

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 112th Year
(1909–2021)

Contents:

- 2 Framework of “Ephesians”
- 3 Editorial
- 5 Paul to the [Ephesians]
- 15 The Address on the Envelope
- 33 Our Saviour, God
- 42 In Grace and Out

FIRST QUARTER, 2021

Volume 112

Number 1

Concordant Version of the Old Testament

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

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

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

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Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS
WORD

VOLUME 112

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

CONCORDANT PUBLISHING CONCERN
P. O. Box 449
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A Chart of Ephesians

FRAMEWORK OF “EPHESIANS”

Reversion

DOCTRINE	Paul’s commission 1¹ Salutation 1² The allotment—in heaven—blessing 1³⁻¹⁴ Paul’s prayer for them 1¹⁵⁻¹⁹ The body—in Christ 1²⁰⁻²¹⁰ The members Participation—believers 2¹¹⁻²² The new humanity
JOINT ENJOYERS	 Summary of grace now shown to the nations 3¹⁻¹³ Petitioning the Father 3¹⁴⁻²¹ Beseeching the saints 4¹⁻⁶
JOINT MEMBERS	 Summary of grace which had been shown to the saints 4⁷⁻¹⁶
JOINT PARTAKERS	 No participation—unbelievers 4¹⁷⁻⁵²⁰ The new humanity
SUMMARY	 The body—in the Lord 5²¹⁻⁶⁹ The Head
DEPORTMENT	 The allotment—in heaven—warfare 6¹⁰⁻¹⁷ Their prayer for Paul 6¹⁸⁻²⁰
	Tychicus’ commission 6²¹⁻²² Salutation 6²³⁻²⁴

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

EDITORIAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

D.H.H.

PAUL TO THE [EPHESIANS]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And this is not out of =you;

It is God's 'approach present,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Rouse! 'drowsy one,

And rise ^ofrom among the dead ones,

And 'Christ shall 'dawn upon you!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

agents of the Adversary, ¹² *t*for it *l*is not ours to *w*restle *td*with blood and flesh, but *td*with the sovereignties, *td*with the authorities, *td*with the world-mights of this *w*darkness, *td*with the spiritual forces of *w*ickedness among the celestials. ¹³ Therefore take up the panoply of *G*od that *y*ou may be enabled to withstand in the wicked *d*ay, and *h*aving effected^o all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand then, girded^o about *y*our *l*oins *i*with truth,

+ With the cuirass of *r*ighteousness put^o on,

¹⁵ And your *f*eet *s*andaled^o *i*with the readiness of the evangel of *p*ea**ce**;

¹⁶ *i*With all *t*aking up the large shield of *f*ai**th**,
*i*By which *y*ou will be *l*able^o to extinguish all the *f*ier**y** *a*rrows of the wicked one.

¹⁷ And receive^o the helmet of *s*alvati**o**n
And the sword of the spirit,
which *l*is a declaration of God.

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

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

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

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

THE ADDRESS ON THE ENVELOPE

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

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

EPHESIANS 1:1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. E. Knoch

OUR SAVIOUR, GOD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TWO FUNDAMENTAL ERRORS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FAITH AND THE EVANGEL FOR TODAY

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

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

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

THUS YOU BELIEVE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHRIST PAID ALL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THOSE WHO ARE CHOSEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IN GRACE AND OUT

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

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

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

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

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

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

(IN) TO-GRACE *chariti*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GRACE INVOLVES JOY

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

FALLING OUT OF GRACE

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

GRACE THE TOUCHSTONE

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

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

A. E. Knoch