for such a place. He did not become an apostle until after the main ministry of the twelve had been accomplished. The one who took Judas's place had to be taken from among those who had been with Christ all the time from John's baptism until His ascension (Acts 1:21,22). This was the one condition,

and Paul had not been with Him at all. Moreover, his apostleship was based on the very reverse of this. It was necessary that he should *not* know our Lord until after His ascension, for he is the apostle of *Christ* Jesus, the *glorified*, not *Jesus* Christ, the *rejected Messiah*.

The title apostle has often been defined as "one sent." But it has not the usual element for *send*. This is *pempō*. Apostle is made up of two elements, *apo*, FROM, and *stellō*, PUT. Its literal meaning is to put some one at a distance, as a representative. Its nearest English equivalent is *commissioner*. An apostle was given a commission, with authority to enforce it. The commissions for the twelve were given them by the Lord while He was yet with them. Paul did not receive his from them or through them, but from the Lord Himself. The vast differences between his commissions and those of the twelve should show how utterly impossible it is that Paul should be numbered with the eleven.

Apostolic authority was by no means confined to the twelve. Among the Circumcision there must always be so many, and no more or less, for Israel's twelve tribe's call for twelve rulers. But no such condition determines the number of apostles among the Uncircumcision. Paul, however, is so great that he overshadows the others far more than Peter does his fellow apostles. Indeed, it is probable that, if we confine ourselves strictly to this final and culminating revelation of the mystery, Paul is its only apostle. Though Timothy is included in the salutation to Colossians, his apostleship is not recognized there. He is simply *brother* Timothy. And, now that the men have passed away, and Paul alone has left inspired epistles, he has become for us the one and only apostle, the only authority in doctrine and practice.

Repeatedly, Paul ascribes his apostolic office to the will of God (1 Cor.1:1; 2 Cor.1:1; Col.1:1; 2 Tim.1:1). None of the twelve do this. They were chosen by Christ in accord

with the revealed *counsel* of God. Their commissions, their careers, all about them, was in line with Yahweh's promises in the Law and in the Prophets and in the Psalms. Some details and developments may have been secret, but their whole course was in keeping with a program previously prepared. One of the special points in Paul's call was that he should know God's will (Acts 22:14). This cannot refer to a knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures, but to matters still unrevealed. It was Paul's special privilege to explore new and unknown fields of God's purpose. To be appointed an *apostle by His will* is suggestive of a fresh departure in the divine activities.

Thus far the writer of Ephesians has introduced himself. Now he writes the address on the envelope. When he indicates the destination of his letter, he characterizes those to whom he is writing. He sends it "to all the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus." It is said that an expert can read the history of a man's health by looking at his teeth. So we can see the apostasy from Pauline teaching in the interpolations and mistranslations and interpretations of these simple words.

It is evident that the force of "*being . . . in Christ Jesus*" was lost very early. As is the case today in many quarters, the names and titles of our Lord had no special significance. Indeed, in the highest evangelical circles the irreverent use of our Lord's personal name is very painful to sensitive spirits. And how few would recognize the great distinction between "Christ Jesus" and "Jesus Christ"! Yet this is the whole point in this address.

All who are in touch with God are holy ones or saints. This is the most inclusive name by which they can be known. From Adam and Abel to the last to be called in the eons to come, in every era, and in all the various administrations, not only men but messengers, are called holy ones, or saints. When Paul wrote this epistle the saints

were divided into two classes. One group, associated with the twelve apostles, mostly of the Circumcision and proselytes, were proclaiming *Jesus* Christ as the rejected Messiah. The other group, associated with Paul, mostly of the Uncircumcision, recognized His present heavenly exaltation, which is expressed concisely and forcibly in the title *Christ* Jesus. To this class this epistle was sent.

No more correct or concise direction could be given for the delivery of this epistle. It is not for unbelievers, but for saints. It is not for those in Jesus Christ, but those in Christ Jesus. Try as we will, we cannot find any better address for the envelope, even though we should add much to it. It is for some Jews and some gentiles, hence we cannot easily draw a line there. Though mostly for the Uncircumcision, it also includes some of the Circumcision. We cannot use this distinction. There is only one way to divide them, and that is their attitude toward Christ, as expressed in the two titles Jesus Christ and Christ Jesus.

Since the significance of the title "Christ Jesus" was lost, this sentence in the salutation has been beyond the apprehension of copyists and translators, hence they have tried to remedy the apparent fault. So the scribe of Alexandrinus, or some one before him, added "in Ephesus" in order to make sense. It is most likely that this epistle was sent to Ephesus as well as to all the Pauline ecclesias, and there may have been a tradition to that effect which led to the insertion of this phrase. But the character of the epistle is such that it is clearly a *circular* letter, one copy of which might be addressed particularly to Ephesus, but which is by no means to be confined to that ecclesia.

We are confirmed in this position by the fact that both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, the most ancient of our manuscripts, were originally written without "in Ephesus." In Vaticanus someone has added it in the margin. It can be seen at the end of the third line of the center column, not

far below the heavy ornamental bar which disfigures the upper margin of the manuscript. In Sinaiticus it is by a later hand. It is clear that the phrase ("in Ephesus") has crept in, and was not a part of the early texts, or of the original autograph. Only the difficulty of translating without it has kept it there. The critical editors usually put it in square brackets. A few mark it to be omitted in their margin. Hardly any hold with the so-called "received text" in retaining it without question. It should be omitted.

This epistle contains no local allusions. The apostle has no special place in mind. The theme is developed along the broadest lines. There are no special expedients as in Corinth, no corrections as in Galatia and Colosse. Every part of the epistle applies equally to all the ecclesias. It is of such a character that it could not be withheld from any saint in Christ Jesus, in any place or at any time. It applies to us today as fully as if we had just received it fresh from the pen of Paul.

This epistle was for *all* the saints in Christ Jesus. It should have been sent to all the saints who had come under Paul's teaching. It would not have been understood by any others. Since it was *written* for them, surely it must have been *sent* to them. Only some of these were at Ephesus. Others were at Corinth and Thessalonica and in Galatia, as well as Philippi and Colosse, wherever Paul and his preaching had penetrated.

We call it "Ephesians." As we need some name to distinguish it, this will serve the purpose better than any other because it has become inseparably associated with this epistle in all that has been said and written about it for centuries. So "Ephesians" it shall be, with the distinct understanding that this name is a mere expedient. If the title had not already been misappropriated we would suggest calling it Paul's General Epistle or his Perfection Epis-

tle, as we have already used the plural of the latter phrase for Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians.

In the transitional era preceding the present secret administration of God's transcendent riches of grace, Paul wrote his epistles to the Thessalonians and to the Romans, the Corinthians, the Galatians, as well as his first letter to Timothy. The question arises, did the revelation of the secret in Ephesians and its companion epistles annul the previous revelation completely, and ignore its recipients, so that Romans to Galatians and Thessalonians are obsolete, or do they still stand just as they are, so that Ephesians is a mere addition to their message? Or is there a third course indicated, between these two extremes, their acceptance as a whole, yet with *modifications in detail* to accord with the later revelation? Is this epistle addressed to those in Christ Jesus to whom Paul wrote his previous epistles?

The third item of the secret settles these questions for us satisfactorily. We are *joint* partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel of which Paul *became* the dispenser (Eph.3:6,7). Note the past tense of *became*. It tells us that Paul is speaking of the evangel which he *had preached*. It is limited by the title "Christ Jesus" to that which is recorded in his previous epistles and does not include his ministry in the synagogues in Acts. In this evangel the nations had been partakers, but not *joint* partakers. It was to the Jew first. The nations had a secondary place. The secret now revealed is not that the nations are to be partakers, but that they are to be *joint* partakers.

Broadly speaking, we have a complete answer to our questions here. All of Paul's previous epistles are definitely declared to be ours, yet with such modifications as the abrogation of Israel's priority involves. Ephesians does not restate Paul's previous evangel, for that would have been useless. All to whom the new revelation came were

acquainted with it. All that they needed was the ability to adapt it to the larger light.

As a consequence, the epistle to the Ephesians is full of contacts and contrasts with Paul's previous teaching. Not only are we given the broad basis on which to build our attitude toward Paul's other writings, but many of the details are developed for us, and the character of the link between the two is carefully considered. We will confine ourselves in this study to these two aspects. In what particulars and how does the fact that we are now *joint* partakers affect Paul's previous epistles? What is the character of the link between them? Is it a sheer break, a mere development, or a super-added glory?

The third item of the secret is elaborated in the last eleven verses of the second chapter. There the apostle would have them remember what they were *in flesh*, during the previous era, before Ephesians was penned. This chapter will help us greatly in our quest. But it is of the utmost importance to note that the contrasts are *not* between the position the nations occupied *in spirit*, as revealed in Paul's epistles, but with their place *in flesh*, as seen in the book of Acts. Indeed, the great difficulty which almost everyone has in understanding this chapter lies in the failure to make this distinction.

The disabilities are all *physical*, not spiritual. In Paul's previous epistles the spiritual unity of Jew and gentile is emphasized; in Acts their physical differences are to the fore. It is only in flesh, as seen in Acts, that the nations are apart from Christ, alienated from the citizenship of Israel, guests of the promise covenants, having no expectation, and without God in the world. This is graphically illustrated for us by the presence of Trophimus, the Ephesian, in Jerusalem, where the very rumor that he had been brought near to God in the sanctuary, caused the riot which led to Paul's imprisonment (Acts 21:27-29).

All these physical disabilities are largely ignored in Paul's writings, so the contrast is developed by references to Acts. The great change is symbolized by the razing of the central wall of the barrier, which Trophimus was supposed to have passed (Eph.2:14), and the nullifying of the apostolic decrees (Eph.2:15; Acts 15:20; 16:4). The consequence is that *the place accorded the nations in the book of Acts is no longer true at all*. There they were guests and sojourners; now we are fellow citizens. There they were outsiders; now we are members of God's family; there they were kept away from the sanctuary; now we are God's dwelling place, in spirit (Eph.2:19-22).

Now these contrasts are emphatically *not* with the position of the nations in spirit in Paul's previous epistles, but with their physical standing at the time when these epistles were written. In them these physical disabilities are hardly mentioned, and one who reads them today would scarcely know that these existed. The great gulf between Paul's written ministry and the record in Acts may be seen by comparing the record of his stay in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9) with the epistles written to the same place not long afterward. In Acts it is all Jewish. In the epistle one would hardly guess that there were any Jews in the city. To be sure there were a vast multitude of the *reverent* Greeks allotted to Paul, but the very term in Acts suggests proselytes.

The point for us to see is that, while Acts is in *contrast* to Ephesians, the epistles are in *contact* with it. Without actually revealing the secret of *joint* participation, the nations, *in spirit*, have access into the presence of God (Rom.5:1,2), unhindered by the barrier wall in the sanctuary at Jerusalem; the decrees issued by the apostles are not even mentioned, and physical relationship to Christ is definitely ignored (2 Cor.5:16). These epistles are preparatory to Ephesians. Trophimus and Paul, in Acts, are far

apart in flesh; in the early epistles they are near, in spirit; in Ephesians they are one.

The second item of the secret is that we are a *joint* body. No body is known in Acts, though it undoubtedly existed at the time. But Romans and Corinthians reveal the existence of the body long before the secret of the *joint* body was made known. Our main question might be restated in concrete terms thus: Is the body of Romans and Galatians the same one as we have in Ephesians, or a different one entirely? We are compelled to take a middle ground. It is the same body, but changed. It is composed of the same class of saints, but its constitution has been altered to agree with the higher and later revelation.

The body in Corinthians was not a *joint body*. The meaning of this term is not as clear as it might be in English. It describes a body in which *believing Jews and gentiles* are of equal rank, respectability and honor. There is no such thing on earth. No bodies we are acquainted with are joint bodies. The word had to be coined in Greek, for the thought was unknown. It may be that there are celestial bodies like this, but none on earth. The body as described in Corinthians at such length was such as we know—an earthly body in which the head held the highest rank and each member differed from all the others in respectability, strength and honor. God blended them together by mutual sympathy and need.

In the Corinthian body the Circumcision would claim the better parts. The gifts—first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers, and after these the lesser graces—would claim superior places. But in a *joint body* these distinctions disappear. Now *Jew and gentile* are both the subjects of such transcendent riches of grace that they are joined in one (Eph.2:1-10). The inequalities produced by the gifts are no longer possible in the realm of purest grace. No one can boast, for all are His achievement.

We are warranted, then, in taking the truth of the one body as in Romans (12:4-8) and First Corinthians (12:12-31) with such modifications as Ephesians calls for. The body is the same, it is composed of the same class of saints, but it has been affected by the change in administration. Not only are the members all of the same rank now, being a joint body, but the gifts in the body are adjusted. Those which accorded with the Kingdom ministry of Acts have ceased, for blessing on earth is no longer in view. Only apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are found in Ephesians (4:11).

This is in perfect accord with the teaching of the thirteenth of First Corinthians, for some of the gifts are there definitely limited to the era of immaturity. Even prophecy is given its place in Ephesians. It, together with the apostolic office, is in the foundation (Eph.2:20). Now that the foundation has been securely laid we have no need for the authority of an apostle or the revelations of a prophet. Any prophecy which could come today could only lay a different foundation, which is not of God. Of all the false prophets who have proclaimed themselves in later years, not even one has so much as understood what the true foundation for the present grace is.

The destiny of the one body is not clearly revealed in the earlier epistles. Only Ephesians gives us the grand truth that it is the complement of Christ with respect to His celestial place, and will be His executive in ruling the entire universe (Eph.1:22,23). It could not be revealed at that time, for the secret of Christ's universal headship had not been made known. Acts gives Him no sovereignty in celestial realms. So far as its testimony goes, He has no Kingdom until He returns to earth, and will have none elsewhere.

But there are hints in Paul's previous epistles which need little stressing to suggest a celestial sovereignty. Paul asks the Corinthians, "Are you not aware that we shall be

judging messengers . . . ?" (1 Cor.6:3). And he insists that there are celestial bodies in the resurrection (1 Cor.15:40). Is not this almost equal to saying that some of mankind would have a celestial destiny?

The first item of the secret is that the nations now are joint enjoyers of an allotment (Eph.3:6). This is elaborated in the opening section of Ephesians (1:3-14). The subject is developed until we are given a distinct point of contact with Paul's previous epistles. This new revelation was to be limited to those at that time who were in a state of prior expectancy in Christ (Eph.1:12). There is not a single suggestion of such a class in the book of Acts. Yet it is the burden of the Thessalonian epistles. There we find that they were waiting for His Son from heaven (1 Thess.1:10). They were not in darkness, that the day of the Lord should overtake them as a thief (5:4). They were not appointed to indignation, such as the saints in Israel must endure before the Lord comes to them. They were to procure salvation, whether watching or drowsing. This was to occur by the Lord's descent out of the heavens, and their snatching away to meet Him in the air (1 Thess.4:13-17). This was a special revelation through Paul, after his separation from the Circumcision, not even alluded to in Acts, so altogether outside the Kingdom ministry to the nation of Israel. It gave the nations a prior expectation. It became a distinguishing mark of those who receive Paul's message, so that, in seeking for some feature to indicate the recipients of the new revelation, he seizes on this special expectation, to be realized before Christ came to the Circumcision.

But what does this involve? The saints, as well as the subject, are left "in the air." This is hardly a permanent dwelling place. Will they come down again and be subservient to Israel? Or will they ascend with Him to celestial realms? Ephesians supplies the answer. Should they descend, they could never be *joint* allottees. Israel has the first place on

earth for the eons. We cannot oust them. God's gifts may be delayed, but they are never regretted. We must ascend if we are to be joint enjoyers of an allotment. But how can we have any place among the celestials apart from Christ? So the apostle first unfolds the secret of Christ, His universal headship (Eph.1:10). We are to have our position *with Him* in the heavens.

The first Corinthian epistle leads to similar reflections. How were we to judge messengers, or rule them, from our inferior station on the earth? The way of a bird in the air is beyond our control. How shall we exercise authority over messengers who can fly through the realm of space? The answer is hinted in his fifteenth chapter. Why speak of celestial bodies in connection with our resurrection? What has the glory of the sun, the moon and the stars to do with our vivification? He does not say. But he tells a *secret*. We shall be changed. Are not all to be changed in resurrection? That is no secret. But the instantaneous change he alluded to was something unknown before. It could be nothing less than a body fitted for celestial scenes.

Thus, while we find a continual contrast to all that pertains to the Circumcision and the book of Acts, we find a continual contact with Paul's previous epistles. It is enigmatic (1 Cor.13:12), to use Paul's own characterization. The tendency is clear enough, for it is away from the physical and terrestrial to the spiritual and celestial. But our destiny is not, and, indeed, could not be revealed so long as God was lingering over His apostate people Israel. It was from glory to glory, each higher revelation being built on its predecessor (2 Cor.3:18).

Another satisfactory solution of our inquiry can be found in the special provision made to bring the saints of Paul's day into their new standing in Christ Jesus. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are given for the *adjusting* of the saints, with a view to the work of

dispensing, for the *upbuilding* of the body of Christ, until we should all attain to the *unity* of faith, and the realization of a son of God, to *mature* manhood, to the *adult* stature of Christ's complement, that we should by no means still be minors . . ." (Eph.4:11-14).

The words we have italicized are worthy of close study in this connection. None of them suggests a break. The first one is the most important. What is meant by *adjusting*? Our common version renders the verb *mend* (Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:19), *perfect* (Matt.21:16; Luke 6:40; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess.3:10; Heb.13:21; 1 Peter 5:10), *fit* (Rom. 9:22), *restore* (Gal.6:1), *prepare* (Heb.10:5), *frame* (Heb. 11:3), *perfectly join together* (1 Cor.1:10). It is evident that it is impossible to get the true sense through the English renderings. The CV uses the synonyms *adjust*, *adapt*, *attune*.

The most of the usual renderings are in accord with our contention that there was no rupture, no break, in passing from the previous to the present administration of God's grace. Yet one word, *mend*, does suggest this. We are told that James and John, with their father, were *in the ship* mending their nets (Matt.4:21). Now this is most unusual. I have seen some fishermen *adjusting* their nets in their ship, so that there will be no trouble when they let it fall over the side for another catch, but I have not noticed that nets were *mended* on board. They are taken to some more convenient, roomy place. Every time they are used they must be folded in their place for the next catch. Only seldom were they mended. The evidence is all in favor of *adjusting* rather than mending.

There are some passages in which *mending* will not do at all. The Lord did not come with a *mended* body, but one *adapted* to His new sphere of service (Heb.10:5). It was not the form of God *repaired*. So we may be sure that the gifts were given to *adjust*, *adapt*, *attune* the saints to the new revelation. The same ministry is needed today, for

those who have received the truth of Paul's earlier epistles. We freely concede that much more than this is needed in most cases, for the majority of the saints are stranded in Acts. Nothing but a decided break with that administration will be sufficient to prepare them for even the rudiments of the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus.

The adaptation was based on the change from an incomplete to a complete revelation of God's purpose, from an inferior to an equal station in His grace, and from a terrestrial to a celestial destiny.

The next important function of the gifts to the ecclesia was to bring them out of minority into maturity. This may be a sudden transition, but it does not involve the repudiation of everything, far-reaching as the change may be. Paul, in the thirteenth of First Corinthians, dwells at some length on minority and maturity and makes it clear that, in that era, the saints were not mature. "For," he says, "at present we are observing by means of a mirror, in an enigma, yet then, face to face" (1 Cor.13:12). He is not speaking here of meeting the Lord, but of full knowledge in an era yet to come when the saints would become mature. That time came when Ephesians went forth.

It is still the function of the pastor and teacher to lead his hearers out of minority into maturity. But, alas, how many of the leaders of His beloved saints are themselves mature? The most alluring spiritual height seems to be those gifts which mark minority. The body of Christ is being dragged down, not built up. Spirituality is usually confounded with emotion, and often with striving after those transient gifts.

Is there any wonder that they are surging hither and thither, and whirled about by every wind of teaching? So long as the saints prefer the minority of Paul's earlier epistles or the infancy of Acts, they will be unstable as to the truth, or firmly fixed in error.

Another interesting token of the close relationship of all Paul's writings is found in the latter part of Ephesians. He does not hesitate to appeal to teaching not found in the earlier portion. The panoply of God (Eph.6:13) consists, in part, of righteousness and of the evangel of peace. This evangel is for the feet—indicating our contact with the world. It is not the peace of the second of Ephesians, between Jew and gentile, but of the fifth of Romans and the fifth of Second Corinthians. Righteousness takes us back to the third and fourth chapters of Romans.

Justification is not mentioned in the prison epistles. Neither is conciliation. These themes are practically confined to Paul's preparatory epistles (Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians). They are not affected by the new revelation and suffer no vital modification, unless we wish to note that the different prepositions used in regard to the justification of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision—*out of* and *through*—no longer have any force (Rom.3:30). Both are now justified through faith, for there are no longer any believers among the Circumcision who have not become participants of this grace.

The rendering "ordinances" (Eph.2:15), suggests that all the observances, especially baptism and the Lord's dinner, are done away. But the translation is quite incorrect. The reference is to the decrees issued by the apostles (Acts 15:20). There is no hint that observances, as such, are abolished. Each must be examined on its own merits. Whatever was given specially to Paul after his separation has a strong claim on permanence. What drifted in from the previous Kingdom testimony is not so secure.

Baptism in water was never given to Paul. Christ sent him, not to baptize, but to preach the evangel (1 Cor.1:17). He seldom did it himself. He teaches that we all are baptized in one spirit into one body (1 Cor.12:13). The body of Christ cannot exist apart from the baptism of the spirit. So

there are two baptisms in his earlier epistles. In Ephesians there is but one (Eph.4:6). Baptism in water loses even the precarious place it had. Water baptism is not for us.

The Lord's dinner is very different. Paul did not receive it from those before him, as we would expect. He received it by special revelation from the Lord (1 Cor.11:23). He commended it to the Corinthians, and corrected its abuse. How different from the treatment accorded baptism in the same epistle!

Another important contrast is the continuance of the gifts. They were to be limited to the minority status of the ecclesia and were to vanish with the advent of maturity. But, with the full realization of the impending change, he ignores any suggestion of recall when dealing with the Lord's dinner. It is to be observed till Christ's coming. The “covenant” associated with it is the dispensation of righteousness (2 Cor.3:6,9) which comes before us in literal language in the third and fourth chapters of Romans.

To conclude: Ephesians is a general epistle written by Paul to those who, like himself, had been severed from the rest, and associated with Christ in glory, rather than in His rejection. When the destiny of the twelve apostles and those associated with them had been clearly revealed, and culminates in the Kingdom of Israel on earth, the destiny of this new departure was unknown. Ephesians unfolds this secret, hence it is only for those who are “in Christ Jesus.” Today, notwithstanding the fact that the church knows nothing of this, and follows the twelve apostles, and rejects Paul and his teaching, the Kingdom administration is no longer in force. By grace, all are associated with the risen and ascended Christ. Let us pray that God will reveal to His saints the transcendent glory which is theirs in “Christ Jesus.”

A. E. Knoch

OUR SAVIOUR, GOD

GOD ALONE is our Saviour. Through Isaiah, He declares, “I, I, Yahweh am El [God]! And there is no Saviour apart from Me” (Isa.43:11). *He* is the Subjector and the Saviour: “An El, just, and a Saviour. *And none is there except Me*” (Isa.45:21).

Our need for God is an all-encompassing one. We need Him “every hour,” continually, not merely upon occasion. For at all times we either need to be saved from sinful practices or to be preserved in the paths of righteousness.

The presence of God’s saving power is often unrecognized, even among those in whom it is operating extensively. Ignorance of divine grace is a primary cause of human ingratitude. Men are inordinately proud of their self-control, for they suppose it to be their own creation. They do not realize that self-control, along with all else that is virtuous and agreeable, is always a fruit of the spirit (Gal.5:23); it is never a work of the flesh.

It is a major step forward when the unbeliever finally turns to God, having discovered that he is not really self-sufficient after all. It is at least as great an advancement when the believer repudiates all confidence in the flesh, and begins to rely upon God alone.

Whenever we are faithful, it is true, in a relative sense, that thus we “save ourselves” (for example, from withdrawing from the faith; *cf* 1 Tim.4:1,16). But we only do this *in His grace*. Therefore boasting in man is debarred: “Toil I—yet not I but the grace of God which is with me” (1 Cor.15:10).

Our actions are God’s channels; they are not a source,

but a conduit. Any course of action which we may take which is essential to a goal, is the fruit, not the root of salvation. Though practical salvation is *through* our works, it is not *out of* our works. For grace is not out of works, and salvation is both in and by grace. "Now if it is in grace, it is no longer out of works, else the grace is coming to be no longer grace" (Rom.11:6). Should we be enabled to carry such marvelous salvation into effect in our lives, this will be so thanks to our Saviour, not ourselves: "For it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight" (Phil.2:13).

All that is faithful and pleasing to God is due in its entirety to His gracious provision and direction. A realization of this truth is essential to maturity and humility. For no one can walk humbly with his God who conceives of himself as the one who finally turns defeat into victory. Therefore, we must not boast of what we have "let" the Lord do in our lives. Submission to Him can never afford us an occasion for self-boasting, but only a further opportunity to thank God for His saving grace.

It wounds our self-respect to think that we might actually need such a gracious and powerful provision. And when we recognize God's true grace, it cuts ever so deeply into our pride. Many are ready to assure us that such grace is neither given nor needed. We find such claims to be quite flattering; they make it easier for us to preserve our self-reliant attitudes and ways.

However, we will do well to consider the story of the gracious creditor and his two debtors, one of whom owed ten times more than the other. Since neither were able to pay, "he *deals graciously* with them both" (Luke 7:42). Though both were appreciative, it was the one "with whom he deals the more graciously" who was "loving him more" (Luke 7:42,43). Similarly, when God gives us an understanding and appreciation of the *graciousness* of His operations, both for us and in us, we are enabled to love Him more.

May we not, like Belshazzar, exalt ourselves over the Lord of the heavens, in Whose hand is our breath, and "for Whom" are all our paths (*cf* Dan.5:23). When we exalt ourselves, due to our failure to perceive God's all-sufficient hand upon us, we fail to honor Him. When we take such an approach, our career can only be "weighed on the scales and found lacking" (*cf* Dan.5:27).

TWO FUNDAMENTAL ERRORS

Most believers consider "free will" and "eternal punishment" to be foundational truth. However, a few consider these same concepts to be foundational error. Of course many among those on both sides of these questions have simply taken a position; most are not aware of the basic issues to be decided. Consequently, confusion is perpetuated, prejudice and ignorance prevail, and these important matters are never resolved.

We propose to examine many of the basic issues involved in these questions, such as faith, choice, foreknowledge, voluntary action, judgment and trials. The fulcrum point of our considerations will be God's achievements through the death and resurrection of Christ. What is the scope of these achievements in our salvation and with respect to His ultimate purpose to become All in all?

The prevailing idea today is that God saves us (from "eternal punishment") only after we first save ourselves from being disqualified for His alleged "gift." While He wishes to assist us even in this, He will only do so if we are willing and cooperative. One must save himself from unwillingness. Finally, we are left on our own. When we need Him the most, He will do nothing. That is: *God helps those who help themselves.*

Though it is acknowledged that we cannot earn salvation, it is insisted that we still have to qualify for it! Such a claim is nonsensical, for "earn" and "qualify" are synonyms.

The basic idea of *compensation* is common to both. For example: a successful salesman qualifies for a luxurious vacation by earning a sufficient number of bonus points.

The popular idea that we must qualify ourselves for salvation in order to escape being consigned to everlasting punishment is a repudiation of God's grace. Besides, all power and ability come from God, Who alone is our gracious Saviour.

This is our theme throughout this study. The purpose for its writing is to make known this great truth. We are taking up the error of human free will first, and the error of everlasting punishment second.

FAITH AND THE EVANGEL FOR TODAY

It is wonderful to know that "Christ Jesus came into the world *to save sinners*" (1 Tim.1:15), not merely to make it possible for sinners to be saved. Similarly, we were not conciliated to God through accepting Christ or believing in the death of His Son. Instead, "We were conciliated to God *through the death of His Son*" (Rom.5:10). Likewise, Christ did not die in order that our sins might be forgiven; for He would never need to die for God merely to forgive us. He died that God as our judge, might have a just basis for justifying us or declaring us righteous. He "was given up because of our offenses, and was roused *because of our justifying*" (Rom.4:25). We are "now justified in His blood" (Rom.5:9).

But this is only so "through Jesus Christ's faith" (Rom.3:22), "the faith of Jesus" (Rom.3:26). This is what such passages as these say; they speak of Christ's own faith, not of our faith in Christ. They no more mean our faith in Him, than the words "the faith of Abraham" (Rom.4:16) mean our faith in Abraham! It is incorrect to translate them otherwise. To do so is to interpret, not translate. But since men are so confident that they are saved (from "Hell")

through "accepting Christ," they assume that any reference to faith in association with Christ must be their own, instead of His. They think of their own faith as what keeps them from being lost. Such a conception of "grace" is perfectly indistinguishable from a reward.

THUS YOU BELIEVE

Faith is essential to our salvation, but it is not a "requirement." It is "essential" only in the sense that there are none in Christ but those who have faith in Him; they all genuinely believe that He died and rose (*cf* 1 Thess.4:14). All such ones are brethren in Christ. For God gives all His people at least some faith in at least this much. God is especially (though not exclusively) the Saviour of believers (1 Tim.4:10); it is these chosen ones who alone are "happening upon the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with glory eonian" (2 Tim.2:10).

Why did the Corinthians believe? Was it merely the result of a "free will" decision of their own, or was it because, like Paul, God's powerful grace was with them in a wonderful way? To all who have eyes to see, Paul's words concerning this matter are unmistakable:

Paul had been the foremost of sinners (1 Tim.1:15). For beyond all others, he had committed much contrary to the name of Jesus the Nazarene, and punished and persecuted the ecclesia of God exceedingly (1 Cor.15:9; Acts 9:1; 26:9-11). Therefore it required "all His patience" (1 Tim. 1:16) for the Lord to deal with this terrible sinner and to graciously save him. Many years later, when writing his Ephesian epistle, Paul painfully recalled those evil days, and in light of them could only speak of himself as "less than the least of all saints" (Eph.3:8).

"*Yet, in the grace of God I am what I am [now]*" (1 Cor. 15:10a), Paul insists to the Corinthians. For the Lord had met him on the Damascus road. The faith and love of

Christ Jesus came over him and changed him from being the foremost sinner among men into the faithful and obedient apostle to the nations, of whom we are to become imitators (1 Cor.11:1; Phil.3:17).

Paul accounts for the faith of the Corinthians (even as the heralding of the twelve, *cf* 1 Cor.12:5) on this same ground: “His grace, which is in me, did not come to be for naught, but more exceedingly than all of them toil I—*yet not I, but the grace of God* which is with me. *Then*, whether I or they, *thus [houtos, THE-SAME-AS]* we are heralding and *thus you believe*” (1 Cor.15: 10b,11).

The grace of God is effective, not merely potential. Faith is God’s gracious gift to us, with which He *overwhelms* our former unbelief, imparting to all whom He calls a measure thereof, whenever it delights Him to unveil His Son in us (*cf* Phil.1:29; 1 Tim.1:13-16; Rom.12:3; Gal.1:15,16). This proves that salvation is not a refusable offer, and that faith is not spiritual currency. Faith is not meritorious. Accepting Christ is not a transaction. Salvation is a gracious gift, not a covenant or agreement. Those who are yet of a mind to “strike a deal” with God, are in no mood to acknowledge their need of a Saviour.

CHRIST PAID ALL

Salvation in Christ is not “the greatest bargain in all the universe,” for it is not a bargain at all. It is neither cheap nor expensive. It *is free*. We need not be “willing to pay the price,” for there is no price to pay. Christ paid it all. He was made sin; God condemned sin in the flesh in the sacrifice of His Son (2 Cor.5:21; Rom.8:3).

Salvation is not a reward for having done the right thing, or for “meeting conditions.” As with Abraham (Rom.4: 16-21), our faith reveals to us what is already true, concerning what God has promised. It gives us assurance.

“God, Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling,” has

promised to glorify and conform to the image of His Son, all those whom He chose “in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian”; this evangel “now is being *manifested*” (2 Tim.1:9,10). “Now you, brethren, *as Isaac*, are children of promise” (Gal.4:28; *cf* Rom.9:9-11). *This* is the gospel—not some offer of a way to escape “Hell.”

The customary “invitation” or “altar call” of today is simply a vain tradition of men (*cf* Mark 7:8). Since it “gets results,” it is used. Through it many become converts to the “Christian religion.” The number of those from among such throngs whom God Himself has already chosen is known to Him, not ourselves. Such popular techniques are based upon the false idea which has well been termed, “decisional regeneration.”

However, such presentations are not faithful ones. For Christ is to be announced and proclaimed, not offered as a “great opportunity” (*cp* Acts 13:38,39). This is to be done so that, “whoever *were set* for life eonian” (Acts 13:48; *cf* Eph.1:3-6) may believe “through *grace*” (Acts 18:27; *cf* Rom.10:14,15).

“Yahweh, our Elohim, *You are the Setter* of welfare on the hearthstones for us, For, moreover, *You contrive all our doings for us*” (Isa.26:12).

THOSE WHO ARE CHOSEN

It is no part of our calling or service today to be crying out to men, “Repent! for near is the kingdom of the heavens!” (Matt.3:2); or, “Return and turn away from all your transgressions, And your depravity shall not become a stumbling block to you” (Ezekiel 18:30). Instead, in this present “day of salvation” (2 Cor.6:2), we are to dispense “the word of the conciliation,” “how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them” (2 Cor.5:18,19). This tremendous change

in the divine dealings during the present administration is “the world’s riches” (Rom.11:12) quite apart from their acceptance or appreciation of it.

The terrible judgments which are predicted for “the conclusion of the eon” (Matt.24:3) are yet to come at the close of this present age. They are for that era. But this present era is not that future era. The present administration, as a foretaste of God’s glorious plans for the new creation, is not concerned with such matters. It is utterly anachronistic to herald wrath in a day of conciliation.

The evangel for today is to be proclaimed on behalf “of those who are *chosen*, that they also may be happening upon the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with glory eonian” (2 Tim.2:10). Most of those who are naming the name of the Lord have never heard a clear presentation of the evangel of God. Instead they have been subjected to a great deal of confusion, in the midst of which, and in spite of all the error, “Christ crucified” was still proclaimed (*cf* 1 Cor.1:23). And, in such cases, God has used *this* marvelous message—not the contiguous “profane prattlings” which were also present (2 Tim.2:16)—to bring many of His people into the beginning of their life of faith. Therefore, “seeing that, by every method, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being announced, I am rejoicing in this also, and will be rejoicing nevertheless” (Phil.1:18).

The evangel is not to be conceived as the presentation of an investment opportunity, a “good deal,” through which all who are smart enough to recognize a good thing when they see it and willing to pay the price to “get in” may do so. One does not “join” the ecclesia (out-called ones) of God, as if it were a fraternal organization or some popular “church”: “Yet now God [the Placer] *placed* the members, each one of them, in the body according as He wills” (1 Cor.12:18).

The truth is, though we too were once terrible sinners,

even as the rest, “when the kindness and fondness for humanity of our Saviour, God, made its advent,” it came to us “*not* for works which are wrought in righteousness which we do, but *according to His mercy*” (Titus 3:4,5a). God *chose* to be merciful to us, we did not put Him under obligation to be merciful. *He* decides to whom He will grant His mercy, and when He will do so. We did *not* qualify for it; therefore God was not obligated to give it.

Salvation is not afforded man at his own convenience, whenever he would care to take it to himself. Furthermore, there is no injustice with God in acting purposefully, choosing some for certain blessings and positions which He does not grant to others. “For to Moses He is saying, ‘I shall be merciful to whomever I may be merciful, and I shall be pitying whomever I may be pitying’” (Rom.9:15). When God is merciful to us, it is only because He is also gracious to us (*cp* Exodus 33:19).

Most seem to conceive of one’s obtaining of the holy spirit in a way similar to that of Simon, the magician. Like him, they “*infer* that the gratuity of God is [somehow] to be *acquired*” (Acts 8:20). Whether one seeks to acquire the holy spirit through money, or faith, the principle is the same. God’s gifts are not for sale. Peter’s testimony to those who would represent salvation in Christ as an acquisition for which men may qualify, is, “Your heart is not straight in front of God. Repent, then, from this evil of yours” (Acts 8:21,22).

Let us rejoice in the realization that *God* is our Saviour! —“*He* saves us, through the bath of renascence and renewal of holy spirit, which He pours out on us richly through Jesus Christ, our Saviour” (Titus 3:5b,6). This is so, “that, being justified in that One’s grace, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian” (Titus 3:7).

IN GRACE AND OUT

GRACE is a fundamental characteristic of the present administration of the secret (Eph.3:2,9). It is the favor of the previous transitional era continued and intensified and enriched. Superabundant grace (Rom.5:17) had already been manifested in justifying the nations apart from the law or works of any kind, through faith, that it may accord with grace (Rom.4:16). Grace glorious, rich, transcendent, is our portion now (Eph.1:6,7; 2:7). That which the eye did not perceive, and the ear did not hear, and to which the heart of men did not ascend—whatever God makes ready for those who are loving Him—He has revealed to us by His spirit through His latest revelation (1 Cor.2:9,10). And is not this to be expected? So long as God was hindered by human help, His heart was restrained. So long as He was thwarted by creature attainments, His love could not find a free outlet. Grace, undiluted by law, unspoiled by works, unconfined by aught of man, is the fullest, freest outflow of God's essence, which is love.

But alas! Our tiny cups are far too small to contain it. Our unnatural hearts are too full of self to give God His place as our All. Our pride insists on having some share in the favors He bestows. How desperately the law-laden Jew clings to his own doings! If he cannot justify himself by law keeping, he will at least make it his rule of life after he has been justified. He cannot bear to be bereft of all merit. God must not be All. Man insists on doing his share in creating his future bliss. He must earn, he must deserve the blessings he receives, or lose his self-respect.

Paul found it necessary to devote a whole epistle to the defense of grace. The Galatians had started well, and had received the evangel which he had heralded with its abundant grace. But for Jews, who had been reared under the law, this was entirely too much to accept. The fact that God Himself had given the law was enough to convince them that He wished it to be kept. They did not realize that His intention was quite the reverse, that He wished to humble them and teach them their own incompetence and need of Him through its enactments. These Jews did not only try to keep the law themselves, but also sought to fasten it upon those of the nations who believed. Thus they ran counter to the grace which God had made the fundamental feature of the evangel of the Uncircumcision. With stern severity the apostle deals with these Jews because of the seriousness of their error. Even the Galatians are not spared. He tells them plainly that they had fallen out of grace (Gal.5:4).

The Galatian repudiation of God's grace is more virulent today than ever. Almost all "religious" training, even when definitely evangelistic, is centered in human effort and attainment. Not only is the evangel tainted with Circumcision requirements, such as repentance and baptism, which seem to give the seeker something he can do in order to assist God in securing his salvation, but the saint is loaded with duties which are to help God to finish His work.

But if the superabundant grace of Paul's evangel is repudiated, what shall we say of the rich, the glorious, the transcendent grace of this secret administration? Is it not possible, nay, probable, indeed, inevitable, that we also have repudiated it, at least to some extent? Alas! how could it be otherwise with mortal men? Christendom has hardly heard of the present grace, and those of us who have, are prone to mix in our own efforts and attainments as though these could procure the gratuities of God. There is a strong cur-

rent which is corrupting the grace glorious, limiting it to those alone who receive, or understand, or think they perceive the higher truths of Paul's later epistles. It is always some human attainment which merits this grace, although, in the nature of things, this is impossible, for then grace is no more grace.

(IN) TO-GRACE *chariti*

One form of the word grace is particularly rich in its implications, yet it is rather difficult to carry over into good English in some connections, especially the verb *be*. It is simple when the verb will allow the use of the preposition *to*, as when Paul and Barnabas were given over to the grace of God (Acts 14:26). Webster's dictionary says that the dative "is generally indicated in modern English by *to* or *for*." Much experiment convinced us that *to* is the best standard for the sublinear of the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT, and subsequent experience has confirmed this. It is the best uniform rendering. In the version, however, the matter is far more complicated, for each verb has an influence on the following connective. We have tried specially hard to get a good rendering for the parenthesis in Ephesians 2:5. We cannot say "to grace you are saved," so we used Webster's second choice and rendered it "you have been saved *for* grace." This comes close to the sense, yet seems to limit it to the future. In some passages, as Galatians 5:1, *for* is fine. "For freedom Christ frees us!" And so it seems here, yet, for the sake of uniformity, we have considered adding a word thus: "to (enjoy) grace are you saved." These renderings, however, do not fit well in similar passages, so we have adopted a regular rendering for such cases, by inserting the connective *in* in place of *to*.

The dative case, answers the question *Where?* and indicates *rest in* the object named. Hence the characteristic connective is IN, which cannot be used for any other case.

If we add *in*, then, for the dative, we are not likely to introduce any false relation. Hence we have thought it well to translate the dative "*in* grace" in all of those marvelous passages where this has to do with our present position. We, and other translators, have used *by*, which is, perhaps the most agreeable English. But *by* is so wide in its usage that it may also denote agency and efficient cause. Its nearest equivalent in Greek, *hupo*, is never used with the dative. We seek to restrict this connective to the efficient cause in the CONCORDANT VERSION. This is especially clear in such statements as, "that which is declared by the Lord through the prophet" (Matt.1:22). Grace is not the *efficient agent* (by) or the *channel* (through), but the *sphere in* which God operates in this and the preceding administration.

Justification is by God as the efficient cause (Rom.8:33), and *in* Christ (Gal.2:17), and therefore in grace. We are justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). It is not that grace is in the past, and exhausts itself in vindicating us, leaving us to stand in law or works, as the Galatians thought, nor is it merely the channel *through* which justification came. It is the element, the province in which justification is effected, which remains, not only to maintain our righteousness, but to form a fit field for the further outflow of God's favor. This is the glorious feature which we seek to unfold in this essay. The dative form of the word grace (our word *charity* is a close transliteration), is not only bursting with gifts for us, but an apprehension of its nuances will preserve us from the prevailing tendency to make His gratuities attainable by means of human efforts or insight.

In Paul's latest and highest revelation a double appeal is made to the fact that salvation through faith (Eph.2:5,8), as heralded in Paul's evangel, is *in grace*, hence is the proper atmosphere for the further favors now revealed.

The usual rendering is much used to prove that salvation is not of works, and suggests to most minds that the efficient cause of our salvation was grace. This is blessed, of course, yet seems rather incongruous in such an epistle as Ephesians, where it finds no close connection with the context. The point is that the condition of salvation which is theirs through faith, apart from works, is in the sphere of grace, hence they were vivified together with the Circumcision recipients of Paul's evangel when Christ was vivified. Such a blessing could not come to any mortal on the ground of attainment, and is possible only to those whom Paul had previously put "in grace."

This is enlarged upon in one of the most precious passages even in this precious epistle. "For in grace are you saved, through faith, and this is not out of you; it is God's oblation, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting. For His achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them." The scene of our salvation is not in ourselves or our deeds, but in God's favor. He is the one Who is working and even prepares the good works which we may do.

GRACE INVOLVES JOY

Grace, in Greek, comes from the stem joy, for that is its fruit. And so it is that we are exhorted, with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, *in grace*, to sing in our hearts to God (Col.3:16). Grace can tune our heartstrings as nothing else can. Our vocal cords may not be able to voice the harmony within. Some of us cannot make music on an instrument or in our throats so as to enchant our fellow men. But all of us can make music *in our hearts to God*. And it will be found that songs which celebrate ourselves, our superiority and attainments, are rare, for these claims are not in grace, and put a damper on our joy.

FALLING OUT OF GRACE

Perhaps the best reason for choosing *in* to indicate the dative case of grace is the direct contrast which it presents, to Paul's graphic figure, when he described the Galatian apostasy. He said, "You fall *out* of grace!" (Gal.5:4). They had been in grace, or they could not have fallen *out* of it. In these days, when there is such a strong tendency to depart from the faith, it will be found that a falling out of grace usually accompanies error. Those who divide the saints into groups according to something in them have fallen out of grace. One who claims to belong to the 144,000 and leaves others in the great company proclaims his own merit, denies the one body, and has fallen out of grace. If we claim to belong to a higher and more privileged group in this administration, we destroy its very foundations, for it is based upon the *unity* of those far and near, the *oneness* of those privileged with those who had no covenant or claim on God. It is noteworthy that no one claims to belong to an inferior group. Let us not exalt ourselves at the expense of God's most precious exhibition of grace! Falling from grace used to be a phrase applied to one whose conduct contradicted his profession. The reformed drunkard was said to fall from grace if he took to his cups again. It was freely used of so-called "backsliders," and carried with it the loss of salvation. But, of course, all this is entirely foreign to the context where it is found in the Scriptures. The Galatians did not lose their salvation, but their liberty (Gal.5:1-4). They still remained brethren. They had the spirit (Gal.3:2,3). They were disturbed, but not lost. All of us fail in doctrine or deportment. This, however, does not affect that which we have in grace. It was only in their thoughts and practices that the Galatians fell out of grace. Failure in these can only make it abound. In law failure is fatal, but grace is stimulated and multiplied by failure.

GRACE THE TOUCHSTONE

Since grace is the fundamental feature of this administration, which is especially designed to exhibit God's grace to the universe, all doctrine and all deportment may be tested by it. If we have drunk deeply of grace we intuitively shrink from all that involves merit on the part of man. Salvation with the slightest tinge of works, no matter how reasonable or how ably defended, or "proven" in the Bible, finds no response in our spirits. Destiny dependent on human attainment is utterly repugnant to us, for it is a falling out of grace and a repudiation of the very basis of this secret administration. And we will find that our conduct usually agrees with our teaching. Graciousness goes with truth: ungraciousness with error. Not that it is merely sentimental and will not rebuke and expose where this is needed, especially in these last days, but even this will be done in harmony with grace.

Here is where the spiritual saint is safer than the learned scholar. The question of truth may seem difficult in our present ignorance and the strange variety of interpretations which abound, but if God's grace has gripped us, this will be our guiding sun in the midst of the prevailing gloom. It will enable us to steer clear of all the sunken rocks of human merit that threaten to make shipwreck of our faith. We will refuse to deduce from one set of passages what God plainly denies elsewhere when our reasoning leads us to lean on man instead of God, because this conflicts with the spirit of grace. O that our hearts were established firmly and finally in the freedom of His favor! Much as we value a knowledge of the external facts of God's revelation we have found that these are not acceptable to us in this administration unless our hearts are prepared by an appreciation of God's grace.

A. E. Knoch

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 112th Year
(1909–2021)

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SECOND QUARTER, 2021

Volume 112

Number 2

The Problem of Evil and the Judgments of God

How can we explain the presence of evil? Is there a purpose for evil, and will it come to an end? Can there be two independent opposing forces in the universe? If God alone is supreme, what is the purpose of judgment? Surely there are answers to these troubling questions in the Word of God.

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A. E. Knoch, paperback, 346 pages (ISBN 0-910424-59-4)

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, SECOND QUARTER 2021
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED TWELVE

EDITORIAL

WE BEGIN this issue of our magazine with Ephesians 1:2,3, which may be translated and arranged as follows:

² **Grace to =you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

³ **Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
Who blesses us 'with every spiritual blessing,
among the celestials,
in Christ,**

We end with Romans 5:8,9, which may be translated and arranged as follows:

⁸ **yet 'God is commending this 'love of ^{sf}His ^{io}to us, seeing that,**

While we 'are still sinners,
Christ dies ^{ov}for our sakes.

⁹ **Much rather then, justified now in His 'blood, we shall be 'saved from 'indignation through Him.**

The title of the middle article is "One God and One Lord," taken from 1 Corinthians 8:5,6 where we read:

⁵ **For +even if so be that there 'are those being termed^o gods, whether in heaven or on earth, even as there 'are many gods and many lords, ^{6 bt}nevertheless**

**To us there is one God, the Father,
out of Whom 'all is, and we ^{io}for Him,**

**And one Lord, Jesus Christ,
through Whom 'all is, and we through Him.**

In one way, the articles might well be considered in

reverse order, starting with James Coram's presentation of the evangel of our salvation as an announcement of God's grace centered on the death, entombment and rousing of Christ (pp.89-96). Then our brother lays down the case for a clear concept of our Lord as the Image of God and Mediator between God and humanity (pp.66-87). Thus with this foundation we may take up Brother Knoch's study of our spiritual blessings among the celestials which are "in Christ" (pp.51-65 and an appendix on p.88).

But if, as believers we start with the transcendent riches of *God's grace* as they begin to be unfolded in Ephesians 1:2,3, and then give attention to the Person and place of *Christ* in Whom we have all our blessings, it is well to end again with the evangel itself. For it is the beginning of our faith and yet needs always to be recalled and considered anew even as we are taken from glory to glory. D.H.H.

REPOSING

Orville Hunt, of Palm Bay, Florida, was put to repose on June 27, 2021 at age 82. Born and raised in Wisconsin where he attended a Bible college and where he met and married his wife Connie. They spent eight years in the Philippines in a mission centered on the evangel of God's grace, but restricted to believers. It was after their return, settled in Michigan, that Orville's concept of Christ's work at the cross magnified as it ultimately embraces all humanity. Thus as his faith expanded, his ministry contracted, and he took on work as a roofer. But as we knew him as host and teacher, we knew him as a gracious brother, reflecting in his life and words the evangel he believed.

Mary Ann Fry, of Spencer Port, New York, was put to repose on June 21, 2021. She and her husband, **Edison W. Fry**, who predeceased her in 2007 rejoiced in God, studying His word early in the morning every day. They passed their love and faith to their three children. Mary Ann's famous sayings during difficult times were "Everything is happening according to God's plan" and "Trust in God—He doesn't want us to worry."

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing, among the celestials, in Christ. (Eph.1:2,3)

“GRACE to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Divine favor, and the weal it works, is the height of human blessedness. The usual Eastern salutation was *Peace!* It was a wish for welfare in all things. Paul always prefaces it with *grace*. This is the keynote of our relationship to God and Christ in all of Paul’s epistles. And he does not only wish us to have it, but he proceeds to present it to us. This is especially true of the epistle before us. In it the grace of God is not only the first to greet us as we enter, but enriches us with its lavish redundancy to the very end.

Nowhere is this invocation more fitting than here, for it introduces us immediately to the grandest and most glorious exhibition of divine favor which ever illumines God’s love, either in the past, the present, or those wondrous future eons which are the special display of His power and perfections.

“Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing, among the celestials . . .” With inimitable wisdom the whole message of this epistle is compressed into these two introductory phrases, *every spiritual blessing* and *among the celestials*. All the rest may be referred to these two themes. The secret itself begins with a repetition of the first, for

everything said to be “joint” is *in spirit* (Eph.3:6). And the three items of the Ephesian secret are entirely dependent on the fact that our blessings are not on earth, but *among the celestials*.

The strongest possible stress, however, is laid on the statement that our blessings are *spiritual*. It is difficult to see how greater emphasis could be given this foundation fact. Ephesians, the fullest exposition of God’s present dealings with the nations, opens with this striking declaration, and it is confirmed at every step. The believers among the nations have become joint enjoyers because they were sealed with the spirit of promise (1:13). In flesh, they were apart from Christ (2:12). Access to the Father’s presence is by spirit (2:18). We repeat, the mystery itself is limited to the realm of spirit. It is only *in spirit* that we are joint allottees, and a joint body and joint partakers.

The full force of this phrase will not dawn on us until we have fully considered its implications. When we say that our blessings are among the celestials, nothing is actually said of our place on earth, but the mere mention of the higher sphere is the most conclusive evidence that our blessings are *not* on earth. So with the character of our bliss. The word *spiritual* is contrastive. It insists that the physical and the soulish have no place in our blessedness.

In the Kingdom Israel will have spiritual blessings, but they will be mingled with all the delights which we can only sip, because of the frailty of our mortal frames. Disease and death, which crush our efforts to quaff the cup of pleasure to the full, will be defeated. The paradise, the “heaven” of which men dream, will be on earth.

Our blessings are above all this. It is not really right to say that we will have no physical or soulish blessings, because this would indicate a lack, a loss, a deficiency. The positive statement that we have every spiritual blessing, in Christ, gives us the gold that makes silver and cop-

per of no account. So superior is the spiritual bliss that all need, all desire, for the inferior felicity will vanish. At present we do not apprehend this. We long for the lower delights. But they are not ours in Christ. Just as we will be satisfied with being “confined” in a universe and leave the earth for Israel, so we will be supremely content with our transcendent spiritual felicity and leave the physical pleasures to the earthly people.

We must also read this phrase in the light of the previous position of those to whom it was written. They had already enjoyed some spiritual and physical blessings, in anticipation of the future Kingdom, in which they were supposed to have a part. There is a change in two directions. Their place in flesh vanishes and leaves them no title to physical felicity. Their place in spirit develops until it includes the very limits of spiritual bliss.

It is evident that these phrases, “spiritual blessings” and “among the celestials,” are new revelations, and denote a change in God’s dealings with the believers among the nations. The celestial destiny was not made known before, though much had been revealed in preparation for it, as we shall see when we consider the phrase more closely. So also, the exclusively spiritual character of our blessings had not been previously expressed, yet there had been a constant trend in their direction, from the very first indication that God was doing a distinct work among the nations. They were weaned from the physical gradually. Here we have the climax, for all physical precedence must be set aside in the administration of the mystery.

The general teaching of the Scriptures as to spirit is well worthy of our attention, and may be considered later when we inquire into the subject of spiritual endowments. At present let us consider the theme in connection with the blessing of the believers among the nations through the ministry of Paul, first as it appears on the surface in the

history of his acts, and then as seen in the doctrine of the spirit in his preparatory epistles.

Parabolically, we are given a graphic representation of the retirement of the flesh and the ascendancy of the spirit in the apostle's personal career. From his call to his severance at Pisidian Antioch, his ministry was based entirely on his physical presence. He spoke by word of mouth only. He wrote no epistle. Later, when he went among the nations, he supplemented his personal presence by writing to the Thessalonians, and to the Corinthians, and to the Galatians, and to the Romans. But before he writes to the Ephesians he is put in prison. Physically, he is retired from service. Only by his epistles he held spiritual communion with the saints. It is a parable of the spirit's gradual ascendancy over his fleshly presence in the ministry.

As we shall see, this is often enforced in his writings, and it is even emphasized in the account of his ministry in Acts. His very severance was by the direct decree of the holy spirit, and he is sent forth in the same way (Acts 13:2,3). This is in undoubted contrast to our Lord's method with the twelve apostles. These He separated and sent forth during His physical presence on the earth.

Those who can see beneath the surface will discover continual intimations of the tendency toward spirit throughout Paul's acts. Consider the marked contrast between his long personal sojourn in Ephesus and his last visit. He did not even go to the site of the city, but called the elders to meet him at Miletus (Acts 20:17). He told them that they would see his face no more. Physically, he faded from their view, never to return. Spiritually, he came to them again in this epistle (for it undoubtedly was sent to Ephesus, too). They were pained to part with him, but who can tell what joy he brought to them in his spiritual return?

The prophecy of Agabus (Acts 21:11) points in the same direction. Its very wording is significant. "This the *holy*

spirit is saying, 'The man whose girdle this is, shall the Jews in Jerusalem be binding thus, and they shall be giving him over into the hands of the nations.'" The holy spirit is the speaker. The girdle speaks of service. It was the action of the Jews in Jerusalem which was forcing the flesh to retire. They were compelling Paul to enter a ministry to the nations in which his flesh would have no place. All this is graphically represented, not only by the action of Agabus, but by the actual occurrence.

Have we ever fully realized the meaning of Paul's imprisonment at the close of Acts? Have we comprehended the significance of the fact that the perfection epistles come to us from a *prisoner*—a man who cannot claim or dispense physical benefits, or serve by means of his personal presence? There is a close accord between the circumstance and the substance of all revelation. While Paul's flesh is being confined, his spirit is set free.

THE SPIRIT IN THIS ECONOMY

The great change in the operation of the spirit can be understood only when we carefully consider the force of the terms used. We read of the spirit *coming on* for power, of *filling* for utterance, of *baptism* for cleansing, of *sealing* for safety, of the *earnest* as a pledge, and of *homing* for communion. The first of these, *coming on* for power, Paul never applies to the nations. The last, *homing* for communion, which takes its place, is used only by Paul, in view of the impending climax of Ephesians. Instead of receiving an occasional visitation, the believers among all nations become the permanent home of the holy spirit. This is not for the operation of miraculous displays, but for the maintenance of constant fellowship. Almost all of these are continually confused with the baptism of the spirit, which we will consider first.

THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

What is the baptism in holy spirit? Aside from the promise given by John the baptist (Matt.3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33) that they would be baptized in holy spirit at the coming of Christ, and our Lord's declaration that they should be baptized with holy spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:5), we have only one other mention of spirit baptism in the Scriptures. This is Paul's declaration that, "in one spirit we all are baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slave or free" (1 Cor.12:13).

If we allow an interpretation of this phrase which is often heard, that the baptism of the spirit is known only when evidenced by miraculous manifestations, we are confronted with a serious difficulty at the outset. We know that many are members of the body of Christ who have never experienced some of these supernatural signs, yet we are assured by the apostle that *all* who are members of Christ's body have become such by the baptism of the spirit. We must either deny that all who are members of Christ have this baptism or modify our conception of its meaning to accord with the experience of all who are His.

Baptism in water was the type or symbol of the spiritual reality. It spoke of *cleansing* and *union*. It was ceremonial washing, and associated its subjects by a common bond. Saul of Tarsus washed away his sins (Acts 22:16). The sons of Israel were baptized into Moses (1 Cor.10:2). These two thoughts—cleansing and unity—are only typified by water, but realized in spirit. The disciples were cleansed on the day of Pentecost and the believers in Corinth were united into one body by the baptism of spirit.

There is not the least suggestion of power in the term baptism—either in water or in spirit. John the baptist wrought no miracles, neither did his baptized disciples. Those who were baptized by our Lord's followers received

no enduement. His apostles and disciples needed a special commission to enable them to cast out demons, cure the sick, or strengthen the infirm. Their baptism conferred no power. The same is true of the antitype. The baptism of the spirit does not endue the believers with might. It only *cleanses* and *unifies*.

At first sight, this seems to be contradicted by the record in Acts. Did not the Lord say that they would be baptized in holy spirit at Pentecost (Acts 1:5)? And did not the holy spirit come with power, accompanied with tongues of fire and the gift of languages? This is true. At Pentecost they were not only *baptized in* holy spirit, but the holy spirit *came on* them (Acts 1:8) and they were *filled* with holy spirit (Acts 2:4). The power was not due to baptism but to the other manifestations of the spirit's presence.

Consider carefully the two distinct promises given by our Lord concerning Pentecost. First He said, "You shall be baptized in holy spirit after not many of these days." Then, when the testimony to the Kingdom is before Him, He says, "But you shall be obtaining *power* at the *coming* of the holy spirit *on* you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in entire Judea and Samaria, and as far as the limits of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Power is not associated with baptism, but with the *on-coming* of the spirit. The figures are opposites. Baptism is a *dipping in*. Power springs from a *coming on*.

The same important distinction is manifest in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians. The baptism of the spirit is the ground of *unity*, not of *power*. The spirit is the *channel* of the graces, which it gives and operates. What a vast difference between this thought and the *dipping* of all *in* the spirit! O that we could clear away the cloudy conceptions which are confusing so many believers today! The baptism of the spirit has become connected with so much which is unwarranted by the Word that it has become the

cause of division, rather than unity. We beg of all to search and see that *baptism never brings power*. It never is the source of spirit manifestations. It is used only of cleansing and consequent unity.

The perversion of the doctrine of spirit baptism should be a helpful warning to those whose hearts yearn to know and obey the will of God, for it points out how easily we may deflect from the truth unless we use the utmost care and accuracy in considering the inspired records. It shows how easily we may reason from false and insufficient premises, and found a great movement on a figment of human imagination. Power came down at Pentecost. The disciples were baptized in holy spirit at that time. But this does *not* prove that one was the consequence of the other. The fact that power was promised in connection with the coming on of the spirit, and is never associated with baptism, disproves it. Yet what a marvelous movement is based upon this blunder! An untold amount of teaching concerning the operation of God's holy spirit is centered around this serious error. Good men and godly find it a challenge to their faith, and they seek to make it their own. The lesson we should learn is the stupendous importance of trifling departures from the Word. The enemy may use them to deceive and to seduce the very elect.

The great lesson for service in this economy of God's grace is almost the reverse of that which obtains at Pentecost. That power did not continue. Let anyone trace the exhibition of power through the book of Acts and he will be convinced that, as the Kingdom hope vanishes, power also departs. At the beginning the twelve are mightily endued and are able to brave the opposition of their rulers. At the end they have been forced from the holy city and their cause is lost. Only a lone apostle, a prisoner in Rome, remains as God's ambassador. All the power he has, lies in his weakness.

That is the great lesson which is needed today. God's strength is now being perfected in infirmity. God is working with weak instruments so that the glory may be His. Great power would disqualify us. It is one of the special excellencies of grace that it operates more freely in infirmity than in strength. God can, and has, wrought great things through those whom He has empowered. He is doing far greater marvels through the feeble, the faint, those who cannot claim a share in the glory of His achievements. Let us, like Paul at the close of his career, boast in our lack of physical power, for then we are more acceptable servitors of His grace.

THE "COMING ON" OF THE SPIRIT

In ancient times the spirit of the Lord came upon those who were His instruments. Balaam prophesied under its power (Num.24:2). Othniel delivered Israel (Judges 3:10), and Gideon acted in its strength (Judges 6:34). When Samuel anointed David the spirit of Yahweh came upon him from that day forward (1 Sam.16:13). His captain, Amasai, had the spirit come upon him (1 Chron.12:18). The spirit of God came upon Azariah the prophet, and he encouraged Asa to put away the idols out of the land (2 Chron.15:1,8), as well as on Zechariah the priest, who was stoned in the court of the temple (2 Chron.24:20,21). The spirit of Yahweh fell on Ezekiel (Ezek.11:5); He worked, not by an army, nor by power, but by His spirit (Zech.4:6).

This same *coming on* is continued as the *power* of God's operations when Christ and His apostles were proclaiming the Kingdom. He Himself was generated in this way (Luke 1:35). Such was the power of Pentecost (Acts 1:8). But never, in all of Paul's career, does the spirit operate in this way. It is not now an occasional outpouring. The spirit is not outside of us. It dwells in us. It is there, not

to work miracles, but to vivify every act of these mortals bodies (Rom.8:11).

At Pentecost the spirit *came on* them for power, *filled* them for utterance, and they were *baptized in* it for cleansing. The baptism and the filling continue, but the coming on is replaced by another nearer and closer relationship which was not known at Pentecost. Only in Paul's epistles do we read that the spirit is *making its home* in the believers (Rom.8:9,11; 1 Cor.3:16; 2 Tim.1:14). Instead of an occasional visitation it has a settled habitation.

As this operation of the spirit is most important in its contrast with the present method, we give a list of the passages in which it is referred to, so that the student may study them for himself. There is some variety in the imposition of the spirit. It *falls* on the proselytes (Acts 10:44; 11:15). It will be *poured* on Israel and all flesh in the coming Kingdom (Acts 2:17,18) as it was in the past on the believing proselytes (Acts 10:45). It is *placed* on Christ (Matt.12:18). It *remains* on Him (Mark 1:10; John 1:32,33).

THE HOMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Up to the end of Acts the spirit is found ON the saints: from Romans, through Paul's epistles, the holy spirit makes its home IN the members of His body. This change is fraught with far-reaching significance. There is all the difference which we find in Israel's early history, where Yahweh manifested Himself in two distinct methods. He occasionally came upon men, such as Othniel and Gideon, David and Amasai, Zechariah and Ezekiel, energizing them for some superhuman effort. But He also made His home in the holy of holies. One was intermittent and temporary. The other was His permanent abode.

Since sin has invaded the universe God makes His home in inaccessible light (1 Tim.6:16), and in houses specially prepared and sanctified for His presence, such as the tab-

ernacle of the wilderness, the temple of Solomon, the more glorious sanctuary of Ezekiel (Ezek.43), in the person of His Son (John 2:19-21) and, in this economy of transcendent grace, which anticipates the glories of the ultimate consummation, in the bodies of His believing people. In the time to come He will dwell in a temple made of living stones. They will be a part of His abode. We, each one, are His temple.

We need not doubt the reality of His homing in Israel's sanctuaries. Our version is inaccurate in saying that the Most High *dwelleth* not in temples made with hands. He is not now *dwelling*, or making His home in them. It is very true that He does not make His home in Ezra's building (Ezra 6:3), or Herod's house, or the temple of the end time (2 Thess.2:4). But we may be sure that the tabernacle and the temples of Solomon and Ezekiel are hallowed by the Shekinah. In the past He dwelt in houses made by men's hands, and He will deign to do so once again. But now He is not making His home in such structures, but in bodies made by Himself as the Creator and hallowed by the sacrifice of Christ.

The figure of the temple is transferred to our bodies by the apostle. "Are you not aware that you are the temple of God and the spirit of God is making its home in you?" (1 Cor.3:16). As the presence of Yahweh sanctified the temple, so we also are holy because we are His home. This is the true basis and power of holiness. It is not in ourselves, but in Him Who homes in us.

The homing of the spirit is set forth most fully in the eighth of Romans (verses 9-11). There we read, "Yet *you* are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God's spirit is making its home in you . . . Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also vivify your mortal bodies because of His spirit

making its home in you.” This is the marvelous and continual miracle of the spirit in this economy. It gives life to the dead. We should be in constant enjoyment of resurrection power, which makes the body of sin, though dead, the instrument of righteousness.

The spirit homing within us, not only hallows our mortal frame and gives it life, but also guards that which He has committed to us. Paul charged Timothy, “Guard that ideal thing committed to you, through the holy spirit making its home in us” (2 Tim.1:14). These three passages fully set forth the present place of the holy spirit in contrast with its place in the past. Then its presence was occasional and extraordinary. Now it is the normal experience of all believers. Then God dwelt in temples, now He homes in those whom He has hallowed.

THE SEALING AND EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT

The sealing and earnest of the spirit are also exclusively ours. In fact, as both are permanent and the earnest is a foretaste of the very blessings we are considering, these tokens could not be given to other believers. As these phases of the spirit’s operation will come before us at length a little later on (Eph.1:13), we will not unfold them at this point.

The full import of the phrase “spiritual blessings” cannot be obtained by reasoning. We are not able to formulate premises from which any safe deductions can be made. This may be illustrated by what may be termed the Kingdom argument, which is as follows: There are spiritual blessings in the Kingdom. We are in the “kingdom” (Col. 1:13). Hence all of the spiritual blessings of the Kingdom are ours. This is beautifully simple and convincingly logical, if only the premises were true.

The “kingdom” in which we find ourselves today is, in some ways, a contrast to the Kingdom of the heavens. That will destroy and displace the kingdoms now on earth. That

will rescue mankind from human rule and deliver them into the Kingdom of Christ, as the Son of Mankind. “The kingdom of the Son of His love” delivers us out of the jurisdiction of darkness into a realm which in no way interferes with our subjection to the powers that be. It is a strictly spiritual kingdom, in opposition to Satan’s present sovereignty.

That it is not even the spiritual counterpart of the millennial Kingdom is evident from the title used. The “kingdom” of the *Son* (Heb.1:8) is not to be referred to the thousand years, but to the “eon of the eon”—the succeeding eon, in the new creation. The reason doubtless lies in the fact that, in that future “kingdom” of the Son, unlike the millennium, there will be conciliation. God will be on terms of amity with all mankind. It is not the rule of the iron club, but of the scepter of the *Son*—a title of relationship and affection. Such is the future type of the present “kingdom” of the Son of His love (Col.1:13).

Without repeating all that we have written on the subject of the heavenly kingdoms, we wish to press the two great phases of the future sovereignty of the earth and their spiritual counterparts, so that we may not be misled by mistaken analogies.

As to *time*, let us note that the *Priest-Kingdom* of Christ and His saints is for the thousand years. This is commonly called the millennium. Let it be clearly noted that this has two distinct aspects toward the nations. It is a Melchizedek reign. Christ and Israel are intermediaries between God and the nations. They are *Priests* as well as *Kings*.

The spiritual counterpart of this period is found in Paul’s earlier ministries, when he as a *priest* ministered the evangel of God to the nations, and as an ambassador conveyed the decrees of the elders to his converts. During this interval we find the powers of the coming Kingdom exercised by Paul himself and by those who received his message. There was blessing in body and soul as well as in spirit, but all in subordination to Israel.

But the reign of the saints is not limited to the millennium. That is only the first phase of the coming Kingdom. They are to reign for the eon of the eons, *but not as priests*. Priesthood vanishes in the new creation. The power of God's Christ is replaced by the loving sway of His Son. The present "kingdom" is the spiritual anticipation of this sovereignty. Hence it is called "the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col.1:13). The figure is continued in Colossians, for we are said to have deliverance and the pardon of sins, *in this "kingdom."*

Christendom has confused the spiritual counterparts with the future fulfillments, so that the coming Kingdom has been spiritualized away. Others have reversed this process, and have tried to make the Kingdom a present reality. Let it be ours to separate the coming phases, the Kingdom of Christ for a thousand years, the sovereignty of the Son, for the final eon, and the kingdom of the Father, after the eons are past. And let us also distinguish the anticipatory spiritual fulfillments. The Kingdom of Christ, and the powers of the millennial era do not illustrate *our* blessing. *The succeeding "kingdom" of the Son speaks of the present grace. We are in a new creation.*

Beyond this, let us note that the present "kingdom" is a figure of speech. There are certain points of likeness between that which we enjoy and that which will be the position of the nations in the new creation. We are not at liberty to define these similarities. This is done for us by the spirit. The nations at that time will not be rescued from their human governors. Neither are we. They will be liberated from the thralldom of Satan and his hosts. So are we. We are rescued out of the jurisdiction of darkness (Col.1:13).

Godward, they will have deliverance and the pardon of sins. *Considering ourselves under the figure of this "king-*

dom" of the Son, we also have these blessings, for they are the only means of conciliation known to government.

These two aspects are the only ones which we have any right to press without doing violence to the laws of language and the Word of God. There are aspects of that "kingdom" of the Son which have no counterpart in the present. Indeed, they are contrary to this administration. For instance, Israel will still rule over the nations. That must not be imported into the present grace. Likewise, there will be physical felicities at that time to which we are strangers. These are not elaborated in the figure, hence we may lawfully deduce that they are *not* a part of the picture.

Even now, therefore, we have spiritual blessings among the celestials, though we have no physical blessings among terrestrials. Unknown, despised on earth, yet we are the first of its inhabitants to be freed from the fearful influence of the powers of darkness, who are hurrying humanity to its doom. They already recognize us as the supreme sovereigns of the universe, to whom, as members of the body of Christ, is pledged the pinnacle of creature bliss.

The negative implications of this great declaration are of tremendous practical importance. The mere statement that our blessings are among the celestials, rules out the terrestrial felicities of the favored nation. And the fact that they are spiritual, sets aside the soulish, sentient, sensual, as well as the fleshly and material, which have so large a place in Israel's promised Kingdom. And the great exemplars given us in Philippians fully confirm this truth. None of them were noted for either health or wealth. On the contrary, Paul dilates on his distresses, Timothy has frequent infirmities, and Epaphroditus lingered near the doors of death. These men gave a living expression to the great motto which appears above the portal to present truth:

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS AMONG THE CELESTIALS.

A. E. Knoch

ONE GOD AND ONE LORD

THE SCRIPTURAL EXPRESSIONS FOR “GOD” signify neither supremacy nor unoriginatedness of being. And, these terms may be used either in a relative sense or in an absolute sense—even when used in a literal sense and in a faithful sense. “God” is a title which speaks of Subjectorhood or Placership.

Ultimately speaking, “there is no other God except *One*” (1 Cor.8:4). “The *Head* of Christ is *God*” (1 Cor. 11:3). The God and Father of the believer is also “*the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph.1:17). We believe, then, that the Supreme God is the One Whom the apostle Paul terms “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph.1:3), Whom Christ Himself terms “the *only true God*” (John 17:3).

While we believe “even if so be that there are many being termed ‘GODS,’ whether in heaven or on earth, even as [there is a sense in which] there are many gods, and many lords, nevertheless for us there is *one God, the Father*, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, *and one Lord, Jesus Christ*, through Whom all is” (1 Cor.8:5,6).

It is revealed that, in Christ, “the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily” (Col.2:9). If the entire complement of the Deity, however, *dwells in* Christ, this does not make Christ God, any more than if the entire complement of a salesman’s samples are contained in a box, the box is the salesman’s samples. The box remains the entity containing the samples, not the samples themselves.

It is revealed as well that Christ, before taking the form of a slave and coming to be in the likeness of humanity,

“being inherently [lit., “inhering”] in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God” (Phil.2:6). This fact, however, again, is no proof that He is God but is rather a disproof of any such proposition. One who is equal with another is not the other but himself. Equality between *two*, regardless of their nature and regardless of the particulars of that equality, is not a proof of identity but of its denial. Equality always denies identity, and must ever be relative, else it becomes identity. Then, it is no longer equality. If Christ our Lord, in some respect, is equal with God, this proves that Christ is not God and that God is not Christ.

“The Word” of God in John 1:1 may well have in view not only God’s personified Word, Christ, but His written word as well. In any case, “THE WORD was *toward* God.” Any sense, then, in which it is correct to say that “the Word *was* God,” must be compatible with the Word’s being, first of all “*toward* God.” This fact precludes the Word’s being literally and identificationally God, and entails Its being God only figuratively, in a representative sense. Hence it is simply incorrect to reason that if in John 1:1 Christ is the Word, it follows that He is therein affirmed to be God, in either a literal or absolute sense.

Since we wish to consider the nature of God’s being according to the claims both of Trinitarianism and Modalism, a word needs to be said concerning the English word “being” itself. One who has “being,” merely speaks of one who *exists* or *is* (*cp* Heb.11:6). Similarly, an “entity” is that which has existence. And, the modern term “person” simply means a being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense, whether or not a corporeal being or a human being. Anything that *has* being, is anything that has existence. But when we speak of *a* being, we mean a “person,” the expression “person” being understood in accord with the definition stated above. In this

sense, then, God is a "Person." "Personal" qualities are those characteristics which pertain to a person; specifically, conscious apprehension, rationality, and moral sense.

Academic Trinitarians, however, do not use the word "person" in the sense presented above. This has resulted in much confusion. This is especially so since ordinary folk who feel obliged to believe in "the Persons of the Godhead" are unaware what this very phrase is supposed to mean.

The teaching of Trinitarianism is that God is one Being, existing eternally in three hypostases: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. More succinctly stated, God exists in three hypostases.

"Hypostasis" is the formal, theological equivalent for the popular term "person." In Trinitarian theology, that which is to be understood by the latter expression, is that which is defined by the former. The Trinitarian definition of "person" is, "one of the three modes of being in the Godhead; a hypostasis."¹ The word "hypostasis," itself, simply means that without which something cannot be, the "essential nature of anything; a subject in which attributes are conceived to inhere, or a . . . *mode* of existence."² A hypostasis, then, is an "essentiality."

It needs to be emphasized that the orthodox Trinitarian does not affirm that God is both one and three in the same sense. He rather affirms that within the one God there are three distinct "Persons," each one of Whom is uncreated and of the same essence or nature (any distinctions between the three being ones of service or office). By "person," however, the knowledgeable Trinitarian does *not* mean a literal person, in the sense of an actual, living being; instead, he uses the word "person" strictly in an

1. WEBSTER'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY, second edition, unabridged; p.1828.

2. *ibid.*, p.1229.

accommodated sense as a token for the technical "hypostasis" (i.e., essentiality).

Consequently, then, more clearly stated, God is one Being, existing eternally in three essentialities: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Briefly, God exists in three essentialities.

The Trinitarian, if he would maintain a viable monotheism and yet avoid adopting opposing views, has no recourse but to affirm that these three essentialities are *modes of the same Being*, three modes in which God *always and actually exists* (not to be confounded with Modalism, the opposing doctrine which affirms a plurality of divine modes merely in the sense of divine roles in which God Himself is *sometimes presented*).

To be consistent, orthodox Trinitarianism must affirm and does affirm,³ that by the "Trinity" they mean that God has His existence in three distinct modes, each of which being marked by a certain, "personal" quality. These modes are denominated, respectively, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It is confusing, however, for Trinitarians to claim that these three hypostatic (i.e., essential) modes are "distinct but not separate." This is because "distinct" and "separate" are synonyms. It is only a question of idiom whether we use one term or the other. What the Trinitarian actually means to say, however, by the slogan "distinct but not separate," is that while there are distinctions which separate what is to be *understood* concerning each hypostasis, one from another, nonetheless these distinctions do not constitute any of the three hypostases separate *beings*.

Even so, if the three hypostases termed the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are in fact three modes or ways

3. "In theological language we would define a person [i.e., a hypostasis] as a mode of subsistence which is marked by intelligence, will, and individual existence" (Loraine Boettner, *STUDIES IN THEOLOGY*, chapter 3, "The Trinity," p.109; Presbyterian and Reformed: Philadelphia).

in which God subsists (i.e., continues to exist), then it follows that each itself, literally speaking, is not God Himself. Each of these three cannot literally be God, but rather a mode *of* God’s existence, a way in which *God* subsists. It would only be, wherever any of these are termed God, or spoken of as God, that we are to understand, by figure of association, God Himself.

Trinitarians, indeed, as a shibboleth, insist on declaring, “Jesus is God.” Yet however important this affirmation is conceived to be as a righteous slogan, such is not actually an accurate statement of Trinitarianism itself.

An outsider might reasonably suppose that by the affirmation “Jesus is God,” the Trinitarian means to say that Christ is the Deity, the one true God. The Trinitarian’s actual claim, however, is that the Son, Christ Jesus, even as the Father and the Holy Spirit, is a hypostasis or essential mode in which God subsists. That is, Christ Himself is not a Being or Person, but is instead an aspect *of* a Being or Person.

One who believes such a proposition cannot, apart from self-contradiction, also believe that Jesus, in a literal, identificational sense, *is* God.

Yet they do wish for Christ to have “full Godness,” including, by all means, uncreatedness, together with no immanent subordinancy to the Father, only “economic” subordinancy. They also wish for both the “Father” and the “Holy Spirit” to have full Godness, including uncreatedness, whatever Their respective administrative offices. And, they wish for there to be only one actual Being Who is God.

With such a wish list, however, the Trinitarian simply has no alternative but to conceive the Deity as a Being comprised of three hypostatic (i.e., inherently essential) modes, three *person-like aspects* that *have* being, but do not, individually in themselves, constitute *a* Being. Simply stated, God consists of three person-like aspects, one of Whom (or rather, of Which) is Christ.

But from this it follows that none of these three, including Christ, is an actual Being. Therefore, as presented in Trinitarianism, Christ is not a Person in the actual sense of the word but a Thing. Specifically, according to such a system, Christ is not, identificationally, God, but is only God, synecdochically speaking (i.e., by near association), the partial Thing being put for the whole Being. This hardly makes Christ “fully God,” but only (“fully” or otherwise) an *aspect of* God.

Indeed, the knowledgeable Trinitarian affirms that not only the word “person” but all nouns and pronouns in reference to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, are not literal (which would make them references to actual Beings), but are “accommodations,” mere anthropomorphisms.

MODALISM: JESUS ALONE IS GOD

In considering the claims of Modalism as to how it is that “Jesus is God,” it is helpful to note that Modalists rarely if ever explicitly distinguish the figurative, representative “is” from the literal, identificational “is.” Accordingly, in certain instances, at least to many, it may not be clear which of these two senses Modalists have in view. Indeed, one often wonders whether it is clear even in Modalists’ own minds which sense they have in view, or even if they make this distinction at all.

No being “is” another being, literally speaking. And, there is one God, Who is a Being. It follows, then, were it to be affirmed that Christ is the Deity (is Yahweh Elohim, is God) representatively and that God alone is a Being, it could only be that by the term, “Christ,” a representative *thing* is put for the One represented. Hence, in such a case, in saying that Christ is God, one would not be speaking in a literal, identificational sense, identifying a named *person* with one of his titles, but in a representative sense, identifying *something* that somehow pertained *to* a person with the person himself.

This, however, is not the Modalist position; nor is it the Modalist's claim. Instead, the Modalist's notion and assertion is that the Being, Christ, is actually God Himself. Accordingly, the Modalist likewise claims that "the Father" is only a character or role in which *Jesus* is sometimes *presented*. But from this, since no being is another being, it follows that no such Being as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ actually exists. This is because if Jesus is God the Father, "God the Father" is a character or role, not a being. To say otherwise would be to say that there are two beings each of whom are God, which is to say there are two Gods, which is impossible since there is one God.

Modalists, however, in addition to affirming that Christ is identificationally the Deity, *also* affirm that Christ is a theophany, a visible manifestation of God; God manifested in a physical form in flesh; God appearing in the form of a man. Thus, Christ is the form of God; He is the *form* in which God *appears*.

The Modalist acknowledges that God is spirit, and that He Himself does not have a body. The Modalist acknowledges as well that the form in which God appears is a body, and that that form is not only an appearance but a real human body.⁴

The claim that Jesus is God manifest in flesh, may be restated as God is *manifested in* the flesh of Jesus. From this, however, it only follows that God is *represented by*

4. "Since God is an invisible Spirit and is omnipresent, He certainly does not have a body as we know it . . . Jesus is God manifest in flesh . . . The New Testament records no theophanies of God in human form outside of Jesus Christ. Of course, He was not just God appearing in the form of a man, but He was God clothed with a real human body and nature . . . God manifested Himself in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ" (David K. Bernard: *THE ONENESS OF GOD*, Word Aflame Press, Hazelwood, Missouri, 1983), pp.12,27,40,302.

Jesus, which is to say that Jesus, *representatively speaking*, is God. But from this it does not at all follow that Jesus is literally, identificationally, the Deity. The Modalist's error is that He claims that Jesus is literally God, and offers as proof the proposition that Jesus is figuratively God. If the Modalist grasped his error here and were consistent, he would soon repudiate Modalism.

If the Modalist's claim were simply that Christ is representatively God and that He is the Image of God, he would be affirming our position, not his own. But if his claim instead is that Christ is identificationally God, he is denying that the God and Father of Christ is a Being; that is, he is denying that the God and Father of Christ, Himself exists.

Such a proposition, however, is impossible, for "there is no other God except One . . . the Father, out of Whom all is" (1 Cor.8:6). It should further be noted that since Christ is the *Image* of the invisible God (2 Cor.4:4; Col. 1:15), He cannot be God Himself. Whatever its particular nature, whether an image is an entity or a being, it is always a copy, not an original. Since Modalists themselves acknowledge that Christ is a Being, and must affirm with the Scripture that He is an Image, it follows that He is not the One Whom the Image represents, God Himself, but is a Being distinct from God. Christ, then, the Image of God, is not God, but a Being Who represents and reflects God.

Modalists acknowledge that "God" is a term which speaks of a Being, and that "Christ" is a term which speaks of a Being. What they deny, however, is that these two expressions refer to two Beings. Instead, Modalists insist that these two expressions refer to the same Being. That is, Modalists deny that God is one Being and that Christ is Another. Indeed, since Modalists insist both (1) that Christ *is* God, and (2) that there is only *one* Being Who is God, they have no recourse but to claim that the expressions

“God” and “Christ” refer to the same Being. Accordingly, when declaring that “Christ is God,” Modalists use the word “Christ” as a term of *identification* for God, even as we use the words “Abraham Lincoln” to identify the man who was President of the United States during the Civil War. Even as it was declared, “Abraham Lincoln is President,” Modalists declare, “Jesus Christ is God.”

From the premises Christ is God and there is one God, it follows that the titles “Father” and “Son” are not titles, respectively, of One Who is the Father and of Another Who is the Son, but of One Who is both the Father *and* the Son. According to Modalism, this One is Christ Jesus. Hence the basic Modalist claim, “Jesus is God.”

Accordingly, Modalists also claim that all the divine names and titles of Scripture are names and titles of Jesus, Who is God Himself. Whether in reference to various *roles* in which He serves or *modes* in which He is manifested, Modalists reason that since every divine name or title is a name or title of God, and Jesus is God, every divine name or title is a name or title of Jesus. It is on this basis that Modalists claim that “Jesus is the Father,” and, “Jesus is the Son.” Their thought is that, representatively speaking, “the Father” is Jesus, and “the Son” is Jesus. That is, the expression “the Father” is a term which represents Jesus in a certain role, and the expression “the Son,” likewise, represents Jesus in a certain role.⁵ As we have already shown, however, in making such claims, Modalists are quite mistaken.

5. “The fact that Jesus is God is as firmly established in Scripture as the fact that God is one . . . *the Scripture* identifies Jesus as the same being as God—the same being as the Father . . . the three terms . . . [Father, Son] and [Holy Ghost] . . . indicate three different roles, modes, functions, or offices through which the one God operates and reveals Himself . . . *the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* are manifestations of the one God with no distinctions of person being possible”; *ibid.*, pp.55,125,211,252.

GOD’S IMAGE AND EXPRESSION

God in Himself is invisible and inaudible (1 Tim.1:17; John 5:37; *cf* Heb.11:26,27). God is spirit (John 4:24), without intrinsic form or shape. God is omnipresent, filling heaven and earth (Jer.23:24), pervading the universe (Psa.139:7,8). In Himself, He is indiscernible and unknowable by ones such as ourselves, limited by sentient faculties. If God would make Himself known, revealing Himself to our sight and hearing, He needs an Image, an Expression, a Mediator between Himself and mankind. *That which fills* this need—“the complement of the Deity” (Col.2:9)—dwells bodily in the One Who is His Christ, His only-begotten Son, Christ our Lord.

Christ’s glory consists not in being the Deity but in revealing the Deity to us. Even as John so gloriously declares, He “tabernacles among us, and we gaze at His glory, *a glory as of an only-begotten from the Father*, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The Scriptures reveal that Jesus is “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt.16:16). Since our Lord is God’s *Christ* (i.e., Anointed) and Son, it follows that He is not God. All would acknowledge that the fact that Solomon was David’s *son*, proves that Solomon was not David. Yet due to the blinding power of tradition, few are able to see that, just as surely, the fact that Jesus is the *Son* of God, likewise proves that He is not God.

Instead of simply affirming that Christ is the Son of God, orthodoxy has instead claimed that while it is true that Christ is God’s Son, it is also true that He is God Himself. Thus it is claimed that Christ is *fully* Man *and fully* God.

Yet since such a proposition is self-contradictory, it is not only false but also incoherent. Even so, from the days of the early church councils, the teaching of the “deity of Christ” has been deemed essential truth. Accordingly,

the advocates of this teaching have made countless arguments in its defense.

Since the Scriptures expressly declare that Jesus is indeed God's Christ and Son, the orthodox themselves must acknowledge that this is so. Yet what they have *also* affirmed, *besides* His being the Christ and the Son of God, is that Jesus is God Himself. Ironically, by insisting that Jesus is God, traditionalists have effectually denied the very truths which they formally affirm, our Lord's divine Christhood and Sonship.

The primary stratagem in defense of the Trinitarian teaching that Jesus is "God, the Son," has long been the artful claim that Christ has "two natures." According to one of these natures, He is human; according to the other, He is God. He is God-Man; that is, He is both Man *and* God.

In the fourth ecumenical council, held in Chalcedon (modern Kadiköy, Turkey) in 451 A.D., not only were the earlier creeds of Nicaea (321) and of Constantinople (381; subsequently known as the Nicene Creed) approved, but Pope Leo I's *Tome* confirming two distinct natures in Christ was also approved, over against the teachings of those who denied this papal dogma. "The overall effect [of these and other rulings] was to give the church a more stable institutional character."⁶ Yet however effective this council may have been in the service of organized religion, it was only one of the many formalized departures from scriptural truth which have obtained throughout church history.

"The unique glory of Christ Jesus as the Mediator of God and mankind has often been obscured by explanations made in defense of 'the deity of Christ.' In his book entitled, *THE LORD FROM HEAVEN*, Sir Robert Anderson says, 'With us, therefore, the issue is a definite and sim-

6. "Council of Chalcedon," *THE NEW ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA*, 15th edition, vol.2, p.711.

ple one, namely, whether Christ is God or only man.' This statement neither defines nor clarifies the theme, for the evidence is abundant on both sides. Moreover, this declaration disregards the special place of Christ as the divine Link between God and man. The Scriptures are emphatic concerning His work of mediation. 'There is *one* God, and *one* Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus . . .' (1 Tim.2:5). Those who make Him either Deity absolute or merely human must do so by avoiding this truth and all the divine explanations of those relationships by which Christ bridges the chasm between us and God.

"All saints believe that, in some sense, Christ is a Mediator between God and man. Some hold Him to be absolute Deity, yet are compelled to acknowledge some limitations. Others make Him a mere man, yet more than all other men. His true place is seldom clearly defined. The solution lies in the great truth that our Lord is unique, quite unlike any other personage in the universe. We do not need to effect a compromise between the conflicting views concerning Him, for both are wrong, though each contains elements of truth. Let us not allow such explanations to rob us of the Mediator, the Christ we need.

"The key to His present constitution is very simple. He is derived from two distinct sources. His spirit is directly from God, unlike any other man. His body, however, is purely human. His soul, which is the consciousness resulting from this combination, is a thing unmatched, capable of direct communion with the Supreme Spirit, and condescending to the corrupt condition of mortal men.

"The point we wish to press is this, that the likeness of Christ to God, instead of incorporating Him into the so-called 'Godhead,' is itself the most satisfying evidence that He is not the Supreme. Nothing is similar to itself, except in a rhetorical figure. Likeness disappears in iden-

tity. Nor can this be limited to ‘personality,’ for Christ and God are alike apart from ‘personality.’”⁷

MYTHICAL CLAIMS

The claim that Christ has a “dual nature” is central not only to Trinitarianism but to Modalism as well. Hence, according to this theory too, Christ is “both fully God and fully man at the same time.”⁸ Indeed, Modalists suppose that nearly all that militates against their position may be shown to be false either by claims such as that the Father is a role not a Being, or by the claim that Christ has two natures.⁹

For example, in explaining the plaintive words, “My God! My God! Why didst Thou forsake Me?” (Matt.27:46) the Modalist insists that we are to understand that this was only Jesus’ “human nature” crying out.¹⁰

If it should be suggested that if Jesus is God and since He prayed to God this would entail His praying to Himself, the Modalist’s ready reply is that, rather, what transpired was that the human nature of Jesus prayed to the

7. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.74, pp.147,148.

8. David K. Bernard: *THE ONENESS OF GOD*, Word Aflame Press, Hazelwood, Missouri, 1983, p.88.

9. For the Modalist, “either the multiple attributes and roles of God or the dual nature of Jesus Christ,” are the explanation of (i.e., the means which he employs to set aside) all that would otherwise debar his position; *ibid.*, *cf* p.135.

10. *ibid.*, *cf* pp.146-234, especially pp.170-198. The author considers a wide range of texts which, to non-Modalists, plainly preclude Modalism. The essence of his justification of Modalism in the face of all such passages of Scripture is simply that “Jesus had two natures—human and divine, flesh and Spirit, Son and Father” (p.198) The New Testament . . . teach[es] the dual nature of Jesus Christ and this is the key to understanding the Godhead. Once we get the revelation of who Jesus really is—namely, the God of the Old Testament robed in flesh—all the Scriptures fall into place” (p.232).

divine spirit of Jesus that dwelt in Him. Similarly, when Christ died on the cross, it is affirmed not that *Christ* (Who, it is claimed, is God) died, but only that the human body of Christ died, the divine spirit leaving the human body only at death.

Our response to all such ingenious claims, is that no passage of Scripture either declares or entails any such thing as the “dual nature” of Christ, or the proposition that “Christ is fully God and fully man.” “The dual nature of Christ,” then, is not of faith; it is rather merely an artful contrivance, concocted in the first place in an attempt to support a false theory. The very idea for which it seeks to stand is irrational and absurd.

“Nature” is a singular concept; it speaks of one’s inherent character or basic constitution. Whatever the particulars of one’s nature may be, one who is fully one thing is not fully another. A mule may be the progeny of a donkey and a mare, but it is “fully” neither of these. It is the offspring of its parents; its nature incorporates elements from each; but its nature is not fully the same as either.

“Christ is the *Mediator* Who links humanity with its Creator, so that He is neither man nor God in an absolute sense, yet He is either in a relative one. The combination is not that of two ‘natures’ which can never be harmonized, but that of body and spirit, the same elements which unite perfectly to form the souls of all other men. His humanity consists in a body derived from Adam through the virgin Mary, His human mother. His deity consists in a vivifying spirit directly from God. These two fuse freely to make a Man unique (1 Tim.2:5) and a God unparalleled—the peerless Man and the only begotten God (John 1:18).”¹¹

“THERE IS ONE GOD . . . AND ONE LORD”

It is revealed that “There is one God, *the Father*, out

11. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.21, p.222.

of Whom all is . . . *and* one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is” (1 Cor.8:6). The appositive, “the Father,” identifies Who the one God is. The only true God, then, is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (*cf* John 17:1-3). Hence we are “to be slaving for the living and true God, and to be waiting for His Son out of the heavens, Whom He rouses from among the dead, Jesus, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation” (1 Thess.1:9,10).

Yet the teaching of Modalism affirms that Jesus Himself in an ultimate sense is not the Son of the living and true God but is the living and true God Himself. In support of this teaching, it is claimed that the Greek word *kai* has two significations, in most cases, simply that of conjointness (i.e., “and”), but in some cases, that of identification (i.e., “even,” in the sense of “that is,” or “which is the same as”). Accordingly, Modalists claim that 1 Corinthians 8:6 should be translated, “There is one God . . . *even* one Lord, Jesus Christ.”

The claim is that sometimes when *kai* stands between a noun and a preceding noun it identifies the latter expression as being essentially the same as the former. Since Modalists already believe that Christ is one and the same Being as God, they suppose that this notion that *kai* sometimes means “the same as” gives support to their basic claim.

The fact that in certain passages which speak of God and Christ together, the Authorized Version sometimes renders *kai* as “even,” further confuses the issue while, at least to some, seeming to give credence to Modalism. It should be noted, however, that even in such cases the AV only renders *kai* as “even” in reference to God as “Father”; it does not translate *kai* in such a way so as to identify God as actually being Christ Jesus (e.g., 2 Corinthians 1:3, “God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”; where the CV is “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” *cp* Eph.1:3; 1 Pet.1:3).

It does not follow that because a prima facie-reasonable translation can be made by saying, as in 2 Corinthians 1:3, “God, even [*kai*] the Father . . .” that the purpose of *kai* in such a passage is to *identify* God as being the same Being as the Father.¹² While it is true that God is the same Being as the Father, the fact that these two expressions often appear together, joined by *kai* (“and”), is no proof that this is so. The point of the *kai* is that the Deity is both our Placer *and* our Father. Similarly, He is both our Saviour *and* our Lord, even as, under God, Christ is *both* of these to us as well.

Even so, many Modalists imagine that the various greetings in Paul’s epistles should be translated along these lines: “Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, *even the Lord Jesus Christ*” (e.g., 2 Cor.1:2), the sense being that “God, our Father” is one and the same Being as “the Lord Jesus Christ.” It should be noted that Modalists do not claim that the phrase “grace and peace” should be rendered “grace, even peace,” as if grace and peace were the same, yet they turn about and claim that the phrase “God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” should read “God, our Father, *even* the Lord Jesus Christ,” as if these Two were the same Being.

It simply is not true that the reason why Paul conjoins “God, our Father” with “the Lord Jesus Christ” is for the purpose of identifying the former Being as one and the same as the latter. Indeed, since God is the God and Father *of* Christ, it is simply impossible for Him to also be Christ Himself. This consideration alone debars any claim that *kai* may be rendered “even” in the various greetings found in Paul’s epistles from God our Father *and* the Lord Jesus Christ.

12. Additional texts in which the AV translates *kai* as “even” in reference to God as “Father” are 1 Corinthians 15:24, James 3:9, and 1 Thessalonians 3:13.

The simple fact is that *kai* corresponds to our “and,” and does not mean “even.” Indeed, in cases where one word or phrase is to be identified with another, the Greek particle *per*—which does correspond to the English identificational “even”—is used, not the connective *kai*. For example, “Now at the festival he released to them one prisoner, *even* whom they requested” (Mark 15:6). Similarly, “Thou dost give them blood to drink, *even* what they are deserving!” (Rev.16:6).

THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR

While in the Concordant Version, “even” is used in a number of passages to translate *kai* (i.e., AND), almost none of these are the “and” of parallelization, but that of ascendancy (e.g., Jude 23) or of argument (2 Cor.4:16). Further, it is not that a certain word or phrase preceded by another word or phrase and joined by *kai* could not possibly be set in parallel, but that such a usage is exceedingly rare. In fact, we know of only one such passage, Titus 2:13, “anticipating that happy expectation, *even* [*kai*] the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.”

It is not that *kai* itself ever signifies the idea of “even.” It is rather, as in Titus 2:13, that when two clauses joined by *kai* are used as parallels (as sometimes in Hebrew poetry, where one idea is expressed in two different ways), idiomatic translation requires the use of “even.”

The parallel in view here in Titus 2:13 is between, clause one, “that happy expectation,” and, clause two, “*and* the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ . . .” Thus, the evident elliptical phrase in clause two is supplied by clause one itself, the sense of the whole being as follows: “*and* the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ [*is that happy expectation*].”

Modalists, however, reasoning that if it is proper thus

to set “that happy expectation” in parallel to the advent of the glory of Christ, it is proper as well within this same verse, to identify the phrase “the great God” with the following phrase, “our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” Thus Modalists claim that this verse in its entirety should read, “anticipating that happy expectation, *even* the advent of the glory of the great God, *even our Saviour, Jesus Christ.*”

It is true that “the great God,” here, is indeed “our Saviour, Jesus Christ.” But it is not true that Jesus Christ is herein “identified as God,” in the ordinary sense of this expression, whether by means of the conjunction *kai* or otherwise. That Christ is the great God referred to here, does not make Him the supreme God, the Deity Himself.

Modalists reason as if it follows, since through the use of the word *kai* our happy expectation is declared to be the advent of Christ’s glory, that through the use of the word *kai* here as well, then, the words “the *great* Placer” may somehow be construed to be in reference to “the *supreme* Placer,” and, that the supreme Placer or God thus contemplated is Jesus Christ! The fact, however, that the *kai* of parallelization, however rare, is itself a legitimate usage, is no indication that it is present in any certain construction.

Since, for the many reasons we have presented, we may be certain that Christ is *not* God and God is *not* Christ, we may be certain as well that it is only an empty claim that any such usage of *kai* is present either in Titus 2:13 in the phrase “the great God and *our* Saviour, Jesus Christ,” or in any of the various phrases within the Pauline greetings in which “God” is conjoined with “Christ.”

GOD AND CHRIST

In Titus 1:4, the Concordant Version, as is ordinarily the case, translates *kai* as “and” (“Grace and peace from God, the Father, *and* Christ Jesus, our Saviour”). One would suppose that such a rendering is hardly to be faulted. Nonetheless, some adamantly claim that this translation is

“inconsistent” and “wrong.” Such ones insist that this verse should read, “Grace and peace from God, the Father, *even* Christ Jesus, our Saviour.”

In Titus 1:4, however, there is no reason to suppose Paul wants to explain in different words what he says in the first clause. In this case, he adds a new thought by saying grace and peace also come from Christ Jesus our Saviour.

It is true that Paul heralded according to the injunction of God, “our Saviour” (Titus 1:3), and, that in his introduction to this epistle, he includes a word of grace and peace from Christ Jesus “our Saviour” (Titus 1:4). It is true as well that, in an ultimate sense, there is only one Saviour, God (termed Yahweh Elohim in the Hebrew Scriptures), even as that there is a sense in which Christ is the true God, Yahweh Elohim. It hardly follows from these facts, however, that Christ is identificationally God. Nor does it follow that Titus 1:3,4 proves such a proposition to be so, or that verse 4 should be rendered, “Grace and peace from God, the Father, *even* Christ Jesus, our Saviour.”

It would certainly accord more with the rest of Scripture, as well as with Titus 3:4-6 where our God and Saviour is said to pour out His blessings *through* Jesus Christ our Saviour, to see God our Saviour as the Source of our salvation and Jesus Christ our Saviour as the Channel. While Christ, then, relatively speaking, is our God (our “Placer”) and Saviour, absolutely speaking, He is *not* our God and Saviour.

COMMON MODALIST FALLACIES

Modalism, besides claiming that the Father is *not* God Himself but only a divine role, goes on to claim that, conversely, “Jesus *is* God.” Indeed, this latter claim is Modalism’s primary contention. Modalists, accordingly, even go so far as to claim that where we read of “the Father,” even “the God and Father of Christ,” this is actually Jesus present-

ing Himself in such a role. Similar claims are made as well concerning the Son, and, by many, concerning the Holy Spirit as well. The idea is that since it is *Jesus* Who is actually *God* Himself, and since by “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit,” we are to understand merely divine roles, inasmuch as these roles are roles of God and Jesus is God, they are therefore roles of Jesus!

This claim, however, is based upon the false premises that the Father is not God Himself but only a divine role, and that Jesus is God Himself. Since the premises are mistaken, the conclusion is wrong.

In order to cover a few remaining points, I wish to present the following dialog between a hypothetical (yet quite typical) Modalist and myself:

Modalist’s Claim: God dwells within Christ, Who is God Himself. Christ is God robed in a body of flesh.

My Reply: It is gloriously true that God “dwells” within Christ, which speaks of His special and abiding presence within His Anointed. But it does not follow from this, nor is it true on other grounds, that Christ is God Himself, or is God Himself in a particular form (“robed in a body of flesh”). Indeed, if “Christ” is a *Being* within Whom God dwells, then Christ cannot be God, since if He were there would be two Beings Who are God. But if by “Christ” you mean simply a body of flesh, physical substance, then “Christ” is not a being but a Thing. Yet if “Christ” is a Thing (simply a body, not a Person) within Which God dwells, then He (or rather, It), is not a Being. This, however, cannot be so, for since Christ (not merely Christ’s body) has the characteristics of a Being, *He* therefore *is* a Being.

Modalist’s Claim: God generated Himself within Christ.

My Reply: If Christ Himself, as I affirm, in opposition to Modalism, is a Being Who is begotten of (or generated by) another Being, God, a Being Who, as a result of generating Christ did not Himself cease to exist, then

Christ is not God but is, as the Scriptures plainly declare, God's Son. Yet if, as is claimed by Modalism, you wish to affirm that in generating Christ, God also "generated *Himself*" within Christ, where He now dwells, this is simply to claim anew your previous claim, which I have already proved to be false.

Modalist's Claim: Christ has two natures; He is fully man and fully God.

My Reply: To say that Christ has two "natures" or is a Being comprised of both God and man, is to say that Christ is a Being comprised of two Beings. Such an assertion cannot be true, since the "nature" of one's "being" is a singular concept. A being's nature may be comprised of many particulars or entities essential to itself, but together they comprise only one nature. One being cannot consist of two beings, for one being, *is* one being, not two. It cannot consist of more than it is. It is as mistaken to say that even if other beings cannot have two natures Christ can have two natures, as it would be to say that if God should make a triangle it can have four sides.

Modalist's Claim: Jesus Christ, He alone is Yahweh Elohim, the God of Israel, the *one* God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, apart from Whom there is none else.

My Reply: Of course "Jesus Christ, He alone is Yahweh Elohim, the God of Israel, the one God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, apart from Whom there is none else." But it does not follow from this that Christ is *identificationaly* Yahweh Elohim, that *thus* He is the one God of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Modalist's Claim: If Jesus Christ is not the one God of Scripture, then there is Another Who is the one God instead. But this is contradictory to what you already have claimed to believe, that Jesus Christ is the one God. You worship not one God but two, and do not really believe that there is one God but two Gods. You teach that there are two Gods; that is idolatry, and you are an idolater.

My Reply: Your argument involves the fallacy of equivocation, and is therefore invalid. Hence your bold claim

as well that we are idolaters, is quite unfounded. That is, since we do not affirm that, in addition to the sense in which the Father is God, Christ as well is God in this same sense, it is pointless for you to appeal to what in itself is true, the fact that there is *some* sense in which we believe that there are "many gods" (1 Cor.8:5), and, in certain respects, believe that the title "God" applies to Christ.

When we use an expression in one sense in one place and in another sense in another place, and yet you argue as if we used it in the same sense in both places, you are committing a fallacy of equivocation by failing to note what we actually have done, while arguing *as if* we did what we did not do. Anyone who is convinced by such a claim is guilty of this fallacy, and has been convicted not by truth but merely by a specious argument. The entire notion is simply an illogical inference, not a corollary, and is therefore completely invalid.

The fallacy of equivocation is involved as well in the false conclusion, commonly entertained both by Modalists and Trinitarians, that if there is one Being Who is unoriginated and supreme to Whom the title "God" applies, since this title applies to Christ (e.g., Heb.1:8; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20), He is therefore unoriginated and supreme.

May we be graciously granted to be believing that "the only true God" is the One Whom the Lord Jesus Christ Himself addressed as "Holy Father" (John 17:11). In praying to His Father, Christ declared, "Now it is eonian life that they may know Thee, the *only* true God, and Him Whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3).

The only true God is "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Eph.1:17). Hence, "for us there is one God, *the Father*, out of Whom all is . . . *and* one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is" (1 Cor.8:6). Though indeed, "not in all is there this knowledge" (1 Cor.8:7), may this knowledge be in us so that we may rejoice in our Lord and glorify our God in truth.

J.R.C.

BLESSED IN CHRIST

WE may read through the accounts of our Lord's life and the Acts without ever encountering the phrase "in Christ"; it is almost exclusively a Pauline thought. Its first occurrence is in Romans 3:24, where our deliverance is said to be "in Christ Jesus." Paul's epistles are full of it, but Hebrews and James do not contain it. In Peter and John, James and Jude it is limited to His earthly glories (1 Peter 3:16; 5:10,14; 1 John 5:20; Jude 1).

All that is ours by grace is "in Christ." Indeed we may say that, by grace, all is ours in Him, even though the blessings are confined to realms celestial. In Him there is deliverance (Rom.3:24), justification (Gal.2:17), no condemnation (Rom.8:1), freedom (Gal.2:3), holiness (1 Cor.1:2), eonian life (Rom.6:11,23), a new creation (2 Cor.5:17), and all our expectation (1 Cor.15:19). It is only as we become acquainted with His worth and high deserts that we can grasp what God has given us, for it is to be lavished upon us, not according to what we are in ourselves, but in harmony with our place in Christ.

Let us exult that our blessings are "in Christ." Were they in us, even in an infinitesimal degree, they would not be sure or satisfactory. Indeed, they would not be blessings worthy of the name. There is nothing in us to deserve them. We have not the power to preserve them. They would have no more value than an unsigned check for many millions. When tempted to doubt our possession of every spiritual blessing among the celestials, all we need to do is to remember that these are in Christ. We cannot doubt His deserts. He is entitled to all that God will give Him, and to all that we will share with Him. Outside of Christ we are mean and miserable. In Him we are rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and blessed beyond all human thoughts of bliss.

A. E. Knoch

BELIEVING THE EVANGEL

THE MESSAGE of Christ crucified was a snare to the Jews (1 Cor.1:23). It by no means met their approval that God's Anointed should fail to remove the Roman yoke of bondage which lay so heavily upon the people. And that He should suffer and die, stumbled them altogether (1 Peter 2:8). To the Greeks, in their perpetual quest for "wisdom" and fondness of intellectual splendor, the heralding of Christ crucified was extremely stupid (1 Cor.1:23). For to them our Lord was merely a dead man hanging on a cross. He was not what men expected the Christ to be. Such a One as He was not acceptable to them, for He did not meet their preconceived standards.

Similarly, that our present salvation in Christ and resultant eonian life and glory should be entirely a gracious gift, and therefore a blessing which is only given to those of God's own choosing, is an altogether unacceptable concept to the great majority of those who are naming the name of the Lord. It is not what they expected the gospel to be, and, in their conceit, many consider it very significant insofar as truth is concerned that they should disapprove of it.

Nonetheless, the evangel of our salvation is that Christ died for our sins, was entombed and roused the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor.15:3,4); that, in God's reckoning, we were crucified together with Christ, and died together with Him (Rom.6:3,8). The evangel reveals to us that before the disruption of the world, in accord with *His* will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, God had already chosen us in Christ, to be holy and flawless in His sight, and designated us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus (Eph.1:3-6).

A HOLY CALLING

How wonderful it is to know that God saves us and calls us with a *holy* calling, a calling which is to be distinguished from others in which requirements are a factor, for we are saved and called not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian (2 Tim.1:9). What good news this is!

We are called according to the purpose that, those whom God foreknew, He designated beforehand also, to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren. Now the truth is, those whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also (Rom.8:29,30). This is God's message of grace to us, we who are His chosen ones, according to Paul's evangel (Rom.8:32,33; 16:25).

Therefore, evangelization is not to be conceived as an offer of how one may qualify for glory and escape wrath, for it is not an offer at all. Instead, it is simply an announcement, a heralding of these great truths which constitute the evangel of our salvation. *They are all fully true entirely apart from our faith in them and acceptance of them.*

ABRAHAM, FATHER OF US ALL

Abraham is the father of us all in this very respect: God had already chosen Abraham before He made Himself known to him, and had already decided as well just what He would do for him and through him. He *informed* him of His plans: "A father of many nations *have I appointed you*" (Rom.4:17; Gen.17:5); "Thus *shall be your seed*" (Rom.4:18; Gen.15:5); "At I this season *I shall come and there will be for Sarah a son*" (Rom.9:9; Gen.18:10).

When Abraham believed God's declarations concern-

ing himself, he did not make them true, nor did he thus qualify himself to be the object of His promises (Rom. 4:16-22). He faced the truth, and believed it of the God Who is vivifying the dead and calling what is not as if it were (Rom.4:17). For the word of God was already sure. Therefore, it was impossible for Abraham either to qualify or disqualify himself for those things which God had already decided to give him.

Abraham's faith gave him conviction and expectation; it afforded him assurance. For God had already determined what He would bring to pass with regard to Abraham and his seed prior to the time in which He revealed this to Abraham, and quite apart from any of his own opinions in the matter. Indeed, if he had failed to believe God's word to him, while it is true that he thereby would have lost all the power and joy of faith, nevertheless, he would not have nullified God's promises: "For what if some disbelieve? Will not their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? May it not be coming to that?" (Rom.3:3,4). The same would be true in our case, were we to disbelieve. In fact, beyond the message that Christ died for their sins, most believers seem to be full of unbelief concerning the evangel of their salvation. Yet its glorious message remains true on their behalf nonetheless.

According to His will, God graciously grants at least a small measure of faith concerning the work of Christ and His victory over death to all who are His (*cf* 1 Cor.15:10,11; 1 Thess.4:14; Rom.12:3). But whatever faith each one may have as a result, does not make the evangel of his salvation become applicable to him, for it was already applicable to him long before he was born, and certainly long before he first believed. One may possess great riches of which he is ignorant. As with the slaves during the American civil war who heard and believed the news of their emancipation, we do not make the gospel of our salvation true by

believing it. When we believe, we only enter into a realization and appreciation of what is already true.

THE EVANGEL OF THE CIRCUMCISION

In the evangel of the Circumcision (Gal.2:7), in itself, the privilege of life in the terrestrial kingdom in the coming eon is a reward for obedience, and God is a Rewarder therein. It is not a gracious gift, or an unmerited provision. While it is quite true that the obedience of the elect in Christ under the evangel of the Circumcision is due solely to the grace of God, that is another matter.

Those who are worthy to happen upon that eon and the resurrection from among the dead (Luke 20:35), will be requited, or repaid, with the consummation of their faith, the salvation of their souls (1 Peter 1:9). On the other hand, the lawless will be requited with the wages of injustice (2 Peter 2:13). Even those who once fled from the defilements of the world by a recognition of Christ, would find their last state worse than the first if they should again be involved in these. It were better for them not to have recognized the way of righteousness, than, recognizing it, to go back to what was behind, from the holy *precept* given over to them (2 Peter 2:20,21). In all such cases, due to one's having disqualified himself for eonian life, such a course can only lead to eonian death (Heb.6:4-8).

Personal righteousness is a prerequisite for entrance into the kingdom of the heavens (Matt.5:17-20); the workers of lawlessness will be told to depart; only the one who *does* God's will may enter into life in the coming eon (Matt.7:21-23; 1 John 2:17). In that calling, the Lord's counsel, even to the disciples, was, "If your hand should ever be snaring you, strike it off. It is ideal for you to be entering into life maimed, rather than, having two hands, to come away into Gehenna, into the unextinguished fire" (Mark 9:43).

The "wreath of *life*" is given to the Circumcision believ-

ers who endure trial and become *qualified* (James 1:1,12). In essence, the Lord informs them, "Become *faithful* unto death, and I shall be giving you the wreath of *life*" (Rev. 2:10). There is an abundance of testimony, all to this same end, throughout all of the Greek scriptures—except within the epistles of Paul in his presentation of the evangel which is for the members of Christ's body.

In Paul's evangel, with respect to one's being in Christ and receiving eonian life, personal righteousness has no place at all, and is to be deemed as refuse (Phil.3:7-9). In his evangel of grace, insofar as life eonian is concerned, "where sin increases, grace superexceeds" (Rom.5:20,21). This is not true under the evangel of the Circumcision. But it is true according to Paul's evangel for the nations, the evangel of the Uncircumcision (Gal.2:7).

REQUIREMENT, REQUITAL AND REWARD

We need to understand just what it is that constitutes one a merchant, employer or rewarder. Then, if we should find that God exhibits these characteristics with respect to our salvation in Christ, we should freely acknowledge that He is such a one, and not a dispenser of gracious gratuities.

It is a deception to reject or deny terminology which describes one's true position in an accurate way and to claim to believe the scriptural words of the evangel, when, in fact, this is not the case. We do not change the nature of our position by giving it a name which describes something else.

Men will be rewarded, or compensated, for their work, for the deeds that they do (Heb.10:35; Col.3:24). The same is true concerning one's pay or wages: "Lo! I am coming swiftly, and My wage is with Me, to pay each one as his work is" (Rev.22:12). Wages are given to the *worker*; they are a *debt* owed to him, not a gracious gift or favor (Rom.4:4). For ourselves, our own practices, both good and bad, will

“fetch” (*komizō*, FETCH) their own “requit,” or repayment (2 Cor.5:10; Eph.6:8).

An employer *requires* that his employee do certain work in order to receive his pay. A rewarder only grants his reward to one who *qualifies* himself for it by meeting the conditions of the *offer*. The idea is that of an *exchange*: this for that. One who meets the conditions or stipulations attending such an agreement *obligates* the one making the offer to give it to him in return. By definition, such a relationship between two parties is that of a contract or covenant.

The essential element in all such relationships is that the first party *requires* the second party to do or furnish to him something which upon receipt, obligates the first party to reciprocate, and thus “meet his part of the bargain.”

A merchant will say to a customer, “In return for your money, I will give you my goods”; or, “Except you give me your money, I will not give you my goods.” It is merely incidental that the merchant’s requirement, in this example, is that of money. For it is not the nature of his requirements that makes him a merchant, but the sheer fact that he imposes requirements upon the dispensing of his goods, and will not give them out unless the requirements are met.

There is nothing at all dishonorable as to one’s being a merchant, if this should be the case. But if anyone, *according to his own policies*, is indeed a merchant, neither he, nor we, should try to deny this.

It must be understood that in all such instances as we have illustrated, one *does* act as a merchant (or, as an employer or rewarder), and not at all as a dispenser of gracious gifts. He by no means gives his goods away gratuitously; for he insists that all who would acquire them meet the established conditions.

FAITH MAKES THE EVANGEL KNOWN

Therefore, it is not at all proper to attempt to represent

God in our salvation even as a man who presents a gift (such as a valuable watch) to an associate for his acceptance. In this example it is only true *merely in the nature of the case* that if the man would enjoy his benefactor’s gift he must accept it. For the benefactor does not at all *require* the man to accept it, nor does he promise to kill him if he should fail to do so! And yet it is insisted that God does require our acceptance of His supposed offer, and that He will at least kill us for a time, if not torment us in fire for all eternity, if we should fail to accept it.

Besides, in this matter of the evangel of our salvation—unlike in the example of the watch—our being endowed with the graces thereof does not even involve our acceptance of the message! *For Christ died for our sins whether we think so or not*. In God’s sight, we died to sin when He died for our sakes, even if we should deny this to be true. And, the fact is, God long ago had already chosen those of us who are now in Christ, according to His pre-eonian grace and purpose, designating us beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son, having set His hand to call us, justify us and glorify us, all in His time.

This is the evangel of our salvation—whether we think so or not! If we are believers at all, we are included, but not because we believe. Our faith affords us assurance of our salvation *in Christ*; it makes the truth known to us. Indeed our being saved out of unbelief is in itself a great saving work of God (*cf* Eph.1:19,20; *cp* Col.1:13).

The evangel of our salvation (*cf* Eph.1:13) is fully true in itself, and entirely apart from whether we should believe some of it, all of it, or none of it. Therefore, let us stop all our ill-disguised proud boastings as to how it is that we, unlike other men, have been good enough to “accept Christ,” and thus have saved ourselves from wrath while obligating God to bless us. Such concepts are present, whether expressed or not, whenever salvation is conceived in a con-

ditional way, whenever such “steps” are believed finally to occur because of man’s actions rather than God’s.

Such inner pride—though in most cases it exhibits itself outwardly as well—may well pass for humility, but only among those of a similar disposition. However pleasantly it may be manifested, it is still a boasting in man, for it adds to the work of Christ. Consequently, the advocates of all such views are following a course that is destructive to faithful service in the Lord, and one’s appreciation of the truth of the evangel. For, however unintentionally, in denying the full significance and purpose of the cross of Christ, they have thus become its enemies (Phil. 3:19; *cp* Gal.5:11b).

“Now I am *making known* to you, brethren, the evangel which I bring to you, which also you accepted, in which also you stand, through which also you are [being] saved, if you are retaining what I said in bringing the evangel to you, outside and except you believe feignedly” (1 Cor.15:1,2). Paul made the evangel *known—the evangel that Christ died for our sins, was entombed, and that He has now been roused! If we are retaining this evangel in unfeigned faith, being attentive to it, then it is* having some measure of practical saving influence upon us, cleansing and keeping us in many ways.

Yet if the evangel’s significance has become clouded to us through a mistaken belief that it is finally by our own obedience—the cross of Christ notwithstanding—that we fend off God’s indignation, we will lose much precious truth of great practical value. For, with such an outlook, our life of faith will necessarily become self-centered, instead of Christ-centered. “Yet God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ dies for our sakes. *Much rather then, justified now in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation through Him*” (Rom. 5:8,9).

J.R.C.

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 112th Year
(1909–2021)

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THIRD QUARTER, 2021

Volume 112

Number 3

The Problem of Evil and the Judgments of God

How can we explain the presence of evil? Is there a purpose for evil, and will it come to an end? Can there be two independent opposing forces in the universe? If God alone is supreme, what is the purpose of judgment? Surely there are answers to these troubling questions in the Word of God.

This book traces the divine function of *evil* (whatever is harmful or destructive) from its inception to its consummation, by presenting scriptural solutions to the various long-debated questions concerning God and His sovereignty.

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The message in this book is especially valuable to us in these days of doubt and distress, to lead men to rely on and rest in God alone.

A. E. Knoch, paperback, 346 pages (ISBN 0-910424-59-4)

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, THIRD QUARTER 2021
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED TWELVE

EDITORIAL

WE ARE privileged to begin this issue with A. E. Knoch's classic writing, "Among the Celestials." We find this work not only to be full of interest but most insightful as well concerning its theme—in respect both to realm and inhabitants:

For us “. . . the highest blessing does not consist in being in a place, however glorious it may be, but rather in a position of beneficence toward others. Our blessings among the celestials will correspond with the exalted opening strain of this epistle [Ephesians]. We will be blessed because we will bless. We do not look for languorous luxury or magnificent mansions, but to be the means of making others happy” (p.101).

In the article, “Whose Faith?” (p.111), Dean Hough responds to this question, saying: “The faith of Ephesians 2:8 is Christ Jesus's faith. This passage stands as the solid foundation of the transcendent riches of God's grace in His kindness to us *in Christ Jesus* just expounded in the preceding verses. These have been expressed in fact verbs: God *loves* us in that He *vivifies* us *together* in Christ and *rouses* us *together* and *seats* us *together* among the celestials in Christ Jesus. We are to see these as settled facts, made certain because they are established and settled *in Christ Jesus*.”

In the exposition, “Faith Accords with Grace,” I explain, “With regard to God's declarations and promises concerning ourselves, as with Abraham, God has made them matters ‘of faith’ *that they may accord with grace* (Rom.4:16). The very *purpose* in their being matters which are of *faith*,

is that they should already be true prior to the time in which we first believe them” (p.122).

In the next article of our current number, “Yahweh is the Only Elohim” (p.127), I consider both the meaning and usage of the title, “ELOHIM”: “In the overwhelming majority of the occurrences of ELOHIM . . . this term is *not* used in reference to certain creatures who, in a relative sense, may also bear this title together with the Supreme, but in an absolute sense in reference to Yahweh Himself alone, Who is the supreme and only true God. For example, ‘. . . Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim. There is *no one else* aside from *Him*’ (Deut.4:35). ‘So you know today, and you recall it to your heart that Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim in the heavens above and on the earth beneath; there is *no one else*’ (Deut.4:39).”

Even so, it is fallacious to suppose “that either supremacy or unoriginatedness is entailed by the word ‘God’”—*in itself, as such*. “It is a fallacy as well that wherever the word appears it speaks of the same being. And finally, it is a fallacy that if the word is used in a certain sense in one place, it is used in the same sense in another place” (p.135).

We conclude our current issue with Brother Hough’s writing, “Justified” (p.137). “When Jesus our Lord was roused from among the dead the great work of justification had been achieved, not applied to sinners, but achieved for them. He was roused *because of* our justifying (Rom.4:25). When He was roused, the justifying work had occurred already, and thus His rousing became the evidence that our sins have been dealt with (*cp* 1 Cor.15:17) . . .

“It is out of the faith of Jesus Christ that we are justified. Justification in this literal sense is not merely a declaration of God, decreed on the basis of divine authority for the benefit of certain individuals who have taken the right steps of faith. It is a work that manifests the righteousness of God (Rom.3:21)” (p.142). J.R.C.

AMONG THE CELESTIALS

Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing,
among the celestials, in Christ. (Eph.1:3)

THE Word of God opens with a significant division of the universe into two distinct spheres—the heavens and the earth. Apart from a special purpose in this distinction and a desire to emphasize the celestial sphere, the natural introduction would have embraced all in one term, and we would have read of the creation of the universe as a whole. As the account of creation proceeds, we soon see that it is practically confined to the earth. The sun, moon and stars are mentioned, but only as they are related to the main theme of the passage.

Throughout subsequent revelation, apart from occasional glimpses, such as the celestial session at the commencement of the book of Job, the Scriptures to the Circumcision are concerned with the earth. Only as celestial beings visit, or Satan and his hosts invade, the lower sphere, are we apprized of their existence. Prophets and apostles are all concerned with the restoration of the earth and anticipate a place in the millennial kingdom and the new creation. None of them hint at a celestial destiny; they know nothing of “going to heaven.” David did not and will not ascend above, but will have his allotment in the land (Acts 2:34).

The blessings promised to the earth are, to a large degree, physical and soulish. The climate will be made comfortable and salubrious, the soil will be fertile, so that the vine, the fig and the olive will flourish and food will

be plentiful. Disease will be banished and death almost unknown. The land will be allotted to the saints of the Circumcision, and Israel will rule the nations for God and bring them to God. They will be a Kingdom of priests. No blessing will come to the nations direct. All will flow through redeemed Israel.

Inasmuch as the rendering “among the celestials” is different from that usually given, it behooves us to examine the evidence on which it is based. The Authorized Version has “heavenly *places*,” which Newberry changes to “heavenlies” in the margin. There is nothing to indicate that *places* are intended. The gender is usually given as neuter, but both the article *the* and the adjective have this form in the masculine as well. It may refer to celestial people as readily as to celestial places, so far as the grammar of the Greek is concerned.

In Greek a single connective, *en*, does duty for *in* and *among*. As a rule it should be rendered *in* with the singular and *among* with the plural. The Authorized Version recognizes this by rendering it *among* quite frequently in such phrases “among the people” (Matt.4:23, etc.), and “among the soldiers” (Acts 12:18), for the essential meaning of *in* and *among* is the same. The difference is entirely a matter of usage.

I suppose that all translators are agreed that *ouranios*, the adjective of *ouranos*, *heaven*, is correctly rendered *heavenly*. Four times it is applied to God as the heavenly Father (Matt.6:14,26,32; 15:13), once to the heavenly host at the birth of our Lord (Luke 2:13), and once to the apparition on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:19). This evidence is sufficient to prove that “heavenly” or even “heavenly places” is inadequate in our text, for there the word has the prefix *ep-* (ON-) before it. What can be meant by the ON-heavenlies?

In three contexts ON-heavenly is set in contrast to ON-

earthly (John 3:12; 1 Cor.15:40; Phil.2:10). It is evident that, in every case, that which is ON-earthly is actually *on* the earth, so that the prefix may be taken literally, and means *terrestrial*, as it is rendered in the fifteenth of first Corinthians. So, likewise, ON-heavenly may be taken quite literally, as that which is *on* the heavenly bodies. There is no English word with this precise thought, so the best we can do is to use *celestial* in this sense. In the singular it is little more than an alternative for *heavenly*, but in its plural form it comes very close to the meaning and usage of the Greek.

Our blessings, then, are indeed in heavenly *places*, but far more than that, they are among celestial *beings*, that is, those who are on the heavenly bodies as we are on the earth. This is most suggestive, for the highest blessing does not consist in being in a *place*, however glorious it may be, but rather in a position of beneficence toward others. Our blessings among the celestials will correspond with the exalted opening strain of this epistle. We will be blessed because we will bless. We do not look for languorous luxury or magnificent “mansions,” but to be the means of making others happy.

If, then, our blessings do not consist in a selfish enjoyment of our riches in Christ, but in dispensing our wealth to others among the celestials, we are confronted with a consideration of the problem which science still seeks to solve, that is, the habitability of the planets of the solar system, or, indeed, of any of the stellar systems which are scattered over the heavens. Science is limited to the sphere of human sensation. It seeks physical evidence of the existence of beings in the heavens.

Reverent students of the Scriptures are quick to question the teachings of science, especially when its tenets seem to conflict with the Bible. So many of the theories of science, such as evolution, the geological ages and uni-

formitarianism (which rejects the great cataclysmic crises of the disruption and the deluge, which have disturbed the earth's crust), clash with God's Word, that it should lead us to be careful in accepting anything not in close accord with what is written in the Scriptures of truth.

But not all science is theory. Not all is false. Not all is contrary to God's revelation. The practical benefits derived from it during the past century give evidence that man is actually becoming acquainted with the physical universe. Indeed, more progress has been made in the realm of nature than in the investigation of Scripture. Let us not reject anything simply because it is called science. Above all, let us make sure what the Scriptures actually teach before proclaiming their conflict with the knowledge of nature.

Many different cosmological theories have been presented to me for confirmation from the Scriptures, and I have examined the evidence presented with much care. I can only state my present conviction that God "is hanging the earth upon nothingness" (Job 26:7). This is the only explanation which needs no further elucidation. It is more scientific than anything science has to offer. It corresponds with every test which our senses can apply. It is the only cosmology which seems to harmonize with the celestial destiny set before us. Heaven is not a small enclosure, shut off from all else. It includes the whole universe, apart from the earth.

It is not in the least likely that mankind, as *at present constituted*, could live anywhere else in the universe. But God is not limited in His creation to the making of men. Even on earth we have a vast variety of forms of animal life very different from man, though they also are flesh. Birds can fly in the air and fishes can live in the depths of the sea. Why cannot God create for each sphere a creature suited to its environment? We have His definite state-

ment that there are bodies celestial as well as terrestrial, and that these are *different* (1 Cor.15:40,41).

Judging from the few celestial beings who have come to visit us, the difference between a celestial and a terrestrial body consists largely in the lack of the very limitations which confine us to the earth. How can a messenger or angel, such as Gabriel, fly across the void of interstellar space without being able to overcome the force of gravitation? The larger planets or still larger stars could easily be peopled by creatures not in the least hampered by weight which would glue us to their surface.

The same is true of temperature. Few human beings could long endure exposure to the chill of an Arctic or Antarctic winter. But we are told that there is nothing else so severe as the cold of interstellar space. How could these celestial visitors withstand this, to us, unendurable frigidity? They have celestial bodies, which are like the stars, to which they are often compared. They are independent reservoirs of light and heat and power. We are absolutely dependent on the sun for life and all its factors. They are diminutive suns themselves, and do not need its ministrations.

Again, how could a human being survive the absence of all those elements which sustain his bodily frame, such as air, water and food? At present we could not. But it is not at all impossible that celestial bodies could dispense with these essentials. They are only a form of that power or energy which comes to us from the sun. So the ultimate source of physical life and activity is not the earth, but the sun, whose rays pervade the whole solar system. Even if a celestial body is dependent on the sun as ours is, it is not difficult to imagine that power could be absorbed directly, instead of through the ingestion of physical substance as at present.

Among the interesting, physical experiments of the

co-founder of this magazine, V. Gelesnoff, was one by means of which he managed to extract electrical energy directly from sunlight. It was, in effect, an electric battery, consisting of certain chemicals, which could be charged by merely exposing it to sunshine. Such solar cells are now in use on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway. They are absorbing solar energy by day and powering a flashing amber traffic light by night. This illustrates the point before us. There exist, in all parts of the solar system, and probably in all the universe, sufficient stores of power for the use of any body equipped to utilize it.

But it is by no means proven that the power of celestial bodies is dependent on the sun or stars. If something similar to atomic energy could be made available it would supply all the power needed to transform us all into celestial beings capable of overcoming all the forces of gravitation and able to endure any extreme of temperature and sustain life without the air or the products of the soil. The power is already provided. All that is needed is a body so changed that it can utilize it.

The greatest and grandest exhibition of the powers of a celestial body is seen in the ascension of Christ. More than that, it shows how a human body, once weary with a few hours' walk (John 4:6), once hungry for a few figs (Matt.21:18), once too weak to carry the cross to Golgotha (Luke 23:26), can be gloriously changed so as to rise without effort from the earth to vanish in the sky, and, to all appearances, leave behind it every opportunity of nourishment or repose. Cannot such a body be at home in any part of God's universe?

We may conclude then, that both nature and revelation demand the presence of celestial creatures and that these are to be found on the heavenly bodies which gleam above us in the vault of heaven. Furthermore, though now we are tied to earth, weak, inglorious vassals of the ground,

wearing the image of the soilish, we shall wear the image of the celestial, and, with bodies changed, we shall rise to meet our Lord in the air, and henceforth be released from the thralldom of earth to wend our way at will among the starry hosts.

Once we realize that the universe is not a barren waste, created only to afford material for human speculation, but was formed to be inhabited by creatures made by God for His own glory, there is much we would like to know about them. Are there many or few? What are they like? Why are we not given a complete account of them in the Scriptures? These and many other questions press for answers.

It is evident that very little, indeed, is said concerning the celestials in the Scriptures. There are several good reasons which suggest themselves. First, there is our innate inability to understand what is not human. The language of mankind is not a fit vehicle for celestial things. Our Lord gave voice to this in His interview with Nicodemus. "If I tell you of the terrestrial and you are not believing, how shall you be believing if I should tell you of the celestial?" (John 3:12). This is often exemplified by those who seek to define the earth's relation to the heavens by earthborn phraseology. They do not realize its inadequacy.

It is not God's plan at present that we should know much of the affairs of the celestials, but rather that they should learn the lessons of His dealings with us. The earth is the stage on which the tragedy of the eons is enacted. No other place can claim a Golgotha. No other sphere has sunk so low in sin or has received such rich grants of grace. The apostle claims that he is a theater, not only to men, but to messengers (1 Cor.4:9). Peter tells us that they are yearning to peer into the salvation of the Circumcision (1 Pet. 1:12). Paul makes it evident that the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials are even now aware of the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus (Eph.3:10).

The fact that most of the celestial beings who have visited the earth are called *messengers* has led to the idea that all of the celestial host are “angels.” They are only the couriers between the earth and the heavens. Those who were gazing at Paul certainly brought him no message, so we may rest assured that their message was about Paul, and was delivered to those who sent them. It seems as though the heavenly hosts took a livelier interest in Paul and his experiences than did his fellow men on earth.

The significance of human events is better known in the heavens than on the earth. Until the heavenly host apprized the shepherds, men paid no heed to the birth of the Saviour. Such prophecies as are found in Daniel were mostly communicated through the medium of messengers. The “messenger of Yahweh” was the regular channel through which He sent word to His people.

In the Hebrew Scriptures we may learn quite a little concerning messengers or “angels,” and their superhuman powers. Often they appear in the form of men and do nothing out of the ordinary. At other times they are invisible, or manifest themselves in miraculous ways. A quaint and curious example comes before us at the time of Israel’s wilderness journey. Balaam is confronted by the messenger of Yahweh in invisible form, but so real and substantial was his sword and the arm that wielded it, that he assured Balaam if his jenny had not interfered, he would have slain him (Num.22).

Matter is not necessarily visible to human eyes. Many hard substances not only transmit light, but are so nearly invisible to creatures such as we are that they deceive us. Many a bird has lost its life by flying full force against a pane of glass. Even living creatures, as some jellyfish, are practically invisible, especially in water. Celestial messengers are normally invisible to human eyes. Elisha was guarded by an invisible army which appeared as fire to the

opened eyes of his servant (2 Kings 6:17). But transparent substances have not the power of becoming opaque at will. Another illustration will show this.

We may not be able to explain this invisibility, but even our present restricted knowledge of nature supplies evidence as to its possibility and may even give a clue as to the manner in which it may be accomplished. We may learn a lesson from the propeller of an airplane. When at rest or turning slowly it is easily seen, but as it turns faster and faster the eye refuses to follow. When in flight the propellers can seldom be discerned; they move too swiftly for human sight.

It takes *power, speed*, to elude the human eye. This is probably the secret of angelic invisibility. They can apply the power they possess to their bodily frames in such a way as to become unseen at will. Our Lord’s resurrection body possessed this power. To become seen He did not need to “materialize,” as some have suggested, for He had the same body which had suffered death. He did not vanish by going away or dematerializing, but by simply becoming unapparent to them (Luke 24:31). He was there, but invisible to the human eye.

The messenger of Yahweh did another wonderful thing when he came to Manoah and his wife (Judges 13:19-20). He ascended in the flame of the altar, thus demonstrating his defiance of the force of gravitation and his ability to bear with extremes of temperature which would end the life of one such as we are now. The same is evident in the army that hovered about Elisha, for their chariots were of fire.

To be told that our blessings are among the celestials without any previous preparation would invite incredulity and skepticism, as the idea of the resurrection did in Corinth (1 Cor.15:35). In answering the question, “With what body are they coming?” the apostle prepares us for

the heavenly destiny now revealed. He does not content himself with making the resurrection body incorruptible, glorious, powerful and spiritual, but insists on a still greater change than these words suggest. It will no longer be soilish, but celestial. It is no longer to be a terrestrial body. We are to wear the image of the celestial (1 Cor.15:39-52). This much he made known to the Corinthians long before the secret of Ephesians was revealed.

Even earlier in his ministry he wrote to the Thessalonians in a similar strain. The Lord's descent from heaven for us will not bring Him down to earth. That will occur later when He comes to the Circumcision. He will call us up to meet Him in the air (1 Thess.4:16-18). And, henceforth we are to be with Him thus. Such an ascent demands powers far superior to those which we now have. It practically involves the possession of a celestial frame such as the Circumcision do not enjoy.

With these two premises—that we shall receive a celestial body in the resurrection, and shall rise to meet the Lord and *always be with Him*—we might easily reason out the celestial destiny which accords with the revelation of the mystery. Of what use would celestial bodies be on the earth? And surely the Lord Himself, since He does not even come down to earth to receive us, is not coming to set us back on the earth after a brief sojourn in the air, for the earth is about to be the scene of awful judgments from which His presence rescues us.

Since we have such a destiny it is natural that we should wish to learn as much as possible of the celestial beings and even gain all the information we can concerning the heavenly bodies. For this we are still largely dependent on the telescope. For the former we have recourse to a microscopic examination of the Scriptures.

As we are to rule in the celestial realms, they are introduced to us in terms which describe various forms of gov-

ernment. There are sovereignties, authorities, powers and lordships (Eph.1:21). In this regard the celestial realms are like the earth. The same terms can be applied to both. Government so highly specialized as these words indicate, assures us of the presence of rational, intelligent, yet subordinate creatures, with a capacity for the enjoyment of God, but evidently not sufficiently acquainted with Him to be left without creature restraint.

Like those of earth, the celestial rule and influence is apportioned to various grades. The highest are called sovereignties. These are first-rate powers or empires. The term "principality," if taken in its literal sense of *principal*, would be a good English equivalent, but it is now used of small or subordinate principedoms. Thus, Wales is a principality, but Great Britain is a sovereign power. The sovereignty is the highest form of celestial government.

The celestial domains, like those of earth, are divided into lesser jurisdictions. The authorities at the head of these dependencies possess delegated power similar to the governor of a province. Pilate is an apt example of such power exercised in behalf of Caesar.

The companion terms, power and lordship, seem to be close synonyms of the first pair, sovereignty and authority. Power, or ability to enforce its will, is characteristic of sovereign states, so that they are frequently called "powers." The Greek word for lordship is similarly related to authority. It comes from a root meaning SANCTION. So that an authority is such, not because of its power, but because it has the sanction of its superior sovereignty.

These celestial beings must never be confused with the messengers or "angels." It is certainly a crude conception of heaven which peoples it with nothing but messengers. Earthly courts have their couriers, to keep them in contact with distant realms. But no one ever imagines that whole kingdoms are composed of couriers because one has come

on a visit. The fact that a celestial visits the earth in itself constitutes him an "angel." No other would be sent.

No one would presume to tell us the number of the stars. Only a very few, comparatively, are visible to the unaided eye. Even the observer at the most powerful telescope sees only a small fraction of those known to exist. The photographic lens reveals millions invisible to human gaze. But it is most wholesome to know that their number is so vast, for the great God Who made them all is greatly magnified by His handiwork.

Neither can anyone presume to take a census of the starry realm. But enough is told us to show that their number is beyond all human computation. We are given a hint as to the number of messengers. In the last book of the Bible (Rev.5:11) we are told that ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands surround the throne. There are evidently more than a hundred million of them. Each one could readily represent the same number of celestials, so that there may easily be billions on billions in the celestial spheres. Let it suffice us to know that we are not to be the channel of blessing to a few angels, but to numbers of celestials so vast that, even if we knew the figures, they would be beyond our mental comprehension.

Let us revel in our privileges and prospect. The heavens are higher than the earth and we are highest in the heavens. The lowest in this celestial exaltation would not exchange with John should he be granted the seat at the right hand of Christ in the Kingdom. Messengers, whose majesty and might would make us quail and quake at present, will be beneath our sway in the celestial realms. The highest dignitaries in the universe will gladly bow before the members of Christ's body, which will have the place supreme, not only in rule, but in the dispensation of God's favor and in the reconciliation of the celestial hosts to Him. We who were last have become first. Such is the potency of grace!

A. E. Knoch

WHOSE FAITH?

THE FAITH of Ephesians 2:8 is Christ Jesus's faith. This passage stands as the solid foundation of the transcendent riches of God's grace in His kindness to us *in Christ Jesus* just expounded in the preceding verses. These have been expressed in fact verbs: God *loves* us in that He *vivifies* us *together* in Christ and *rouses* us *together* and *seats* us *together* among the celestials in Christ Jesus. We are to see these as settled facts, made certain because they are established and settled *in Christ Jesus*.

How important is it that these acts of God are carried out *in Christ Jesus*? The phrase itself appears so often in Ephesians that we might call the epistle the "In-Christ Epistle"—in Christ, in the Beloved, in Him, in Whom, in the Christ, in the Lord Jesus, in Christ Jesus, in Christ Jesus, our Lord, in the Lord, in Jesus. Each designation points to Him in a certain way in accord with its context. Ephesians 2:5 has "in the Christ" and verse 6 and 7 both have "in Christ Jesus," and this is repeated in verse 10, "For His [God's] achievement are we *in Christ Jesus* for good works, which God makes ready [readies] beforehand, that we should walk in them." We see, then, that the context here lays emphasis on Him as God's *Anointed One*, His Title of glory, and adds His Name of humiliation and obedience as the Saviour, Jesus, Who makes the grace of God known.

But where is He in verse 8? God is there, for the grace is *His* grace as established in verse 7. And we are there as the ones having been saved. Is it also, as widely understood, that we are there as the ones through whose faith we have

been saved? The “you” here are believers, but our faith is not coupled with God’s grace in this completed work of salvation which is not out of ourselves. The salvation is in God’s grace through Christ Jesus’s faith.

THE PREPOSITION “THROUGH”

The preposition “through” does not appear so often in Ephesians as the preposition “in.” But in certain key cases it is used with Christ or His death as its object. God designates us for the place of a son “*through Christ Jesus*” (Eph.1:5). And we are having the deliverance in Christ Jesus “through His blood” (Eph.1:7). In accord with this we learn that God reconciles those termed “Uncircumcision” who were once far off with those termed “Circumcision” in one body “*through the cross,*” for “*through Him*” [Christ], we both have had the access in one spirit to the Father¹ (Eph.2:11-18). This matter of access to God as our Father comes before us again in Ephesians 3:12 where we read: “In Him [Christ Jesus, our Lord] we are having boldness and access with confidence, *through His faith.*” This is definitely not our faith. It is the faith of Christ Jesus, our Lord, His faith that God’s will must be done and that it was the right way even when, in the case of the cross, it was not His own will (*cf* Matt.26:38-44).

With this in view we are ready to return to Ephesians 2:8. But one more passage beckons. Surely (it will be thought) Ephesians 3:17 speaks of the faith of believers, through which Christ’s dwelling in our hearts may be grasped. Yet we need to note the definite article shown by the raised dot before “faith.” Paul speaks of “the faith,” that is, a definite faith, which would seem to point back to verse 12 where he refers to (as the Greek puts it literally) “the faith of Him,” that is the faith of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

1. Note the connection with the place of a son and our access to the Father.

His dwelling in our hearts is a matter of God’s grace and blessing which comes about through Christ’s faith and love, which is expressed later in Ephesians 5:2 as His giving up of Himself for us as an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor.

To review: the blessing of sonship with which we are blessed by God (blessed is He as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) is channeled to us through Christ Jesus (Eph.1:5), that is, through His faith in dying for us, His love indeed that He dies for all, and thus all die proleptically (2 Cor.5:14). We are having deliverance from what we are in Adam, the old humanity—deliverance which comes through Christ Jesus’s blood, His faithful suffering and death in accord with God’s purpose (Eph.1:7). The reconciliation of us who once are far off with those near is an evangel of peace which comes about through Christ, that is, by His blood (Eph.2:13,18). This peace involves access in one spirit to God as our Father, which is elaborated in Ephesians 3:12 as a matter of boldness and confidence through the faith of Christ Jesus our Lord. Finally, the prayer that we may be strong to grasp the breadth and length and depth and height of God’s love revealed in the secret of the joint body and our celestial expectation includes the dwelling of Christ in our hearts through the channel of His faith and love (Eph.3:14-18).

All of these blessings are channeled through Christ Jesus’s faith. And this is for our faith.

With this in view we can now return to Ephesians 2:8, which, may be arranged as a hymn along with verses 9 and 10.

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

⁸ **For in 'grace 'are =you ones having been saved
through His faith,
And this is not out of =you;**

It is **God's** 'approach **present**,
⁹ **Not out of works, lest anyone should boast**.
¹⁰ **For His achievement 'are we,**
Created in Christ Jesus ^{on}for good works,
Which 'God makes ready beforehand,
That we should walk in them.

Even as God will display the riches of His grace in His kindness to us *in Christ Jesus*, so God has saved us in grace *through the Same One's faith*. This is the pattern of Ephesians 1:5 and 1:7 and 2:16,18, and 3:12 and 3:17, and only this harmonizes fully with the rest of this hymn.

If we have been saved through our faith, how does this fit in with the "this is not out of you"? If it is our faith then God's approach present is limited in its effect. If it is not of our works, but still of our faith, boasting is not entirely excluded. What we are is therefore not wholly God's achievement, for our faith has thus entered into the process. We are ones having been saved, and this is God's achievement. God has created us *in Christ Jesus* as saved ones who are created for good works which God makes ready for us to walk in. The salvation and the achievement are God's, in His grace, through Christ Jesus Whose faith is shown in His becoming God's approach present.

ON BELIEVING

Yet of course Ephesians directs attention in its opening prayer to "this faith" of ours (Eph.1:15), which is "the word of truth" that *we are believing* (Eph.1:13). The faith that accords to us is the message that centers on the faith of Christ Jesus and brings us of the nations who once are far off near (with boldness and access) to God. This is by His blood (Eph.2:13) which is to say by His faith through great suffering in His obedience to the death of the cross. Even as, in Romans, where God's evangel is a message of salva-

tion revealing God's righteousness "out of [Christ's] faith, for [our] faith" (Rom.1:17), so the evangel of our salvation in Ephesians is the message opening up transcendent glories in Christ, channeled through His faith. Our faith is in His faith. The message of His faith is for our faith.

Consequently, we are told that "on believing" this evangel we are sealed with the holy spirit of promise—sealed to the deliverance of that which has been procured (Eph. 1:13,14).

To be sure, we can call this sealing a "salvation" which begins when we believe this message of the completed salvation which is in God's grace and through Christ Jesus's faith. Indeed that is how Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15:1,2. We are presently *being saved* through our acceptance and believing and retaining of the evangel Paul brings. But the evangel which we are believing is an announcement of a completed salvation. It tells us of *Christ's* faith (not ours), His faith in dying for our sins and being entombed, and that He has been roused (1 Cor.15:3,4).

Ephesians 1:13,14 speaks of our believing of the evangel of our salvation. Ephesians 2:8-10 *is* the evangel of our salvation which we have heard and accept and believe in accord with the measure of faith God graciously gives us. And this evangel is an announcement of God's grace channeled through Christ Jesus's faith. It tells us we *have been saved*. We have been saved in God's grace, through Christ Jesus's faith, and *this* (this whole operation of God's grace channeled through Christ Jesus's faith) is not out of us. It is God's approach present. It is not out of *our* works, but through our Lord's faith (which indeed speaks of a most tremendous and meritorious work).

This distinction must be kept in view. The sealing and the being saved from much irreverence and from much ignorance and much that presses down on us in this life is associated with our believing of the evangel. But the sal-

vation completed at the cross (we cannot believe we have been saved unless it is true that we have been saved) is completed through Christ Jesus's faith.

This is verified by parallel passages elsewhere such as the following:

ROMANS 3:24

Ephesians 2:8 opens with the word "grace" (literally, "the grace") in the dative case, which the CV translates as "in **grace**."² This usage of "grace" in the dative case occurs also in Romans 3:24 with the addition of the pronoun, "His," referring to God, which the CV renders "in **His grace**." There also it is followed by a "through" phrase: "through the deliverance which is *in Christ Jesus*." That phrase corresponds with the highly significant phrase in Romans 3:22, "through Jesus Christ's faith." "Jesus Christ's faith" refers to His death, and "the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus" refers to one of its results, that is, God's achievement (that which has been procured) by means of the faithful obedience of our Lord in dying for our sins.

Furthermore, where Romans 3:24 has "being justified *gratuitously*," Ephesians 2:8 has "having been saved, and this is *not out of you*." Justification is a specific aspect of salvation which is gratuitous, not out of us, but rather channeled to us *through* the death of Christ as the Saviour.

In addition the Romans passage is followed in 3:27 with the logical and fully appropriate questions and answers: "Where, then, is boasting? It is debarred! Through what law? Of works? No! But through *faith's law*." Likewise

2. This could be rendered "to grace" or "by grace," but using what is called the dative of location, the CV takes Paul to speak of grace as the environment in which we have been saved; see the article by A. E. Knoch entitled "In Grace and Out" in *Unsearchable Riches*, First Quarter, 2021, especially pages 44-46.

Ephesians 2:9 declares that God's approach present, which is the means of our salvation in His grace through the faith of Christ Jesus, that is, His death, is "not of works *lest anyone* should *boast*," glorying in their own acts. Salvation as a completed blessing is *not* of ourselves! It is gratuitous in God's grace through Christ Jesus's faith! The pattern of God's evangel set forth in Romans 3:21-26 is the pattern of the evangel of our salvation set forth in Ephesians 2:8.

GALATIANS 2:16

Galatians 2:16 which refers explicitly first to "Christ Jesus's faith" and then to "Christ's faith" is also a telling parallel to Ephesians 2:8. Justification is *not out of works* except *through* [the "law" of] *Christ Jesus's faith*. Here Paul indulges in wordplay giving a double meaning to the term "law," first, literally in reference to works imposed on Jews as human beings by the law given at Sinai, and then viewing Christ Jesus's faith figuratively as a law work ("faith's law") which He maintained fully and successfully—the one exception to the failure of law works to result in justification. We see the same "law" in Galatians 6:2 where Paul directs us to be bearing one another's burdens and thus "fill up" in our present behaviour, "the law of Christ," that is, His law of faith in His bearing of the burdens of humanity in His death. So in Ephesians 2:8 our completed salvation is to be seen as channeled *through* [the law of] Christ Jesus's faith. It is *out of* [sourced in] *Christ's faith and not out of human law works*.

Traditionally these passages have been understood as contrasting human works of law with the believers' faith. There is certainly a contrast there, but our believing is an act,³ although a mental one. Yet even where human faith

3. "act" and "work" are translations of the same Greek word.

is as great and pure as Abraham's, it is not perfect, but only in accord with the measure graciously granted by God (Rom.12:3; Phil.1:29). Indeed the contrast between Christ's faith and human works is much more relevant and impressive to our understanding of the evangel of our salvation in God's grace than the traditional understanding where Christ is left out of the contrast.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

Thus Ephesians 2:8 can be clearly seen (as it truly is) to be an announcement of God's grace through Christ's faith in obedience unto the death of the cross. It is not a contract where God's grace is dependent on our faith. The evangel of our salvation is an announcement of what God has done through the faith and love of Christ Jesus, Who gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God.

Now we can appreciate God's grace of salvation more clearly and begin to grow in realization of it more surely. It is not out of ourselves. What we are is God's achievement in and through His Son.

All of this is in delightful harmony with those passages which speak explicitly of Christ's faith: God's righteousness manifested *through Jesus Christ's faith* (Rom.3:21,22); His righteousness displayed out of *Jesus's faith* (Rom.3:26); the human being justified through *Christ Jesus's faith* we also believe in Christ Jesus that we may be justified out of *Christ's faith* (Gal.2:16); Paul living in *the faith of the Son of God* (Gal.2:20); the promise out of *Jesus Christ's faith* given to those who are believing (Gal.3:22); we are having boldness and access with confidence, *through His faith* (Eph. 3:12); and Paul not having his righteousness, which is out of law, but that which is *through Christ's faith* (Phil.3:9).

D.H.H.

FAITH ACCORDS WITH GRACE

IN THIS ERA of great withdrawal from the faith, it is nearly always claimed that salvation in Christ is conditional. Those who express interest in meeting God's supposed requirements are considered "candidates" for salvation. Of course in such an environment words like "free" and "grace" will almost surely be present as well. Many will acknowledge that men cannot come to Christ apart from God's call and that salvation is of the Lord. But in the presence of a basic representation of salvation as a thing of reward, all claims about "free grace" necessarily become nominal, mere "empty words" through which many are seduced (Eph. 5:6). It is dishonest to attempt to deny this, or to cloud the issues. Yet it is the work of the Adversary to do this very thing, and he does it well (*cf* 2 Cor. 11:3,4; 11:13-15).

ANNOUNCING THE EVANGEL

Rather than presenting the unbeliever with an offer, the *announcement* to him should be that Jesus the Nazarene is indeed the Christ of God, and that He died for the sins of the unbeliever as well as those of the believer, in the grace of God having tasted death for the sake of everyone. *If* he genuinely believes, having done so apart from all threatenings and inducements merely to profess that which is not his own, he should in due time be taught the counsels of God. It is especially important for the believer to learn of those things with which he is personally concerned as a member of the body of Christ. Apart from

either frantic hurry or undue delay, he should be taught basic truths such as our election in Christ before the disruption of the world, and God's great goal, to become All in all at the consummation.

At no time should the salvation which we have in Christ be presented as a reward, and certainly not as a mere refusable offer that depends upon man as the key to its success.

SUFFERING EVIL WITH THE EVANGEL

If it must be that some cannot agree, let us all, above all else, seek to be walking worthily of the calling with which we were called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, "*bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace*" (Eph.4:1-3). Let us rejoice that the infirm one in the faith, whoever he may be, will be made to stand, "for the Lord is able to make him stand" (Rom.14:4).

To those who are able to perceive the true graciousness of the evangel (*cf* Col.1:6), we would say, Be prepared to "suffer evil with the evangel" (2 Tim.1:8). For men *love* the darkness rather than the light (John 3:19). They may follow error out of ignorance, but this is no indication that they will turn from it when it is exposed in its true character. To the contrary, it may be that at such times they will contend for it all the more zealously. We once did the same, and are by no means superior to others.

If we should find that God has graciously enlightened us concerning the faith, and yet would avoid being puffed up, let us always seek to think and act in ways that accord with this glorious evangel. "Now may the God of expectation be filling you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the power of holy spirit" (Rom.15:13).

RECEIVING AND ACCEPTING CHRIST

When we believe the evangel, we believe Christ. Upon believing, having heard the word of truth, the evangel of our salvation, we are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (Eph.1:13). Thus we first "accept" (or "take along," *paralambanō*) Christ, as well as the evangel that He died for our sins according to the scriptures (Col.2:6; 1 Cor. 15:3). One should never put a contractual connotation upon the word "accept" when speaking of our initial acceptance of Christ. There is nothing contractual in the evangel of grace, nor can there be.

The Greek term for "accept" is a compound expression, *para* and *lambanō*. The first part means "beside"; the second part means "come into possession of" (KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, entry "get," p.121). When *lambanō* is used actively it is translated in the CV by "take"; when it is used passively, it is rendered "obtain" (in many cases, the AV gives the sense well by the rendering "receive"). Often it is translated in the CV simply as "get." The compound, BESIDE-GET, in addition to being rendered "accept," is often translated "take along" (e.g., Matt.2:13,14). These English variants are required because of the differences between Greek and English idiom. In all cases, the reference is to that which one somehow comes to have, or possess.

However, popular misuse of these words has caused much confusion. This is true both of the word "receive" (as in the emotional appeals made to the unbeliever to "receive" Christ), and with the term "accept" as well (as in, "If you would avoid eternal burnings, 'accept' Him today"). That is, the connotations and inflections foisted upon these words by preachers, are strictly their own. *They find no support whatever in the Scriptures.*

The apostle Paul makes it plain that *all* that we have—whether riches, health, success, understanding, self-disci-

pline, willingness or faith—is that which we have received from God. Everything we possess is given to us by God, even those things which we “take” to ourselves through much time and effort. “He Himself *gives* to all life and breath and *all*” (Acts 17:25).

PRIDEFUL EXALTATION

The inveterate pride of man is exemplified in all its horror in the person of the Pharisee who prayed—and yet “prayed this *toward himself*,” (Luke 18:11) saying—“*God, I am thanking you* that I am not even as the rest of men, rapacious, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tribute collector. I am fasting twice of a sabbath. I am taking tithes from all whatever I am acquiring.’ Now the tribute collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest, saying, ‘God, make a propitiatory shelter for me,¹ the sinner!’ I am saying to you, this man descended to his home justified, rather than that one, for everyone who is exalting himself shall be humbled, yet he who is humbling himself shall be exalted.”

When noting the *differences* between ourselves and others, do we ever stop to think, and then face the fact that all these things have their own cause? They are all caused to be as they are. Do we realize that it is therefore altogether foolish to be “puffed up” about our own virtues while looking down upon others in their weaknesses? To the proud Corinthians the apostle Paul says, “For who is *making* you to discriminate [that is, to *‘differ’*]? Now what are you having which you do not obtain [or, “receive”]? Now if you obtain it also [even as others], *why are you boasting as though you do not obtain?*” (1 Cor.4:7). May God grace us all, as those who have received and accepted Christ, to

1. Literally, “be being propitiated to me,” that is, favorably inclined.

stop thanking ourselves for this, and recognize that this was “neither of the will of the flesh, neither of the will of a man, but *of God*” (cf John 1:12,13).

JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

When we believe, our faith is reckoned, or accounted, for (“into,” *eis*) righteousness (Rom.4:5). God considers our faith in His declarations to be a righteous faith; for it is always *right* to believe what He says. However, *salvation from sin is only to be found in the work of Christ*, not in one’s faith in the work of Christ.

Paul does not say that to him who is not working, yet is believing (Rom.4:5), his faith qualifies him for salvation! He does not say that we are justified because we believe or in return for believing. This is not the case. Our Lord “was roused,” not merely to make it possible for us to be justified, but “*because of our justifying*” (Rom.4:25). “*Justified, then, out of His faith*, we may be having peace toward God, *through our Lord, Jesus Christ*” (Rom.5:1). We are justified out of Christ’s own personal faith (Rom.3:22,26). It is not through our faulty faith, but through the matchless faith of our Lord Jesus Christ that we have peace toward God. His work of faith affords this to us. Our faith only makes this known to us.

With regard to God’s declarations and promises concerning ourselves, as with Abraham, God has made them matters “of faith” *that they may accord with grace* (Rom. 4:16). The very *purpose* in their being matters which are of *faith*, is that they should already be true prior to the time in which we first believe them.

God “is justifying the irreverent” (Rom.4:5), doing so *gratuitously, in His grace* (Rom.3:24). In the very nature of things, when acting in *grace*, God must act purposefully, according to *His* choice and apart from any obligation to requite His creatures for their actions (cf Rom.9:11; 11:6).

It is fitting that those chosen ones who are called in this current era of the *display* of God's righteousness (Rom. 3:26) should have faith. *Their faith points to Christ*, in Whom, through His sacrificial death, God's righteousness is manifested. It is manifested, not through our faith, but "through Jesus Christ's faith" (Rom.3:22). God unveils (*cf* Rom.1:17) His righteousness to men by justifying them gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). This glorious gratuity is "for all," "for all sin and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). It has been *bestowed* upon God's chosen ones at present (it is "on all who are believing"; Rom.3:22). God has done this in order that we might constitute a special display, or example, of this great blessing which He has purposed for all. Through the obedience of Christ, this and related glorious benefits will actually be given to all mankind (*cf* Rom.5:15,16,18,19).

NOT WORKING, YET BELIEVING

Many eagerly seek to point out to us that faith is not work. However, they only do this in the interest of making faith—though technically not work—a "condition of salvation" nonetheless. If they cannot qualify by their good deeds, they hope to at least be able to do so by their faith. They would not have God save them solely because of His love and grace, according to His own will, power and purpose. Besides, "if that were true" all the glory would be His!

What they fail to realize is that while faith, in *itself*, is not an act, one's possession of it is nonetheless the product of mental *activity*. Indeed, when one is *actively* engaged in *believing*, he is involved in much mental work.

Many are more persuaded by a single inference of their own—no matter how poor—than by all the plain declarations of Scripture to the contrary. For example, many

attempt to validate the idea of conditional salvation by citing Paul's statement in Romans 4:5 concerning one who is "not working, yet is believing." The usual assertion concerning these words is to the effect that one may believe and yet still avoid all work. From this it is inferred that while one cannot qualify for salvation by "working," he must qualify for it by believing. It is supposed that if one should be found believing, doubtlessly his believing constitutes the fulfillment of a requirement! Thus conditional salvation is "proved" to be true, and all else in the Word of God twisted in order to conform to this false idea.

THE EVANGEL DEBARS BOASTING

It needs to be recognized that any issues concerning the nature of human choice simply have no bearing on the theme of the saving work of Christ. This is because, considered at its deepest level, salvation is without fail a matter of *gratuitous grace*, not of qualification or reward. Boasting in man, then, is debarred; to God alone be the glory. Since we are justified *gratuitously*—without any warrant, insofar as *anything* we may have done is concerned—we cannot boast in ourselves that we are justified (Rom.3:27).

The truth of the evangel—the grace of God in truth—*debars* all boasting in man (Rom.3:27). The evangel of grace precludes boasting; this is to say that it is afforded no place in which it might even possibly be exercised. It is not merely that we *should not* boast, but that, in ourselves, we *cannot* boast! "Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal.6:14).

Since we are believers, we are to recognize that God has called and justified us at this time. But we are not to imagine that inasmuch as most men persist in unbelief, He therefore intends to damn them for all eternity.

GOD'S GOODNESS TOWARD ALL

Our faith is evidence of our *calling* (1 Cor.1:23,24), of our having been *chosen* (1 Cor.1:26-29) for membership in the body of Christ and for life eonian. If others do not believe, they will not enjoy the life of the coming eons. But this is only because, *according to God's wise counsels and purpose*, they have not been *chosen* for this particular allotment.

We ourselves have not been chosen to have a part among those who will be vivified at the consummation, which will doubtlessly be an inexpressibly glorious experience for all concerned. We will never know the experience of having been brought from under the rod of God's indignation in severe chastening judging, only to be embraced in the arms of His love at the consummation. Let us not underestimate the preciousness of this blessing for those for whom it is intended.

It is true that we will have been vivified already, long before this time. Unlike the unbeliever, we are saved from indignation, and will enjoy life in the eons of the eons. But let us never glory in our own blessings in ways that lead us to doubt the goodness of God's counsels concerning the rest of men.

Since God is so exceedingly good, all will receive whatever is best for *Him* and best for *them*. This is true even if this should include the experience of a temporary enlistment as a vessel of indignation in order that man's unrighteousness might commend God's righteousness (*cf* Rom.3:5; 9:22).

When we believe God in these matters, our faith accords with His operations in grace, and is centered in His gracious promises. Thus we are enabled to believe, and to rejoice in our happy expectation. Let us be invigorated by the *grace* which is in Christ Jesus (*cf* 2 Tim.2:1)!

J.R.C.

YAHWEH IS THE ONLY ELOHIM

“GOD IS SPIRIT” (John 4:24). “God no one has ever seen” (John 1:18a). Since God is spirit, He is therefore invisible, intangible, imperceptible. He is all-sufficient; He is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. While such, indeed, are among God’s attributes, it is not inherent in this title (i.e., “the Subjector,” or “God”) that this is so. God alone is unoriginated and supreme; but it is neither entailed in nor does it follow from the fact that the Almighty is “God” that He is unoriginated and supreme.

It is true that in certain of its occurrences, the primary divine title, ELOHIM, does not refer to the supreme and only true God, but to a plurality of certain of His creatures. Clearly, in such cases, reference is made to a plural number of such beings, each one of whom, in some capacity, is a “subjector.”

In the overwhelming majority of the occurrences of ELOHIM, however, this term is *not* used in reference to certain creatures who, in a relative sense, may also bear this title together with the Supreme, but in an absolute sense in reference to Yahweh Himself alone, Who is the supreme and only true God. For example, “. . . Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim. There is *no one else* aside from *Him*” (Deut.4:35). “So you know today, and you recall it to your heart that Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim in the heavens above and on the earth beneath; there is *no one else*” (Deut.4:39).

There are not only those both in heaven and on earth who are *termed* “GODS” (or “ELOHIM”), but there are also

those who *are* "GODS" ("there *are* many gods and many lords"; 1 Cor.8:5). "*Nevertheless*," declares the apostle Paul, "for us there is *one* God, *the Father*, out of Whom *all* is . . ." (1 Cor.8:6).

Just as Paul identifies to us Who the one true God is, saying that He is "the Father, out of Whom all is:" Moses identified the one true God to Israel, declaring that He is the One Whose name is Yahweh.¹

Indeed, this is Israel's great confession: "Hear, Israel! *Yahweh* [is] our Elohim; Yahweh [the only] One" (Deut.6:4).

"The first Hebrew sentence that a Jewish child learns is [this very verse]:

SH'MA YISRAEL YAHWEH ELOHENU YAHWEH ECHAD
Hear, Israel! Yahweh our-Elohim, Yahweh One

"The observant Jew is required to recite it twice daily, in the morning and at nightfall, together with three related passages. He may add verse 5 ("So you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your intensity"), sometimes including the following verses 6-9; also Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41"²

1. The Divine Name, *Yahweh*, is composed of the elements of the verb "to become." Yahweh is "I am that I am:" or literally, "I am becoming Who I am becoming" (Ex.3:14). In Revelation 1:8 John seems to give the meaning of the Name for His Greek readers: Who is and Who was and Who is coming (*cf* 1:4; 4:8 and 11:17; 16:5 where the future is omitted). Though these passages in Revelation speak directly of God Himself in contrast to Jesus Christ (*cp* 1:5), it is important to remember that while, absolutely speaking, Christ is not God Himself ("Yahweh," in the Old Testament), representatively speaking, Christ indeed is Yahweh, Who alone is God Himself (*cp* Zech.14:3,4).

2. Herman H. Rocke, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.78, p.280.

The sense is that *not two* (or more) are Israel's "elohim," but only *one* is their Elohim. That *one* is *Yahweh* alone. To express the ellipsis inherent in the second clause, we would say, "Yahweh is our Elohim; Yahweh—*One*—[is our Elohim]."³

The title of this Jewish key prayer, "Shema," is taken from the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4, *Sh'ma* (Hear!). Most Jewish translators and commentators give the sense the same as that which appears in the Concordant Version. "The belief that God [Elohim] is made up of several personalities, such as the Christian belief in the Trinity, is a departure from the pure conception of the Unity of God. Israel has throughout the ages rejected everything that marred or obscured the conception of pure monotheism it had given the world, and rather than abandon that pure monotheism, rather than admit any weakening of it, Jews were prepared to wander, to suffer, to die."⁴

"Yahweh" is the name of the divine Being Himself, Whose chief title is "Elohim." The literal significance of the word ELOHIM is "Toward-SUBJECTORS."

The shortest form of the divine title, *El*, which is singular, is the same in form as the connective *to* and the pronoun *these*. *To* and *these* indicate the direction, disposition, or subjection of that which is in view. For example, "The water from under the heavens shall flow together *to* one place" (Gen.1:9), *disposes* or *subjects* the waters. "*These* are the genealogical annals" (Gen.2:4), *places* the genera-

3. The Authorized Version rendering of Deuteronomy 6:4, ". . . the LORD our God is one LORD," is confusing and misleading. The Revised Version (1901) is to be commended for including the correct sense in its margin (" . . . Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone"). The Revised rendering, however, which appears in its main text, ". . . Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," is even more perplexing than the AV translation.

4. J. H. Herz, editor: THE PENTATEUCH AND HAFTORAHS, Soncino Press, London, 1972, p.770.

tions before the mind of the reader. This is the underlying thought in accord with the true proverb, “Man proposes but [God] disposes.”⁵ It would seem, then, that the essential thought of the divine title (which appears in three forms, *El*, *Eloah*, and *Elohim*) is *Subjector*, *Disposer*, or *Placer*.

We may be certain that this assumption is correct since the Greek equivalent, *Theos*, which is derived from *the-*, PLACE, signifies the *Placer*. This may be confirmed from many words which share this common stem such as *tithêmi*, *place*, *lay*, *appoint*, *assign*, or *atheteō*, which means “repudiate” or *have no place for*. The meaning of *the-* may be seen as well in such English words as *theme*, *thesis*, and *theater*, in which a certain entity (whether a topic, proposition, or drama) is placed before an audience.

The intermediate form of the divine title is *Eloah*, which is also singular. 41 of its 58 occurrences appear in the book of Job. In order to express motion or direction, the ending *-ah* is occasionally postfixed to a noun, such as *westward* (Num.2:18). This same ending, which means *-ward* (i.e., “[to]ward”), appears in *Eloah* as well. This calls to mind John 1:1 where we read that “the WORD was *toward* God.” We are mindful that Christ’s name is called the “Word” (or “Expression”) of God in Revelation 19:13. Surely all that Christ is and does directs us toward God.

It is conceivable that the title *Eloah*, in an ideal sense, was especially intended to reflect the general direction of Christ’s activity, which is *Godwards*, *toward-the-Deity*, *toward-the Subjector*, *toward-El*. Perhaps certain of its usages even entail this thought though we cannot be certain. That the word identifies the one so termed as Christ however, is not something that these morphological considerations themselves can prove. Indeed, in certain instances, we may be sure that ELOAH does not in any

5. cf A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.24, p.173.

respect speak of the true God, *Eloah* of Israel, but of a foreign *eloah* or god (e.g., Dan.11:37,39). The main point to note, however, is that whatever the original reason may have been (which may be lost to antiquity) for the employment of this special singular form which incorporates a suffix signifying *-ward*, this form as well, when used of the *Eloah* of Israel, ultimately directs us to the only true God.

The longest form of the divine title, *Elohim*, which contains the plural ending *im*, occurs much more frequently than either of the other forms. In a number of its occurrences it speaks of a plurality of beings, of various creatures, whether righteous or unrighteous, whether in heaven or on earth, of whom all are in some respect “subjectors,” working *toward* the accomplishment of their own purposes, which, in the highest sense, all direct us *toward God* and the accomplishment of His purpose (*cp* Isa.10:5-15). All such “subjecting ones,” in one way or another, are engaged in subjecting others, in the disposition of their affairs, in placing them under a certain authority. And, all such ones, in so acting, are the agents of the Supreme Subjector; thus they are included among “the men of His counsel” (*cp* Isa.46:11).

Many of the passages in which “*elohim*” appears merely speak of the idolatrous “*elohim*” the gods of the nations which Israel was prone to worship. Aaron declared to Moses: “The anger of my lord must not grow hot. You know the people that they are unbridled, for they said to me: Make *elohim* for us who shall go before us, for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt we know not what has become of him” (Ex.32:22,23; *cit.* Acts 7:40; *cp* Acts 7:43; Amos 5:25-27; Ex.22:20; Deut.7:25).

It is with such “*elohim*” in mind that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “that which the nations are sacrificing, they are [actually] sacrificing to *demons* . . .” (1 Cor.10:20). This

was so, by whatever name these “gods” of the nations may have been known. Such deceiving spirits actually are not *worthy* of the title “subjectors,” for their subjection was unto evil ends and was not in the faithful service of the true God.

In the Song of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32:21, Yahweh speaks of Israel having followed such unclean spirits, ones which were called “*elohim*” yet were only so in an evil sense, unworthy of the name: “As for them, they make Me jealous with a *non-el*. They provoke Me to vexation with their idols of vanity. As for Me, I shall make them jealous with a *non-people*; with a decadent nation shall I cause them vexation.” Paul speaks of the time when the Galatians once, like the Thessalonians, had turned about “to God from idols, to be slaving for the living and true God” (cf 1 Thess.1:9). Until that time, however, and in a similar sense to that of Israel in her idolatrous worship of a “non-el,” the Galatians had been “slaves of those who, by nature, are not gods” (Gal.4:8). These demons, however, were quite real, and certainly *subjected* the natives of Galatia to much evil. Therefore, it is only with a *faithful sense* in view that these wicked spirits were deemed “not gods.”⁶

It is certain that Galatians 4:8 should be understood in such a sense as is suggested here, for there are a considerable number of scripture passages which speak of both men and messengers as being “*elohim*” (i.e., “subjectors”), each one, under God, working in his own *faithful* capacity toward the achievement of his own respective service.

6. Some, in an effort to “prove” Trinitarianism, have found support for their claim in Galatians 4:8. Their notion is, based upon their own pre-supposition that the Galatians’ erstwhile idols were *in no sense whatsoever* actually “gods,” therefore “ELOHIM” is a term descriptive of *nature*, one which entails both supremacy and unoriginatedness. Hence it can legitimately only be used of the “Triune God” of their creeds. This illogical claim is simply contrary to the facts, and fails to note the sense and corollaries of Deuteronomy 32:21, to which Paul alludes.

Note the following texts: “You shall not maledict the *elohim* [i.e., the arbiters or judges; cf Ex.21:6], and a prince among your people you shall not curse” (Ex.22:28). “Then the sheiks of Edom are flustered; the *arbiters* [*elohim*; i.e., judges, or disposers] of Moab, quivering took hold of them. All the dwellers of Canaan are dissolved” (Ex.15:15).

“If the thief is not found then the possessor of the house will be brought near to the *elohim* [or “judges”] to show whether or not he has put forth his hand on the work of his associate. In every matter of transgression over a bull, over a donkey, over a flocking, over raiment or over every lost thing which one says that this is it, unto the *elohim* shall come the word of the two of them. Whom the *elohim* shall condemn, he shall repay double to his associate” (Ex.22:8,9).

YOU ARE ELOHIM

Of the sons of Israel, collectively, it is written, “I Myself have said: you are *elohim*, and sons of the Supreme are all of you” (Psa.82:6). How glorious to know that these words will find a fulfillment in the kingdom of the heavens. Then, Israel will be the head and not the tail; then, in the kingdom, the chosen race will indeed be a “royal priesthood,” a “holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9). Citing the very words of Psalm 82:6, Jesus declared to the Jews, “Is it not written in your law that: ‘I say you are *gods*’? If He says those were *gods*, to whom the word of God comes (and the scripture can not be annulled), are you saying to Him Whom the Father hallows and dispatches into the world that: You are blaspheming, seeing that I say: *Son of God am I?*” (John 10:34-36).

The words of Psalm 97:7, in reference to Yahweh, “bow down to Him, all you *elohim*,” are interpreted in Hebrews 1:6 as “worship Him, all the *messengers* of God!” In speaking of Christ, Hebrews 1:9 (citing Psalm 45:7) declares, “You love righteousness and hate unrighteousness; there-

fore God Your God *anoints* You with the oil of exultation beyond Your partners.” Though there are others, whether celestial or terrestrial, who are themselves “anointed ones” of God (i.e., “christs”), who thus are our Lord’s “partners” (*metochon*, WITH-HAVER) in divine service, Christ’s own anointing and corresponding divine service is certainly beyond that of any others.

In Hebrews 1, verses 8 and 9 (citing Psalm 45:6,7), God declares to the Son, “Your throne, O God, is for the eon of the eon,” and “God Your God anoints You.” The text of Psalm 45:6,7 itself reads: “Your throne, O *Elohim*, is for the eon and further . . . *Elohim* Your *Elohim* anoints You.”

In these verses of Psalm 45, not only is God termed “*Elohim*” but the Son is also termed “*Elohim*.” While it is true that the mere form of this word is plural, it is just as true that each of the two Beings Whom it herein represents are singular Beings.⁷ One is God Himself, “the Majesty in the heights” (Heb.1:3), at Whose “right hand” the other One so addressed, termed “the Son,” is seated. As is the case as well in the vast majority of the texts in which ELOHIM appears in which it is used in reference to God Himself (“Yahweh Elohim”), this form is used here not of a plurality of beings but, respectively, of Two individual beings, God and His Son.

It follows, then, the claims of Mormonism, among others, notwithstanding, that the plural form ELOHIM does not *mean* a “company” or “family” of beings. That it is *used* of a plurality of beings in certain passages and that certain of these are, under divine inspiration, *interpreted* accordingly in the New Testament⁸ no one doubts. That however,

7. It should be noted that the plural form, “*elohim*,” is used as well of *individual* gods of the nations (*cf* 1 Sam.5:7; Judges 11:24; 1 Kings 18:24).

8. *cf* John 10:34,35; Acts 7:40,14:11,19:26; 1 Cor.8:5; Gal.4:8.

is not the issue. Indeed, it is just as true, and far more to the point that in many places and in all cases in the Greek New Testament God always used the Greek singular for *Elohim* whenever referring either to Himself or His Son.⁹

Perhaps, as many scholars have suggested, when “ELOHIM” is used of Yahweh Himself, the plural form “*Elohim*” is an idiom termed *plural amplitudinus* or plural of majesty, which originally had in view the plenitude of God’s operations in which He acts through others who are energized by His holy spirit. Some such explanation must account for the mere plural form. This is because in the vast number of passages which speak of Yahweh Himself as “*Elohim*” even as where, under God, Christ as well is denominated by this same title, a single Being alone is addressed or is in view.

It is a fallacy that either supremacy or unoriginatedness is entailed by the word “God.” It is a fallacy as well that wherever the word appears it speaks of the same being. And finally, it is a fallacy that if the word is used in a certain sense in one place, it is used in the same sense in another place. Each of these errors has been the source of much confusion. Collectively, the volume of deception which they have wrought is simply incalculable. If we are not snared by these errors ourselves, this can only be attributed to the grace of God.

We are often praying for a realization of God’s purpose of the eons which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. 3:11), even as for discernment concerning His allotment

9. For example, in Exodus 3:16 when God spoke to Moses out of the flaming thornbush, He revealed Himself as the *Elohim* of Abraham, and the *Elohim* of Isaac, and the *Elohim* of Jacob. Yet when our Lord cites this passage in proving the necessity of resurrection (Matt.22:32), and Steven brings it before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:32), neither translates *Elohim* as plural. Thus we may be certain concerning Yahweh, that *He* is the Subjector and Placer (not “subjectors” or “placers” of Abraham, or Isaac, and of Jacob).

among the saints, in which we have a part. May we complement such prayers by a request for the most fundamental realization of all, which is simply a realization of *Him* (Col.1:10). Truly, may the eyes of our heart be *enlightened*, in a realization of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (*cf* Eph.1:15-19). J.R.C.

THE TITLE, "GOD"

The word "God" (or "god"), like all titles, concerns itself with office or service. In Greek, its stem, *the-*, signifies PLACE; hence, the complete form, *theos* (GOD), means PLACER. This idea fits all the contexts in which *theos* is used. *Theos* is not only the original Greek word for the English "GOD," but is also the inspired translation of the Hebrew "ELOHIM," in all corresponding New Testament citations of Old Testament texts which refer to God Himself.

Any references to those lesser beings to whom the title GOD ("placer" or "subjector") also applies notwithstanding, then, we say, Nevertheless, there is only *one* God. He alone is the Supreme, the Almighty One. He is the God, and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is "the only *true* God" (John 17:3).

It is Christ Himself Who insists that this is so. The adjective, *alêtheia* (TRUE), speaks of that which is in accord with the facts. In accord with the actual, literal facts, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ alone is God. He is the only Placer Who is not Himself placed by another. He alone is self-existent and self-sufficient. All others to whom this title is ascribed, *including Christ*, possess it in a derived sense, *not* in accord with the facts absolute, but relatively speaking, or, in some figurative way.

Supremely speaking, there is only *one* true God, even though, speaking relatively, and even in a righteous sense, "there *are* many gods" (1 Cor.8:5). For, indeed, "there are those being *termed* gods, whether in heaven or on earth" (1 Cor.8:5; *cp* Ex.22:8,9; Psa.82:6). Consequently, we should hardly be surprised that, in certain passages, Christ also is so termed (*cf* Titus 2:13; Heb.1:8; 1 John 5:20b). Except for God Himself, Christ certainly has a right to this title in a way unspeakably above that of all others, to whom it is also properly applied. Yet conversely, we must also realize that the ascription of the title "God" to Christ—in certain senses and in various connections—is no more indication that He is the Deity than that any others to whom this title is also ascribed are the Deity. J.R.C.

JUSTIFIED

WHEN Jesus our Lord was roused from among the dead the great work of justification had been achieved, not applied to sinners, but achieved for them. He was roused *because of* our justifying (Rom.4:25). When He was roused, the justifying work had occurred already, and thus His rousing became the evidence that our sins have been dealt with (*cp* 1 Cor.15:17). Therefore, we read (Rom.5:1):

- A. **Justified, then,**
- B. **out of His faith,**
- A. **we may be having peace toward God,**
- B. **through our Lord, Jesus Christ**

Here we see a twofold pattern where God's gracious gratuity of justification (A) is based on the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ Who is given up to death because of our offenses (B). We, who are believing, are even now living in a state of justification in God's sight, and because of this extraordinary favor we may be enjoying peace toward God. The justification is *out of the faith of Jesus Christ*, and the peace comes *through Him as our Lord and Saviour*. The "A" sections speak of what we receive, and the "B" sections speak of Christ, Who gains what we receive. This wording of the evangel is repeated in strikingly similar correspondence a few verses later, in Romans 5:9:

- A. **justified now**
- B. **in His blood,**
- A. **we shall be saved from indignation,**
- B. **through Him.**

It is the shedding of Christ's blood—it is the faith-obe-

dience of Jesus Christ to the death of the cross (Rom. 3:21; Phil.2:8) that is the source of our justification and the resultant enjoyment of peace toward God. This pattern of the evangel where righteousness and peace are solidly based on the faithfulness of our Lord in dying for sinners, is introduced in Romans 3:24,25 where we read, in accord with the twofold pattern noted above:

- A. **being justified gratuitously** in [God's] **grace**,
- B. **through the deliverance** which is **in Christ Jesus**
- A. **(Whom God purposes for a Propitiatory,**
- B. **through [His] faith in His blood . . .**

The gratuity of righteousness is *out* of Jesus Christ's faith (*cp* Gal.3:22). The "faith" of Romans 5:1 is His faith in obedience to God's will, and His faithfulness in His suffering and death. This is the faith that justifies. Our faith comes into the picture as it rests on His faith and as the provision through which God reckons to us the righteousness established by Christ. So also, in Romans 3:24,25, justification is through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, not in us, but in Him; and "the faith" which brings about propitiation is our Lord's faith expressed in the shedding of His blood. Justification and peace are the accomplishments of God through the faith of His Son Who dies for us while we are still sinners.¹ Such a work of justification has become the manifestation of God's own righteousness (Rom.1:17; 3:21,25,26). It is a work of justification, in God's grace, that is without flaw. It is ironclad—no, it is gold-clad and wholly indestructible. It is righteous in every way, and it will result in the enjoyment of life's justifying by all mankind, so that the many sinners from Adam on downward will be constituted righteous (Rom.5:18,19). There is no way this will not occur.

1. Paul uses fact verbs here: *we are sinners; Christ dies.*

And thus we who are believing this evangel may already be enjoying peace toward God. Later, writing to us who are of the Uncircumcision, according to flesh, Paul reveals that we are brought near to God *by the blood of Christ* Who is our *Peace* (Eph.2:13,14). Once again, in accord with the pattern of Romans 5:1,2, Paul writes that it is *by means of the blood of Christ Jesus*, indeed *through His faith*, that we have boldness and *access* before God (Eph.3:12).

THEN

The fifth chapter of Romans does not stand by itself. It develops from all that has been laid down in the epistle from the beginning, but most directly and vitally from Romans 4:25. This is the force of the word "then" in Romans 5:1. Jesus our Lord is given up because of our offenses and is roused because of our justifying. Justified, then, out of such faith as this, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

It is because our offenses have been successfully dealt with in God's giving up of His Son to the death of the cross and the entombment, as made evident in the fact that He is then roused from among the dead, that the apostle now speaks of peace in connection with justification. What God does in giving up His Son, and what His Son does in faith and faithfulness—this is the basis of our justification, and this, in turn, opens the way to peace toward God.

JUSTIFIED

In that Jesus our Lord is given up because of our offenses, and in that He is roused because of our justifying, we now are standing before God, in His sight, holy and flawless (*cp* Eph.1:4). This is a dramatic reversal of the situation earlier described by our apostle: "Out of law works, no flesh at all shall be justified in [God's] sight" (Rom.3:20). Yet now God's righteousness is made manifest "for Him

to be righteous and a Justifier of the human out of Jesus's faith" (Rom.3:21,26).

Consequently God righteously reckons the righteousness established by the death of Christ to us even now while we still live in the flesh. Our position before God is described by an aorist passive participle, "Justified," simply stating the fact. This cannot be taken away because it is not based on what we do or how we feel, but rather on what our Lord has done, and what God has put to our account.

Justification has occurred on the basis of Christ's faith. That is the first point being made in Romans 5:1. Moment by moment, we are living in a state of justification in the sight of God, Who is not pretending or resting on mere forensic judgment, but is seeing accurately and truly what has been gained through the death of His Son. It is a work of gratuitous grace as far as we are concerned, but it is righteously founded on what Christ has done.

THE END OF ADAM'S LINE

How did it happen? How did the crucifixion and entombment of Jesus Christ bring justification to us who are sinners, and conciliation to us who are enemies in our offensiveness before God?

When Christ dies, all of us human beings die (2 Cor. 5:14) in the sense that the old humanity is decisively and unconditionally put to an end. Eventually this will take the form of full experience, when no one at all will be found as a sinner and everyone will be vivified and constituted righteous (Rom.5:18). What is accomplished will become a reality in full realization. The old state of sin under the power of death that started with Adam is doomed.

Paul will repeat this exultant word of truth in speaking of us who are believing the evangel and are viewed by God as we shall be when we are glorified (*cf* Rom.8:30). In spirit, we are baptized *into the death* of Christ Jesus (Rom.6:3).

We are entombed together with Him (Rom.6:4). Our old humanity is crucified together with Him (Rom.6:6). We die together with Christ (Rom.6:8).

One who dies has been justified from sin (Rom.6:7).

Christ does not suffer in our place. We are crucified together with Him. He does not die as our Substitute, but the sinner dies in Him in Whom all of us are created (*cf* Col.1:16).² He suffers and endures the cross (*cf* Heb. 12:2), and we do not, but nevertheless we die. He is given up *because of* our offenses. He also dies *for the sake of* our sins (1 Cor.15:3), that is, He dies so that our sins might be put away to a finality (*cp* 2 Cor.5:17; Heb.10:1-14). He dies so that the sinner, the old creation, might be put to death, and all might ultimately be vivified in Him (*cf* 1 Cor.15:22), blessings now applied to us in spirit.

OUT OF FAITH

Romans 5:1 does not speak of actual justification coming out of *our* faith. The word "faith" in Romans 5:1 must be understood in reference to *Christ's* faith, as we have noted above. To be sure, the believer's faith is given much attention in Romans 4, and in verse 24 Paul has just spoken of us "who are *believing* on Him Who rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead." But our believing is not the source of justification but the occasion upon which God reckons righteousness to us in this present era while we are still in the flesh. Only in a figurative way, in reference to the way in which justification is applied to us in this era, can we relate justification to our faith. And even then there is no place for boasting in ourselves. Literal justification as a righteous work of God, in its essential sense of being caused to be righteous, does not rest on our faulty faith.

2. See the article, "Substitution or Inclusion?" in *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.22, pp.549-573; reprinted in vol.106, pp.51-75.

If justification as a display of God's righteousness requires human faithfulness in addition to Christ's, there would be no solid basis, indeed no hope for peace. If such justification could, in some cases, be somehow partly earned by such a measure of faith even as exhibited by Abraham in Genesis 15 or Paul on the Damascus road the whole matter of peace toward God would best be set aside from our considerations.

NOT OUR FAITH, BUT HIS

Hence it is out of the faith of Jesus Christ that we are justified. Justification in this literal sense is not merely a declaration of God, decreed on the basis of divine authority for the benefit of certain individuals who have taken the right steps of faith. It is a work that manifests the righteousness of God (Rom.3:21). If, then, justification manifests God's righteousness, it must have a solid basis in righteousness, one that bypasses human requirements and lies outside of human efforts. Every wrong must be righted. Every sin and every sinner must be dealt with in such a way that all mankind may be brought into the profound and glorious state of "life's justifying" (Rom.5:18).

At the very beginning of Romans, the apostle writes that the evangel of God concerning His Son reveals God's righteousness "out of [the Righteous One's] faith." It is "for [our] faith," but the revelation of God's righteousness is sourced entirely in the faith of Jesus Christ, in His obedience to the death of the cross. It comes *out of* His faith.

If we are to grasp the reality of the peace which God has set before us, we must come to appreciate the righteousness of justification as it is announced in the evangel Paul is bringing in Romans. In their deepest significance, the words "out of faith" here in Romans 5:1 as well as in Romans 1:17 refer to the faith of Jesus Christ as pre-

sented explicitly in Romans 3:22-26, where "*through* Jesus Christ's faith" is used.

MAY BE HAVING

Much has been written about the correct grammatical form of the verb "have" in Romans 5:1. Brother Knoch observed: "The Authorized Version says 'we *have* peace.' Yet the two leading manuscripts read 'we *may* be having peace.' The difference is very slight in the original, only the *length* of the letter *o*, but the same sound. But the fact is, that those who are justified, have so little conception of what this implies that they . . . are *not* at peace with God. It is only as we fully grasp the force of justification, that it excludes all possibility of condemnation (Rom.8:1) and is not dependent on our acts or feelings, that we have settled peace, and are really reconciled with God."³

Our faith does come into the picture here, however, but not in the word "faith," but rather in the pronoun "we." The antecedent of this pronoun is the phrase "[those] who are believing" in Romans 4:24. Justification comes out of Jesus Christ's faith; the enjoyment of peace toward God is for those who are believing this evangel. Hence, in context, Romans 5:1 declares: "Justified, then, out of [Jesus Christ's] faith,, we [who are believing this evangel] may be having peace toward God."

But even here, Paul puts the spotlight on the faith of Christ, for not only is justification sourced in His faith, the peace that believers may be having is to be recognized as coming *through our Lord, Jesus Christ*. We are conciliated to God *through the death of His Son* (Rom.5:10). The emphasis in Romans 5 continues to be on the message we are believing concerning God's Son. The value of our faith is fully dependent on His faith.

3. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.47, p.193.

The physical fact is that we are still in the flesh, and in focusing on our own faith without appreciating the centrality of Christ's faith, we tend, on one hand, to get depressed and discouraged, or on the other hand become proud and self-righteous, both evils arising from comparisons with the faith of others. These bring about the very opposite of a state of peace and drive us away from enjoyment of peace toward God. Paul would have us focus our believing on the faith of Jesus Christ which is the source of justification. That is the pathway to peace toward God because it brings us to the awareness of what He has done in and through His Beloved.

PEACE TOWARD GOD

What is this peace we may be having toward God? It is the enjoyment of the *access* and *standing in grace* which we have before God because of being justified through the faith of Jesus Christ. But this is more than standing before Him apart from His indignation. Indeed, propitiation has been achieved through Christ's faith as it involved the shedding of His blood (Rom.3:25), but the term Paul is about to use in defining this peace is not *propitiation*, but *conciliation* (Rom.5:10,11; *cp* 2 Cor.5:18,19). There is no condemnation for us (Rom.8:1), and that speaks of peace. But also from a positive standpoint, the peace we may be enjoying is built on God's love (Rom.5:8) and brings us into the position of sons to God, in which the spirit of sonship in us cries out to Him, "Abba, Father!" (Rom.8:15).

Justification comes out of the faith of Christ. With this One, Who dies for us, and thus establishes our justification—with this One as the Conveyer of peace, we may be sure that all estrangement between us and God is gone, and in its place is the peace of a son, a peace built upon God's righteousness and love.

D.H.H.