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REPOSING IN EXPECTATION

Our good friend, Ed Bumgarner of Bessemer City, North Carolina passed away in April of this year. He loved reading *Unsearchable Riches* and looked forward to the day when his favorite verse: 1 Corinthians 15:28, will come to pass. He was 87 1/2 years old and is survived by his wife Lorena, and his son Andrew. It was always a blessing to visit with Ed, Lorena and Andrew and his wife, Carol, at the Bible fellowships.

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 110th Year
(1909–2019)

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FIRST QUARTER, 2019

Volume 110

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 110

co-editors:
Dean H. Hough
and
James R. Coram

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I see Thee, Lord, in everything

That nature brings to view—
The buds that blossom in the spring,
The birds that in full rapture sing,
The flowers of varying hue.

I see Thee in the sun, whose beam
Adds splendor to the day,
And in the moon's nocturnal gleam;
Their welcome rays from heaven stream
To drive the gloom away.

I see Thee in each tiny star
That twinkles in the night.
Those lights from circling spheres afar
Declare Thy glory, Lord, and are
A witness to Thy might.

I see Thee in Thy Word, and praise
The wisdom of Thy plan.
Thy Word of truth, O Lord, displays
The endless wonders of Thy ways
Revealed therein to man.

I see Thee best in Him, Who came
From realms of light above,
To suffer trials, death and shame,
That He might glorify Thy Name,
And show Thy boundless love.

The countless seasons onward roll,
Thy purpose to complete;
Thus wilt Thou reach Thy final goal,
When all respond to Thy control
And worship at Thy feet.

John H. Essex

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, FIRST QUARTER 2019
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED TEN

EDITORIAL

THIS issue features the first two articles comprised in the series *Studies in Philippians* by A. E. Knoch. The first of these articles is preceded by a chart, “Framework of Philippians, Complex Reversion” (p.5).

“The Philippian epistle is a divine commentary on the latter half of Ephesians, and, like it, is especially concerned with the deportment demanded by the transcendent doctrine developed in the first half of the Ephesian letter. This is the key to its contents. *It does not deal with doctrines, but with deportment.* This will illuminate many a difficult passage in it and this has been allowed to color the wording of the version.

“As shown in [this] literary framework, the epistle is a perfect, though complex reversion. Its controlling theme is Participation in the Evangel, not only by its public proclamation, but especially by a conduct consistent with its teachings.”¹

As stated in the first of these two articles included herein, “Introduction” (pp.6-20), “As Ephesians is the great exposition of the truth of this secret administration so Philippians opens up new vistas of *service.*” (p.6).

In the second of these two articles, each in its own way introductory in nature to the Philippian epistle, “The Philippians’ Contribution” (p.21-31), Brother Knoch states, “Among the most precious privileges which come to us with the reception of Gods unspeakable gift, is that of giving, of participating in the service of heralding the evangel

1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.67, p.129.

by supporting the efforts made to spread the knowledge of God” (p.21).

On page 30, we have included “Translation Notes” concerned with two changes in vocabulary from the previous CV editions as these appear herein, reflective of our prospective revision at Philippians 1:7. “The word ‘right’ is used in place of ‘just,’ and ‘setting (my) mind’ is substituted for ‘disposed.’”

Next is Dean Hough’s exposition, “Joint Participants of Grace” (pp.33-36): “The revelation of God’s righteousness in dealing with human unrighteousness is sourced in Jesus Christ’s faith in dying for sinners, and this is for the cause and invigorating power of our faith” God’s righteousness is revealed by means of [Christ’s] faith, that is, *out of* (Greek, *ek*) His faith, and this is *for* (the cause of), that is, directed *into* (Greek, *eis*) the believer’s faith” (p.33).

This is followed by my writing entitled, “Deeming It to be Refuse” (pp.37-44). “Many who are friends of Christ, are nevertheless *enemies* of the *cross* of Christ, insofar as its significance is concerned in the achievement of God’s purpose to become All in all (1 Cor.15:28). The consummation which is theirs (‘whose consummation’) for such unfaithful *service* is that of a certain ‘destruction’ (or ‘loss’), namely that which will obtain when they, even as ourselves, are manifested before the dais of Christ and are requited for their practices through the body, whether good or bad (2 Cor.5:10)” (p.44).

The concluding article for this issue is, “Do Not Worry About Anything,” (pp.45-48) by William Mealand. “There is an elixir of life in words like these. Touching life at all points, they embrace every experience, and affect every problem. How positive they are, how emphatic! There is no room left for the smallest doubt to intrude. The words are just an exquisite echo of the Psalmist’s thought—*fret not thyself!*” (p.45).

J.R.C.

FRAMEWORK OF PHILIPPIANS

Complex Reversion

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FELLOWSHIP IN THE EVANGEL
THE LIVING EXPRESSION OF THE EVANGEL

INTRODUCTION

PHILIPPIANS, almost more than any other epistle, must be considered as a unit. Its truth is so little known or practiced, and so distinctive in character, that a passage outside its context, or severed from the main theme, may suggest a thought quite contradictory to its message. "Work out your own salvation" (AV rendering) is only one of such statements which may be used to give the truth an entirely false twist. Unless the theme of the epistle is seen to be *service*, even those who are well aware of their transcendent blessings in Christ will be stumbled by passages which seem to call in question the precious truths already taught.

As Ephesians is the great exposition of the truth of this secret administration so Philippians opens up new vistas of service. The tendency observable in Paul's earlier epistles, in contrast with the book of Acts, is carried on to its consummation. Not only is Israel set aside, but all that pertains to the flesh and the earth is forfeited in order to gain Christ and conform to our celestial citizenship. The cross finds its full expression first in this epistle. This is sorely needed today, for without a due appreciation of its meaning we will be sure to fail in our walk and service.

I would especially urge those who seek to serve the saints to take Philippians to heart. The more I have meditated upon it, the more I have been appalled at our great lack in living up to it.

Another thought has impressed me. In these perfection epistles there is no enigmatic teaching. We do *not* observe as in a mirror, but face to face (1 Cor.13:12). This should

make it clear and easy, but, not being mature, most of us find it difficult. For instance, the statement "it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work" goes right to the root of the matter, and leaves no haziness whatever, as was the case in almost all previous revelation, which leaves us with the impression that *we* are the operating force in willing as well as in working. Let us never seek to modify or annul such clear declarations, which give us the final analysis and take us back to first causes, by bringing in others which deal with apparent processes, as used by God in testing men.

On the contrary, we should take Philippians as final, and God's previous unfoldings as more or less superficial and partial and obscure. It can be explained by the latest revelation, but not the latest by it. Of course Philippians is "extreme," for the cross is extreme and God is extreme in His desire to become *All* in His creatures. So let us not allow this word to frighten us and keep us from obeying the truth.

And let us not fail to note the joyous, yes, jubilant character of our service. True, it may be done in weakness and suffering, amid failure and envy and strife, yet beneath all is the promise and purpose of God, and in all we have the nearness of our Lord. Although this is the time of our humiliation, we anticipate the glory. While looking our afflictions in the face, we shout to all our fellow slaves (Phil.4:4): "Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again I will declare, be rejoicing!"

THE SLAVES' EXHORTATION (Philippians 1:1-2-4:21-23)

THE PHILIPPIAN EPISTLE comes to us from two *slaves*, not from an *apostle*. It is an *exhortation*, designed to affect our feet, rather than a revelation for the enlightening of our minds. Paul and Timothy do not present the truth as to

our position in Christ, but the path to be pursued by the Philippians, after they know their place in Him. It consists principally of four “living expressions” of the evangel, which are set forth for us to follow. Christ, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Paul—these are the patterns who give us a clue to the conduct which becomes us today—Christ and Paul in particular.

Philippians follows Ephesians. Whatever we may hold as to the sequence of the books in the Bible, Paul’s epistles come to us in an order undoubtedly divine, for it is the same in all the manuscripts. The Roman Group—Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians—form a unit by themselves, and do not depart far from the great truths of justification, conciliation, and glorification. Romans, like Ephesians, has a completeness all its own, yet it is supplemented by the two epistles to Corinth, as to conciliation and glorification, and Galatians is a most masterly commentary on its treatment of justification.

Philippians occupies the same relation to Ephesians that the Corinthian epistles do to Romans. This similarity is even more strikingly seen in Galatians and Colossians. Galatians is practically confined to the first of the three great subjects of Romans—justification. It leaves conciliation and glorification to the Corinthian letters. So Colossians also deals principally with the first aspect of the secret of Ephesians—our relationship to God. It leaves the other two to Philippians. In this epistle, then, we may expect to find set forth the *conduct* which flows from our relationship to *Christ* and to our *fellow saints*. The power of the appeals will depend largely on our apprehension and appreciation of the last two items of the secret—that we are a joint body, and are joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel of which Paul became the dispenser.

Just as Galatians is an excellent help in understanding

justification, and the Corinthian epistles in developing conciliation, so Philippians may assist us in further founding and confirming our knowledge of Ephesians, although it is intended for those who already apprehend that great unfolding of present truth. It will especially help to correct such faulty ideas as we may have in regard to the last two items of the secret. This is especially true of the evangel, for the Philippians were active participants in it from the first (1:5). And this very same evangel remains with them. He unfolds no new one to them. Now, however, they are *joint* partakers in its grace, whereas, at first, they partook of it as guests of Israel (Eph.2:12).

Both Ephesians and Colossians are easily divisible into two parts, doctrine and deportment. No such division can be seen in Philippians, for it is all devoted to conduct. It, indeed, divides into two complementary halves, for a glance at its structure will show that it is a reversion, dealing principally with living expressions of the evangel. In the first half are the examples of Christ and Timothy. These are balanced in the second by those of Epaphroditus and Paul. In the first part we are exhorted to imitate Christ (2:1); in the second we are bidden to imitate Paul (3:17). These facts are of vital value in the interpretation of this epistle, for some passages in it, divorced from its controlling theme, may be made to appear to teach truth quite beyond and contrary to Ephesians, but when kept within the bounds set by the epistle itself, and applied to our experience, they are in fullest accord with the previous epistle and its transcendent revelations.

A casual reading of Philippians gives little idea of the symmetry and beauty of its structure. Yet, for a close consideration of the epistle, there is no key comparable to a clear exhibition of the literary framework. The mind is likely to be lost in a maze of detail and forget the theme under discussion. Indeed it is not always easy to seize

the real subject without some such aid as the structure affords. Perhaps the common impression of this epistle is that, like our own letters, it is a jumble of this and that and the other, without any designed relation between its parts. A so-called “analysis” is apt to be arbitrary and is usually derived from the interpretation, instead of aiding it. But a real “framework” should be as self-evident as the skeleton of an animal, with all its parts symmetrical and complementary, making their relationships quite obvious to all.

THE FOUR EXAMPLES

The framework of Philippians shows that its subject is *participation in the evangel*. We must not limit this to the heralding of “the gospel” to unbelievers. It includes all of the glad message as it was revealed, not only as imparted to faith, but as expressed in life. In the second half of Ephesians we are *told* how we should walk; here we are *shown*. There the basis of conduct is truth. Here it is illuminated by example. The greater part of this epistle is devoted to *living expressions* of the evangel. The service and suffering of its greatest exponents are presented for our consideration. Christ Himself, in His descent from the form of God to the shame of the cross, is presented for our imitation. Corresponding to this we have Paul’s descent from a self-righteous Pharisee to conformation to the death of Christ. The center of the epistle depicts two ideal characters—Timothy for service, and Epaphroditus for suffering.

In accord with its character, the hortatory passages in Philippians are not grouped together at the close, as in Ephesians and Colossians, but are scattered symmetrically throughout the epistle. They appear before and after the two great examples, The apostle pleads for a humble and obedient disposition like our Lord’s (2:1-5,12-18). He exhorts us to imitate himself and beware of those who act otherwise (3:1-3,17-21). The question may arise, Since

Ephesians has already dealt with the conduct which comports with its new revelation, what room is left for exhortation in Philippians? The answer is that here also we see the special character of this epistle. The exhortations are general in Ephesians, here they apply particularly to *service*. Ephesians indeed dealt with the slaves of masters on earth. Philippians deals with the conduct of all saints in their character of slaves of a heavenly Master.

INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

1 Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, together with the supervisors and servants:

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

To correspond with their special character, both Philippians and Colossians, unlike Ephesians, are written jointly by Paul and Timothy. In Colossians Paul speaks as an *apostle*, Timothy as a *brother*, but in Philippians both bow themselves under the yoke of servitude to Christ Jesus. They are *slaves*. Here there is no secret unveiled, as in Ephesians. Here we are concerned with deeds rather than with words, with walk on earth rather than with our position in the heavens.

²¹ Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. Greeting you are the brethren ^gwith me. ²² Greeting you are all the saints, yet especially those ^o of Caesar’s house.

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit! Amen!

As the conclusion shows (4:21-23), the saints in Rome, especially those of Caesar’s household, join him in greeting the saints in Philippi. Both are eloquent witnesses to the service of these slaves.

THE SAINTS IN PHILIPPI

Philippi does not enter into his ministry until after Paul's separation by the spirit (Acts 13:2) and his further separation from Barnabas (Acts 15:39). It enters soon after Timothy becomes Paul's companion. Very definite leading by the holy Spirit, which forbade his speaking in the province of Asia and Bithynia, forced him to the seacoast at Troas, where he had the Macedonian vision. Thereupon Paul crossed over into Macedonia to help them (Acts 16:6-10). Philippi was the first stopping place, as it was the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, and a Roman colony. There it was that Paul met Lydia, the seller of purple in Thyatira, and drove out the python spirit from the maid. And there he was flogged and jailed and put in the stocks, and prayed and sang hymns to God. There it was that the jailer was saved, and exulted, believing in God, with all his house.

Such is the background in the book of Acts. All is still on kingdom ground. There is baptism, and the casting out of demons, and a miraculous earthquake, all of which belong to the kingdom which is the theme of the "Acts" (Acts 1:6;28:31). Since then vast changes had taken place. The record of Acts itself had practically closed. Israel had been thrust aside. God's salvation is dispatched directly to the nations, without their mediacy. The apostle has made known the great truths of justification, conciliation, and glorification in his epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Thessalonians. These he undoubtedly made known to them in his later visit (Acts 20:6). But of these truths the Acts knows nothing. Far less should we look there for the latest revelations, which Paul sent from his prison in Rome. So that we must leave the Philippi of Acts in the far distant background, with great spiritual changes between that and the writing of this epistle.

Not only is this epistle written by slaves, but it is writ-

ten especially to supervisors and servants. It is very evident that, in respect to service, there were distinctions between the saints. This is necessary wherever a number of individuals unite in striving to accomplish a common end. The experienced should supervise. The capable should serve. This is fitting and proper.

ORDER IN THE ECCLESIA

It is evident to everyone that the order in the various churches of today is not that found in the Scriptures. No church has several "bishops," or supervisors, as in Philippi, except those few who are striving to conform to the divine model. In those days, besides the gifts, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph.4:11), there were supervisors and servants for service, as well as elders for rule. The function of a "bishop" has usually been confused with that of an elder, so that today we have "episcopalian" (ruled by bishops) and "presbyterian" churches (ruled by elders). Ephesians does not deal with the local ecclesia, hence there is no mention of local elders or supervisors or servants. So also, Philippians is concerned with *service*, not with rule, hence elders are not mentioned, although their work of supervision is brought before us.

SUPERVISORS OR "BISHOPS"

When we see how far modern ecclesiastical organizations have departed from the ideal set before us in the Scriptures, there is a tendency to recognize no order as divine in the ecclesia. But this will lead us from one error into another. This epistle reveals the root of the present apostasy in this regard in its opening exhortation. Supervisors and servants are especially exhorted to imitate the *humility* of Christ and to follow Paul in his repudiation of earthly honors. Contrariwise, they have been transformed into "bishops" and "deacons." Instead of visiting the saints

in their own ecclesia, the bishop has a high place over the clergy of many churches. In order to recover the divine idea of the office of a bishop we will need to note carefully all that is said on the subject in the Scriptures. In order to get the exact significance of the word, we set forth a concordance of its occurrences. The word in parenthesis is the Authorized Version rendering.

supervision, visitation *episkopê*

Luke 19:44 you know not the era of your *visitation* (*visitation*)
 Acts 1:20 His *supervision* let a different one take (*bishoprick*)
 1 Tim. 3: 1 if anyone is craving the *supervision* (*office of a bishop*)
 1 Peter 2:12 glorifying God in the day of *visitation* (*visitation*)

supervise, *episkopeō*

Heb. 12:15 *supervising*, that no one be wanting (*looking diligently*)
 1 Peter 5: 2 *supervising* . . . nor yet as lording it (*taking the oversight*)

supervisor, *episkopos*

Acts 20:28 *supervisors*, to be shepherding (*overseers*)
 Phil. 1: 1 with the *supervisors* and servants (*bishops*)
 1 Tim. 3: 2 the *supervisor*; then, must be (*bishop*)
 Titus 1: 7 a *supervisor* must be unimpeachable (*bishop*)
 1 Peter 2:25 Shepherd and *Supervisor* of your souls. (*Bishop*)

As is usual, the Authorized Version itself is witness to the true meaning of this word, for it renders it *overseer* (Acts 20: 28) and *taking the oversight* (1 Peter 5:2). It is characteristic that the Authorized Version should introduce one of the ecclesiastical titles used in the church at the time it was translated, for it was particularly desired not to disturb the church order then existing. Luther also made it plain that he was not of those who discard everything not found in the Scriptures. He wished to leave everything in the Catholic ritual as it was unless definitely contrary to

the Word. Hence the ecclesiastical order of the Lutheran church still contains much which has been carried over from Romanism. But, even when translated “bishop,” the spiritually intelligent will detect a vast gulf between the ecclesiastical dignitary of today and the humble supervisor of the early church. Who would class a bishop with a servant, or even with a “deacon” (Phil.1:1)? And who would expect to find several bishops in one church, as in Philippi? And who would exhort a bishop not to lord it over the flock? Is that not the very essence of his office? Today we have one bishop over many churches, then there were many in one ecclesia. Now bishops rule over ministers and deacons, then they were associated with them in serving the saints.

ON-NOTE

The Greek words we are considering are formed from *epi*, ON, and *skop*, NOTE, ON-NOTE, and are the usual terms for *visit*, *visitor*, *visitation*. It seems from this that the principal duty of the supervisor is to visit or “look after” the saints. It is the service done by a pastor. The word pastor is literally, *shepherd*. When Paul was passing Ephesus for the last time (Acts 20:28), he exhorted the *elders*, “Take heed to yourselves and to the entire flocklet among which the holy Spirit appointed you *supervisors*, to be *shepherding* [or to be *pastors* of] the ecclesia of God . . .” This was evidently a Presbyterian-Episcopal church, for the elders were also bishops! And they were the ones who did the pastoral work as well! Ecclesiasticism is difficult to avoid in these days, but those who give themselves to the Lord’s work and are entitled to live of the evangel should strive their utmost not to lord it over the saints. Now that there are no apostles, church government is a local matter, in the hands of the elders in each ecclesia. The Word does not sanction any ruler outside the ecclesia except the Lord Himself.

The terms, elder, bishop, pastor, and teacher should not describe distinct ecclesiastical offices. Though the chief function of an elder is to *preside* (1 Tim.5:17), yet when Titus was instructed to constitute elders in each city, Paul also calls them supervisors: “If anyone is unimpeachable, the husband of one wife, having believing children, not accused of profligacy or insubordinate—for the *supervisor* must be unimpeachable . . .” (Titus 1:6,7). And the supervisors are to shepherd, or be *pastors* (Acts 20:28). Besides, some of the elders had the gift of *teaching*, and one who toils in the Word is to have special honor and to be supported in his work (1 Tim.5:17,18). Paul probably combined all these gifts and services in himself. Any layman in an ecclesia may become a servant, and when he becomes older, a supervisor and an elder, besides exercising one of the gifts, evangelist, pastor, or teacher.

Apart from apostolic supervision, the Pauline ecclesias were given no human head to unite and rule over the ecclesia as a whole, or over any groups of them. All of the functionaries, servants, supervisors, and elders, were *local*, and had no service or jurisdiction outside their own ecclesia. The gifts, indeed, may have had a wider sphere, but it is likely that evangelists and teachers, when they went to other fields, cooperated with the local ecclesia, if there was one, and deferred to the elders in matters of church order. One might almost say that the early church had no head. The need for a human head was not felt until the church lost contact with its heavenly Head, and wandered away from His Word. If all were subject to Him there would be the fullest cooperation and unity. Israel did not recognize Yahweh as their King, so they asked for a man. After the same example of unbelief, the church has chosen bishops and popes, and has called councils, and conferences and assemblies. These have succeeded, not in

uniting the saints into one body, but in dividing them into many hostile camps.

All “church government” in the Scriptures, apart from the apostolic office, is *local*. No bishop, no elder, has any jurisdiction beyond the assembly where he lives. There were no unions of several companies, or of all in a given city, or district, or country. There were no ecclesiastical authorities outside the local gathering. Every ecclesiastic who rules over more than one group of saints or over the local officers is usurping the place of Christ, for God has given the headship of the church to *Him*.

Since there was no corporate unity among the saints on earth, their relation to the government was an individual one. And this consisted simply in submission to the superior authorities (Rom.13:1) and in praying for them (1 Tim.2:2). If each individual believer would do this the probability is that the saints would lead a mild and quiet life. Their ability to carry on the functions for which they are left on the earth would be much greater than under the present system, when by organized numbers, they seek to influence governments in their favor, to their own eventual loss.

SERVANTS OR “DEACONS”

Perhaps no better evidence can be offered for the defection of the church from the spirit of humility inculcated in Philippians than the change from supervisor to “bishop,” and from plain servant to “deacon” or “minister.” It is evident that the latter term once meant no more than servant, or our translators would not have rendered Matthew 20:26, “whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister”. In Matthew 23:11 they translate the same word servant. Some of the functions of these “deacons” or “ministers” are: keeping house, like Martha (Luke 10:40), drawing water (John 2:9), and it is specially used of those who waited on the table at meals (Luke 22:27; Acts 6:2).

Hence it also has the sense of serving out or *dispensing*. It refers to lowly duties, not dignified display. I well remember my first experience as a deacon. The office fell to my lot without appointment or election. My duties consisted in cleaning out the meeting place each week. I had others do such things for me in business and at home, but I considered it an honor to perform such a service as to the Lord. It gave me much joy and satisfaction, and to this day I feel more confident of a reward for wielding a broom in those happy days than for the higher work of wielding a pen in the defense of the truth in the long years that have followed.

A concordance of *diakonos* shows that it is not the special title of a church official. Magistrates are also “deacons” or “ministers.” It is a general term, applicable to all who serve others or serve out something. It also shows that the terms *minister* and *deacon* are equivalents in the Scriptures, though they are so far apart in modern ecclesiastical usage. Every deacon is really a minister and every minister a deacon. To escape such confusion the *Concordant Version* avoids ecclesiastical terms wherever possible. It has made servants out of the deacons and ministers.

THE FUNCTION OF A MINISTER

“Minister” is used by the Authorized Version at all times for another Greek word, *leitourgos*, for which it is more appropriate, and the *Concordant Version* follows its example. As it is also a form of service which the Philippians, as a whole, rendered to Paul (2:17,30) through Epaphroditus (2:25), it will be well to include it in our study at this time, although such ministers have no permanent place in the church order. The term was applied only on special occasions, when some public service was performed, as can be seen when its occurrences are consulted in a concordance.

The public nature of the service rendered by a “minister” is evident from the occurrences, as well as the derivation

of the word. It is literally PEOPLE-ACTer, one who acts for other people, who *officiates*. Thus it is used four times of the priesthood (Luke 1:23; Heb.8:2;9:21; 10:11). A priest ministers or officiates. When Paul acted as a priest of the evangel of God, he was a minister (Rom.15:16). Paul was not the minister of Philippi. On the contrary, the Philippians were ministers of Paul (Phil.2:17,30). This consisted in the supply of his temporal needs. They had failed in this until Epaphroditus was sent to minister to Paul for them.

To give a modern example: One morning a brother, a baker by trade, called at the publication office and handed over a special collection taken by the ecclesia for the work. He was their “minister” on this occasion. When a special effort is to be made in which the whole ecclesia joins, they may choose one of their number to act for them in forwarding their bounty. By this act he becomes their “minister,” in the true, biblical sense of the word. Too often our Lord’s words (Matt.20:26) are literally, instead of figuratively, true. In these days the “minister” expects to be treated as the greatest in the ecclesia, instead of the least. True greatness does not consist in superior education, manners, or social position, but in lowly service.

ELDERS

Elders, as we have seen, are not in view as such, in Philippians. Age should teach wisdom, and experience should develop ability to direct. Therefore the older men were usually looked upon to *preside over* the affairs of an ecclesia. As elders, they were over those who served. But they usually did their share in serving also. It seems to be taken for granted that they would supervise (Titus 1:5-7). Such as did so appear in Philippians, classed as supervisors. Paul’s epistles to Timothy and Titus deal with rule in the ecclesia. Hence elders are brought before us there. In Philippians we are interested in the service of all, including the elders.

The question as to the manner of choosing elders, now that there are no apostles to constitute them, should seldom come up. Those who have the necessary qualifications should be evident to all, and they should be recognized without further ceremony. This has worked practically for many years even in these days. Other methods lead to much that is evil. Especially is this so when there are definite terms of office, with elections occurring frequently. The church of God is not a democracy, ruled by the majority. They should bow to the Word and to those who possess the qualifications which are therein prescribed. Elders may ask the opinion of anyone or of the whole ecclesia, but they should not base their action on this alone, but upon the experience and wisdom which their years should bring, in accord with the Scriptures.

THE SALUTATIONS

The epistle begins with Paul's usual, but highly significant salutation of grace and peace (1:2). In accord with this theme-setting word of greetings a striking phrase closes the epistle in the salutation at the end. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your *spirit!*" The striking absence of *physical* blessing in the epistle is emphasized at its close by limiting God's grace to the spirit, in contrast to the body and the soul, which were prominent in the evangel of the kingdom. Contrast the salutation of the apostle John to Gaius. He emphasized the *soul* (3 John 2). But Philippian service brings in a new note. There is suffering in present service. Christ descended to death. Paul is in bonds, and his afflictions are intensified even by his fellow slaves. Epaphroditus is infirm and risks his soul. All grace is in spirit. Hence, in closing, Paul calls down this grace upon the Philippians—and upon us—that we may find our highest bliss in serving Him in the midst of physical infirmity, not in flesh, but in spirit.

A. E. Knoch

THE PHILIPPIANS' CONTRIBUTION

Philippians 1:3-11-4:14-20

³ I am thanking my 'God ^{on}at every 'remembrance of 'you, ⁴ always, in every petition of mine ^{ov}for 'you all, making the petition with joy, ^{5 on}for 'your 'contribution ^{io}to the evangel from the first day until 'now, ⁶ having this same confidence, that He 'Who undertakes a good work among 'you will be performing it until the day of Jesus Christ: ⁷ according as it 'is right for me to be setting my mind in this way over 'you all, because 'you, 'having me in 'heart, both in my 'bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the evangel, 'you all 'are joint participants with me of 'grace. ⁸ For 'God 'is my Witness how I am longing for 'you all in the compassions of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this I am praying, that 'your 'love may be superabounding still 'more and 'more in realization and 'all sensibility, ^{10 io}for 'you 'to be testing 'what things are of 'consequence, that 'you may 'be sincere and no stumbling block ^{io}for the day of Christ, ^{11 °} filled with the fruit of righteousness 'that is through Jesus Christ ^{io}for the glory and laud of God.

AMONG the most precious privileges which come to us with the reception of God's unspeakable gift, is that of giving, of participating in the service of heralding the evangel by supporting the efforts made to spread the knowledge of God. In this the Philippians as a whole are our example, for they seem to have excelled all others in their contributions to the evangel from the beginning to the very end of

Paul's career. Therefore an entire section is set aside for this subject both at the commencement and at the conclusion of the epistle. Let us seek to enter the delightful atmosphere which pervades it and lifts it heaven-high above the plane on which this matter is usually found in the churches of today.

God loves a gleeful giver. Giving grudgingly or of compulsion is of no real advantage to anyone, and an abomination to God, as though He were in need, and wished to exploit His creatures instead of contrariwise to lavish His abundance upon them (2 Cor.9:7,8). It is the motive that counts. In some lands there is a regular church tax, and payment is compulsory. Let no one imagine that much of this will be reckoned as given to the evangel. In other lands all sorts of expedients are used to lure the cash out of the pockets of reluctant members. What a falling off there would be if only those whose hearts were stirred by God's grace should be allowed to contribute to His work! But the real value would not be less.

Paul did solicit contributions from the saints, yet not for himself, but rather for the poor among his own people in Judea, according to his agreement with James, Cephas, and John, when their fields of service were separated (Gal. 2:10). This was on a much lower plane, however, and fits only in that intermediate administration when the nations accepted the spiritual riches which belonged to Israel, and sought to pay for them by sending material aid (Rom. 15:27). They were in the position of debtors at the time, and were under obligation to the nation of God's choice. So will the nations be in the next eon, and even in the last, when their kings bring their glory into the new Jerusalem (Rev.21:24). This is not the motive which moved the Philippians to make their contributions to Paul.

It is not at all likely that Paul received enough to keep body and spirit together for his service to the saints. He had

a trade at which he worked when he could. At Corinth he was employed in tent-making along with Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:3). Although, in answering the Macedonian call, he had found much response to the evangel in that province, not one of the ecclesias sent him help after he left them except the Philippians. More than that, there were times when he was in actual need (Phil.4:16). The last years of his life as a prisoner relieved him of the burden of self-support, yet here it is that the gift of the Philippians fits in. Taking his career as a whole, Paul, perhaps the most deserving of all God's slaves, did not receive even a slave's rations for his service to the saints.

But he did not complain. Rather he exulted that he had preached the evangel to the large Corinthian ecclesia gratuitously. Note the words he uses. He *despoiled* other ecclesias, *getting rations* for dispensing to them. He was actually in want in Corinth, but he did not become an encumbrance to them, but received help from Macedonia. He always endeavored to keep from becoming a burden (2 Cor.11:7-9).

Not that he did not know his rights in the matter. Strangely enough, he has to defend himself to these very Corinthians, who did so little for him when he was among them. Listen to his expostulation: "Have we no right at all to eat and drink? Have we no right at all to be leading about a sister as a wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or have only I and Barnabas no right not to be working? Who is warring at any time supplying his own rations? Who is planting a vineyard and not eating of its fruit?" (1 Cor.9:4-7). Possibly no man ever deserved as high wages as Paul. He sowed a most marvelous crop of spiritual seed among the nations, and, in justice, he should have harvested a tremendous crop of worldly wealth. But how much nobler was his course, as he himself said: "We do not use this right, but we are for-

going all, lest we may be giving any hindrance to the evangel of Christ" (1 Cor.9:12).

With such an experience back of him, no wonder that Paul had a very soft spot in his heart for the Philippians, whose practical sympathy came from the depths of their heart and never needed any prompting on his part. The material donations were transformed into the fragrant incense which delights the heart of God as well as provides for the needs of His unselfish slave.

With this before us we can better appreciate the opening and closing strains of the Philippian epistle. Paul begins: "I am thanking my God at every remembrance of you, always, in every petition of mine for you all, making the petition with joy, for your contribution to the evangel from the first day until now . . ." (Phil.1:3-5). The very first time that he preached the evangel in Philippi, Lydia generously urged him to come to her house and remain (Acts 16:15). He seems to have stayed there until he left, as he returned there, after coming out of the jail, before leaving the city (Acts 16:40). Soon afterward he was in Thessalonica, and it seems that they sent several times during his sojourn there. No doubt they were responsible for the contributions sent from Macedonia to Corinth (2 Cor.11:9). And this is crowned by their latest donation, sent to his prison in Rome, by the hand of Epaphroditus (Phil.2:25).

It is this persistent continuance which gave the aged slave the confidence that they would not fail in the future, that "He Who undertakes a good work among you will be performing it until the day of Jesus Christ" (1:6). Let us not dilute this statement into a mere promise that God will save everyone whom He calls. That is true and precious, but it applies to all. This is a rarer grace, which is, alas, not found in every ecclesia. In fact we do not read of it in connection with any other, and we know that it was lacking in some. It may be that the Philippians could not

send him much at a time, but they continued to send what they could, and this recurrent token of their affection for him and their desire to have a share in his service led to the conviction that they had become "incorrigible" givers. May we emulate their example.

No one can blame Paul for being partial to the Philippians, in view of their attitude toward him. When he was free and went about confirming and defending the evangel they had him in their heart, and were given grace to do their part in supporting his hands. And, now that he is in bonds, they did not reason that his bread and water are sure, being supplied by the state, but they sent their "apostle and minister," that is, they commissioned Epaphroditus to go to Rome with supplies to use in ministering to Paul. Being now aged, his life could no doubt be made much easier. This seems to have especially touched his heart. In a sense he was laid aside and had not the same claim on their aid as when he was actively going about and heralding the evangel. But they remained true to him, so that he longed for them all in the compassions of Christ Jesus.

As a result of this interchange of loving service, Paul is led to pray for the Philippians (1:9-11), that the love which has led them to care so faithfully for him and his service may be superabounding still more and more in *realization* and all *sensibility* for them to be testing what things are really of consequence, in order that they may be sincere and no stumbling block for the day of Christ, having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which is through Jesus Christ, for the glory and laud of God (1:9-11). Here we have a hint of what is on Paul's heart in writing the epistle. They have been giving to him, and now he desires that they, in turn, receive all that is theirs, in the latest and highest revelation, which he has just made public, and of which they have doubtless read in the so-called epistle to the Ephesians.

As in his marvelous opening prayer in Ephesians, he prays that they may be granted the *realization* of Him Who has given new treasures of grace (Eph. 1:17)—the very same word which expresses his desire for the Philip-pians. In reality the word embraces even more than this, and might be rendered *appreciation*. This is all that is needed to make a saint happy. This is more than enough to repay us for all that we may do to forward the evangel or contribute to the support of its heralds. Paul could not repay his friends in material goods, but in spiritual wealth he had unutterably more than was needed to recompense even the model Philippian ecclesia.

But how can he convey it to them? Merely to write it out for them is not enough. Ephesians has now been before the saints for centuries, with very little realization or appreciation of the grandeur of its grace. The Philippians had doubtless heard it only recently. To them it would be new. For them it would involve a spirit of wisdom and revelation quite beyond the average. Yet this alone is the field in which their love can unfold still further, and so the Lord's slave prays that this gift may be theirs as well.

Yet he does not develop the thought as in Ephesians, but, in harmony with the trend of the epistle, he adds the word *sensibility*. He would trace the truth further, in its operation through their *faculties* (SENSE-KEEPERS). He is concerned with the conduct which should characterize it. He would have them live it out in their lives. The new revelation brings with it a flood of apparent problems which will confuse their feet if they are not able to fully realize its import. Many practices which hitherto have seemed vital now fall away. To let go that which belongs to the past and grasp that which lies before, such is the crisis which confronted them at this time.

THINGS OF CONSEQUENCE

Christendom is chiefly occupied with the husks of divine

truth and knows but little of the kernel. This is because it has failed to realize the latest revelation. Hence it fails to function accordingly, and is occupied with things which are no longer of consequence. Indeed, there are hardly any, even among intelligent believers, who realize that there is any such thing as a crowning revelation in Ephesians which clears away all the enigmas of the fragmentary unfoldings which went before, and which brings the saint to maturity. As a consequence there is but little real sincerity. Almost everything is partly sham. And the path of both saint and sinner is strewn with stumbling blocks which will cause much loss in the day of Christ, when the conduct of the saints is tested by fire.

The word "consequence" is a difficult one to translate concordantly into English, and it may be that in this passage, it carries with it the ideas suggested by its elements, THRU-CARRY. In Hebrews 10:14 a word with the same elements is rendered "to a finality." That is, things of consequence are those which are not merely the scaffolding of truth, which will be removed at last, but the final forms, which are permanent. Israel had mostly shadows. We now have the substance. The process of divine revelation deals much with the flesh. The end is found in spirit.

As this epistle itself points out the things which are of no consequence, we need not linger over the thought. Paul especially deals with the prerogatives of the Jew in flesh, and is glad to forfeit them all, and deems them refuse in order to gain Christ, which is of the greatest consequence. Hitherto the saints were concerned with terrestrial things; now it is of the most vital importance that we recognize our celestial citizenship. Now it is necessary that Paul be taken as a model for our walk. Otherwise we will be sure to do the inconsequential things which, alas, are not lacking in dire results.

THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Righteousness should bear fruit. It may be that the particular righteousness here in view is the conduct of the Philippians in contributing to Paul's support and the evangel. That was just. Some may reason that the glad tidings are free, that grace demands no payment for the benefits it brings. That is true. But is it right to drink of a fountain and not even tell others about it? In the last analysis, the Philippians had done no more than their duty in contributing to the evangel. But the fact that it was not done as a duty, but was the spontaneous outgrowth of the new life they had received, gives it a precious character not possessed by righteousness alone. It produced satisfaction and pleasure such as we experience when tasting of luscious fruit. It is delicious.

And this brings us to the most excellent and final fruit of all. It will be for the glory and laud of God. Briefly summed up, the prayer of Paul expresses his desire that these saints, whose love for him and the evangel has been practically expressed by many a gracious gift, may lead to their appreciation of God's greatest and latest revelation of His grace in giving the nations an equal place in the celestial honors of Christ's body. But, beyond this, he especially wishes that they may walk in accord with this final unfolding, and thus bring to God the glory and the applause which is the object and end of all things.

THE PARALLEL PASSAGE

¹⁴ **Moreover, =you do ideally** in your **joint contribution** in my affliction. ¹⁵ *y*Now =you' Philippians also are aware that, in the beginning of the evangel, when I come out from Macedonia, not one ecclesia participates with me ¹⁶ *io* in the matter of giving and getting, except =you only, ¹⁶ *t*for in Thessalonica also, =you send, + once and twice,

¹⁶ *io* to my 'need. ¹⁷ **Not that I am seeking for a 'gift, but I am seeking for 'fruit** that is **increasing ^{io}for =your account.** ¹⁸ *y*Now I am collecting all, and am superabounding. I have been filled full, receiving ^bfrom Epaphroditus the things ^bfrom =you, an odor fragrant, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to 'God. ¹⁹ *y*Now my 'God shall be filling =your every need in accord with His 'riches in glory in Christ Jesus. ²⁰ *y*Now to our 'God and Father be glory ^{io}for the eons of the eons! Amen!

This phase of the joint participation in the evangel—the contribution of the Philippians to its support—is taken up again in the corresponding section, near the end of the epistle shown above. We will skip all in between and consider what Paul writes there as well (4:14-20). Here he changes the formula “a good work” to “do ideally.” Many versions have practically blotted out the fine distinction between the *good* and the *ideal*. In fact the Authorized Version almost always renders both by “good,” though sometimes by “well,” as in this case. But here we have a deed which is more than merely good. It perfectly fits the circumstances, and is eminently acceptable and appropriate not only in the eyes of Paul, but of God.

I take it that there is a correspondence between *their* gift to Paul, and the grace which he has for them. He speaks of superabounding, of being filled full, of being paid in full, and it is very probable that he, as a Roman prisoner, was not in actual need, as had been the case before. It would seem that this gift was a material counterpart of the lavish grace then being dispensed to the nations, hence an acceptable and *ideal* contribution at this particular crisis. It was good for them to relieve the physical needs of the apostle during his itinerant ministry. It is *ideal* that he is overwhelmed with good things at the time when he has opened the flood gate of blessing for the nations.

Paul had not always been so satiated with good things. Yet was not this in spiritual accord with his ministry? He had been dispensing grace, but so long as Israel was the channel of blessing the vast riches of grace could not be revealed. Now that God goes to the nations directly, Paul's physical surroundings change to accord with it. This, of course, is no excuse for the ecclesias of Corinth, who would have allowed him to hunger if Philippi had not come to the rescue. Undoubtedly their excellent conduct in this matter, humanly speaking, entitled them to receive the supreme epistle on the subject of conduct, and enabled them to live according to a standard which is the highest presented to mortal man.

FRUIT, NOT GIFTS

In these days of systematized budgets, and envelope systems, and all sorts of schemes to finance the work of the church (we will not say, of the Lord), we have forgotten the great difference between gifts to support the work and fruit which pleases God. We want quantity, not quality. We reason that the unbeliever's money will buy just as many Bibles as the believer's. Not so thought our Lord. The widow's mite in His sight was more than a whole chest full of common coin. This is the point in Philippians. That Paul should be supplied is only a secondary side of the matter. That they should have given expression to their hearts, without any prompting or coercion, but simply as the outflow of their appreciation and love, makes their gift acceptable to God and is entered to their account, to meet them again in the day when all will receive awards for the good done in the body.

A FRAGRANT ODOR

This is the quality which pleases God in our efforts to work for Him. Not *great* doings, but *gracious* deeds rise

to perfume His presence. Not mere service but sacrifice ascends to Him. Not the high achievements of a master mind and an indomitable will, but the humble attempts of a submissive and grateful heart are pleasing in His presence. Some may be too rich, or too great or too strong to procure a proper perfume for our God, but no one is too poor or too small or too weak to find a fragrant odor in which He can delight.

On the occasion of the collection for the saints in Judea, Paul, speaking of the saints in Macedonia, says that "the corresponding depth of their poverty superabounds to the riches of their generosity." And again, "according to their ability . . . and beyond their ability, of their own accord, with much entreaty beseeching of us the grace and fellowship in a service for the saints . . ." (2 Cor.8:2-5). This seems to show that the church chosen to be our example in acceptable giving was a very poor one. How happy would it make their hearts to hear the words of Paul as he assures them: "Now my God shall be filling your every need in accord with His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (4:19). God will not be outdone in giving. With all His riches in glory in Christ Jesus He is able to repay a thousandfold every generous impulse of the lowliest saint.

The epistle proper closes much as it began, with an ascription of praise to our God and Father, closely related to the subject of giving. In this eon we can expect but little public response to the gracious gifts of our God. But in the eons to come His gifts will receive more appreciation, and His glory will no longer be hid. And the most potent means of displaying to the whole creation, in the heavens as well as upon the earth, the excellent graciousness of His gifts, and the love which is their source, will be the story of that secret by which He fills the heights of heaven with the lowest dregs of earth.

A. E. Knoch

TRANSLATION NOTES

TWO CHANGES in vocabulary from the previous CV editions appear in the prospective revision at Philippians 1:7. The word “right” is used in place of “just,” and “setting (my) mind” is substituted for “disposed.”

Even though the word JUST is used as the English standard for all Greek words in the *-dik-* family, and this is mostly reflected in our translation (*just, justice, justify, justly, etc.*), its usage does not correspond to the scriptural usage of these Greek words as well as *righteous* (or, *right*). Both English words are used to refer to that which is right, but “just” is used more in a judicial sense, while “righteous” covers more ground, and is able more clearly to express the sense of “without wrong” when used of God or Christ, as well as describing our future state (*cf* Rom.5:19). Most English translation have recognized this by translating the noun (*dikaïosunê*) “righteousness” rather than “justice.” However, English does not include the word “righteous-ify”), so we must continue to use “justify” for the Greek word *dikaioō*. Of course Paul was not claiming that he was absolutely without wrong in all his doings (as God is), but he was without wrong in setting his mind as he did with regard to the Philippians.

As for the use of “setting (one’s) mind” instead of “disposed,” (and “mindset” for “disposition”), the change makes the intended sense more explicit and clear. It is true that the Greek word used here (*phroneō*) does not include their word for “mind,” but it may have developed from their word for the diaphragm, suggesting perhaps an idea in ancient Greece that our thoughts are pumped up in us by this inner structure as long as it operates. In any case, the English verb “be disposed” was used in the CV hopefully to convey a sense of mental inclination, which is supported by the Greek word in its contexts. Yet an even more forceful sense of active mental engagement is conveyed by the (relatively new) English word “mindset” and its verb forms. This is especially true when it is used of both Christ and the believer in Philippians 2:5. D.H.H.

JOINT PARTICIPANTS OF GRACE

PAUL's letter to the Philippian saints is concerned with conduct as it reflects God's evangel concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. What he writes here is built on what he writes in the first five chapters of Romans, and corresponds especially with what he writes in Romans chapters 6 through 8.¹ Paul is not ashamed of the evangel even though it leaves no room whatsoever for human contribution and boasting. It is *God's* power, not human power, for salvation, and it reveals *God's* righteousness (not requiring human righteousness, but rather Christ's righteous response to His Father's sending, *cf* Rom.5:18) in gratuitously justifying the human by means of *Jesus's faith* (Rom.1:16,17; 3:21-28). God's righteousness is revealed by means of [Christ's] faith, that is, *out of* (Greek, *ek*) His faith, and this is *for* (the cause of), that is, directed *into* (Greek, *eis*) the believer's faith.

Four Greek words in Romans 1:17 provide, in a nutshell, the evangel and its operation in the believer: *ek pisteōs eis pisteōs* ("out-of faith, into faith"). The revelation of God's righteousness in dealing with human unrighteousness is sourced in Jesus Christ's faith in dying for sinners, and this is for the cause and invigorating power of our faith.

Philippians emphasizes the "into faith" part of this message. But, like Romans 6-8, it is built on the "out-of faith"

1. This is not to deny its special relationship with Ephesians and Colossians, but to recognize that even the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ (Eph.3:8) is built on God's evangel of grace concerning His Son as expounded in Romans (*cf* Eph.2:8,9).

part, which tells of the faith and obedience of Jesus Christ. That is never left behind when further revelations are made regarding the future and the present lives of believers. Yet not only is Philippians built on that message of God's sending of His Son concerning sin, and His Son's faith in and faithfulness to that sending, but this evangel appears implicitly throughout the letter, and at significant places most explicitly. This is the message of God's gratuitous grace which God worked out in the Philippians' lives, as He jointly worked it out in Paul's (Phil.1:7; 2:13).

OUT OF FAITH

We must not take up the matter of conduct apart from God's evangel concerning His Son. This evangel is not a summons to righteousness, nor even to faith. Rather it is an announcement of grace which is a revelation of the righteousness of God and a commendation of the love of God, bringing joy and peace and spiritual invigoration to the believer. Philippians begins with Paul thanking *God* (not the Philippians) for what the Philippians had become and were doing (Phil.1:3-7).

In Romans 3:21,25 and 26, the words, "out of faith," become "through Jesus Christ's faith," then "the faith," and then "out of Jesus's faith." These references to the death of Christ for sinners as His "faith" are repeated in Galatians 2 and 3 as well, and in Ephesians 3:12, and also in Philippians 3:9. But in Philippians 2:5-8 they become the disposition, or "*mindset* which is in Christ Jesus." The faith of Jesus Christ, which is His mindset, is defined first as His *emptying* of Himself, followed by His *humbling* of Himself in becoming *obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*.

The basic meaning of "grace" is JOY. Joy and peace come to us from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. They come from God Who spares not His own Son, but

gives Him up for us all (Rom.8:32), and thus through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who was obedient even to the death of the cross. They do not arise from the law, but from Jesus Christ's faith. And this is for our faith. This is for our believing, which brings with it joy and peace, and working in us, by God's grace, it infuses in us a mindset which corresponds to that of Christ Jesus.

FOR FAITH

Faith is a spiritual endowment of grace given to us by God and much needed today (*cf* 1 Cor.12:1,32; 13:13). Our faith is not the cause of justification and deliverance from sin and death, but is graciously given to us by God (Phil.1:29) on the basis of Christ's faith. As with Abraham, justification gained by Christ is *reckoned* to us who are believing what God says to us (Rom.4:20-25).

The evangel which Paul was bringing is for the progress and joy of faith (Phil.1:25). It does not bring a sense of wretchedness as the law brought to young Saul of Tarsus (Rom.7:21-24). Rather it brings a glorying (boasting) in Christ Jesus, which grows and superabounds more and more as we set our minds on it.

In Romans 5:19 the faith of Jesus Christ is called His "obedience" (UNDER-HEARING). That is, He listened attentively to the will of His God and Father for Him, and submitted Himself under its every term. While we are still sinners He dies for our sakes (Rom.5:8). In Romans 6:16,17 our apostle guides us to become slaves who are obeying this obedience of Christ. This means that the teaching of Christ's obedience is that message from God which we are to be listening to submissively. God does not put us under instructions of what we are to do (such as He did for our Lord), but under the declaration of what Christ Jesus has done, which powerfully affects our conduct.

This same pattern comes before us in Philippians 2:5-13.

The Philippians were always obeying the evangel Paul brought to them. They were hearkening to the message of the mindset of Jesus Christ in emptying Himself, taking the form of a slave, and humbling Himself in obedience unto death. And as they put their hearing under that evangel of grace (with joyful fear and exultant trembling) God was working in them to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight.

They were thus carrying their own salvation into effect, not by obedience to the law, but by setting their minds on the mindset of Christ in dying for their sake. That also is where and how God is working in us today.

As Saul of Tarsus, a Hebrew of Hebrews, Paul had gained much by listening to the words of God given in the law. But now God had made him acquainted with Jesus Christ as His Saviour, the One Who was obedient unto death. And he deemed what he had gained by his attentive listening to the law as a forfeit “because of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus” his Lord. Now he was *having* righteousness *from* (Greek, *ek*, out of) God. God was working out righteousness in Paul’s life as he focused his mind and heart on the knowledge of Christ Jesus His Lord (Phil.3:4-12).

Here we see once again how much is missed, not only when righteousness is perceived to be the fruit of works of law, but when it is understood as based on our faith. What is said of *Christ Jesus our Lord* must not be taken to be *of the human*. This is so that what is said of Him may become operative in the believer. Our conduct is the result of God operating in us as we are believing and setting our minds to what Christ has done.

That explains why our conduct is crowned in Philippians 4:4, with these words: “Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will declare, be rejoicing.”

D.H.H.

DEEMING IT TO BE REFUSE

(Philippians 3:1-21)

For the rest, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. (3:1a)

As we consider Paul's entreaty here for faithful service to our Lord, let us continually be rejoicing in the *Lord*. While whenever we are not distracted from so doing, we cannot but rejoice in *Christ* in connection with our future salvation and glorification, here we are not called to a contemplation of these, but are instead enjoined to be rejoicing in our *Lord* in consideration of our *service* as *slaves* for His sake.

To be writing the same to you is not, indeed irksome for me, yet it is your security. (3:1b)

It is as if Paul is apologizing for repeating his entreaty so often for us to be rejoicing in the *Lord*. But since few seem even to grasp the point of his words in this connection, and even those who understand them need special grace in order to heed them, it is critical that he repeat and stress them on behalf of us all.

It is by no means irksome for Paul to be writing the same to us, for it is our *security* that he should do so in the interests of our faithful service, lest we be left to our own devices and be put to shame.

Even if inconsistent in their theology, in their way, all believers rely on *Christ* for salvation. Few indeed, however, have no confidence in the flesh (Phil.3:3b), which is to say, no confidence in themselves but in God (*cf* 2 Cor.1:9) as concerns their *service* for their *Lord*, upon Whom they are wholly dependent for any success therein.

Because of the darkness of our minds, intuitively, such

an approach seems out of the question, since it conflicts with our received ideas as to moral responsibility. We fail to recognize that in our endeavors in which we *effect* (or produce) our own salvation as concerns our practical affairs, it is in fact *God* Who is operating in us for the sake of His delight both the willing and the doing in which we engage unto this end (*cf* Phil.2:12,13).

Yet if we should come to realize that as the Image of the invisible God, it is Christ Himself Who *as our Lord* motivates and inspires us so that we *therefore* enjoy a demonstrable measure of ability (i.e., “invigoration”) in His service, how can we not but rejoice in Him? “For the rest, brethren mine, be *invigorated* in the *Lord* and in the *might* of His *strength*” (Eph.6:10). Hence, “Be rejoicing in the *Lord* always! Again, I will declare, be rejoicing!” (Phil.4:4).

Beware of curs, beware of evil workers. (3:2)

Those who are figured here as “curs,” who, however fine fellows they may be in their own person, are in a certain respect not doers of good, but “evil workers.” This is because, however unwittingly, they stand in opposition to the apostle in his insistence on our putting no confidence in the flesh, whether as concerns not only our ancestral pedigree but even our own righteousness which is of law.

Those who see value and importance in those very things which Paul deems his refuse, who therefore insist on retrieving them out of Paul’s refuse container, are indeed, in this respect, like the wild dogs of the east, who are quite indiscriminating in what they are willing to ingest.

Beware of the maimcision, for we are the circumcision who are offering divine service in the spirit of God, and are glorying in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh. (3:3)

In the present administration, unlike in previous ones, “Circumcision is nothing . . .” (1 Cor.7:19). What was once a token of covenant relationship with the Deity, is now a mere

mutilation of the flesh. Conversely, as those who place no confidence in the flesh and are glorying in Christ Jesus, we become the genuine Circumcision, for this is what the rite signified, in the cutting off of the flesh. Circumcision—as the type of all law-obedience for salvation—has become a badge of apostasy. Beware, then, of the maimcision!

And am I having confidence in flesh, also? If any other one is presuming to have confidence in flesh, I rather: in circumcision the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in relation to law, a Pharisee, in relation to zeal, persecuting the ecclesia, in relation to the righteousness which is in law, becoming blameless. (3:4-6)

All of these are concerned with confidence in the flesh; most have to do with a place of nobility for an esteemed Israelite under law, while two of these (membership in the sect of the Pharisees, and zealotry for the putative virtue of persecution of the ecclesia) are concerned simply with the approval of one’s peers in the pursuit of “orthodoxy.”

But things which were gain to me, these I have deemed a forfeit because of Christ. But, to be sure, I am also deeming all to be a forfeit because of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, because of Whom I forfeited all, and am deeming it to be refuse . . . (3:7,8a)

The Greek word which the CV translates “refuse,” *skubalon*, is an interesting term. It is a New Testament *hapax legomenon* (“[something] said only once”); that is, a word that occurs only once in a single corpus or body of literature.

The AV translation “dung” accords more with the usage in Josephus (*Jewish War*, 5.571) where in the final siege of the Romans in the Jewish War (66-73 A.D.) some of the Jews were reduced to such straits that they searched the sewers for old cow dung and ate the “offal” (*skubalon*; i.e., the residual garbage) therefrom.

The CV translation “refuse” corresponds to the usage

found in the apocryphal work *Sirach* (or *Ecclesiasticus*; 27:4): “As when one sifts with a sieve, the *refuse* [*skubalon*] remains; so also the filth of man in his speech.” Similarly, in the collection of the Rylands Papyri (2.149.22; 39-40 A.D.) the writer speaks of animals grazing on “the *gleanings* [*skubalon*, i.e., ‘residuals’] of my vegetable-seed crop.” Apart from connotative usage, then, the essence of *skubalon* appears to signify that which remains as a residue, which is appropriately discarded as worthless.

These things which had been “gain” to Paul, he now deems a “forfeit” (i.e., something to which the right is lost). He does so gladly “because of Christ”—with a view to “gaining Christ” in his own awareness and practical service, in consideration of the true significance of the cross, in the victory achieved there.

Paul accordingly not only *forfeits* all (giving up the rights and benefits thereof), but deems it as *refuse* as well, which is to say as mere residue, which is to be *discarded* as worthless.

It is “the righteousness which is *in law*” (Phil.3:6) and “*of law*” (Phil.3:9), which includes God’s law given to Israel but is not confined to it, which most cannot believe we are to deem as refuse and so discard accordingly insofar as our standing before God is concerned. Yet it is here that we are “complete” in *Christ* (*cf* Col.2:10), and so simply have no need of law-obedience for our justification.

Further, we cannot “fully follow [Paul]” in his “teaching” (2 Tim.3:10) for our service in which he gives no entreaty for us to heed any directives of Moses at all per se, while at the same time taking it upon ourselves to look to Moses’ law for instruction concerning our walk. Instead, our apostle declares, since we are complete in Christ, “Let no one, *then*, be judging you in food or in drink or in the particulars of a festival, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of those things which are impending—yet

the body is the Christ’s” (Col.2:16,17). As those who are so closely identified with Christ as to be figured as members of His own body (Eph.5:30), we simply have no need to be “scrutinizing” days and months and seasons and years (*cf* Gal.4:10) within a code of law never given to us, which we are nowhere enjoined to heed.

The “all” which Paul deems a forfeit and as worthless refuse includes all that which the Israelite people deemed most valuable—in which they placed their *confidence*, albeit, as aptly termed by Paul, a “confidence in flesh,” whether of heritage, peer approval, or obedience to law.

Insofar as their standing before God was concerned, they were *confident* that their pedigree and law-obedience were the *sine qua non* (“without which, not”) of divine blessing.

Today, perhaps all believers are enlightened sufficiently to know that, in Christ, it is simply not important whether we are of Israelite descent at all, or whether we have obeyed the law concerning circumcision. Many, however, suppose that what is in fact a certain “righteousness in law” is essential to their salvation. This is so whether such a righteousness in law is based upon various portions of the law of Yahweh given to Israel, particular instructions of Jesus given to his disciples, or sundry imperatives of service contained in the epistles of Paul.

Many suppose that they must avoid various sins while achieving at least some minimal level of virtue or else they will be confined to hell for all eternity.

Others, more enlightened in a way, recognize that one’s outward acts (whether of sinful deeds or virtuous endeavors) are simply *not* determinative of one’s destiny.

Such ones, however, insist that a certain inward activity of mind in which one willingly acquiesces to the influences of the spirit and thus accepts Christ as one’s Saviour, *is* determinative of one’s destiny unto salvation.

Such a mental act, however, is deemed not as simply a

proximate cause of one's salvation, one which itself is but the fruit of divine grace, but instead as *a requisite act, ultimately under one's own control, which is the ultimate cause of one's salvation.*

In the end, then, those holding this position finally make man his own saviour just as surely as those who do so more overtly through explicit appeals to law-obedience if one would escape hell and gain heaven.

. . . that I should be gaining Christ, and may be found in Him, not having my righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God for faith: (3:8b,9)

Thus we "gain Christ" in a true recognition of Him; we decidedly do not gain Christ as our Saviour by our correct understanding of His truth, but by God's own choice "before the disruption of the world" (Eph.1:4), in accord with the grace given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian (2 Tim.1:9). We would be found in Him as those not having their own righteousness which is of law, but that which is through the faith(fulness) of Christ, the righteousness which is from God, [based] "on the [i.e., 'this'] faith" (literal rendering).

This is all unto the end:

to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, conforming to His death, if somehow I should be attaining to the resurrection that is out from among the dead. Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected. Yet I am pursuing, if I may be grasping also that for which I was grasped also by Christ Jesus.

Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing—forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus. (3:10-14)

We may conform ourselves to His death, by "reckoning

[ourselves] to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.6:11). Then, in contending the ideal contest of the faith, we may, *in spirit*, even seek the attainment of "the resurrection that is out from among the dead," as those who would "get hold of eonian life" (1 Tim.6:12; 19) even now.

Even Paul could only pursue this goal that he might grasp it; he had not yet obtained it or become already perfected therein. Thus he emphasizes the importance of "forgetting" (figuratively, at least) those things which are behind that he might stretch out to those in front: namely, the pursuit of the prize, that of *a vital, present-day fore-taste* of God's calling above in Christ Jesus in the coming eon, which itself is not a prize at all, but a gracious gift, granted to us gratuitously in God's grace.

Whoever, then, are mature, may be disposed to this, and if in anything you are differently disposed, this also shall God reveal to you. (3:15)

How encouraging these words are! If we are not yet sufficiently mature to grasp the true sense of Paul's words here, do not be worrying about anything (*cf* Phil.4:6), God shall reveal it to us in due course. To our own master we are standing or falling. Now we will be made to stand, for the *Lord* is able to make us stand (*cf* Rom.14:4).

Moreover, in what we outstrip others, there is to be a mutual disposition to be observing the elements by the same rule. (3:16)

As we observe the elements of our faith and its concomitant faithfulness (*cp* Rom.4:12), while recognizing that we possess an enlightenment enjoyed by few others, let us be disposed not to this fact alone. Instead, let us have a "mutual disposition" which includes a mindfulness as well to this "same rule" of outstripping others when it comes to "elementing" our faith, that is to engaging in a faithful walk, suited to the nobility of our position as sons of God and ambassadors of Christ (*cf* Gal.6:15,16; Eph.1:5; 2 Cor.5:20).

Become imitators together of me, brethren, and be noting those who are walking thus, according as you have us for a model . . . (3:17)

In all of these things, let us be imitating Paul, while noting others as well who are walking thus, for we have all such ones as a model (*cf* 2 Tim.3:10,11).

. . . for many are walking, of whom I often told you, yet now am lamenting also as I tell it, who are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose consummation is destruction, whose god is their bowels, and whose glory is in their shame, who to the terrestrial are disposed. (3:18,19)

Many who are friends of Christ, are nevertheless *enemies* of the cross of Christ, insofar as its significance is concerned in the achievement of God's purpose to become All in all (1 Cor.15:28). The consummation which is theirs ("whose consummation") for such unfaithful *service* is that of a certain "destruction" (or "loss"), namely that which will obtain when they, even as ourselves, are manifested before the dais of Christ and are requited for their practices through the body, whether good or bad (2 Cor.5:10). "If anyone's work shall be burned up, he will forfeit it, yet he shall be saved, yet thus, as through fire" ((1 Cor.3:15).

For our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself. (3:20,21)

Our realm inheres in the heavens, where God rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, that, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Eph.2:5-7). How we long to have the body of our humiliation conformed to the body of His glory. Yet this is just what He will do, "in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself." How great is our Saviour, the *Lord* Jesus Christ!

J.R.C.

DO NOT WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING

“DO NOT worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus” (Phil.4:6,7).

There is an elixir of life in words like these. Touching life at all points, they embrace every experience, and affect every problem. How positive they are, how emphatic! There is no room left for the smallest doubt to intrude. The words are just an exquisite echo of the Psalmist’s thought—*“fret not thyself!”*

How complete, how inclusive the injunction is! Do *not* worry about *anything*. Not a single thing. But can we realize it? Is it possible to live up to such a counsel of perfection? A thousand times, yes! And for the great reason that this rare paragraph enshrines a God-given assurance. There is a promise, a pledge of a superior peace—the peace of God, His perfect provision for the keeping, the steadying of our hearts in Christ Jesus.

What an expression of God’s solicitude! And for each of us to *make true* in the circumstances of life. How true, rests with the quality of our reliance upon God, in how far we leave things to Him, for His working out. And His appointment is never a disappointment. Therefore, on no account are we to worry. It does no good, changes nothing, nor ever gives us back the thing we prized. It enfeebles and wastes our strength, keeps the brain excited, the blood feverish, and the heart beating wildly.

If, then, we must not worry, and there are things in

life calculated to make us anxious, how may we displace worry? By taking God into our confidence as we voice immediate needs. "With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Note the proviso—*with thanksgiving*, which in itself affects the burdened mind. Indeed, thankfulness for the simple things of life, the ordinary, forgettable things, means much.

The tragic indictment of the ancient world was that, "knowing God, not *as God* do they glorify or thank Him." Stars in the heaven are thanked, and saints in the calendar, but not God. May we be giving thanks always, for all things, to God. Untold occasions call for it, and a voiced acknowledgment deepens our consciousness of His daily care.

No aspect or department of life is outside the interest of God, our Father. He is at all times an interested Listener. Our requests, therefore, may be unreservedly made known. Let them flow forth, without any concern as to how they will be met. That rests with God's will and wisdom, according to which, all the intricacies of life are appointed. Has He not ordered them, appointing each one, both good and ill?

There are some things in life God would not have us change! And happy are we, if, in the acceptance of them, we see the Father's own rare ordering. Let us so live, in the spirit of a line from a hymn: "I do not ask to see the distant scene, one step enough for me." It suffices that we make our requests known to God, and leave them with Him. This done, with thanksgiving, there will come to heart and mind, God's own wonderful peace.

"And the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus." Here, in a peace which surpasses all power of thought, lies the strength and joy of Paul's counsel of perfection. It is the peace of God, in contrast with and superior to all human counsel, palliative, or panacea.

Gift of the God of peace; it is the only calm in a world of unrest. But O, how this peace differs from that which the world offers! We see the word used all around us. Yet how little it conveys, how far short it falls, of all that such a word "peace" should stand for! Does it not look lost, as a wandering star from its orbit?

Only as linked with God and His ministering grace, does the Word hold real comfort and consolation. In such union it has vital power, confirming its frequent and heartening occurrence in the calm of a rich content. The peace of God. Grace and peace. Yes, yes. In spite of all around us, and the tangle of daily events. For our hearts shall be as a citadel, gloriously kept. "The Lord is thy Keeper."

What a glad secret of life! One that Christ Himself exemplified. He did not worry or fret impatiently. He *trusted*. He rested supremely in God. He gave Himself completely over to God. He prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass by from Me. Moreover, not as I will, but as You!" (Matt.26:39).

How sublime an example of utter submission to God's will! There has been but One, and there will never be another so altogether acquiescent to the Father's will. The purpose, will, and majesty of God, the Father, was everything to Him. How much so we have yet to see. In the meanwhile, let us hold by this superior peace. It is resident in Him. *He* is our peace, and He is on the throne, even the throne of the universe.

Therefore, "do not worry about anything." Rather, "with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." In these two statements we have first a prohibition, then an injunction. Is it not that prayer should be the death of care? It follows, however, that the source or cause of worry should not be self-made. It should be that imposed on us, and not something fashioned by ourselves which we persist in carrying. This we must throw away. Life, to be happily

lived, must have in all its aspects, a felt consciousness of God. At all times there should be a sense of God's ruling. For, not only is God operating the universe in accord with the counsel of His will, but Christ is carrying it on by His powerful declaration. What control is here, and how complete! Just to feel that we are entirely in God's hands, flung upon His care and control, is to know a peace inviolate.

What small resemblance to the faith of Christ our faltering trust displays. Self looms so largely with us, and thus disquietude. Not so with our Lord. He displayed the dignity of complete assurance. Rejecting His disquietude, He puts in its place the thought of the majesty and power of God the Father.

Let us learn of Him to quietly accept our Father's will. Let us be disposed to that which is above, where Christ is, enthroned at God's right hand. Then shall we know the peace of God, and how superior it is to every frame of mind. And the God of peace *shall* be with you, in every moment, every hour.

“Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace.”

William Mealand

HARRY WATTS

War veteran, bus driver, husband, father, friend of many, brother in the Lord, Harry Watts was a servant of a small monthly assembly in Kitchener, Ontario, for many years. He died at the age of 95 on May 10, 2019.

He was a man of optimistic expectation (not simply “hope”). This was because God graciously granted him faith centered in the giving of His Son for sinners. Those who knew him will miss him for awhile. But God's purpose for him in Christ will be realized, as it will for us all together.

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 110th Year
(1909–2019)

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SECOND QUARTER, 2019

Volume 110

Number 2

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.

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EDITORIAL

AS WE CONTINUE to give special attention to Paul's letter to the Philippians, let us rejoice with our apostle in all that he writes concerning Christ Jesus, our Lord. No matter the motive, "Christ is being announced" still today, and we are rejoicing in this also, and we will be rejoicing as Paul was rejoicing, nevertheless, even in the restrictions placed on his ministry (Phil.1:18). What a joy it is for us to meditate on these things of consequence (Phil.1:10) together with our readers!

"Short as it is, no other book contains the word rejoice as often as Philippians" (p.77).

God's evangel of grace (JOY) and peace which Paul was bringing does not accord with human wisdom, but it is "God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing it" (Rom.1:16). This salvation "is not only a future event, but a present power and should be the preponderant influence in our lives" (p.74).

We hear the message of what has been done in bold and faithful terms in Philippians 2:6-8, and of that which shall be in 2:9-11. In accord with the apostle's special concern in this epistle for our present conduct, this evangel is introduced with his entreaty: "Let this disposition ["mindset," revised CVNT, *cf* p.52] be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also" (Phil.2:5).

Consequently, in our present lives we are to be setting our minds and subjecting our hearing to this message of Christ's mindset and obedience. As we do so, God will be working in us to will as well as to work in carrying our salvation into effect, for the sake of His delight (Phil.2:12,13).

Regarding this, we direct attention especially to the articles beginning on pages 79 and 87.

We present now the particular sections of Philippians (as currently being revised) under discussion in the articles that follow: D.H.H.

PAUL'S AFFAIRS (Phil.1:12-30)

¹² *y* Now I am intending =you to know, brethren, that my ^{ac}affairs have rather come to be ^{io}for the progress of the evangel, ¹³ so that my bonds in Christ become apparent in the whole pretorium and to all the rest, ¹⁴ and the majority of the brethren, having confidence in the Lord as to my bonds, are more exceedingly daring to speak the word of God fearlessly. ¹⁵ *a* Some indeed are ⁺even heralding Christ because of envy and strife, yet *a* some because of delight also; ¹⁶ these indeed ^o of love, having perceived that I am located ^{io}for the defense of the evangel, ¹⁷ yet those are announcing Christ out of faction, not purely, surmising to rouse affliction in my bonds. ¹⁸ *a* What ^{for} then?—Moreover, 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 ^{bt}nevertheless.

¹⁹ For I am ^oaware that, for me, this will be eventuating ^{io}in salvation through =your petition and the supply of the spirit of Jesus Christ, ²⁰ in accord with my premonition and expectation, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but ⁱwith ^eall boldness, as always, now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. ²¹ For to me to be living is Christ, and to die, gain. ²² *y* Now if it is to be living in flesh, this to me means fruit from work, and *a* what I shall be preferring I am not making known. ²³ (Yet I am being pressed out of the two, having a yearning ^{io}for the solution and to be together with Christ, for it rather is much better.) ²⁴ Yet to

be staying in the flesh is more necessary because of =you. ²⁵ And having this confidence, I am ^oaware that I shall be remaining and shall be abiding with =you all ^{io}for =your progress and joy of faith, ²⁶ that =your glorying may be superabounding in Christ Jesus in me through my presence ^{td}with =you again. ²⁷ Only be citizens walking worthily of the evangel of Christ, that whether coming and making =your acquaintance or being absent, I should be hearing of =your concerns, that =you are standing firm in one spirit, one soul, competing together in the faith of the evangel, ²⁸ and not being startled by those who are opposing in *n*anything, which ^a is to them a proof of destruction, yet of =your salvation, and this from God, ²⁹ *t*for to =you it is graciously granted, ^{ve}for Christ's sake, not only to be believing ^{io}on Him, but to be suffering ^{ov}for His sake also, ³⁰ having the same struggle such as =you perceive in me and now are hearing to be in me.

PAUL'S AFFAIRS (Phil.4:10-13)

¹⁰ *y* Now I rejoice in the Lord greatly that at length, for once your mindset ^{over}toward me blossoms, ^{on}to which =you were setting your mind also, yet =you were lacking occasion. ¹¹ Not that I am hinting ^{ac}at a want, for I learn to be content in that in which I am. ¹² I am ^oaware what it is to be humbled as well as ^oaware what it is to be superabounding. In everything and among all am I ^oinitiated, to be satisfied as well as to be hungering, to be superabounding as well as to be in want. ¹³ For all am I strong in Him Who is invigorating me—Christ!

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST (Phil.2:1-18)

2 If then there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any communion of spirit, if any =compassion and =pity, ² fill my joy full, that =you may be setting

your mind ^omutually, having ^omutual love, joined in ^esoul, being set in mind to ^oone thing—³ nothing according with faction, nor yet according with vainglory—but with ^hhumility, deeming one another ^hsuperior to one's ^eself, ⁴ not each noting ^hthat which is his ^oown, but each ^hthat of ^dothers also.

⁵ For let this ^hmindset be in ^eyou, which is in Christ Jesus also, ⁶ Who, being ^hinherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, ⁷ ^{bt} nevertheless empties Himself, ^htaking the form of a slave, ^hcoming to be in the likeness of human beings, ⁸ and ^hbeing found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, ^hbecoming obedient unto death, ⁹ even the death of the cross.

⁹ Wherefore also, ^hGod highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the Name ^hthat is above every name, ¹⁰ that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, ¹¹ and every tongue should acclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, ¹⁰ for the glory of God, the Father.

¹² So that, my beloved, according as ^eyou always obey, not as in my ^hpresence only, but now much rather in my ^habsence, with fear and trembling, be carrying your ^oown salvation into effect, ¹³ for it ^his God ^hWho is operating in ^eyou to ^hwill as well as to ^hwork ^{ov}for the sake of His ^hdelight. ¹⁴ All be doing without murmurings and reasonings, ¹⁵ that ^eyou may become blameless and artless, children of God, flawless, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse among whom ^eyou are appearing as luminaries in the world, ¹⁶ having on the word of life, ^{io}for my glorying ^{io}in the day of Christ, that I do not run ^{io}for naught, neither that I toil ^{io}for naught. ¹⁷ But ^heven if I am a ^hlibation on the sacrifice and ministration of ^eyour ^hfaith, I am rejoicing myself and rejoicing together with ^eyou all. ¹⁸ ⁹Now to be ^omutual, ^eyou' also be rejoicing, and be rejoicing together with me.

PAUL'S AFFAIRS

(Philippians 1:12-30–4:10-13)

THE AFFAIRS of Paul, the slave of Christ Jesus, at the crisis which introduced the present administration of God's transcendent grace, are of extraordinary interest and importance to those who wish to walk in accord with the will of God. As the framework of Philippians shows, he discusses his affairs twice, in two balancing sections, one near the beginning, and the other at the end of the epistle. First he brings up his bonds in Christ (1:12-18). Corresponding to this he speaks of his strength in Christ (4:13). In the early part of the epistle he expands on his indifference to death (1:19-26). In the latter he declares his complacency in want. Besides this, in each section, he touches on the experience of the Philippians, their suffering with Paul (1:27) and their care of him (4:10).

PAUL'S BONDS IN CHRIST

The vast divergence between the Kingdom and the present is graphically set forth by the bonds of Peter and Paul. Herod had Peter bound with two chains, besides the four quaternions of soldiers to guard him (Acts 12). Paul, in Rome, seems to have been bound with only one chain (Acts 28:20; Eph.6:20; 2 Tim.1:16) with a single soldier to guard him (Acts 28:16). Yet God is not hindered by man's might. He acts in accord with His spiritual plans. The Kingdom is a display of His power on earth. Hence its chief representative must be freed. The present is a display of God's weakness, hence Paul is not set at liberty by miraculous means. To Peter God sends His messenger.

The very gates of the jail opened to him spontaneously. He is extricated out of the hands of Herod. So long as the Kingdom was being heralded, Peter had power superior to all of earth's rulers.

And, so long as this Kingdom was the subject of Paul's preaching he also was freed from jail, as at Philippi itself (Acts 16). But now that the Kingdom has been definitely rejected by the Jewish nation, God has changed His mode of operation, so that it is quite the reverse. The symbol of the evangel becomes a chained ambassador (Eph.6:20). Nothing else could so graphically illustrate the fact that God is conciliated toward this warring world. He is for peace with mankind, and even the most flagrant provocation, such as the imprisonment of His ambassador, will not change His attitude toward it. So, for two whole years at the commencement of this economy, God stages a picture which portrays its essential features.

To us, with our dull minds and feeble apprehensions, this change in the outward fortunes of God's chosen witness may not mean very much. But this was especially real to the Philippians, as Paul's release from prison, with the accompanying earthquake, must have been one of the most cherished memories of the jailor and all the members of the ecclesia at Philippi. At first sight it would seem to them, as it does to most of us, that Paul's imprisonment must be a great hindrance to the evangel. Not merely that he himself could no longer go about to make it known, but that his sufferings would intimidate others, so that the evangel would cease to be heralded at all, or at least with far less boldness than before. All of this arises from a failure to realize the vast change the evangel itself had undergone, which made so striking a contrast in its symbolic expression.

With this in mind we are able to understand why Paul assures the Philippians that his affairs were no hindrance,

but rather had come to be for the progress of the evangel. Since they had given the message such hearty support, this would be most welcome in their ears. Paul has not been robbed of an audience. Quite the contrary, he has been brought to the most desirable audience that could be found. The whole pretorium heard of him. This was not necessarily, as some translations have it, the "palace" of the emperor, but the guard, which had an enormous influence, and may have been used by God as a means of spreading the evangel far more effectively and expeditiously than if the apostle had been at liberty. He came into touch with Caesar's very household (4:22).

It may also have been intended by God to serve notice on the political powers that this evangel could not come into conflict with their authority. The Kingdom message and the mixed message of the church in these degenerate days are a menace to the governments of the earth, but the true evangel for today has no right to interfere with this world's politics. Can we not see all this in the fact that Paul was put under the power of the Roman guard in the capital city itself? There was no friction there, and this may have been a great help in allaying suspicion elsewhere, for the Romans were quick to crush any sect which had political aims. Moreover, Paul was allowed many privileges. Perhaps it was the gift received from Philippi which enabled him to hire a house of his own (Acts 28:30).

It is only as we realize that Paul's bonds are in fullest accord with the evangel in its latest form, that we are able to appreciate his insistence on *boldness* in making it known. A prisoner of Caesar's can hardly be bold. But if the bonds are in *Christ*, and according to God's will, and calculated to advance the evangel, then it may be heralded freely and boldly, as it is fitting that it should. Hence Paul asked for prayer that he might open his mouth with boldness, to make known the secret of the evangel, for which

he was conducting an embassy in a chain, that in it he should be bold, as he must speak (Eph.6:19-20). We have every reason to think that this prayer was answered, and that, though he was bound, the evangel was free and was heralded with the utmost fearlessness.

Nor was Paul alone in this. The majority of the brethren, instead of being timid in their heralding lest they also be put in a chain, are more exceedingly daring to speak the word of God fearlessly. They realized that God had placed Paul in an ideal position to defend the evangel. Here he could “teach that which concerns the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, unforbidden” (Acts 28:31). The evangel wins its way in the very capital of its enemies. This must have been a very great consolation and encouragement to him. Instead of his imprisonment becoming the death blow of the glad tidings, it is the signal for fresh confidence and new delight.

So great became the confidence—one is almost tempted to say carelessness or recklessness—that some even pretended to preach Christ in order to bring Paul into trouble. Possibly their faction did not realize the full truth of the secret of the evangel, and heralded a semi-kingdom mixture as many have done since, to which the authorities could rightly object. Be that as it may, even their envy and strife, so unbecoming to those who pretend to proclaim peace, even that does not hinder the evangel, for Christ is announced nevertheless. Hence Paul is rejoicing in the advance of the evangel, which seems to make better progress against the wind than with it. May we also learn this lesson, and rejoice that neither foe nor friend can find a means of defeating His gracious purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PAUL'S INDIFFERENCE TO DEATH

To magnify Christ is the one object now before His aged

slave, and he tests everything which comes to him from this standpoint alone. Of course the great question before him and before his friends, the Philippians, is the outcome of his imprisonment. He must face the possibility that the verdict will be death. But this does not disturb him. Either life or death must be met in the same way. He is concerned rather that he may not be put to shame in anything, that even the fear of death shall not make him timid, that his customary boldness in making Christ known may not be lacking as he faces the fate of a martyr.

So he weighs all the possibilities and finds that he has no real choice in the matter. Living, to him, meant Christ. Dying, as a witness for Christ, would be gain to both himself and the cause of Christ. If he lives, there will be fruit from further efforts. Whether these will equal the results of a martyr's death could not be known, so he does not give his preference (1:22). At this point the attentive reader of the usual versions finds that Paul goes on to contradict what he has just been saying. He has made it clear that he is indifferent, yet he now goes on to say that he is in a strait betwixt these two, which is quite the opposite of indifference. But then he makes it clear that he is *not* in a strait at all, but prefers to “depart” (which must mean death). This, he says, is far better. In brief, he wished to be convicted, yet made every effort to defend himself!

The lack of all consistency in the passage, as ordinarily translated, is matched by its utter lack of conformity to the Original, in which there is no such confusion of thought. What Paul has said as to his own attitude is not denied. He is quite complacent as to the outcome of his trial, so far as he himself is concerned. Yet from *their* standpoint he realizes that his continuance in the flesh would be of more advantage. Therefore he is confident that he will remain and abide for their progress and joy of faith, that their glorying may be superabounding in Christ Jesus, through

his presence with them again. He was later released, and doubtless was with them as he had hoped. But, as this part of his career is not symbolic of the present grace, it is suppressed in the Scriptures. We are to look upon him as bound in body but free in spirit to the last.

When I was in Rome I was surprised to find that the statues of Paul usually put a sword in his hand, until my guide explained that it was customary to depict each of the saints with the instrument that caused his death. Judged by the other relics in Rome, especially the traces left by Peter (who never was there) we may be quite certain that Paul was *not* executed with the sword, if he was killed at all. The legends to this effect cannot be substantiated by the Scriptures. This relieves us of another incubus of theology, the mythical second imprisonment of the apostle. All such additions to the sacred text are mischievous and altogether unnecessary for faith.

Paul, in characterizing his death, speaks of it as a libation, a dissolution, (2 Tim.4:6). This has no suggestion of violence, as is the case with Peter. The course and outcome of Paul's trial is given us in his second epistle to Timothy. “At my first defense no one came along with me, but all abandoned me. May it not be reckoned against them! Yet the Lord stood beside me, and He invigorates me, that through me the heralding may be fully discharged, and all the nations should hear, and I am rescued out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will be rescuing me from every wicked work and will be saving me for His celestial kingdom . . .” (2 Tim.4:16-18). These words seem to show clearly that he was released, and that his confident words to the Philippians were fulfilled.

In view of all these facts the ordinary renderings, which make Paul desirous of death, are to be viewed with suspicion. In that case his release was “far worse” than his death! A concordant rendering, as usual, disposes of all

of the difficulties. Paul was not in a strait *betwixt* life and death, but there was pressure from both which took him *out* of them. The accurate, literal rendering is I-AM-BEING-pressed YET OUT-OF-THE TWO. Neither life nor death has the attractive power of another, a third alternative—to be together with Christ. This is what should always be before our hearts, as it was with Paul. This is the solution to the question, life or death? The answer is *neither*. Rather let us have immortality when we are together with Christ, for it, rather, is much better.

Death is not far better than life, and Paul could not have made such a statement. This whole passage has lost its force because the church has lost its proper expectation. Death was always banished from the presence of Christ when He was on earth. No one goes to Him in death. If any did they would be dead no longer. It is His presence which calls them back to life in the resurrection. Let us be like Paul. Between life and death we would not choose, but rather let us yearn for that gracious and glorious event which is ever imminent—the presence of Christ and our gathering together unto Him.

PAUL'S COMPLACENCY

Paul's experience with the evangel, as well as his varying supply of material support had taught him one of the most blessed of all lessons—that of contentment apart from prevailing circumstances. He had learned to be content in that in which he was (4:11-12). Humbled and hungry, or superabounding and satisfied, he did not wish it otherwise. The reason was that he had been *initiated*. This word *mueō* is closely connected with the word mystery *musterion*. In earlier eras God not only hid what He purposed in the future, but, as a result, it was unknown why He dealt as He did with His creatures. Since He has made His purpose fully known, we have the privilege of going behind

the scenes, and know that every detail of our experience has a blessed sequel, hence do not wish to change aught in the least. We know why God sends us wealth and want, and we are content, even if it does not suit our souls.

THE PHILIPPIANS SUFFER WITH PAUL

Philippi was a Roman colony, so that it was a Rome in miniature and much would be made of the duties as well as the privileges of citizenship. Paul uses this as the basis of his exhortation for the future. They have heard of his concerns. Now he hopes to hear of theirs, that they are standing firm in one spirit, one soul, competing together in the faith of the evangel (1:27). Later on he uses this same figure to enforce the great truth that their citizenship belongs to the heavens (3:20). But here we have rather the unity or community of effort which should characterize every local company of believers who seek to spread the glad tidings. Not only is there the sevenfold unity of the spirit to unite them (Eph.4:3-6), but there should also be a unity of soul and of effort in service.

Faithful heralding of the evangel is bound to stir up opposition. It reveals the destruction of the stubborn as well as the salvation of those who believe, notwithstanding its insistence on peace, and that God is now conciliated, so that all may be reconciled to Him by simply receiving the proffered gift of Christ. The city that flogged and imprisoned Paul because he had done a good deed, which interfered with the sordid gains of a few of their number, would not hesitate to mishandle those who followed in his steps.

There is one thing which is even better than serving our blessed Lord, and that is to suffer for His sake. It seems to be a special grace granted to the faithful, more especially as they have fellowship with Paul and with the struggle which came to him when he first made public the present secret administration. Much of this suffering arises from

the great changes which were introduced and because only a few cut cleanly with the past. Others held on to it with its religion and fleshly prerogatives. This was aggravated as time went on. All Asia and eventually nearly all the saints everywhere forsook Paul and his final message. The few who have had even an inkling of it have had to suffer, not merely from unbelievers, but from their own fellow saints.

These are not the sufferings of Paul which came to him from lack of support, or danger, or his many enemies. These could not touch him now. But they were none the less real and painful. In this very epistle he speaks of envy and strife and faction (1:15,17), of evil workers, of the maimcision (3:2), of the many whose walk made them enemies of the cross, who are disposed to the terrestrial (3:18-19). And if such were present in his days, what must be the case today? Is there envy or strife or faction? Are there evil workers, Judaizers, enemies of the cross among the saints now? Are some disposed to the terrestrial? Very few of us are not included in these terms. If Paul were present he would be a great sufferer, even if he had no wants and endured no afflictions. And so it will be with us if we are fully in fellowship with him (2 Tim.3:12).

Paul *lamented* over the enemies of the cross. What a lamentation there would be if any number of the saints were so sensitive at the present time! Even where the *death* of Christ is preached, the *manner* of it, and its utter condemnation of the flesh and the world are seldom seen in our conduct. And celestial citizenship has been exchanged for terrestrial dominion or service, with good government or social reform or sanitation as its aim. It is simply that we whose eyes are opened to these lamentable conditions have been hardened to them. If we were not callous our suffering would incapacitate us for service.

But ours is not to dwell upon such things, but rather

on the side of rejoicing. The suffering will have a glorious compensation in the future. And the present is never without ground for joy. To correspond with the section which speaks of the Philippians' suffering with Paul, we find him rejoicing greatly that their disposition toward him had found expression. In the living language of the epistle it is compared with a plant which was waiting for warmth in order to bloom. Now that their disposition had blossomed in their contribution, he has occasion to rejoice greatly.

Such were Paul's affairs at the beginning of this economy. And, in a very real sense, such are his affairs today. The difference is only one of degree. It is only as we are in living sympathy with his way at this juncture that we will be able to walk and please God under the very special conditions which pertain to the present grace. I will not apologize in the least for going into his affairs in some detail. It can hardly be overdone. When so much time is spent in following in the footprints of Christ *when He was ministering to the Circumcision*, leading to endless perplexity, it is high time that we consider the conduct of the one whom God has given as a model for us who are of the Uncircumcision. This alone will enable us to walk worthily of the special and supernal calling with which He has called us.

A. E. Knoch

Who can walk worthily of a calling which he does not apprehend? Let us not strive to be what we are not. All God asks of us is to live up to what He has made us.

The preparation for such a walk, the power for such deportment, lies in a consciousness of our high social standing among God's nobility. Among men we readily recognize a nobleman by the superficial niceties of his conduct. We ought to be the true nobility, known by the deeper and more enduring virtues which adorn the doctrine we profess.

A. E. Knoch

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

(Philippians 2:1-18)

PRACTICE is more powerful than precept. Deeds may do more than declarations in directing our lives. In Ephesians we have already been told how we should walk. In Philippians we are given examples of such conduct in the careers of others. We are pointed to the kenosis of Christ (He “empties Himself”), the forfeits of Paul, the solicitude of Timothy, and the suffering of Epaphroditus. These are the special characters in Holy Writ who are presented for our emulation within the boundaries of this present secret administration. Hence they should be frequent and foremost in our exhortations. They should be the leading characters in Christendom.

How far have we failed in this matter! More picturesque characters occupy the attention of Christians, and are hailed in their literature and songs. Even the children sing, “Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone.” But who does it? He would not be a second Daniel, but a fanatic. It is well to be reminded of the patience of Job. But we must not count on his reward. And it is excellent to consider the heroes of faith in the eleventh of Hebrews. But the object and end of their faith are not the same as ours. All of this is instructive and profitable, but cannot compare with the special examples selected by God for us, to guide our feet in His service in this era which is so different from all that preceded, or that will succeed it. Let us henceforth focus our attention on these models exclusively for a while, and see if we can profit by their example.

This is especially true of the Psalms. In the dim light of the Reformation and even among those more enlightened in later days, the Psalms have been acclaimed as the greatest source of strength for communion and conduct. Good as they are, they never attain, not even in their highest strain, to the grace and glory which should empower our conduct at the present time. In one way, indeed, the Psalms are in antithesis to present truth, and, we fear, hinder its full apprehension. Being concerned with Israel and the Kingdom, they are disposed to the terrestrial, which we should not be. When we leave them in their own setting, they are even more wonderful and helpful while singing with grace in our hearts to God (*cf* Col.3:16).

This celestial character of our walk is especially clear in connection with the example of Christ (Phil.2:5-8). In setting forth a synopsis of His humiliation, no details of His earthly life are given. The earth seems to serve only as a place on which to erect the accursed tree. There is no mention of His ministry to the Circumcision, or of His royal rights. He comes in the form of a *slave*, in the likeness of *humanity*. His life on earth serves as the supreme example for the Circumcision. He was their copy, their “underwriting.” They are to follow Him in His footprints (1 Peter 2:21). For them no other example is needed. But with us it is different. Only His relation to the earth as the place of humiliation is put before us. The details must be filled in by others. These are involved in His cross, but they are not apparent until the depth of human infamy has been sounded by the apostasy of Israel.

EXHORTATION TO A MUTUAL DISPOSITION

We now come to the first of the four exhortations which are found in Philippians. It is strikingly like the opening exhortation in Ephesians 4:1-6. There humility was coupled with *unity*. The unity of the spirit is to be kept with

the tie of peace. Where pride prevails this unity fails. So also here. Humility is associated with a *mutual* disposition. The slight difference in viewpoint arises from the character of the epistles. It may be seen in the words used. In Ephesians it is *one*. In Philippians it is *same*. The spirit's unity consists in *one* body, *one* spirit, *one* expectation, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God. Corresponding to this, in service there should be in all the *same* disposition, the same love, souls joined *together*, disposed to *one* thing (Phil.2:2). This might be called *the unity of the soul*, for it is the effect of the unity of the spirit, the outward evidence of the inward power.

Unity of spirit and a mutual disposition are the great need for effective service, even among believers. This is because we are by no means perfected as yet. We are still selfish. We are prone to two sins which should be utterly absent—strife and vainglory. These are products of pride. If we consider ourselves better than others it will lead to contention. If we desire that our superiority be recognized it will be naught but vainglory. No one knows how subtle and widespread these failings are because no one recognizes them as such. They are not condemned, but condoned. We do not expect anyone to allow his pride to be touched. We almost demand that this be resented. Humility—*true* humility—is considered a weakness unworthy of a man and a Christian.

It is not easy for us to recognize the justice of this. If we really possess superior qualities or have advanced to attainments beyond others, why should we not claim due recognition? The answer is very simple. All true worth will be rewarded in the future. But now is the time of *service*. It is most likely that, in that day, only that will be found genuine which did not fight for recognition. All other glory will be found without solid contents, an empty shell. It is impossible for us to decide even of ourselves, nor is it nec-

essary. The truth for today is found only in unity, and the service for today should be a mutual effort, unmarred by strife and vainglory.

Even the highest gifts are no ground for self-exaltation, for all comes from God and should be a cause of thankfulness, not pride. The best of us have *nothing that we did not receive*. Nothing has originated in us. We have no more right to it than the most despised of humanity. It is only when we lose sight of God's deity and our creaturehood that we preen our feathers or blow our horn. Then it is that we resent any lack of appreciation of our gifts or interference with our work. And this soon leads to dissension and division, which constitute the most glaring faults of Christendom, and are the conclusive evidence of its apostasy and shame.

Normally, we should look to Christians and Christendom to see the fruit of evangelical truth. That is what the "heathen" are compelled to do, apart from reading the Scriptures. What a consolation to look away from such hypocritical Christianity to Christ! Self-abasement, not self-exaltation—such is His disposition. What a comfort there is to be found in His love, which was fixed on others, not Himself. Here we can have real communion of spirit if our eyes and hearts are open to the truth. With Him we can have compassion and pity for those beneath us, not disregard or contempt. It is only by meditation on His career that we may realize the shortcomings of our own. His disposition is the test and corrective of our tendency to exalt ourselves.

There is a notable difference between the ecclesias of Corinth and Philippi. In the former there seems to have been much in the way of gifts and physical endowments. They sneered at the apostle's style of speaking. Yet they were full of factions. They wanted to reign. Yet they were fleshly and immature. Notwithstanding their own estimate

of themselves, the apostle could not reveal to them what was on his heart. We do not read of many gifts in Philipians. Instead of criticizing Paul's oratory they contributed to his support. So that we do not read of any schisms among them. And to them Paul writes as to those who have received the highest truth.

May every gathering of saints take these things to heart! It is far more important to have the humble disposition of Christ than to have the most perfect spiritual and physical equipment. A good speaker, with an agreeable presence, and equipped with much truth, is not to be despised. But, alas, too often, as in Corinth, he may divide instead of unite. Apollos did not wish to split the saints, but he did so by his good qualities. What should be cultivated by us all is this *mutual disposition* for, apart from our own pride, we have the *same* objects before us. And this can come only in the measure in which we partake of the disposition of Christ Jesus, as summed up in the phrase: *He stooped to serve*.

THE DESCENT OF CHRIST

As the *kenosis*, or emptying of Christ, is fully discussed elsewhere¹, we will confine ourselves here to the lesson which it should bring us. It is the ideal for all creation in relation to God. Christ humbled Himself: God highly exalted Him. With us, alas, the tendency is just the opposite. We exalt ourselves so that God must humble us. In His case we have true humility exemplified as in no other, for He went from the place supreme to the deepest depth, and God has made Him Lord of all. Leaving the form of God He took that of a slave. Becoming like a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

1. In our 48-page booklet, *The Pre-existence of Christ*, and "The Kenosis Of Christ," *Unsearchable Riches* vol.21, pp 197-231.

Apart from being God Himself, nothing can be higher than having the *form* of God. God Himself is invisible (1 Tim.1:17; Heb.11:27). To bring Him within the range of human comprehension He must be depicted by an Image, having a Form. The living God cannot be made known by lifeless representations. Hence He has chosen One, His creative Original, in Whom all was created, to represent Him, to be the visible Image of invisible Deity (Col.1:15). His shape or form must be that which is suggestive of God, especially of the character which He assumes on any occasion, in order to reveal Himself to His creatures. Christ Jesus was that Form. In Him God was seen in such a theophany as suited the weakness of the human frame. Yet in visions He appeared in soul-dismaying splendor, as when Isaiah beheld His glory. This passage, as all else in this epistle, deals with service, not essential being.

As the subject of this passage is the height from which Christ descended, it does not treat of His relationship to God in other respects. The equality here spoken of does not arise from intrinsic identity but extrinsic form. Outwardly, to human gaze, He was God, Elohim and Yahweh. This it was which He did not deem pillaging. The fact that He could take the place of God without taking anything from Him is here introduced to show His supreme position in the universe. He was the Effulgence of God's glory (Heb.1:3), the most magnificent and sublime percept to be found. As there was no higher height, He could not be exalted without a previous descent.

Our disposition, and that of the world, is to hold fast to all the wealth and power and dignity to which we are able to attain. Indeed, we are disposed to seek still more, even when that which we possess has become a burden. The motto of the respectable and esteemed is "Ever upward"! It is pressed upon the aspiring youth and preached as gospel in our churches. Ever higher is the aim of the ambitious

man. Even in the church this has found its full expression. It is seldom that a preacher does not desire a larger church, or welcome a higher ecclesiastical position. Alas, the most prominent men in Christendom have gone up and not down, and in most cases, have given an example just the reverse of that which our Lord has set before us.

That, despite His supernal dignities, the disposition of Christ was one of love and compassion, and utterly lacking in selfishness and pride, is shown by His self-abasement. He *empties* Himself. What this means is clearly indicated by the change in *form*. He was not God and He did not become a slave. But He had God's *form*, yet He took a slave's *form*. He did not carry with Him any of the former into the latter. This is clearly shown by the word *empties*. Only when He was *transformed*, as on the holy mount (Matt.17:2), did His face shine as the sun and His garments become white as the light. In this vision He anticipates the form which He will have in the Kingdom, after His exaltation. But it was not a permanent form, only a vision. When He descended the glory was gone.

Not only does He *empty* Himself by taking the form of a slave, but He also *humbles* Himself, seeing that He came to be in the likeness of humanity. It is humiliating to belong to the human race. Let us take a place among those messengers from other spheres who have visited the earth, and know something of human history. What a sad, sordid, sinful spectacle do we see as we contemplate man's mistakes and misery! Apart from his future, I question whether any creature outside the earth would care to belong to our sin-cursed, death-doomed race. Normally we should be like our parents, and hide ourselves for very shame. Were we not blinded to our state, and hardened to our fate, we would humble ourselves because we are not merely *like* humanity and *fashioned* as a man, but we actually belong to this base band.

Christ Jesus was not a human being as we are, for God was His Father, yet He bore our likeness. He was not a man like the rest, for He had no sin and had life in such abundance that it would counteract the disease and death which is our portion. Though He had the likeness and the fashion of a man, He did not possess the mortality and the sin which is the cause of our humiliation. He was human in appearance, not in fact. He did not humiliate Himself simply because, like all of us, He shared the general disgrace. So sensitive was He to sin, that His association with it was enough to humble Him. Thus it was that He became the Man of Sorrows, and made close acquaintance with our grief.

We must not think that all this was independent of the will and heart of God. Quite the opposite. It was a path of *obedience* to God. And it was a revelation of the Deity quite as much as His previous condition. Indeed, the highest service lies in the lowest sphere. His humiliation revealed God's heart as His more glorious condition never could have done. Becoming like a man is only a step in His humiliation. He must stoop lower still, and become like the very worst of men, like the outcast of society, like the very vilest criminal.

It is disgraceful to die, but we do not discern the dire dishonor of it because we all share the shame. But it is far more humiliating to be executed as a criminal, to be deemed unworthy to live even among such sinners as mankind. Even here there are degrees of disgrace. But an agonizing and lingering death, exposed to public scorn, and in the special form on which the curse of God had been pronounced, with every token of human and divine displeasure, such a death is the deepest depth of degradation which can be imagined. Christ did not merely descend to share our common fate of dying and death, but to suffer

so as to bring upon Himself the utmost humiliation from man and the deepest abhorrence from the Deity.

The cross of Christ! How little do we realize the abyss to which He sank! As men cover the grave of a corrupting corpse with flowers, so Christendom has sought to obliterate the offense of the cross by giving the rude stake itself an artistic form. No cross-piece gave the crude pole on which He was gibbeted picturesque proportions. It was never intended to beautify the architecture of our churches or to be fabricated of precious metal and costly gems to adorn the vain worship of the flesh. How terribly has this so-called symbol been altered, both in form and in intent! It should be a symbol of shame, to be shunned with shuddering. In its popular form it has become a symbol of man's utter failure to grasp the deep and dire significance of the manner in which God's Christ was done to death by human hands.

O that the saints could grasp the vast distinction between the death of Christ and the manner of it! Too often, when we speak of the cross, we merely mean His death. Had He died a common death, it would not have revealed the heart of man or the indignation of God. That human beings have brought upon themselves the blood of God's Anointed tells the tale of their alienation as no other act could do. That this was done by those in closest official touch with God, the priests of Israel, is the best evidence of human depravity. Not only was Christ humiliated at the cross, but men were shown to be so low and vile, that naught but divine grace and love could ever give them the right to exist. Indeed, justice demands that *they* be crucified for this deed. Not only Christ, in fact, but the world, in truth, was on the shameful tree of Golgotha.

CHRIST'S EXALTATION

"Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him . . ." (2:9). Christ

emptied and humbled *Himself*, but *God* exalts Him. He did not exalt Himself. Only God can truly exalt His creatures. For them the way to the heights lies through the depths. They should share the disposition of God's Anointed, and, in due time, God will raise them up. As the result of His descent to the deepest humiliation He is now on the way to the highest place in God's universe. Already, in countless hearts, His Name ranks far above every other name. It is not merely great but gracious. None of the names on earth can compare with it. It does not inspire fear or admiration merely, but love and adoration.

The word here used is full of precious significance. God has *graced* Him with the Name which outranks all others in the universe. The root thought of this family of words is JOY. The verb *chairō* means *rejoice*. One of its nouns, *charis*, is *grace, favor, gratitude, bounty*. So this verb *charizomai*, JOYZE, speaks of an act that brings joy. Usually this is produced by granting an undeserved boon, or bestowing benefits where the opposite is deserved. But here this winsome word tells us of the pleasure which the Name delectable will bring, not only to Him Who bears it, but to those who find it a Shelter and a Satisfaction to their hearts.

The name Jesus is full of precious significance. It is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Joshua. This seems to be shortened from Yahweh-Hoshea, Yahweh-Saviour. Yahweh is the title of the Deity as associated with time, especially the eonian times, that great group of eons in which God is revealing Himself through darkness and light, evil and good, sin and salvation. The cross of Christ stands in the very midst of these eons, and through it He will transmute all the evil into good. Yahweh is He Who will be and is and was. Hoshea is added to describe His work. Jesus is the appropriate name of the *Saviour* Whom God has given to rescue the creation from the thralldom of sin and destruction and death during the eonian times.

The worship and acclamation of the universe—such is the reward which comes to our blessed Saviour for His descent and humiliation. And this will not wait until the consummation, when all are reconciled to God. During the eons many shall bow the knee to Him and acclaim Him Lord, for the glory of God, the Father. Even now His saints adore His Name, and own His lordship in their feeble way. Already He is at God's right hand, messengers and authorities and powers being made subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22). When He comes, the earth will own Him King. Even beings under the earth, of which we know so little, will adore and obey Him. Celestial, terrestrial and subterranean—all will bow the knee in worship and use their tongues to acclaim the Crucified before the eons end. Low as was His humiliation, so high will be His exaltation.

“For the glory of God, the Father.” This is the object of it all, as well as the key to our understanding of it. Christ descended in obedience in order to glorify God, His Father. He was exalted for the same reason. And it is for this cause that every knee shall bow and every tongue acclaim Him Lord—because this not only elevates Him to the place supernal, but at the same time brings to God the glory which is His due. But it is not to God, as Creator, or as judge. The name Jesus sets forth the *Saviour*; He glorifies the *Father*. There is no constraint here, except that of love. Those who worship Him as Saviour and acclaim Him as Lord become children of God, and give Him glory.

THE SAINTS' OBEDIENCE

Having meditated upon the obedience of Christ Jesus and its blessed results, Paul exhorts the saints to emulate His disposition in their own small sphere. Hitherto the Philippians had always been obedient to the truth which he had imparted to them when he was present with them. Now that he has still greater and grander grants of glori-

ous grace for them, which he must send to them in his absence, he exhorts them to carry this out also, in their daily life. It is a high salvation indeed, but it calls for a lowly walk in humiliation and suffering. It leads down, not up, so long as we are in these bodies of humiliation. With fear and trembling, bowing ourselves under the mighty hand of God, Whose spirit in us is the effective force, we should seek to work *out* what is within.

Salvation is not only a future event, but a present power and should be the preponderant influence in our lives. God has a glorious goal for each one of us, just as He has for His Anointed. Let us learn from His example that self-emptying and humiliation, with all their discomfort and distress and agony, are God's will and the only way to attain the future exaltation. Let us not strive against it but be disposed to it, when it lies in the path of obedience, even though it brings fear and trembling with it. Let us be satisfied when *our* will is not consulted, and *our* work is not done, realizing that God's will and work are to be carried out through us, for His delectation. It is God Who wills as well as works in us for His delight. So great is the light shed upon the human will by this word that we will devote a later chapter to its discussion.

When we realize that God is the power of our life, it is revolutionized. Nothing enters it by chance, or by any means without the will of God. Why then murmur when it is not to our liking? It is a comfort that He *knows* our trials and a consolation that He *sympathizes* with us in our sorrows, but how much better to realize that it comes from Him and is a step, into the depths it may be, which leads to our exaltation? It is not a cause for murmuring, but for thanksgiving. Murmuring had no place in the life of our Lord. Not that He lacked occasion. The wise and intelligent in His day did not receive His message. Was He discontented? Quite the opposite. He said, "I am acclaim-

ing You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for You hide these things from the wise and intelligent and You reveal them to minors. Yes, Father, seeing that thus it becomes a delight in front of You" (Matt.11:25,26).

This is a very practical point with the writer and readers of these lines. We have marvelous things to teach. Humanly speaking, it seems impossible that the intelligent, even scholarly, leaders in Christendom should not grasp them eagerly. But they do not. Their wisdom seems to be useless in the realm of revelation. The fact that they do not receive it seems to reflect on our message, and we are tempted to murmur. Then, again, it is far pleasanter and more respectable to have many men of mental ability and high standing in the world to support and propagate the truth. Would it not have been better to choose priests and scribes as apostles rather than ignorant fishermen? By no means. Let us not murmur at God's ways in choosing the stupid and the weak and the ignoble and the scorned, for only thus can He give the flesh its proper place. Let us rather rejoice.

How many of us are prone to reason that, if *this* had only been so, *that* could not have happened. But all such reasoning is vain and a delusion. So intricate are the complex interrelations of human life and conduct that no rational reasoning is possible. It is almost invariably the product of unbelief. God's ways are not to be the subject of our syllogisms, for we are not at all equipped for logical deduction. Once we believe and realize that God's hand is operating all things in our lives, as well as in the universe, all desire to reason will leave us. Faith will replace reason, and dissatisfaction and perplexity will be replaced by contentment and understanding.

Should we come to be in complete concord with the control of God, it will make us "blameless and artless, children of God, flawless in the midst of a crooked and per-

verse generation . . ." (2:15). The world, and the saints who have not yet given God His place in their lives, do not fall in line with His will (even if they fulfill His intention), hence they lie athwart His way and are perverse, or they vary their course, and are crooked. So long as we parallel His course, and do not plot and scheme to improve or evade His plans for us, we will be like His children, in Whom no flaw can be found. Such is the conduct which should come from the contemplation of the course of Christ. It should be the glad obedience of those who make God all in their lives and cheerfully acquiesce in His way for them, seeing that the suffering must precede the glory.

LUMINARIES IN THE WORLD

Such saints are not only a delight to God, but the light of the world. This world is a very dark and dismal dungeon. In their day, the disciples of our Lord were the light of the world (Matt.5:14). Since then the light has left Israel, as figured in the olive tree, some of whose boughs were broken off (Rom.11:17). Now the oil is found among the nations, some of whom have been grafted in. But the real luminaries are only those among them who live the evangel, "having on the word of life." They are clothed, as it were, with the luminous garments of God's revelation, and shine in a manner like our Lord when He was on the holy mount.

It is a glorious privilege to give expression to God's truth by verbal utterance or the written pages, by means of the words He has given us to make Him known. But here we have a different method, and, perhaps, a more effective mode of shedding the light of God. Not words for the ears, but works which can be heard by the hearts of our hearers, are the means brought before us in Philippians. These deeds will appear again in the day of Christ, to receive the reward which is their due. In these is Paul's boast, for they

show, as nothing else could do, that his efforts had not been empty of results (2:16).

That the path of the Philippians had been a painful one, yet pleasing to God, is apparent from Paul's description of it. It was a *sacrifice*. The sacrifice of "burnt offering" or ascent offering, which was wholly God's and ascended to Him as a savor of rest, was accompanied by a libation of wine, to express the joyful character of the sacrifice. How well this fits the circumstances here! Paul also suffers in his service, yet rejoices in it. The sacrifice is a joyous one. They rejoice, and he rejoices with them, and, to make it mutual, he would have them rejoice with him.

Notwithstanding its strong strain of humiliation and suffering, our service is one of joy and rejoicing. Short as it is, no other book contains the word rejoice as often as Philippians. Paul made his petitions with joy (1:4). He rejoices and will rejoice in the announcement of the evangel (1:18). He will abide for their joy of faith (1:25). He would have them fill his joy full (2:2). He joys and rejoices with the Philippians and asks them to joy and rejoice with him (2:17,18). He sends Epaphroditus that they may rejoice and receive him with all joy (2:28,29). He exhorts them to be rejoicing in the Lord (3:1). He calls them his joy (4:1). Again he exhorts them to be rejoicing in the Lord always, and repeats it (4:4). He rejoiced that their disposition toward him found expression in their contribution (4:10). What other book can match the overflow of happiness found here in Philippians?

Let us note also that this joy is not in their salvation but in their service. Undoubtedly they enjoyed the grace which had come to them in Christ. But this is a different matter. This joy is in the *Lord*. They were happy in serving and suffering in the midst of weakness, poverty and distress. This is the joy which accompanies our present path

of hardship and humiliation. Indeed, it is the firstfruit of our downward disposition in obedience to the will of God.

Let us, then, cultivate the disposition which was in Christ Jesus, which is the very reverse of that which inspires the world and the flesh and the Adversary. Let us not strive to rise high, but to become low, not to rule but to serve, not ourselves but others. Let us leave all exaltation in the hands of God, Who will raise us up and give us glory in His own good time, as He did with Christ Jesus. He that exalts himself shall be abased. But he whom God exalts shall share with Christ the glories which are His because He emptied and humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. A. E. Knoch

PREMONITION

In choosing a word for a divine vocabulary it is a translator's earnest wish to find one, in each case, which exactly covers the original for which it stands. But, alas, this is not always to be had. The word *apokaradokia*, FROM-SKULL-SEEM, is one of the most baffling examples. We have rendered it *premonition*, but not without a *presentiment* that our choice would be criticized.

The word is used twice in Scripture (Rom. 8:19 and Phil. 1:20), where it has to do with the *intellect*, the *formation of ideas*, and extends thought into the *future*, and is closely related to *expectation*. But it is, in some way, inferior to expectation, or we would have an anticlimax in Philipians. The most important point to observe is the fact that the lower creation shares this with man. In Romans we would hardly expect to find that the creation has *expectation*, because that is intelligent, not instinctive. It seems much more likely that the word has to do with an intuitive, unintelligent, subconscious attitude toward the future.

The question is, What shall we call it? The central *meaning* of *premonition* is correct (that simply of intuitive anticipation). Only it has fallen into bad company. I hoped to redeem it by putting it in the best society, *where no one can possibly charge it with being evil*. But it is not easy to regain a lost character. We must give it time. (Adapted from *Unsearchable Riches* vol.26, pp.39-42). A. E. Knoch

THE HUMAN WILL

(Philippians 2:13)

GOD is operating in us to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight (Phil.2:13). This brief allusion to the human will throws a flood of light into a very dark and dismal doctrine which has so vitiated the theology of Christendom that it has practically robbed God of His deity and believers of a God worthy of the name. It is generally taken for granted that the Bible teaches that man, being made in the image of God, is absolutely sovereign in the realm of his will. Just as God can will, without being influenced by aught about Him, so we can create a decision out of the blue, without the least reference to what we are, or to the world about us.

This nightmare, we are given to understand, is not directly taught in the Scriptures, but must be predicated as its background, or else we could not understand its message! It is pathetic to see the zeal with which men, who have suffered much for God's name, spring up to attack any teaching which threatens the doctrine of man's free will and free moral agency. They have not a line of Scripture on their side, so they inject the idea wherever it seems feasible, and so seek a semblance of support.

It will be worthwhile to consider some aspects of man's will, to see whether it is "free" or not, and to learn thus just what is meant by God operating in us to will. The wording of this passage will give us a hint, and, if we are correct, we will find ourselves in full harmony with its teaching when we are through.

What is the human will? Our text will help us to determine this vexing problem. The will of believers should be due to *God's operation*. It is not our action, but the result of His. So the will is a result, due to the operation of external factors. Probably we are not conscious of God's operation. We seem to be doing what *we* will. That is true of many functions of life. Our thinking, our breathing, the beating of our hearts, the manifold operations of digestion, all these are or should be, accomplished without our superintendence or conscious volition. And all are maintained and formed from external supplies or impulses. We eat, we breathe, we observe, and these make us what we are.

Where does the will come from? Do men create it out of nothing? That would be a feat more wonderful than any sleight of hand of which we have ever heard. If God is operating in us, is He then interfering with the creative capacity of His creatures?

The wise man knows that the human will is easily influenced from without. In fact it can be changed easily by one who understands human weaknesses. It is manufactured out of motives. It is a compound, made out of what we are within and where we are without. Heredity and environment fuse together to form it. Our wills are determined for us to a large extent by our ancestors, especially one named Adam. The mixture is finished by our associates and associations. If we had brains enough we could figure out any given will-problem like a sum in arithmetic. A given man will react to a given situation as surely as half a dozen plus six make twelve.

IS THE HUMAN A MACHINE?

Oh, someone will exclaim, then man is a mere machine, an automaton, and is subject to a blind fate from which he cannot escape! How often have these words frightened us when we dared to think through to reality! No. Man is not

a *mere* machine, but we must all admit that he has many of the characteristics of one. The fact that he has a soul, and can sense outward things, does not prove that he can sense all of his own operations. If he were not automatic in most of his vital processes, he would be dead in a few minutes. Some of his functions are not within the sphere of his consciousness. The will is one of these.

Man is an automaton in many ways. What would become of him if he had to supervise all of his bodily functions, or if he were even conscious of them all? How could a man who had never even heard of physiology keep the blood pump going and the air bellows working and the stomach churning all at the same time? He would not dare to stop to take a bite to eat. He could not get a wink of sleep. He would, however, have the melancholy pleasure of knowing that he is no mere automaton. Thank God that He, in His wisdom, Himself attends to our vital functions, so that we may look away from them to Him.

In these matters man is not subject to a "blind fate," but to a beneficent Creator. He provides parents and food and drink and air, not blindly, but blessedly. All this is a parable of those non-physical functions of our being, the mental, the emotional, and the voluntary. As Creator, God supplies us with the tendencies of our ancestors and with our surroundings and associates. These are incorporated in our mental tissue and enter our brains through our organs of sense. There are times when these two sources (heredity and environment) contribute materials which will not mix, and we cannot "make up our minds." But, in most cases, we subconsciously act upon the impulse provided by the union of these two streams without considering our course.

It is a stupendous blessing that this process is, as a rule, subconscious. If we had to stop and think and combine our hereditary tendencies with the fleeting impressions constantly brought in by our eyes and ears and nose and nerves

before we act, many would be run over by automobiles before they could walk. Our wills themselves sometimes prompt us to action before we have time to be definitely conscious of what we are doing. I well remember once resting quietly under a bush, when I heard a buzzing noise, and lazily turned my head to see if the wind was blowing the vegetation. But it flashed upon me in the midst of my sluggish motion, that it might be a rattlesnake. I jumped up so quickly that I still seemed to be thinking of the wind after I saw the snake strike at the spot where my head had been an instant before.

Man is like an automobile, a splendid vehicle to convey the knowledge of God to the creatures of His heart. Let us suppose that an automobile had a free will of its own. Who would care to ride if the steering gear demanded its independence, and turned off the avenue to climb a tree, or insisted on diving into a pit, instead of running on the road prepared for it? If automobiles had free wills the American people would soon be extinct. And if men could break away from the natural laws which guide them, they would utterly destroy one another in a fortnight. The measure in which they are lawless because of death and sin, is well within the reach of God's protecting arm. The steering gear has gone wrong, the wheels wobble, and the automobile seems to be blessed with free moral agency. If you wish to sell the machine it may be well not to boast of its superior spiritual endowments. One who has God's Spirit has a steady steering gear and a Driver Who will get him there on the well paved path.

Our consciousness seems to be a sluggish bubble which rises from the operations of the mind and is hardly recognized until it breaks. There is a possibility of uniting sensations from without with the mental fiber within and of sending the resultant order to the muscles and even of acting before we are well aware of what we are about. This is

the way the will usually works. It would be intolerable if we had to make up our minds regarding every act of life. It would take more nerve force than most of us possess. Most of our voluntary acts are replaced by habits—things we do “without thinking.”

Too often the sinner is directed to manipulate his will, as though he could do anything with it. An evangelist is not supposed to twist and turn the human will by eloquent exhortations, but to provide divine material for the formation of God's will in men. Of what avail would it be to feed the famished with lectures on the digestive apparatus? It is just as useless to tell a man to will to come to Christ. Give the starving food and the digestive apparatus, complicated as it is, will do its part. Give the sinner Christ and his will will work of its own accord. Preach the *Word*. This is the most effective motive power for moving the mind of man. By its means God's Spirit will bring the sinner into line with God's will.

Men imagine they are sovereign in the realm of the will and that no one can break their resolution—no, not even God. This is childish. They have no greater control over it than the captain of a sailing vessel has over the set of his sails. If he is not demented he will spread them to suit his course, and that is determined for him by the breeze. There are spiritual winds to which men bend their wills. They may whistle ever so long, but these spirit forces are beyond their perception and above their control. Hence men do the will of the flesh and obey the behests of evil spirit powers of which they seldom are aware. These now operate in the sons of stubbornness (Eph.2:2). The great movements in the world, the great leaders, can find success only when they fall in line with unseen spirit forces.

The unbeliever is the sport of the spirits of evil. It is the chief of the aerial jurisdiction who operates in them. Their wills are a compound of the soulish sensibilities of

the flesh and the spirit of the world. The believer is not called upon to be passive, to “surrender,” to “yield” as is so often taught, but that is what the unbeliever unwittingly does. That is what evil spirits crave. Intelligent subordination to God's revealed will is quite the opposite of a passive reception of passing impressions. The Spirit of God does not produce such indefinite “guidance,” such loose “leadings.” God's Spirit works only through His Word.

Our course is often dark, and we need light, not vague “guidance.” With a light we can intelligently pick our path, and choose our steps. We are not called upon to obey an inner voice or an outward impression, or to blindfold our eyes and follow an unknown guide, but to use the light of revelation.

Within us is the flesh and without us is the spirit of the world and the world of spirits. These are always forcing themselves upon us and producing “impressions.” It is true that, if we know the Scriptures, the divine directions will, to a large extent, displace these sinister influences, but this comes through the activity of faith, not the passivity which blindly obeys impulses. God seeks open-eyed, active obedience. The forces of evil desire blind passivity.

Saints who sincerely desire to do the will of God will find that it is not enough to “make up their minds” to do it. However strong their determination, it may not last. The wise way is to provide the will with motives which will keep them in God's will. Above all we must know Him through His Word. We must enter into His present plans and future purpose. Then, without straining ourselves to create an artificial will of our own, this knowledge will become the formative factor in our wills, so that actually it will be “God Who is operating in us to *will* (as well as to work), for the sake of His delight.”

Let me warn all against the fearful practice of making a medium out of God's holy Word. There are those who

will insert a needle into the Bible, or open it at random in order to get God's “leading.” God's Book is not a planchette, though I have no doubt that the evil spirits prefer it to every other way of deceiving their dupes. God controls our wills only when we intelligently absorb His thoughts, and weigh His ways, and luxuriate in His love. It is detestable idolatry to turn His revelation into a ouija board, and allow evil spirits to speak through its sacred sentences.

At Pentecost God's Spirit came on the disciples for power, and uninstructed saints have longed for a repetition of this marvel ever since, not knowing that the Spirit is at home in us, to impart not power but life (Rom.8:9). There is great danger in tarrying for the Spirit, for deceiving spirits are eager to use such opportunities. In fact the history of all movements of this kind is sufficient evidence that they are merely a brand of spiritism, doubly deceptive because they seem to be based on the Bible, and succeed in arousing spirit manifestations which are mistaken for the power of God's holy Spirit.

It is quite true that God revealed Himself directly through the prophets and those who had the gift of prophecy in the Pentecostal era. No one has it now. The only real prophets today are false prophets. If we expect God to speak to us directly through His Spirit, apart from His Word, we are assuming the gift of prophecy. Today such a gift is not needed, for the truth has been fully revealed in the Scriptures. Moreover, the fact that those who depend on such revelations are led contrary to the Scriptures and to one another shows that they are not guided by the one Spirit of God, but by the many spirits against which we are warned.

Much of the “waiting on God” or “going into the silence” may be simply a form of spiritism. If we seek to shut out the distractions of the world about us in order to be able to give all our thoughts to God's revelation, that is good, very good. But if we imagine that making our minds a blank, or

putting ourselves into a state of passivity will enable us to receive definite instructions from the holy Spirit direct, we are under a strong delusion, and lay ourselves open to the deceiving spirits which characterize these last days. The holy Spirit of God will indeed guide us into the truth, but only through the word of truth. There is no safety apart from God's written revelation. The spirit that speaks to us apart from it is evil, however much it may imitate the divine.

All who have had an intelligent experience of divine life will readily admit that even the saint cannot please God apart from His operation, and they are glad to have it so. Let them *believe* the passage before us, and seek to realize its force, and they will be gratified still more in the consciousness that even the spring of their good deeds flows from God.

They become, as it were, a miniature universe, in which all is out of and through and for Him. The fact that they cannot independently will or work so as to please God will not disturb them in the least. Quite the opposite. They will find their all in Him, and this is only the normal complement of the great goal God has set before Him—to be all in them.

A. E. Knoch

SCRIPTURE OCCURRENCES OF "WILL"

If our readers will consult all of the occurrences of *thelêma*, WILL, they will obtain both pleasure and profit. Out of about sixty occurrences at least fifty speak of the will of God. Man's will is not very important, according to the divine reckoning. The list begins with "Thy will be done" (Matt.6:10) and ends with "for Thy pleasure [*will*] they are" (Rev.4:11). In Romans 2:18 God's will is recognized as the will which needs no further specification. The Jew knew the will because he had the divine oracles. The coming kingdom is briefly characterized as the time when men will not do their own will, but the Father's.

A. E. Knoch

GROWTH IN REALIZATION OF GOD

WE ARE ACQUAINTED with the entreaty, “Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again I will declare, be rejoicing! Let your lenience be known to all men: the Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus” (Phil.4:7).

In the presence of such high entreaties, it is vital to our realization of truth to recognize that the apostle Paul does not come to us as a “second Moses.” That is, Paul does not “command” us to do what is right on the grounds that if we fail to do so we will suffer the curses of the law, or, if we should continue to disobey, that we will “lose our salvation” and find ourselves among the vessels of wrath.

Paul comes to us, instead, as a wise counselor, as the Lord’s apostle, encouraging us and building us up in faith. He entreats us concerning that which is imperative to our service if God would be pleased and we would be benefited. The fear and trembling that is to attend our walk as we carry our salvation into effect (*cf* Phil.2:13), is not a fear of divine wrath or a trembling born out of a contemplation of eternal punishment. Instead, it is a fear to offend our God and Father Whom we love; it is a trembling produced by an awareness of the fact that the spirit of the One Who rouses Jesus from among the dead condescends to make its home in us.

Insofar as the curses of the law are concerned, “Christ

reclaims us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for our sakes" (Gal.3:13). We "were put to death to the law through the body of Christ" (Rom.7:4); hence "we were *exempted* from the law" (Rom.7:6). Consequently, we "are *not under law*" (Rom.6:14). These things are related to us by Paul with reference to the fact that Grace *reigns* for life eonian (Rom.5:21); eonian life is a *gracious gift* (Rom.6:23).

DIVINE INDIGNATION

As to the question of divine wrath in the future "day of indignation," how thankful we are to affirm that, "being *now* justified in [Christ's] blood, we shall be saved from indignation through Him" (Rom.5:9). We are also mindful that, according to God's purpose, there are many who will be "vessels of indignation" (Rom.9:22), yet only unto the end that, in due time, they themselves should also be obtaining mercy (*cp* Rom.9:16; 11:32).

Those, however, who are "God's *chosen ones*" (Rom.8:33; *cp* 2 Tim.2:10), having been *graciously* granted to be believing (Phil.1:29), have had the blessing of justification conferred upon them even now (Rom.3:22; 5:1). In His kindness and grace to us, God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ Who died for our sakes, that, whether we may be watching or drowsing, we should be living at the same time together with Him (1 Thess.5:9,10).

If some will not, as it literally is, "*tenant* the reign of God" (i.e., have an allotment or "place" in His reign; Gal.5:21; *cp* 2 Tim.2:12), it is not to say that they will not live under its jurisdiction. All who are members of the body of Christ will live under the jurisdiction of God's reign, whether or not they have a place in its governance.

Vivification and eonian life are a display of God's *grace*; they are not a display of a divine reward in response to man's faithfulness (Eph.2:5,7). They are not a matter of

qualification, but of favor. The fact that, relatively speaking, the reverse is true concerning the selection of those who will have a governing position within the kingdom is beside the point. The believer's eonian life depends solely upon the grace of God.

Concerning the oncoming eons: whether or not we take part in the reign *of* that day, we will, in any case, *in* that day, be roused, vivified and seated together among the celestials (Eph.2:5,6). Our "seat" among the celestials, speaks of a settled place of useful service. Every one of us will be pleasing to God and faithful in His service. "Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, *then you also* shall be manifested together with Him in glory" (Col.3:4).

JUSTIFIED FROM SIN

In the grace of God, Christ tasted death for the sake of *everyone* (Heb.2:9). "Christ Jesus . . . is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for the sake of *all* . . ." (1 Tim.2:6).

"For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently *all died*" (2 Cor.5:14). And, "one who dies *has been* justified from Sin" (Rom.6:7; i.e., "freed from Sin," *cp* Rom.6:18).

This justification *from* Sin which is now the portion of all, is wholly the achievement of the cross. "What was impossible to the law, in which it was infirm through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh" (Rom.8:3). Thus in Christ we behold "the Lamb of God Which is taking away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Sin in the flesh does not *await* condemnation; it has already *found* condemnation. Sin in the flesh is not *to be* condemned in a future judgment (such as in the second death); it *has been* condemned in a past judgment, the judgment of the cross. The sin of the world has been *taken away* through the sacrificial offering of the Lamb of God,

Christ Jesus our Lord. God made Christ (“the One not knowing sin”) to be a sin offering (2 Cor.5:21). Indeed, in literal terms, “He makes Him [to be] *sin*”—that thus sin might be *condemned* and *taken away*.

Consequently, God has not only conciliated *us* to Himself through Christ, but has, in Christ, conciliated *the world* to Himself as well. Accordingly, He is not only dealing graciously with all *our* offenses (Col.2:13), but, concerning the world as well, He is “not reckoning *their* offenses to them” (2 Cor.5:18,19).

Sin speaks of *failure*; it speaks of that which “misses the mark,” the mark or target of that which is inherently good, well pleasing and perfect (*cp* Rom.12:2). Sin in the flesh, “the sin of the world,” has met its judgment through the One Who is the Sin Offering. Now, through the work of Christ, man is justified *from* the evil slaveowner, Sin (2 Cor. 5:14; Rom.6:7b). Man is declared to be in the only right relationship to Sin, which is to be freed from its jurisdiction. Sin personified (literally, man’s sinful deeds), no longer has the prerogative concerning man’s judgment. Instead, God through Christ has gained the prerogative!

Therefore, *God*—not Sin—will now determine each man’s judgment and final destiny. And, He will do so according to His own purpose, not according to individual merit. Indeed many who will be subjected to God’s indignation are far less deserving of it than others who will be saved from it. The vessels of mercy enjoy mercy solely because of God’s gracious purpose, not because of any deservedness of their own (1 Tim.1:12-16; Rom.9:15,16).

WHAT THE HUMAN DESERVES

Insofar as “just deserts” are concerned, *all* are deserving of death (Rom.1:32). Considered in themselves, in their own sinfulness, apart from the divine purpose, humanity is well suited and worthy only of death. If this were the only

consideration, it would be altogether fitting not only to put man to death, but to leave him there on a permanent basis.

This is true of the entirety of humanity, not merely of some. Remember, all sin; *and* all are wanting of the glory of God (Rom.3:23). The glory of God represents the only ideal standard of righteousness. It is not merely that man *comes short* of the glory of God that is significant. It is that he is found *wanting* of the glory of God. Not only do all mankind sin, but all mankind—including those who are least offensive—are members of the old humanity which is *corrupted* in accord with its seductive desires (Eph.4:22).

WHAT GOD WILLS

Howbeit, in the end, God, Who loves all (John 3:16), and wills to save all (1 Tim.2:4), will become All in all (1 Cor. 15:28). In that day, God will fully manifest Himself as the One Who indeed is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim. 4:10). Until then, with respect to all interim judging, it is only a question of whether one best serves the divine purpose as a vessel of mercy or as a vessel of indignation.

OFFENSES NO LONGER RECKONED

The fact that God has conciliated the world to Himself and is not reckoning offenses to the all who sin, affirms the fact that man’s sinfulness continues to be offensive to God. It is not that man’s sinful ways are no longer offensive to the Deity. That is far from the case. It is that now that the Sin Offering has been made, God is no longer *reckoning* man’s offenses to him.

It must be emphasized that the conciliation does not exempt man from his close and often painful connection with the generally attenuated yet sometimes full-toned indignation of God which, even now, is being revealed from heaven upon the irreverence and injustice of men

(Rom.1:18). We become acquainted firsthand with God's appraisal of sin whenever we ourselves experience the practical retribution which attends our own failures (*cf* Rom. 1:18-32; *cp* 1 Tim.6:9).

It does not follow from the fact that, as a timeless truth, *sin* has been taken away, nor from the companion fact that, personally speaking, *offense* is not being reckoned, that God will therefore do nothing at all insofar as personal adjudication is concerned with respect to the dreadful deeds of His beloved creatures. God will still bring every *act* into judgment (Ecc.12:14), both in the case of the believer (at the dais of Christ; 2 Cor.5:10) and of the unbeliever (before the great white throne; Rev.20:11,12).

GOD'S WORK OF JUDGMENT

Divine *judgment*, however, simply speaks of divine *decision*. For the sake of the accomplishment of the divine purpose, it remains *expedient* that the various judgments in which God would engage in response to man's wickedness still be carried out. Through these means, God will further make known the awfulness and injuriousness of sin.

Yet it must be recognized that the indignation in the day of the indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God (Rom.2:5), will itself proceed "according to" (or, "in accord with") that glorious body of divine revelation which Paul terms "my evangel" (Rom.2:16)! Paul's evangel is the evangel which reveals the eventual "life's justifying" and reconciliation of all mankind through the saving work of Christ (Rom.5:18,19; Col.1:20). How we rejoice to know that the events of the day of judging will proceed on the basis of and in the light of the glorious consummation when God becomes All in all.

In all future, adversative judgments, then, God will be mindful that the "sin in the flesh" of those undergoing judging has already been condemned and taken away through

the sacrifice of Christ. He will be mindful as well that, through Christ's sacrifice, every sinner—even the most wicked—is already joined to Himself. That is, this is so in fact, all human unbelief notwithstanding.

It is true that, in the current era, God *acts* in conciliation toward mankind. It is true as well that, in coming times of indignation, it will *appear* that God surely is reckoning the offenses of humanity against them. Yet in fact, in the depth of His heart, this will not be so. This is because, at the cross, God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself. The recognition that, practically, this is a truth applied in a special way in the present, must not be misused so as to obscure the realization that, factually, it is a timeless and abiding truth.

In His work of judgment, through Christ, what is seen on the surface covers what is in the depths of God, made known in the One revealed in Paul's evangel (*cf* 1 Cor.2:6-10). Let no one imagine that Christ, the Righteous One, departs from virtue in assuming the role of Divine Indignation. He does so for the sake of the glory of God and the benefit of all concerned, being motivated by love, wisdom and perfect righteousness. His motives are of the highest order, and His purpose for the greatest good.

FOR GOD AND HIS GLORY

It is vital to realize that the divine indignation of the day of indignation will be the manifestation of an assumed character, not the reflection of what, deeply and ultimately speaking, is actually so.

Furthermore, the indignation of that day will be just the right amount, neither too much nor too little. It will soon be past, and, even as all else, will prove to be for the glory of God and the benefit of man. How glorious it is to know that God does not afflict "from His heart" (Lam. 3:33). How we rejoice in the realization that, ". . . though

He afflicts, *yet He has compassion according to the abundance of His benignities*" (Lam.3:32).

The Son of God, then, to Whom all judging has been given (John 5:22), will yet, as the Emblem of God's *assumption* (Heb.1:3), *assume* the role of One Who is indignant. For the sake of the fulfillment of the divine purpose, even as for the benefit of the creature, it is wise and expedient that Christ should be manifested thus. This theophany will occur principally in the conclusion of the current eon, and then in the day of judging following the thousand years. This assumed, indignant Character, while true to form, is not at all reflective of the heart of the One Who is love (1 John 4:8)—love, which is not incensed, neither is it taking account of evil (1 Cor.13:5), evil being the out-working of the divine intention (*cf* Rom.9:19).

God has a purpose in all that occurs (*cf* Rom.11:36). Man's unrighteousness commends God's righteousness (Rom.3:5). "The truth of God," by virtue of its being afforded an entity of contrast through the vehicle of "my lie" (i.e., through the innumerable lies in which men so frequently engage), indeed, "superabounds." That is, God's truthfulness, in the face of man's untruthfulness, thus becomes much more apparent and precious "for His glory" (Rom.3:7).

God wants to display His indignation and make His powerful doings known (Rom.9:22). Accordingly, He has made the world and all that is in it (Acts 17:24), doing so in such a way that the world will surely contain both creatures and creaturely deeds well-suited to the visitation not only of His indignation but as well of all His concomitant, powerful deeds. "Yahweh has made *everything* for its own pertinent end, *yea even the wicked* for the day of evil" (Prov.16:4; *cp* Eph.6:13). All is not only *out of* God, and *through* God, but all is *for* God as well: *to Him be the glory* for the eons! Amen! (Rom.11:36).

According to Paul, everything that exists and every-

thing that occurs is "for" God. That is, everything is for His purpose; it exists unto the end that the purpose which requires its ephemeral presence might be achieved. It follows, then, that all that is "not of God," faithfully speaking, is nonetheless out of Him, ultimately speaking.

WE RELY ON THE LIVING GOD

All will yet redound to God's glory. Thus we say, "to Him be the glory," in anticipation of and with a view toward the good that God will surely bring into existence out of the evil upon which the corresponding good is dependent.

God cannot be glorified as the Saviour He intends to become, unless His creatures are the kind of sinners they need to be unto this end. Nor can God bless each one with salvation from sin in the way and to the degree that He intends, unless each one's particular kind and degree of sin is fixed. Therefore, that all might accord with God's purpose, all accords with what must be (*cf* Rom.8:26). All, indeed, accords with what must be, since all is out of, through, and for God (Rom.11:36), Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11).

Nonetheless, human behavior still occurs voluntarily, according to one's own choice. It is not true that since all is out of God (and, therefore, that human choice is out of God), that it makes no difference what we do, or that future events will come about in spite of what we do. To the contrary, future events will come about *because* of what we do. Accordingly, since we cannot know what we will do before we actually do it, the matter of decision making, even as self-discipline and self-control, remains vital.

We are awaiting the realized achievement of the full Saviourhood of God. Unto this end, we *rely* on the living God (1 Tim.4:10). Accordingly, we give thanks to Him *in* everything (1 Thess.5:18) and *for* everything (Eph.5:20). We do so, in word and deed, in the form of our unfeigned

assurance and trust in His goodness and wisdom in the face of all the evil extant in the world, replete with such an abundance of horror and misery. God is *our Saviour*; and He is *the Saviour of all mankind*.

The existence of sin and evil is a harsh and unchanging reality. Whatever *we* may do, whatever our own course may consist of, in any case, the current eon itself will continue to be a wicked eon (Gal.1:4). We are all being afflicted. The entire creation—involuntarily—has been *subjected* to vanity, the slavery of corruption (Rom.8:20,21). It is on account of *God* that “we are being put to death the whole day,” that “we are being reckoned as sheep for slaughter” (Rom.8:36). We are all dying; we are all sorrowing and groaning in our bodies of humiliation.

In his present state of corruption, man has become characterized by pride, bitterness and wrath. Yet a proud heart can only be changed by the transforming power of a thankful spirit. A spirit of thankfulness affirms that any virtue we may enjoy is ultimately God’s gift to us, including the virtue that makes good use of the gifts which He grants.

A bitter and wrathful spirit can only be subdued by a spirit of kindness and love. God alone can grant us such a spirit. Yet the means of grace unto the possession of such an endowment may well be acceptance of and growth in recognition of God as God.

How helpful, then, it is truly to realize that the same awful deeds that man devises against us for evil, God designs for us for good (*cf* Gen.50:20; *cp* Rom.15:4). How beneficial it is to know that all is out of, through and for God.

It is in an awareness of this glorious truth that we say, “Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, our Father, Who loves us, and is giving us an eonian consolation and a good expectation in grace, be consoling your hearts and establish you in every good work and word” (2 Thess.2:16,17).

J.R.C.

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 110th Year
(1909–2019)

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THIRD QUARTER, 2019

Volume 110

Number 3

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.

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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, THIRD QUARTER 2019
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED TEN

EDITORIAL

IN the three articles from his “Studies in Philippians” series, reprinted in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*, A. E. Knoch directs our attention to the way in which Timothy, Epaphroditus and Paul serve as ideal examples of believers letting the disposition (i.e., the mental inclination, or *mindset*) of Christ make its home in them. As they “obeyed” (UNDER-HEARD), listening subjectively to the evangel of Christ Jesus’s emptying of Himself of His glories above, and His humbling of Himself to the death of the cross, God was working in them to will as well as work for the sake of His delight (*cf* Phil.2:5-13). Even as Christ Jesus took on the form of a slave in His obedience to God’s will, so “in Timothy we see the model slave” in his service (*cf* p.99). So also Epaphroditus, in setting his mind on what he had “in Christ,” even consolation, and comfort of love, communion of spirit, compassion and pity” (*cf* Phil.2:1), so his charm “is revealed in the exquisite sensitiveness of his character” (*cf* p.110).

As for Paul, who else so truly exhibits the mindset of Christ in his conduct and service? He forfeited all that he had gained in flesh because of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ which was founded on God’s evangel of grace. “All his cherished merit, his blameless walk, his proud pedigree, on which is the chief reliance of the religionist to this very day, were seen to be so many incumbrances to keep him from the complete appropriation of Christ. Away with it! May his example help us all to refuse the refuse which religion offers us in order to keep us from the full appreciation of Him Who is our All!” (p.121).

We provide below the portions of Philippians (revised)

which concern Timothy and Ephaphroditus. That concerning Paul is given at the end of the magazine.

D.H.H.

THE SERVICE OF TIMOTHY (Phil.2:19-24)

¹⁹ *y*Now I am expecting, in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to ⁼you quickly, that I also may be of good ^lcheer when I know of your [˘]concerns. ²⁰ For I [˘]have no^t one equally sensitive, who^a will [˘]be so genuinely [˘]solicitous of ⁼your [˘]concerns, ²¹ for [˘]all are seeking [˘]that which is of their [˘]own, not [˘]that which is of Christ Jesus. ²² *y*Now ⁼you [˘]know his [˘]testedness, that as a child with a father, he [˘]slaves [˘]with me [˘]for the evangel. ²³ This one, indeed then, I am expecting to send—as ever I may perceive my course from the things about me—forthwith. ²⁴ Yet I have confidence in the Lord that I [˘]myself shall also be coming quickly.

THE SUFFERING OF EPAPHRODITUS (Phil.2:25-29)

²⁵ *y*Now I deem it necessary to send to^d ⁼you Epaphroditus, my [˘]brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, yet ⁼your apostle and minister for my [˘]need, ²⁶ since in fact he [˘]was longing for ⁼you all and [˘]depressed, because ⁼you hear that he is infirm. ²⁷ For he is infirm, also, very nigh death, but [˘]God is merciful to him, yet not to him only, but to me also, lest I should have sorrow on sorrow. ²⁸ The more diligently then I send him, that ⁼seeing him again, ⁼you may rejoice and I [˘]may [˘]be more sorrow-free. ²⁹ [˘]Receive him then in the Lord with [˘]all joy, and [˘]have [˘]such in honor, ³⁰ seeing that because of the work of the Lord he draws near unto death, [˘]risking his [˘]soul that he should fill up ⁼your [˘]want of [˘]ministration toward me.

THE SERVICE OF TIMOTHY

Philippians 2:19-24

AS PAUL is bound, and cannot visit the Philippians himself, he sends Epaphroditus and contemplates sending Timothy. In these two characters we have two “living expressions” of the evangel for this administration. They set forth the highest ideal in service and suffering. In Timothy we see the model slave. His very name is eloquent, for it means Honor-God. He is one of the few of whom it could be said that he did not seek his own, but others’ good. In many ways he seems to be a typical character for the present, combining, in his own person, both Circumcision and Uncircumcision, and the weakness of the flesh with the power of the spirit.

The facts of Timothy’s life, as recorded in the Scriptures for our instruction, are doubtless intended to give us a living picture of the inception of this administration. After Paul’s separation from Barnabas, the Levite, he came to Lystra, the place where he had been stoned and left for dead (Acts 14:19). It is more than possible that it was at this time that Paul received the transcendent revelations which he later makes known in his perfection epistles (2 Cor.12:2). So that Timothy, in *spirit*, commences with this administration, yet in flesh is connected with the previous kingdom heralding. He commences at Lystra and goes all the way to Rome, not only in flesh, but in spirit.

With striking attention to detail, we are told that he was the son of a *believing Jewish woman* (Acts 16:1). This

Jewess belonged to the dispersion, evidently, as she is found outside the land, and wedded to a Greek. As such she may well represent that believing remnant of Israel among the nations, to whom Paul was especially sent. But he also turned to the Greeks, and the company of people who received his message was a mixture of believing Israelites and Greeks. Such a combination, also, was Timothy. God will use this body of people in His highest service. So He used Timothy.

From the very beginning, Timothy earned the approbation of the brethren in Lystra and Iconium, where he lived (Acts 16:2). Probably he believed through Paul's ministry when he was there before, for, while he was, physically, the son of a Jewess and a Greek, spiritually he was Paul's child in faith (1 Tim.1:2,18; 2 Tim.1:2). This may illustrate an important point in service in the present administration which needs to be pressed. While the body of Christ is composed of those who are a mixture, physically, being from both Circumcision and Uncircumcision, this should not extend to their spiritual parentage. They should all be children of Paul. Those who receive life and are nurtured by means of his ministry are equipped for service today. Those who are mixed in their spiritual descent, being children of Peter as well as of Paul, are not fit to serve acceptably in this administration of God's grace.

It would seem that Timothy was with Paul much of the time thereafter. At Berea he remained behind when the Jews of Thessalonica came there, and Paul was sent away by the brethren but he soon received word to rejoin Paul at Athens (Acts 17:15). When he found Paul in Corinth, Paul was pressed to certify to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. When they opposed, Timothy probably listened to the memorable words, "Your blood be on your head! Clear am I! From now on I shall go to the nations" (Acts 18:6). Thus Timothy was present at the commencement

of the Corinthian ecclesia, and actually experienced the great crisis there when Paul left his brethren according to the flesh and turned to the Uncircumcision.

The next time that we hear of Timothy he is sent with Erastus to Macedonia, and doubtless went to Philippi (Acts 19:22). Paul himself remained in the province of Asia. It is evident from this that he no longer was a mere attendant of the apostle, but was himself an apostle, commissioned by his spiritual father to represent him in the work. As Paul himself wrote to Timothy, he had fully followed his teaching, motive, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings (2 Tim.3:10). This is precisely what each slave of our Lord should do today if he wishes to render acceptable service, and to have a part in the ministry of this administration. Even the order in which these essentials are given is significant, for only those who *fully* follow Paul's teaching are really eligible for service and suffering.

Paul follows with the injunction, "Now *you* be remaining in what you learned and verified, being aware from whom you learned it . . ." (2 Tim.3:14). The tendency to forsake Paul's teaching is very strong. In his own days all in the province of Asia turned from him (2 Tim.1:15). Since then Christendom as a whole has left his teaching or so adulterated it with Circumcision doctrine that it is practically nullified. Therefore it should be our very special endeavor to guard against this propensity in ourselves. God graciously granted some light at the Reformation and through the so-called Brethren, but the reaction is very strong, and the light is dimmed. Even so with us. Already some are failing to *remain* in the truth, which few, indeed, have ever grasped in anything like its fullness.

Later Timothy was sent to Corinth also. In Paul's words concerning him we may receive further insight into his service. Paul writes to them, "I am entreating you, then,

become imitators of me. *Therefore* I send to you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will be reminding you of my ways which are in Christ Jesus . . ." (1 Cor.4:16,17). Paul's "ways which are in *Christ Jesus*" is a key phrase for the present. Nowadays this is ignored. Paul is pushed aside and men are reminded of the ways of the *Lord Jesus* as He ministered to the Circumcision, as recorded in the four gospels. But Timothy was taught better. Being vitally connected with both sides, he knew that this is no model for the Uncircumcision. Paul's teaching calls for ways which accord with Christ Jesus in *glory*, not as a homeless Wanderer on earth.

Again the apostle writes: "If Timothy should be coming, look to it that he should be with you fearlessly, for he is working at the work of the Lord, as I also. No one, then, should be scorning him" (1 Cor.16:10,11). At another time Paul wrote to Timothy himself: "Let no one be despising your youth . . ." (1 Tim.4:12). And again; "God gives us, not a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of sanity" (2 Tim.1:7). Among the carnal Corinthians Timothy makes a pleasing yet pathetic contrast. Too young to command the respect due to an elder, he seems to have had a tendency to timidity and fear. How different from the popular conception of a great church dignitary of today! Youth is aggressive and self-reliant and needs little encouragement to assert itself. Yet the model here set before us is one whom the world (and most of the church) would despise, and who needed to be encouraged not to allow himself to be slighted.

Perhaps Timothy's tendency to timidity was due in measure to his physical condition. He had a weak stomach and was frequently infirm (1 Tim.5:23). Many of us may be able to sympathize with him in this, and can realize how it unfits one for that self-assurance which is deemed essential in those who must meet the public. But we may

rest assured that it was given him by God, not to hinder but to help, for the Lord's work never needs the arm of flesh, and in this administration of the spirit, great physical endowments may be a hindrance to genuine and acceptable service. Not that we should seek to be ill. We do all in our power to counteract our infirmities, yet thank God for those which remain, for they are doubtless needed in order to keep us lowly (*cf* 2 Cor.12:7).

Among the last words on record which Paul writes to Timothy we see how true Timothy remained to his father in faith, and how Paul longed for one on whose fidelity he could count. Perhaps we may take the action as symbolic for this present era, for the second epistle to Timothy deals with the last days. He writes, "Endeavor to come to me quickly, for Demas, loving the current eon, forsook me and went to Thessalonica . . ." (2 Tim.4:9,10). If there ever is to be a return to Paul, it must be done speedily. Demas is probably derived from the root *dem*, PUBLIC. The public, the mass, even of the church, have abandoned Paul. Not a few are antagonistic to him, even among those who, like the Thessalonians, were once lovers of our Lord's advent. Let us, then, in spirit, hasten back to Paul, and to the revelation which he gives from his prison in Rome.

In a like symbolic sense we may take the reference to Timothy in Hebrews, if, indeed, it be the same Timothy there as elsewhere. Nothing is said in other places of his imprisonment. Now we are told, "Know that our brother Timothy has been *released* . . ." (Heb.13:23). Here we have a contrast. In Ephesians, Paul is imprisoned. In Hebrews, Timothy is at liberty. Does this hint that he is not involved in the fate of the Circumcision as set forth in this epistle? Physically, having a Jewish mother, he could easily be caught in the apostasy of Israel, and be bound by her defection. But he is not only freed from all physical relationships in Christ; he is at liberty to go out and serve

even when the Circumcision are restrained by the change of administration.

Such is the career which prepared Timothy to be a model for service in this era. The quality of his preeminence in contrast to others is clearly seen in the short paragraph which Paul devotes to him in this epistle. He wishes to know how the Philippians are, so that he also may be of good cheer. He wishes to send someone, and his choice falls on Timothy, “for I have no one equally sensitive, who will be so genuinely solicitous of your concerns, for all are seeking that which is their own, not that which is of Christ Jesus” (Phil.2:20,21). Here he probes deep, into the very heart of the matter. Are we seeking our own, or that which concerns Christ Jesus? Do we serve selfish interests, or those of our Lord?

One of the delicate touches in this epistle lies in the word “equally sensitive.” Though all is spirit now, in service the spirit should control and ennoble our sensations, and make us most sensitive to the welfare of those whom we seek to serve. Two things are needed, a fine perception of the feelings of others and a genuine solicitude as regards their affairs. It would be useless to send some unimpressionable or callous representative whose heart strings could not vibrate in tune with theirs. And still less would be done if he were indifferent to their concerns. In service we should approximate the vital sympathy which each member of the human body shows for the others, for this is the figure used of our relationship in Christ.

“All are seeking that which is their own.” What a word to find in this epistle, when, in the flush of their first love, the saints were nearer the ideal than at any time since! If all sought their own *then*, what shall we say *now*? Some, indeed, there have been, through the years, of whom we would say that they did not consider their interests, but gave up all for Christ. But, if we should ask them, doubt-

less they would also confess their failure in this regard. It seems to be the universal sin in service which few of us are able to overcome. Yet it should be our aim, despite our failures, to forget our own concerns in preoccupation with the things of Christ.

As we have seen in our review of Timothy’s career, he had been thoroughly tested as a companion and servant of Paul. This is most aptly summed up in the words, “as a child with a father he slaves with me for the evangel” (2:22). Two pictures are presented here, child and father, slave and lord. Between Paul and Timothy there was the loving and living relationship of father and child, and they both together attended to the affairs of Christ Jesus as though they were His loyal slaves.

I have often been criticized for using the word “slave” to describe the character of our service. But I delight in it. There is no question of its correctness. This alone should settle the point, for interpretation and feelings must be barred in translation. But here, for instance, it is in fullest harmony with the context, for a slave, who has no privileges or property of his own, makes a good figure for those who should not seek their own. I imagine that the objection may arise because we do not wish to serve without doing our own will and attending to our own welfare. But I glory in the “title” slave, and only wish my service were in accord with this lowly distinction.

Yet Paul was not willing to part with Timothy until his own matters (which were also his Lord’s) had been settled. It must have been a vast comfort to him to have Timothy at hand in his imprisonment. At his first defense no one went with him, but all abandoned him (2 Tim.4:16). Perhaps this influenced him in calling for Timothy and keeping him until his fate had been finally decided. And, indeed, he would wish to send the news to his friends at Philippi as quickly as possible. What better commenda-

tion for the model slave than the fact that Paul would not part with him even though he would like to have sent him!

Such is the example set before us today: closest association with Paul in his teaching and ministry, and loyal devotion to him in his imprisonment. Is not this a picture of the path we should pursue in spirit? May the Lord send us slaves like Timothy, having His honor at heart, seeking that which is of Christ Jesus, a genuine child in faith of Paul, following his teaching and practice, sensitive and solicitous of the welfare of the saints!

A. E. Knoch

RISKING HIS SOUL

Our Lord taught His disciples that he who prefers the indulgence of his physical senses to loyalty to Christ, who shrinks from the discomfort and distress which they must endure, he shall lose his soul in the time of Christ's exaltation. He who "loses his soul" for Christ's sake, he will gain it in that glorious future kingdom. In the phraseology of today's theology, to "lose your soul" is the very worst calamity which can occur. It is equivalent to "eternal damnation." Yet our Lord used these very words and urged His disciples to "lose their souls." "For whosoever should be wanting to save his soul shall lose [or "destroy"] it" (Matt.16:25). He who would save his soul (which is continually put before the sinner today) was to be discouraged and restrained by the fact that such would destroy their souls. Once we allow the true scriptural force of "soul" the passage is luminous with meaning and "the salvation of soul" takes on an entirely different color. This phrase, so loudly proclaimed today, is never once used in Paul's epistles. In fact, he very seldom speaks of the soul. Indeed he highly commends Epaphroditus for "risking his soul" for the sake of his fellow Philippians (Phil.2:30). This risk was evident in his sickness and depression which accompanied it. Paul could never commend anyone risking their salvation for any cause. But in Hebrews and James' and Peter's first epistle, which are concerned with the physical blessings of the earthly Kingdom, in these letters we read of the salvation of the soul.

A. E. Knoch

EPAPHRODITUS' SUFFERINGS

Philippians 2:25-30

SUFFERING is the supreme service. It comes nearest to the sacrifice which our Saviour made for us. The service of the strong is acceptable to God, yet the work of the weak is far more welcome. It is a deeper display of sacrificial love and demands much more affection to suffer than to serve. It is when both are combined that we see the highest response to God's grace. And both are found in the four examples set before us. Christ was the supreme Sufferer. Paul had his splinter in the flesh and his persecutions. Timothy had his frequent infirmities and the evils from without. Epaphroditus, the apostle of the Philippians, was especially signalized by his suffering, which took him very near to death (2:25-30).

Suffering for God is the highest privilege which can be accorded His creatures. The Philippians themselves knew this by experience, for they were graciously granted not only to believe on Christ, but to suffer for His sake (1:29). In them the two extremes meet, for in no other part of God's Word is there so much emphasis on both suffering and rejoicing. And this is true of Epaphroditus also, for twice in this brief paragraph concerning his sufferings we read of the rejoicing of the Philippians in connection with it (2:28,29).

Epaphroditus signifies *charming*, and such is the account of his career in this epistle. We read of no great deeds that he had done, no "souls" that he had won, but only that he was commissioned to carry the gift of the Philippians to Paul.

He transformed this somewhat prosaic task into a memorable achievement by risking his soul in its accomplishment. So is it with earth's common occupations. Weakness and suffering may make them deeds of honor and charm, worthy of highest recognition, bringing joy and delight to the heart of God and man.

Epaphroditus is given five titles which are characteristic of his service. These are: brother, worker, soldier, apostle, and minister. The number is especially appropriate, as five is usually associated with weakness, the outstanding feature of service. On one side these remind us of the family circle, of the workshop, and of the army. Epaphroditus belonged to the same spiritual family as Paul. This, of course, is basic. Service *must* be based on spiritual, not on physical ties in this administration. Beyond this we *must* be *fellow* workers of *Paul* if our service is to be acceptable to God.

FELLOW SOLDIER

There seem to be four who take the title soldier in Paul's epistles, Paul himself, by implication, Epaphroditus, Archippus (Philemon 2), and Timothy. Paul's charge to Timothy is well worth pondering in this connection, for we may easily receive a false impression from the figure of a soldier. We associate it with violence and glamour. It really conveys the thought of devotion and suffering. Like all figures, only a section of the soldier's life is used in the likeness, not the whole. So that Paul wrote: "*Suffer evil with me as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus*" (2 Tim. 2:3).

Many who went through the war learned that real soldiering did not consist in parading about in fine uniforms, but in enduring all sorts of discomfort and hardship in the midst of rain and mud and weariness and wounds and death. It is this side of the soldier's life which portrays our course in His service. It is not simply endeavoring to accomplish His

work in pleasant surroundings, but in the midst of opposition and evils of all sorts, which test our endurance and try our physical frames to the utmost. Not that we seek suffering, or castigate ourselves. No soldier does that. He does the opposite. In every way he seeks to build up and conserve his forces for the fight. We do not invite evil, we face it. Then we thank God and suffer it, for His sake.

THE APOSTLE EPAPHRODITUS

We are far too prone to stereotype the usage of words and make a proper name out of a common noun. This is shown by the rendering of the Authorized Version in this place. Acting under the tradition that only the twelve could be named *apostles*, they changed the rendering here to messenger. How could the Philippians appoint an apostle? The same superstition insists that Paul took the place of Matthias. But apostle simply means *commissioner*. In some ways it would be far better if this term were used. That is why I have it in the sublinear. Are there apostles in the church today? Of course there are commissions and commissioners today. That is not the point. If we are asked whether *God* commissions men today the answer must be in the negative. The apostles are in the foundation.

Epaphroditus was the apostle *of* the Philippians. But that was a totally different matter from being God's apostle *to* the Philippians. He had no such authority over the ecclesia or its doctrine or practice such as Paul or Timothy might exercise. He was simply given the power to represent them in carrying their gift to Paul in Rome. He was not merely a "messenger." He may have conveyed a message as well, but his main business was to transport their present to the apostle. Being commissioned ("apostled") to do this he became their commissioner or apostle for the time. Such "apostles" may well find a place today. It did not occur to me at the time, but I also have done

this duty, and was an “apostle” for a brief period, empowered to convey a sum of money to evangelists at some distance from the city.

EPAPHRODITUS THE MINISTER

Yet I was also a “minister,” for it ministered to the needs of the workers. How far this word has lost its proper usage is seen when we say that Epaphroditus was Paul’s “minister.” We may be sure that Paul did not attend his church, or listen to his sermons, or “sit under his ministry.” To be sure, ministration is not simply serving or dispensing. It is a public office. The priests ministered in the temple (Luke 1:23; Heb.10:11). The political authorities are God’s ministers (Rom.13:6). In this sense was Epaphroditus the minister of the Philippian ecclesia, inasmuch as he was their public functionary and attended to their ministration for them. As the priests brought the people’s offerings to God, so he carried the Philippians’ gift to Paul.

The charm of Epaphroditus is revealed in the exquisite sensitiveness of his character. He was depressed, not because he is infirm (though that may have been the case also), but because the Philippians had heard of his infirmity. Even though drawing near to death he is concerned about them, and the sorrow he causes them, rather than his own disability. Paul shares in this charming considerateness, and hastens his return to them, so that he, in turn, may not be burdened by their sorrow. Indeed, the whole interchange of sympathetic feeling is charming to a degree seldom seen among mortals. It is the delectable fruit of God’s love, which should always grace the service of His saints.

INFIRMITY AND DEATH

The case of Epaphroditus is of more than passing moment because it confirms and crowns the great truth that, in

this administration, God’s power is perfected in infirmity. Paul himself, after he had healed others, was given a splinter in the flesh (2 Cor.12:7). Today God’s grace is our sufficiency. Paul gloried in his infirmities, that the power of Christ should tabernacle on him. This was by no means the teaching of the twelve, or even of Paul himself when he was connected with the heralding of the kingdom. That day of physical marvels was announced by displays of *power*. The *powers* (not the infirmities) of the coming eon were produced as tokens of its nearness. Even the nations were given gifts of healing, in view of the coming glory. But, as the kingdom heralding ceased, the powers that accompanied it withdrew.

FROM PHYSICAL TO SPIRITUAL

There are circles of believers today who would not have hesitated to charge Epaphroditus with lack of faith, if not with actual sin, for his failure to “appropriate the healing in the atonement.” For them it is a disgrace to be ill, and, even if it is the consequence of their self-sacrifice in the Lord’s work, it is a dishonor and a shame. How different was Paul’s estimate! Quite to the contrary, he writes to them and to us: “*have such in honor*, seeing that because of the work of the Lord he draws near unto death, risking his soul that he should fill up your want of ministration toward me” (2:29,30). Infirmary of the flesh is as much in keeping with the truth today, as was the health and healing which accompanied the heralding of our Lord or of the twelve, or of Paul’s own earlier ministries, which were still connected with the kingdom.

Paul was probably the greatest healer among the apostles. He more than duplicated every sign recorded of Peter in the book of Acts. The lame man at the Beautiful gate of the temple was not the beneficiary of so wonderful a miracle as was the lame man at Lystra (Acts 3:2; 14:8).

Of whom else do we read such words as these: “powerful deeds, not the casual kind, God did through the hands of Paul, so that the handkerchiefs or aprons from his cuticle are carried away to the infirm also, to clear the diseases from them. Besides, wicked spirits go out” (Acts 19:11,12)? In this matter Paul seems to have easily eclipsed all others.

Yet in this, as in all else connected with Saul, who is called Paul, there is a gradual but mighty change, which he himself describes as a going from glory to glory (2 Cor. 3:18). Superficially, one might expect that this would bring still more physical strength and healing, but the advance is confined to the spiritual sphere, while the physical wonders fade away with the failing kingdom hopes.

Personally, in immediate connection with the highest revelation of which Paul could boast (2 Cor.12:1-7), he is given a painful and irritating affliction in the flesh, in order to keep him down. He who healed others cannot heal himself. And when he prayed for its removal, his persistence did not avail. So far as we know it was never withdrawn from him, so that we must picture the great apostle himself as a pathetic figure physically, in the latter part of his career, as at once the revelator and exponent of the great truth for the present, that *God's power is perfected in human infirmity*. It was in his latest days, in prison and unable to cure himself or his friends, that Paul was most powerful.

GRACE INCREASES

We see this change coming over the scene even more clearly in Paul's connection with his companions. Surely the great healer would wish to cure his own intimate friends and associates in the Lord's work. But, in proportion as the spiritual grace increased, the physical receded. His own child in the faith, whose service he so highly commends in this epistle, is *frequently* infirm (1 Tim.5:23). That Paul

is concerned about it is evident from the fact that he recommends, not a remedy, but a palliative. Weak Timothy became his most powerful aid. “Trophimus, being infirm, I left at Miletus” (2 Tim.4:20). In his earlier days, before the present grace was revealed, he would have healed him. Now infirmity is not to be removed but used. Through it God's power is to be revealed. Some day we shall see that Trophimus's infirmity effected more for God than the most wonderful miracle of healing would have done.

And so today. God's power is not apparent in mighty muscles or in buoyant health, neither of which is to be despised. He displays His glory in broken vessels of clay, so that the excellence of it is not of man but of God. And it is our duty and privilege to bestow especial honor on those who risk their souls in carrying out His work. God could easily keep them in health or cure their weaknesses, but that does not accord with the transcendent grace which is granted to us in this secret administration. Soon after it was revealed to Paul, long before it was made public in his imprisonment epistles, the physical blessings of the kingdom not only retired but, in Paul's case at least, were replaced by positive physical impotence and pain.

Epaphroditus risked his soul to fulfill his commission. It is evident from this that he did not shrink back in the face of danger. He knew before that it might cost him his health, if not his life. He had no such illusion as that the wonderworking apostle would heal him. He committed himself wholly into the hands of God, Who had mercy on him and spared his life. Now he has an honor compared to which all earthly glories fade away. What distinction can compare with his place among the slaves of God? For he it is who was chosen to be our model, to teach us how to serve God acceptably in suffering.

A. E. Knoch

THE IMITATION OF PAUL

Philippians 3:1–4:9

PAUL'S service now comes before us, preceded by a three-fold warning which is one of the least heeded yet most needed portions of God's Word for His slaves in this era. The third chapter of Philippians brings before us Paul's conduct in connection with the present administration, for our emulation, and points out the pitfalls which are spread for our feet, or, rather, it warns us against those who have fallen into them. And, indeed, almost the whole of Christendom, including its most illustrious leaders and its most noble saints, has failed in a measure in finding the way of true service. Even in Paul's own day many were enemies of the cross, though zealous workers and saved believers. Today the apostasy is so general that few think of objecting to it or warning God's slaves against it.

The keynote of true service is rung out once again: "*Rejoice in the Lord!*" Not in ourselves, in the flesh, or the terrestrial at this time, but in Him, in spirit, among the celestials. To be safe, we should keep this ever before us. Paul apologized for repeating this so often, but it is sorely needed, for it is seldom heeded. Indeed, few realize the precise force of the simple terms used. It is a very different matter to rejoice in *Christ* in regard to our salvation and glory, and to rejoice in the *Lord* in relation to our service for His sake. This chapter deals with service, not salvation. It is saved saints who are enemies of the *cross* (not enemies of Christ), whose consummation is destruction

(so far as their service is concerned). This is no chapter for unbelievers, but for saints in their character as *slaves*, who rejoice in their master, or *Lord*.

THE TRIPLE WARNING

The threefold warning is given to us in highly figurative language, hence it will be well to identify the figures, and put them into literal language. The warning seems to be a reversal, in which the first item corresponds with the last, so we will set it forth in this way, to help us to connect the corresponding parts.

Beware of curs,
beware of evil workers,
beware of the maimcision,
for *we* are the circumcision who are
offering divine service in the spirit of God,
and are glorying in Christ Jesus,
and have no confidence in flesh.

From this it seems that "curs" are those of the nations who have confidence in the flesh, and the "maimcision" those who rest on their literal circumcision. The whole is in contrast to the previous eras when circumcision had its place and the nations were to be blessed through the physical seed of Abraham.

BEWARE OF CURS

The dogs of the East, when grown, were half-wild scavengers of the villages, without an owner, existing on the refuse or offal, and universally detested. Hence it became an epithet for those outside the pale of promise, in the same class almost with hogs. Our Lord said:

You may not be giving that which is holy to the curs, nor yet should you be casting your pearls in front of hogs, lest at some time they be trampling them with their feet, and, turning, they should be tearing you. (Matthew 7:6)

Peter also speaks of both together in his parables (2 Pet. 2:22). In order to convey this feeling of contempt we have not translated the word *kuōn* by *dog*, as is usually done, but by the more accurate *cur*.

Curs are outsiders (Rev.22:15). In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus we find a hint of this (Luke 16:21). But there is more than that in the picture Paul puts before us. They are outsiders who devour the offal of the Circumcision. The key to the correct interpretation lies in the following context. Paul recites a list of what he has as a physical descendant of Israel and then adds that he deems it *refuse* (3:8), that he may gain Christ. This refuse, this offal, which he has thrown away, is eagerly devoured by the curs, that is, those of the outside nations who seek to appropriate that which belongs to Israel in the flesh. They sometimes call themselves “spiritual Israel,” and other euphonious terms, but here they are called “curs.” They have confidence in the flesh. Beware of them!

EVIL WORKERS

Christendom has many “workers.” It seems cruel and heartless to describe them as evil. Indeed, one is tempted to call all “Christian” work good, when the motive seems to be commendable. But one consideration alone shows that, in a very real sense much of the work of Christendom is evil. Until very recent times, the church had such confidence in itself that it proposed to bring about the conversion of the world without the coming of Christ. And, indeed, that is still the aim of the great majority of “Christian” workers. Yet all such efforts must be evil, despite their commendable object, for they propose to take the glory which belongs to Christ alone, and make it their own. All work which does not glory in Christ Jesus is evil. All which boasts in the flesh is evil. All which is disposed to the terrestrial is evil. Beware!

THE MAIMCISION

This is the epithet which reveals what the Circumcision really are in this era when the flesh has lost all standing before God. Circumcision was once a token of covenant relationship with the Deity. It entailed many precious privileges. It will have a great place in the future again, when the physical seed of Abraham will be restored to divine favor. But now circumcision has lost all virtue and has degenerated into a mere mutilation of the flesh. The rite to the rite is a physical one. Descent from Abraham is essential, except for proselytes. This term may be applied to all who give it a place in service today, whether they are actual sons of Israel, or take this rite upon themselves in order to share in the blessings which it is supposed to bring.

Circumcision is a *cutting off* of the flesh, and was intended to set forth its futility. Had the Circumcisionists fully realized what the sign signified, they would have lost all confidence in the flesh. Instead they gave the flesh the highest place, and sought to make it the basis of all blessing. As we, who place no confidence in the flesh whatever, really carry out the true significance of the sign (even if we do not possess it) *we are the genuine Circumcision*. We have no ritual, no priesthood, no temple in which to go through the outward forms and ceremonies of the divine service, but, in spirit, we offer to God that essential worship which the temple service only shadowed. Too often, alas, the substance was lacking. We need no physical symbol. We dare not be circumcised. It has become a badge of apostasy. Beware of the maimcision!

PAUL'S PHYSICAL PREROGATIVES

But what of Paul himself? He certainly belonged to the Circumcision. What is his attitude toward these physical prerogatives of his? In seven distinct steps he describes to us the height which he had attained in the divine reli-

gion. He could measure himself with the best of them. Narrower and narrower he draws the circle of privilege, until at last he stands almost alone, a solitary example, at the summit of human religious attainment.

CIRCUMCISION THE EIGHTH DAY

The rite of circumcision was not confined to the sons of Jacob or Israel. Abraham received it before Isaac was born, and he circumcised Ishmael and all who were in his house (Gen.17:24-27). After the example of Ishmael, his descendants perform the rite in the thirteenth year. Yet all who were circumcised reckoned themselves a special class, being associated with Abraham. Paul, in his claims, really goes back to Isaac, for he adds "the eighth day." This is a smaller circle of privilege than that of circumcision alone. The striking fact is that this class begins with him who was born of parents as good as dead, when the energy of the flesh was replaced by the power of faith.

OF THE RACE OF ISRAEL

Not all who were circumcised the eighth day belonged to the race of Israel. Esau and his descendants are not reckoned in this more highly favored class. Yahweh repeated his promises to the patriarch Jacob, not to Esau. The nation of God's choice is confined to the descendants of Israel. There was a covenant made with the Circumcision. But there was still another made with Israel when they came out of Egypt. To them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the legislation, the divine service, and the promises (Rom.9:4).

THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN

Benjamin was the best beloved of Jacob's sons after Joseph was taken from him. The tribe took a prominent part in the affairs of Israel, and had the honor of hav-

ing the temple and Jerusalem within its borders. Israel's first king, Saul, came from Benjamin. it was the only tribe which remained true to the house of David, when the ten tribes broke away. It was an additional honor to belong to such a tribe.

A HEBREW OF THE HEBREWS

In Paul's day the nation was divided into two parties, very much as in these days: one could speak of orthodox Jews and liberal Jews. All the Jews had learned to speak Greek, yet some of them had gone much further, and had forsaken the traditional customs to become Hellenists, with Greek culture and customs. This was especially the case among the dispersion. Paul had been born in Cilicia, so was especially tempted to leave the "Hebrews," as they were called, for more modern ways. Yet he did not yield to these influences, but clung to the traditions. Indeed, he was a leader among such. He even expresses his position here by a Hebrew idiom. For the superlative they used this form. The holiest division of the tabernacle they called the holy of holies. So, to express the fact that he was most "orthodox," he calls himself "a Hebrew of the Hebrews." Religiously this was a more select class than the mass of the nation.

A PHARISEE

In relation to the law the Jews of our Lord's day were divided still more. Among the "Hebrews" there was a sect of special sanctity and severely strict in the law's enforcement. Notwithstanding the excesses to which they went in its interpretation, and the fact that they overloaded it with human additions, outwardly, at least, they were recognized as the champions of the law, and opposed all laxness in its observance. No doubt that most of them were hypocrites, as our Lord so clearly showed. But they were pardonably

proud in their stand for the Scriptures, and against human reason and philosophy. It was a distinct gain to belong to their ranks rather than to those who gave the divine legislation no such place in their lives.

PERSECUTING THE ECCLESIA

Paul was no half-hearted, indifferent religionist. Much as we may condemn his misdirected zeal in harassing those who had accepted the Messiah, we must allow that it testified to the earnestness and depth of his convictions. He was a zealous Pharisee, quite above the average in the intensity of his desire to serve the God of his fathers. Among his contemporaries he had a right to expect special recognition for his services on behalf of the Jewish faith, as he saw it.

BECOMING BLAMELESS

A blameless reputation in the midst of the strict Pharisees was no light accomplishment. Let us not think here of sin, for the apostle himself confessed that, while blameless in the sight of men, he was the foremost of the sinners in the sight of God. It is clear that he carried out the observance of the law so fully and accurately that the most faultfinding Pharisee could not detect any lapse. A very notable achievement! It is a question whether Saul of Tarsus could do any more, religiously, to better himself or attain a higher standing in the flesh before God. And it is very much to be doubted whether any other man of his day could equal his record.

PAUL FORFEITS ALL

When Paul was on board the ship which was taking him to Italy, it entered a bay called Ideal Harbors. But, as it was not a fit place in which to winter, the navigator and the man who had chartered the ship proposed to go on

to Phoenix, in Crete. Paul expostulated, saying, "Men! I behold that sailing is about to be with damage and much *forfeit*, not only of the lading and of the ship, but of our souls also" (Acts 27:10). The outcome was that the ship and its cargo were *forfeited* by their action in pursuing the voyage against the counsel of Paul.

We have brought in this incident in order to give a graphic illustration of the meaning of the word *forfeit*, which is one of the features of the passage before us (Phil.3:7,8). Like the ship, Paul was loaded with all sorts of valuable cargo, but he forfeited it all in the great crisis which he had just passed through. Indeed, the ship is a picture of the kingdom as heralded in the book of Acts, especially as it concerns Paul and those with him. At the end of the book it goes to pieces, and all that belonged to it was lost; only those who believed were given to Paul, and with him went to Rome.

All these physical advantages were a gain to Paul, but they hindered a much greater gain. They seemed excellent in the dimness of human ignorance, but they became intolerable in the light of the knowledge of Christ. So Paul does not part with them reluctantly, but deems them to be no better than refuse, or offal to be thrown to the curs. All his cherished merit, his blameless walk, his proud pedigree, on which he had prided himself in days gone by, the like of which is the chief reliance of the religionist to this very day, were seen to be so many incumbrances to keep him from the complete appropriation of Christ. Away with it! May his example help us all to refuse the refuse which religion offers us, in order to keep us from the full appreciation of Him Who is our All!

Is it not all too true that the religious gains in Christendom today are nothing more than what Saul had in Judaism? Good birth, membership in an accredited denomination, zeal, and an irreproachable life—what more do you wish in a "Christian"? Yet not one of these things is vital, and

every one may be a hindrance to the acceptance of Christ, not merely as our Saviour, but as our All. Indeed, the religionism of today is little more than a camouflaged Judaism, in which the flesh seeks to make itself acceptable to God, apart from, or with the aid of Christ.

GAINING CHRIST

But how could Paul speak of gaining Christ after all these years of sainthood and faithful service? How can he say “that I may be found in Him” when He had been “in Christ” for many years? He is “working out” the salvation he had received (*cf* 2:12; 3:3). He is carrying it into effect. While all believers rely on Christ for salvation, few indeed are wholly dependent on Him for service. To let those things go which seem an advantage to us is quite a different matter from forsaking recognized sin. The Jew must forfeit his most cherished prerogatives, and the Gentile all his terrestrial advantages if he wishes to gain Christ in this sense. Christ must become their All in service as He is in salvation.

RIGHTEOUSNESS IN CHRIST

Saul was what he was in himself. His righteousness was his own, based on the law. Blameless as he appeared before his fellow men, at heart he was most unrighteous. This came to the surface in his zeal against Christ and His saints. Nothing could be more unjust than to sympathize with Stephen’s murderers, or to persecute those who belonged to the just One. Away with such self-righteousness! Now Paul wishes to be found *in Christ*, *not* having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God for faith¹ (3:9). Since Job’s day men hang with death-clutch to their own righteousness (Job 27:6):

1. or: “on the basis of that faith,” *cf* CVNT, p.143.

I will hold fast to my righteousness, and I shall not relax.
But God, by His grace, can loosen this grip by a sight of His Christ, and by the gift of His own righteousness in His Anointed.

TO KNOW HIM

The knowledge of Christ is especially extended to His sufferings and death, and to His resurrection. *There is no reference whatever to His life and ministry in the land as a Servant of the Circumcision*, which is knowing Christ after the flesh, which Paul repudiated (2 Cor.5:16). Our vital connection with God’s Anointed does not commence until His crucifixion, and associates us with His resurrection and ascension.

As the succeeding section of this paragraph seems to be another reversal, we will set it forth so as to help our minds to follow the course of thought (3:10-12):

To know Him,
and the power of His resurrection,
and the fellowship of His sufferings,
conforming to His death,
if somehow I should attain to the resurrection
that is out from among the dead.
Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected.
Yet I am pursuing, if I may be grasping . . .

CONFORMING TO HIS DEATH

Righteousness demands the death of the unrighteous. This includes the whole race. Christ alone was righteous, hence He alone could die for the sake of others. His death for us fulfills the demands of justice, yet at the same time involves our death in Him. We should have died on Golgotha rather than He. His sufferings were ours by right, not His. This knowledge puts an end to us and all our pretensions in the flesh. Paul no longer saw himself blameless before men but smitten and slain in the sight of God. He may

have been a circumcised Israelite, a Hebrew and a Pharisee, but he was a dead one. The death of Christ put an end to all his physical pretensions and absolutely settled his unrighteousness. Conformity to the death of Christ is the one absolute essential to acceptable service. So long as we still cling to something of our own, we cannot fully find our place in Christ.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS

None of us can actually endure the sufferings which came to Christ when He died on behalf of sinners. Nor can we add our own to His sufferings on behalf of the race, for He alone is qualified to save. Had we such sufferings to endure, they would be because of our own sins and not those of others. How then can we enter into "the fellowship of His sufferings"? By the vital recognition that these sufferings, being *for* us, were really ours, and show God's estimate of what we were in ourselves. This enables us to escape from ourselves and our supposed excellences in the flesh, and to transfer ourselves into Him. There we find all our supposed losses overwhelmingly recompensed.

THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION

If we are identified with Christ in His death, then we will be in His resurrection also. Actually, literally, we will be made alive because we are His (1 Cor. 15:22). But this is not in view here, for we are concerned with life and service for Him now, not in the future when these warnings and exhortations will no longer be needed. We are not now concerned with resurrection itself, but with a knowledge of its power in our present service. This is viewed from two different angles, both of which should powerfully affect our course. One is the past resurrection of Christ. The other is our own future resurrection.

There is a tremendous reservoir of potential power in the realization that our Lord has been raised from among

the dead. Its implications are limitless. If He has accomplished this, He is able for all else. We have a Lord Whose power knows no limits, and does not even retreat before death, the last of all our enemies. All human effort is circumscribed and impotent in view of death. The work in which we are engaged is not so. It will not fail, because it is in the hands of the Deathless One.

ATTAINING TO THE OUT-RESURRECTION

The word *exanastasis*, OUT-UP-STANDING, has excited so much interest that it is only just that we pay particular attention to it, and to the doctrines to which it has given rise. This word occurs but once, hence cannot be compared with its other occurrences. We must appeal to aids of a different kind. In this case it is very simple to find help, for words compounded of the element *ek*, OUT, usually retain the meaning of their parts, so that there we have to do with a resurrection, not *of* the dead merely, but *out from among* the dead. There is a strong tendency, however, to limit this phrase still further, so that it might read, "out from among the *saints*," or "out from among the *church*." Beyond this the question also arises whether there is such a resurrection in the other Scriptures, to which reference is made, or does this suggest a resurrection elsewhere unrevealed? Is there an "out-resurrection" apart from Paul's highest revelation in Ephesians?

We must not fail to notice, however, that, so far as the actual letters in the manuscripts are concerned, and so far as the sense goes, there are other passages which also speak of OUT-UP-STANDINGS. In the following citations the Greek is precisely the same as in this passage. A difference arises only when we divide the text into "words" as in English. Each of these is an *ex anastasis*, while in Philippians it is an *exanastasis*. The space after the *x* is the only difference, and this is not in the Original.

Acts 26:23 if He, the first *out* of a *resurrection* of the dead
 Rom. 1: 4 [*by* or] *out* of *resurrection* of the dead
 Heb. 11:35 women obtained their dead [*by* or] *out* of *resurrection*

Besides this, the same sense is conveyed when the connective *ek*, *OUT*, *follows* the word, as in these passages:

Luke 20:35 those deemed worthy to happen upon that eon and the *resurrection out* of the dead
 Acts 4: 2 announcing in Jesus the *resurrection out* of the dead—
 1 Peter 1: 3 through the *resurrection* of Jesus Christ *out* of the dead

The corresponding verb, *OUT-UP-STAND*, is never applied to the dead (Mark 12:19; Luke 20:28; Acts 15:5).

From this it will be seen that the term *out-resurrection* is a name for the thought expressed in the phrase *raise out* or *from among* (Matt.17:9; Mark 6:14; 9:9,10; 12:25; Luke 16:31; 24:46; John 20:9; Acts 10:41; 13:34; 17:3,31; Eph.5:14).

We avow, as Paul did before Felix, “that there is to be a future resurrection of the just as well as the unjust” (Acts 24:15). “All who are in the tombs will be hearing His voice, and those who do good things shall be going out into a resurrection of life, yet those who commit bad into a resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28,29). These resurrections do not occur at the same time. There is at least a thousand years between them. Therefore it is necessary that the former should be an *out-resurrection*, for the rest of the dead do not live until the thousand years are finished (Rev.20:5). It is also evident that, should a resurrection occur even before this, it also would be an *out-resurrection*. It is important to note that Scripture does not distinguish these by a special phrase. We never read of an “out-resurrection from among the *saints*.” All are simply from among the *dead*.

It is evident from this that *out-resurrection* is for believ-

ers only and leads to eonian glory, in contrast to the latter resurrection, which leads to judgment. In the out-resurrection we will be sinless, and lead a life of perfect conformity to the will of God. This is the ideal to which our present life should conform. What would we not give to be as we will be when vivified! To serve as we will in that glorious time! What is more practical than to seek to attain it now?

Let us keep in mind the context in which this term is used if we wish to interpret its message correctly. Paul is concerned with his *service* (Phil.3:4-16). His previous course in unbelief led to the persecution of God’s saints. Could anything be further from our occupation in resurrection? Now Paul wishes to regulate his actions so as to anticipate his behavior in the out-resurrection. He puts it, “conformed to His death, if somehow I should be attaining to the resurrection out from among the dead” (Phil.3:10,11). For this he wishes to know the *power* of His resurrection.

That he is not referring to his own literal resurrection is evident from what follows. “Not that I already obtained, or have already been perfected . . .” No one could possibly suppose that he had died and had been raised. There was no need to reassure anyone on that point. But the conduct of the apostle may very well have been so like that which will be ours in resurrection, that his friends might easily suppose that God had already actually bestowed upon him the power which belongs to that day.

Christ Jesus has grasped, or taken hold of Paul in order to conform him to His own likeness. That will be openly manifest in the case of all saints when the out-resurrection actually takes place. But Paul wished to grasp that ahead of time, here and now. He wanted the power of that future life to transform his present career.

The powers of the coming eon were present in our Lord’s ministry and in that of the twelve, and even in Paul’s earlier course. Now that the kingdom is no longer the subject

of testimony, these physical marvels have of necessity vanished. In their place we should seek to anticipate the spiritual powers of the future glory which awaits us. These are in reality far greater than those of the kingdom, though their character is very different.

A semi-literal interpretation of this passage has been proposed. It is asserted that, if we are conformed to His death, then we will also be raised from the dead after three days. But, if we are to take this literally, then we must make it all literal. We have not only died, but have been crucified. To be literally conformed to His death, we must go to Jerusalem, and have ourselves crucified on Golgotha, and be laid in the nearby tomb, and then rise and show ourselves by many infallible signs. We might manage to be crucified and entombed, but no literal resurrection would follow on the third day. Paul did not do this literally. But he sought to do it figuratively. Literal resurrection is no attainment, but conduct like that which will be ours in the resurrection is a goal toward which we all should strive.

Other grave difficulties attend this interpretation. To begin with, *all* believers of this administration of God's grace are planted in the likeness of His death and shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, for our old humanity has been crucified together with Him (Rom.6:5). This occurs at the time of our baptism. We were entombed together with Him through baptism into death. If this is to be taken literally in regard to the *time* of the entombment and in regard to the death, then it must be literal throughout, especially as nothing is said here as to the time, but the mode is insisted upon. Consistency demands, then, that each believer be literally crucified and entombed when he is baptized by the spirit, and literally roused after three days, and literally reveal himself with the same, uncorrupted body on earth before ascending above.

But when the Scriptures speak of our literal death, this

is denied. In the resurrection this *corruptible* must put on incorruption (1 Cor.15:53). Our Lord saw no corruption (Acts 2:27). If we are to be conformed to His death in our literal death, then we should not see decay. But we trust that what has been said of the passage as a whole will be sufficient to show that it is not concerned with our future lot but our present service, not with the literal resurrection but with the knowledge of its power.

THE RACE

In order to give our service the proper direction and incentive, our career is compared to a race, yet not in regard to competition with others—that is not here, and would spoil the picture—but in regard to our attitude. The racer pays no attention to that which is behind him. It would be a great hindrance. He does not stand up straight, but stretches far forward in the direction of the goal. He not only wishes to arrive there, but to cover the course in such a way that he will receive a prize, a reward for his efforts.

It is vital that we keep the picture here presented to us well within the bounds of the context. Much misunderstanding would have been avoided if thoughts foreign to the theme had not been worked into it. It is true that, in a race, many run and only one wins the prize. According to that there is no use for us to enter it, for Paul would surely carry off the single prize and the rest of us would have nothing but disappointment for our pains. But this aspect of a race is not at all in view here. The lessons are drawn from altogether different features, and this should not be allowed to intrude.

FORGETTING, NOT REGRETTING

Few, indeed, who have learned what they are in themselves, can look back without regret. Paul might have made much more mention of his past errors in his epistles. But

he never brings them up without good cause. There is no power in our past, especially not in the years of self-exaltation before we began to find our all in Christ. Many are tempted to spend much time regretting their own ignorance and selfishness, and thinking how much better it would have been if they had been enlightened at an earlier age. Such regrets weaken and unfit us for our forward striving toward the goal, conformity with Christ, and should be discouraged. Let us forget our past advantages and disadvantages and look ahead. Back of us is ourselves, ahead is Christ.

THE PRIZE

The Prize set before us is God's calling above, which might be rendered the "up calling." Like our Lord before his exaltation, our present career is a "down calling," a descent, a humiliation. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God highly exalts him. Exaltation is the prize set before Him and us. The glory awaits us at the goal. God has called us, indeed, but He has not yet called us up. Now we need to be emptied of ourselves and be found in Him, in lowliness seeking *conformation* to His death, and a realization of the power of His resurrection. Then we will realize it to the full and attain the prize of prizes, *transformation* into His glorious likeness. It is presented as a prize because it cannot be ours until we reach the goal at the end of the race, not that we alone win it in competition with others.

MATURE SAINTS

Among the saints there are many, if not most, who cannot follow what is here set forth. They have many things in the flesh, race, position, attainments, and reputation, which they cannot forfeit for Christ. They would not think of refusing them as refuse in order to gain Christ. Of con-

formity to His death they have known little or nothing, nor of the power of His resurrection. In a word, they are *immature*. In the language of the race course, they lag behind and cannot see the goal. Those who are mature, whose hearts have been opened to the final revelations through Paul, who are no longer puzzled by the enigmas of previous revelation but see face to face (1 Cor.13:12), should be disposed like Paul (3:15). Eventually all will come to this knowledge (3:15).

There is a tendency to create a gap between the mature and the immature, those who have gone ahead in the race and those who lag behind. We would be inclined to urge the laggards to mend their pace, and to catch up with those ahead of them. But the immature have no clear realization of their backwardness. They sometimes consider minority quite the normal state, and maturity an undue assumption. It seems a settled opinion that, in religion, there must be clouds and mystery. Clearness is only conceit. This comes largely because they are constantly occupied with the Scriptures intended for the immature, and have never followed Paul into perfection. But there is no exhortation to them to hurry, but to the mature to accommodate themselves to them. "In what we outstrip, there is to be a mutual disposition to observe the same fundamental rule" (3:16).

THE IMITATION OF PAUL

Paul occupies a unique place in God's revelation. What other man could calmly put himself before us for imitation? Peter would not do so. He would have his readers follow in the footsteps of Christ (1 Peter 2:21). Yet in the section concerning our Lord in this epistle, we are not exhorted to go in His steps, but rather to imitate the disposition which sent Him from heaven to the death of the cross. All intermediate "steps" between His incarna-

tion and the cross are avoided by including His life's history in one word, "He humbles Himself." In His earthly career He was the great Example for those who will enter the kingdom which He heralded. But His conduct was not in accord with present truth, for this would have clashed with His whole ministry which was to the Circumcision, and confined to the earth.

Few who have considered the matter have not wondered at first how Paul could take so much upon himself. Not only could he make himself a model (1 Cor.4:16), but, quite unlike any other apostle, he could speak of *my* evangel (Rom.2:16; 16:25; 2 Tim.2:8), or *our* evangel (2 Cor.4:3; 1 Thess.1:5; 2 Thess.2:14), without the least attempt to excuse himself. Some have thought it most irreverent for him to couple himself with the evangel after this fashion. And it cannot be condoned on any other ground than the real one, that to him was committed an evangel distinct from all the rest, which can best be described by this fact, rather than by any special side of it, such as *grace*, or *conciliation*, or *Uncircumcision*, all of which have their place, but fail to convey its every aspect.

If Paul lived today perhaps Jeremiah would no longer be called the weeping prophet. Paul's lamentations over the saints might far exceed his over Israel. It seems almost incredible that even in Paul's day *many* were walking so as to cause him so much concern. What are these days compared to those? As lead to gold, as dusk to midday. If there were so many in those days who were *enemies of the cross* (3:18) how must it be today? Should we not expect to find nearly all in this category? Nothing else can be expected. There is an almost universal insensibility to the teaching of the cross, and its effect on the physical and terrestrial. The saints are like Job; they hold fast to their own, and will not let go. They do not care to be found in Christ.

ENEMIES OF THE CROSS

Paradox though it seems to be, most of those who are friends of Christ are enemies of His cross (3:18). They are willing to part with their sins and evil and take Him as their Saviour, but they do not wish to part with their goodness or personal advantages and superiorities and be found alone in Him. They do not realize that the manner of Christ's death puts an end to all that man is in himself. They wish to be somebody on their own account. And this makes them antagonistic to the cross. Their attitude is cloaked under various euphemistic terms, which reveal a latent pride in their origin or their character or their attainments in the flesh. All of this clashes with the cross.

WHOSE CONSUMMATION IS DESTRUCTION

This phrase kept me from grasping the tragic meaning of this passage for a long time. It seemed, indeed, that Paul was speaking of believers, for why should he mention any others when speaking of imitating his walk? No others but saints could come into view in this passage. But that the phrase "whose consummation is destruction" (3:19), should refer to them seems quite incredible, until the proper background is furnished by a consideration of the whole epistle, and especially this section of it. This letter deals with *service*, not with *salvation*. The disobedient among the saints have already been referred to as "curs," as "evil workers," as the "maimcision," terms whose harshness is excusable only on the ground of truth and necessity. They are intended to be helpful in rescuing the saints from delusive dangers against which they need an alarming admonition.

Here we have such a dire warning. It is a fact that all service done under the influence of the flesh will be destroyed. All self-righteousness must perish. That is its consumma-

tion. If it is not forfeited now, it will be burned up at the dais of Christ. At the final consummation God is not only going to be in all, but *All* in all. What we have here is only the process to this end. The unbeliever will be prepared for it by judgment. The believer should anticipate it now in his service, by gaining Christ in the measure in which he forfeits that which is his own. But if he does not do so, he can look forward to nothing but the destruction of his deeds in that day, when he stands in front of the dais of Christ, to be requited for that which he puts into practice through the body, for it will be reckoned bad (2 Cor. 5:10). If anyone's work shall burn up, he will *forfeit* it, yet he shall be saved (1 Cor.3:15).

WHOSE GOD IS THEIR BOWELS

This strong and striking figure seems to set before us a form of idolatry which puts the satisfaction of the flesh in the place of the Deity, so far as service is concerned. It is abundantly in evidence in most so-called Christian worship. Much more is done to satisfy the soul than to edify the spirit. Beautiful sights and melodious sounds and pleasant scents are used to attract, in place of the love of God and the glories of His Son.

WHOSE GLORY IS IN THEIR SHAME

Blind to the shame in which the cross of Christ has sunk all fleshly religion, it has become the boast of Christendom. An apt expression of this is the form which has been given to the cross itself. In place of the severe and shameful stake, the badge of human depravity, it has been converted into an ornament to adorn church buildings and their ritual and the dress of devotees. Much of the boast of Christendom is in things which are contrary to the cross of Christ, and which, if seen in its light, would cause deep humiliation and shame.

WHO ARE DISPOSED TO THE TERRESTRIAL

A disposition to the terrestrial is the normal attitude of man. Almost all of the Scriptures are concerned with the earth and that which takes place upon its surface. For Peter and the Circumcision to be thus disposed is quite in keeping with the character of their calling. But today it is a sign of immaturity and opposition to the cross, for the terrestrial is still outside of Christ, and, like the flesh, is not subject to Him, neither is it able. If Christ were today engaged in blessing the earth as He will bless it in the future, then, in Him, we also would be concerned with its betterment. But, *without Christ*, the cross has condemned the world and its works, and we should not seek to do anything outside of Him.

Not that we are to be recluses and hermits, or do nothing to earn a livelihood. We have our duties. We must provide for our own and pay taxes. We must be subject to the authorities. But, in spirit, we are not of it, especially with any of its plans for self-improvement before the presence of Christ. Such efforts are contrary to the cross, and are anti-christian in character, for they seek to displace Him, and make His presence unnecessary. We know that as a whole all such movements will end in failure, for the earth will need Him more and more, as time goes by, in spite of all that anyone can do. He alone can heal its mortal wound.

CELESTIAL CITIZENSHIP

In glorious contrast to our present place of humiliation on the earth is our potential place of exaltation in the heavens. We have no valid rights on earth. It, with its fullness, belongs to Yahweh, and He has not delegated any of its privileges to us. But why should we wish to meddle here, seeing that God has given us a far more glorious sphere? We are citizens of the heavens (3:20). We will not go there as fugitives of earth or as guests dependent on the hospi-

tality of others. We will need no pass, no visa, as though we were foreigners, limited in our rights and restricted in our movements, alien expatriates, despised emigrants of a despicable and death-doomed race. This we would be in ourselves, but in Christ we are entitled to all the rights and privileges which He Himself can claim.

AWAITING A SAVIOUR

Salvation has its tenses, past, present, and future. We were saved, we are being saved, and we shall be saved. It is not finished until our Lord descends from heaven and we ascend to our allotment. We await Him in various characters. He will come as a Saviour with regard to our bodies, for these have not yet felt His touch. Our salvation is still incomplete, and will remain so in the physical sphere as long as we are here.

THE BODY OF OUR HUMILIATION

No one is so keenly sensitive to the degrading corruption and impotence of our bodies as the saint who has caught a glimpse of His glory. But the phrase means more than that. It is not merely a humiliating body, but the body which accompanies and accords with our humiliation (3:21). So long as we are in it we are to humble ourselves, as well as suffer the humiliation it involves. This is not the time for us to be glorified. The Corinthians were sated and rich and reigning, while the apostles were a gazingstock to the world, but that was due to the Corinthians' carnality (1 Cor.4:8-10). A mortal body is the proper place to display our present humiliation. Undesirable as it is in itself, we should be thankful for it, as it prepares us to appreciate the body that shall be ours in the future.

THE BODY OF HIS GLORY

Paul never met our Lord in His post-resurrection body,

as He presented Himself to His disciples. When he saw Him He was enveloped in a glory which the eyes of the disciples never could have borne. To the disciples on the way to Emmaus our Lord presented no outward evidence of His glorified position. This was dimmed, and invisible in His intercourse with the kingdom saints. This was not the body which pertained to His glory. This is not the prototype of our future frame. Even the transformation on the holy mount, though His face shone as the sun, seems to have been bearable to their sight (Matt.17:2). But when Paul saw Him on the Damascus road, the light irradiating Him was *above* the brightness of the sun (Acts 26:13). Its beams were too bright for Paul's poor eyes, and blinded them, scorching the sclerotic coat into scales (Acts 9:18). Such is the body of His glory.

Contrary to our conceptions, glory and subjection go together. Now our flesh is not subject and is inglorious. Then it will be endued with power and effulgent in its splendor. This is because it is once more connected with the source of life and power and fully under the sway of Christ. Independence and insubjection drag down to degradation and death. Dependence and subjection lead to life and glory. The transfiguration of our bodies will inaugurate a similar operation to include the whole universe, for He is able to subject all to Him. In each case it will involve glorification, so that, at the consummation, when all will be subject, He will hand over to God a universe glorified as well as subject.

STAND FIRM

Having delivered his warnings, designed to shield us from the special evils which beset our course, Paul proceeds to add positive exhortations equally needed to aid us on our way. We are all liable to waver, to differ in our dispositions, to be depressed, to worry, to be engrossed

by the evil rather than by the good (4:1-9). How wonderfully he introduces his words! His readers were beloved and longed for, his joy and wreath (4:1). It seems to me that, in milder measure, this is true of all to whom God's truth comes through Paul. I, for one, feel almost as if I were a Philippian, for I am certainly in his wreath and would like to be his joy, and love him and long to see him, as he would me, were we acquainted. Paul puts the personal touch here, and speaks as to particular friends.

Stand firm *thus* in the Lord, my beloved (4:1). Here is the tone which lifts the favorites of grace. There is no threat of doom in case of disobedience, only the constraint of love. Since that day the slaves of the Lord have been inconstant, unsettled, unsteady, changeable, fluctuating, vacillating, wavering, restless, uneasy, erratic, fickle—anything but firm in the Lord in regard to His service in this era. We do not speak of Christendom, which has been far more constant in the service of the flesh and the terrestrial than the saints have been of Christ and the celestial. Yet God's patience has not been exhausted. The exhortation still calls to us, *stand firm in the Lord—thus*. As imitators of Paul, as forfeiting everything of the flesh and finding our all in Christ, there is a vast opportunity for service, such as seldom comes to the sons of Adam.

THE SCROLL OF LIFE

To imitate Paul should be very much easier for the saints among the nations than for one from among the chosen race. I have found, in my own personal intercourse with the sons of Israel, that a sense of superiority, on account of their physical pedigree, is seldom counted as refuse. They are fond of quoting, "To the Jew first." And this is often encouraged, rather than discouraged, by non-Jews who have not gone on to maturity. But there is one point in which those of the favored nation still differ from the

rest. They have their names in the book of life. They are not removed when they accept Christ and, like Paul, are given a celestial allotment. Hence, if we wish to distinguish them from the rest we may use the formula here adopted, "whose names are in the scroll of life" (4:3).

To help converted Jews realize that their physical advantages must all be forfeited if they are to gain Christ, is a special service to which Paul first devotes himself and then asks the help of his genuine yokefellow. He entreats two who serve, Euodia and Syntyche, to a mutual disposition. Nothing is said as to the nature of their difference, unless the meaning of their names contains a hint. Euodia (WELL-WAY) probably corresponds to our "Luck," while Syntyche (TOGETHER-HAPPEN) may be rendered "Fortuity," or "Coincidence." But it is far more likely that both of them, as well as Clement, and the rest whose names are in the scroll of life were not easily disposed to forfeit all that they had in the flesh, hence were in special need of assistance in this matter.

REJOICING IN THE LORD

"Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again will I declare, Be rejoicing!" (4:4). If we look at ourselves, we are sad. If we consider our work, we are despondent. But if we view all *in the Lord*, we have every cause to be glad. And this is just what we will do if we imitate Paul. In our flesh, on earth, the scene is very somber, indeed. In Him in the celestials it is full of joyful expectation. Our weaknesses and our failures should not hinder our rejoicing, for even they will contribute to the glory of His achievements. He is not weak! He makes no mistakes! He will accomplish more than our hearts can wish, and satisfy every desire which God has implanted in us. Let us ever rejoice in Him, and do so all the more when disappointed in ourselves and in our fellows.

THE LORD IS NEAR

“Let your lenience be known to all men: *the Lord is near*” (4:5). What a help it is to realize the nearness of the Lord! Paul himself, at his first defense, was abandoned by all. Yet the Lord stood beside him and invigorated him (2 Tim.4:16,17). True humility will lead to lenience. But moderation and mildness, are almost sure to be misunderstood and will invite their opposites. When foes and friends take advantage of us there may be a strong temptation to teach them a salutary lesson by using such severity as the occasion seems to demand. It is in us to wish to put things right ourselves. At such times we need to remind ourselves that we are not alone. Severity is not necessary. The Lord is near, and will not only invigorate us, but see that others are put in their places.

THE PEACE OF GOD

Those who are justified by faith may be enjoying peace *toward* God (Rom.5:1) with reference to themselves. Through Christ, we may be on terms of close friendship with Him. Yet there is much outside of ourselves which may disturb us and ruin our service for Him. Life may be full of perplexing and harassing situations, which produce fear and dejection, unless we enjoy the peace *of* God, and are able to view them from this point of vantage. God is not disturbed by anything, seeing that all is out of Him, and through Him, and for Him (Rom.11:36). He is its Source, and He controls its course. He is using it all to effect His purpose. So He cannot be uneasy or fearful about it. Neither should we. That is why Paul wishes us to combine thanksgiving with all our prayers and petitions.

Let us not pray and wait fearfully to see if God will comply with our requests, and hold it against Him if there is no immediate response, or if things go contrary to our wishes, nor let us thank Him only when He does what we demand.

The thanksgiving should always accompany the prayers and come *before* its fulfillment. In fact we should be thankful when God does *not* fulfill our petitions, for we do not know what to pray for, and the most spiritual petition is that which recognizes our inability, and pleads with inarticulate groanings (Rom.8:26). Peace based on answered prayer may be turned into worry over unfulfilled requests.

Thanksgiving is the incense which will make our petitions agreeable to God. At the same time it is the only power which will preserve our peace. It is like a military garrison that keeps all worry away from our hearts and apprehensions. And indeed, why worry, when we know that all is in the hands and hearts of God and His Christ? All about us loom danger and distress and strife, and we are forced to speak to God about it, and He would have our hearts exercised by it. But faith in Him and confidence in His Christ rejoices in the storm, knowing that He will rise and speak His, “Peace! Be still!” The calm that will surely follow has already found a place in our hearts. We need not be timid. Let us be thankful for both the storm and the calm, for these reveal to us the peace that presides in the heart of God, which may be ours by faith in Him.

THE GOD OF PEACE

Essentially, God is a God of peace. The strife and enmity which now seem to deny this fact, are only means to make it manifest. Moreover, in the midst of all the turmoil there is much which is in accord with the Deity. This we should not forget. Let us not confine our contemplations to the false, the fanatical, the unjust, the impure, the disagreeable, and the disreputable, for there is much that is virtuous and commendable. Especially should we consider the deeds of faith, the fruit of God’s own Spirit. And first among these is Paul himself. “What you learned also, and

accepted, and hear and perceived in me, these be putting into practice, and the God of peace will be with you" (4:9).

A LIVING EPISTLE

Everything that we can learn about Paul at this period of his life is of particular importance to us, for he is a living epistle, a practical exposition of his own precepts. Apparently, all his affairs are going wrong. Actually they are all going right. His work seems to be hindered in every way. In fact it is being forwarded. He has much reason to be downcast. But he rejoices as never before. He not only has peace with God, and enjoys the peace of God, but is in fellowship with the God of peace.

May our meditations on this epistle enable us to serve Him more acceptably, with some flavor of the disposition which led our Lord down to the death of the cross, with a taste of the service of Timothy and the sufferings of Epaphroditus, and in tune with Paul, that we also may forfeit all to gain Christ!

A. E. Knoch

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL (Phil.3:1-4:9)

3 For the rest, my brethren, be rejoicing in the Lord. To be writing the same to you is not indeed irksome for me, yet it is your security. ² Beware of curs; beware of evil workers. Beware of the maimcision, ³ for we are the circumcision who are offering divine service in the spirit of God, and are glorying in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in flesh.

⁴ And am even I having confidence in flesh, also? If any other one is presuming to have confidence in flesh, I rather: ⁵ in circumcision the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in ^{ac}relation to law, a Pharisee, ⁶ in ^{ac}relation to zeal, per-

secuting the ecclesia, in ^{ac}relation to the righteousness which is in law, becoming blameless. ⁷ But things which were gain to me, these I have deemed a forfeit because of Christ. ⁸ But, to be sure, I am also deeming all to be a forfeit because of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, because of Whom I forfeit all, and am deeming it to be refuse, that I should gain Christ, ⁹ and may be found in Him, not having my righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through Christ's faith, the righteousness which is from God on the basis of that faith: ¹⁰ to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, conforming to His death, ¹¹ if somehow I should attain to the resurrection that is out from among the dead ones. ¹² Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected. Yet I am pursuing, if I may grasp also that for which I am grasped also by Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing—forgetting indeed those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—¹⁴ toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ As much as, then, we are mature, we may be setting our mind to this, and if in anything you are differently setting your mind, this also shall God reveal to you. ¹⁶ Moreover, in what we outstrip others, there is to be a mutual mindset to be observing the elements by the same rule.

¹⁷ Become imitators together of me, brethren, and be noting those who are walking thus, according as you have us for a model, ¹⁸ for many are walking, of whom I often told you, yet now am lamenting also as I tell it, who are enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹ whose consummation is destruction, whose god is their bowels, and whose glory is in their shame, who to the terrestrial are setting their mind. ²⁰ For our realm is inherent

in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, ²¹ Who will 'transfigure the body of our 'humiliation, to conform it to the body of His 'glory, in accord with the operation 'which enables Him 'even to subject 'all to Himself.

4 So that, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and wreath, be standing firm thus in the Lord, my beloved. ² I am entreating Euodia and I am entreating Syntyche to be setting their mind *mutually in the Lord. ³ Yes, I am asking you also, genuine yokefellow, be aiding them, these women who^a compete together with me in the evangel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers whose 'names are in the scroll of life.

⁴ Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will 'declare, be rejoicing! ⁵ Let =your 'lenience be known to all human beings: the Lord is near. ⁶ Do not 'worry about anything, but in everything, by 'prayer and 'petition, with thanksgiving, let =your 'requests be made 'known to^d 'God, ⁷ and the peace of 'God, 'that is 'superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning =your 'hearts and =your 'apprehensions in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For the rest, brethren, whatever 'is true, whatever is grave, whatever is righteous, whatever is pure, whatever is agreeable, whatever is renowned—if there is any virtue, and if any applause, be taking these into account. ⁹ What =you learn also, and accept and hear and perceive in me, these be putting into practice, and the God of 'peace will 'be with =you.

PHILIPPIANS 3:9

The last words of this verse in Greek are: *on the-faith*, which the CV has rendered “for faith,” indicating that Paul refers to his own faith. But it is probable that he means “on [the basis of] the faith” just mentioned, thus seeing Christ’s faith as both the channel and the basis of God’s gift of righteousness.

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 110th Year
(1909–2019)

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FOURTH QUARTER, 2019

Volume 110

Number 4

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, FOURTH QUARTER 2019
BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED TEN

EDITORIAL

WE conclude another year of publication of *Unsearchable Riches*, this time with four issues centered on Paul's letter to the Philippians. For the most part the articles have been reprints, with A. E. Knoch's "Studies in Philippians" leading the way, along with two of James Coram's more recent studies on this epistle. In this issue we now join the early article on "The Kenosis of Christ" by Brother Knoch. With this, along with Brother Coram's article entitled, "The Disposition of Christ" we focus our attention on the heart of the epistle (chapter 2, verses 5-11) which brings the evangel to us in powerful terms. It is the message of Christ's emptying of Himself of the form of God and descending to the form of a slave in fashion as a human, and then humbling Himself even lower, in obedience to His God and Father, to the death of the cross. Then when all humbling is completed in death, God rouses Him and highly exalts Him beyond any former position of honor with the ultimate bowing of every knee and the acclaiming of every tongue. Yet this acclamation is, in accord with Christ's disposition (or mindset), in its highest focus, not for His own glory, but *for the glory of God the Father*.

In this we see why God sent His own Son so low. It was that all of us might be brought out of sin and corruption and darkness to the righteousness and life and light of Christ's exalted reign. But again, we perceive that this is not the highest goal of it all, for all reaches to *the glory of God the Father Who shall become All in all*.

Yet for us now the evangel is first bringing us to both the emptying (*kenōsis*) and the humbling (*tapeinōsis*) of

Christ before it takes us to His exaltation and sets before us our grand and gracious subjection to Him and not ours alone, but that of all. As an especially striking testimony I would urge the reader to linger long on Brother Knoch's own meditation on the humiliation and pain of our Lord Jesus Christ, as it culminated in God Himself forsaking His Obedient One in the darkest of all hours of the eons:

Thus our brother writes: "Here we are able to glimpse the bottomless abyss of His humiliation. Here He Who knew no sin was made sin. Here He Who alone had kept the law endured the law's anathema, 'Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree!' Instead of communion He endured God's curse! Instead of fire coming down from above upon His murderers, it enters His bones. Hitherto sinless, He becomes sin, and like the sin offering, He is shut out of God's holy presence . . . This is the folly that is wiser than man, the weakness that is stronger than all, the display of love which will overwhelm every heart" (pp.178,179).

But there is much more which hopefully will send the reader anew to this epistle, not only concerning our Lord's obedience and its future results to the glory of God, but also, the effect of this evangel on the believers' present lives. After all, Philippians is an epistle of service and walk. However, the evangel is the engine which energizes us in our behavior. In this respect I point to Brother Coram's article on "The Disposition of Christ," in which he seeks to bring a practical understanding to the English reader of Paul's own guidance expressed in Greek nearly two thousand years ago. Thus concerning Paul's words, "Let this disposition be in you which is in Christ Jesus also" (Phil.2:5): he reminds us: "We must look to God in His saving grace to transform us by the renewing of our mind (Rom.12:2), if we would in any measure at all fulfill this lofty counsel" (p.182).

D.H.H.

THE KENOSIS OF CHRIST

THE supreme example of self-abasement set before us in the Scriptures is the descent of Christ from the form of God to the death of the cross, from the zenith of celestial glory to the deepest depth of earthly degradation. We are exhorted to cultivate His humble disposition, so contrary to all our own ambitions and counter to the spirit of the world about us, that we may emulate Him in devotion to the welfare of others, though it involves our own humiliation. In the course of this exhortation we are reminded of the *kenōsis* of the Christ, that which changed Him from the form of God to the form of a slave. The Authorized Version does not really translate, but substitutes the oratorical paraphrase, He “made Himself of no reputation.” The Revisers courageously give the bold but literal root rendering, He “emptied Himself” (Phil.2:5-11).

This simple statement would never have caused the untold confusion which still seems to surround it, if the commendable zeal of the early fathers and the Nicean council against the Arian faction had not led them to invent a creed, calculated to clear up its meaning. The supposition that men could express clearly and concisely what the Scriptures had failed to clarify is repugnant to anyone who has imbibed but a modicum of the self-effacing disposition which is in Christ Jesus. The early fathers of the church not only fought for their own superiority in the church but their councils actually considered their creeds superior to the inspired utterances of the Scriptures.

These earnest men would probably have excused them-

selves on the ground that the creed was *in accord with* the Scriptures, hence not in conflict with the sacred writings. They desired a condensed summary of its teachings. They flagrantly ignored the exhortation to retain the pattern of sound words (2 Tim.1:13) and finally settled on expressions which they themselves were reluctant to allow. One such was the Greek word *homōusion*, literally, LIKE-BEING, or like-estate, as descriptive of Christ in the form of God. This by no means settled the point, for it was far more susceptible of devious interpretations than the text it was supposed to explain. As the dogmas of the Nicene creed still dominate the theology of the day, especially the *kenōsis* of the Christ, we will give it as it was first issued by the council.

THE NICEAN CREED

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, both visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, *that is to say of the substance of the Father, God of God and Light of Light, very God of very God*, begotten, not made, *being of one estate* [*homōusion*] with the Father, by whom all things were made on earth; who, for us men and our salvation, came down and was made flesh, made man, suffered and rose again the third day, went up into the heavens, and is to come again to judge the living and the dead, and in the holy Spirit . . .

This was much modified by succeeding councils, for it did not prove to be as satisfactory as they hoped. Indeed, when we come to examine it, what is there in it? Most of it is a jumble of scriptural phrases, to which we can offer no vital objection except the absence of their contexts. The non-scriptural phrases (which we have italicized to make them prominent) are also unscriptural and irrational. They have been “explained” for more than a millennium, yet no one knows what they mean. They are still repeated as though of far greater sanctity than the words of God Himself. What is the “substance” of the Father?

How can God be “of God?” What is Light “of Light?” What is “very” God “of very” God? What is the “one estate” (or substance) of the Father?

We do not bring up these questions to answer them, but to press the point that they cannot be answered. All acknowledge this. Some seem to think that this alone proves that they are true, as though God is more intent on mystifying His creatures than on revealing Himself. We desire to make the definite charge that these false, futile additions darken counsel by words without knowledge, and must be repudiated rather than acknowledged, if we are ever to have any satisfactory insight into the past or future glories of the Son of God. To confine our investigations to the sacred text should ordinarily be sufficient. Yet earnest and honest truth seekers have become so saturated with the errors of the creeds, that they, unconsciously no doubt, view the oracles of God by the light of these human speculations and theories instead of allowing the human accretions to wither away in the light of divine revelation.

A collection of creeds is an interesting and instructive exhibition of human incapacity. With hardly an exception they are *unscriptural* in every place in which they are *non-scriptural*. Even when they present fragments of the pattern of sound words, these are isolated from their special setting and divorced from their true application. I see no harm in a series of propositions, expressed in scriptural language and kept in their proper place, to indicate the dominant ideas which a group of saints desire to declare and defend. But I would insist on two essentials: the words must be “sound” or scriptural, and the context must be indicated. In this way they are linked up with the divine oracles themselves and the deplorable confusion fostered by the creeds can never occur.

The rational reaction to the Nicene creed should be somewhat as follows: As it was made in the heat of con-

trovsky, mainly to oppose Arian teaching, it probably fails, in going to extremes in the opposite direction. The desire to emphasize the deity of Christ led to statements unwarranted by the Word. The causes which called forth the creed were by no means ideal. Its effects also have been most unsatisfactory. Instead of clearing up the matter once for all, it has been the fruitful source of innumerable and unprofitable speculations, until the verdict has finally been given that it not only *has not* but *cannot* be understood. Then the subject is conveniently relegated to the occult by calling it “the *mystery* of the Godhead.”

This is a most mischievous “mystery.” It is not only unknown to the Scriptures but altogether contrary to the whole purpose of revelation. God has written a book and has sent His Son in order that He should *not* be a mystery. He desires to be known by means of His various revelations in our Lord Jesus Christ. If this is a “mystery,” beyond mortal minds, then His whole purpose is a failure. There are secrets in the Scriptures which men could by no means imagine until the time of their revelation. These are called “mysteries” in some of our versions. But the relation of Christ to God was never made a secret. Failure to understand it is not due to God’s hiding but to human faithlessness and lack of spiritual perception.

We cannot help having a deep sympathy for the early fathers in their effort to understand what they professed to believe. Faith is not credulity, and craves the consent and cooperation of the mind. While it is intensely “rational” to believe God, even when we can not understand Him, it is the height of credulity to believe men when their statements clash with the evidence of our senses or the operation of our intellect. If the Nicean creed were inspired by God, nothing would be more reasonable than to believe it, though its statements transcend reason. Being of men, it cannot be super-rational, and must be irrational.

The Nicean creed drove the church into the darkness of the middle ages. The Reformation revived the subject of Christ’s humanity and deity, and sought to reconcile them on the same lines as the early fathers, who never solved the riddle. Beginning with the same misconceptions, modern theologians have been no more successful. They cloud the issue with credal pre-suppositions which effectually keep them from actually considering the Scriptures. Some have made close, scholarly, consistent studies of Christ’s *kenōsis*, which should have made the subject clear. But even they are forced to conclude that the solution is as far away as ever. Their eyes are holden by the “truth” with which they approach the subject. Their light is darkness. No wonder the Scriptures refuse to unlock with such a key!

A thoughtful consideration of the matter should suggest to them that their credal assumptions are the cause of all the confusion. It is these that prevent the Scriptures from shining forth. But, like apostate Israel, there is a veil on the heart of Christendom and its orthodox leaders. Evangelical Protestant expositors are more enslaved by the “infallibility” of the ancient fathers than others are by the decrees of the Roman pontiff. If they could only see that the course of the church is to be down and not up, then they could readily understand that its councils are more likely to be wrong than right. They are by no means a court of appeal from the Scriptures.

Besides the intellectual paralysis induced by credal tradition, the subject is heavily handicapped by unsound words and phrases. Much is made of the two “natures” of Christ, and we are continually referred to His “Person.” Nothing concerning these can be found in the Word, but the church council at Chalcedon declared that these two “natures” are perfectly and organically united in one “Person,” yet are distinct(!). We are told that we must neither “confound the natures, nor divide the person.” The best

way to do this is to ignore them both, yea, rather, deplore them both, and rigidly exclude them from the problem, for they are false factors which will lead us off into an inextricable maze and mental mist.

In Paul's exhortation he presents for our emulation two distinct acts of Christ, the *kenōsis* and the *tapeinōsis*, the *emptying* and the *humbling*. The first describes His descent from the form of God to the form of a slave; the second His descent from the fashion of a man to the fashion of death most detestable to men and most obnoxious to God—the death of the cross. As He was in the form of God before He took the form of a slave and a human frame, the *kenōsis* is the inspired term for the change which accompanied His incarnation. Hence it has been made the focal point for the discussion of His “nature and Person.”

First let us define our terms. What is the literal meaning of *ekenōsis*? We may at once discard the common rendering “made Himself of no reputation.” The words do not at all represent the Greek, and they have acquired a sinister tinge akin to *disreputable*, which is far from the spirit of the passage. We may be sure that Christ did not commit some sin, some offense, in order to lose His reputation. It is appalling to think that devout and sincere followers of our Lord, who would lay down their lives for His Word, are content to support and circulate such an inconsistent and suggestive translation of this passage.

All are agreed that the literal meaning of the Greek root *ken* is EMPTY, hence the Revisers translate “emptied,” which the CONCORDANT VERSION modifies to “empties,” because it is a question of fact, not of time, as indicated by the use of the indefinite. There is no strictly literal example of this meaning of the word in the Scriptures. The nearest we can get is used in the phrase “send away empty” (Mark 12:3; Luke 1:53; 20:10,11). In Mark we have a slave sent to farmers to collect the rent for his master. He expects

to carry away some of the fruit of the vineyard, but they dispatch him “empty”—without any grapes. We have the same illustration in Luke 20:10,11.

In most of its other occurrences English idiom forbids the use of the word “empty.” Instead, the Authorized Version uses “vain” or “make void.” The latter phrase is, perhaps, as close as we can come to the idiomatic meaning of *kenōō*, the word we are studying. There is no better way to assimilate the true meaning of “He empties Himself” than to consider every other passage in which the word occurs. In Romans 4:14 we read: “if those of law are enjoyers of the allotment, faith *has been made void* [literally, *emptied*], and the promise has been abrogated.” An “empty” faith would, in this case, be one without any effect.

In 1 Corinthians 1:17 we read: “For Christ does not commission me to be baptizing but to be preaching the evangel, not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ *should be made void*,” (or *emptied*). The Authorized Version gives the thought here in its rendering, “lest the cross of Christ *should be made of none effect*.” If it were “emptied” the result would be the same as if there were no cross at all.

In the two remaining passages, 1 Corinthians 9:15 and 2 Corinthians 9:3, Paul is concerned that his boasting should not lack results. In the latter instance he has been boasting that “Achaia has been prepared a year past!” If, after all, they should not be ready, then his boasting would be “empty.” In these passages the idea is referred to the past, hence they are not as helpful as the other occurrences in fixing the meaning of the word.

Now we are ready to make the application. If faith “emptied” had no effect whatever, and the cross “emptied” totally nullified any results flowing from it, then when Christ, in the form of God, “emptied Himself” or “made Himself void” (as in the other passages), He made

the form of God of none effect, *He carried nothing that was His in that form into the form of a slave.*

This is the Scriptural answer to innumerable theories as to the extent and character of His *kenōsis*. The bare word “empty” must be enriched by its usage in the Scriptures before we fully comprehend its force in this passage. Perhaps a more colorful and accurate rendering would be, “He *vacates* Himself.” We should not ask, “Of *what* did He empty Himself?” The passage fails to specify the details because it includes all. Naught that He was in the form of God was transferred into the form of a slave. He retained only Himself, or as a theologian would express it, His personality. The effect of the form of God on the form of a slave is expressed by the literal “empty” and the idiomatic “void” or “none effect.”

This conclusion “empties” the *kenōsis* of its imaginary value in determining the two forms in which He is found in this passage. The form of a slave was not merely a veiling of the form of God. It was no mere limitation of His powers. It was not acting a part. He did not retain all His supposed “attributes” except “omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence,” as some assert. The very variety of these theories should be sufficient proof that they have no substratum of truth. The difference between the two forms must be gathered from the qualifying words. One was the form of *God*; the other of a *slave*. These suggest a contrast rather than a continuation.

Our conclusion is in happy harmony with the purport of the passage. The disposition which is in Christ Jesus is one of complete humiliation. Applying it to our conduct, we are not asked to limit it to a few of our greater dignities. The specific statement is a decided negative: “*not* each noting his own things.” The same may be seen in the lesser example, Paul, who could say “I am deeming *all* to be a forfeit” (Phil.3:8). He had much indeed, in the flesh,

of which he was proud. He gave it all up in order to be found in Christ. He had the disposition of Christ Jesus.

THE MEANING OF “FORM”

Nowhere, in this passage, do we find the influence of the creeds more powerfully present than in the attempt of many orthodox theologians to give the word “form” a special and extraordinary significance. In fact the Nicean creed did little else than to repudiate the word “form” and substitute “substance” or *homōusion* “like-estate,” and add other confirmatory phrases. Form refers to external appearance. They insist that it must include internal essence. We ourselves were carried along with this traditional view, notwithstanding the concordant evidence against it. The following passages constitute the scriptural evidence:

morphê, FORM

Mark 16:12 He was manifested in a different form to two of them
Phil. 2: 6 subsisting in the form of God
7 taking the form of a slave

morphōmai, FORM

Gal. 4:19 until Christ may be formed in you

morphōsis, FORMING

Rom. 2:20 having the form of knowledge and truth in the law
2 Tim. 3: 5 having a form of devotion, yet denying its power

Leaving the Philippian text out of consideration, only one of these passages will allow the popular idea that “form” is intrinsic and essential, and is “indicative of the interior nature.” In Galatians Paul is certainly speaking of an inward work of grace, not a mere outward copy. He desired to see Christ formed *in* them. This passage satisfied us, at one time, that the word “form” meant more than what strikes the eye. We failed to note that this sense is conveyed by the word *in*, not by the verb *form*. Its presence is against our supposition. *It would not be needed if*

form itself meant an inward work. It proves positively that “in” is absent from its meaning.

The other occurrences are most helpful and suggestive, for in each case there is a decided contrast. In Romans (2:20) the word form is used of the opposite of reality. The Jews did not actually possess the knowledge and truth in the law. All they had was the outward form. This usage of the word should be conclusive, yet it is no more so than Paul’s description of the men in the last days who have a *form* of devoutness, *yet deny its power*. If that “form” is not superficial, lacking the corresponding inward grace, it certainly would not be devoid of power. What could be more conclusive than these two contrasts? In each the form is in contrast to the reality. It does *not* correspond to that which is within.

We must recognize that our Lord’s descent from the form of God to the form of a slave is not the only change of form which He experienced. On the holy mount He was transformed (*metamorphōmai*, Matt.17:2; Mark 9:2). After His resurrection He was manifested in a different form to two of them (Mark 16:12). A careful consideration of these incidents will lead to the conviction that there was no intrinsic change in Him on these occasions. His face shone and His garments became white as the light, but there was not the least indication of inward alteration when He was transferred.

After He rose from the dead, He was seen by Mary Magdalene. He was evidently the same in appearance as before His death, for she eventually recognized Him even though she was not expecting to see Him alive. But when He accompanied the two disciples to Emmaus, He assumed a different *form*. For the purpose in hand there was no necessity for Him to make any essential change in His “nature” or essence. All He needed was an appearance which they would not recognize. Indeed, they par-

tially pierced His disguise, for their hearts responded to that which came from within Him, which the outward form failed to affect.

For our purpose it is sufficient to insist that our Lord is not confined to the two forms of which the apostle speaks in Philippians. After He appeared in the form of a slave He was temporarily transformed before some of His disciples in the midst of His ministry, and He assumed an unusual form after His resurrection. We might insist that His subsequent appearances in glory, such as blinded Saul of Tarsus, and caused the beloved apostle to fall at His feet as dead, are still different forms, suited to His new glories. Certainly He is no longer in the form of a slave. In His future unveiling He will be invested with a form in keeping with the might and majesty of His universal empire.

But one more occurrence remains. This is found in the passage itself. At first sight it seems to contradict all that we have learned concerning the true meaning of the word “form.” Our Lord took the form of a slave. Are we to understand that He became a servant only in appearance, not in fact? All are agreed that Christ was the ideal Servant. He was not merely clothed in the habiliments of service, but He served. He Himself assures us that “the Son of Mankind came, not to be served, but to serve . . .” (Matt.20:28; Mark 10:45). Paul gives Him the title “Servant of the Circumcision” (Rom.15:8). There can be no question that Christ is the supreme Servant of God and of men. Why then merely assume the *form* of a servant, as it is usually translated?

The solution is simple. He did not take the form of a *servant*, but of a *slave*. The Revisers insert “bond-servant” in their margin. Nor is this a trite distinction. It is maintained throughout the Greek Scriptures. Nowhere else in the more than one hundred and twenty occurrences of the word slave (*doulos*) is it ever applied to our Lord. He

was a slave extrinsically, not intrinsically. He appeared as a slave, but He was never in bondage. His own characterization of slavery was never true of Him. "The slave is not aware what his lord is doing" (John 15:15). His was intelligent, voluntary service.

The Greek word for slave or bond-servant (*doulos*) has a more definite and specific signification in the Scriptures than in the Septuagint. There it was used for the Hebrew *ebed*, any sort of service or servant. It is certainly not confined to bond service, for it is used of Jacob's service for his wives (Gen.31:41). It is translated *till* and *dress*, in reference to Adam's farming and gardening (Gen.2:5,15). It is frequently called upon to denote the service of the tabernacle. It is the true Hebrew equivalent of our *serve* and *servant*. During the three hundred years between the Septuagint and the Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *diakonia* assumed the meaning of *service*, and forced *douleia* into the specific sense of involuntary servitude. It is often rendered *bond* (1 Cor.12:13; Gal.3:28; Eph.6:8; Col.3:11; Rev.13:16) in antithesis to *free*. Our Lord was never in bondage, however He may have given that impression by His aspect.

Moreover, the expression "slave" falls far short of indicating what He really was. Even "servant" deals with nothing more than His work. It does not tell us Who the Servant is. As a matter of fact, all will agree that His service was *not* that of a slave but that of a Son. If "form" indicates the inward reality, He should have appeared as the Son of God. If we apply the evidence of this phrase logically, we must admit that, actually, He was far, far above a slave, and, therefore, when He was in the form of God, He must have been far, far above God. But if the "form" is *assumed* in each case for the purpose of divine revelation, all is clear. It is not the function of Christ to display Himself but to reveal God.

To put the matter bluntly, the form of God was not an

outward indication of what He was Himself, but a representation of His God. The word "form" is out of place if we simply mean that His external appearance was consistent with His internal essence. That would not even need to be stated. The mere use of the term *form* should be enough to prove that outwardly He seemed to be Another. His exaltation consisted, not in actually being that Other, but in having the visible appearance proper to the Deity.

Furthermore, just as the Philippian passage does not give all the forms in which He appeared after His incarnation, for He was not in the form of a slave on the holy mount, so it does not refer us to all the forms which He took prior to His *kenōsis*. Besides appearing in the form of God He also appeared in the form of a man and as a messenger. In Philippians we are called upon to consider His highest and His lowest manifestations, for these alone are called for by the exhortation. This discussion has been almost paralyzed by the assumption that Christ had one settled pre-incarnate form, and one fixed form on earth, and a single unalterable form in the resurrection. This is contrary to the facts.

Much light is shed on the form of our Lord before His incarnation by the statement that humanity was created in the image and likeness of God. Mankind is not the original, but a copy. This must have reference to externals, for the language is otherwise unnecessarily involved. *In our Image and as our Likeness*, suggests, first of all, that the invisible God has an Image and Likeness from which a copy could be made. Humanity cannot be a replica of God Himself, Who is Spirit and invisible. The race was made in accord with the form taken by Christ as the Image and Likeness of God. Therefore, if we find our Lord in a form like a man, that is not because He has imitated us, but because humanity was patterned after Him.

He it was Who communed with Adam in the garden of

Eden. There is no need to debate whether He was in the form of God or that like man when He visited Adam. It was probably both, for the first man was himself clothed in a robe of light and had an aura of glory which we might mistake for divine. Undoubtedly, the Elohim of that early paradise was in the form of God, which is always presented with human characteristics. It is not that God imitates mankind, in order to reveal Himself to humanity, but that man was formed after the divine Image, and is a replica of his Maker. Our Lord, therefore, probably appeared in Eden as a Man of surpassing outward glory, subdued, perhaps, to accommodate Himself to the capacity of His creature.

It is probable that, in His subsequent patriarchal appearances, this glory was further dimmed, or mortal men could not have lived in His presence. Cain was able to endure the sound of His voice. When He came to visit Abraham as one of three men (Gen.18:2), the patriarch is evidently aware of His identity, for he calls Him the Judge of all the earth (Gen.18:25), yet he entertains Him as though He were a man. As He withdrew from familiar intercourse with mankind, His glory was augmented. At Sinai, only Moses dared climb the holy mount. A few of the people saw the God of Israel. Perhaps it is only here and in the awful theophanies of Ezekiel and Daniel that we have that manifestation which Paul characterizes as the "form of God."

Let us remember that the divine form does not preclude the likeness of humanity. Ezekiel expressly states that, upon the likeness of the sapphire throne was a likeness as the appearance of a *man* (*adam* Ezek.1:26). In the center of a sublime setting for the vision of God, the divine majesty is seen in human form with superhuman glory. Isaiah, in his sixth chapter is not so specific. Nevertheless, what other than a human shape can be imagined? He sits on a throne. He speaks a human language. All of this seems conclusive that the form of God is like that of a

glorified man, because He is both the Image of God and the pattern of humanity.

In the resurrection the Lord could readily assume another form. The powers of a physical frame, such as He then possessed, are quite unknown to us, who are deadened by sin and enslaved by corruption. Before He took a body of flesh, there is no reason why His appearance to human perceptions should not be absolutely under His control. It is largely a question of glory or the diffusion of power. When He was transformed from a slave upon the holy mount His physical frame underwent no change in shape. The difference seemed to consist principally in the effulgence of light. His very clothing became glistening. The Son of God is the effulgence of the divine glory. This shone through the temporary and abnormal form of a slave on the holy mount.

After all of this investigation we came back to the simple, natural, unforced meaning of the words. The form of God was the material, visible representation of the invisible spiritual Deity. No one has ever seen God (John 1:18), for He is invisible (Col.1:15). In Colossians the Son of God supplies the needed link with creation because He is the Image of God. In Philippians we have the same thought with only a slight variation, to suit the context. Both the Form and the Image appeal to the eye. This is after the manner of Paul. John appeals to the ear, for he calls Him the Logos, or Word of God. In each case Christ is the Mediator of God and mankind. Human ears cannot hear God and human eyes cannot see Him, but they can listen to the living Word and perceive the Image and the Form.

The Form, however, was not the means of communication, but the evidence of exaltation. When Isaiah saw Yahweh, exalted and uplifted on His glorious throne, with all the accompaniments of Deity, he was overwhelmed by the awful sublimity and magnificent majesty of Him Who

sits on the throne. Though he was the great prophet who rebuked the failings of his people, he is utterly humiliated by the sight, and cries out in dismay, "Mine eyes see the King, Yahweh of hosts!" The representation he saw was the Image of Yahweh. The Form that he saw was the glory of God. The marvel for us to discern is this: that this glorious One was not disposed to exploit that glory for His own ends. He had the *heart* of God as well as the form of Deity, and was disposed to vacate it, empty Himself of it, and take the form of a slave in order to further reveal God's inmost affections.

EQUAL WITH GOD

There is much confusion in our translations in regard to the equality with God which comes in connection with the form of God. Was this a possession or a prize which He did not seize? The Authorized rendering, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," evidently conveys the idea that He *was* equal. The margin in some editions, however, change "robbery" to "a thing to be grasped at," which implies that He was *not* God's equal. This interpretation is followed by the Revisers, who render it, "counted it not a prize to be on a equality with God" and gives us the marginal alternation, "a thing to be grasped." The tendency of modern scholarship is against the idea that Christ was, in any sense, God's equal. This, we are told, is a height to which He did not aspire.

But modern scholars are no more infallible than ancient creeds. Indeed, since we know that the normal tendency is toward apostasy, we should always ask for the evidence. A literal concordant translation of the clause is as follows: "NOT SNATCHING deems THE TO-BE EQUAL to-God." Does *snatching harpagmon* refer to the *act* or the *thing*? In the original the word occurs in four forms, as follows: *harpazō*, SNATCH, *verb*; *harpax*, SNATCHER; *harpagē*, SNATCHING,

noun, and *harpagmos*, SNATCHING, another form of the noun. The poverty of the English language makes it necessary for us to use —ing for two distinct forms of the noun. The point in our problem lies in distinguishing between them. Why did the inspired writer use the special form *harpagmon* in this passage instead of the usual *harpagē*?

The Authorized Version renders *harpagē*, *extortion* (Matt.23:25), *ravening* (Luke 11:39), and *spoiling* (Heb. 10:34). "The *spoiling* of your goods" evidently refers to the *pillage* of their goods. In both of the previous references, men are said to be *full* of extortion or ravening. It is evident that this word does not refer directly to the act, but to its effects. On the other hand the ending of *harpagmos* connects it with a group of words which convey the idea of *action*. If one denotes *pillage*, this should be *pillaging*, the committing or carrying out of the act. The same distinction is seen in *baptismos*, baptizing (Mark 7:4; Heb.6:2; 9:10) and *baptisma*, baptism (Matt.21:25, etc.). Hallowing and cleansing are further examples. The pillaging in this passage is an act, not a thing.

Equality with God was not a thing Christ refused to grasp. He acted as God's equal and He did not deem the act extortion or ravening or spoiling or robbery, to use the renderings of this root given in the Authorized Version. It was not pillaging. The point of the passage lies in the extremes—equality with God and the death of the cross. The apostle is going to the limit in his exaltation of Christ. To all appearances the form of God put Him into the place of equality with God. Creatures, seeing Him, saw God, and addressed Him by means of the titles which belong only to God and to His Image and Form.

The principal objection to this interpretation from the standpoint of language is the following disjunctive, "but." It would be fatal were it not for the fact that, in Greek, this disjunctive has a wider range than our English "but" and

includes our “nevertheless” (Mark 14:29; Acts 9:6; Rom.6:5; 1 Cor.8:6; 9:2,12; 2 Cor.4:16). He was in the form of God, and deemed equality not pillaging—*nevertheless* He emptied Himself. To show the transcendent humility of His disposition He must be exalted first. It is no great thing for a subordinate or a sinner to be humble. It is the marvel of the universe that the highest perceptible Being has stooped to its lowest depth. Equality always denies identity, and must ever be relative, or it becomes identity. It is the *Form* which was equal with God.

Too little attention has been paid to the denial that equality with God would amount to pillaging on His part. However we translate the word, all agree that it consists in taking away the possessions of another by violent or unjust methods. This involves two distinct parties, one of whom lacks what another has. Christ lacked equality with God, yet, being in the form of God He *assumed* it. In doing so He did not deprive God of anything, hence did not deem it pillaging. Indeed, since He appeared to those who beheld Him as God would appear if He were visible, He could take nothing from God without, at the same time, investing Him with it. The glory Isaiah saw was the glory of *God*, yet he saw it in the form which was Christ.

In this statement we were careful to use the word *assume*, because such key words should be taken only from the divine vocabulary. Among the glorious ascriptions to the Son of God in the opening prelude of the epistle to the Hebrews are the two declarations that the Son is the Effulgence of God’s glory and the Emblem of His *assumption*. The usual renderings of this word *hupostasis*, *confidence*, *person*, *substance*, must yield to the one idea which suits each text, as we have fully explained elsewhere. The assumptions of Deity are made known in the Son, Who likewise assumes the character in which God is presented.

We find then that Christ took all that belonged to God

are the “Person,” “Substance,” etc.

in such a way that there was no wrong involved. As He was the only Mediator through Whom God could come into contact with His creatures, He must assume equality with the Deity or fail to properly present Him. An idol misrepresents God. It would be deception to give it divine attributes. The true Image reveals God and should have all that may be perceived of Deity.

The word “equal” may easily provide material for endless controversy. But this is not at all necessary, for all expressions are used in a relative sense. If all the terms we use were taken in an absolute sense, without reference to the subject, the scope, or the context in which they are employed, there would be an end of all intelligent intercommunication. The subject is the visible, tangible *Form* of God, such as His creatures can perceive. In every particular this Image appeared to be equal to, or the same as, God Himself.

Of one thing we may be sure. He did not only empty Himself of the form of God, but He also left equality behind. When the Jews charged Him with making Himself equal to God (John 5:18) He does not defend the supposed claim. Instead, He points out the inequality between the Son and the Father. This may help us to perceive what constituted the equality. The Son can *do nothing of Himself*. When He was in the Form of God no such inequality could be perceived. The fact that the Form of God could lay aside equality is sufficient to show the distinction between the invisible, immutable Deity and His Image. He could not lay aside equality with Himself!

The *kenōsis* of our Lord consisted in vacating His place supreme, in which He manifested the heights of God’s glory, apart from sin, for the place of a slave, in which He reveals the depths of His love, by suffering for sin.

Much futile reasoning has been indulged in concerning the *nature* of God. The Form of God has been identified

and interpreted as His nature. This word is never used in the Scriptures in connection with this theme. To bring it in only betrays ignorance and creates confusion.

THE FORM OF A SLAVE

We must reiterate the fact that the *kenōsis* did not make Christ a *slave*. He became a *servant* in the *form* of a slave. Though His service is so fully set forth in the Word, there is not a single hint that He was, in bondage to either man or God. Though the term slave *doulos* is freely used of His disciples and the saints, He never takes it or accepts it as His own. His service was *not* that of a slave, for He knew His Father's will and what He was doing. But those who saw His form found no indication of His divine commission in His physical circumstances. He appeared to be like other men, sold and subject to forces outside of themselves, entirely apart from their own volition.

THE INCARNATION

Some may ask, How was the *kenōsis* accomplished? We know that, in the process, He came to be in the likeness of humanity. Nothing of the form of God is carried over. His "self," or personality, vacates the glorious form and takes up its abode in a physical body *adapted* for His mission. Like all mankind His body came from Adam through His mother, but unlike them, His spirit did not come through the first man and his posterity, but directly from God Himself.

Instead of confining their attention to the *kenōsis* theologians could far more profitably have concerned themselves with the *katartisis*, the readjustment, or adaptation, of Christ's body. Whatever body He had before incarnation, it is evident that it was not fitted for the great object for which He came. It was not mortal. It could not die. He must have a body, not mortal in the sense of dying, but mortal in the sense of capable of death. He must be the great Antitype of all of the sacrifices. Hence we read (Heb.10:5):

Sacrifice and approach present
 You do not will,
 Yet a body do You *adapt* to Me.
 In ascent approaches and those concerning sin
 You do not delight.
 Then said I,
 'Look! I am arriving—In the summary of the scroll it is written
 concerning Me—
 To do Your will, O God.'

The Authorized Version rendering, "prepare," fails to fully convey its significance. The body He took was in the nature of an *equipment*, purposely designed for sacrifice. The human body is especially adapted to this, hence He was found in the likeness of humanity. Such phrases as this and that which describes Him as being "in *fashion as a man*" confirm the fact that the human element in His constitution was in His body, His flesh, that which has the shape and tangible likeness of humankind.

This process confirms and emphasizes the facts of our findings. Almost all theories of the *kenōsis* demand some definite connection between the form of God and that of a slave, in order that there may be the transference of attributes or power or glory or "nature" or something—no one seems sure just what. But there is no ground for this whatever. The virgin Mary was an entirely new element in His new form. The spirit of God, His Father, is not identified with His previous form. There is an entire break, except in selfhood. This may be illustrated by death and resurrection, though we do not by any means imply that it was either. The body dissolves in death. Other elements will constitute the resurrected frame. Only the personality continues.

There is no dual "nature," one a remnant of His previous form and one acquired by generation from Adam. The *kenōsis* denies this rather than supports it. It is a vain speculation founded on error. The transference of personality does not create such a monstrosity. It is reasonable,

sane, and scriptural. Christ could speak of His place with the Father before the world was without implying that His human body was involved.

Some may marvel that there seems to be no definite statement on this subject in the Scriptures. Rather let them be amazed that no attention is paid to the one there given. It is just where we would expect to find it, at the very opening of Paul's Roman epistle (Rom.1:3,4). The moment he mentions the Son, he halts the flow of the argument to give a lucid, cogent, and satisfactory explanation of the incarnation. The parenthesis reads as follows: "Who comes of the seed of David according to the flesh, Who is being designated Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead." His "personality" is divided into two elements, flesh and spirit. His flesh comes from David: His most holy spirit comes from God. His soul was the result of their union.

Only His soul is complex. He does not have a divine body and spirit, and a human body and spirit merged into one. His body was not divine. He had a spirit which was superhuman. The supposed difficulties connected with the fusing of the two diverse elements are mostly imaginary. Once we see that the union is found in His *soul*, which is the seat of consciousness, sensation or experience, all becomes clear. The souls of all humanity are the product of these two elements, flesh and spirit. Our own soul, our own sensation, is the effect of body and breath, just as that of Adam, when he was created (Gen.2:7). The difference between other men and the Son of God is not in the number or name of their components, but in the spirit He received at His generation. The divine spirit operates as readily with flesh as the human spirit which we have.

The differences between Him and us are all connected with the spirit. Let us note how briefly the apostle deals with His human side. He is of the seed of David according

to the flesh. No further explanation is necessary or desired. But when His spirit is in view, we are given intimations of the great distinguishing qualities which emerge. He is designated Son of God *with power*; or, as we are accustomed to put it, He is *powerfully* designated Son of God. The human spirit is weak and is being destroyed by sin and death. Every human born into the world (except our Lord) is so lacking in vitality and enslaved to sin, that his life is but a lingering death. In contrast with this, the spirit He was given made Him *powerful* and *holy*. The latter quality is emphasized by using the Hebrew idiom—the spirit of holiness—His *holy* spirit.

Man's spirit fails in death. Christ's spirit restores life. There can be no greater proof that He is the Son of God, that His is a powerful and holy spirit, than in counteracting the effects of infirmity and sin, by the resurrection of the dead. A preacher once decided that he would study the funeral sermons of our Lord in order to improve his own. But he could not find any! Until His own decease, we do not find our Lord in the presence of death except as its conqueror. He shared the intense vitality imparted to Him by God, in recalling the dead to life. The little girl, the widow's son, and Lazarus, all acknowledged the power of His holy spirit, which marked Him off from all mankind. He was the *Son of God* as to His spirit. On this all else is based. It is vital. It is essential.

The more vague, yet graphic language of the Hebrew seer suggests an illustration of this vital union (Isa.11:1):

Then a Twig will come forth from the set slip of Jesse,
And a Scion, it shall be fruitful from his roots.

The Twig is the natural growth from the stock of David's father, just as the flesh of Christ came from him by natural generation. The scion, or graft, however, is abnormal. It is not taken from Jesse, but from his root. It does not grow

from him but is grafted into him. Yet the scion combines perfectly with its stem. It shares the life of the stock, yet the form and flavor of the fruit flows from the scion, not the stock. Thus does the flesh and spirit unite in Christ, only the spirit dominates the flesh and determines the rich quality of His words and works.

The humanity of Christ is best learned by a comparison with Adam, from whom all humanity flows. This is done by Paul in his first Corinthian letter (15:45). "The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam is a vivifying Spirit." The language is emphatically figurative. Adam was not devoid of a body and a spirit, but these are dominated by his soul. Men today are soulish, ruled by their sensations. In contrast with this the last Adam was a Spirit. We know that He also had flesh and a soul. He spoke of both. But these were subordinate to His spirit. Hence He is called a Spirit, though He vehemently denied being such in resurrection, when He appeared more like a spirit than before His death. Other men receive no spirit until they breathe at birth. He was generated by the holy spirit of God.

Similarly, the first man was out of the earth, soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven. Adam was not entirely soil. God gave him the breath of the living. So with his descendants. They are soilish, though they breathe the air of heaven. So with the second Man. His body was of soil, as other men. But his personality is not to be traced to the soil as ours is. He was in the heavens and came down. He is a celestial.

All of this, though occurring in a passage on resurrection, has to do with His incarnation, His humanity before He was roused. Then He was the Lord out of heaven and a life-giving Spirit. He was far superior to Adam. They were not on the same plane. Adam imparted death to himself and to his posterity. The last, Adam restored life to the

dead who met Him during His earthly ministry, and will impart it to all who die in the first Adam.

To conclude: The generation of Christ by the holy spirit of God is the cause of His deity and the key to His humanity. In mankind spirit and flesh naturally operate to give life and sensation, or soul. So His divine spirit naturally operated with His human body to make Him what He is. To insist on meaningless, unscriptural phrases, such as "a *real* Man," and "*very* God" is only a mask of ignorance. He is *not* the same as other men. He is *not* the same as God. He is their *Mediator*. He has a divine spirit and a human body. His flesh came through Mary and David and Abraham and Adam. His spirit came from God.

HIS HUMILIATION

The humiliation of Christ is the second step in His descent from divine equality to unexampled shame. It must not be confused with His *kenōsis*, or self-voiding. That was effected before His humiliation, and led to His coming into a human likeness. It was only after He was found in fashion as a man that He humbled Himself. The same disposition governs both. He refused to exalt Himself and seeks the weal of others. But the mere fact of becoming a man is not necessarily humiliating. Apart from sin, mankind made in the image of God is a noble race. It is no disgrace to be human.

The theologians of the Reformation, as well as more modern writers, are very insistent on the "true" humanity of Christ. Again and again we are warned that He was a "real" Man. It reminds us of the opposite extreme of those who insist that He is "very" God. Then when they try to combine the "real" Man and the "very" God, by means of the two "natures" they find themselves outside the Bible altogether, for no such monstrosity is found within its covers. No one is very sure what "very" and "real" mean in

this connection. Only, as it seems to be the height of heresy to believe otherwise, most of us keep the peace and save trouble by nodding a dubious affirmation.

If the term “real” implies that He is exactly the same as other men, we deny it absolutely. His spirit came from God, and differed radically from others. That He was in all things *like* His brethren (Heb.2:17) has reference to His capacity for suffering and consequent sympathy for those in trial. Such expressions must be subject to their contexts and the facts. He is often called a “Man.” It would be intolerable pedantry if the Scriptures always reiterated distinctions which have no bearing on the matter in hand. But when the actual subject of His relationship to the race is discussed—as in this passage—the language is most exact. Then we learn that He came to be in the *likeness* of humanity, and was found in *fashion* as a man (Phil.2:7).

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 alien “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 and a God unparalleled—the peerless Man and the only begotten God (John 1:18).

That His generation by holy spirit did not affect His physical form in such a way as to publicly differentiate it from other men is evident. Even when the Jews knew that He claimed to be God’s Son, many could see nothing to substantiate it, or, at best, held Him for a prophet. His deity was not evident, for His form was that of a slave. He was so like other men that they took Him for a mere man. How is it that the spirit to which He owed His life did not

alter His physical appearance and make Him a superman whom the world could recognize?

We must remember that, in the beginning of the race, Adam was formed from the soil of the ground before the breath of the living was added to vitalize his frame. When the spirit was added, it did not affect his size or shape. It simply made him *live*. That is the function of spirit. It imparts life. The entrance of sin introduced death. Humanity became a dying race. The spirit remains with its members only a brief span of years. Sin was perpetuated by the transmission of death. Such would have been the case with Christ if He had been a “real” man, and had had a human father. Instead, the spirit gave Him *life, abundant life*.

Here is the basic distinction between Christ and other men. Their vitality is limited. Their life is a process of dying. This is what makes them sinners. Sin is not some subtle, unknown principle which mysteriously passes on from parent to child. It is the by-product of the death process. This is what we inherit. This is what makes sinners of us all. If our Lord had received His spirit by human generation, His life also would have been a process of dying and might have ended in a natural death, and He would have been forced to sin. But, thank God, the spirit He received gave Him life—abundant life—so that death was not operating in Him, and sin found no soil in Him. Sin can thrive only in men who are dying.

Let us adoringly acknowledge then that Christ was made in the *likeness* of humanity. He was not simply spotless and unsullied in His acts. It was not that He succeeded in overcoming the universal tendency to sin which afflicts humanity, but that He had no such tendency to overcome. This was not due to some special miraculous intervention which counteracted the sin He should have inherited from His mother Mary, but simply and solely to the divine paternity which endued Him with a fresh, a sin-repelling vital-

ity, which would have kept Him alive forever if He had not deliberately laid down His life for us, in order that He might take it up again in resurrection.

There is a designed contrast between the words *form* and *fashion* (*schêma*) in this passage. It is usually explained that *fashion* is the *outward* and *accidental*, while *form* is the *inward* and *essential*. We have seen the fallacy of this. Form is the external, and by no means necessarily indicates the inward essence. Christ was not the form of Himself, but of Another. Such a distinction has no place whatever in this passage. A “fashion” is rather a temporary and special kind of form. This is evident from the single other occurrence: “The fashion of the world is passing by” (1 Cor.7:31). The present form of the world is abnormal and fleeting. So with mankind. Its present “fashion” is degrading, but, like all such fashions, is due to change.

We are now approaching the heart of our subject—the humiliation. *Because He was found in fashion as a man*, He humbled Himself. Being a human being is not in itself a cause for humiliation. The day is coming when it will be the cause for highest exultation. But to be found in the shape in which humanity finds itself now, its present “fashion”—sunk in sin and degradation, at enmity with God—this is the proper reason for the deepest humiliation and self-abhorrence.

Human depravity was the prevailing “fashion” of the race when Christ found Himself a member of it. This is by no means its *natural* state, either internally or externally. We have so corrupted the meaning of the word *nature* that we have lost much light on the problem of sin. Human *nature* (*phusis*) is not at fault. It has not been debased by sin. The real meaning of the word in the Scriptures is *instinct*. The sins which afflict mankind are *against* nature (Rom. 1:26). The nations do by nature (or instinct) the things contained in the law (Rom.2:14). Nature teaches us correctly

(1 Cor.11:14) if we only heed it. Nature, or instinct, may, like conscience, be stultified and suppressed by sin, but it is not, in itself, sinful.

The “fashion” of humanity which leads to humiliation is not the result of a sinful “nature.” Nor does the remedy consist in the impartation of a new “nature.” There is no passage of Scripture to prove that the “nature” of Christ was different from other men. The intrusion of this term is a hindrance to the apprehension of the truth. It is true that, by nature, or in the course of natural generation, the Jews became sons of indignation just as did the nations (Eph.2:3), but nature here is merely the channel, not the cause of sin. Human nature, or instinct, and human conscience remain in spite of sin and as a protest against sin. Why, then, make them sin?

The humiliation of the divine Man may be graphically figured by exaggerating the lack of life, which is the real support of sin. It was as though He alone were endowed with life and all about Him were putrefying corpses. An intolerable stench and gruesome sights certify to the degradation of mankind. Indeed, the world to which He came was a vast cemetery and a slow funeral procession in which all were marching to a ghastly tomb. We do our best to hide this shame. We deny death and deck it with flowers. We refuse to bow our heads or humble our hearts, even when death ends in actual disintegration and corruption.

But death, the process of dying, the only form of life we know since Adam’s transgression, was quite as offensive to His sensitive soul as the dissolution of the body is to us. All about Him death reigned, and was evident to His perceptions by its effluvium, sin. “I am come that you might have life,” He tells them, but their senses are so far gone that they do not even know that they are dying and reeking with the offensive evidence of mortal disintegration. Once we see that His spirit, fresh from God, gave Him life

abundant, so that He was mortal only in the sense that He *could* die, not in the sense that He was undergoing the process—as all other men—we hold the key to His unique humanity and need no creeds to supplement the simplicity of the divine oracles.

He was not as other men in this regard, and, if He had shared the disposition of His fellows, it would undoubtedly have been the basis of great pride and boasting. Let us put ourselves in His place. All that we do is right. Almost all that others do is wrong. Could we endure such a test? Instead of humbling us it would make us haughty. All we would care to do would be to condemn. Here is where His disposition shines. Here is a glory, a moral excellence, which could not be revealed by Him when in the form of God. That glorious theophany was not a full-orbed revelation. It needed to be complemented by His course when found in fashion as a man. God, in His lofty excellence, cannot reach our hearts. We must see Him in the midst of misery and woe. Here it is that He wins our affections through the humiliation of His Anointed.

THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

Death itself is a humiliation, whatever may be its form. It cannot be dissociated from sin in some shape. Much greater was its shame to Him Who not only had life in Himself, but Who had recalled the dead to life. It is evident that His death was entirely voluntary. Neither the Jews nor the Romans could take His life from Him. Whatever disgrace His death may bring to Him, He brings it on Himself. He needed no one to humble Him. He humbled Himself. His death was due to obedience, not to man, but to God.

But the shame of His death is not to be compared to the degradation of the cross. It is the *manner* of His death that plunged Him into the deepest abyss of abject ignominy and utter despair. Some forms of death have a halo about

them, and call forth the applause of men. But the cross was reserved for the vilest and meanest of criminals. From the human aspect the Roman law had no more degrading death than crucifixion. Like hanging at the present day, it was the symbol of the most shameful end which could be devised to put a stop to a detestable career. The pain, the publicity, the appalling ignominy far exceeded the very worst of modern methods of execution.

CHRIST WAS HUNG ON A STAKE

How far all this is from the mind of Christendom is evident by the present prevalence of this dreadful symbol. To be sure, there is not the slightest ground for supposing that our Lord was hung upon a cross of any kind. It was a mere stake or pole, without any cross-piece. There was nothing ornamental about it. But the figure of the cross has seized the imagination of the masses. If they had any sense at all of its shuddering horror, it would be avoided and banned as accursed, instead of lending its shape to jeweled pendants and ecclesiastic art. All this is a travesty, an insult, to the awful humiliation of which it is supposed to be the sign.

The human side of the crucifixion is a tragedy not altogether beyond the reach of our apprehensions. We have some standards of comparison by which to acquaint ourselves with some aspects of it. If He were a man like other men we could possibly plumb its dreadful depths. But He was not as others. Shame is relative. A callous brute does not feel an insult which would torture a sensitive soul. No mere man could suffer from the taunts, the mockery, the ignominy of the cross, as One Who came from the heights of glory, where the very cherubim veiled their faces in His presence. He alone can realize the stupendous contrast, or feel the fearful horror of being despised by the dregs of Adam's degraded race.

But the manward side of the cross cannot be compared with the Godward aspect of the accursed tree. Men had long been hostile to Him. The cross was but the culmination of a long course of events in which He suffered the ridicule and abuse of His fellows. Not so the curse which fell from heaven when the sun withdrew and the darkness hid the scene from mortal gaze. Through all of His humiliations heretofore He had been upheld by the hand of God. At the very crisis of His ministry, when it became apparent that He was rejected, He could find consolation in fellowship with the Father. "I am acclaiming Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, seeing that Thou dost conceal these things from the wise and intelligent . . ."

GOD'S PLAN PREVAILS

It must have been in the nature of a grave disgrace for Him to realize that His efforts had not succeeded in their apparent object. It is extremely trying even in these days for His servants to find such a feeble response to God's truth, notwithstanding the knowledge that the apostasy is part of God's plan. Yet He always had recourse to God and never failed to find solace in His presence. Until He hung upon the tree God's smile was His constant comfort. He never forsook Him. The more men withdrew, the closer God came. In the natural course of events, we would expect all others to flee, but that God would stand by Him in the supreme crisis of the cross.

From this standpoint, we view from afar the starkest tragedy of all creation. Here we are able to glimpse the bottomless abyss of His humiliation. Here He Who knew no sin was made sin. Here He Who alone had kept the law endured the law's anathema, "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree!" Instead of communion He endured God's curse! Instead of fire coming down from above upon His murderers, it enters His bones. Hitherto sinless, He becomes

sin, and, like the sin offering, He is shut out of God's holy presence. In solemn sympathy with the awful darkness that enveloped His soul, the sun, a symbol of God's light and life and love, hides its beams until the work is finished and His God once more has ears to hear His cry.

"*Eloi! Eloi! lema sabachthani?*" that is "My God! My God! why didst Thou abandon Me?" gives us the character and suggests the cause of Christ's deepest humiliation. His persecution by men and desertion by His disciples is a disgrace hardly worthy of mention in comparison with His abandonment by the Deity. It pleased God to bruise Him. Why? That He may bless all others. That He may be just and the Justifier of those who believe. That God may reconcile all His creatures to Himself. The abandonment of Christ by God is the source of all salvation, the root of all reconciliation. This is the folly that is wiser than man, the weakness that is stronger than all, the display of love which will overwhelm every heart.

We must not miss the vivid contrast presented by the exalted station of Christ as the equal of God and His abandonment on the cross. He begins as close to God as possible. No creature could approach the Deity except through Him. To all intents and purposes, He was God, so far as creation is concerned, and He had the form which is suitable to the Supreme. In the dark hours of the crucifixion He is at the opposite extreme. In the midst of physical degradation and moral ignominy He hears the taunts of those who claimed the closest communion with His God, and the contempt of the lowest of the vicious and the vile. He is as far as possible from the place He once had occupied.

It were well if all theological theories regarding God and His Christ were examined in the darkness of the cross. Absolute Deity does not address another Deity as "My God." God the Father is Supreme. He has no God. If He had He would not be God. Absolute Deity cannot be abandoned

by Another, is not dependent on Another, and certainly would not suffer humiliation if anyone deserted Him. Neither can He die, and commit His spirit to God Who gave it. On the other hand a man like other men might do all these things and affect little except his own soul. Nothing would be accomplished for others. No One but a Mediator, divine in spirit, human in body, with a soul the fusion of both, will satisfy our reason or fulfill God's revelation.

We have no hesitancy in averring that death is not possible to proper deity. We cannot even force our imagination to conceive of the death of God, for with Him all life would vanish from creation. It is even difficult for us to realize that the Son of God could sink to such a state. He Who gave life to others, even after they had died, could have kept Himself alive under all conditions. This is both reasonable and scriptural. But it is no less rational and revealed that He had the right to die, if it was God's will. And this is precisely what He claimed. He became *obedient* unto death—even the death of the cross!

HIS EXALTATION

“Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father” (Phil.2:9-11). It is essential that we see the close connection of this exaltation with His humiliation, as well as its contrast to the glories which were His before He emptied Himself. Both can be summed up in a single word—salvation. It is concentrated in His name. He was Yahweh. Now He is Jesus—Yahweh the *Saviour*.

Before His *kenōsis*, when He was in the form of God, He was such because God had given Him that honor. He did not seize it for Himself. So also is His present and

future exaltation. It is God's response to His sufferings, a reward for His humiliation. To the name that once stood for the highest of God's theophanies, Yahweh, has been added the greatest of God's activities—salvation. As Yahweh, Christ could have coerced the knees of all creation and required the acclaim of every creature, for He had the right to universal homage. But He did not choose to enforce His rights, but rather relinquished all in order to win their hearts by the more potent process of suffering and shame.

If all that He gains in His future exaltation is the forced acknowledgment of His omnipotence by unwilling knees and reluctant tongues, then all His humiliation has been in vain. As Yahweh He could have accomplished this, before He descended to the accursed tree. It is as Saviour that He will receive, without constraint, the acclamation of all creation, the worship of every living intelligence. The glory and the grandeur of His exaltation is embodied in the lowly name which shall become supreme. His salvation shall assure Him universal worship, His deliverance will be the theme of world-wide acclamation.

The goal of all is the glory of God. The *kenōsis* of Christ is the first step in bringing about the Fatherhood of the Deity. It is the only way that He could display the riches of His affection, the resources of His love. God has revealed Himself as a mighty Creator in His works. This does not satisfy His heart or the hearts of His creatures. He desires to be their Father. He must draw them by the cords of love. He must win their affection. This is the vast task which began with Christ's *kenōsis*. This is the glorious consummation to which it leads. In eras yet to come God will be the Father of all His adoring creatures. This achievement will make the name of Jesus esteemed above all others in the eons of the eons and beyond.

A. E. Knoch

THE DISPOSITION OF CHRIST

(Philippians 2:1-30)

If, then, there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any communion of spirit, if any compassion and pity, fill my joy full, that you may be mutually disposed, having mutual love, joined in soul, being disposed to one thing—nothing according with faction, nor yet according with vainglory—but with humility, deeming one another superior to one’s self, not each noting that which is his own, but each that of others also. (2:1-4)

Here, we find the usage of “if” termed “the if of argument”; it is the equivalent of “since” (*cp* Rom.8:31).

There is such an abundance of “comfort of love,” “communion of spirit,” besides “compassion and pity” afforded us in Christ. *Since*, then, this is so, *in* the empowerment we find through the comfort of love, communion of spirit, even as compassion and pity which is in Christ, Paul would have us “fill [his] joy full” by being “mutually disposed” toward one another, “having mutual love, joined in soul.”

Our apostle would have us be “disposed to one thing”: “Nothing according with faction, nor yet according with vainglory.”

“Faction” (*eritheia*, STRIFE-) is “a group or clique within a larger group . . . ; party strife and intrigue; dissension.”¹

“Vainglory” is “excessive elation or pride over one’s own achievements, abilities, etc.; boastful vanity”² (*cf* Galatians

1. Dictionary.com Unabridged (v 1.1.); based on the RANDOM HOUSE UNABRIDGED DICTIONARY, Random House, Inc. 2006.

2. *ibid.*

5:26: “We may not become vainglorious, *challenging* one another, *envying* one another”).

Accordingly, then, the apostle Paul would have us “with humility, [be] deeming one another superior to one’s self, not each noting that which is his own, but each that of others also.”

Eritheia (“faction, CV) is a derivative of *eris* (STRIFE), which itself is the equivalent of the English “strife,” which speaks of “enmity or zeal in action, evil competition”³ (*cf* Rom.13:13, “strife and jealousy”; *cp* 2 Cor.12:20).

If “with humility,” we are “deeming one another superior to one’s self, not each noting that which is his own, but each that of others also,” we will simply have no room for faction, strife, vainglory, jealousy, competition, envy, or challenging of one another. May the virtues and the benefits we find in Christ as we center upon them, keep us from engaging in these sundry yet closely related evils.

For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (2:5-8)

We are to “see to it” (“let this disposition be in you”) that the disposition of Christ be in us, living and operative in our lives. This is our duty, or “role responsibility”; the fact that we have no resources of our own with which to fulfill this obligation does not exempt us therefrom, apart from which we cannot be well pleasing to God. Therefore, we must look to God in His saving grace to transform us by the renewing of our mind (Rom.12:2), if we would in any measure at all fulfill this lofty counsel.

3. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, entry “strife,” p.290.

“The supreme example of self-abasement set before us in the Scriptures is the descent of Christ from the form of God to the death of the cross, from the zenith of celestial glory to the deepest depth of earthly degradation. We are exhorted to cultivate His humble disposition, so contrary to all our own ambitions and counter to the spirit of the world about us, that we may emulate Him in devotion to the welfare of others, though it involves our own humiliation.

“In the course of this exhortation we are reminded of the *kenōsis* [i.e., ‘emptying’] of the Christ, that which changed Him from the form of God to the form of a slave”

“In Paul’s exhortation he presents for our emulation two distinct acts of Christ, the *kenōsis* and the *tapeinōsis*, the emptying and the humbling. The first describes His descent from the form of God to the form of a slave; the second His descent from the fashion of a man to the fashion of death most detestable to men and most obnoxious to God, the death of the cross. As He was in the form of God before He took the form of a slave and a human frame, the *kenōsis* is the inspired term for the change which accompanied His incarnation.”⁴

THE FORM OF GOD⁵

The entire *complement* of the “Deity” [or, “*deity*,” *theotēs*, *PLACERSHIP*, the “*GODness*” or *PLACERSHIP of God*] is dwelling *bodily* in Christ (Col.2:9). In a *bodily* way, the entire array of *that which pertains to God is dwelling in Christ*. Since the entirety of that which pertains to God yet cannot be communicated *by God in Himself*, Who is spirit, is dwelling *bodily in Christ*, it follows that Christ Himself is *not* the Deity.

Similarly, since, in His “pre-existence,” Christ alone was

4. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.21, pp.197,202.

5. James Coram, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.86, pp.69,70.

“inherently [lit., “inhering,” i.e., existing by right] in the form of God,” He, accordingly, “deem[ed] it not pillaging to be *equal with God*” (Phil.2:6,7).

Since Christ is the Son of God, He is a Being distinct from God. Christ therefore was not equal to God in an identification-of-person sense; instead, the *appearance* of Christ was in a form which is to be identified as that which is proper to Deity. To all appearances, Christ was the same as, or “equal to,” God.

We are not told that Christ is a Form of God (and, therefore, that Christ is a mere Form, instead of a tangible, actual Being). Instead, we are told that God’s Anointed, *Christ*, before He emptied Himself, was “inherently *in the form of God*” (Phil.2:6). Form refers not to inward essence but merely to external appearance (e.g., 2 Tim.3:5). The form of God was not a manifestation of what Christ was in Himself, but a representation of His God. His glory consisted not in actually being the Deity, but in possessing the visible appearance through which God had chosen to manifest Himself.

“The form of God,” does not refer us to that of which God Himself is composed, nor is it an expression corollarial to the notion that God Himself is a corporeal being. Instead, it refers to the personal *appearance of Christ*, in which He inhered and thus deemed it not pillaging to be *equal with God* (lit., “ANOINTED JESUS WHO IN FORM OF-GOD BELONGING . . .”). Christ was inherently in the “of-God” *form*; thus He *appeared* to be the Deity. He Who is the Image of the invisible God, existed in the form which is proper to Deity, the form in which God would have Himself made manifest.

IN THE NAME OF “JESUS”!

Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the

name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father. (2:9-11)

It is in response to the fact that Christ voluntarily emptied Himself, descending from the highest to the lowest place, that God now highly exalts Him. Even so, in bestowing the name Jesus (*Iêsous*; “Yahweh-SAVIOUR) upon Him, God does not *reward* Him with this name, but instead *graces* Him with this name, the name that is above every name.

Our Lord declared, “Now the Father, remaining in Me, *He is doing His works*” (John 14:10). All is *out of God* (Rom. 11:36), including the obedience of Christ unto death (*cf* Acts 4:27,28). Christ’s obedience, too, then, even as our own, is ultimately the work of God. All is *for God* (Rom. 11:36), to Whom alone all ultimate glory is due.

It is in the name of “Jesus,” that is, “Yahweh-Saviour,” that every knee should be bowing, whether celestial, terrestrial, or subterranean, and every tongue should be *acclaiming* that Jesus Christ is *Lord*, to the glory of God, the *Father*. Thus it is evident that it is the *Saviourhood* and *Lordship* of Jesus Christ even as the *glory* of God as *Father*, that is in view here, when every knee bows and every tongue declares.

By usage, it is necessarily an “acclamation” (as opposed to a negative “confession”); that is, a proclamation made with enthusiastic approval, for all is declared unto the *glory* of God—the glory of God, *the Father*.

In the coming eons, those who are God’s people, will enjoy either “the allotment of the land” (Matt.5:5), or an allotment among the celestials (*cf* Eph.1:3; 2:6), in the case of those whose “realm is inherent in the heavens” (Phil.3:20).

However, during this extended period, by far the greater portion of mankind’s only allotment will be a “subterranean” one, in the sleep of death.

“Subterranean” (*kata chthonion*, DOWN-TERRANEAN), by its elements, signifies “down” (or “in accord with”) “[the] terrain.” Nevertheless, even those who in oncoming eons know no other allotment than a “down-terranean” one (save for the day of their judging), will, at the consummation (1 Cor.15:22,23,28), be vivified themselves, and join in the *universal* chorus, bowing their knee and acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father.

So that, my beloved, according as you always obey, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, with fear and trembling, be carrying your own salvation into effect, for it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight. (2:12,13)

“*So that . . .*” That is, since it is the case that the glorious goal which he has just rehearsed, in due time, *will* be achieved, in light of this, Paul goes on to entreat, saying: “according as you always obey, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, with fear and trembling, be carrying your own salvation into effect . . .”

“According as you always obey . . .” It is true that because of “the spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus,” all genuine believers have a new disposition and a new walk, according to the *measure* of grace granted them (*cf* Rom.8:1-4). However, because of the limited and imperfect obedience of even the most noble of believers, it is evident that Paul’s words here are not intended categorically but relatively, and are more exhortative in their intent than strictly accurate in their historicity. To speak thus, however, in such a case, is reflective of wisdom, as in the adage, penned many centuries after the lifetime of Paul: “Treat people as if they were what they ought to be and you will help them become what they are capable of becoming.”⁶

“. . . *with fear and trembling*, be carrying your own sal-

6. Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749–1832).

vation into effect, *for it is God Who is operating in you . . .*” We do not fear and tremble in light of the impending era of indignation, for “being now justified in [Christ’s] blood, we shall be saved from indignation through Him” (Rom.5:9). Accordingly, we enjoy “the expectation of salvation, for God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:8,9; *cp* 1 Thess.1:10).

Still, since it is God Himself Who is operating in us as we carry our salvation into effect, it is only fitting that we do so “with fear and trembling.” Any literal “fear” here, however, is simply that of a healthy fear to displease, born out of a longing to be well pleasing. Our “fear” of God—which is the beginning both of wisdom and of knowledge (Psa.111:10; Prov.1:7)—is essentially a matter of deep reverence and extreme awe. It is a reverential fear, motivated by love and gratitude, not by a spirit of terror. Similarly, we would tremble solely out of awe and wonder, in consideration of the wondrous fact that God Himself deigns to operate in *us*.

First of all, here, we should note that any “salvation” that we carry into effect, is necessarily a practical salvation, not our positional salvation in Christ. Our positional salvation in Christ is “not in accord with our acts, but in accord with [God’s] own purpose and the *grace* given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian” (2 Tim.1:9; *cp* Eph.1:4).

Conversely, our practical salvation, by which, as the case may be, we are either *delivered* from sin and danger, or *kept* from sin and danger, is something in which we are very much involved, for it is we ourselves who must carry it “into effect.”

Even so, our need for God is just as vital as concerns our practical salvation as in the matter of our positional salvation in Christ, through the blood of His cross. Ultimately speaking, we are no more capable in ourselves of either

delivering or keeping ourselves from sin and danger, than we are of achieving a justified standing before God through our own works. It follows, then, whenever we do either *get* ourselves out of trouble or *keep* ourselves out of trouble, that we do so as God’s achievement (*cf* Eph.2:10), not as some sort of demigods that are ultimately, somehow “on their own”—ones who accordingly enjoy their own independent glory, quite apart from the Almighty.

How glorious it is to learn, then, that when we ourselves, as the proximate cause thereof, “effect” or “produce” our “own [practical] salvation,” we do so as those in whom God Himself, as the ultimate cause thereof is “operating,” doing so “for the sake of His delight.” Literally, it is God Who is operating in us, “THE TO-BE-WILLING AND THE TO-BE-IN-ACTING” (Phil.2:13) in which we engage, in all such cases.

All be doing without murmurings and reasonings, that you may become blameless and artless, children of God, flawless, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse among whom you are appearing as luminaries in the world, having on the word of life, for my glorying in the day of Christ, that I did not run for naught, neither that I toil for naught. (2:14-16)

Where the Scriptures speak against “reasonings,” they have in view not the ratiocinative (i.e., “reasoning”) process itself, per se, which indeed is essential to rational thought, but the “*wicked reasonings*” (Matt.15:19) and “*evil reasonings*” (Mark 7:21) which arise out of man’s own sinful heart. These result in evil and wicked acts (hence they are wicked and evil reasonings), whether one’s syllogisms employed unto such ends, as such, should be valid or invalid.

We would not “murmur,” nor wickedly “reason”; and, we would avoid all such evils that we may be becoming blameless and artless, children of God, flawless, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse indeed.

But even if I am a libation on the sacrifice and ministration of your faith, I am rejoicing myself and rejoicing together with you all. Now, to be mutual, you also be rejoicing, and be rejoicing together with me. (2:17,18)

Under the law, the priest poured a “libation” (i.e., liquid offering) onto the sacrifice (Num.15:5). Paul had simply “poured himself out” into the lives of the Philippians, as they presented themselves before God in the actions related to their faith, which is to say, in the “sacrifice and ministration” thereof. Even so, in this, he was rejoicing, and entreats the Philippians to join him in rejoicing as well.

Now I am expecting, in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy to you quickly, that I also may be of good cheer when I know of your concerns. For I have no one equally sensitive, who will be so genuinely solicitous of your concerns, for all are seeking that which is their own, not that which is Christ Jesus’. (2:19-21)

Of all those whom Paul might send to assist the Philippians, Timothy alone was suited for faithful service. Alas, all the rest were seeking that which was their own, not that which is Christ Jesus’.

Now you know his testedness, that, as a child with a father, he slaves with me for the evangel. This one, indeed, then, I am expecting to send—as ever I may be perceiving my course from the things about me—forthwith. Yet I have confidence in the Lord that I myself shall also be coming quickly. (2:22-24)

As we make our plans concerning any proposed future activities, rather than seeking the guidance of signs or miraculous revelations, let us instead imitate Paul here as well and be *perceiving* our course “from the things about [us],” as a more faithful indicator of what may lie ahead.

Now I deem it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, yet your apostle and minister for my need (2:25)

Epaphroditus’ “apostleship” or commission consisted simply in acting as courier in order to bring the Philippians’ contribution to Paul. This example illustrates the elementary, essential meaning of the term.

. . . since, in fact, he was longing for you all and depressed, because you hear that he is infirm. For he is infirm, also, very nigh death, but God is merciful to him, yet not to him only, but to me also, lest I should be having sorrow on sorrow. The more diligently, then, I send him, that seeing him again, you may be rejoicing and I may be more sorrow-free. Receive him, then in the Lord with all joy, and have such in honor, seeing that because of the work of the Lord he draws near unto death, risking his soul that he should fill up your want of ministration toward me. (2:26-30)

“Ministration” (or “ministry,” *leitourgia*, PEOPLE-ACTION) speaks of active, personal service on behalf of another (cf Luke 1:28; cp 2 Cor.9:12). Even if the Philippians were willing to make some contribution to Paul’s need, they were deficient in the matter of “ministration” or personal care on his behalf.

Concerning Epaphroditus: “This is a most pathetic picture of the suffering which often accompanies the service of the Lord in this economy. In the previous economy Paul could and would have healed Epaphroditus, for his very handkerchief was potent with power (Acts 19:11,12). That course was in keeping with the kingdom which he then proclaimed. But now, when all blessing is spiritual (Eph.1:3), Paul does not attempt to heal Epaphroditus and tells Timothy to use a sip of wine for his frequent infirmities (1 Tim.5:23). How full of feeling is the statement that he was depressed, not by his own condition, but because the Philippians had heard of it and would be concerned about him!”⁷

J.R.C.

7. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.299.