

# Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

*Our 111th Year*  
*(1909–2020)*

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## Concordant Version of the Old Testament

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# Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE  
FOR GOD AND HIS  
WORD

VOLUME 111

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and  
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## PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

**1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, through God's will, and brother Timothy, <sup>2</sup> to the saints and believing brethren in Christ in Colosse:

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

<sup>3</sup> We are thanking the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying<sup>o</sup> concerning you, <sup>4</sup> on hearing of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have <sup>io</sup>for all the saints, <sup>5</sup> because of the expectation being reserved<sup>o</sup> for you in the heavens, which you hear before in the word of truth of the evangel, <sup>6</sup> which, being present <sup>io</sup>with you, according as in the entire world also, is bearing<sup>o</sup> fruit and growing<sup>o</sup>, according as it is among you also, from the day on which you hear and realize the grace of God in truth, <sup>7</sup> according as you learn it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful dispenser of Christ <sup>ov</sup>for us, <sup>8</sup> who makes evident also to us your love in spirit.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear, do not cease<sup>o</sup> praying<sup>o</sup> <sup>ov</sup>for you and requesting<sup>o</sup> that you may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, <sup>10</sup> you to walk worthily of the Lord <sup>io</sup>for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing<sup>o</sup> in the realization of God; <sup>11</sup> being endued<sup>o</sup> <sup>i</sup>with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, <sup>io</sup>for all endurance and patience with joy; <sup>12</sup> at the same time giving thanks to the Father, Who makes you competent <sup>io</sup>for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light, <sup>13</sup> Who rescues<sup>o</sup> us out of the jurisdiction

of 'Darkness, and transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His 'love, <sup>14</sup> in Whom we are having the deliverance, the pardon of 'sins, <sup>15</sup> Who 'is the Image of the invisible 'God, Firstborn of every creature, <sup>16</sup> 'for in Him is 'all created, 'that in the heavens and 'that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, 'all is 'created through Him and <sup>17</sup> 'for Him, and He 'is before all, and 'all has its cohesion in Him.

<sup>18</sup> And He 'is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who 'is 'Sovereign, Firstborn <sup>19</sup> 'from among the dead ones, that in all He 'may become 'first, <sup>20</sup> 'for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile 'all <sup>21</sup> 'to Him ('making peace through the blood of His 'cross), through Him, whether 'those on the earth or 'those in the heavens.

<sup>22</sup> And 'you, being once 'estranged and enemies in 'comprehension, 'by 'wicked 'acts, <sup>23</sup> yet now He reconciles 'by His 'body of flesh, through His 'death, to present 'you holy and flawless and unimpeachable in His sight, <sup>24</sup> since surely 'you are persisting in the faith, 'grounded and settled and are not being removed from the expectation of the evangel which 'you hear 'which is heralded in the entire creation 'which is under 'heaven of which I, Paul, become 'the dispenser. <sup>25</sup> I am now rejoicing in my 'sufferings <sup>26</sup> 'for 'you, and am filling up in my 'flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of 'Christ, <sup>27</sup> 'for His 'body, which 'is the ecclesia <sup>28</sup> of which I 'become 'a dispenser, in accord with the administration of 'God, which is granted to me <sup>29</sup> 'for 'you, to complete the word of 'God—<sup>30</sup> the secret 'which 'has been concealed from the eons and from the generations, yet now is made manifest to His 'saints, <sup>31</sup> to whom 'God wills to make known 'what are the glorious 'riches of this 'secret among the nations, which 'is: Christ among 'you, the glorious 'expec-

tation—<sup>32</sup> Whom we 'are announcing, admonishing every human and teaching every human in 'all wisdom, that we should present every human mature in Christ Jesus; <sup>33</sup> 'for which I am toiling also, struggling in accord with His 'operation, 'which is operating in me 'with power.

**2** For I 'want 'you to 'perceive what the struggle amounts to which I am having <sup>34</sup> 'for 'your sakes and for 'those in Laodicea, and whoever have not seen my 'face in flesh, <sup>35</sup> that their 'hearts may be consoled, united in love, and <sup>36</sup> 'to 'all the riches of the assurance of 'understanding, <sup>37</sup> 'unto a realization of the secret of the God and Father of 'Christ, <sup>38</sup> in Whom all the treasures of 'wisdom and 'knowledge are concealed. <sup>39</sup> Now I am saying this, that no one may be beguiling 'you 'with persuasive words. <sup>40</sup> For 'even if, in 'flesh, I am being absent, <sup>41</sup> nevertheless, in 'spirit, I 'am 'with 'you, rejoicing and observing 'your order and the stability of 'your 'faith <sup>42</sup> 'in Christ.

<sup>43</sup> As then 'you accept 'Christ Jesus, the Lord, be walking in Him, <sup>44</sup> having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith according as 'you are taught, superabounding in it 'with thanksgiving.

<sup>45</sup> Beware that no 'one shall be 'despoiling 'you through 'philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with 'human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with Christ, <sup>46</sup> 'for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily. <sup>47</sup> And 'you 'are 'complete in Him, Who 'is the Head of every sovereignty and authority, <sup>48</sup> in Whom 'you are circumcised also with a circumcision not made by hands, in the stripping off of the body of 'flesh in the circumcision of 'Christ. <sup>49</sup> Entombed together with Him in 'baptism, in Whom 'you are roused together also through the faithfulness of the operation of 'God, 'Who rouses Him <sup>50</sup> 'from among the dead ones, <sup>51</sup> 'you also being dead to the offenses and the uncircumcision of 'your 'flesh, He vivifies us together <sup>52</sup> 'jointly with Him,

dealing graciously<sup>o</sup> with all our offenses, <sup>14</sup>erasing the handwriting of the decrees against us, which was hostile to us, and has taken it away out of the midst, nailing it to the cross, <sup>15</sup>stripping<sup>o</sup> off the sovereignties and authorities, with boldness He makes a show of them, triumphing over them in it.

<sup>16</sup>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, <sup>17</sup>which are a shadow of those things which are impending—yet the body is the Christ's. <sup>18</sup>Let no one be arbitrating against you, who wants, in humility and the ritual of the messengers, to parade what he has seen, feignedly, puffed<sup>o</sup> up by his fleshly mind, <sup>19</sup>and not holding the Head, out of Whom the entire body, being supplied<sup>o</sup> and united<sup>o</sup> through the assimilation and ligaments, is growing in the growth of God. <sup>20</sup>If then you die together with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as living in the world, are you subject to decrees<sup>o</sup>: <sup>21</sup>“You should not touch, nor yet taste, nor yet come into contact” <sup>22</sup>(which things are all for corruption from use), in accord with the directions and teachings of human beings?—<sup>23</sup>which are (having indeed an expression of wisdom in a willful ritual and humility and asceticism) not of any value against the surfeiting of the flesh.

**3** If then you are roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting<sup>o</sup> at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Be setting your mind on that which is above, not on that on the earth, <sup>3</sup>for you die, and your life is hid<sup>o</sup> together with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory.

<sup>5</sup>Deaden then your members that are on the earth: prostitution, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed, which is idolatry, <sup>6</sup>because of which the indignation of God is coming<sup>o</sup> on the sons of stubbornness—<sup>7</sup>among

whom you also once walked, when you were living in these things.

<sup>8</sup>Yet now you also put<sup>o</sup> away all these: anger, fury, malice, calumny, obscenity out of your mouth. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie<sup>o</sup> to one another, stripping<sup>o</sup> off the old humanity together with its practices, <sup>10</sup>and putting<sup>o</sup> on the young, which is being renewed<sup>o</sup> into recognition, to accord with the Image of the One Who creates it, <sup>11</sup>wherein there is no Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but all and in all is Christ.

<sup>12</sup>Put<sup>o</sup> on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, pitiful compassions, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, <sup>13</sup>bearing<sup>o</sup> with one another and dealing graciously<sup>o</sup> among yourselves, if anyone should be having a complaint against any. According as the Lord also deals graciously<sup>o</sup> with you, thus also you. <sup>14</sup>Now over all these put on love, which is the tie of maturity. <sup>15</sup>And let the peace of Christ be arbitrating in your hearts, for which you are called also in one body; and become<sup>o</sup> thankful. <sup>16</sup>Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves; in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God. <sup>17</sup>And everything, whatever you may be doing, in word or in act, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him.

<sup>18</sup>Wives, be subject<sup>o</sup> to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your own wives and be not bitter<sup>o</sup> toward them. <sup>20</sup>Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Fathers, do not vex your children, lest they may be disheartened.

<sup>22</sup>Slaves, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-slavery, as human-pleasers, but with singleness of heart, fearing<sup>o</sup> the Lord. <sup>23</sup>All, whatsoever you may be doing, work<sup>o</sup> from the soul, as to the

Lord and not to human beings, <sup>24</sup> being ° aware that from the Lord =you will be getting° the compensation of the enjoyment of an allotment: for the Lord Christ are =you slaving. <sup>25</sup> For he `who is injuring shall be 'requited° for that which he injures, and there 'is no' partiality.

4 Masters, 'tender° that which is righteous and 'equitable to your 'slaves, being ° aware that =you' also 'have a Master in the heavens.

<sup>2</sup> In 'prayer be persevering, watching in it 'with thanksgiving, <sup>3</sup> praying° at the same time concerning us also, that 'God should open for us a door of the word, to speak the secret of 'Christ, because of which I am ° bound' also, <sup>4</sup> that I should make it manifest, as I 'must speak. <sup>5</sup> In wisdom be walking toward 'those outside, reclaiming° the era, <sup>6</sup> =your 'word being always 'with grace, ° seasoned' with salt, perceiving how =you 'must 'answer° each one.

<sup>7</sup> All my ° affairs shall be made 'known to =you by Tychicus, a 'beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow slave in the Lord, <sup>8</sup> whom I send to<sup>d</sup> =you ° for this same thing, that =you may know that which concerns =you and he should be consoling =your 'hearts, <sup>9</sup> together with Onesimus, a 'faithful and beloved brother, who 'is one ° of =you. They shall make 'known to =you all things 'here.

<sup>10</sup> Greeting° =you is Aristarchus, my 'fellow captive, and Mark, 'cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom =you obtain directions: if he should come to<sup>d</sup> =you, receive° him), <sup>11</sup> and Jesus, 'termed° Justus, 'who 'are ° of the Circumcision. These are the only fellow workers ° for the kingdom of 'God who<sup>a</sup> become a solace to me.

<sup>12</sup> Greeting° =you is Epaphras, 'who is one ° of =you, a slave of Christ Jesus, always struggling° ° for =you in 'prayers, that =you may stand mature and fully ° assured' in ° all the will of 'God. <sup>13</sup> For I am testifying of him that he 'has much misery over =you and 'those in Laodicea and 'those in Hierapolis.

<sup>14</sup> Greeting° =you is Luke, the beloved 'physician, and Demas. <sup>15</sup> Greet° the brethren in Laodicea, and Nympha and the ecclesia ° at her house. <sup>16</sup> And whenever the epistle should be read ° to =you, ° cause that it should be read in the Laodicean ecclesia also, and that =you' also may read that out of Laodicea. <sup>17</sup> And say to Archippus: "Look to the service which you accept in the Lord, that you may be fulfilling it." <sup>18</sup> The salutation is by my 'hand—Paul's. 'Remember my 'bonds!

'Grace be with =you! Amen!

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#### EDITORIAL NOTES

WE GIVE special attention to Paul's letter to the Colossians in this issue. It begins on page 2, in place of the usual poem, with the Framework as used in the first edition of the Concordant Version. Its usefulness is especially noted on page 19 under the subheading, THE LITERARY STRUCTURE.

The revised CV of Colossians as it currently stands follows. Changes in 2:12 are of particular interest. The terms "Entombed together" and "are roused together" both reflect what we recognize now as *fact* verb forms, where the fact of the action is emphasized irrespective of the time. Furthermore, the phrase, "through faith *in* the operation of God" is changed to a more literal rendering of the Greek: "through the faithfulness *of* the operation of God." To be roused together in Christ is certainly a matter of faith, and indeed of our faith. But here Paul points to God's faith in His faithful operation of rousing.

In accord with Brother Knoch's desire that the CV translation be an ongoing project, he himself discusses on pages 13-19, changes made in Ephesians 1:15-17 from the first edition (called the "Complete Edition") to the later editions. In this case, he maintained that the original thought was correct, but not well expressed in English idiom and according to the Concordant principle of consistency.

Along with, and beyond such matters, may we all be rejoicing in the revelations of "the Christ of Colossians." D.H.H.

## HIS GRANDEST GLORIES

CHRIST and His highest honors come before us in Colossians, even as the *saints* and their celestial blessings are the theme of Ephesians. There the transcendent truths of the present secret administration were set forth as they affect the believers among the nations, who become peers of an election out of Israel in spiritual, supernal dignities. Here these tremendous truths are a halo on the brow of *Christ*. His glories as the Messiah of Israel on the earth are magnified to universal dimensions. *All is created* in Him in the beginning, and *all* is reconciled in Him at the consummation (Col.1:16-20). On earth, at present, He is not confined to Israel in flesh, but, in spirit, is found *among the nations*. This is the basis of their future bliss (Col.1:27).

Colossians and Ephesians are very similar, for they teach the same truth, though from different standpoints. To fully appreciate and enjoy these epistles, which are two of the most precious portions of God's revelation for us in this secret administration, it is necessary that we clearly grasp the distinctive view presented in each. Even as Philippians can only be understood in the light of *service*, so Colossians can only be clear to those who see that it deals with *Christ's* relation to the present, even as Ephesians was especially concerned with the place of the *saints*, especially the Uncircumcision.

In reference to the body of Christ the two epistles are complementary. In Ephesians the emphasis is on the *members* of the body, while Colossians presses *Christ's headship* over the ecclesia. Ephesians elaborates the relation of the members to God and to one another, as well as to

## Ephesians and Colossians are Complementary 11

Christ Himself. Colossians is largely confined to our connection with Him alone.

In Ephesians, the bulk of the epistle is concerned with an orderly and positive presentation of the truth. Colossians, however, devotes the corresponding space to the correction of departures from it.

Ephesians is general, with no local allusions. Colossians is concerned with a special situation, and a particular ecclesia.

In Ephesians the previous disabilities of the nations *in flesh*, alienated, guests, without prospects, far off (Eph. 2:11-13) are used to form a contrast to their present *spiritual* privileges as fellow-citizens, members of God's family, with a part in the temple (Eph.2:19,20). In Colossians this contrast is replaced by comparing Christ's limited glories in Israel, *in flesh*, with His vast *spiritual* glories among the nations and in the entire universe. This contrast is not directly expressed, as in Ephesians, but is evident in the figures of the kingdom (Col.1:13), and the startling announcement that He is *among the nations* (Col.1:27) whereas He would not leave the land during His ministry to Israel, before His crucifixion.

In Ephesians the body of Christ is the complement of the universe (Eph.1:23). In Colossians we are complete in Him. There the ecclesia is the final factor in bringing all under the headship of Christ. On the earth His headship is exercised through His apostles and the holy nation. These are, figuratively speaking, His "filling" on earth, who share His spiritual might and majesty, and so are, officially, a part of Him. The ecclesia which is His body has the same function in His celestial dominions. These two, earth and heaven, constitute the universe, so that no more "filling" is needed to administer all creation. Hence we are the final "filling," the *plērōma*, or complement, that which fully fills, so that no more is needed. The adminis-

tration of the universe is amply provided for, both on earth and in the heavens.

In Colossians Christ is a double Complement. He is all that God needs (Col.2:9), and all that we need (Col.2:10), to be complete. God needs a visible and tangible expression suited to the capacities of His creatures, and Christ fulfills this fully by means of the body in which He came to do His will (Heb.10:5).

We, also, find our Complement in Him. All the rites and ceremonies pertaining to the flesh, such as circumcision and baptism, which were deemed essential to a standing before God, are now found in His death, His burial, and His rousing. What *He has done*, not what *we do*, fully equips us for the divine presence. In Ephesians, *we* are the complement of all, but in Colossians *He* is our Complement.

In time, our choice is carried back to before the disruption (Eph.1:4). Christ is carried back to creation, for He is the Firstborn (Col.1:15). Our blessings are among the celestials. *All* was created in and through and for Him (Col.1:16). We are joint-members of the body (Eph.3:6). He is Head of the body (Col.1:18). We, as His complement, *complete* the universe (Eph.1:23). He uses the entire complement to *reconcile* the universe to God (Col.1:20). In Ephesians the secret consists of the *joint*-enjoyment of the allotment among the celestials, the *joint*-membership in the body, and *joint*-participation in the promises by the *saints* among the nations. In Colossians the same truth is expressed by putting *Christ among* the nations, instead of in Israel, to whom He has hitherto been confined (Col.1:27).

The secret of Christ, that He is to head up the entire universe (Eph.1:10) had been partially made known to the prophets of old, though not in its fullness, "as it is now revealed" (Eph.3:5). That part of this secret which they made known, His messiahship to Israel, is used as a back-

ground in this epistle. His future kingdom in the new earth is used to figure His present spiritual dominion, "the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col.1:14). His future presence in Israel, constituting them the ruling nation, finds its parallel in His present spiritual presence among the nations, constituting them His complement for the future administration of His celestial realms (Col.1:27; Eph.1:21-23).

#### "YOUR FAITH" AND "ACCORDING-TO YOU<sup>p</sup> FAITH"

Colossians is by no means a repetition of Ephesians. Even those paragraphs which seem to be parallel have minute variations which, when sympathetically examined, will show how exquisite the separate details harmonize with the special subject of the whole. Thus, in Colossians, we read of "*your* faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints" (Col.1:4), which is very simple and readily understood. Why then, in Ephesians, should we find "the *according-to you* faith, and the [faith] for all the saints" (Eph.1:15)? The Authorized Version renders both "your," but the Revisers, who were keen in such matters, changed it to "which is *among you*." One of the best German versions reads "*in you*." Another has "*with you*," but puts "*concerning you*" in the margin, as the real translation. Luther has "*with you*." The YOU is plural (*p*).

Before examining the evidence, let us remind ourselves that Ephesians is devoted to setting forth precisely what this marginal reading ("concerning you") suggests, that is, the special faith which concerns us in this administration as distinct from the truth for other times, and, besides, it seems to have no special bearing on any particular group of saints (as the Ephesians), unless this passage is so interpreted. If all the saints in Christ Jesus are before us, and the apostle refers to that body of faith which is especially theirs, then this peculiar wording, "the *according-to you* faith" is not only fitting but necessary to express his thought.

But, if he is simply referring to the faith exercised by the special group whom he addresses, then the simple “*your* faith,” as in Colossians, is appropriate. One phrase fits Ephesians, the other Colossians.

But how should THE according-to YOU (*tên kath humas*) be translated? That it should not be rendered simply “your,” as in the Authorized Version, seems beyond question, first, because this is the regular rendering of the simple genitive pronoun OF-YOUP (*humōn*), which occurs ever so often, and concerning which there is never any difference of opinion. Consequently the *accusative* pronoun, with the connective DOWN (*according-to* with the accusative), a combination which occurs but seldom, should at least be translated otherwise in order to preserve the distinction. In order to help us to arrive at a clear conception of the nature of this special phrase in Greek we present a number of passages in which this same combination is found, grouped according to the nature of the context, which helps to determine the translation into English.

THE *according-to* YOU or ME

Acts 24:22 [Felix] shall investigate *your affairs*  
 Eph. 6:21 may become acquainted with *my affairs*  
 Phil. 1:12 *my affairs* have rather come  
 Col. 4: 7 All *my affairs* shall be made known.

This group seems to sustain the idea that it does not refer to possessions so much as to things pertaining to the person in question. Felix would investigate the circumstances leading to Paul’s arrest and the charges against him. The saints would wish to be informed of Paul’s case at court. Paul’s faith would hardly be included in the reports, as this is contained in the letters themselves.

THE *according-to* [SOMETHING]

1 Tim. 6: 3 teaching in *accord with* devoutness  
 Titus 1: 1 truth which *accords with* devoutness  
 Heb. 11: 7 righteousness which *accords with* faith

In these passages *harmonious relation* is expressed plainly by the connective which we are considering. Teaching and truth cannot possess devoutness but they should never conflict with it. Righteousness cannot have faith, but it can be in accord with it. From these passages we may see clearly that mere possession is not in view when this connective is used.

THE *according-to* YOU [SOMETHING]

Acts 17:28 some poets *of yours* have declared  
 18:15 questions about . . . a law *of yours*,  
 Eph. 1:15 the faith which *relates to you* [this faith *of yours*]

Here we have the closest parallels to our text. Certain Greek poets sustained a relation to Paul’s hearers, and the law was related to the Jews as this faith was related to those who received Paul’s epistle. The law reference is especially helpful, for we are well acquainted with the relation of the law to the Jews. It applied particularly to them and to no others, which seems to be the special point of the passage, for Gallio would not judge according to a law not pertaining to his jurisdiction.

The question of idiomatic translation alone remains. The phrase “of yours,” is a peculiar English idiom, in which two signs of the genitive (*of* and *-s*) are added to a word already genitive (*your*), giving it, not only emphasis, but a vague kind of relativity. This seems to serve very well in connection with the law, as most readers are more or less clear that it was exclusively for the Jews. It would also serve in Ephesians if it were as well known that *the* faith which it reveals relates exclusively to the saints today. Would “this faith of yours” convey the same impression as “this law of yours?” It is questionable, but it may be wise to use it to secure uniformity.

The expression “according-to” does not always comply with the demands of English idiom, as these examples

abundantly show. Hence it is necessary at times to use substitutes, as “suited to” (1 Cor.12:31), “savor of,” “corresponding to,” “relate to,” as was done in this passage (Eph. 1:15). In view of the following sentence, “and that for all the saints,” however, which should make its meaning clear, we are considering the rendering “of yours,” which will be uniform with the two other occurrences, and avoid the use of the word “relates” in this single passage. Then it will read, “Therefore, *I* also, hearing of this faith *of yours* and that for all the saints . . .”

In passing, let us note that the phrase “when hearing” is not intended as a mark of *time*. A participle is a tenseless verbal adjective. Hence we use *when* to make it *indefinite*. The very highest authorities and Greek scholars, as well as one version, give the participle a “present” force, but this is utterly untenable, although English idiom compels the addition of the present verb in many passages. Here is where a sublinear should help. The Keyword edition has all these verbs in lightface because they are not in the Greek. “On hearing” or “when hearing” show the basis of Paul’s thanksgiving and prayer.

Perhaps the idiomatic “*on* hearing” would show this best. The point is that he could not thank or pray as he did until first he had heard. In Colossians he heard of their faith and love. In Ephesians the faith was revealed to him apart from any particular group of saints, and leads to petitions which apply to all the saints of this administration.

It remains to add a few words as to the Greek text in this passage. We do not, as a rule, countenance the many omissions in the text used by the Revisers, merely because a word is not found in Vaticanus. Here most manuscripts add the words “the love” in the following sentence thus: “your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints” (AV). But the most ancient, the three used in compiling the CONCORDANT VERSION, did not have these words. They

were added by a later editor in Sinaiticus. On many occasions the additions of this editor are of great value. But in Ephesians he seems to be recording the attempts of early expositors to make this epistle understandable after its message was lost. So that his addition of “the love” in this place lacks the weight which his notations usually have.

The thought that we have a special faith is so foreign to theology that this passage has caused much perplexity to translators. The Revisers have added the words *ye shew*, thus: “the faith which is among you, and which [ye shew] toward all the saints.” But how can we show faith to the saints? If this is the individual faith of the believer rather than that which they believe, then this should be rendered *into* or *in*. But how could they have faith *in* the saints? The passage can hardly be understood or translated so long as the faith exercised by each one is in view. But once we see that this rare and peculiar expression is used to indicate the things to be believed by them alone, as the law was to be obeyed by Israel alone, and in each case was in accord with their peculiar place in God’s purpose, all is clear.

With this beginning of Paul’s prayer the following petitions, for a spirit of wisdom and revelation, possess much more point. He prays, in fact, that they may be enabled to comprehend what he writes to them in this epistle. That this is most appropriate is evidenced by the fact that, even if it was understood by its first recipients, there is very little to show that it has ever been apprehended since by any considerable number of saints. It has seldom been accorded its proper place by teachers of the Word. The apostasy from Paul started in his lifetime and has continued ever since.

When the true import of this phrase first dawned upon me it seemed to me that I had discovered a key to the epistle, and I was greatly concerned to give it a clear expression in the version. Hence the rendering “the faith which

*relates to you,*" which still seems to me better than any other I have since seen. But my zeal led me too far in the following petitions, where I made the indefinite pronoun *auton* (OF-it or -Him) refer to this faith. Logically and indirectly I am still convinced of this, but grammatically the word *faith* is feminine in Greek and would be referred to as *her* (*autês*). It would be *her* realization, *her* calling, *her* allotment, *her* power (Eph.1:17-19).

There is a problem in Greek grammar which deserves further study. The so-called *neuter* forms are not confined to *things*, so the CONCORDANT VERSION has changed the name to *indefinite*. For instance, the article *ta*, indefinite plural, is responsible for the word *things* ten times in the Revised Version of Colossians 1:16-20. And yet it seems clear that impersonal *things* are not at all in view, especially as regards reconciliation. So also, in such expressions as *the stupid*, *the weak* (foolish *things*, weak *things*, RV, 1 Cor.1:27) it is certainly evident that *things* are not meant, for they are not stupid. It is clear that, in these passages, the indefinite *includes* the other genders. At one time I considered this sufficient ground for the rendering *its* in place of *His* in Ephesians 1:17-19, but now I freely confess that it is inadequate, and so have changed the version to *His* in these verses.

This correction, however, does not affect the rendering of "according-to you," in the beginning of the prayer. Whether the apostle prays that the *faith* may be realized, or *God*, Who gives the faith, comes to much the same result. Whether it is the expectation of *its* call or *His* in it, is not vital. Whether it is the riches of the glory of *its* or *His* allotment, is the same, for in either case it is *His*. And, even if not expressly limited to the faith by the grammar, all of this which we have from God is nevertheless within the boundaries of the faith to which the apostle refers before commencing his petitions. The call is not God's call to Israel,

but to us, and the expectation and allotment and power is *in accord with* (*kata*), celestial glory unknown before.

#### THE LITERARY STRUCTURE

A grasp of the controlling theme of an epistle greatly aids in its apprehension. The same is true of its parts. When we are sure of the subject of any section its interpretation is safer and more satisfactory. And when we can get a view of the whole epistle at a glance, showing the symmetrical relation of its parts, our dull minds are relieved, and our eyes are opened to the special subject of each section, and its relation to the whole, or, perhaps, a similar section in the corresponding member, and its contrasts as well as its likenesses. A casual reading of Colossians will hardly discover the symmetry of its structure or the exquisite relation of its parts, so we reprint the structure for those who may not have seen it before (*cf* p.2).

Within the salutations, and the mutual reports, one at each end, we find the body of the epistle, which deals with the *secret of Christ*, that great revelation concerning Him which had been hitherto withheld or only partially made known, but is now necessary, since the saints have a place among the celestials. Twice is this secret the subject, once in reference to its realization by us, and, near the end, in connection with its expression to others. Between these two come correction in doctrine and in deportment. Perhaps we might come closer to the facts if we further characterized these as *warning* in reference to teaching, and *exhortation* as to walk.

#### THE SECRET OF CHRIST IN EPHESIANS

It will be seen from this that the controlling theme is the secret of Christ, just as the framework of Ephesians shows that it is concerned with the secret of this administration. Before entering upon our studies in Colossians

it may be well to see what Ephesians has already revealed on this theme, for it is there that we read of the secret of Christ for the first time, and there we have clear indications, not only of its contents, but also of its relation to the present administration of God's grace. It were well if we had these two secrets distinct in our minds before we enter into Colossians.

The first intimation of the secret of Christ in the Ephesian epistle is found in that marvelous opening effusion in which God's blessedness is the keynote of a symphony of blessings for us, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavishes on us, in all wisdom and prudence, making known to us the *secret of His will* . . . to head up *all* in the Christ—in the heavens as well as on the earth. Hitherto the headship of Christ had been confined to the earth. His heavenly headship had been kept secret. But now that an election out of the earth is to share His celestial glories, these must be made known. This, then, is the essence of the secret of Christ—*His universal headship*. Not only is He to have the throne of David, and be King of kings upon the earth, but He will reign throughout the starry spheres, including all creation.

Once more, at the end of the first chapter of Ephesians, when praying that we may perceive the transcendent greatness of the power which operates on our behalf, we are reminded of the mighty strength which roused Christ from among the dead and seated Him at God's right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is future: and subjects *all* under His feet. This is the Ephesian aspect.

Here we have still further light. The throne of David is still vacant. The Son of Mankind has not yet taken His seat as earth's Suzerain. He was rejected on earth, but He was acclaimed in the heavens. There He already has the highest

place, at the right hand of the throne of God, though all may not yet respond (1 Peter 3:22). All varieties of heavenly government are subordinate to His sway. There is no name above that of the despised Nazarene. From the accursed cross, beneath the lowest dregs of earth, He has ascended to the highest heights of heaven. Even now He has this place in heaven, and in the eons to come He will include the earth in His universal sway. That Messiah should be Head in heaven even before He took earth's sovereignty was part of the secret hitherto unknown.

Such is the side of the secret of Christ which is set forth in Ephesians. As we shall see, much more is revealed in Colossians, because Ephesians treats of it only insofar as it makes contact with the main theme, which is another secret. This is why, when the apostle comes to make a categorical statement of the three items which characterize the present administration, he prefaces it with a brief allusion to the secret of Christ (Eph.3:3,4). Referring to the passages we have just been considering, he says, "(according as I write before, in brief, by which you who are reading are able to apprehend my understanding in the secret of the Christ, which, in other generations, is not made known to the sons of humanity as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets)."

That these words refer to the secret of Christ, in contrast to the secret administration which is defined in the following words, is clear from the phrase "in brief." The secret administration had been set forth *at length*. Almost all of the preceding chapters was devoted to its details. Hence it was by no means brief. But the two allusions to the secret of Christ (Col.1:10,20-22) were very short, and gave only that side of this secret which was in point. So, likewise, "as it is now revealed" fits the secret of Christ, for the prophets had spoken of His earthly headship. But

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it cannot apply to the secret administration, as that was absolutely unknown. No apostle or prophet could have had any inkling of it.

Such is the sum of our knowledge of this secret before we come to Colossians. It was concerned almost wholly with the future. It was limited largely to His relations to the ecclesia which is His body. He will be Head of all. The holy nation will rule the earth in His name. The ecclesia which is His body will be His administrator in celestial spheres. Thus the whole universe will find their Head in Him.

Colossians reveals the secret of Christ in all its fullness. It is not briefly set forth, in relation to the special faith which is ours in Christ, but fully revealed, in relation to all creation, on earth as well as among the celestials, including the nations, as well as Israel, the celestial hosts as well as the members of His body. He is not only Israel's Messiah, and the Saviour of the nations, but the Head of the entire universe and the Reconciler of all.

In Him dwells the Complement of the Deity. At the beginning all is created through Him and at the Consummation all is reconciled through the blood of His cross. And in the eons of the eons He will be the supreme and only Head of all.

O that God would enlarge the hearts of His holy ones to make room for the Christ of Colossians! Some of our hearts, alas, are so shrunk, that we welcome Him only as our own personal Saviour. Even this overflows its narrow confines. May His spirit expand it, by His grace, to give Him His place as Israel's Redeemer, as the Saviour of all mankind, as the Head of all creation, and the Reconciler of all who are stranged from God! Only such a Christ can satisfy the heart of God. Only such a Christ should satisfy our own hungry hearts.

A. E. Knoch

## INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

Colossians 1:1-2; 4:10-18

PAUL—what a wealth of grace and overwhelming glory fills our hearts at the very mention of his name! He was the erstwhile enemy of Christ and rabid persecutor of His people, who hunted them down even in distant Damascus. In an instant the glory of Christ stops him in his mad career, and wins his heart, henceforth to worship and work for Him alone. Can grace ever gain a more splendid trophy than Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners, yet supreme among the saints? But how much greater was the grace that still awaited him! From glory to glory God led him on, until he reaches the highest honor ever accorded a mortal, for he is the vessel chosen to fill up God's Word and to reveal God's latest secrets, the fruit of His highest thoughts and His deepest love.

Paul presents himself in this epistle as an apostle, for he has been commissioned, and has authority to write and set forth the truths and reveal the secrets which it contains. Apostles are in the foundation (Eph.2:20). These were needed to form a solid substratum for God's operations among mankind. Paul appears alone as apostle in his salutations, especially in those in which his authority is necessary to certify to his words. Yet he sometimes associates others with him, in other capacities. In Colossians, as in second Corinthians, "brother" Timothy joins in the salutation. He is not seen as an apostle, but simply as a brother in the faith.

CHRIST JESUS and Jesus Christ—what a vast difference

between these two titles, though one is merely a transposition of the other! Jesus Christ is the humble, despised, rejected, crucified Messiah. His glories wait until the future, at the time of His return to earth. At present He has no place down here. But Christ Jesus! Already He is highest in the heavens. Seated at the right hand of God, there is no dignity to equal His. All might and power, all sovereignty and authority among the celestials is centered in Him. There He is not humbled, but honored! There He is not despised, but praised! There He is not rejected, but acclaimed! There He is not crucified, but glorified! We hail Him, not only as the coming King upon the earth, but as the present Head of all celestial might and majesty! Hail! Christ Jesus!

#### THROUGH THE WILL OF GOD

The will of God is the positive pole of the divine intention. God is carrying out His great purpose of revealing His heart by means of two contrary currents during the eons. The mutual reaction of these upon each other accomplish His purpose. One current coincides with His will. The other goes counter to it. One movement is headed by Christ. The other is led on by Satan. Saul of Tarsus, before he met the Lord, was fulfilling the divine intention, for he was preparing the black background on which alone the highlights of God's grace could be displayed. But he was going counter to God's will. After his call, Ananias said to him, "the God of our fathers selects you to know His will" (Acts 22:14).

A true apostle must come through the will of God and conform to that will in his words and works. Thus all is traced back to the divine volition. The source of all is found in God's love and its determination to win a response through its activity on our behalf. God wants our love, hence wishes us to know His will. The apostle's first prayer

opens with this petition: That you may be filled with the realization of His will (1:9). This is a root which bears much fruit. Without it our walk will lack those qualities which are dear to God's heart. Wisdom and understanding, as well as a fruitful walk, must grow out of an apprehension of God's will.

#### TO THE BRETHREN IN COLOSSE

The epistle is addressed, in the first place, to Colosse. Yet it was also sent to Laodicea, and, indeed, is especially meant for all who had not seen Paul's face in the flesh (4:16; 2:1). Like its companion epistles, Ephesians and Philipians, the very mode of communication is in accord with its contents. Flesh has no place. Paul is bound (4:18). He could not go to Colosse in order to tell them these transcendent truths by word of mouth, but is compelled to have his words committed to writing, so that they will be seen rather than heard, and not only can be transported vast distances, far beyond the reach of his voice, but may be imperishably preserved for the future. And so they have come to us.

The recipients of this epistle are distinguished by two tokens—holiness and faith. On God's side they were saints, hallowed by contact with Him. On the human side they had believed in Christ. The title here may be Christ Jesus, as in Alexandrinus, to accord with Ephesians. As the apostle has connected his apostleship with this title, this must be the same in shortened form. This epistle was not sent to all saints without discrimination. In those days there were still some of the Circumcision, as we shall see, to whom Paul was not sent, whose faith did not lay hold of Christ as at present, exalted, but who looked forward to His future rule upon the earth. The faith of the Colosians is expressly said to be in Christ Jesus (1:4).

Faithfulness and trust are the accompaniments of belief.

In the original there are no distinct terms for them. By the figure of association the Greek uses *believing* for *faithful* throughout. Thus, in this very epistle, Paul refers to Tychicus as “a beloved brother and *believing* servant” (4:7). Because belief produces fidelity it is used for it in a figure. English itself has this figure, though it is faded. What is *faithful* if not full of faith, or belief? Yet it has come to mean *trust-worthy, dependable*, and the word *believing* is reserved for its literal sense. As we have seen, we must use *faithful* with service, yet when this is not clearly in view it may be better to use *believing*. In connection with *brethren*, *believing* is probably better, inasmuch as this epistle is not especially devoted to service.

#### THE INVOCATION

The invocations in Paul’s three prison epistles are identical. Just as the body of the epistles commence with blessing or thanking, so the first wish of the apostle’s heart for his readers is *grace*. Divine favor lavished upon those who deserve God’s indignation will yet be the most precious gem in the crown of His glory. His creatures will be awed by His infinite might. They will be amazed by the wonders of His works. They will marvel at His wisdom. Their hearts will swell with thankfulness for His kindness. Far more precious will be the praise and worship which His mercy will call forth. Yet the highest adoration and the deepest affection will come to Him from those who realize the depths of their deserts and the corresponding heights to which His grace has exalted them.

We should make more of His grace. Not only should it warm our own hearts at all times, but it should pervade our walk and our service. Oh, how great a transformation would it work in the heralding of the evangel, if it were presented in its purity and power! Grace that Saul encountered on the Damascus road. Grace that Paul received to serve the

saints. Grace that enabled him to suffer for Christ’s sake. Let us not confine it to the past, to our call, when we first believed. This invocation is not for unbelievers, but for us. Our salvation is not only *by* but *to* or *in* grace (Eph.2:5). Not only did it begin with grace, but it continues so, and will finish with the greatest display of all, when our bodies will be transfigured and glorified.

First grace, then peace. First justification, then reconciliation. Were God not gracious, what could there be but indignation and enmity? But now that His favor hovers over us as a benediction, we may have peace with Him, peace in our spirits, peace with our fellow-saints and the world, yea we may enter into the peace of God, and enjoy some measure of the calm with which He is filled, Who knows the end from the beginning, and Whose great aim is to overcome all enmity with love, and clasp His whole creation to His heart in the bonds of perfect and perpetual peace.

These blessings can come from one source alone—from God, Who now looks upon us as His children, and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between us, our Saviour and Lord. We are no longer merely creatures of the great Creator. We have entered the circle of His family and now are children of an affectionate Father. He will be gracious to us and give us peace, through the work of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Indeed, He is our Peace, for He not only reconciles us to God through the blood of His cross, but removes the barriers between the saints, and makes the despised Uncircumcision one with the privileged Circumcision.

#### THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion of Colossians (4:10-18) consists of greetings whose range corresponds to that of the epistle, as well as Paul’s special greetings and directions. The greetings of the group from the Circumcision come first. Christ’s head-

ship over the earth is a part of the secret of Christ, and was first revealed, hence it is in keeping with this epistle to bring in three who are associated with Him in this phase of the kingdom. The transition from the heralding of His earthly kingdom to the present is an interesting yet intricate subject. Perhaps there are a few indications here which may help us to understand the place of the believing Circumcisionists when the nation becomes caloused (Rom.11:25) and the heart of the people is made stout (Acts 28:27).

At first glance there seems to be no particular reason for bringing in the characters here presented. Yet one cannot help being struck with their diversity. First we have Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus, who are definitely said to be of the Circumcision. Then there is Epaphras, fully of the nations. Then there is Luke, who supposedly was closely associated with the Circumcision before the secret of Christ's heavenly headship was made known. May not these be representative of the classes to which they belong? What is said of them is worth the closest attention. And what is *not* said of them, but of the others, is equally striking.

#### THE CIRCUMCISIONISTS

Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus are said to be *ek peritomês* OUT OF-Circumcision. Does this mean that they had come out from the Circumcision, as Paul had, or were *still of* the Circumcision? The English might easily suggest the former. This can best be settled by studying the same expression elsewhere. The following passages will show that it clearly denotes those who are *still of* the Circumcision. This is very striking in view of the injunction of the apostle in this very epistle to strip off the old humanity and to put on the young, wherein there is no circumcision (3:9-11). It seems that we must take these Circumcisionists as such.

#### *ek peritomês*, OUT OF-Circumcision

Acts	10:45	the believers <i>of</i> the <i>Circumcision</i> . . . with Peter
	11: 2	those <i>of</i> the <i>Circumcision</i> doubted [Peter]
Rom.	4:12	not to those <i>of</i> the <i>Circumcision</i> only
Gal.	2:12	fearing those <i>of</i> the <i>Circumcision</i>
Titus.	1:10	especially those <i>of</i> the <i>Circumcision</i>

The Circumcisionists connected with Peter had certainly not come *out* of the Circumcision, but were insistent on the rite, not only for themselves, but for the nations also. Their charge against Peter was, "You enter to men having uncircumcision, and you eat together with them!" (Acts 11:3). So that there is a strong presumption that here, in this universal epistle, we have a group of men representative of the kingdom. And, indeed, does not the apostle actually connect them with the kingdom, using the very terms with which the book of Acts describes this ministry (Acts 28:31)?

The more we consider these three Circumcisionists, who are honored with a place in this epistle, the more we are impressed with the fact that they were not taken at random, but specially chosen to represent the Circumcision as a whole, that is, the believers among them, for whom the epistle to the Hebrews was especially written. The mention of Barnabas suggests the gradual introduction and exemplification of the truth through him and Paul and Timothy and Titus and Onesimus, as has already been set forth in the study "From the Levite to the Slave." May not these men be chosen to set forth the opposite, the declension of the Circumcision, and their state, now that the nation is callous?

#### ARISTARCHUS

Aristarchus, if, indeed, it is the same man, was a Macedonian of Thessalonica (Acts 27:2; 20:4; 19:29). But, as this is mentioned expressly elsewhere, and not brought in here,

we should leave it out of consideration. There could easily be several men of the same name. The point to press is his Greek name and its meaning. He must have belonged to the dispersion. His name signifies "best-chief," a title well suited to the Circumcision among the nations, for, in the kingdom, they will rule among them. But, alas, he is in prison! He is a captive! Politically, he has no authority whatever. Is not this a realistic picture of the kingdom at present, politically?

#### MARK

Mark brings before us quite a different picture. His name is not Greek, but Roman. He is especially related to Barnabas, the Levite. He does not represent the place of the Circumcision *over* the nations, but as *serv*ing the nations. In this they failed utterly. They opposed Peter as well as Paul in every attempt to bring salvation to the aliens. Mark, indeed, was not so bad as that. He left Jerusalem and went with Barnabas and Saul to Antioch, and started with them on their first missionary journey. Yet "John," as Mark is called, left them at Perga, Pamphylia, and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Paul and Barnabas had been chosen by the *spirit* (Acts 13:2), while Mark had been chosen because he was related to Barnabas in the *flesh*. He is representative of the Circumcision in their failure to *serve* the nations.

It would appear that he was not very welcome in Colosse, and would not have been received by them without special directions from the apostle. Surely we can understand this sentiment among the ecclesias which had received the truth of the present secret administration through Paul. Mark would have much to give concerning the life of Christ in the past and His glories in the future, but evidently did not go along with Paul, either literally or figuratively, while they had gone on to maturity. There is a strong inclination,

in such a case, to break off all fellowship, just as there is a tendency to cut all connection between this administration and the past on the part of those who first begin to grasp its glories. But let us remember that, in the secret of Christ, the terrestrial as well as the celestial is needed, and they have Him as their common Head.

Let us then, in spirit, receive Mark, that is accept his ministry, as, indeed, we may by using his account of our Lord's life, if, indeed, the tradition is correct that he wrote it. But let us note, at the same time, that the Circumcision, who should have been the teachers of the nations, were not welcome in the early ecclesias, and almost lost their place of service.

At the present time, it would probably be quite otherwise. Mark would be received with open arms. Was he not an inspired penman? No need to write ahead lest he be not received. Cloudy conceptions of Circumcision truth, with a dash of heaven to flavor it, is the staple diet of most of Christendom.

In Mark we see the Circumcision serving us. Although they belong to a different administration and have another destiny, we cannot get along without their help. Paul's epistles need all the other writings as a background. Do they not give us the details of God's dealings with the earth and Israel? Without these even the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus could not be fully apprehended. This aspect corresponds closely to the figure of the olive tree, in which the wild boughs are partakers of the root and fatness of the tree. As a light producer, Israel continues to function, through the oracles committed to them, although it comes through the nations who temporarily displace them in the olive tree.

#### JESUS, TERMED JUSTUS

The third in the group of the Circumcisionists has a purely Jewish name; indeed, it is the name above every name,

the personal name of their Messiah. Probably “Jesus” was deemed too sacred to be commonly used, so he was given another, and called Justus. The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, Yahweh the Saviour. This is the name by which Israel will be saved, for Yahweh alone can save them. But, alas! even believers in Israel did not trust wholly in Him, but in the law and their physical rights as members of the chosen nation. And what better name for this than the Latin Justus, from *jus*, law, right, justice? Therefore salvation was taken from the nation and is heralded to the nations (Acts 28:28). They must learn God’s righteousness now, before they experience His salvation.

These only of Paul’s fellow workers for the kingdom of God became a solace to Paul. Many others of Paul’s fellow workers were far more than a comfort to him, so we must restrict this to the Circumcision and the kingdom. No doubt there were many of the Circumcision who had heralded the kingdom, but nearly all seemed to oppose Paul and his ministry, and were a menace to the ecclesias among the nations, with their insistence on law-keeping and religious rites. How much there may lie behind that word “solace!” The Jews had done much to distort the evangel of Christ, and caused Paul much misery. But these three seem to have been of a different spirit, so that he could cooperate with them in those things which they had in common.

I take this as a little foretaste of the time to come, when the terrestrial and celestial will be in fullest harmony under their mutual Head. For the present, however, I take it that this delightful miniature portrays to us the fortunes of the Circumcision in the present administration. Politically they are captives, not rulers. The kingdom cannot be heralded. In service their testimony is to be received. But they have lost their salvation. And is not this the exact counterpart of what we have at the close of Acts?

There seems to be a general impression that any gospel may be preached at any time. Not so! Even the present evangel of God’s grace would work havoc if heralded among the nations in the thousand years. Nor can the evangel of the kingdom be heralded today. First of all it must go to the people of the covenant first, apart from whom there can be no kingdom. And the last words to this people put them into a condition where they can neither hear nor see, lest God be healing them. God has given them a spirit of stupor. For nearly two thousand years they have been this way, and they are even more callous than they were. Herald the kingdom to them, and there would be no response. No one has any commission to herald it until this ban is removed.

Of course the church talks about “the kingdom” and appropriates quite a little of its setting in order to produce the grotesque caricatures which parade as churches in the world today. But few, if any, really herald the political side of the kingdom, and seek to open the eyes of the sons of Israel, so that they may accept its message, and so that the nations also may rejoice with His people. This would be the real kingdom evangel. Repentance and baptism are preached for the remission of sins, but how many consider this a passport into the millennium? Tatters are taken from the gospel of the kingdom and patched on to a self-made story, of many kinds and differing qualities, but nearly all land their devotees in heaven, not on earth. The gospel of the kingdom is not heralded today and no one believes it, hence, no one is won for the kingdom in this era of God’s grace.

But this does not cut us off from *everything* connected with the kingdom. Politically—and in this lies the essence of a kingdom—it is futile and false to herald the kingdom evangel. The Circumcision cannot hear, and there can be no blessing except as they are the channel of it. Now there

can be blessing apart from them, yet not in their kingdom. But, in other spheres, we have much in common. The One Who will be Head in the kingdom is already the Head in the empyrean. He Who will save Israel is already our Saviour.

A genuine kingdom evangel to the nations would insist on our subjection to the holy nation. It would promise no blessing except through and with them. So few have such an evangel that we may be sure that the kingdom evangel is as little preached today as the true one for this era. And if the destiny of the saints were dependent on the gospel they hear, almost all of them would need to be divided into several parts to match the fragments of evangels they have patched together. Since even the Ephesians needed Paul's prayer that they might perceive the prospect of their calling, so it is quite possible to have a calling and yet be in ignorance concerning its riches.

The evangel of the kingdom is not the fact that Christ will take over the rule of the earth with Israel as the leading nation, but that this is *near*. John the Baptist did not repeat what is written in the prophets, but prefixed his heralding with the *time* of its appearance. As it is in the Greek this has the emphasis: "*Near* has come the kingdom of the heavens!" (Matt.3:2). Our Lord repeated this with the same stress on the word *near* (Matt.4:17). The apostles had the same message at the beginning of Acts. "Repent, then, and turn about for the erasure of your sins, so that the seasons of refreshing should be coming . . ." (Acts 3:19). This nearness recedes throughout the book, until, at the end, it is gone. Meanwhile Paul reveals a new secret, that it is *not* near, but must wait until the complement of the nations may enter (Rom.11:25).

#### EPAPHRAS

Epaphras is in striking contrast to the Circumcision. He was a Colossian, hence of the Uncircumcision, and is called

a *slave* of Christ Jesus. Though without any physical advantages, how high is his spiritual stature! He is called a faithful dispenser of Christ (1:7). Through him it was that the Colossians had heard the evangel, and now that he cannot serve them by his presence, he agonizes in prayer during his absence. Note the subject matter of his petitions. This shows how fully he was in line with God's thoughts and desires at the time. He wished them to stand *mature* and *fully assured* in *all* the will of God (4:12). It is for this that the gifts are given (Eph.4:11-14). Evangelists, pastors, and teachers should lead the saints from minority to maturity. Paul himself had prayed that they be filled with a realization of God's will (1:9).

Epaphras is a model for those whose hearts have been turned to the service of the saints. He did not *say* his prayers. How much of our praying is mere talk! Possibly he could not even put his petitions into words. To him it was a struggle, a contending. And he was in misery concerning those on whom his heart was set. It seems strange, at first, that he should be miserable. But those who have been in a similar position will not fail to understand and sympathize with him, especially in these days of declension and apostasy. It is heartbreaking to hear that those who once reveled in God's grace have been led aside and give place to human merit. It is bitter to hear of pride, dissension, division, where once the peace of God presided. Perhaps Epaphras had no such experiences, yet even in those days it meant much misery to bear a company of saints upon one's heart.

#### LUKE AND DEMAS

We are so accustomed to the idea that Luke is the writer of the account which bears his name, as well as the Acts, that we are tempted to connect these with him at all times. But it is a fact that the Scriptures themselves do not men-

tion his name in that connection. Hence we will not bring this in here. He was the most constant of all Paul's friends, for he remained when all others had left (2 Tim.4:11). No doubt, as a physician, he was helpful to Paul and others, for he seems to have been beloved as such. This is in contrast to the Circumcision evangel, and shows that it is no longer in force. It includes miraculous healing for the body, so that there was no place for a physician.

Demas is in direct contrast to Luke, for he abandoned Paul out of love for the current eon (2 Tim.4:11). Perhaps his name means *popular*, as *dêmos* is *populace*. May he not represent that vast company of believers who are so concerned not to go contrary to the good opinion of this eon that they cannot remain with Paul's teaching, if, indeed, they have ever known it? All Asia seems to have turned away from him during his imprisonment. Conformity to the times will surely separate from Paul. The whole history of Christendom shows that this became chronic, and only occasionally has there been a return to some of his teaching. And when a little is recovered it is soon abandoned once again. Let us all take this to heart. The danger of abandoning Paul is always present, and is usually popular, and we should guard against it.

#### LAODICEA

Because of the character of the message sent to the ecclesia in Laodicea (Rev.3:14) in the day of the Lord, the name has become a synonym for apostasy. But this should not be applied to the ecclesia of Paul's day. Nothing is said to indicate a low spiritual condition at that time. It seems to be brought in here in order to show the general character of this epistle. It could be read to them as well as to the Colossians.

Of the Laodicean letter from Paul we have no hint elsewhere in the Scriptures, so that some have supposed that

it was lost. But there are good grounds for the opinion that the epistle to the Ephesians is in view, for that, according to the best readings, has no definite address, and must have been put before *all* the saints in Christ Jesus, either by sending a copy direct, as to Laodicea, or by loaning, as in Colosse. As we have already seen, the epistles are complementary, and both are needed in order to bring the saints to maturity.

#### ARCHIPPUS

Paul calls Archippus a fellow soldier when writing to Philemon (2). But here he appears in the character of servant. He seems to have undertaken some special service, but was lax in carrying it out. Hence the gentle admonition of the apostle, which many of us may well take to ourselves. Has the Lord laid any special task on our heart? Sometimes it comes with irresistible force. There is an unshakable conviction that a certain work must be done and we must do it. It may be accompanied with a painful and humiliating consciousness of our own unfitness and inadequacy, and a foreboding of suffering and scorn, but it is evidently of the Lord, and such things characterize His service. But they dishearten and discourage. There is a continual temptation to leave the task undone, and escape the consequences. Nothing that we do is as well done as we would wish, so the only relief seems to be to drop it all. Perhaps it was so with Archippus. May the Lord give each one of us grace to fulfill the service which He has assigned to us!

#### THE SELF-WRITTEN SALUTATION

To this day much of the writing in the orient is done by professional scribes. While waiting in the post office of Smyrna, not so very far from Colosse, I saw a scribe write a letter for a woman, which she dictated. There is no doubt that Paul could write, for he makes a point of doing so at

the close of some of his epistles, in order to certify to their genuineness (2 Thess.3:17,18), for it seems that some had produced forgeries. Possibly he penned the whole of Galatians (Gal.6:11). It has been suggested that an eye infirmity made it difficult for him to write small enough. Be that as it may, Colossians has Paul's sign manual to show that it is genuine.

But he does not close with his signature. His heart is too full to refrain from a few more outbursts. And so he unburdens himself by adding "Remember my bonds! Grace be with you!" Great was his desire for sympathy in his sufferings, and that these should be understood in their relation to the truth. Paul's bonds are not merely an incident in his personal career. They became the standing symbol of God's relation to the world and of the place of the flesh in God's present work of grace, in contrast to the kingdom that is to come. Spiritual blessings among the celestials are ours, coupled with *no* special physical blessings among the terrestrials. And, as we thankfully accept Paul's wish that grace be with us, let us remember that it was with him in a superlative degree even in his imprisonment. Grace now, but glory in the future!

A. E. Knoch

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GERTRUDE VENLET

My cousin Gertrude was to me much as I assume his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice were to young Timothy in acquainting him with the sacred scriptures (2 Tim.1:5; 3:15). Yet in accord with this era of the completed word (Col.1:25), the emphasis was always on the epistles of Paul. She, in turn, learned much from good teachers including her father, Howard Hough and husband, D. W. Venlet, and especially from the writings of A. E. Knoch. She passed along much spiritual grace through mailings, most significantly the small periodical entitled, *Faith Fellowship*. She died January 13, 2020 at age 95, in expectation of the "glorious appearing" of her Saviour "through the gloom," as she often expressed it in song.

D.H.H.

## MUTUAL REPORTS

Colossians 1:3-8-4:7-9

NO PHYSICAL contact united Paul with the Colossians. They had never seen him, nor he them. Nevertheless, there was a deep mutual concern, so that each was informed of the other through intermediaries. Paul learned about the Colossians through Epaphras, who had them on his heart (1:7). The Colossians were informed of Paul's affairs through Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9), who were with Paul in Rome. This is in delightful harmony with the truth of this era, in which the physical has no place, yet there should be mutual concern and loving consideration.

Ephesians ascribes blessedness to God for His blessings. Philippians opens with thanksgiving for their contribution to the evangel. Colossians begins with thankfulness to God for their faith and love. In the first the blessedness lies in God alone, and depends only upon His own gracious operations, apart from their effect in the recipients, for, at the time, these wonderful revelations were unknown, so could not have borne fruit. Philippians goes back to their service under a former administration. So also in Colossians. That which they had heard *before* had produced faith in Christ Jesus and love toward all others who were hallowed by the same belief.

Thanksgiving and prayer go together (Phil.4:6). Especially at this juncture in the apostle's ministry we can understand how great would be his desire that these unknown believers, whose faith had been exemplified by their love to their fellow saints, should share "the expectation which

is reserved” for them “in the heavens” (Col.1:5), of which they had indeed heard, yet which was just then being fully revealed. Does not the same spirit of prayer well up within us when we hear of a company of believers? Do we not wish that we could share with them these glorious gratuities of grace? Do not our hearts yearn to bring them these blessings? No words may form on our lips, but, in spirit, we pray as Paul prayed for the Colossians.

*Now* are remaining, faith, expectation, love (1 Cor.13:13). These three graces greet us at the very threshold of Colossians (1:4,5): faith in Christ Jesus, love for all the saints, a heavenly expectation. Though one of the supreme triad of epistles, there are no wonder-working gifts, no “tongues,” no healing for the body. These are left behind in the era of minority. From the very first we are in the atmosphere of maturity. The three abiding graces form the only fit entrance into the present administration. Where they are found there are open hearts ready for the highest and best that God has to bestow.

Their faith was fixed on Christ Jesus, our ascended and glorified Lord, in His celestial exaltation. The importance of this can be realized only in the light of the subsequent revelation of their celestial destiny. The heralding of “Jesus Christ,” the rejected and returning Messiah, has glories all its own, but it is not a fit basis for a celestial allotment. Moreover our faith is of a more exalted, a more blessed kind. The Circumcision have a vast amount of tangible evidence to build upon. The powers and signs wrought by Christ and His apostles produced a faith which too often did not stand the test. How do we know that our allotment is in heaven? We have no evidence at all outside the bare Word of God. To such faith alone comes God’s highest revelation.

The love of the Colossians was true to its noble nature in that it included *all* of the saints. It was not called forth

by their good qualities or worthiness, but rested solely on a mutual relationship to God. We may well be fond of those of the saints whom we know and whose virtues call forth our appreciation. But it is our privilege to imitate God in that deeper and finer affection which flows out to those also who do not deserve to be loved in themselves, who, indeed, sometimes repel rather than attract. God finds the springs of love in His own heart, so that it flows forth to all His saints, in Christ. If He lavishes His love upon them, why should not we follow His example?

Paul prays for the Colossians because of the expectation which is reserved for them in the heavens. In a similar strain he had prayed in Ephesians for a spirit of wisdom and revelation that they might perceive the expectation of His calling (Eph.1:17,18). Like Ephesians, also, the scene of blessing is not left on earth but is immediately transferred to heaven (Eph.1:3). Philippians puts us in a heavenly realm (Phil.3:20). So these three ranking epistles unite in raising us above the terrestrial to our place supreme among the celestials. They are alone in this, although hints were not lacking in Paul’s previous epistles.

As a notable example of the many vital contrasts between Colossians and Ephesians, note the way in which their common expectation is put before us. In Colossians the matter is very simply presented: “the expectation . . . which you hear before” (YE-BEFORE-HEAR, *proêkousate*). In Ephesians, however, it is not *hearing before*, but *expecting*. Were this all, then we would have simply “you expect before” (YE-BEFORE-EXPECT). Instead it is the plural form of HAVING-BEFORE-EXPECTED, not a *verb*, but a *participle*, not a *fact*, but a *state*.

Years of investigation and experience has confirmed us in our classification of the Greek verb into three grand functions: *act*, *fact*, and *state* (it is writing, it writes, it has been, or is written). The lack of these distinctions

in current grammars is unscientific, and leads to confusion, which obscures vital differences in the text. Much clarity is attained and many differences vanish if we note whether a verb speaks of an action under way at a given time or a fact apart from time. So, also, it is a vast advantage to distinguish between these two and a verb which brings before us the *state* resulting from an action, and the *act* or mere *fact*. *It is written* is not the same as *it is writing* or *it writes*. So important do we deem these distinctions that they will be specially indicated throughout in the Keyword edition when the form is not standard. A vertical line will indicate an *'act*, a horizontal a *fact*, and a tiny circle the *state*.

The *state* resulting from an action, called the *complete* or *perfect*, indicated by HAVE in the sublinear of the CONCORDANT VERSION, has been made the subject of special investigations. While the STANDARD with HAVE seems to be the best for the sublinear, idiomatic English seems best served, as a rule, by forms like *it is written*, rather than *it has been written*. That is, the verb *is* or *are*, with an *adjective* describing the *state* is the clearest and most concise idiomatic equivalent for the so-called Greek "perfect." The Authorized Version has often used it most happily in the formula "it is written," and we have adopted this throughout (Matt.2:5). It often helps us in determining the best rendering if we turn it into this idiomatic form.

THE *ones-HAVING-BEFORE-EXPECTED* of Ephesians (1:12) may be resolved into *who are preexpectant*. The early editions of the CONCORDANT VERSION had *who are in a state of prior expectancy*, which amounts to the same thing. Though somewhat more explicit, it adds too many words which really belong in a grammar rather than in a version. So we are thinking of coining *preexpectant*. As the Greek is not a verb, the BEFORE does not tell us *when* the expecting occurs. Being a verbal *adjective*, it tells us

what *kind* of expecting it is. The thought in the mind of the writer of Ephesians is most uncommon, hence it has found expression in a word and form very seldom found. The *time* is *present*, a state in which those who received the epistle were when they received it. A past action is only implied and is not in point.

This is practically settled for us when we see that this state is *in Christ*. It refers to the future coming of *Christ* before He is expected by Israel as inducing a present state. We are now preexpectant, since we wait for Christ to come *before* His advent to Israel.

Ephesians is concerned with all the saints who had received Paul's special ministry, and he coins this term in order to describe them, for it most accurately summarizes what he had taught the Thessalonians (1 Thess.4:15) and Corinthians (1 Cor.15). It is to these that he submits his latest revelations.

#### THE WORD OF TRUTH OF THE EVANGEL

The so-called "genitive" case in Greek is one of the trials of the translator and interpreter, especially when it is doubled, as in "the word of truth of the evangel." As the English possessive covers part of the ground it is often possible to use it, especially when the article is lacking. For example, we may say "the word of God" or "God's Word" without any appreciable difference in sense. In fact it usually amounts to little more than an emphatic adjective, as in the eleventh verse of this chapter, "the might of His glory," which denotes that might which is associated with His glory, so, at the same time, is His glorious might.

Some phrases do not create any serious difficulty in English, as, for instance, "the word of truth," because we have become accustomed to them. Yet it is a question whether many really grasp their significance. What is "the word of truth?" If we change to the possessive, "truth's

word” it may be somewhat clearer. If we use an adjective, “the true word” the sense is much more definite, yet it insists that the word *is* true, while “the word of truth” refers to the word *as* truth.

Perhaps this can be seen better in the phrase “the truth of the evangel.” This means the same as “the evangel’s truth.” Here we have not that part of the evangel which is true (while other parts may be false), but the evangel *as* truth. Hence it must be the true evangel. A special case which has received much consideration is the phrase “the administration of the secret” (Eph.3:9). Even if we substitute the possessive, and read “secret’s administration” the English still persists in suggesting the *action* of administering the secret, while the Greek refers to the administration (not *of*) but pertaining to or characterized by the secret. We have sought to avoid this by rendering “secret administration,” but it may be wiser to translate as usual, and leave the explanation to the interpretation.

It is when there are *two* genitives that the question arises, how to make them intelligible to the English reader. The connective “of” is far too vague to give any definite idea of the relationship of the words to each other. If we could say “the word *dealing with* the truth *pertaining to* the evangel,” this might help, yet it would involve much interpretation on the part of the translator. “The true expression of the evangel” seems to be the nearest clear cut idiomatic rendering we can find, yet it may be wiser to follow the Greek idiom and leave the explanation to the interpreters.

In Ephesians we read that the saints of the Uncircumcision, on hearing “the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation” were sealed with the holy spirit (Eph.1:13). Colossians is corrective, so there is a special emphasis on the *truth*, in contrast to what is false. Not only did they hear “the word of *truth* of the evangel,” but through it they realized the grace of God in *truth* (1:7). As we will see when

we come to the doctrinal portion of the epistle, philosophy and tradition threatened to rob them of the truth. But they had heard the true evangel and received the true grace of God from Epaphras. They had commenced well.

As a dear old brother expressed it many years ago, most of the Lord’s saints are born in a fog. They listen to a “gospel,” consisting of some truth mixed with much error. The mere fact that God graciously saved them under it, gives this gospel a strong hold on them, and sanctifies its false elements along with the true. From the very beginning they are under a handicap, so that any great degree of truth is unattainable. How thankful should we be if, in our case, God has called us through an evangel which approximates the word of truth! How grateful should all those be who were brought to the knowledge of God where grace was dispensed in truth!

None of us may have listened to an Epaphras, or anyone who could compare with him as a faithful dispenser of Christ. That was a vital and a vigorous evangel! In the entire world it was growing and bearing fruit, not only in Colosse. In Christendom today it has degenerated into a religion or a philosophy, so that its vitality is largely gone, and its grace has vanished. But in those days it came to the nations with a freshness and pristine power which has seldom, if ever, been equaled since. Alas, how few of the most advanced saints have “realized the grace of God in truth!”

As Epaphras is related to Paul in service, he calls him his beloved *fellow slave*. In reference to the Colossians he is not their slave, but their *servant*, and so a *dispenser* of Christ to them. Perhaps his special characteristic lies in the fact that he was not satisfied to merely bring Christ to men for salvation, but he struggled in prayer that they might stand *mature* and *fully assured* in all the will of God (4:12). He it is who reports to Paul, and who makes evident to him their love in spirit. Doubtless this epistle is based

on his report, and is also an answer to Epaphras' prayers for the Colossians.

#### TYCHICUS REPORTS TO THE COLOSSIANS

In the complementary part of the epistle (4:7-9), a report goes from Paul to the Colossians, borne by two who are with him. Not much is said of these concerns in this epistle, as they belong in the sphere of service, and so are found in Philippians. However necessary it may have been for Paul to know about the Colossians, it was far more needful that they should know and understand the significance of the events which have befallen him as the prisoner of the Lord. Can we imagine with what tension the ecclesias established by Paul or on his teaching would watch the course of events which threatened to put an end to his career and, perhaps, utterly wipe out his testimony in the earth?

To the human eye the course of the apostle seemed to indicate the end of his career. It would leave the believers among the nations in a position of great perplexity. The contrary was the result. Paul's imprisonment led to the spread of the evangel, both by himself among the guard, and by others who were emboldened by his example. The status of the believers among the nations was fully cleared up by the revelation of the two secrets—that of Christ in Colossians, and of the new administration in Ephesians. The apostle explains much of this himself to the Philippians. He leaves it to others to do this to the Colossians and those who received the Ephesian epistle (Eph.6:21,22).

Tychicus, the fortunate, seems to have been the principal agent of the apostle in this matter. If Ephesians was a circular letter, he may have gone among the ecclesias in order to assure the saints that God was using the apparent evil in order to promote the evangel, and, at the same time was using the occasion in order to divulge His latest

and highest revelation, the supernal destiny of the nations, together with the lavish grace which characterizes the new administration which follows on the setting aside of Israel until the complement of the nations has come in.

In Ephesians Tychicus seems to be commissioned for the one purpose of making known *Paul's* concerns to others (6:21,22), but in Colossians he not only makes known all of Paul's affairs, but also that they may know what concerns *them* (4:8). The word *you* (the things which concern *you*) is found in Vaticanus and in Sinaiticus. Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus corrected read *us*, but Sinaiticus was changed back again by the latest editor. The tendency, we submit, would be to make Colossians and Ephesians the same, hence *us* is not as probable as *you*. In fact, until we take into account the contents of the two epistles the reading we have used seems out of line with the context.

In Ephesians we have a full account of "the things which concern *you*" (the saints), hence Tychicus had no need to make these known to those who received that epistle. But Colossians does not contain the things that concern them so much as the things that concern Christ. The Colossians, as well as all saints of this secret administration, need to know what concerns *them*, especially what had been made known just at this juncture. This revelation was soon lost, and is almost unknown today. Hence it seems trite, if not foolish, for Tychicus to inform the Colossians of their own affairs. Only as we realize the great change which had taken place in their status, can we see how vital it was for him to tell them of these things, as well as to explain the career of Paul.

What a consolation it must have been to the Colossians to get the report of Tychicus! From dark forebodings their hearts are filled with joy unutterable and full of glory. Behind the dismal clouds of distressing circumstance God's brightest sun is shining with beams of almost unbearable

brilliance. Paul's imprisonment, though the end of earth's physical expectations for a time, is but the beginning of a celestial, spiritual administration which will far excel all that God has previously revealed. And *they*, they are chosen to fill the highest place in God's purpose of love.

With Tychicus goes Onesimus, a typical specimen of the grace now being disclosed to the nations. Just as he was an unprofitable, runaway slave who was returned to his master by Paul during his imprisonment, so the nations are fleeing far from God, yet are being brought back to Him through Paul's gracious evangel. We would recommend the reading of Paul's letter to Philemon in this connection. How clearly does grace shine in every line! From the lowest in the social scale on earth, Onesimus is graced with the highest honors in the heavens. He shares with Tychicus the privilege of conveying to Colosse, his own home, the report which will bring so much joy and blessing.

Would that the saints today were more concerned about Paul and his imprisonment, with all that is involved! So important does he deem it that he cannot close the epistle until he has written with his own hand, *Remember my bonds!* Yet let us not only recall his chains but the whole crisis through which he passed, for it was all symptomatic and expressive of the grandest truths and greatest revelations ever made to mortal man. Let us take the report as sent to ourselves, and let us seek to enter into their joy, and return thanks to our God for the grandeur of His grace.

A. E. Knoch

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*Who is This Who Came from Glory?*

He is God's Anointed One!  
He is His Beloved Son!  
His Effulgence, Pledge of love —  
Laud His Name, all names above!