

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS
WORD

VOLUME 105

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A Prayer

God of my destiny, I bow to Thee;
Fashion me day by day:
Thine are the tools, and the artistry;
I, the lump of clay.

Make me a vessel well pleasing to Thee,
Fill it with love divine:
Only Thine alchemy I now can see:
Make of this water wine!

And with a gift so rare, I am content,
Where e'er Thou leadest me:
Filled at the fountain and then freely spent;
Let me return to Thee!

Shape me, O Master, to Thy sovereign will,
Sharp though the scalpel be.
Stamp me with Thy holy impress until
My all I find in Thee!

E.B.R.

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EDITORIAL

THE first three articles in this issue are by Sigrid M. Knoch (1876–1967). Their content is original, in consideration of her own heartfelt questions and concerns. Yet they were prepared with the support of her husband A. E. Knoch, the co-founder of the Concordant Publishing Concern.

In *“Heaven and Hell, What Did Christ Teach About Them?”* the author declares, “Judgment is necessary in order to prepare the road for grace. Let us not confuse God’s goal with the various steps leading to it. Gradually, He reveals His grace, drawing the circles wider and wider, one illumination following the other unto perfect day” (p.20).

“The Object of Creation” begins with the question, “For what purpose is man in the world?” and then replies, “This question is asked by all thinking men, but who is able to answer it? The solution is found in the Scriptures alone, and even there it is not on the surface” (p.21).

In *“Torturing Doubts, and Exultant Faith”* Sister Knoch earnestly asks, “If there is an eternal hell, no other but God Himself can have called it into existence, for no one else would have the power to do so.” She then states, “If anything in God’s creation can happen apart from His plan, where is there any security in this life or in that to come? Must we not give up our trust and faith in an Almighty God, or assume that sin and hell are a part of His plan?” (p.35).

After consideration of various such issues which had prompted her former “torturing doubts,” she then, with rejoicing, turns to affirm her latter “exultant faith,” stating: “After long years of torturing doubts, God had mercy on me and turned my darkness into light, my despair into

joy and my misery into exultation. He brought me into touch with His revelation, just as He had written it, apart from most of the mistranslations of well-meaning men, who were bound by creeds and tradition" (p.40).

In the devotional article, "*In the Hand of the Potter*," William Mealand writes assuringly, "The prophet sees a vessel marred in the hand of the potter. Yet, as he gazes, it is made again, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make. Now, in this pictured incident, we see that all throughout the vessel is in the hand of the potter. He is the determining and deciding factor.

"So is God, as witness His word to Jeremiah. 'O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel'" (p.42).

"As in creation [God] is our Potter, so in redemption. He makes and He remakes. And even as He took pleasure in His ancient people, a pleasure He will show yet again, so in those of a later day, whom He designates beforehand, He calls and justifies, and glorifies" (p.44).

The concluding article of this issue, by Dean Hough, is strikingly titled, "*The Body and Ears of our Lord*." The exposition begins thus: "The human body which was adapted for our Lord (*cf* Heb.10:5) was a body of humiliation, like our own. References in Scripture to His physical body are almost always in association with His sufferings and death. For it was in fashion as a human that He humbled Himself to the death of the cross (Phil.2:7,8). Yet now He has a body of glory, and it is in conformity to it that our body of humiliation will be transfigured (Phil.3:21)" (p.45) In the end there must be a Saviour, the Anti-type of Psalm 40, Who would be given a body of humiliation and ears fully submissive to God's will and delight, even His desire (*cf* Isa.53:10)" (p.48).

J.R.C.

HEAVEN AND HELL

What did Christ teach about them?

THERE WAS A TIME when I thought I knew this well. But this knowledge, which seemed so clear, so blessed, so wonderful when it first dawned upon me, changed more and more into an unsolvable problem, yea, even a hideous nightmare, because of the way the matter was presented to me in all the churches and meetings I attended.

It was a problem indeed. I knew that Paul had written in Colossians 1:20: "By Him to reconcile all things to Himself," and in 1 Corinthians 15:28: "That God may be All in all." Also in Romans 11:36: "Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things." But then, had not the Lord Himself said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"? And was not what He had spoken the final truth about these things?

At that time I thought I knew also what it was to be born again. But I, as well as my friends and co-workers began to be burdened by the awful realization of the fact that almost the entire human race was not born again, and therefore lost. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." We had Him, of that we were certain. And that certainty gave us cause for rejoicing and thanksgiving. But did not the verse go on: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him"? Did this wrath not abide on nearly all those we knew and loved? The thought nearly drove us to despair.

We made the most violent efforts to press all those around us into the "kingdom of God," to "pull them out

of the fire." And, had we had great success, we might have been somewhat relieved. But the worst of it was that nearly all was in vain, when we had thought that God would surely bless our frantic efforts and give us souls in great numbers. The soil was so hard, the harvest so small, the power of the enemy so great, how were we to understand it? Why did God apparently do nothing to break this terrific power? How could He look on at all these "souls dying in sin"? Were they not damned for eternity? Did not His own Word confirm this?

But what did it mean, when you really thought it through? Is it not that God had called billions into existence, knowing that their end would be everlasting fire? Did He not know all beforehand? And had He not, then, been creating men for this purpose for thousands of years? And had not billions lived without even a possibility of being born again? The Bible became a terrific riddle. Even the Lord Himself seemed to have said contradictory things. Did He not say of infants that theirs was the kingdom of heaven? Were these babes in any way "born again"? Why, they had not even been baptized! And could anyone already be "born again" at that time? The Lord had not yet died. If the kingdom of heaven could be had before there was a cross of Calvary, why was it necessary for Christ to go to the cross?

And then Jesus told the people the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The one went to hell, because he had received his good things in his lifetime. The other went to heaven, because he had received evil. Was that a new birth?

The matter is so serious, so important, the shadow which a false explanation throws on God's character so black, the consequences so awful (because men are driven away from such a God), that it is imperative to penetrate to the bottom of the question. So let us make earnest enquiries whether the usual interpretation of these and other passages of

Scripture is right. For these passages are the ones generally quoted as being the final answer to such questions.

After long years of searching and studying the entire Scriptures, God gave me the wonderful, liberating and satisfying solution—that all the passages quoted are clear and comprehensible, if applied solely to Israel in connection with the kingdom, promised alone to that nation, but that they raise endless and unsolvable problems as soon as we apply them to all men and eternal issues.

THE DIVINE REVELATION BEFORE CHRIST'S APPEARANCE

The so-called "Old Testament" promises in an unmistakable manner the future kingdom of God on this earth. Its king is the Messiah, through whose rule "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab.2:14).

The proclamation of John the Baptist and of Jesus Himself was concerning this kingdom.

To enter this kingdom, Israel must be "born again." Only in this connection could Nicodemus, as a master in Israel, know of it, and could Jesus speak about it at that time. What is usually called a "new birth" today is impossible apart from Christ's death. Yet at that time this death was a thing nobody was able to clearly grasp.

Jesus Himself was very definite about the fact that He was sent to Israel only. He even forbade His seventy disciples to go to others than their own people. Paul says of Him, that He had been a "servant of the Circumcision." Not before Calvary was this revoked. Only after Israel's rejection were God's plans concerning all mankind made known.

Who would think of forcing Christians today to be circumcised? To introduce the Mosaic sacrifices and rituals into our modern churches? We recognize what belongs exclusively to the old covenant people. Yet we fail to draw

the boundary line at the point when Israel was rejected and Paul commissioned to minister to the nations. We deliberately appropriate to ourselves what Jesus Himself carefully restricted to Israel alone.

How could He forbid His disciples to go even to Samaritans, if He had already preached the "conditions for eternal salvation?" And what could these conditions have been at that time, as His death could not yet be proclaimed? Is it right to seek for light on these fundamental questions in such parts of Scripture in which only a shadow is glimpsed of His death, and He is misunderstood by His nearest and dearest; in parts that, on this point, do not differ from the revelations concerning the suffering Messiah in the sacrifices, the psalms and the prophets?

Recently I read in an evangelical tract: "There is an eternal hell, as sure as the Son of God, coming out of eternity, proclaimed it." One thing at least seems clear to the writer of this statement. That is, that the eternal God, who dealt with human sin thousands of years before Christ's advent, had not proclaimed it. He seems also to know, that the word translated "hell" in the "Old Testament" meant only the state to which all dead, even the righteous ones, returned. If not, he would surely have quoted the texts in which Yahweh had already threatened the first human sinners with the consequences of their offenses. Apparently he was unable to discover such texts.

But if "eternal hell" was such a well known place to God's Son, coming out of eternity, it must at least have been in existence as long as sin had existed! What else could have induced God to make such an institution? Why then did He keep it secret from sinners until Christ's coming?

Only one explanation could be offered, and that is that before Christ's coming nobody was ever sent to "hell," because nobody even had a possibility of getting saved.

That is all very well. But could anybody be saved before

Christ died, saved and redeemed in the sense in which we understand it? And did not Christ speak of these things when He was still living?

If we now scrutinize His "threats about hell" a little more closely we discover further peculiarities. To escape the hell of the Rich Man it suffices to listen to Moses and the prophets or to receive ill during this life. The goats to the left go into eternal fire because they did nothing for His suffering brethren. You can escape the worm that dieth not, by mutilating your own body, whether figuratively or literally is here of no moment.

One thing remains certain. We have here a hell, from which man is not saved through faith in Christ, but from which he saves himself by his own doing. A hell in connection with which Christ's death on the cross is not even mentioned. And this is contrasted with an "entry to life," which man can accomplish himself, not only without Calvary's power, but before Calvary's cross, existed. Nevertheless we are most emphatic in asserting that even the most godly and good are lost without Christ, no matter how much they labor and struggle. Anyone who is able to straighten this out, should do it. I was forced to give up trying.

And if hell was so well known to the pre-human Christ, why did neither Adam nor Abraham, neither Moses nor David ever say a word about it? These were men who learned much from God concerning sin and His thoughts about sinners! Have we any right to evade the issue by saying that since Christ appeared the time of ignorance has come to an end, and man is in danger of hell because of the clearer light that Christ brought? He who says so should first prove that the time of ignorance really came to an end then for the vast majority of mankind. Are we to believe that, up to the year of His birth, or maybe to the year of His death, all the heathen in far-away China had gone to heaven, but from then on, to hell?

May nobody say that it is irreverent to use such language! It must be brought to light what the usual "hell-doctrine" really means, when we think it through to its logical conclusion. If the sending of Christ was the one great revelation of God's love, bringing blessing for all the nations and the reconciliation of the world to Himself, it surely does not hurl the great majority of mankind into a hell concerning which God had not said a word until then. If hell were "the wages of sin," God would have made this known in due time. Why must arrogant man say "hell" when God has said "death," and so fill the Bible and Christian doctrine with contradictions that refuse to disappear until we give death the place God gave it? So also with the fire, the worm and all other such judgments.

One who has realized that, in interpreting Scripture, it is most important not to apply everything to everybody without distinction, will receive a Bible full of light and consistent teaching instead of untenable notions that condemn themselves.

If Jesus really is what His name means, the great Yahweh-Saviour, it was not the object of His appearance to bring hell to all who did not accept Him at His coming. It was Israel alone to whom He came. Israel alone He addressed before dying for all mankind. Can we not see how utterly He confined Himself to Israel when on earth from the fact that even His disciples never thought He might also have come for the other nations? Not even after Jesus had instructed them for forty days concerning the kingdom did Peter know anything about His plans for others. He had to have the vision of the unclean beasts in the sheet before he could grasp this new truth.

Can we not see from all this, against what a false background we usually put the Lord's sayings? We connect them with ideas He never had in His mind and which no apostle could have connected with them. New birth, sal-

vation, damnation, heaven and hell, all these have become to us mental conceptions which we believe to be solidly anchored in the Bible, yet which we nevertheless sadly misunderstand, forgetting to whom and in what connection these things were spoken.

WHAT JESUS REVEALED

There are people today who, under the weight of evidence, acknowledge that "eternal" in the Bible does not mean endless, but who, in spite of this, insist on the endlessness of suffering in hell, because the Lord said: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." With this quotation they think they can still prove "eternal fire." As this seems to be the only argument left to them, it is worth while to demonstrate how untenable it is.

When our Lord came to this earth, this did not alter anything at first concerning the state of the vast mass of mankind and their standing before God. All were and remained what they had become in Adam, mortals on their way to death. It was just as Yahweh had told their first parents. Never did Jesus diverge from that. Never did He make death in Adam to mean life in unending anguish. He was the great, glorious expectation of all Hebrew prophecy. And in order to understand His words correctly we must also understand the prophets of old. What did they set before the longing eyes of the people? Was it bliss in "heaven" after death, or was it a renewed earth, in which the Anointed One of God would rule in righteousness? Were men to enter a "celestial kingdom" on high, or did this kingdom come down to them out of heaven? Would it be erected with the joyous applause of the nations or in the face of bitterest opposition and after terrible judgments? Everyone who knows his Bible a little, knows the answer to these questions. Did Jesus, John the Baptist, the Twelve and the Seventy proclaim the message of the heavenly king-

dom drawing near to the Jewish people, with its king and its power of healing and help for men on this earth? Or did they go to all nations with the gospel of the cross, that tears down all barriers between Jew and Gentile?

Just as well as we know that the message of the cross was not proclaimed until after Israel was rejected, we also know that it could not be proclaimed before there was a cross. We should know as well then that it will never do to sever vital parts of the kingdom message from where they belong and force them into the message of the cross, with which they can never harmonize organically.

What did our Lord have in view when He spoke of the worm and the fire? In Isaiah 66:23,24 we read: "And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another and from one sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring to all flesh." Out of the preceding chapters we can clearly see that this will be in Jerusalem, in the kingdom of Messiah, which according to Revelation 20 lasts for a thousand years. The unbelieving dead are not raised until after the close of this period, when they shall be judged according to their deeds.

If Jesus, in connection with the kingdom message, also mentions this place where the rebels will be disposed of, it only proves the faithfulness with which He kept His commission. And when He adds that this worm and fire destroy in "Gehenna," this ought to forestall any error. For Gehenna is a valley near Jerusalem in which the offal of the city and also the corpses of executed criminals were destroyed by fires that were not quenched and by worms that went on multiplying.

Is it faithful, reliable interpretation that bows before everything that is written, if we say "immortal souls" instead of "corpses," if we make a place of judgment near Jerusalem to mean the future abode of all unredeemed mankind, if we turn events in the millennium into boundless eternity, the kingdom of God on earth into an unscriptural "other side," a punishment awaiting those unworthy of this kingdom into the fate of billions that never will come in contact with it? Can those who must fall back on such interpretations in order to prove an eternal hell be called trustworthy advisers and counselors? Can we even hope to be able to realize clearly what the cross does stand for if we mix up its message with elements alien to it?

What is the new birth? It is the requisite for entrance into the millennial kingdom of Israel, the great national repentance and conversion of an accursed and rejected people, which can take place only when the King Himself appears in glory, so that all eyes will behold Him, also those that have stabbed Him, and when all tribes of the land (of Israel) will wail because of Him (Zech.12:10; Rev.1:7). Israel proved themselves incapable of attaining to the new birth, when their Messiah came for the first time. In consequence they were cast off, lost their home and their temple, became a curse among all the nations and will remain under God's judgment until Christ comes for the second time, when all Israel shall be saved (Rom.11:26).

All this, Christian teachers have twisted until it means: "Whosoever is not born again will be lost for all eternity." What distortion of the Lord's words! No wonder they create such overwhelming problems.

THE LOST WILL BE FOUND

What does it mean to be "lost?" In the Original it is the same word as is translated "perish" or "destroy" in most of its occurrences. When used by the Lord in connection

with the kingdom message, it means to lose one's life during the judgments that precede His rule, without the hope of entering His kingdom, either by being preserved in the judgment or by resurrection. Only the righteous will be raised before (Rev.20:5,6; John 6:40; 11:25). Applied to the rest of mankind, to be "lost" means to die without redemption and therefore to go into the second death, which Jesus, while on earth, never even mentioned.

And what does it mean to be "saved" or to attain to "eternal" or rather "eonian life?" Well, it means just the opposite of being lost. For Israel, it means entrance into Messiah's kingdom, into that glorious life of the future eons on this earth. In connection with the message of the cross to all the nations, which is valid today, it means the destiny of those called out to be members of Christ's body. These do not perish during the final judgments, nor must they remain in death until called by God before the great white throne.

Their salvation will be by being "snatched away . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess.4:17). And this will mean life with their glorified Head in His heavenly realms as long as the eons shall last. It was not Israel's Messiah on earth who proclaimed this message in Galilee and Judea. It was the resurrected and exalted Christ, sitting at the right hand of God, who entrusted this to His chosen instrument, Paul, as a special message. A message that could not be heralded until Israel's callousness and rejection had become an irrevocable fact and the kingdom was put off, consigned to an uncertain, faraway future.

The defender of "everlasting punishment" shows clearly how untenable his doctrine is by his "proofs" which he takes from prophecies concerning "the day of the Lord." The one who preaches Christ to sinners as the only means of salvation and at the same time threatens them with judgment proclaimed before His death for their sins, the one

who acknowledges no other justification than the one by faith, yet points to rewards for works (see the sheep and the goats) or even to compensation for earthly suffering (Lazarus), cannot claim to rightly divide the word of truth. If he wants to know who the sheep and the goats are he should read Joel 3, then he will see of which judgment the Lord is here speaking. He should not drag generations into this judgment who will never stand there. Surely our blessed Lord, who will sit on this throne, knew of what He spoke and that He addressed people who were familiar with Joel's prophecy, but knew nothing of the cross.

God judges the vast mass of mankind later, when this judgment will be past for more than a thousand years (Rev. 20:5,11,12). And those who today accept Christ will not come into either of these judgments. They belong to the ecclesia which is His body, and "shall be saved from indignation, through Him" (Rom.5:9). Those who see "the church" in the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25 know little about its destiny.

And what the Lord will do at the end of this eon and the next cannot in any way alter His determination to become All in all, when even the rule of the Son comes to an end, because it has accomplished its purpose (1 Cor.15:25-28). May this passage speak for itself. It does not contradict the worm and the fire, as so many imagine. The worm and the fire will not survive the rule of the Son. The prophets cannot say enough of the length, the constancy and the unshakable nature of His kingdom. To most Christians it therefore seems certain that its reign will be eternal. And yet Paul tells us that it will have an end. Not one of the old prophets foresaw this. It was also not part of Christ's commission to disclose this when He was on earth.

Jesus, as "the Servant of the Circumcision"—neither in plain language nor in shadow or symbol—ever went beyond the scope of what had already been revealed to

His earthly people. Indeed, we could never understand Him, if He, as the Servant of the Circumcision, were to have spoken forth such an awful, revolutionary message. Such a doctrine as that of eternal hell would change the entire outlook of Israel's prophets.

Fire and worm in the vale of Gehenna were familiar and clear to His hearers. They knew what Isaiah had said about them. The nation had looked forward to the kingdom for centuries. The worst that could happen to an unworthy member was exclusion from the kingdom (*cp* Matt.8:11; Luke 13:28,29). The faint glimpse which they had concerning resurrection was concerned with entry into the kingdom. The other nations were to receive blessing and the knowledge of God during Messiah's rule. As far as they withstood Him, He would destroy them in the valley of Jehoshaphat or punish with other plagues (Joel 4; Zech.12, 14). The believing Israelite could know no more than this through his own sacred Scriptures. What a few sects may have supposed or what sophistic rabbis imagined is of no concern to us.

But did one single disciple of Jesus believe that all the heathen were eternally damned, and the greatest part of his own people likewise? Did one of them reason from His words as we do today? Many a parable was dark to them, and they asked their Master for an explanation. On hearing the word on the narrow entrance to the kingdom, they were amazed and astonished beyond measure. But we do not read that they were shocked on hearing about the worm and the fire, as a new and terrible message "out of eternity."

It would seem that they clearly understood these things. They were acquainted with their own prophets. They expected no setting up of the kingdom apart from judgment. Even after Christ's resurrection, they waited only for His ascension to the throne of David. No vision of "lost souls" drove them beyond the boundaries of their own peo-

ple in order to "save" them. Even at Pentecost their message was the return of Messiah. What had the heathen to do with Him? When Cornelius received the holy spirit, they were stunned with astonishment.

But did not Jesus tell them to go to all nations? Indeed, but they were to do so with the message of the kingdom, which has nothing to do with the fate of the individual after death. Pentecost was, for the apostles, the first step towards the inauguration of the kingdom. The other nations were to receive blessing in it on this earth.

Jesus always instructed His disciples when the time for more and clearer knowledge had come. He explained to them His death and His exaltation, before they became witnesses of it. Through the vision given to Peter they learned of God's loving intentions towards the other nations. It seems that this was the first time they saw clearly enough to understand the allusions to this in the prophets (*cf* Acts 15).

But where did He give them light that went further and beyond the kingdom? When did He teach them the truth for today on the ground of Israel's rejection? Did He ever reveal to them that the worm and the fire ought to be understood in a new and different manner, extending far beyond Jerusalem and the kingdom, being universal and eternal, more eternal even than His own reign?

Fire and worm in the vale of Gehenna are clear and comprehensible. Put them into a "hell" on the "other side," and the problems pile up like mountains. No man has been able to find a solution. Those who think they have, inevitably will meet with some contradiction to it elsewhere in the Scriptures. And let us add here, that in the original text the verbs "dieth not" and "is not quenched" appear in the form which denotes a passing action, not a timeless fact. As this is not always easy to express in a modern language,

this important and helpful guide towards right explanation has also been hidden from the average Christian.

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

Today we are bidden to preach the cross and not the kingdom, neither its blessings nor its judgments. The cross is a stumbling block to the Jew, not the fulfillment of his highest hopes. It does away with all his people's prerogatives. It is the great symbol of his rejection. Therefore not one of the twelve was able to preach it. That was entrusted to Paul alone and to those connected with him.

Do not confuse the cross with Christ's sacrificial death. His death as the fulfillment of the entire Jewish ritual was also preached by the others. It brought about a shelter from sin, as the blood of the beasts foreshadowed. It protected from divine indignation. John the Baptist saw in Jesus the Lamb that bears the sin of the world. John writes of Him as the propitiation for our sins and for those of the entire world as well.

His blood cleanses from all sin. But the *cross* means more. It points to the *manner* of His death. The curse was connected with a death like this one. The cross is the display of what man is capable of in his own wisdom. On the cross where Israel murdered its Messiah in order to bring Him under the divine curse, God revealed in His wonderful wisdom to the entire universe the abysmal depths of depravity of the creature and the greatness of His own self-sacrifice and love.

What was an act of wild hatred towards Himself, He turned into a means of showing grace to all. On the cross all human virtue collapses. The nation of Israel has lost all claims to its privileges. God would have a right to cast it off forever. For as He approached it with the fulfillment of promise, it refused Him. If He, after a long time of judgment, will accept this nation again, this will bow and

humble them as nothing else could do so thoroughly. And in the meantime, the cross gave God the opportunity of bringing the other nations to Him.

Out of all mankind the cross gathers today an assembly, the ecclesia, Christ's body, standing on an absolutely different ground than the new birth for entrance into the kingdom. It is a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Cor.5:17; Gal.6:15). In spirit, we are already seated in these realms: those of the administration following the kingdom, when God creates an order entirely new. In the kingdom, the privileges of the covenant people are still valid. In the new creation, these are all abolished, and therefore are today already abolished for all living in spirit in this new order.

Those in Israel who rightly understood God and His word, knew that it was His plan to bless all in Messiah's kingdom. But further none could yet see. The idea that blessing for the nations was possible on the ground of Israel's rejection of Messiah and the consequent rejection of the kingdom people, was one that nobody could have grasped. Paul alone learned it through the exalted Lord. This is the foundation of his message of the cross. And now Paul's view is still further enlarged. He may behold what no one else saw before him. Not only does he see the entire earth blessed and saved, but all reconciled whom God created—even the principalities and powers of the heavens (Col.1:20). So great is the power of the cross!

Those today who accept the evangel that Christ died for ours sins, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures (1 Cor.15:3,4), become members of the ecclesia which is His body, through which God makes known to the heavenly hosts the greatness of His wisdom (Eph.3:10). They have not only forgiveness of sin through the blood of the Lamb, but God's own righteousness is bestowed upon them.

All who are not reached by the message of the cross

today, or who reject it, must go into judgment, where they receive what their deeds deserve. They must go into the second death. They are not vivified or reconciled as long as death is not abolished. Only indescribable, unmerited grace makes it possible for us to escape this. But the fate of the others is not hopeless. To the contrary, the evangel has opened to us vistas of divine glory and love such as none of the ancients ever suspected. In the light of the cross we can see God's heart, how it embraces all He created. And we see everything in its right place, even His judgments.

Judgment is necessary in order to prepare the road for grace. Let us not confuse God's goal with the various steps leading to it. Gradually, He reveals His grace, drawing the circles wider and wider, one illumination following the other unto perfect day. We have a faint glimpse in Eden of the One crushing the serpent becoming brighter and brighter, until the rays lighten up the entire universe and nothing remains in darkness. And it is all occurring with marvelous order and succession, without flaw or contradiction, and leaving no problems and riddles, so that we can only adore God for such a revelation. Verily it is worthy of His name!

Let us leave to the earth what belongs to it and let us thank God that we may look up to our Lord, exalted over all the universe, to Him who sent us a message out of His glory, concerning the consummation of His ways:

God All in all

S. Knoch

Irene H. Beachy of Lititz, Pennsylvania, passed away on February 8, 2013. She and her husband, Eli, would often visit the Baldwin, Michigan annual fellowship. They began to see the greater truths of God's goal for mankind around 1974.

Irene was a happy, gentle woman and will be greatly missed . . . until the Lord's return.

THE OBJECT OF CREATION

FOR WHAT PURPOSE is man in the world? This question is asked by all thinking men, but who is able to answer it? The solution is found in the Scriptures alone, and even there it is not on the surface. It is one of the "deep things of God," hidden from the carnal mind, from the religious as well as from the intellectual searcher. It can be revealed only by God's spirit. To say that we can know why man was created, may seem a stupendous claim to many. Yet the purpose of man's existence may be determined by those who are guided solely by His Word, not by what they think, nor by the philosophical notions emanating from the human brain.

We learn of a first act of creation by God through the texts which tell us of His having originated the Christ, His Son. In Colossians 1:15 He is called the "Image of the invisible God," as well as, "the Firstborn of every creature." The word "image" means a visible representation and must speak to us of God's longing to be revealed. His objective in originating Christ was that this One should be His revelation. The word "firstborn" in the Scriptures is a figure of speech, denoting the highest in rank and station, the one who is to take his father's place. Christ appears as the Origin or Beginning of God's creation (Rev.3:14). He was present before anything else existed. No other being, no solar system, no speck of matter, was made before Him. There has been much theological discussion about whether the pre-human Christ was born from or created by the Father. All this is vain, for, in His case, there is no vital difference between the two thoughts. In Hebrews

2:11 we read that He is not ashamed to call the many sons, whom He glorifies, His brethren, because He and they are out of One. All—that is the entire universe—is *out* of God (Rom.11:36; 1 Cor.8:6).

But all is *through* Christ, as Paul discloses to us in such majestic words as these: “For in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth . . . all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him” (Col.1:16,17). “For us there is one God, the Father, *out* of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, *through* Whom all is and we through Him” (1 Cor.8:6). Since the invisible God wishes to be revealed, the One Who is His visible Image was brought forth in order to serve in this capacity. After bringing forth His Son, God needed intelligent beings to be the recipients of His revelation.

In Job 38:4, 7, God Himself asks: “Where were you when I founded the earth? . . . When the stars of the morning jubilated together, and all the sons of Elohim shouted with joy?” This one short passage teaches us wonderful and most important facts: that there were beings allowed to look on when God called some new, marvelous masterpiece into existence, ones who were able to appreciate the power and wisdom exhibited, and to rejoice in it. And it seems as if this grand and glorious universe was then not marred by any discordance, any trace of rebellion, enmity, sin.

Now some might think that this must have been a perfect world, a world which enjoyed a perfect revelation of God, which was therefore capable of bringing the most perfect satisfaction both to Him and to the creatures which He had made. But this was not so. All that His creatures were then able to see was a Creator of unlimited power and ability. His innermost heart remained hidden from them. They could know Him as the embodiment of might, but not as the embodiment of love. They could not know

good as long as there was nothing to contrast it with. They did not know evil. They did not know what it was to overcome evil and to develop good to its sublimest height in the struggle with sin. The Deity they could grasp resembled the One Whom countless unbelievers admire in nature.

God knew that another revelation was needed; needed for His own sake, for the sake of His Christ, and for the sake of His creatures. It was the revelation of evil. The old theological quarrel, whether Satan fell from a state of perfection, or whether he was created as the personification of wickedness, is in vain, for even had he once been good, God made him so that he could become the very embodiment of everything that is evil. And that is what he was made for. He was a necessity for God's most sublime revelation.

We have already referred to the earth's foundation as having taken place later than the creation of the celestial hosts. And the fact that Satan exercises power over this earth makes it most probable that it was made in order to become the scene on which the great struggle between good and evil was to be enacted. It is beyond question that Satan rules today. He himself tells Christ that all the kingdoms of the world were given to him and that he gives them to whomsoever he wills (Luke 4:6). Paul calls him the god of this eon (*aiōnos*, AV "world"; 2 Cor.4:4), and John tells us that the whole world is lying in the wicked one (1 John 5:19).

We also know that there was a disruption of the world, which may be attributed to the misrule and failure of the one who dominated it. This disruption is clearly suggested at the forefront of revelation. This harmonizes with the great truth that God did not create the earth "without form and void" (AV), or rather, "a chaos and vacant" (*cf* Isa.45:18, CV), but that it *became* thus (Gen.1:2, CV), and surely for a good reason.

Thus far we have an almighty God Who is Spirit and therefore invisible to those whom He has made. We have His visible Image, the Christ, and, we have a universe of suns and stars along with intelligent beings, created for the purpose of receiving the revelation of God, in order that He should be satisfied through their heartfelt response to it.

And, to activate this revelation, we have Satan, a being of incredible cunning, ability and power, to whom God gives a stage, a platform, on which he is to demonstrate just what he can do in opposition to God, and what his capacities are able to achieve while yet fearfully estranged from his wonderful Creator. The stage is the earth, on which Satan is allowed to display his true character. A fine object lesson for the hosts of heaven!

But will this alone accomplish God's purpose in creating evil (*cf* Isa.45:7)? Where would the revelation of God's heart come in? Where the revelation of the unutterable superiority of Christ over every other being, not as the Most High, but as the Most Worthy of all? Where the revelation of the value of absolute dependence on God in contrast to Satan's career of self-will and self-elevation? How would it benefit the witnesses of his misrule, if he were permitted to go on eternally as he has started to do, without his sin ever coming to a consummation, bringing about his utter defeat and the triumph of good?

The heavenly onlookers might even become accustomed to behold him running about on the earth, resisting God, yet never having an opportunity of really challenging Him; opposing Christ, yet never able to harm Him; resolute against all who were untouched by sin, but never in a position to tempt and mislead them. It would soon turn out to be a sort of platonic enmity of evil against good, never coming to a real decision. It would never become an adequate revelation of the depths of grace hidden in God and of the lengths to which His love would go; nor of the depths of

iniquity in Satan, and evil's awful culmination. Something more was needed.

So God went about to restore the ruined earth for the scene of His crowning revelation. This calls for circumstances in which Satan would have an opportunity to attack God, demonstrate all his antagonism toward God, and go to the incredible lengths of actually murdering God's Representative. Then, when he believes that he has triumphed over God, he must discover that he has brought about his own complete and final defeat, as well as the glorious victory of the One He wished to destroy.

Satan could never touch the Christ Who existed in the form of God. In order that He might be challenged by Satan unto mortal combat, the Son of God had to empty Himself of His divine majesty and take on a body adapted to this struggle, a body that could be hurt, broken, and sacrificed. As the first specimen of such a being, God created the first man, Adam.

It is hard to express in human words all that it must have meant to God when He formed this wonderful creature in His own image. Man had to be God-like to such an extent that the Christ could become a man without sacrificing His real status. Even in the glory, Christ is and always will be a Man. This one fact places man far above all the principalities and powers of the heavenly realms. Christ never took on their likeness, and God did not choose them to be the instruments of His crowning revelation unto the rest of creation. Once we grasp that we were made in order that Christ could, in our form and likeness, reveal to the universe what God is, what He Himself is, and what Satan is, we can only bow our heads in adoration. Such a vision, once it dawns upon us, is overwhelming. It is an answer to the question of our existence that surpasses in its marvelous grandeur all human explanations, as God's wisdom surpasses ours. But there it is, hidden in the Scriptures.

Paul says in Colossians, that Christ, on the cross, in stripping off the sovereignties and authorities (of wickedness, for Satan has many underlings), boldly made a show of them, triumphing over them in it. This certainly was no show for the people looking on. They saw nothing but utter weakness, defeat and death on Golgotha. It was a show for the benefit of all the heavenly hosts. And Peter speaks (1 Peter 1:12) concerning Christ's sufferings and the glories to follow, into which the messengers are yearning to peer. That is why Christ always calls Himself the Son of mankind and again and again says that His task on earth is "to reveal the Father." But this had to be in the form of a man. It was evidently a revelation superior to the one which He could become to the universe in His pre-human glory.

In Philippians we find much light on this subject. Christ emptied Himself of His divine form in order to become a man, and as a man became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Golgotha was the reason for His becoming a man, for it was God's central revelation to the entire creation. What is set before us on the cross cannot be surpassed by any other unveiling, or exhibition of power, splendor and majesty.

Evidently Satan craved to bring man under his power as soon as mankind appeared on the scene. In this way he wanted to wreck God's purpose with humanity. And yet he has only fulfilled it. God's wisdom, in truth, surpasses all our comprehension. Every move which His enemy makes against Him, He turns into victory for Himself, and into defeat for Satan.

Had man remained innocent, there would never have been a cross on this earth. It would not have come to a Golgotha. Christ would not have become a man. The history of mankind would not have been what God needed for His purpose. Living in a magnificent garden, with no

other task than to pick luscious fruit and associate with harmless animals—no member of such a humanity could ever become “a theater to the world and to messengers” (1 Cor.4:9), as God’s plan demanded.

When Satan without effort misled the first human beings, he surely believed he had frustrated God’s purpose. Now these creatures would no longer be dangerous to him. Now he would keep them in bondage, use them as his instruments to fight the Creator. On the very same day he learned from God Himself how terribly mistaken he had been. Now he himself had brought about the conditions necessary for the advent of the true Son of Mankind into his own domain! The very one whom he deceived first, the woman, would bring forth his destroyer. From now on, there would be a “Seed,” which, standing on God’s side, would be the enemy of Satan. His final dethronement by this Seed was now certain.

The entire story of mankind that follows is a work of God, step by step, to reach the cross on Golgotha. The nation that was to bring forth the One Who hurts the serpent, and at the same time, under Satan’s leadership, become the instrument for His crucifixion, furnishes us example after example, how God prepares it for its destiny, how Satan in his turn tries everything to frustrate God’s plan, and how he only gives God another opportunity to turn all his evil doings against himself.

If Satan had perhaps thought that man, after having become a sinner, would now never be able to conquer him, he overlooked the marvelous depths of God’s plan of redemption. Adam, in spite of his innocence, was soul-ish. He was “flesh.” This was never a match for Satan. God’s intention was not to overcome Satan by a sinless first Adam, who knew neither good nor evil. To conquer a being like Satan, divine strength was needed. Evidently God had invested His enemy with so much power, that the

struggle between him and the Christ had to be in truth a deadly combat. Else it would only have been a sham. It would never have meant for God, nor for Christ Himself, nor for Satan, nor for creation, what God intended. But because Adam did not remain innocent, humanity could receive in Christ a new Head, a second Adam. After the disqualification of the first Adam, another One, immeasurably better, took his place. Never would humanity have welcomed the second Adam without the bankruptcy of the first one. God let Satan win a seeming triumph with his seduction of man, in order to turn evil into good by a far higher plan of love.

Though Christ was to hurt the head of the serpent on Golgotha all alone, yet He was also to make a multitude, called out of the mass of mankind, conquerors, in order that they might in due time reign together with Him. What no son of the first Adam was able to become through the life he inherits, he now could be through the life communicated to him by the Second. But how could man receive this divine life without first recognizing his own corruption? When God permitted Satan to poison man with sin, He made room for His life in all who are willing to consign to death the life of the first Adam. In this way Satan will be conquered by men after all. But by men, who, by the spirit of God, have received a power which the first Adam, in his innocence, never could know. If anyone thinks that redemption is nothing but restoration of innocence, as was found in paradise, then he is sadly mistaken. God let Satan rob man of this in order to give him His own righteousness instead. And if man was not to exalt himself in consequence of this fact, he had first thoroughly to learn the misery of his own sinful state.

With all his cunning and slyness, with all his desperate efforts, Satan, completely blinded, only brings about his own destruction. He himself makes provision for the cross

on which he is defeated. He does not foresee what it will mean for himself. He works into the hands of God. That is the drama of the universe, the spectacle which holds all the heavens spellbound. Because of this, mankind came into existence, to play the different parts which this stupendous event demanded. Satan surely did not realize what he would accomplish for the entire creation on Golgotha.

One is in fact tempted to speak of divine irony when one grasps how God lets His enemy, step by step, exert himself to bring about the cross, always hoping to harm his Creator, and yet only serving the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom.

WHY, GOLGOTHA?

Golgotha had to be, for God's sake. If God longed for the responsive love of creatures capable of appreciating what He is, nothing else could reveal to them everything that is in His heart as the cross could. There He gave His Beloved One for His enemies. There He provided for the reconciliation of every being which had been estranged from Him. There He made manifest His perfect justice when He justifies all mankind (Rom.5:18,19). There He showed to a wondering universe the unfathomable depths of the wisdom which finds a way to finally do away with all sin, without leaving the least flaw on His own righteousness. Never will His creatures cease to find new marvels in the cross of Christ.

Golgotha had to be, for Christ's sake. He was not only to be adored and honored as the mighty Representative of the all-powerful God, but to be worshiped as the One Whose obedience, self-denial and love surpassed everything that had been realized before. Christ was to be given the highest place above every other creature, not only because of His rank, but also because of His deeds. How could creation bring Him such heartfelt adoration, if He had only

been the Most High, because God made Him thus? The cross proves Him to be worthy of all honor, because of what He did there, quite apart from His divine station.

If God wanted to "highly exalt" Him (Phil.2:9), He could do it no better way than by first abasing Him to the depths of suffering and shame. Because He endured that, God gives Him a Name that is above every name. Because He descended so low, every creature will gladly and joyously acclaim Him as the One fit to be the Most High. Golgotha brought to Christ a wealth of honor to be had in no other way. Therefore it had to be, for His sake.

And Golgotha had also to be, that God might give Satan the crowning opportunity to display the depths to which wickedness can go. Nothing like what he did there, could ever have been considered possible by any intelligent being among the heavenly hosts. Now they may see what evil can come to. Now they may grasp its awful potentialities. But Satan, at the peak of his triumph, in reality was defeated, utterly brought to naught, displayed in all his iniquity before the horrified witnesses of his deed, and made a public show by the conquering Christ. Though God still lets him exercise dominion on earth, he is constantly overreaching himself, constantly showing his incapacity to accomplish anything perfect. God looks on calmly at his efforts to make some show of his capabilities, to lift humanity to all sorts of heights. God turns everything he does into a great failure while He holds ready His Christ. God will dethrone Satan finally, when his time is over. And then the terrible state to which he has brought the earth will be the foil for Christ's wonderful reign, which is to undo all he has done.

Hitherto we have contemplated only the grand and overwhelmingly glorious aspect of what it means to be a man. There is still another, darker side. Man was not only to be the creature in whose form Christ could become

God's crowning revelation. He was also to be the medium through which Satan reveals himself in his turn. The first man was trapped by Satan and brought under his sway. From then on, all men were used by him more or less to carry out his plans. Satan needs men to accomplish his aims. And God lets him have them. That was also according to His plan. The great tragedy featuring the conflict between good and evil, this spectacle for all the universe, is acted out by man. Tools of Satan on one hand, instruments of God on the other.

It is necessary that we also give due emphasis to the somber side of man's role, a side which should well keep us from all self-exaltation. We surely have nothing to boast of. And God was wise to have it be that way. If ever a human being should elevate himself because he wears the image of God, because he exists in the likeness of Christ, let him realize that not a single one of his race remained as God created him, that man fell short at the very start of his career. But that does not alter the fact that man carries out God's intention. Quite the contrary, man had to become a sinner for the same astounding reasons that there had to be a cross: for God's sake, for Christ's sake, for Satan's sake and for his own sake. That justifies God in making man so responsive to sin, that he gave way to it in the face of the first temptation God put in his path. If God had not wanted it to be thus, He could well have kept man from ever knowing evil.

But a neutral humanity was not what God needed, for man has a special task in the universe, or else his creation, different from the heavenly hosts, would have been, to say the least, superfluous. God needed sinners and enemies to reveal to the onlooking witnesses His power to redeem and reconcile, to take what Satan had spoiled and reshape it to something much higher; to make mere innocents into conquerors; former slaves of His adversary into victorious

overcomers, with the great enemy under their feet. He needed sinners, in order to awaken in them a response of gratitude and love, by saving them from their cruel bondmaster, such as would satisfy His heart. Their never-ending praise for His deliverance is something He would by no means want to go without. Surely, man had to become a sinner for God's sake.

And he had to become a sinner for Christ's sake. Christ yearns to have others partake of the glory which He Himself enjoys. He longs for a reward for His sorrows, namely, to be given those whom He delivers through His own blood. He needs a complement, a bride as well as a body, consisting of those whom He has made worthy to share His future reign, on this earth as well as in the heavenly realms. And such must be prepared for these tasks in the same way that He was prepared for His place above all. This preparation is by the cross.

Christ died on it a literal death. His redeemed ones are identified with Him in this death, accepting God's curse on the old humanity, as expressed through the cross. By dying to everything involved in the term "flesh," and living by the indwelling power of the risen, victorious Christ, they become what He seeks in order to satisfy His heart. And that which counts for God, when it comes to the gratitude and fervent love from those who are delivered from Satan's thralldom, counts for Christ in the very same way. Would He want to be without the praises and thanks of creatures whom He Himself redeemed at such tremendous cost? Any such adoration would be impossible in sinless man. Only a sinner needs crucifixion. In order to go literally to the cross, Christ took on Himself the sin of the world. In order to go figuratively to the cross, a man must realize his own shameful deserts.

And man had to become a sinner for Satan's sake, that is, so that he might carry out his enmity to the full. God

is also just to His great adversary. He furnishes him with material to give him an opportunity, to show what he can do. God lets him have billions of men, great empires, vast resources. Now let him prove that he can build a happy, peaceful world without God, that he can satisfy the craving of men's souls, that he can fill the void within them by what he has to offer. Power and glory, lust and pleasure, education and civilization, anything and everything that can be had, except the One Who alone can fill the human heart.

But man would have never been Satan's dupe and tool had he not been estranged from God. That was the necessary preparation for Satan's great demonstration, which he stages in his realm, the earth. Where has his rulership led to? Wars upon wars, sorrows upon sorrows, one form of government and administration of earth's affairs following upon the other. Every one a failure, every one ruined by the sin and selfishness of those concerned. And the greatest disappointment for humanity under his leadership seems just ahead, when man proposes to build a better world by his own plans and powers, blind to the fact that a hidden hand works behind the scenes; blind to the fact that Satan's public bankruptcy is almost due, ousted as ruler of this world-system, to usher in the rule of Christ.

And man had to become a sinner for his own sake. If God and Christ need human love and gratitude to satisfy the longings of Their hearts, it is the same with him. He needs the unutterable and never-ending joy of thanking and adoring a Saviour and Redeemer from his former woes. He could not appreciate freedom without having experienced slavery. He would not be able to value God's righteousness, had he not become unrighteous. He could not realize the grace of the cross, had he not been in need of it himself. And, last of all, he could never have been prepared for his station with Christ upon His throne, had he not been deep in the depths of shame and sin and helplessness.

ness. Only with this experience behind him will he be fit for the exaltation which God has prepared for him. Without it he might glory in himself. Now he can only glory in Christ, knowing that through His indwelling power alone he will be counted worthy of this, the highest place in all the universe.

And if we still need more scriptural proof to show us that God made man in order to bring about His crowning revelation to all that He created, let us consider what Paul says in Ephesians 3:8-10, that it was granted to Him "... to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ ... that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God" And how can all the celestial beings, together with the terrestrial and subterranean ones, bow the knee in the name of Jesus (Phil. 2:10), because of His having gone to the cross, if they have no knowledge of this event?

Surely what is written is true: "That which the eye did not perceive, and the ear did not hear, and to which the heart of man did not ascend—whatever God makes ready for those who are loving Him. Yet to us God reveals them through His spirit, for the spirit is searching all, even the depths of God Thus also, that which is of God no one knows, except the spirit of God. Now we obtained, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we may be perceiving that which is being graciously given to us by God" (1 Cor.2:9-12).

S. Knoch

*God locks up all together in stubbornness,
that He should be merciful to all. (Rom.11:32)
Indeed though He afflicts, yet He has compassion
according to the abundance of His benignities. (Lam.3:32)
God is love. (1 John 4:8)*

TORTURING DOUBTS, AND EXULTANT FAITH

IF THERE IS an eternal hell, no other but God Himself can have called it into existence, for no one else would have the power to do so. Did He make it before or after sin entered the world? If *before*, we would be forced to believe that He deliberately created mankind for such a fate. Or did He *not* foresee sin and yet make hell, in order to dispose of sinners in case there would be some? Then why create human beings at all if this was such a risky matter? And if God instituted hell *after* Satan or Adam had sinned, because He was not able to keep them from sinning, where are His omniscience as well as His omnipotence? If anything in God's creation can happen apart from His plan, where is there any security in this life or in that to come? Must we not give up our trust and faith in an Almighty God, or assume that sin and hell are a part of His plan?

Why do we study the Bible in vain when we desire an answer to these questions, which are of fundamental importance to everyone who wants to know what sort of a God he is to worship? I have searched without getting any light on this subject. I ask why He gives us a book in order to reveal Himself to us and then not even tells us why He had to create doomed sinners. Heart and reason rebel against such a doctrine. It is a direct contradiction to God's own precept that we are to love our enemies. How can He ask us to do so, if He proposes to torture eternally not only His enemies, but also those who never heard of Him? It seems to me that if we tried to imitate God, as

orthodoxy depicts Him, we would become more like devils. And if He has to act like that for some reason which is beyond us, a whole huge vista of other perplexing difficulties opens up to our view.

A troubling problem to me is why a God, Who has the power to cast Satan into the lake of fire, as He himself says that He will, did not do it before he could do so much damage? Why does He let Satan remain at liberty for thousands of years? Why does He let him deceive and mislead billions? Why does He allow mankind under his leadership to ruin itself as well as the earth, this once wonderful achievement of His creative power?

And if all this had to be for some reason which we cannot fathom, why must humanity multiply at such a rate? If most men are only rushing to an eternal hell, why would not a wise and loving God let only comparatively few come into existence?

I, for my part, cannot understand how anyone who believes in an eternal hell dares to bring children into the world.

It has often seemed to me that it would be better to be born as an animal than a human being. An animal may have to endure awful sufferings, but there is always the certainty that these will finally end, whereas the lost sinner has no such hope.

With all our praise and thanks to God for His wonderful salvation of sinners through the death of Christ, the following questions still persist as unanswered by orthodoxy:

Why was Christ sent only after thousands of years of sin and death for countless multitudes? Why was He sent without providing that all could immediately hear of His sacrifice? Why has it been impossible to reach whole continents until very recently?

And even today, with all the modern facilities, why is mission-work not triumphant? Why all the dreadful hand-

icaps, ill health, want of money, and so forth, with which God's witnesses have to struggle, not to mention the callousness of the hearts of unsaved men?

The Bible says that God alone can accomplish a change of these stubborn hearts. Why does He not do it, except for a few? To say that He saves all who are willing, explains nothing, for very few realize what it is all about. Besides, the Scriptures teach that God also does the willing. As soon as His spirit reveals to anyone his lost condition and God's love, his will agrees. Why does He not reveal Himself to all?

When we consider things as they are, it becomes very evident, that Christ saves not even one-twentieth of all mankind today. Is that the great, wonderful triumph of Golgotha? If a doctor discovers a remedy which saves only five percent of all cases, it is counted a failure. Golgotha's failure seems even worse. What about the word: "He shall bruise thy head," if the serpent gets almost all of the spoils?

According to popular evangelistic teaching, there is no salvation apart from Christ and the "New Birth." We are even forced to believe in the damnation of infants. Who is able to accept that? Nobody that I know of. So let us allow that God will save infants without conversion. Then heaven would be populated for the most part by the "souls" of babies. The few converted heathen of the last century are a mere nothing compared with the numbers that died without Christ.

Now it may be a small comfort that infants at least are not sent to hell. But if this is so, why prevent their dying? All the efforts of well-meaning people to save the lives of young children would only rob God of their souls, as experience shows that only a fraction are converted later.

And if God can save infants apart from their faith in Christ's death, why not also the heathen, who know hardly more about right or wrong than they do.

Why does not the Bible give us any definite light con-

cerning the salvation of children? The whole bulky book with all its information does not even tell us at what age responsibility begins. If men were responsible for their eternal fate, at least this question would have to be discussed more fully than others. And what about the responsibility of those who never heard about Christ? What about the responsibility for our bad dispositions, our environment, our education, our inherited alienation from God? Since God makes the world and *all* that is in it (Acts 17:24), I have concluded that in the end God alone must remain responsible for all that is possible in His creation.

Who other but God decreed that, after Adam's transgression, the poison of sin should pass through to all his descendants? Who other but God decreed that, in contrast to this, salvation is not passed on through any such channel, but must be appropriated by every individual? No such choice is left to him when it comes to sinning. He is a slave to sin from the beginning of his existence and cannot help himself and free himself of its tyranny. If responsibility played any part in this matter, God would have had to let every person come into the world as neutral as Adam, and free to choose for himself sin or obedience.

And not only that. Everyone would have to be as enlightened and privileged as Adam, who had personal communication with God Himself, with power to resist sin.

Another riddle is, in my opinion, that God never even warned the first human beings that an eternal hell would await them if they sinned, and not only them, but all their descendants. He only told Adam that he would die if he ate of the forbidden fruit. Is that not just the opposite of never ending life in torture, where death would be a mercy?

As we go on searching in the accounts of God's dealings with the race after it had been driven from Eden, more and more problems arise. God gives a law at Sinai and tells the people of Israel that He chooses them for His own. He

selects an entire tribe to serve Him in His sanctuary. He calls these men holy. How could they be that and yet for the most part be lost? Or did fleshly descent from Levi and temple-service save them? Was it then not rather an automatic, carnal thing that could save a man? Why this radically different way of salvation *now*? The one under the Old Covenant evidently was more successful. Where do we have a whole tribe of sanctified people today?

The whole Old Testament is a puzzle. Not a word is said corresponding to our concept of hell before Daniel's prophecy. Only then do we read about everlasting shame and contempt. All judgments are temporal and earthly. God has pity on people who cannot discern between right and wrong, like the Ninevites, whom He spared. And there it was only a question of a destruction of the town, not of an eternal hell. But today God is supposed to condemn even the ignorant forever.

On this point, something in the later Scriptures must be radically wrong, for how could Christ pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," and yet hold out no hope outside of the "New Birth"? If we follow one of His words and believe that He will have mercy on those who know no better, we should leave the people as much as possible in ignorance. If we follow His other words, we would be forced to the most frantic efforts to warn everyone, even though we profess to believe that no one can come to Christ unless the Father Himself draws him.

The Bible seems one vast chaos, beyond understanding, full of contradictions. An omnipotent God, from Whom the devil takes almost everything, a God Who knows all beforehand, yet hinders nothing, Who is even concerned with the cattle of Nineveh, Whose Son is moved with compassion when He sees a mourning widow or a blind beggar, and yet He invents a hell of fire and keeps it going for ever! Where shall we look for light in such darkness?

EXULTANT FAITH

After long years of torturing doubts, God had mercy on me and turned my darkness into light, my despair into joy and my misery into exultation. He brought me into touch with His revelation, just as He had written it, apart from most of the mistranslations of well-meaning men, who were bound by creeds and tradition.

I found out that God is operating "*all* in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:11), for *all* is "*out* of Him and *through* Him and *for* Him" (Rom.11:36). Indeed, He "locks up all together in stubbornness," but it is not to *damn* the most of men, but "that He should be *merciful* to all" (Rom.11:32). In order to display His love, He brought in sin and sorrow and death, for only so could He be the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10). In Adam, all are dying; thus also, in Christ, all shall be vivified (1 Cor.15:22). All mankind, through Adam's offense, deserve condemnation; but, in Christ, all mankind will be justified (Rom.5:18).

Not only will He bring all of earth's inhabitants back into the sunlight of His love, but, through the blood of Christ's cross, He will *reconcile all* to Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:20). The present enmity toward God on the part of terrestrial and celestial creatures will, in due time, be used as a background to display His love.

Sin and suffering are confined to the *eons* (or ages, as "forever" and "everlasting" should be translated). "Hell" stands for three different words, the *unseen*, *Gehenna*, and *Tartarus*, none of which mean anything like the traditional "hell." In Scripture, divine judgment always entails *setting right*, not condemnation, as an end in itself. Believers in Christ and His sacrifice are saved from the indignation of God. Unbelievers are judged and go into the second death. But all will be made alive when death, the last enemy, is abolished (1 Cor.15:26). Then, Christ will subject Himself

and all the rest of God's creatures to His Father, that God may be All in all (1 Cor.15:28).

There will indeed be an awful judgment, but it will not merely "punish," but *set right* all wrongs. The Judge is the One Who emptied Himself of His glories as the channel of creation and came down to earth to become a Man, and to suffer and die to save all, especially those who believe (1 Tim.4:10). God has raised Him from the dead, and He has ascended into heaven; but, He will come again to receive us to Himself, that we may reign with Him over His celestial realms. And after that, He will return to earth to restore it and rule over it through His chosen people Israel.

S. Knoch

HUMILIATION BEFORE EXALTATION

Christ emptied Himself of all He was when He represented God's majesty in its most sublime glory, and took the form of a slave (Phil. 2:5-8). Only in this way could He reveal the depths of God's love by His suffering for sin. He became a man with the same flesh and blood as ours. But what distinguished Him from us was His spirit. He was begotten by the spirit to become flesh, designated Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, the last Adam, a vivifying spirit.

And as such a man He descended still further and humbled Himself unto death. The Inaugurator of life went in obedience to the will of His Father, into the very jaws of the all-devouring king of terrors. And He descended far lower than the average man ever descends—down to the cross, the symbol of an utterly cursed state. He Who knew no sin was made sin. And cut off from the heretofore unbroken and continual living connection with His God, He was forsaken by Him and experienced death. This path unto the death of the cross He took upon Himself voluntarily, so that His Father's loving plan for the entire creation might be carried out.

Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him with the name that is above every name. Out of the deepest depths (for a greater humiliation has never been known in the universe), God begins Christ's exaltation by a stupendous exhibition of His might and divinity, the consequences of which are fraught with transcendent glory for us and all of His creation.

W. Prolingheuer

IN THE HAND OF THE POTTER

"I WENT down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter. So he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make" (Jer.18:3,4).

The prophet sees a vessel marred in the hand of the potter. Yet, as he gazes, it is made again, "another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make." Now, in this pictured incident, we see that all throughout the vessel is in the hand of the potter. He is the determining and deciding factor.

So is God, as witness His word to Jeremiah. "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel." What sovereignty breathes in these words! As the clay in the potter's hand, *so* are you in My hand.

God is sovereign. Therefore of Israel He could say: "This people have I formed for Myself. They shall shew forth My praise" (Isa.43:21). And again in the same chapter: "I have created him for My glory. I have formed him. Yea, I have made him."

Truly, the hand of the Potter is here. I have *created, formed, made*. And, for *My glory*. Marred? Yes, but still in the hand of the Potter, to be eventually for His glory.

And, marvelous to relate, that very marring is the occasion for a new and wonderful fashion, the formation of an instrument that is also to be for His glory. Here we are immediately concerned. As participants of the grace glorious we are His achievement. We are in His hand.

He is making us. And all the while there is the closeness of Maker and made. And how blessed the consciousness of the Molder's far-seeing wisdom, which again and again amazes the mind! How blessed, also, the waiting, and sometimes the withholding, of His touch! It is then we perceive the marvels of His ordaining, the wisdom of His disposing, and that in His fashioning all is *together-acting-into-good* for those who love Him.

God would build for us a character far exceeding our earthbound comprehension. He would wean us from the things which too easily engross our attention, lifting us to a closer attachment to Himself.

Yet always, even hourly, we are in His hand. Of that we may be sure. But are we conscious of the great affinity—the closeness of Maker and made? A tower of strength lies in the thought, an utter rare content.

RELYING ON THE LIVING GOD

But are we as the clay, plastic, yielding, impressionable? We may be, in a wrong way. There are world forces so making appeal to our leisure moments that time is only too easily spent in studying their chronicled triumphs. Indeed, civilization is intoxicated by their glamor. We are perilously placed in this our age, in a civilization that crowds God out of its thought and program. Its god has lures at every turn of life's road, lures to which the soul so easily responds. And too readily are we pliant here.

But what of the Potter's touch, of the Master's molding? That is for the spirit, for the prayer life, and for the Scripture study, that therein we may be truly pliant, impressionable to a fine degree.

How great a thing it is to realize ourselves as in His hand! What equipoise and calm! For then, should wayward circumstance, or mood's despair come near, it is to

find us still within that hand. As our “faithful Creator” His word is confirmed to our hearts in all its fine gradations: “I have made, and I will bear. Even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

As in creation He is our Potter, so in redemption. He makes and He remakes. And even as He took pleasure in His ancient people, a pleasure He will show yet again, so in those of a later day, whom He designates beforehand, He calls and justifies, and glorifies.

From out of the intrusive chaos, “Elohim is seeing all that He makes—it is very good.” He takes pleasure in His own work. And its far-reaching issues are to constitute the delight of God’s will. Far down the course of time there were those who should be His achievement in a wondrous, unique sense. His “*poiêma*” are we (“achievement,” Eph. 2:10, CV). And its excellency will be celestially apparent above all earthly showing. The highest intelligences will, through these media, be satisfyingly instructed in the wealth of God’s grace, as shown in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For such display are we set. But what of our present sense of its dignity? The spirit may rise in exultation at the thought of such glory. But are there not hands, feet, and lips, for action even now? And the spirit of God has something to do with these members of the body.

Hands may not have the cunning of a Bezaleel, but they can be gentle, ministering hands. Our feet, too, may be treading the obscure ruts, yet willing feet for His revealed requests. And our lips. Someone once prayed: “Lord, take my lips, and speak through them. Take my mind and think through it. Take my heart and set it on fire.”

If only thus we live and pray, what channels we could be! Vessels of honor, for and in the Potter’s hand. Made, not only by Him, but for Him.

William Mealand

THE BODY AND EARS OF OUR LORD

THE human body which was adapted for our Lord (*cf* Heb.10:5) was a body of humiliation, like our own. References in Scripture to His physical body are almost always in association with His sufferings and death. For it was in fashion as a human that He *humbled* Himself to the death of the cross (Phil.2:7,8). Yet now He has a body of glory, and it is in conformity to it that our body of humiliation will be transfigured (Phil.3:21).

His body of humiliation was necessary so that He was able to die for the salvation of sinners (*cf* 1 Tim.1:15). Hence we read in Hebrews 2:9 that “we are observing Jesus, Who has been made some bit inferior to messengers (because of the suffering of death, wreathed with glory and honor), so that, in the grace of God, He should *be tasting death for the sake of everyone*.” And again we read: “Since, then, the little children have participated in blood and flesh, He also was very nigh by *partaking of the same*, that, *through death*, He should be discarding him who has the might of death, that is, the Adversary, and should be clearing those whoever, in fear of death, were through their entire life liable to slavery” (Heb.2:14,15). So also the apostle Peter speaks of Christ, “Who Himself carries up our sins *in His body on to the pole*” (1 Peter 2:24).

The apostle Paul has expounded this *adaptation*, this bodily “change to conform to a purpose”¹ in no uncertain terms: “Christ Jesus . . . being inherently in the form of

1. *cf* KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, under **adjust**, p.9.

God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless *empties Himself*, taking the form of a *slave*, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion *as a human*, *He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross*" (Phil.2:5-8).

This was His *body of flesh* in which, *through His death*, He reconciles us now, having made peace for the reconciliation of all *through the blood of His cross* (Col.1:20-22). In this, it was given to Paul to reveal God's achievement through Christ's death more fully than Peter saw it. It was not simply that human sins were carried up on the cursed pole in Christ's body, but the sinful race itself was identified with Him in His death. In that "One died for the sake of all, consequently all died" (2 Cor.5:14). For the believer, already, in spirit, we are identified with Christ's death and thus have died to sin, our old humanity being crucified together with Him (Rom.6:3-7). Furthermore, in accord with this grace we are "put to death to the law *through the body of Christ*" (Rom.7:4).

A BODY ADAPTED FOR CHRIST

In Hebrews 10:5-10, the writer cites the Septuagint translation of Psalm 40:6-8a and comments on its significance in relation to Christ as being the great Antitype of all the sacrifices:

*Wherefore, entering into the world, He is saying,
Sacrifice and approach present Thou dost not will,
Yet a body dost Thou adapt to Me.*

*In ascent approaches and those concerning sin
Thou dost not delight.*

Then said I, "Lo! I am arriving—

*In the summary of the scroll it is written
concerning Me—*

To do Thy will, O God."

Further up, when saying that "Sacrifice and approach present and ascent approaches and those concerning sin Thou dost not will, neither dost Thou delight in them" (which are being offered according to law), then He has declared, "Lo! I am arriving to do Thy will, O God!" He is despatching the first that He should be establishing the second. By which will we are hallowed through the approach present of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.

However, instead of the line, "Yet a body dost Thou adapt to [or, for] Me," the Hebrew text reads, "(Both) ears You dig for me." Most English translations follow the AV, which paraphrases: "mine ears thou hast opened," conveying a sense of listening ears. This harmonizes with verse 8 where we read, "I delight to do what is acceptable to You, my Elohim." Some have noted a possible connection with the law's provision for a slave who prefers to remain in service to his master rather than being set free in the seventh year: "If the servant [slave] should say, yea say, I love my lord, my wife and my sons; I shall not go forth free, then his lord will bring him close to the elohim [arbiters], and bring him close to the door or to the jamb, and his lord will bore his ear with an awl; and he will serve him for the eon" (Exodus 21:5,6).

Indeed the reference to ears implies a sense of listening which is, in fact, the foundational requirement of a slave. In Hebrew *obedience* is *hearkening*, and in Greek it is UNDER-HEARING. This is symbolized for the loving slave whose ear is dug into by an awl. With reference to Christ, He took the form of a slave, and was extraordinarily obedient, that is submissively listening (by both ears) to His Father's will. To do what is acceptable to His God and Father is paramount to our Lord.

Yet also He was given a body in which this will could be carried out.

HEBREW POETRY

A distinctive feature of Hebrew poetry is the use of parallel thought-lines. Yet in Psalm 40:6, while the first and third lines are parallel, the thought seems to be interrupted by the second line, which lacks a parallel. Is it possible that the two middle lines, the one witnessed to by the Hebrew and the other as found in the Greek Septuagint translation, were both originally in Psalm 40? In that case there would have been a couplet of parallel lines within a couplet, which might be translated somewhat as follows:

*Sacrifice and approach present You do not desire,
 Yet a body have You prepared for me;
 (Both) ears You have dug for me;
 The ascent offering and sin offering You do not ask for.*

We can see how well these lines would lead forward to verse 8. Yahweh, David's Elohim, had given him a body (*cp* Psa.139:13-15) and listening ears so that he delighted *to do* what is *acceptable* to Him. David was a man of action whose major concern was to do the right and faithful things set before him by his God. Yet, despite his many acts of righteousness and faithfulness David also brought dishonor to God through his body of flesh (*cp* Psa.51). In the end there must be a Saviour, the Antitype of Psalm 40, Who would be given a body of humiliation and ears fully submissive to God's will and delight, even His desire (*cf* Isa.53:10).

In this way also Psalm 40:6 would even more clearly serve as a background to Philippians 2:6-8 as well as be even more thoroughly fitting in the context of Hebrews 10.

But whether or not this conjecture can be sustained, we can surely rejoice in our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose body was adapted for the salvation of sinners and Whose ears were fully submissive to what was acceptable to His God and Father.

D.H.H.

EDITORIAL

ROMANS chapter seven is an especially challenging section of Scripture, calling for careful and prayerful consideration *within the context of the evangel*. The entire epistle is written by Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, who was severed from the other apostles in order to bring *the evangel of God concerning His Son* (Rom.1:1-3). This has been burned into my consciousness from early youth, and I have tried to keep it in mind in preparing my articles on this letter.

This has not been so difficult in going through the sixty-four verses from Romans 1:18 through 3:30, for it is evident that this thorough exposure of human irreverence and unrighteousness is preparation for the revelation of God's righteousness made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ. Romans 3:21-5:21 is the evangel in its most fundamental glory. But starting with chapter six our apostle expounds the evangel as not only God's WELL-MESSAGE concerning what Christ has done for us in dying for our sins, and what this means for our future, but as the power of God even for our present salvation *as we are believing it* (cf Rom.1:16).

And here it must be distinguished from the law, God's word to Israel, given through Moses at Sinai. It is the evangel of God's grace concerning His Son, Who died for our sakes that is given to us as the source of spiritual power for our lives—not the law, but grace! This is essentially what the seventh chapter of Romans is saying.

Consequently, it seems especially important to me to

note and draw attention to the evangel as Paul brings it before us here. It was this which led me to see the word *Obedience* [UNDER-HEARING] in Romans 6:16 as a reference back to the evangel as stated in Romans 5:19 concerning the obedience of the One, Jesus Christ, and the word *Righteousness* in Romans 6:18 and 6:19 as a recapitulation of the evangel as first expounded in Romans 3:21-28, concerning the manifestation of God's righteousness.

Now also, as Paul contrasts these two messages of God, that of law and that of grace, I believe we need to keep all that Paul has said about the evangel in mind and give special attention to what he says here directly about the evangel in verses 4 through 6 and then in verse 25.

In this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*, we include three articles from past issues which have been of particular help to me in appreciating Romans seven.

Brother Knoch's study on Paul's use of the words *death* and *life* in both literal and figurative senses (p.51) is truly sensible and enlightening. It reminds us that every usage of such key terms must be kept in its own context.

Similarly, in his article, *What then is the Law?* Brother Coram supports this principle as it applies to Paul's writings and our need to hold fast to the evangel.

Then we reprint Brother Knoch's editorial for September 1930 concerning a sound *mind* (p.71). If our hands and feet are to be effectively directed in the right direction, it is of the utmost importance that our minds be focused on the evangel of God's grace.

Finally we share some brief notes on the chapter as a whole drawn from the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT, from George L. Roger's notes on Romans, and some previously unpublished notes by Edward H. Clayton (p.79).

My own notes on Romans 7:1-6 follow (p.87).

D.H.H.

FIGURATIVE DEATH AND LIFE IN PAUL'S EPISTLES

DYING AND LIVING are the most potent factors in human experience. Hence they are used in the scriptures, especially by Paul, for the most powerful spiritual realities. Before the saints literally expire, in their present career, they are represented as dying, dead, or entombed, as well as living, raised, roused, and vivified. We hope that these extreme contradictions will help all to recognize and appreciate figurative language, and to limit the scope of each figure to its context. No one can be literally dead and alive at the same time, nor can anyone die when he is dead, or be made alive when he is vivified, else death is no longer death, and life no longer life. In casual reading these figures may escape us. By grouping them and comparing and contrasting them, we may be able to discern their marvelous message with clarity and power.

The figure of proceeding from death into life is used by John of one who passes from unbelief into faith (John 5:24). It is not difficult to see the appropriateness of this figure, for before faith came we were not only literally dying, but were dead *to God*. that is, without any more active communion with Him than if we were corpses. But the statement is true only in things divine, for men are quite alive to that which pertains to this world. In Paul's epistles similar figures are used, but death there is usually associated with the *believer*. not the unbeliever, and it is connected with the death of Christ, in Whom we have died,

Let us note the striking contradiction between the two

figures of the believer, one of which looks upon him as having died, the other as living. In one series of passages we are represented as being dead (Rom.6:2,8,11; 8:10; Eph. 2:1,5; 5:14; Col.2:13; 2:20; 3:3). In the other we are alive (Rom.5:21; 6:4, 22,23; 8:2; 1 Tim.1:16, *etc.*). These contradictory statements should suffice to show that one, or both, must be taken figuratively. We could be these literally at different times; only figuratively can we be dead to some things and alive to others at the same time. Thus our body is dead because of sin, yet our spirit is life because of righteousness (Rom.8:10). Literally we would be all dead with a dead body, and all alive with a spirit that is life. Figuratively, we can hold them apart. Literally, the life that now is distinct from that which is to come (1 Tim.4:8). Figuratively we already possess eonian life, and we may rise from among the dead (Eph.5:14), we were roused with Christ (Eph.2:6; Col.2:12; 3:1), we may be vivified through the indwelling spirit (Rom.8:11).

DEATH, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Not only are we represented as both dead and alive, but we seem to die repeatedly. In the distant *past* we died together with Christ (Rom.6:8; Col.2:20; 2 Tim.2:11). At *present* we are dead (Eph.5:14), our body is dead (Rom.8:10), and we are exhorted to deaden our members (Col.3:5). But how can this be if we died with Christ? There has been no resurrection since, and it is not a resurrection body which is dead. Moreover, all saints who have died had still another death, which was in the future for them. This was a literal death. The first two must be figurative. So that death for us is in all three tenses, *past*, *present*. and, possibly, *future*. In Paul's latest revelations these great truths are enforced as never before. Were we actually vivified, how could we rise from the dead (Eph.5:14)? And why should we deaden our members?

Not all believers are alike dead. The nations, never having been under law, cannot, of course, die to it. But the Jew could not extricate himself from its thralldom in any other way than by dying to it. Exemption from it cannot be obtained by any other means. Through the body of Christ, according to Paul's evangel, he and his brethren according to the flesh are now released from its yoke (Rom.7:4,6). In Galatia, where this was not understood, and Judaizers were seeking to bring the believers among the nations into the bondage of the law, this is emphasized. Paul avers: "I through law, died to law" (Gal.2:19). The law itself, in this slightly different figure, slew him, and released him from its bonds. Here, we repeat, is a death that none but a Jew can die. And, we might add, if he does, he will probably be more alive to God's grace than ever!

DEATH TO OFFENSES AND SINS

Death to sin involves us all. In Romans Paul brings it up to show that grace does not countenance persistence in sin (Rom.6:1,2). In the previous section of the epistle there is justification from sin (3:24). But this may not keep us from sinning. So we are given the further truth that, in Christ's death we also were involved, and then we died with reference to *sin*, hence should no longer live in it. A slightly different turn is given this figure in Paul's later epistles, for there death is introduced as the basis of unity between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision, and as a foil for the succeeding vivification (Eph.2:1,5). During our lifetime, indeed, we both were guilty of sins. But God seeks to reveal the riches of His grace toward us by dealing with them long before we committed them. In Christ, we died to sins, offenses and lusts, when He expired on Golgotha. That it was at that time, and not after our acts had become facts, is especially clear in Colossians: "(in which you were roused together . . . you also being dead

in the offenses and the circumcision of your flesh) He vivifies . . ." (Col.2:12,13).

Even though we died long since, yet we are exhorted to be deadened, or put to death, our members which are on earth (Col.3:5). Alas, these often seem to be very much alive. Literally this could not be possible. But figuratively each figure fits its own context and is fraught with precious truth which in no way clashes. In other connections also, we are looked upon as dead. Paul exhorts us to rise from among the dead (Eph.5:14), which we could hardly do unless we were ourselves dead. In Romans he distinguishes between our body and spirit. The former is dead, the latter is life (Rom.8:10). Yet in Colossians it is the members of the *body* which are to be put to death!

DEATH WITH CHRIST

Our death with Christ involves our living, also, since He was roused from the dead (Rom.6:8-11; 2 Tim.2:11). From this we could easily reason that, since He cannot die again, neither can we, hence, for us there is no death, the resurrection is past already. But, even as our death with Christ is a figure (for we were not even alive at that time) so also is the life we have received. That is why the apostle adds, "Thus, *you* also *reckon* yourselves to be dead, indeed, *to Sin*. yet living *to God*. in Christ Jesus." The life is not literal, covering our whole experience, but only Godward. Much the same is brought before us in Colossians, where Paul says: "you died, and your life is hid, together with Christ, in God." The manifestation of this life awaits His presence. So also we died together with Christ from the elements of the world (Col.2:20). Figuratively we are not "living in the world," though it would be difficult to convince our fellows that this is literally the case.

The link between literal death and resurrection is usually the tomb. The fact that we were figuratively entombed

with Christ cannot lead to our literal resurrection but to that which is *like* it, a walk in newness of life (Rom.6:4).

The figure of death has many applications and must be interpreted in each case according to the context. It may refer to the *unbeliever*, who is dead *to God*. and it may denote the believer who is dead *to sin*. Figurative death is always limited *to* a particular sphere, while literal death includes all. Generally speaking, we die thrice. Twice figuratively, once with Christ in the past and again in our present reckoning. If the Lord does not come before, there is literal death in the future.

As our salvation at present does not directly affect our *bodies*, the figure of rising is not used as freely as *rousing* and *vivifying*, seeing that our *spirits* and *souls* are the sphere of God's power at the present time. Our bodies will not be changed until the presence of Christ (1 Cor.15:52). Whatever effect our salvation has upon our bodies comes through our spirit. We are inclined to think that the resurrection of the body is a figure suited to Romans, while Ephesians would use only the vivification of the spirit. Yet the contrary is the fact. It is in the second part of Ephesians, dealing with deportment, where we find the apt exhortation, "rise from among the dead!" (Eph.5:14). Here we are represented as dead. Yet the cry comes to us now, as it will come to the dead in the presence of Christ, to stand up from the surrounding corpses, that is, to walk as if our bodies had already been raised, when we will no longer be dragged down by its disposition, but conduct ourselves as we will do when we have a spiritual body. As we will see, the same truth is presented from the opposite side in Romans 8:11, where the spirit vivifies our mortal bodies. There the earnest, of the spirit which is ours now enables us to walk in measure as we will after being literally vivified, and have spiritual bodies.

The figure of *rousing* is in contract to *sleep*. We are rep-

resented as *sleeping* in the *night* (even though this is man's *day!*), and the time has come for us to awake (Rom.13:11), as well as having died. It is a question of sensation or consciousness, and is used in connection with offenses, sins and the lusts of the flesh (Eph.2:6). With reference to these things we were *roused* (together with some of the Circumcision), in Christ. The time element here is most interesting. This was done to two *groups* (*you* and *we*, Circumcision and Uncircumcision) in *Christ*. so could only have taken place when Christ was literally roused, on the third day after His crucifixion. Hence the verbs are indefinite, timeless. The participle BEING (2:1,4, 5) has no tense. It simply takes that of the context. The other verbs, *vivifies*, *rouses* and *seats*, are simply facts which may occur at any time. The context clearly puts all the action "in Christ," so that we were figuratively dead before we were born! More than that we were vivified, roused and seated among the celestials when He was made alive and ascended!

VIVIFICATION

Let us first fix the *facts* as to *literal* vivification. These are given us in Paul's great summary of human destiny (1 Cor.15:23) with such precision that we need never be in doubt on this grand theme. Let us cherish it in our heads and hearts: *in Christ, all shall be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation.* On *only three* occasions is there literal vivification. Except in the case of Christ, there is no individual operation of this kind. They are vivified as classes. No separate individuals will be vivified at the great white throne or even at the consummation. All who are Christ's must wait for His presence. There have been *resurrections* of individuals in the past due to His presence, but not *vivifications*. Apart from His literal presence there can be no

literal vivification. Apart from His presence, no saint will put on immortality. Until He trumpets, the dead will not put on incorruptibility. The mortal will not be swallowed up by life (2 Cor.5:4) until He comes. Then our celestial body, or habitation which is from heaven, takes the place of this groaning, mortal frame.

This is the way of *grace*! Let us not miss the richness and preciousness this truth contains! Only *grace* could exalt us before we degraded ourselves in sin. That our salvation is by *faith* is proof sufficient that it is in *grace*. Yet even that does not compare with placing us in Christ *before* our sins had been committed. Some are inclined to make faith a work of merit, and would limit the amount of blessing to the amount of faith. Notwithstanding God's plain assertion that *whom He justifies, these He glorifies also* (Rom. 8:30), some have even suggested that Ephesians is for only a few of the more faithful among the justified. This is the Galatian heresy in another form, a falling out of *grace*. *Glory* is as sure to the justified as to the glorified themselves. God spared not His own Son, but gave Him for the Roman saints, and together with Him He will *graciously* grant them *all*! (Rom.8:32).

The truth is that we are vivified in *Christ* (Eph.2:5), or *together* with Him (Col.2:13; 3:1). That we were literally in or with Christ on Golgotha, or received a deathless life nearly two thousand years ago, we hope no one will maintain. Yet that is the only Bible literal interpretation of the Greek text, as indicated by our being in and *together* with Christ. The life here spoken of we had before we were born and is the portion of all believers, even those who have died. It is not manifested now, but hid with Christ, in God. Christ is our Life. We cannot be manifested without Him (Col.3:3,4). This life was not *manifested* before we were born. It certainly cannot be manifested in our *death*, when it is hid even in our life. Apart from His pres-

ence, the world will never behold us as we are, even as it did not know Him in His humiliation, notwithstanding the life He lived and the deeds He did. Yet how grand is the truth that we are so involved with Christ that not only His death is reckoned as ours, but His vivification likewise! In fact we possess all that we will ever have in Him already, even if we do not yet enjoy it, as we shall in His presence.

We might reason that, since we were vivified in Him, we can by no means ever die, but go on living in spirit forever. But it would be just as logical to deduce that, since we were alive before we were begotten, we were never born. But it would be still more reasonable to say: since we were vivified and roused with Christ, the life and sensation due to this will be the same after death as before birth. As there was *none* before, neither will there be any after. But all of this reasoning is vain, for the vivification is figurative and not literal. We can test this very simply by the following phrase: for He not only rouses and vivifies, but *seats* us together among the celestials. Who would say that he has been literally seated at God's right hand since Christ ascended and took His place supreme? Moreover, a single individual is not in view here, but two groups. It is not that you have been seated there, with Christ, nor that you have been seated together with a Jew, but that both the Circumcision and Uncircumcision who received Paul's evangel are seated. A literal interpretation is excluded. It is contrary to the dictates of a sound mind. In the past as well as in the future vivification concerns *groups* or *classes*, not individuals.

That our joint vivification is not literal is evident from that fact that we are not actually roused from among the dead or seated among the celestials, as will be the case when our Lord comes for us. The literal sense is clearly evident from the connectives *in* and *together*. All is literally true of Christ. So close is our association with Him

that His glories are also ours, and will actually become a part of our experience when the time comes for the manifestation of the sons of God. And how can this marvelous matter be made plain to our minds and hearts more briefly and beautifully than by such a forceful figure? The offenses and sins were ours individually and literally, but the grace is only *in Christ*, together with all the saints of this administration. Christ is our Life, hence this does not date from our acceptance, but from His vivification. Now it is hid from the world, as He is, and it will not be manifested until the advent of His glory. This glory waits until Christ is manifested. Who would care to be glorified without Him?

Our present vivification is connected with our conduct, and arises from the figure that the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness. The argument proceeds: Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also vivify your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you (Rom.8:11). The homing of the spirit is a present experience and leads us into debt to the spirit. We should use it to put the practices of the body to death, and thus have a foretaste of the time when the body itself will be spiritual and we are actually vivified and beyond the possibility of death.

Were our mortal bodies vivified literally, then Paul would still be alive, as well as the Roman saints and, indeed, all believers since then would still be with us. Had the Romans received literal vivification, how could the apostle proceed to exhort them not to live in accord with the flesh, and to warn them that, should they do so, they are *about to be dying*? This statement, taken literally, has caused much concern, and obscured the whole teaching of the apostle as to grace, as if life depended on conduct. The

spirit that homes in us can, indeed, produce conduct like that which will characterize us when we are made alive in His presence, and if we live according to flesh it will lead to a walk *like* that of dying men. We keep on living literally whatever we do, but figuratively we live only when we put the practices of the body to death by the spirit which is homing in us.

As to time we were vivified with and in Christ in the past, we may be vivified by the spirit in the present, and we will be vivified by Christ's presence in the future. Thus we have vivification in all tenses. Yet it is evident that, if we were literally made alive in the past, there would be no need of it now, and, if we have it already, there is no need of it in the future. Both past and present are figurative, symptomatic, promissory, intimating and presaging the glorious day when our bodies will be made immortal or incorruptible and changed from soulish to spiritual and soilish to celestial.

The orthodox idea that the Christian "goes to heaven" when he dies probably arose from a misunderstanding of figures of speech and may have started as a "higher" interpretation of Pauline truth. It arose very early, for even in Paul's day there were those who taught that the resurrection was already past (2 Tim.2:18). It is being revived today, especially in Europe, and seems to be taught in America also. The idea is that, in Paul's later teaching, the believer receives not merely life, but vivification. That is, he cannot die, but lives on even when he seems to expire like other mortals. He already possesses life beyond death, so there is really no death possible for him. But this is directly contrary to the facts. Present vivification is taught in Romans, not Ephesians. Colossians expressly states that the life we have in Christ will not be manifested until He is. We are literally vivified only in His presence.

A. E. Knoch

WHAT, THEN, IS THE LAW?

OUR recognition of the place of the law is central to our grasp of the evangel. Yet for most, failure to recognize their exemption from the law (Rom.7:6), has meant failure to recognize the actual nature of the evangel as well.

We know that the law was given to Israel of old for their obedience. We know (since the law is a part of the sacred scriptures inspired by God) that it is given to us with a view toward teaching, exposure, and correction; even as, with a view toward discipline in righteousness (*cf* 2 Tim.3:15-17). Even so, it does not follow from the fact of our possession and profitable use of the writings of the law, that the law has been given to us that we might obey its precepts.

Some wish to claim that since all of God's commandments are "righteousness" (Psa.119:172, AV; "all Your instructions are righteous," CV), and since we are to pursue righteousness (2 Tim.2:22), that we must pursue obedience to the commandments of the law. This, however, will not do; for according to such reasoning, it would follow that we would be obligated to heed *all* the imperatives of the law, a proposition which, as far as we know, no contemporary proponent of so-called "commandment keeping" wishes to advocate.

How absurd: Since God never gives wrong instruction, all instruction given by God is given to us. Besides, "acting righteously," in itself, is a relative term. That is, "righteousness" must be judged in relation to one's calling and allotment; its scope encompasses all that is right for a man to do, *according to the divine administration which per-*

tains to him; under which he is called, and, called upon to be faithful to his God.

All scripture is beneficial with a view toward our *discipline* in "righteousness"; it is given to us unto this end. That is, all scripture is beneficial unto the end not only of our discerning that which is right for us to *know* concerning others, but specifically unto the end of our discerning that which is right for us to *apply* to ourselves. Yet how foolish to conclude that since all scripture serves with a view toward the accomplishment of this goal, that a certain portion of scripture (viz., the portion containing the precepts of the law) is therefore applicable to ourselves, with respect to our own obedience.

May God grant us wisdom to recognize, and reject, the persuasive words of human wisdom (1 Cor.2:4), the many specious arguments and illogical reasonings which are, in fact, but so much foolishness. "Be observing *accurately*, then, brethren, how you are walking, not as unwise, but as wise, reclaiming the era, for the days are wicked. Therefore do not become imprudent, but *understand* what the will of the Lord is" (Eph.5:15-17).

ACCORDING TO PROMISE

Both in Romans 4 and Galatians 3, the apostle Paul considers the same essential question, which is: "What, then, shall we declare that *Abraham*, our forefather, according to flesh, has found?" (Rom.4:1), Abraham, who "believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness" (Gal.3:6; cit. Gen.15:6).

Abraham (FATHER-HIGH-throng; for Yahweh had appointed him the forefather of a throng of nations; Gen. 17:5), at the time that Yahweh promised to make him into a great nation, was still Abram (FATHER-HIGH) and was not as yet the father of anyone.

Yet Yahweh had not promised to make Abram into a great

nation (or in him to bless others) *if* Abram would believe, or *if* Abram would obey. Instead Yahweh simply *informed* Abram of the good news which He had appointed for him:

"I shall make you into a great nation,
And *I shall* bless you,
I shall indeed make your name great,
And *you will* be a blessing;
I shall indeed bless those blessing you,
And *I shall* curse the one maledicting you.
In you all the families of the ground *will*
be blessed" (Gen.12:2,3).

Thus Yahweh foretold the lot of Abram, his descendants, and all the families of the ground. In light of the certain eventuality of the outcome, then, by the necessity of the consequence, it follows that no other outcome was possible.¹ Besides, Yahweh had not merely predicted what the future would hold, but what He Himself would make come to pass.

Paul by no means rehearses these matters concerning Abraham incidentally; much less does he do so gratuitously. Instead, Paul wishes for us to perceive what Abraham "has found," since God's ways with Abraham, in principle (both before he believed, in Genesis 12, and, much later, when he finally believed, in Genesis 15), are both representative of and precedent-setting for His ways with us (*cp* Gal.3:8,9).

Even as that which God had appointed for Abraham

1. The accurate *foretelling* of specific future events entails the *foreknowing* of these same events; the foreknowing of these events entails the *inevitability* of these events; the inevitability of these events entails the falsehood of traditional "free will" (i.e., the notion of a power of categorical contrary choice, even under exactly the same conditions). If a contrary course of events were actually possible, then Yahweh would know this to be the case. Yet such "knowledge," falsely so-called, would contradict Yahweh's actual knowledge; therefore, no such knowledge could ever exist, much less could the events which some imagine to be comprised therein, ever occur.

was determined by God, not by Abraham, thus also, that which God has appointed for us, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, is determined by God, not by ourselves, according to our deeds.

If we are Christ's, consequently, we are "of Abraham's seed" (metaphorically speaking); that is, literally speaking, we are enjoyers of an allotment *according to promise* (Gal.3:29; cf Prov.16:33).

If any should reply, "Yes, but the enjoyment of the allotment itself is out of obedience to law," Paul will rejoin, saying, "If the enjoyment of the allotment is of law, it is no longer of promise. Yet God has *graciously granted* it to Abraham through the promise [and therefore the allotment is *not* given out of obedience to law]" (Gal.3:18). Accordingly, "if those of the law are enjoyers of the allotment, [1] faith has been made void and [2] the promise has been nullified, for the law is producing indignation [not blessing]" (Rom.4:14,15a).²

"Therefore [the promise to Abraham] is of *faith that it may accord with grace*, for the promise to be confirmed to the *entire* seed, not to those of the law only, but to those also of the faith of Abraham, who is father of us all, *according as* it is written that, A father of many nations have I *appointed you*" (Rom.4:16,17a; cit. Gen.17:5).

ON BEHALF OF TRANSGRESSIONS

Since God has graciously granted the allotment to Abraham through the promise—and therefore, accordingly, through promise, has allotted the blessing of justification to us, out of Jesus Christ's faith (cp Gal. 2:16)—the burning question is: "*What, then, is the law?*" (Gal.3:19).

2. The only way obedience to the law could ever produce blessing, would be if the law were kept, perfectly and continually (cf Deut. 28:1-15).

"Brethren (I am saying this as a man), [even] a human covenant likewise having been ratified, no one is repudiating it or modifying it. Now to Abraham the *promises* were declared, and to his Seed. He is not saying 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of One: And to 'your Seed,' which is Christ.³ Now this am I saying: a covenant, having been ratified before by God, the law, having come four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not invalidate, so as to nullify the promise" (Gal.3:15-17).

"What, then, is the law?" Here is the answer: "On behalf of *transgressions* was it *added* . . ." (Gal.3:19a).

"Law changes sin from a mere mistake to the overstepping of a divine command. It enhances the sinfulness of sin. Transgression is sin against a known law, entailing not only the usual penalties, but the added displeasure of God against one who defies His precepts The promises Abraham received [which, incidentally, subsequently, came to be] in connection with the law, were unconditional; [ultimately speaking,] dependent only on God's faithfulness. They were given without any reference to the law and [thus] do not depend on any legal observance for fulfillment. When the law did come it did not confirm these promises. It was brought in to show how impotent their own efforts were when they sought to attain to Abraham's divinely given righteousness by the keeping of the law. The law hindered rather than helped. Instead of making them just, it drew down God's indignation for their failure to live up to it."⁴

3. Christ, our *only* Saviour, is represented by the *singular* "seed" of Abraham. That is, even as Abraham's offspring *alone* may possess their promised blessings, thus also our blessings in Christ depend *solely* upon His finished work (*cf Unsearchable Riches*, vol.81, pp.46-48, James Coram).

4. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, pp.234, 282.

Charin ("on behalf," CV) is the accusative form of "grace," and is used as a preposition with the genitive case ("of transgressions").

The Authorized Version, at least as interpreted by some, is very misleading here in its rendering "*because of* transgressions." The words "*because of*" have led some to imagine that transgression obtained prior to Moses; and that the reference here is merely to ceremonial laws which were temporarily added by Moses to an already extant timeless moral code (namely, to a code which, under Moses, was merely formalized as the "Ten Commandments"). All of this is perfectly false (as well as artful and unreasonable); yet it is instructive to note the lengths to which some will go in order to impose the law upon believers today.

The idea of the Greek word, *charin*, is that of an act done with the objective of somehow bringing favor (i.e., some type of benefit or advantage) to the object in view (*cp* Titus 1:5,11). This is just what the entrance of the law afforded to transgression. Hence the law was given *on behalf* of the resultant transgressions which came into being through the law. Where no law is, neither is there transgression (Rom.4:15); yet the bestowal of law gives rise to its violation, which is transgression. Transgression owes its very existence to law, and cannot exist apart from it. Thus, on behalf of transgressions, "law came in by the way, *that the offense should be increasing*" (Rom.5:20).

THE ESSENCE OF THE EVANGEL

The law, on behalf of transgressions, however, was added "*until* the Seed should come . . ." (Gal.3:19b). This fact is of special relevance to our understanding of the evangel, since we are apt to fear that our sins may bar us from its benefits.

In speaking of himself and of his fellow Israelites who had now obtained the evangel which he proclaimed (*cp* Gal.2:15), Paul declares:

“Now before the coming of [the] faith we were garrisoned under law, being locked up together for the faith about to be revealed. So that the law has become our escort to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. Now, at the coming of [the] faith [the faith of Christ; v.22], *we* are no longer under an escort, for *you* are all sons of God, through [the] faith [which is] in Christ Jesus. For whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ, in Whom there is no Jew nor yet Greek, there is no slave nor yet free, there is no male and female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus. Now if you are Christ’s, consequently you are of Abraham’s seed, enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise” (Gal.3:23-29).

As is true of all scripture, to avoid misinterpretation, this passage must be kept within its context and understood accordingly. The context is that of the epistle to the Galatians which is a defense of the exclusively-Pauline teaching of justification by faith (the faith of Christ). Specifically, the context is that of the evangel of the Uncircumcision (Gal.2:7)—the evangel *which* Paul was heralding among the nations (Gal.2:2).

Justification by faith is the essence of this evangel, the evangel of our salvation (*cp* Eph.1:13). Since Christ Himself died for our sins, our justification is the result! While He was given up because of our offenses, yet He has been roused *because of our justifying* (Rom.4:25). *This* is what makes Christ’s death for us good news!

Accordingly, then, the good news is that, apart from law (Rom.3:21), through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, we are being justified (declared righteous) *gratuitously* in His *grace* by God Himself (Rom. 3:24). This is in anticipation of our promised glorious vivification when we will actually be constituted righteous.

This evangel is “in accord with the faith of God’s chosen, and a realization of the truth which accords with devout-

ness, in expectation of life eonian, which God, Who does not lie, *promises* before times eonian, yet manifests His word in its own eras by heralding, with which [Paul# was entrusted, according to the injunction of God, our Saviour" (Titus 1:1-3).

These glorious declarations, however, are not revelations of the evangel of the Circumcision, but that of the Uncircumcision (Gal.2:7). Indeed, in a number of vital particulars, they are contrary to the Circumcision evangel. The evangel of the Circumcision consists only of pardon (which may be withdrawn); *it knows nothing of justification*. Under the evangel of the Circumcision, works of righteousness, according to Moses, are essential to life (i.e., to "remaining for the eon"; 1 John 2:17; *cp* Matt.7:21,23).

Yet under Paul's evangel, the evangel which, broadly speaking, is the evangel of the *Uncircumcision*, not only are we justified apart from law, but, "where sin increases, *graces superexceeds*" (Rom.5:20); where there is persistence in sin, grace increases accordingly (Rom.6:1), for life eonian (Rom.5:21). *This is not true under the evangel of the Circumcision.*

NO LONGER UNDER AN ESCORT

Therefore, *as it stands in relation to the Pauline evangel*, the law is nothing more than a *former* escort. It is but an erstwhile servant; a pedagogue-slave which, while useful in its day in its ministrations on behalf of children, is now rendered wholly redundant, since the children have attained their majority.

It was the custom in well-to-do Roman families, to have the boys *escorted* to and from school under the guardianship of a slave. Yet the grown sons would scorn the escort of their boyhood days. His presence would be an insult to their manhood. Similarly, those today who know their majority in Christ refuse the bondage of the law as both

unnecessary and humiliating. We are not children but sons. Law leads minors. Faith controls sons.⁵

Thus, on behalf of transgressions, the law was added (yet incidentally so, with respect to the original promises made to Abraham) *until* the Seed should come. Insofar as Paul and those of his fellow Israelites to whom this evangel had been granted are concerned, the law had become their escort to Christ. Now at the coming of the *faith* (through the advent of Christ; *cp* 2 Tim.1:10), *such ones* (“*we*”; Gal. 3:25) are no longer under an escort. Thus, whoever—*among those who are in view in this context*; namely, among those who are blessed according to Paul’s evangel—are baptized into Christ put on *Christ*, in Whom—with respect to Paul’s evangel and insofar as it is concerned—there is no Jew nor yet Greek, nor any other distinction, for all, thus blessed, are one in Christ Jesus (*cf* Gal.3:27,28).

In service, or in the *Lord*, the slave was still a slave, the sexes were still recognized; but—under Paul’s evangel—in *Christ*, in Whom we are complete (Col. 2:10), all physical distinctions vanish. By faith, all who are called according to the Pauline evangel (*cp* Gal. 1:6-9) have the same high place of privilege and are entitled to the promise and righteousness of which this evangel consists.⁶

Thus, in the accounting of God, we have been put to death to the law through the body of Christ (Rom.7:4). Hence, since it has no jurisdiction over us, we are *exempted* from the law (Rom.7:6). Righteousness is God’s gratuitous gift to us, through the work of Christ.

5. Adapted from the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.282, A. E. Knoch. It should be noted that in declining to subject ourselves to the particulars of the *Mosaic* instruction, it is not that we have been given over to lawlessness. The entreaties of Paul for service in the evangel, inculcate a far more august (and encompassing) “morality” than that of the demands of Sinai.

6. Adapted from CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.282, A. E. Knoch.

We are God's *chosen* ones (Rom.8:33); chosen before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4). Accordingly, God has graciously granted each of us a measure of faith (Phil.1:29); at least in the reality of Christ's sacrificial work, if not in a true understanding of its significance and consequences.

Since God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, we have the *expectation* of salvation (1 Thess.5:8,9). Truly the love and grace of God inherent in the evangel, is the secret of devoutness (*cp* 1 Tim.3:16). Since we *shall* be living together with Christ (Rom.6:8), let us be walking in a way well pleasing unto the Lord.

Insofar as the evangel itself is concerned, whatever we may think or whatever we may do is simply irrelevant. The evangel is impregnable. That is good news indeed! And, that is what constrains us to respond to it worthily—to be adorning the teaching that is of God, *our Saviour*, in all things (*cf* Titus 2:10). J.R.C.

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THE SPIRIT OF A SOUND MIND

THE recognition and glorification of God *as God* is the basic qualification for the mental apprehension of truth. In the measure in which we deny His divinity or devise a dual deity our minds will falter and we will fail to grasp God's revelation of Himself, either in nature or in His Word. Those who do not hold to the recognition of God become mentally disqualified (Rom.1:28). Those who do not laud and thank Him as God have no proper premise for logical reasoning. Their deductions are vain and their heart is dark.

The basis of all sane and satisfactory thinking is the great truth that *all is out of God, and through God, and for God*. If you deny this, the foundation of a sound mental structure is lacking. It will affect all of your thought processes. This it is which afflicts the wise men of today. They are building castles in the air. Evolution goes back, back—to nowhere. The further back it goes, the more inexplicable is the riddle of creation, which it succeeds in shelving instead of solving. It is far easier to account for creation as it is today than involute in a primordial germ. The moment we learn that *God is the source of all*, reason reigns and revelation explains.

The same is true when we begin to realize that *all is through God*. The present perplexing chaos is not resolved by the injection of another God to account for its evil. This explanation has been current for millennia, but it has paralyzed reason and darkened intelligence. It denies that all came out of God and that all is for Him. With a God in

the background Who is operating the universe in accord with the counsel of His own will, we can gaze upon the seeming inextricable maze and see the outlines of His grand purpose shaping to His glorious end.

That *all is for God* is the most potent mental medicine which has ever been manufactured. It is not too much to say that the only rational reaction to orthodoxy is insanity. No human mind dares to use its full functions to face the future as it is usually set forth. That way madness lies for those who have the mental equipment to rationalize and realize its awful implications. A God Who will lose the greater part of His creatures is hardly a safe sheet anchor in the storms to come. If He could not save all, He may lose all. There are no halfway measures with absolute deity. But when we know that all—the losing as well as the saving—is of Him, then we may also rejoice that, *when the process of revealing Himself has been accomplished through sin and sorrow and suffering*, then He will have *all for Himself*, as He has said.

We merely mention this great truth because we desire to devote considerable space to the *mind*, as connected with God's revelation. Emotion has largely displaced mind in many quarters. The fact that the learned are largely apostate has prejudiced us against mental processes. We do not see that it is the *lack* of sound mental principles which is misleading the learned. God does not denounce mental exercise. Transformation, by mental renewal, is the first step in walking with Him (Rom.12:2). We are beginning to realize that we can be of more help to the saints in directing mental methods than in correcting the errors to which false reasoning gives rise.

We wish to emphasize one point, which our readers can confirm for themselves by means of a concordance. *Reasoning is never commended in the Scriptures*. We are to believe God, not to make deductions from His words after

they have been combined with our own error. The latter has become almost universal. This accounts for so many divergent "interpretations." There is no cure for the present distress apart from a vigorous mental grasp of the word of God and a smashing attack on the false mental processes by means of which "truth" has become an antonym of the Scriptures. We call for an exposure of every teaching that masks as truth, that is reasoned from the Scriptures, yet fails to accord with its microscopic accuracy.

The arguments against the truth we teach are multiplying so rapidly that it is impossible to answer them all in detail. Nor is this necessary, for they all have this in common: they are based on reasoning *from* the Scriptures, instead of implicit belief *in* God. They usually are a form of syllogism, in which one of the premises is not fully expressed, in order that the conclusion may seem to be Scriptural. All that is necessary is to clearly state the premises, and the illusion vanishes. We wish to show our readers how to meet these objections for themselves, and especially to forestall the objections of those who are honestly desirous of the truth, yet are mentally misled by the error which they hold, and on which they base their thinking.

Too many of the saints are not open to this salutary mental readjustment. They are impatient of "syllogisms" and "premises." These names should not stumble us. We are constantly making syllogisms and using premises in our thinking. Is it not well that we should give them a handle, so that we may control them? Most reasoning is done in the dark. If we wished to thread a needle, and the blinds were drawn, we would stop to raise them. This is what we hope to do. Let us never reason without throwing a searchlight on our premises, to see if they are true. They very seldom are. The result will be that we will reason less and less, and believe more and more.

No better example can be given than the passage to

which we have already referred. All is out of, and through, and for God. Nothing is more reasonable, yet how unnecessary to prove it! All that human reason, in its present plight can do, is to seek to disprove it. Yet the moment that is attempted, mental retribution operates to disqualify the mind of the reasoner. He seeks to limit it by inserting the word "good." All *good* is of God, but evil is not! This flies in the face of the context, for it concerns God's repudiation of Israel and the locking of all in stubbornness. This is the opening wedge for the final deification of the devil and the dethronement of the deity. Reason leads to darkness. It is most unreasonable in the face of revelation. Let us test all attempts at logic, and reject every conclusion that makes the slightest discord with the minutest element of the sacred originals.

Since my earliest fellowship with God's people I have been rebuked for what was then called "head knowledge." Lately it has been strikingly stated thus: "Paul worked with his hands, not with his head." It is distinctly disconcerting to be called to task for this failing of mine. I cannot help it. It is inherited, in part. I have never learned to think with any other member of my body. When I came to know God I gloried in the fact that He had not given me the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a *sound mind* (2 Tim.1:7). I am somewhat dubious about Paul. Easily the most intellectual of all the inspired writers, I have taken it for granted that he was not averse to moderate mental exercise.

But I wish to assure my objectors that I also work with my hands. For most of the years of my ministry I made my living with my hands (though not to the entire exclusion of my brains). I am a printer. Quite a little of the mechanical work on the magazine and our other work is done by me. Perhaps I ought to say that my writing is done by my hands. Even Paul did not do that!

I am being continually classed with the Scribes of our Lord's day, because they knew the letter of the Scriptures. But our Lord did not denounce them on that account! It is no crime to know exactly what God has said! It is no proof of apostasy! Alas! how many are sheltering themselves behind a comfortable and lazy ignorance! How many practically reject God's written revelation by claiming to have a special endowment which enables them to know the truth without the labor and toil of recovering it in the Scriptures! I confess that I am compelled to study and investigate and search and continually readjust myself to God's living oracles. Many claim to be more fortunate. But, as they differ among themselves, only one *can* be right. *None* can be right!

Interpretation, in these degenerate days, has become almost wholly inference. Even inference is too strong a term. It is assumption, supposition. It rests chiefly on the fact that modern minds are so muddled, that any relationship of thought is mistaken for reasoning. It seems that, while we may not use our minds in sound and sensible inquiry, it is perfectly proper to use them in unsound speculation. It is quite right to formulate a theory and appeal to passages which have hardly a remote relation to the subject. It is quite commendable to propose a series of propositions, which convey a hazy impression and suggest a conclusion which clashes with clear statements of God's word!

We have need that God should keep our minds or apprehensions as well as our hearts, in Christ Jesus (Phil.4:7). Satan is blinding the *minds* of unbelievers (2 Cor.4:4). Paul prays that we may apprehend, or *mind* (it is the same word), his knowledge. Our Lord rebuked his disciples repeatedly because they did not *mind*, or apprehend, His words (Matt. 15:17; 16:9,11; Mark 8:17; John 12:40).

The relative importance of the mind in the present administration may be gathered from the frequency of

the occurrence of *nous*, MIND. It occurs only once before (Luke 24:45) and twice after Paul's epistles (Rev.13:18; 17:9), but over twenty times in the course of his letters. These are so suggestive and helpful for those who imagine that the mind is a hindrance to spirituality that we give all of them herewith.

One of the most solemn passages in the prison epistles refers to the mental state, the comprehension, or *through-mind*, of unbelievers. Their comprehension is darkened (Eph.4:18). Shall we be like them? Because mental keenness is not of itself sufficient to give us the knowledge of God, shall we glory in stupidity and denseness? Peter, who is generally supposed to have been an "ignorant" man, exhorts his readers to gird up the loins of their comprehension (1 Pet.1:13). Surely, we cannot do less, for Paul, we feel sure, used his feet to walk, his hands to work, but his mind to think.

Our transformation is effected by the renewing of our minds (Rom.12:2). Those who always want to be "practical" are usually impatient of doctrine and stress deportment. Mental renewal is a prime necessity if we wish to please God. Only thus can we know His will. This is not confined to Romans. It is amplified in Ephesians. The only way to put off the old humanity is to be rejuvenated in the spirit of our minds (Eph.4:23). The last occurrences are very searching, as they seem to apply with special force to these days. We read of men of a *decadent* mind (1 Tim. 6:5). Let us not boast in this as some are doing. Those who withstand the truth are of a *depraved* mind, disqualified for the faith (2 Tim 3:8). Are we in this class? It is only as we humbly acknowledge the prevalence of these dire conditions, and the possibility that we also may be tinged with them, that we have any assurance that we are qualified to grasp God's revelation of Himself.

nous, MIND in the Concordant Version

Luke	24:45	Then He opened up their <i>mind</i> to understand the scriptures
Rom.	1:28	God gives them over to a disqualified <i>mind</i> .
	7:23	warring with the law of my <i>mind</i>
	7:25	with the <i>mind</i> am slaving for God's law,
	11:34	For who knows the <i>mind</i> of the Lord?
	12: 2	by the renewing of your <i>mind</i> ,
	14: 5	fully assured in his own <i>mind</i> .
1 Cor.	1:10	to the same <i>mind</i> and of the same opinion
	2:16	did anyone know the <i>mind</i> of the Lord?
	—	yet we have the <i>mind</i> of Christ.
	14:14	yet my <i>mind</i> is unfruitful.
	15	be praying with the <i>mind</i> also.
	—	be playing with the <i>mind</i> also.
	19	speak five words with my <i>mind</i>
Eph.	4:17	in the vanity of their <i>mind</i> ,
	23	be rejuvenated in the spirit of your <i>mind</i> ,
Phil.	4: 7	being superior to every <i>mental</i> state,
Col.	2:18	affectedly puffed up by fleshly <i>mind</i>
2 Thess.	2: 2	not quickly shaken from your <i>mind</i> ,
1 Tim.	6: 5	altercations of men of a decadent <i>mind</i>
2 Tim.	3: 8	men of a depraved <i>mind</i>
Titus	1:15	But their <i>mind</i> as well as conscience has been defiled
Rev.	3:18	Let him who has a <i>mind</i> calculate the number
	17: 9	Here is the <i>mind</i> which hath wisdom.

Though not in Paul's epistles, the first occurrence is most suggestive, in this connection. The disciples had been with our Lord, yet had failed to grasp the vital points in His message. In resurrection He meets them again and works a special miracle to enable them to understand the Scriptures. What does He do? What part of them does He affect? He opens their *mind* (Luke 24:45). This is what is needed today. Let us not ignore or disparage the mind. It is the only medium through which we can understand God's word.

God gives over *those who refuse to recognize Him* to a disqualified mind (Rom.1:28). This is basic and important. The vanity of the world's wisdom lies in the fact that it excludes God. The truth of any system of theology is in direct ratio to its recognition of Him. Do you wish to have a mind qualified to enter into God's revelation? Then believe this simple statement: "All is out of Him and through Him and for Him." This is the only rational foundation for all mental processes. Deny this, in any degree, and your mind will suffer. This is the great premise from which alone sane conclusions may be drawn. It is the only proposition which can heal the mental mystification of God's saints. All who deny this are lost in futility and mental fog.

A. E. Knoch

STYN VOGEL

Our dear sister, Styn (VanHolten) Vogel, age 88, beloved wife of Brother Peter Vogel for sixty-five years, was put to repose on April 19, 2014. Born in the Netherlands she had lived for many years in Canada, most recently in Hamilton, Ontario. Her obituary in the Hamilton newspaper ends with a favorite verse of hers, testifying to her faith: "In Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor.15:22).

WALKING IN WISDOM TOWARD THOSE OUTSIDE

It is wisdom to deal with men in accord with God's will and purpose concerning them. If we imagine that those outside are doomed to destruction or eternal torment, it is practically impossible to avoid a hardening of the heart in regard to them, which will lead us to think and act contrary to the basic truths of their creation and reconciliation in love. Thinking of them as so much waste in God's operations in turn reflects upon His wisdom and love. These false conceptions of God's creation and goal, outside the Son of His love, make a wise walk toward those outside impossible.

What if they are the vessels of God's indignation now? In due time He will use them for His glory. We, the vessels of His grace, have no more right to His favor than those without. May this thought humble us before them.

A.E.K.

THOUGHTS ON LAW AND SIN

THE gospel declaration made to saints that "you are not under law" (Rom.6:14) is very distasteful to many of them because they suppose that Christian conduct consists of obedience to a law which demands of man only what is holy and just and good. Nevertheless, it is a central feature of Paul's evangel that the saint has been exempted from that same law. The need for this exemption is shown in this chapter, and the fact that such a need exists and that it demands deliverance from the mastery of law is eloquent testimony that there remains in the saint something that is not subject to law, nor indeed can be.

Because Paul proclaimed deliverance from law by the death of Christ the legalists perpetually joined issue with him. This feature of his gospel, absent from the gospel of the Circumcision, well nigh cost Him his life (Acts 21:28). It was this difference between their two gospels that made Paul withstand Peter at Antioch, that led to his declaration that justification is by faith and not by works of law, and that "I, through law, died to law, that I should live to God" (Gal.2:11-21). And it was the efforts of the legalists to subvert the gospel that occasioned the writing of the epistle to the Galatians, in which Paul shows that legalism for them would mean nothing short of separation from Christ (Gal.5:1-6).

There is a profound need for such a discussion as this chapter gives. It is made necessary by all that Paul has said about our crucifixion with Christ. There is nothing like this chapter elsewhere; it is fundamental to all that Paul in his

other epistles has to say on the subject of the saint's walk and his freedom from law as a rule of spiritual conduct. He defended that part of his gospel which declared that God's righteousness is reckoned to the believer by referring to the Hebrew Scriptures concerning Abraham's justification, and showed that his justification was not through law, but through faith. But when he proceeds to show that the saint is made dead to the law by the body of Christ, he supports the revelation by no scripture, because this is part of the secret of the gospel concerning which the Hebrew Scriptures were silent. He first interpreted the purpose of law as a preparation for a gracious justification (3:20), and now he relates his experience under law as proof of the need of deliverance from it in order to a walk which is worthy of the Lord. The law cannot sanctify and transform any more than it can justify. On the contrary, it forbids us to reckon ourselves dead to sin and alive to God, because it applies law to the sin which God has judged, and from which He justified us by death; it aggravates sin in the flesh and stirs into activity the law of sin which is in our members, and which brings us into captivity. Thus the teaching of Romans 6:1-14 involves death to law as well as death to Sin.

G.L.R.

Or are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law), that the law is lording it over a man for as much time as he is living? (Rom.7:1)

The apostle now addresses particularly those who have been under law, that is, who were of the Circumcision. His appeal, however, is not to the law itself, but to the nature of all law, that it has jurisdiction only over those who are alive.

A.E.K.

The conjunction "or" refers back to the statement of 6:14; you are not under law. It introduces a proof of that assertion, viz. law is limited to the living.

E.H.C.

For a woman in wedlock is bound to a living man by law. Yet if the man should be dying, she is exempt from the law of the man. Consequently, then, while the man is living, she will be styled an adulteress if she should be becoming another man's, yet, if the man should be dying, she is free from the law, being no adulteress on becoming another man's. (Rom.7:2,3)

Verses 2 and 3 provide an illustration of freedom from law by death. Death is the only release from law. In the illustration a case is chosen where death leaves a living one in a new position.

E.H.C.

The law of wedlock is given as a well-known example. A woman's subjection to her husband lasts only for his life. During his life she may have no relations with other men. After his death the ties which bind her to a new husband are just as sacred as those which united her to the former one.

A.E.K.

So that, my brethren, you also were put to death to the law through the body of Christ, for you to become Another's, Who is roused from among the dead, that we should be bearing fruit to God. (Rom.7:4)

The illustration is now applied to the saints. The woman died to law by the death of her husband; so the saints died to law by the body of Christ. The woman, being freed, might become another's; so the saints, released from the mastery of law, become Another's. The result of exemption from law is that the saints may be fruitful to God.

E.H.C.

A wife and her husband are one flesh (Gen.2:24), hence the *wife* dies with the husband, but the *woman* remains. Those united to Christ under law died with Him to the law. Union with Christ in resurrection is a new relationship beyond the sphere of the law.

A.E.K.

For, when we were in the flesh, the passions of sins, which were through the law, operated in our members to be bearing fruit to Death. (Rom.7:5)

The sphere of the old life, before faith came, was “in the flesh.” Then “the passions of sins, which were through the law, operated in our members to be fruitful to death.” Thus is emphasized the necessity for death to law and to sin.

E.H.C.

Paul does not preach Christ as He was presented to Israel. The proper Object of our faith is the One Who died, was buried, and rose again, in Whom is all our deliverance. Further, he presents the saints as baptized into Him, so that they share, as well as His death to sin, His death to law. In Christ Jesus they are carried out of the old creation with its expectation of blessing in the kingdom.

G.L.R.

Yet now we were exempted from the law, dying in that in which we were retained, so that it is for us to be slaving in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter. (Rom.7:6)

“Yet now;” here is the saints’ present position—“exempted from law,” for “when dying” we died to that in which we were retained. The saints are severed from the old to take up the new. Letter and spirit, in scripture, do not signify the mere difference between the literal and essential sense, but respectively indicate law and life. We are “to be slaving,” for deliverance from law does not relieve us from serving, but rather introduces us to service produced by the operation of spirit, which is our new life.

E.H.C.

Exemption from the law applies only to those who were under the law. As the law is not unjust, like Sin, but just and holy, they continue to serve, no longer in letter, but in spirit.

A.E.K.

What, then, shall we declare? That the law is sin?

May it not be coming to that! But sin I knew not except through law. For besides, I had not been aware of coveting except the law said, "You shall not be coveting." Now Sin, getting an incentive through the precept, produces in me all manner of coveting. For apart from law Sin is dead. Now I lived, apart from law, once, yet at the coming of the precept Sin revives. Yet I died, and it was found that, to me, the precept for life, this is for death. For Sin, getting an incentive through the precept, deludes me, and through it, kills me. So that the law, indeed, is holy, and the precept holy and just and good. (Rom. 7:7-12)

The mistaken deduction from the foregoing (verses 1-6) is that the law itself is sin. Else why cease to serve its letter? Or else how does it make sin more sinful and transform it into an offense? Sin is not known in its true character except through law. Instead of sin being ignorant inability, it becomes the opposite. It is active hostility. The law which seemed to be given to regulate, only roused it. Sin is dormant or dead until law comes and gives it life. The law which should have given the *sinner* life, gave life to *sin*. It should have been the death blow of *sin*, but it became the death of the *sinner*. All this shows how futile it is to try to reform or regulate or conquer sin. It not only acts in darkness and ignorance but transforms the very light into an agent of death. The law offered life to those under it, on terms which, apart from sin, were all that could be desired. But sin not only disabled them so that they could not take advantage of its provisions, but involved them in its condemnation by stirring their passions against its just decrees.

A.E.K.

The sin of coveting lies not in the evil of the thing desired, but in the very desire itself. The other precepts forbade overt acts which might be observed by others.

Saul had evidently got past the nine precepts with the feeling that he was blameless, but the tenth detected the first motions of sin in the inner and hidden life; it passed below the external behavior to the hidden movement of lust. A deep, spiritual purpose underlies the precept; it bids one to be content with what God gives. Desire for more calls God's will in question. The precept is used to discover in the human heart all manner of lawless desire. G.L.R.

The teaching that the saint is exempted from law leads to a serious inquiry regarding the character of law. The nature of law is fully vindicated; the law makes sin known by developing the specific hostility of sin; this function of law does not constitute the law to be sin; it is not the fault of law.

Sin exists apart from the law, and the latter only brings to light how bad matters are, making clear the necessity for the salvation of the evangel.

Sin finds incentive in the law's precepts. In a figure, sin, apart from law, is dead, yet sin uses law to effect, not the intention of law, but activities which accord with its own character.

The "I lived" of verse 9 becomes "I died" in verse 10 in the view of the precept. The insidious nature of sin is such that a "precept for life" becomes, because of sin, a precept "for death."

Verse 11 explains the "I lived" and "I died." Sin finds its power in the law's precept, and deludes, and kills.

The conclusion is unmistakable; the law is holy, with precepts holy, just and good. The fault is the fact of sin.

E.H.C.

Become good, then, death to me? May it not be coming to that! But Sin, that it may be appearing Sin, is producing death to me through good, that Sin may become an inordinate sinner through the precept. For we are aware

that the law is spiritual, yet I am fleshly, having been disposed of under Sin. (Rom.7:13,14)

Still another query; did good (that is the law) become death? No! Sin leads to death. Sin misses the mark even when it has instructions from that which is good. E.H.C.

From the supposition that the law, being holy and just and good, involved him in death, it seems that what is good may become the cause of death. But such is not the case. It was not the *law* which produced death, but sin, misusing law. The real and apparent functions of the law are very different. And, in order to effect its real object, it was necessary that it should not appear on the surface. The apparent object of the law was to give life to all who consistently and constantly kept it. As it never gave life to anyone, for no one was able to fulfill its demands, it appears as if the law has failed of its primary object. And, further, as it revived the passions of sin which were dormant, it seems to have defeated its own aim. But the real object of the law was to reveal the inordinate sinfulness of sin, and in this it was most successful.

A.E.K.

For what I am effecting I know not, for not what I will, this I am putting into practice, but what I am hating, this I am doing. Now if what I am not willing, this I am doing, I am conceding that the law is ideal. Yet now it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin making its home in me.

For I am aware that good is not making its home in me (that is, in my flesh), for to will is lying beside me, yet to be effecting the ideal is not. For it is not the good that I will that I am doing, but the evil that I am not willing, this I am putting into practice. Now if what I am not willing, this I am doing, it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin, which is making its home in me.

Consequently, I am finding the law that, at my willing to be doing the ideal, the evil is lying beside me. For I am

gratified with the law of God as to the man within, yet I am observing a different law in my members, warring with the law of my mind, and leading me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom.7:18-23)

This is the experience of one who does not realize his death to sin and the law, but who is endeavoring to keep the letter of the law. He finds that the law of sin in his members is far more potent than the law of God, which appeals to his mind. He *wants* to do good, but cannot. He does things which he hates to do, hence charges his misery to the indwelling sin, which has taken possession of his body. He is a wretched captive. This will be the experience of all who make an earnest effort to please God by obeying the letter of that law which was broken even before it reached the people (Exodus 32:19). A.E.K.

A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? Grace! I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Consequently, then, I myself with the mind, indeed, am slaving for God's law, yet with the flesh for Sin's law. (Rom.7:24,25)

What is the answer to this wretched man's cry? It is *grace*. There is no other deliverance possible. This brings us back to where this digression began, the reign of Grace at the end of the fifth chapter. It is only as we recognize the imperial sway of Grace, putting us beyond all possibility of condemnation, whether we sin or not, that we have real liberty and power sufficient to effect not only what was demanded by the law, but those higher duties which far transcend the righteous requirements of Sinai. Then we will not be wretched and self-occupied, but happy and exulting in God, in Whose favor we are basking, and Whose delight we are, in Christ. A.E.K.

The preceding notes were selected from the writings of E. H. Clayton, A. E. Knoch and George L. Rogers.

TO BECOME ANOTHER'S

WE have become His Whose body was crucified for us and Who is roused from among the dead (Rom.7:4). This revelation of our place before God and in the world is set before us in a context announcing death to the law. We are justified in God's grace through the faith of Jesus Christ, apart from works of law (Rom.3:21,22). Law came in by the way that the offense should be increasing. Yet where sin increases, grace superexceeds (Rom.5:20,21). In view of our current lives as believers of this evangel we are directed and invigorated by this message of grace, centered in Christ Jesus, our Lord. We are not under law, but under grace (Rom.6:14). We are put to death to the lording of the law. And we are brought under the lording of Christ as He is made known in the evangel of God, the One Who suffered in body obediently unto death, and was roused from among the dead.

We do not become Christ's with respect to justification and peace before God by keeping the law, nor is our walk in the Lord empowered by its precepts. We belong to Christ. He is the *Another* of Romans 7:4. He is Grace Personified. In this way He lords it over us in our daily lives, by means of the word of God's grace concerning His death and His rousing from among the dead, and our identification with Him in these supremely critical events. Law tells us what we must do; the evangel of grace, centered in Christ, tells us what God has done through His Son. Where Christ is recognized as the Channel of God's grace for life and peace, there the believer bears fruit to God.

THOSE WHO KNOW LAW

Now Paul addresses those who KNOW law, saying: "Or are you UN-KNOWING, brethren, that the law is lording it over a human for as much time as he is living?" (Rom.7:1).

No doubt, as Brother Knoch wrote, "The apostle now addresses particularly those . . . who were of the Circumcision." Yet very few of us have escaped the impression that, in some sense, we are under the law. We need Paul's vigorous reminder here that we are exempt from it and are standing before God in grace alone. Perhaps our apostle would be surprised to see how widespread the Galatian error is found among us today. In any case, we truly would be sorely impoverished without Romans 7.

When one who knew the law asked Jesus, "Teacher, by doing what should I enjoy the allotment of life eonian?" the Lord said, "What is written in the law? How are you reading?" And the lawyer answered, "You shall be loving the Lord your God out of your whole heart, and with your whole soul, and with your whole strength, and with your whole comprehension, and your associate as yourself." Then the Lord said, "Correctly have you answered. This be doing and you shall be living" (Luke 10:25-28).

Thus Jesus made it evident to this law-expert that he was not doing what the law demanded. Yet the very foundation of the Lord's teaching was a sharpening and deepening of the law given at Sinai: "Till heaven and earth should be passing by, one iota or one serif may by no means be passing by from the law till all should be occurring . . . For I am saying to you that, if ever your righteousness should not be superabounding more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, by no means may you be entering into the kingdom of the heavens" (Matt.5:18,20).

Again to the rich young ruler who asked, "Teacher, what

good shall I be doing that I should be having life eonian?" He answered, "If you are wanting to be entering into life, keep the precepts" (Matt.19:16,17). Then when Jesus defined the law in accord with its strictest demands, "the youth came away sorrowing" (Matt.19:22). As with Saul of Tarsus, a growing acquaintance with the law "killed" his self-deceived assurance.

The law's dominance over Israel was not changed when John the Baptist announced, "For the law through Moses was given; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Grace was necessarily added to law, for apart from the precious blood of Christ there is no ransoming of Israel from their vain behavior (1 Peter 1:17-21). Yet they remain under the law throughout the millennial kingdom in accord with the new covenant (*cf* Isa.51:4-8; Jer.31:31-34; Ezek.36:24-28). The Circumcision evangel remained one of faith plus works (James 2:8-19), of grace joined to law keeping.

On the other hand, in accord with the evangel given him by the ascended Lord, Paul says to us, "You are not under law, but under grace" (Rom.6:14). As for life eonian, he writes: "The *gracious gift of God* is life eonian, in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.6:23). Life eonian for us is solely the effect of God's grace in the giving of His Son Who died for our sakes while we remained sinners. If this is not clear enough, our apostle tells us bluntly that we were put to death to the law through the body of Christ and are exempted from it (Rom.7:4,6).

AN ILLUSTRATION

The illustration given in Romans 7:2,3 of exemption from the law by means of death is both fitting and instructive. In this case, a woman in wedlock is put to death as a wife when her husband dies. But she remains alive to become another's without being an adulteress. She is dead in one

sense, but alive in another. To be *exempt* from the law of the man (Rom.7:2) is to have died to that law, just as those who have been put to death to the law (Rom.7:4) are exempted from it, dying to its authority over them (Rom.7:6). The Greek verb rendered "exempt" is the same word as that translated "nullify" in Romans 6:6 and 1 Corinthians 15:24, and that rendered "abolish" in 1 Corinthians 15:26. In its word elements it is DOWN-UN-ACT. In our vernacular we might say, "put down and undone." It is a parallel term to the verb *die*, and is nearly as strong in expressing a decisive termination.

The woman, as a wife, died when her husband died. The law of the husband was no longer lording it over her.

SO THAT

"So that, my brethren, you also were put to death to the law through the body of Christ, for you to become Another's, Who is roused from among the dead" (Rom.7:4).

We learn as a result of this picture that our identification with Christ in His death (*cf* Romans 6:2-11) means not only removal (in spirit now and in full reality in the future) from Sin's lordship over us but also from the lordship of law.

But why give so much space to this?

We have only to compare the general understanding of our position under grace with what Paul says here to come to appreciate this chapter. Even in commentaries on this scripture the impression is often made on our minds that in some way to be under grace involves being under law. Some may say explicitly that we are exempt only from the lording of the "ceremonial" law, and not at all from the "moral" law. Others may rightly point out that we are not under the condemnation of the law, but deny (or at least fail to note) that Paul is speaking first of all of the *lording* of the law over the human (Rom.7:1). What Paul says

here displays the reality of his opening words in this epistle: Paul was *severed* for the evangel of God. What Paul writes here is distinct and differs from what is said concerning the law outside his writings.

CHRIST'S BODY

The death of Christ for sinners comes before us here in the words "the body of Christ." This means His suffering and death in His own literal body, in that body which was adapted for Him (Heb.10:5,10) for this very purpose that He would be able to die for sinners. It was that body in the form of a slave and the likeness of humanity in which He humbled Himself to the death of the cross (Phil.2:6-8). It was that body in the likeness of sin's flesh in which God sent Him to die for the condemnation of sin in the flesh (Rom.8:3). In being baptized in spirit into this death and entombed together with Him we have been put to death to Sin (Rom.6:2-10). But also, by this same means, we have been put to death to any lording of the law over us.

Paul speaks of Christ's body with reference to what he has just said about our body. Our body of flesh is a "body of Sin" (Rom.6:6). It is a "mortal body" (Rom.6:12), that is, a dying body in which Sin reigns (Rom.5:21). Ever since sin and death entered into the world through the one offense of Adam, human bodies have been bodies of humiliation (Phil.3:21), bodies of flesh in which, from that time, Sin makes its home (Rom.7:17,18,20). We cannot change this situation. There is only one way for it to be changed once and for all, and that is by death, which puts an end to the mortal body of sin, and a rousing to life in a new body in which we are no longer dying, and Sin no longer reigns. In that Christ's body was put to death, so our body of sin and death is put to death when we are identified together with Christ in His death.

Hence the believer who, by the death of Christ, is put

to death, not only to Sin, but also to the law and its lordship is brought under a new lordship. In Romans 6:14 the replacement of law was called *grace*. Here the new Master is revealed to be *Christ*, Whose body suffered death on our behalf, and Who is roused from among the dead. The word, *grace* in 6:14 and the words, *Another's, Who is roused from among the dead* in 7:4 are equivalents. *Grace* is a one-word summation of the evangel which concerns the Son of God, Whose body was put to death on behalf of the sinner and Who was roused from among the dead, no longer dying, but living to God. That which lords it over us is not "you shall do, and you shall not do," but: "*Christ* died for our sins . . . and *He* has been roused the third day" (1 Cor.15:3,4); "*Jesus our Lord* . . . was given up because of our offenses, and was roused because of our justifying" (Rom.4:25); "while we are still sinners, *Christ* died for our sakes" (Rom.5:8); "the gracious gift of God is life eonian in *Christ Jesus, our Lord*" (Rom.6:23).

As Paul will soon express it (though in negative terms), since we are Christ's, we have His spirit (Rom.8:9). To belong to Him, and in holding this in mind and heart, the spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of sonship and the spirit of expectation and endurance, and of self-humbling and submissive listening to God's word for the glory of His God and Father (*cf* Phil.2:5-8), begins to take hold in our lives.

ROUSED FROM THE DEAD

The death of Christ is chaos and emptiness and darkness (*cp* Gen.1:2) apart from His rousing from among the dead. Apart from His resurrection, we are still in our sins (1 Cor.15:17), and when we die, that would be the end of us and any possibility for God's creation of life on the earth having any purpose for His glory. Sin and its reign, death and its reign—these cannot come to an end apart from His rousing.

This reference to the rousing of Christ from among the dead receives a full exposition in 1 Corinthians 15:12-57. Our hearts are rejoiced and our current lives stabilized by this message of victory over death and life to come:

Christ has been roused from among the dead, the First-fruit of those who are reposing. For since in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified . . . Then shall come to pass the word which is written,

Swallowed up was Death by Victory.

Where, O Death, is your victory?

Where, O Death, is your sting? (1 Cor.15:20-22,54,55)

What happened in Eden is undone. It is now certain that death will be "abolished"—DOWN-UN-ACTED. Indeed the tragedy of Genesis 3 is more than undone; it is justified by the achievement of God Who brings all evil to good by the death of Christ followed by His resurrection.

He was roused from among the dead! And we belong to Him!

BEARING FRUIT TO GOD

We are under grace. We are Christ's. This is so that we may be bearing fruit to God (Rom.7:4).

Once again we remind ourselves that the "may" does not mean "ought to," or "possibly," but rather expresses a result contingent on what has just been said. We have become Christ's, Who is roused from among the dead. On the basis of the certainty of this we shall certainly be bearing fruit to God in the oncoming eons. Even as Christ is roused and living to God so also we shall be living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Rom.6:11), bearing fruit to His glory. This speaks of the future.

But this has important reference to the present. What shall be affects us now as we are believing it. In our stand-

ing before God the passions of sins which operate in our flesh, bearing fruit to Death, that is, the chaos and nothingness of Death as a power, are things of the past. This is our present position in spirit. There is divine power in this evangel of what Christ has done and what shall be and in the revelation that we are identified with Christ in His death. The power is in the message of grace, not that of law. Law leaves us with much despair because it centers on us and what we *have* to do. The grace of certainty that we shall be living to God, which is based on what Christ has done, bears fruit in our lives even now as we hold fast to it. It, not law, bears fruit of love and joy and peace that honors God.

Yet if we suppose that grace is the law of Exodus 20 or Matthew 5 by a new name, we will be greatly impoverished. As Paul will soon show we are not under the law that says "You shall not be coveting" (Rom.7:7). There is no spiritual power for us in that instruction even though it is spiritual in speaking of spiritual behavior (Rom.7:14). The spiritual power for us is in the word that while we are still sinners who are disposed in flesh to covet, Christ died for our sakes. The transcendent riches of God's grace train us, as they did Paul, to be content in that which we are and have (Phil.4:11). So it is that, on the basis of the pit-ies of God, Who has justified us gratuitously in His grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, Paul entreats us not to be coveting (*cf* Rom.12:1; 13:9).

A SLAVERY OF LOVE

We are under the power and influence of the evangel and are devoted to it, listening to it and invigorated by it. That is what Paul means by the verb "slaving" in Romans 7:6. Here Paul continues to associate the evangel with the highest form of slavery, in which there is love and devotion toward the master.

So it was with Paul himself who writes as a slave of Christ Jesus, severed for the evangel of God concerning His Son (*cf* Rom.1:1-3). Our apostle was not ashamed of this evangel even though it did not afford opportunity to gain praise for himself for making some contribution to its successful work of justification and the enjoyment of the glory of God. He had come to realize that he could contribute nothing, and in that he was unable to carry out all the requirements of the law, he was under condemnation. Grace was his JOY indeed. It was fully centered in Christ. This was his life, and this was his message. As he was the happy man of Romans 4:8, so he was the thankful slave of Romans 1:1, and of Romans 7:6.

So also it is for us who belong to Christ and eagerly and submissively listen to ("obey") the evangel which announces the obedience of the One, Jesus Christ (Rom.5:19; 6:16). Like slaves we listen from the heart to the type of teaching to which we are given over (Rom.6:17)—to the type of teaching which centers on Christ. In this we focus our minds on the evangel of God, manifesting the righteousness of God and His love and glory. And this, in turn, affects our tongues and hands and feet. What a happy and powerful position, to be thus enslaved to God as He is made known in and through His Son (*cf* Rom.6:22)!

NEWNESS OF SPIRIT

It is not God's word given at Sinai that directs us in our living, but His word which tells of the death and rousing of Christ. This word of God is imbued with "newness of spirit," in contrast to the law which is "oldness of letter." In 2 Corinthians 3:1-11 Paul speaks of this evangel which he was dispensing as "a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit, for the letter is killing, yet the spirit is vivifying." The new covenant which will be established for Israel will be one of law infused with the spirit of God, so that

they will know the law and do it. But the evangel as “a new covenant” is the message of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as it is set over us who are believing and who have been put to death to the law. This is a dispensation of righteousness, manifesting the righteousness of God in the justification of those who are products of the faith of Jesus Christ (*cf* Rom.3:21-26). “Now the Lord is the spirit; yet where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Now we all, with uncovered face, mirroring the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the spirit” (2 Cor.3:17,18).

Romans 8 will give much attention to the spirit as it vibrates over us in the evangel of God. Paul will call this evangel “the spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom.8:2). The law given through Moses will operate in the lives of Israelites by spiritual power in the kingdom ahead. The evangel of God operates now among believers as spiritual power in their lives, affecting their walk and filling their heart with happiness and peace. As slaves of the message of Christ’s obedience and God’s righteousness we do not get slavery’s spirit to fear again, but the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying “Abba, Father!” (Rom.8:15). We are slaves who are sons. The two positions are one.

Spirit has been well described as “the imperceptible, intangible power of action, life and intelligence.”² In the future, terrestrial kingdom, God will give His spirit to Israel in association with the letter of the law. But for us, in the future, yet also now in accord with the earnest of the spirit, it comes in association with the evangel of God’s grace.

Thanks be to God that He has opened our ears and hearts and lives to this powerful word.

D.H.H.

2. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.232.

EDITORIAL

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"), though much remained still to be done. And since that time, while the Concordant Version of the New Testament has come through six editions, the Old Testament in its entirety has remained until quite recently "a work in progress."

Now after all these years, with thanksgiving to God, we announce that the entire CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT has been sent to the printers and should be available as a single, hardbound book by the end of November. (See particulars on p.114.)

Yet the translation of both parts remains a work in progress, as it must. We must be the first to admit that, despite our efforts, there remain inconsistencies in renderings and uncertainties as to the exact wording of certain original texts. Nevertheless, we strongly believe that the Concordant Version, as it now will exist in two separate volumes will prove unusually helpful in conveying God's Word to those who take advantage of its features.

Some of the features of consistency and harmony with original terms and grammatical forms provided by the CV are reflected in the articles appearing in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*. The word "salvation" as it relates to Israel, is given careful attention as used in its contexts, in

the article, "Thus *All* Israel Shall be Saved" (p.99). Then follow some notes on problems related to the translation of the book of Job, with special attention to an emendation made in the CVOT in the first line of Job 19:26. This relates to the blessing of expectation given to this man in his extreme sufferings, and is truly harmonious with the context (p.107).

In the center of the magazine are four articles focusing on the evangel of our salvation, that most central and pivotal message of the Scriptures concerning the death of Christ on the cross followed by His resurrection, and the effects of these astounding events. In all four articles, "Because of Another" (p.115), "Three Laws" (p.123), "Law and the Knowledge of Sin" (p.126), and "God's Law of Grace," this message is distinguished from the law set over Israel at Sinai, especially as this theme is traced in Romans 7. The evangel of God's grace, which indeed is found in every translation of the Scriptures, is a "scandalous" message (*cf* p.117) in relation to human and religious pride, yet in view of the fact that we all are sinners, infirm in the flesh, it can only be a message of highest joy. It is a message of God's joy to us, stirring us to return joy to Him in the form of thanksgiving.

Finally we reprint an article written especially for young people by a former editor of our magazine (p.137). Yet as when it first appeared, so today it is so reflective of God as He is revealed in His Word and of His purpose as it is unfolded in His Word that we are sure it will encourage our readers of every age.

Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen! (Eph.3:20,21)

D.H.H.

THUS ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED

NOW ISRAEL is *calloused, in part*; but when the Rescuer arrives out of Zion, *all* shall be *saved* (Rom.11:25-27). Not all of Israel are saved in this era of grace. Only a few accept the Messiah and are joined to the nations in blessings celestial. Neither are all of those scattered among the nations saved, for this is a time when God chooses and segregates an "out-calling," or ecclesia, commonly called a church. We have an *individual* salvation, not a national one. But, in the kingdom eon, God will deal with *nations* as such. These are brought before Him at the beginning of the millennium (Matt.25:32). Israel, as the head of the nations, will receive a special blessing. All Israel shall be saved, that is, all, *as part of the nation*. It is not easy for us to understand this, as it is contrary to our experience. We are inclined to make deductions from our standpoint, as if everyone had an individual salvation.

Let us note *where* this statement is found. It is not in the early part of the Roman epistle, where our personal justification and reconciliation are expounded. It belongs to the *national* section (9:30 to 11:36). There we read that *Israel*, pursuing a law of righteousness, into a law of righteousness does not outstrip (Rom.9:31). Yet this was *not true* of each *individual* in the nation. Paul certainly became subject to God's righteousness (10:3), although his people as a whole did not do so. In speaking of Israel, or any other nation, we should keep this in mind. Statements concerning a nation may be the reverse of the truth if applied to some individuals in it.

It is God's purpose to bless the *nations* through Israel. We could reason that, if Israel is not in her place, then there will be no blessing to anyone. But this is not so. Rather the *national* blessing is less in degree, and different in kind. The nations receive conciliation and take a place as God's witnesses under the figure of the olive tree. In this illustration it is vital to remember that the boughs of the olive tree are not saints or believers, but nations. The salvation of believers will not be affected even if the nation to which they belong should lose its place in the olive tree. The salvation of individuals at the present time does not follow the pattern of salvation in Israel, but goes back to Abraham and Adam, before Israel was a nation and God dealt with single individuals.

The question often arises, does this include every Israelite of all times, from Jacob on to the consummation? Or is it limited by the context to the nation which is present at the coming of Christ? That it includes the whole nation at that time is clearly indicated. And that every Israelite as well as every other human being will be saved *at the consummation* is also beyond question, for God is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of those who believe (1 Tim.2:4, 4:10). But there are many passages which conflict with the thought that unbelievers, the stubborn, those who reject their Messiah, will receive *eonian* life, or enjoy the allotment of the kingdom. Our Lord told the nation of His day plainly that the kingdom would be taken away from them (Matt.21:43). Most of His parables were spoken in order to warn them of this. It will be given to the regenerate nation of the day of Yahweh, who will bring forth its fruits. The "church" has tried to bring forth kingdom fruit, but it has all been sour and rotten.

All Israel has been saved before. Jude reminds his fellow Israelites that the Lord, after *saving* the people out of the land of Egypt, secondly *destroys* those, who do not

believe (Jude 5). Very few of those who were saved out of Egypt reached the land of promise. This should show us that salvation does not always mean what is popularly supposed. That is why there is no agreement among the sects of Christendom, especially where there is no correct cutting of the word of truth. The various salvations which belong to Israel, such as the exodus, should not be used to inject works and conduct into present day salvation, which is entirely a matter of faith and grace.

ALL WILL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM

All Israel of the past will assuredly not *enter* the kingdom, as every saved one of that day certainly will. The evidence for this is so overwhelming that it seems superfluous to elaborate upon it. Matthew's account alone is full of intimations that the scribes and Pharisees, as a class, not only do not enter the kingdom, but shut it up against themselves, and then hinder others from entering (Matt.23:13). John the Baptist had warned them before this that they were candidates for fire, not for the kingdom (Matt.3:1). Hebrews, which was written after the nation had rejected the ministry of Acts, as well as that of our Lord, makes it clear that the tragedy of the wilderness was being repeated, for, as few who came out of Egypt entered the land (Heb. 3:12), so it was also with those who had tasted the powers of the future eon and the celestial gratuity and then fell aside (Heb.6:4). The promise was to *all* but only *some* enter (Heb.4:1-6).

ALL ISRAEL

All Israel shall be saved because the salvation, in this case, is that of a nation, not of individuals. We must keep in mind the parallel of the deliverance from Egypt. Not a single soul was forsaken, and even the cattle were all taken. Not a hoof was left behind (Ex.10:26). *All Israel was glori-*

ously saved. Not from *sin*, for they transgressed grievously in the wilderness. Not to *heaven*, for they looked forward to the promised land. They were saved from *Egypt*, and its bondage. So, in the future, even though their sins will be eliminated, and they will be rescued from the power of the nations, the question of individual *faith* is not in view, and we must not consider that each member of the nation is justified, or reconciled, or glorified, as is the case with us when we are delivered. The millennium must be kept in accord with God's plans for the *rule of the earth* through a *people*, while we are in harmony with His rule of the heavens through a single Man, Christ Jesus.

THE MILLENNIUM

The Lord's day, or millennium, is not the last eon, and does not bring us to the consummation. It is still far from perfection. In it and at its end great rebellions against Yahweh will occur among the nations. Millions upon millions will be killed by the plague and by fire from above. Even in Israel, Gehenna, the nearest to the popular conception of "Hell," will not be a permanent institution. The nations who come there to worship before Yahweh will not only see the magnificent temple in the holy oblation, but they will go forth to see the corpses of the mortals who trespass against Him, for their maggot shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched (Isa.66:24). Transgressors will not go unpunished, as they are today, but weeded out without delay. They will be made an example from which the representatives of the nations may learn the peril of disobedience.

Because the last lines of Isaiah ended the prophecy with such a terrible scene, the readers in the synagogues repeated the preceding verse in order to close the book with words of comfort. This illustrates a widespread impres-

sion, current today, that the millennium is God's ultimate. The word has become a synonym for unalloyed bliss. The dictionary defines it as a period of great happiness, good government and freedom from wickedness. This is only partially true. It is not until the next eon that God wipes away all tears and does away with dying and doom. These will still be present in the millennium, even within the holy nation itself.

Even in Israel there will be sin (*cf* Isa.66:23,24); but "No longer shall there be thence an infant of few days, Or an old man who shall not fill his days; For a youth shall die at a hundred years old, And he who misses a hundred years old shall be lightly esteemed" (Isa.65:20).

Dying is not done away with until the following eon, in the new earth. Death is not abolished until the end of the succeeding eon.

THE NEW COVENANT

Works characterized the old covenant made with Israel at Sinai. The one who should *do* the law should live by it (Rom.10:5, Lev.18:5). In contrast to this Yahweh will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah in the Lord's day. He will impart His laws to their comprehension and inscribe it on their hearts, so that they will understand it and have the *desire to do* it. We are tempted to consider this the best that anyone could have, and that it insures sinlessness. This is not the case. Let us remember that it is still within the eons. Let us especially note that the new covenant deals with *man's works* rather than God's. True, He removes many of the hindrances and disabilities which made it impossible for them to fulfill the law in the past. But *it is still law and human works*, and God's object remains the same, and that is to show them that, even with "divine aid," man is

still self-centered and a failure, and far short of God's goal, in which He is All in everyone.

The new covenant is based on *flesh*, for it is only for the descendants of Israel according to the flesh. Paul learned that, in his flesh, dwelt no good thing (Rom.7:13-23). Even when he was gratified with the law and willing to do it, his flesh interfered. Almost all religion, especially the "Christian" religion, seeks to improve the flesh. This is good, but it should not come under the name "Christian." In Jerusalem there is a chapel on one side of the main building for Christians, on the other for Moslems. When I announced that I would speak on the glories of Christ, they tried to have me change to a theme less objectionable to the Moslems. And the churches? They are now "institutional." The missions? They lure with meals. *Flesh! Flesh!! Flesh!!!*

When Israel is saved there is a proper place for such things. God gave them manna for their bodies in the desert. He gave them water in the wilderness. He will sustain them in their great affliction in the future. He will give them great abundance in the land. He sends His spirit on all flesh. The flesh has been at a vast disadvantage hitherto. Perhaps it only needs a better environment! This is the question to be answered in the early state of the kingdom. The new birth, the heart of flesh, do *not* lead to God's goal. They are not sufficient. They give place to a new *creation*.

ISRAEL'S SALVATION A TEMPORARY ACT

In the original the grammar helps a great deal to make a passage like Romans 11:25,26 this clear and definite. It declares that the saving here spoken of is an *action* going on at the time indicated by the context. It must be distinguished from the *fact*, as "He saves us" (Titus 3:5), and the *state*, "You are [have been] saved" (Eph.2:5). We ought to say that all Israel *will be being saved* when God deals with

them at the commencement of the day of Yahweh. But, this is too cumbersome in English. To keep these helpful, enlightening distinctions before the reader, the CV marks them when the English does not express them. Thus, in this case there is a small vertical line before 'save. This alone will answer the questions which arise, for the verb refers only to an action which will take place in the future. It has no bearing on Israel in the past or present. Neither does it say anything about them thereafter. Had it been a fact, as "God saves all in Israel," it would be timeless and true, even if the action has not been completed. Had it indicated a state, then all Israel would be in a saved condition, and none of them would lapse thereafter. It is neither of these. Such grace is reserved for us.

This passage is much more definite once we grasp these simple grammatical distinctions. Many another passage may be cleared up in the same simple way. That is why the new edition of the version marks them when necessary. That the grammar, as thus explained, may be relied upon, is confirmed by many passages in the Scriptures. Many passages might be adduced to show that many Israelites are *not* included in this salvation of all Israel at this time. And they will show that this salvation does not necessarily include all Israel later on.

Our salvation is a timeless fact and a state or condition, while the salvation of Israel is an act, an event, a passing incident. Because Christendom chooses to extract its theology from the Circumcision writings rather than from Paul's, the salvation of the churches is usually a temporary action, induced by abnormal soulish excitement, brought about by physical distress or surfeit, by music or display, and lasting little longer than their duration. It is, in fact, a degenerated, exaggerated copy of the salvation of Israel. It should be, in contrast to this, an appeal to the spirit. It should not even "bring men to Christ." *It should bring*

Christ to men! It should herald *God's* attitude to them, because of the sacrifice of Christ. It should lead *away* from the *flesh*. It does not promise wealth or health. It prays the *enemies* of God to be *conciliated* to Him. It imparts God's righteousness to the sinner.

A. E. Knoch

DEATH CONDEMNS AND JUSTIFIES

Faith is a personal matter before God, but justification is not, any more than condemnation. We have no choice or chance when it comes to sin, not even as Adam *seemed* to have had (although he also was carrying out God's intention). All humans are sinners because of Adam's transgression and the *dying state* which he transmits to every one of his descendents. So also is justification. All will eventually be justified (Rom.5:18), not by their own acts, or by law keeping, but by Christ's *death*, even as was the case in condemnation. The *death* of One Human, Jesus Christ, will eventually justify all. Grace makes all *believers* just now. Even as *mortality* makes men sinners in Adam, *death* justifies them in Christ.

Mortality, our present state of *dying*, is a confused condition in which there is a mixture of right and wrong. Mortals can accomplish some commendable deeds, but the tendency is to sin. So also in the case of those in Christ who *died* with Him and have been roused with Him by faith. The spirit of life in them *wills* to do well, yet the sin that homes in them keeps them from accomplishing that which they desire (Rom.7:18). Humans are unjust sinners in Adam, whatever good they may perform. So also, saints are justified in Christ, whatever sin they may commit. It is not *our* acts that really matter with respect to justification, but the one offense of *Adam* and the one sacrificial death of *Christ* which count.

And it is a great help to us to see the manner of His death. We were *crucified* with Him like felons, for such we are. Yet we will be glorified with Him like paragons, for such He is.

The law only emphasized sin, heightening it to transgression, and so became a dispensation of *death* (2 Cor.3:7). It came in by the way, that the offense should be increasing. Paul's brethren, the Jews, were put to *death* to the law through the body of Christ (Rom.7:4). This does not imply that they should or would break God's law, on that account. On the contrary, the *just* requirements of the law are fulfilled by those who are not walking in accord with flesh, but in accord with spirit (Rom.8:4).

A. E. Knoch.

I WILL STAND ERECT

WE READ in chapter one of the book of Job: "There was a man in the land of Uz. Job was his name. This man was flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil. Seven sons and three daughters were born to him, and his acquisitions came to be seven thousand small cattle, three thousand camels, five hundred pair of oxen and five hundred jennies, beside very many servants, so that this man came to be the greatest of all the sons of the east" (Job 1:1-3).

We know of Abraham's brother Nahor who lived in Syria of the two streams and had eight sons (Gen.22:20-23; 24:10). The name of his firstborn Uz. The area where his clan lived, was probably called the country of Uz; it was in the general area where Abraham sent all the sons he had from Keturah. He sent all her descendents eastward to the land of the east (Gen.25:6), where, as it seems, Job had become the greatest man.

The book of Job does not refer to any events recorded elsewhere in Scripture, not even to those that were always in the mind of an Israelite. In the book of Job there is not the slightest reference to the call of Abraham, nor to Israel's family in Egypt, nor to Moses, nor to Yahweh's covenant with the sons of Israel.

The book of Job tells us the story of a man whom Yahweh called: "My servant Job . . . there is no one like him on earth, a man flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil" (Job.1:8).

These had been Yahweh's words to the Adversary (Job

1:8). Then Yahweh gave him permission to attack Job, who now lost his farm animals his flocks, his camels, and finally his children. When Job received the bad news, he fell to the earth, worshiped Yahweh and said, "Naked I came forth from the belly of my mother, and naked I shall return there. Yahweh, He gives, and Yahweh, He takes away. Blessed be the Name of Yahweh." (Job.1:21). Job's intense faith saw the hand of God in everything that had happened to him so far. The Adversary's first attack against Job had failed.

In his second attack the Adversary smote Job with evil boils from the sole of his foot unto his scalp (2:7). The various symptoms of this skin disease with darkened and peeling skin add up to a hideous picture of a man whose sight had become utterly repulsive to others, even to his own wife. She said to him, "Are you still holding fast to your integrity? Scorn Elohim and die." Yet we read, "In all this, Job did not sin with his lips" (2:8-10) as he sat on the ashes.

In those days, a heap of dust, ashes and dirt could be found at the entrance of small towns. The basis of the mound was the ash that had been removed from baking ovens, and in the course of time it was reduced to fine dust and often reached a considerable height. Then the mound served both as a watchtower for the city and as the resort of outcasts. Job had accepted his new status as a piece of human trash, hence he was sitting in the midst of ashes.

The second chapter of Job ends with a short report about three of Job's friends who, after some lapse of time, had heard of his misery. Obviously Job had been the leading person in his own country, somewhere in the east; actually he had been greatest of all the sons of the east. And his three friends were probably influential in three neighboring countries.

The fact that they met by appointment shows that they were already acquaintances who felt it would be better to come *together*. They certainly were genuine friends,

and their motives for coming to condole with him and to comfort him, were sincere. When these three wise men finally met Job, they were horrified and speechless. Since they were true friends, they brought to Job the compassion of a silent presence, at least for the first seven days and seven nights.

The concluding sentence in chapter two reads: "And there was no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great." In chapter 3, verse 1, we read: "Afterward Job opened his mouth, and he maledicted his day, saying, "May the day perish in which I was born."

From hereon the following forty chapters are written in archaic Hebrew poetry which is almost a language by itself, with an ambiguous grammar and an almost total lack of conjunctives, prepositions, relative pronouns or signs for the accusative. Archaic Hebrew poetry in this, the oldest book of the Old Testament, uses these particles very sparingly so that specialists in the study of Job are still uncertain about the meaning of many passages which seem to be obscure, even incomprehensible. Let me give you an example: In Job 15:5 we have a verb form followed by two nouns. The literal translation is: "He trains your depravity your mouth." Now, who is *he*? So we go back to the preceding verse which ends with the word El, the singular of Elohim, God. But it could never be God Who is meant when It says, "He trains your depravity your mouth." Since *depravity* is masculine in Hebrew, we may conclude that Eliphaz was saying to Job, "For *your depravity* trains your mouth."

This is a very simple example of ambiguous grammar in archaic Hebrew poetry. Most other cases are more complicated, even more so, as Job's friends just do not speak like pious Israelites would. In the speeches of these forty chapters truth is mixed with error. Some statements may be understood as questions, but the lack of connective particles leaves many lines obscure. In addition there are many

words that occur only once or twice, and only in Job, and they may be either Hebrew or Aramaic. Hence we have followed Brother A. E. Knoch's advice and have consulted the best commentaries of those scholars who have given the matter special study.

The book of Job ends with chapter 42 where, in verses 2-6, Job speaks to Yahweh and says:

**I know that You are 'able in all things,
Wherefore I have professed ideas
+when I was not understanding,
Marvelous thoughts from me, +that I did not 'know.
+With the hearing of the ear I had heard of You,
+But now my eye sees You.
Therefore I 'recant and repent
On soil and ashes.**

The following verses in chapter 42 are again in normal Hebrew prose, where we read that Yahweh Himself blessed the latter years of Job more than his beginning, so that he came to have a flock of 14,000 sheep, 6,000 camels, 1,000 pair of oxen and 1,000 jennies, twice as many as there had been his before the disasters. He also came to have seven sons and three daughters. These children were equal in number to those he had lost.

Job continued living (obviously in the best of health) for a hundred and forty years. He saw his sons and his grandsons (and *their* sons and grandsons) four generations. "Then Job died, old and satisfied with days." Here the Septuagint adds that "all his years were 248 years when he died, satisfied with his days. And he will rise again with those whom Yahweh raises up."¹

These words from the LXX may be a reflection on a few

1. The CVOT does not include this LXX reading, but it may be well for the student to add it by hand.

lines of poetry that are one of the highlights of the book of Job. In chapter 19, verses 25 and 27, we read these inspired words, spoken by Job:

**“Yet as for me, I know my Redeemer¹ is living,
And after this He shall arise on the soil;
Whom I’ shall perceive for myself,**

These three lines are easy to comprehend; the expectation of resurrection lies at the very heart of Job’s faith.

Yet the passage between these two verses is difficult to translate; it may serve as an example of the numerous lines that are ambiguous as they stand. Here as elsewhere in Job, the various English versions differ; and their translators admit that no single English translation is adequate to reflect the original Hebrew text. Here are more problems than in most other parts of the Old Testament.

If the Septuagint, the oldest Greek translation of the Hebrew text, were a faithful reflection of the original Hebrew wording, our job would be relatively easy. But the LXX translators omitted about 400 lines, especially where the meaning of a Hebrew sentence was hard to understand. Elsewhere the LXX translators often used a paraphrase or some kind of an explanation for a difficult Hebrew wording, instead of providing a literal translation.

One of the best commentary on translational problems in Job is that by a Frenchman, Edouard Dhorme.² It deals with every Hebrew word that is either rare or misspelt, and shows whether or not a satisfactory translation is to be found in the LXX or any other Greek, Aramaic, Syriac and Latin translations, and also what other commentators had to say about the problem.

Following a suggestion made by this scholar; we changed

2. A COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB, translated by Harold Knight, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1984.

the sequence of letters and the vocalization of two Hebrew words in verse 26a, and we arrived at the following translation of Job 19:25-27.

- 25a ***Yet as for me, I know my Redeemer¹ is living,**
 25b **And after this He shall arise on the soil;**
 26a **And ^{af}behind my skin ~I will stand erect~,**
 26b **And from my flesh I shall perceive Eloah,**
 27a **Whom I' shall perceive for myself,**
 27b **And my own eyes will see, and not an alien¹.**

Hebrew poetry consists of thought rhymes, mostly in parallels. In verse 25a, we have: *is living*; this is balanced by: *arise on the soil*, in 25b. Then Job wants to emphasize that he himself, in person, will be present when his own eyes will see the Redeemer.

So he says in verse 26a, of the time when his present repulsive skin is gone, that is, "behind my skin ~I will stand erect~." This thought is balanced by the words in line 26b, "From my flesh I shall perceive Eloah [i.e., Christ].

This expectation of Job found its *first* fulfillment in chapter 42:5 after he had gained a fuller knowledge of God and of himself, so that he could say, "Now my eye sees You," for the eyes of his *heart* had been enlightened by God Himself.

Yet Job believed also in the ultimate fulfillment that comes through physical resurrection after death. And so in chapter 19, verse 27, Job adds,

**Whom I' shall perceive for myself,
 And my own eyes will see, and not an alien¹.**

Job expected to see Christ with his own eyes.

Before our emendation in verse 26a, we had an incomprehensible line: "And behind my skin they will encompass this." All translators and commentators agree that the Hebrew text is corrupted here. Many solutions have been offered, some of them requiring elaborate changes

of the Hebrew text. I know from Brother A. E. Knoch that he would have accepted a minimal change of the Hebrew wording as long as the thought rhyme remained intact. E. Dhorme insisted on just these two points, namely minimal change, and thought rhyme. And so he arrived at this emendation, "I will stand erect," in parallel to "I shall perceive Eloah." I am sure Brother A. E. Knoch would be fully satisfied with this emendation. However, in the late twenties, when he made a tentative translation of Job, no such commentary on Job was available. And so he was not satisfied with his first draft of his translation; he put it aside to be taken up under more propitious circumstances.

The epistle to the Hebrews begins with the statement that—by many portions and many modes, of old, God had been speaking to the fathers in the prophets. In the book of Job, God spoke to a man who in his day, was the greatest of all the sons of the east who were famous for their wisdom. Job was not an Israelite, but he may have been a descendent of Abraham's brother Nahor, who also believed in Elohim (Gen.31:53). Job may well be called a prophet in his own right, since he was inspired to speak the words about the Redeemer Whom he expected to see with his own eyes at the resurrection.

In our translations from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, we have preserved the three different forms of the principle Divine title by transliterating them into their nearest English equivalents. The shortest form of the Divine title is the singular *El* that occurs times over two hundred times in the Old Testament, and may be rendered, *God*, *Deity*, *Disposer* or *Subjector*. The plural form *Elohim* occurs about twenty-four hundred times. We find this longer form in Job only in the Hebrew prose of the first two chapters. Elsewhere in the book, the divine title appears in the singular; it is either *El* or *Eloah*. The latter title means *God-wards*, and points to *Christ*. This Divine

title, Eloah, is very rare in the Old Testament; we find it only fifty-eight times, and forty-one of these occurrences are in the book of Job. In this way, the scroll as a whole points to Christ the Redeemer.

It is worth mentioning that Job, together with Noah and Daniel, is mentioned by Ezekiel (14:14) for his outstanding righteousness. And in the New Testament, James (5:7,11) exhorts his readers: "Be patient, then, brethren, till the presence of the Lord . . . We are counting those happy who endure. You hear of the endurance of Job, and you perceived the consummation of the Lord, for very compassionate and pitiful is the Lord."

Herman H. Rocke

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

The CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT is expected to be available by the end of November. It will be a book of 1,730 pages, 7" x 10.5" page size, printed on thin "Bible paper" and hard-bound with black imitation leather. The price is set at \$35.00 each (postage and handling additional).

The procedure followed in making the translation, and various typographical features of the Concordant Version are already familiar to most of our readers. But we take advantage of the present circumstance to rehearse these matters briefly here for those less familiar with them. 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.

BECAUSE OF ANOTHER

Or are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law), that the law is lording it over a man for as much time as he is living? For a woman in wedlock is bound to a living man by law. Yet if the man should be dying, she is exempt from the law of the man. Consequently, then, while the man is living, she will be styled an adulteress if she should be becoming another man's, yet, if the man should be dying, she is free from the law, being no adulteress on becoming another man's. So that, my brethren, you also were put to death to the law through the body of Christ, for you to become Another's, Who is roused from among the dead, that we should be bearing fruit to God. (Romans 7:1-4)

HERE in Romans 7:1-4, through a striking illustration relating to marriage, Paul enforces the *graciousness* of the *evangel*.

It is important to see what Paul is *not* addressing in this passage as well as what he is. He is not addressing the question of what the corpus of instruction is that is applicable to those of the body of Christ concerning their behavior, if they would walk worthily of their calling and be pleasing to God. Neither is he addressing what the consequences will be of the personal failures of any among them who should fail thus to walk worthily.

His subject, instead, is the significance of the death of Christ for our sakes in the benefits which accrue to us as a result, in the *grace* of God.

Further, Paul is by no means herein giving us a treatise on wedlock, but only introduces the subject incidentally for

the purpose of reaffirming and defending the utter despotism of *the reign of Grace* with respect to *life eonian*:

"... Law came in ... that the offense should be increasing. Yet where sin increases, *grace superexceeds*, that, even as Sin reigns in death, thus *Grace* also should be reigning through righteousness, *for life eonian*, through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom.5:20,21). "... Now the consummation is *life eonian*. For the ration of Sin is death, yet the gracious gift of God is *life eonian*, in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.6:22,23).

Or are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law)

This is as if to say, If you should decline, or at least hesitate to accept, the simple truth of the altogether *gracious* nature of the evangel in what God has achieved through the death of Christ, it must be, then, that while you are ones who "know law,"¹ even so, you evidently are ignorant of one of its fundamental principles. That fundamental principle is that:

"... the law is lording it over a man for as much time as he is living?"

Therefore, Paul would have us know, and know well, that law only has lordship over a man who is still a *living* man; it has no lordship over a *dead* man. Accordingly, previously here in Romans, in illustrating the benefits which redound to us through the death of Christ, the apostle has boldly declared our identification with Christ in His death—His death on our behalf, for our sakes:

In the reckoning of God, in the death of Christ for

1. Here, it may be that Paul is speaking especially to the Circumcision, though the principle to which he appeals is well known to all who are acquainted with law in general. That principle is that law has no jurisdiction over a dead man. The nature of all law is that it applies only to the living.

our sakes, "We . . . died to Sin" (Rom.6:2). Figuratively, in Paul's illustration, "Sin" is spoken of as if it were a person; indeed, an evil despot out to do us harm and work our ruin. The literal entity of which Sin-figurative speaks, is our sins themselves.

For a woman in wedlock is bound to a living man by law. Yet if the man should be dying, she is exempt from the law of the man.

Surely this is the ideal illustration (for it is the one which God's spirit has employed) of how it may be so that the status and concomitant privileges of one may be radically changed—indeed reversed even to the point of "exemption" from what would otherwise be one's standing—wholly apart from any doing of their own and solely because of what someone other than themselves has done.

Consequently, then, while the man is living, she will be styled an adulteress if she should be becoming another man's, yet, if the man should be dying, she is free from the law, being no adulteress on becoming another man's.

Just think of it: the woman may form the same relationship and engage in the same acts, in one instance when left to her own devices, such that she will be styled an adulteress, and yet in another instance solely because of something done by someone other than herself, such that she will be no adulteress, "on becoming another man's [woman]."

So that, my brethren, you also were put to death to the law . . .

Like the *wife* who died when her husband died, yet as a *woman* remained, when Christ died on our behalf, God accounted us as having been put to death to sin's power, that of the law in its capacity to condemn (*cf* 1 Cor.15:56). Though, as sinners, we died, as saints we remain alive, that we may become Another's, even the Lord Jesus Christ's. Thus we declare with Paul: "For I, through law, died to law, that I should be living to God. With Christ have I

been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me" (Gal.2:19,20).

... through the body of Christ . . .

The cross, truly, is the inscrutable wisdom of God even as the manifestation of His self-sacrificial love, in the death of the cross, in all its shame and horror. It is that ". . . the One not knowing sin, [God] makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor.5:21). This is to say, Behold, the righteousness of God, *displayed in sinners*, whom He makes righteous through the sin offering which He makes on their behalf, in the sacrifice of His Son.

"... Yahweh Himself *causes* the depravity of us all to come upon Him Although He had done no wrong, And no deceit was in His mouth Yet Yahweh *desires* to crush Him, And He causes Him to be wounded" (*cf* Isa.53: 6b,10a). "For of a truth, in this city were gathered against Thy holy Boy Jesus, Whom Thou dost anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the nations and the peoples of Israel, *to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel designates beforehand to occur*" (Acts 4:27,28).

... for you to become Another's, Who is roused from among the dead, that we should be bearing fruit to God.

Christ died for our sakes not in some abstract sense concerned merely with our own happiness; instead, He died for us that we may become His own, serving Him and bearing fruit to God. "For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son, much rather, being conciliated, we shall be saved in His life" (Rom.5:8-10).

SIN'S REIGN VERSUS GOD'S GIFT

"So that, my brethren, you *also* [like the woman whose husband has died] were put to death to the law through

the body of Christ" (Rom. 7:4a). Even as, *solely because of the act of another* (namely, the man who dies), the woman, should she become another man's will not be styled an adulteress (Rom. 7:3), thus also, *solely because of the act of Another*, even Christ the Lord, God will only deem us His saints and will not treat us as sinners *even if we should be persisting in sin—even if we should be increasing in sin* (Rom. 5:20,21; 6:1).

While it is true that our awful enemy Sin has nothing better to give than the terrible rations of death, since, being under *grace*, Sin shall *not* be lording over *us*, we need not fear the forced imposition of any such rations! Let Sin's despicable rations be what they will, they will never be our portion. Indeed, "the ration of Sin is death, *yet* the gracious gift of God is life eonian, in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "*Nothing, consequently*, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

What makes the "glad-tidings"—because of their significance—truly the *glad-tidings*, is the evangel (*cf* 1 Cor. 15:1) that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3,4). Therefore, fundamentally, we have no other message. Nothing else need be said nor can be said. Though, to Jews, the proclamation of "Christ crucified," indeed, is a "snare," and to the nations "stupidity," *yet [it is] to those who are called*, both Jews and Greeks: "*Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God*" (1 Cor. 1:23,24; *cp* 2:2).

THE SNARE OF THE CROSS

The answer to the usual rhetorical claim: "Is not that a most scandalous message?!" can only be, Yes—but only so long as one's bases of truth are the intuitions of the flesh and the ethics of the world. And indeed it is just these that form the foundational principles of nearly all who are nam-

ing the name of the Lord (some part of whom are genuine believers), not to mention of practically all unbelievers.

Ironically, the declaration: "Christ crucified," is at once both the *evangel* of the cross, and "the *snare* of the cross" (Gal.5:11). It is true that this evangel is a snare most especially to the Jews, who "boasted in a law" (who, even so, through the transgression of the law were dishonoring God; Rom.2:23). Yet just as surely it is a snare as well to all who boast in themselves, even if they should do so unwittingly, and without any overt display thereof.

"The human tendency is to stand aloof from the humiliating fact that we can add nothing to the finished work of Christ's cross; this is its snare We are sons of Adam, and our most outstanding sin is pride. It is human to oppose the thought that we are helpless to produce righteousness and gain salvation. We may accept it with our lips, but we often find ourselves fighting it with our minds.

"Like an animal falling into a baited trap we may fall into many snares to our own harm, but the snare of the cross is not attractive, and we try to avoid it. There is no bait which catches our eye. Rather, the snare itself is exposed in plain sight and presents itself exactly for what it is

"Perhaps a more subtle religious attack against the snare of the cross is the suggestion that our standing before God is based on our faith. Not only what we do, but what we believe is considered essential for salvation.

"Indeed both our actions and our faith are of utmost importance for ideal service, but neither can add anything to the work of Christ at Calvary and His perfect faith by which we are justified. No one becomes a member of the body of Christ because he is orthodox nor because he 'has the truth' and stands for it. Nor do we have access to the Father's heart because we have performed the proper works of penitence and charity. We are God's called-out ones, and this is according to God's purpose (Rom.8:

28-30) based on the gift of His Son for us all (Rom.8:32). Justification and conciliation are through the sacrifice and faith of Christ.”²

The “snare” (Greek: *skandalon*) of the cross consists in its “scandalous” appearance in the eyes of all who boast in themselves, who seek in any worthiness of their own, not but a reflected glory of that which is wholly of God, but an independent glory of their own, concerning which they alone can boast, and that justifiably. Such ones cannot say, discerningly and from the heart: “. . . In the *grace* of God I am what I am . . . toil I—yet not I, but the *grace* of God which is with me” (1 Cor.15:10); and, “Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .” (Gal.6:14).

The snare of the cross snares all those thus ensnared through the agency of their own pride. Only thus, by metonymy, may it be said that the message of the cross is the snare of the cross.

The snare of the cross renders its “victims” unable to appreciate its joyous and wholly righteous nature so long as they remain ensnared by what they perceive to be its “scandalous and shameful” properties. Therefore, solely a realization of the truth of the evangel of the *cross*, alone, is able to free the victim of the snare of the *cross* from its powerful grip (*cp* Rom.9:33; John 8:32).

WE DIED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST

Any who truly believe this evangel of that which is ours “because of Another” and yet become “utensils . . . for dishonor” (2 Tim.2:20) as to their walk, only magnify the grace of their calling, as far as that is concerned, notwithstanding the terrible turpitude of their dreadful deeds. The lowliest and most fleshly Corinthian believer who long ago died

2. Dean Hough, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.67, pp.282,284.

in shame and apart from repentance, will be vivified in Christ's presence and will enjoy eonian life—*just as surely as the apostle Paul*.

This is simply because eonian life and glory are a *gracious, gratuitous* gift to us, not a reward. Indeed, we may test whether we ourselves are still ensnared by the snare of the cross according as whether we deem the above considerations shameful, despicable, and false, or instead, joyous, righteous, and true.

"Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall be living together with Him also" (Rom. 6:8). "... Let not Sin, *then*, be reigning in your mortal body, for you to be obeying its lusts" (Rom.6:12).

"... Present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as implements of righteousness to God. *For Sin shall not* be lording it over you, *for* you are not under law, but under *grace*" (Rom.6:14).

In summary, the law is only lording it over a man for as much time as he is *living* (Rom.7:1), even as a woman is bound to a *living* man by law, but is not so bound to a *dead* man (Rom.7:2). Therefore, in the accounting of God, since *we died* together with Christ (Rom.6:8; *cp* Col.3:3) when He died for our sakes, there is no law that can speak our condemnation.

Since we *shall* be living together with Christ, and since Sin shall *not* be lording it over us, we are *therefore* entreated to obey! We do not obey to *become* exempt from the power of Sin, which is the law (1 Cor.15:56), but because we were put to death to the law through the body of Christ (Rom. 7:4) and thus were exempted from its condemning power (*cf* Rom.7:6). Therefore, because of the act of Another, even our Lord Jesus Christ, we may be having peace toward God and may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:1,2).

THREE LAWS

THERE are three major laws¹ in Romans chapters 7 and 8. (1) Most prominently is “the law,” sometimes simply called “law,” which God placed over Israel (7:1,4,6,7,8, 12,14,16,21; 8:3,4). Paul calls it “the law of [the] God” in 7:22 and 8:7, while in 7:23, in relation to his upbringing as a Hebrew of Hebrews, he refers to it as “the law of my mind.” (2) But also he refers to the effect of sin on us all as “a different law” in 7:23 and “Sin’s law” in 7:25 as well as “the law of sin and death” in 8:2. (3) Finally (and this is by far the least recognized, yet it is most essential for our understanding of the passage) the apostle speaks of the evangel of God’s grace as “God’s law” in 7:25, and “the spirit’s law of life in Christ Jesus” in 8:2. This is the “law” which *God Himself* followed in “sending His own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh and concerning sin,” the way of righteousness by which “He condemns sin in the flesh” (Rom.8:3).

“God’s law” is the evangel of God concerning His Son (Rom.1:1-3), that WELL-MESSAGE of God which announces to us that, in commending God’s love, Christ died for our sakes while we are still sinners (Rom.5:8). In Romans 3:28 this law was called “faith’s law,” in reference to “Jesus Christ’s faith” through which God’s righteousness is made manifest (Rom.3:21,22).² It is that word telling us of “the

1. A fourth law, called “the law of the man [husband]” is referred to in 7:2 for purpose of illustration.

2. cf *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.98, p.46.

grace of God and the gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:15). As the "spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus," it clearly declares that life, now and in the future, does not depend on us and our obedience to the law given at Sinai, but on Christ Jesus and His obedience even to the death of the cross. God's ways are not our ways, and the way to *life* is by means of the *death* of God's beloved Son. It is not by our works, but by means of God's gratuitous gift of joy in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Like Paul, we may be gratified in our mind with the law given at Sinai (Rom.7:22,23), for it is holy and just and good, but, as was our apostle's experience, this brings us deeply into wretchedness with every failure to maintain its precepts. Yet there is no failure in God's law of grace, for it *has been already* carried out in God's giving of His Son, and Christ's obedience unto the death of the cross. In centering our minds, as devoted and loving slaves, upon this message telling of God's law, wretchedness gives way to thankfulness of greatest joy to God. Here is our rescue in spirit for every day of our lives while we remain in our flesh. In God's grace we are submissively listening from the heart to the teaching which instructs us concerning God's righteousness and Jesus Christ's faith (*cf* Rom.6:16,17). In being disposed to this there is spiritual power for life and peace (Rom.8:5,6).

Both "the law of God," given at Sinai, and "God's law" carried out in God's giving of His Son for sinners, are messages from God set against "Sin's law." The law given to Israel is good, but the human is fleshly and unable to keep it as presently constituted in a body of death (Rom.7:12-24). But "God's law," His evangel concerning the death and resurrection of His own Son which leads to the end of sin and death is also God's power for salvation and rescue, in accord with the earnest of the spirit, even today while we remain in the flesh (Rom.1:16).

The warfare between the law of God and Sin's law is described in Romans 7:7-24, first as it affected Paul himself as Saul of Tarsus (Rom.7:7-12), and then as he continued to be aware of it as a human being, a descendant of Adam, still dying and still sinning while still knowing the law laid down at Sinai (Rom.7:13-24). But now, along with this operation of death and sin in his flesh, Paul had become aware of a third law, which he calls "God's law," and which fills his mind and heart with thankfulness to God. This was the evangel of God's grace, and it had powerful effects on his life, day by day as he enslaved his mind to it. Paul will call it "the spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus" in Romans 8:3, for in it is God's spiritual power for the life and walk of the believer as set before us in Romans 8.

What is in our mind is critical throughout our present lives in which we are dying, and in which we are made wretched by sin. Now in Romans 7, by tracing his own experience, our apostle encourages us in the renewal of our minds by their enslavement to God's "law" carried out in not sparing His own Son but in giving Him up for us all.

In the articles to follow, we will look further at Paul's own account of the way these three laws affected his life.

D.H.H.

MARVIN RICE

Our brother Marvin Rice of Largo, Florida was put to repose on August 17. Yet we praise God for opening the evangel of His grace to him and for strengthening the gift of expectation in his heart, to which he often testified by word of mouth and printed pamphlet.

EMMANUEL ASTARITA

With sadness, we announce the death of our friend, Emmanuel Astarita on August 21. Born in Malta, but living many years in Kitchener, Ontario, before returning to the island of his birth in recent months, he was keenly occupied in mind with the Scriptural testimony to the faith of Jesus Christ and its effects.

LAW AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN

THOSE who are put under the law and come to know what it says will come to know they are sinners.

Sin is not caused by the law; we all sin as a result of death which is in us because of Adam (Rom.5:12). The law is holy and just and good. *But* it makes sin apparent, and, because of the weakness and corruption of our flesh, sin increases where it is defined by the law. The outcome is death, both literal and figurative.

This is Paul's personal testimony in Romans 7:7-24.

What, then, shall we declare? that law is sin?

May it not be coming to that! But sin I knew not except through law. For besides, I had not been aware of coveting except the law said, "You shall not be coveting." Now Sin, getting an incentive through the precept, produces in me all manner of coveting. For apart from law Sin is dead. Now I lived, apart from law, once, yet at the coming of the precept Sin revives. Yet I died, and it was found that, to me, the precept for life, this is for death. For Sin, getting an incentive through the precept, deludes me, and through it, kills me. So that the law, indeed, is holy, and the precept holy and just and good. (Rom.7:7-12)

In Hebrew the word "sin" means MISS as in Judges 20:16 where it is said of seven hundred chosen men hampered in their right hand that "every one of these could sling a stone at a hair and not miss," that is, not *sin*. In Greek the root elements are UN-MARK, that is, fail to hit the mark. Law sets the mark. Sin misses the mark.

Knowledge is received by and stored in the mind. It grows as a process in time, a matter of getting to know. In Romans 7 Paul addresses those who are *knowing* law, that is, having been learning what it says, in particular those believers out of the Circumcision who had become acquainted with the law from their youth. Yet also most of us have gotten to know something about that law. This is because it is given such a prominent place in the Scriptures and has been often made central even where the evangel of God's grace is heralded. Consequently, what Paul says about the law in Romans 7 has practical value to us all, even those of us who have never been put under the law of Sinai. We need to understand that our present lives are to be directed and empowered by God's word of grace, His evangel concerning His Son, which directs us and invigorates us in accord with its holy, righteous and good spirit manifested in the disposition of Christ (Phil. 2:5-8). It is to this teaching so absolutely belonging to the grace-type that we are submissively listening as loving slaves (Rom.6:17).

But now in Romans 7 Paul speaks of the law of Sinai in order to aid us in becoming even more acquainted with grace by way of contrast.

THE SIN OF COVETING

Coveting is a sin rooted in the mind. So also is anger (Matt.5:22) and hate and greed and selfishness and the like of these.

The sin of Adam and Eve in eating of the forbidden fruit began when, through Satan's stratagems, Eve looked at and immediately *yearned for* what God's instructions had denied to Adam and herself (Gen.3:6). This was covetousness, which preceded the taking of the fruit and the eating of it. She was deluded, not simply by Satan's stratagems, but by the sin of covetousness which was dormant in her,

that is, it had been “dead,” and she had “lived apart” from it until the law of Genesis 2:17 and Satan’s use of it made covetousness UP-LIVE (the root meaning of the Greek word translated “revive” in Romans 7:9) in her.

This sin led to the sin of disobedience by both humans in eating the fruit, and the consequence of this was that death entered into their bodies and they began to be dying with fear as its first instalment.

This same pattern played out in Saul of Tarsus when he began to realize what the tenth precept of Exodus 20:3-17 was saying:

You shall not covet the house of your associate. You shall not covet the wife of your associate, his field, his manservant or his maidservant, his bull, his donkey or anything which is your associate’s.

Young Saul had not stolen things that did not belong to him. Of that he was blameless. But in his mind he was desiring many such things. At some point he realized in his mind what this precept actually was saying, and thus he found he had been committing the sin of covetousness all the time and found that it was increasing.

Now in Romans 7, Paul looks back on this time and openly avows his sinfulness and recalls the place of the law in its discovery and enhancement. The hypocrisy is gone, whether or not all traces of covetousness and lust are gone. Under law he was guilty of all manner of coveting. Under grace he had learned to be content in what he was (Phil.4:11), and this is most significant in showing the power of the evangel.

But in the flesh he was still a sinner, and even in the matter of coveting he could not claim perfection of deliverance (cp Phil.3:11), as we might infer from passages such as 1 Corinthians 9:5,6, where he asked: “Have we no right at all to be leading about a sister as a wife, even as the rest

of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or have only I and Barnabas no right not to be working?" It seems wholly justified to us that Paul would sometimes feel he deserved better than he was experiencing. But in this there still was covetousness, a sin so commonly and easily committed by dying humanity that we hardly think of it as a sin. Yet the law very distinctly classifies it along with such sins as murder and adultery.

Indeed Paul was uniquely blessed, for he was given revelations which transcended those of any other apostle. "Wherefore also," he writes to the Corinthians, "lest I should be lifted up by the transcendence of the revelations, there was given to me a splinter in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he may be buffeting me, lest I may be lifted up. For this I entreat the Lord thrice, that it should withdraw from me" (2 Cor.12:7,8). Transcendently favored Paul was brought low lest he be lifted up in thinking he was better in himself than others and deserved the glorious experience God gave him. At that point, all he could think of was the pain and suffering of the "splinter" in his flesh. Consequently, with an element of covetousness toward those who were free from such buffeting as he was receiving, he entreated the Lord three times that it would withdraw from him.

What was the Lord's reply? Did He tell Paul, "You shall not be coveting"? Or did He say, "You must be content with what you are"? No indeed. Paul was not under law, and law would not help him at all. Such words of law would only make it clearer to Paul that he was a coveting sinner, a good lesson, but hardly helpful in dealing with his wretchedness. Most graciously and appropriately the Lord did not point to the law. Rather, in accord with the evangel, He protested to Paul, "Sufficient for you is My *grace*, for My *power* in infirmity is being perfected" (2 Cor.12:9).

Paul was under grace. Only the word of grace could give

Paul the spiritual strength to exclaim, "With the greatest relish, then, will I rather be glorying in my infirmities, that the power of Christ should be tabernacling over me" (2 Cor.12:10).

Thus, we see that Paul was learning contentment by being given over to the teaching of grace and by receiving the Lord's grace for application in every infirmity and experience of pain and depression.

LAW AND DEATH

The law given at Sinai is good in defining what is right and what is wrong, but in a practical sense, under present circumstances, its goodness does not lie in keeping sinners from sinning. Its goodness lies in its ability to make sinners aware that they are sinners. And the effect is death in the figurative sense of the killing of human pride and self-deception, with the outlook of condemnation and literal death unchanged.

Become good, then, death to me?

May it not be coming to that! But Sin, that it may be appearing Sin, is producing death to me through good, that Sin may become an inordinate sinner through the precept. (Rom.7:13)

The law is good, but it leads to death, and death is not good.

GOOD DOES NOT DWELL IN MY FLESH

Thus Paul as one who knows he is "an inordinate sinner" continues to testify, but now using the present tense:

For we are aware that the law is spiritual, yet I am fleshly, having been disposed of under Sin. For what I am effecting I know not, for not what I will, this I am putting into practice, but what I am hating, this I am doing. Now if what I am not willing, this I am doing, I am con-

ceding that the law is ideal. Yet now it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin which is making its home in me.

For I am aware that good is not making its home in me (that is, in my flesh), for to will is lying beside me, yet to be effecting the ideal is not. For it is not the good that I will that I am doing, but the evil that I am not willing, this I am putting into practice. Now if what I am not willing, this I am doing, it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin which is making its home in me. (Rom.7:14-20)

Truly the law, sourced in the spirit of the righteous God Who hates all unrighteousness, makes anyone who listens to it honestly and attentively very self-conscious. Accordingly, knowing the law as he does, Paul cannot speak of its effects without using the pronoun "I" over and over again.

A DIFFERENT LAW

The literal and dominant usage of the word *law* throughout the Scriptures is in reference to the law which God placed over Israel at Sinai. But here in Romans 7, Paul also employs the term in a figurative sense. He speaks now of Sin as a law, very different from the Mosaic law, yet like that law in that it is a power concerned with human behavior. The question before us now is whether or not the law of God given to Israel in the wilderness is able to overpower the law of sin (as it will do in the future, millennial kingdom).

Consequently, I am finding the law that, at my willing to be doing the ideal, the evil is lying beside me. For I am gratified with the law of God as to the man within, yet I am observing a different law in my members, warring with the law of my mind, and leading me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. (Rom.7:21-23)

The "consequently" of Romans 7:21 arises from what the apostle has just said. Unless God provides a special measure of spirit, descendants of Adam who are placed under

the law of God, and who are gratified in their mind that it is good, nevertheless, are like every other human being in that sin dwells in their flesh. And the "law of sin" (which operates in their flesh) takes the "law of [their] mind" (the law of God as He revealed Himself at Sinai) captive.

Here are two laws, and because of the conflict between these two laws, Paul exclaims:

A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? (Rom.7:24)

Here Paul uses the very Greek word used in the Septuagint Version of Psalm 38:6. The condemnation demanded by the law of Sinai and the operation of the law of Sin in our dying bodies of flesh brings those knowing law into *wretchedness*.

Many interpreters of Romans 7:24 insist that Paul could not be speaking of himself in the present even though he uses the pronoun "I" and the present tense verb "am wretched." But if that is so, I do not see how Paul can help those believers under law, and indeed anyone who knows the law, when they become devastated by depravity. David, and Paul, and all of us experience the wretchedness which comes by being wretched creatures. But God gave Paul and has given us something He has not yet given those under the law. That is the evangel which says we are justified in God's grace and that there is no condemnation to us, for we are in Christ Jesus.

Yet our awareness of this grace is not a one-time thing that automatically remains strong in our consciousness. We need to keep enslaving our minds to God's evangel of grace which Paul is now about to call "God's law." It is this, the "law" God followed in sending His Son to condemn sin in the flesh through His death, that gives us spiritual strength and prepares us for the "entreaties" starting with Romans 12.

D.H.H.

GOD'S LAW OF GRACE

ROMANS 7:25 brings us back to the evangel of God concerning His Son. Paul has not been directly concerned with it since verses 4 and 5 in which he reminded those who know law that in being identified with the death of Christ we have been put to death to the law. Since then, all that the apostle has been saying concerning the law of Sinai and sin in the flesh stands as a backdrop to the word of God's grace which we have received. Romans 7:7-24 prepares us marvelously for Romans 8, but our present passage is the glorious gateway to our growing enjoyment of the evangel in our daily lives.

However, this has not been much appreciated. Indeed few verses of Scripture have been so misunderstood and seemed so puzzling as Romans 7:25.

We are faced with two serious questions, the first concerned with the transmission of the Greek text, and the second with the meaning of a key phrase as it relates to the context. Did Paul originally answer his question about rescue from bodies of death with the exclamation, *Grace!* and did he refer to this message of God's grace by calling it "God's law"? Concerning the first we can only conjecture, but on the basis of the manuscript evidence and the way in which an original text can be corrupted in copying. As for the second, we need to give careful attention to the flow of Paul's thought and to his use of key terms in more than one way.

Both matters call for more thorough consideration than can be offered in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*. But I

want to set forth briefly my reasons for answering “yes” to both questions.

GRACE!

Happily, even without accepting the insertion of the word *grace* in this text, most careful listeners to the first line of Romans 7:25 have explained that God in sending His Son, or the evangel of Christ's death for sinners is to be understood as the source of our rescue from the wretchedness of verse 24. *What* [or, *Who*] will rescue me out of this body of death? We are *justified gratuitously in God's grace, through the deliverance* which is in Christ Jesus.

Yet there is good reason to believe that Paul's immediate answer to his question was originally the word *Grace* (the Greek word, *charis*) followed by “I am thanking God” (*eucharistō*) which appears in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus (and other ancient manuscripts), or the word rendered “thanks” as in Romans 6:17 (*charis*), as it appears in Codex Vaticanus (and other ancient manuscripts). Both *grace* and *thanks* have the same elementary meaning: JOY. In the context of Romans, Grace is joy received from God, and thanks is joy given to God in appreciation of what He has given. Both rescue us from wretchedness; as we take account of God's grace we are given joy, and as we thank God and thus give Him joy, our lives are lifted up in every way.

We conjecture that Paul originally expressed both grace and thanksgiving here, but that the first appearance of *charis* was lost by an early scribe in copying the text when he looked away from the text and, in looking back, his eye skipped ahead to the second occurrence. In God's grace (His joy to us), Christ has rescued us as a sure and certain accomplishment, though not yet experienced by us in body; and, on the basis of His death and resurrection, He shall rescue us in every way from death and sin in the future; and having accepted this evangel of grace, we are

spiritually invigorated in the present as we are believing it. So it is that we say in praise and appreciation: "Joy be to God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

GOD'S WAY WITH US

God's way is not our way. He condemns sin in the flesh, not by requiring us to get rid of it by obeying the law, but by sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh, to die for sinners. In this way the old, mortal and sinful humanity was put to death. This is what Paul means by the words "God's law," in Romans 7:25b. This is the third law of the context, and the greatest of them all.

In Greek, to say "the law of [the] God" is not the same as saying "God's law."

The first puts the emphasis on the word "law." It is *the* law which revealed to Israel that they were sinners. It is the law which God, as He made Himself known to them in the wilderness, called on them to carry out in full and perfect action. It is the law they will carry out when God puts His spirit in them to do so, while Satan is imprisoned during the thousand years.

The second wording, "God's law," puts the emphasis on the descriptive term, "God's." What was given at Sinai was *law*, law which Israel must do, and which they shall do under the best of conditions. But "God's law" is law which is, in every way, characterized by God, carried out by God and glorifying to Him.

That Paul refers to "God grace" when he says "God's law" in Romans 7:25 is given strong support by the word "Consequently." As a consequence of grace-joy received from God and thanks-joy given to God Paul enslaves his mind and heart to this evangel. This is in line with his urging in Romans 6:16-18 that we be enslaved to the message of Christ's obedience and God's righteousness, which is the type of teaching to which we are given over.

Furthermore, we note that Paul was merely *gratified* with the law of God, for it was good, but was used by Sin to kill him. But now, regarding God's law of grace, Paul was being devoted to it as a loving slave. This law takes the attention away from the human and places it on God. It leads away from wretchedness takes us in the direction of thanksgiving.

YET WITH THE FLESH

Yet as long as we remain in these dying bodies, sin is still with us, and wretchedness is not wholly or lastingly eliminated from our experience. This must surely be the case for even the most mature of believers. Otherwise, there is no need for us to be reminded of the evangel and be renewed in it, to listen to it attentively day after day and be enslaved to it.

CONSEQUENTLY

Consequently, we come back time and time again to the words of God's law of grace:

Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.

For what was impossible to the law, in which it was infirm, through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh.

Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

D.H.H.

THE PARABLE OF THE POTTER

I went down to the house of the potter, and behold, he was making a work on the wheel stones. Yet the vessel which he was making with clay was ruined in the hand of the potter, and he turned back and made it into another vessel, just as it seemed upright in the eyes of the potter to make.

(Jer.18:3,4)

ONE OF the most wondrous word-pictures that God, in His wisdom, has wrought for us, in order to reveal Himself, is the parable of the potter.

Yet, in his vanity, man, soulish, soilish, and selfrighteous, has refused to accept his rightful role as the clay, and much prefers to imagine himself in the place of the potter.

But for those who believe God there can be no room for reasoning, or artificial arguments. God has spoken, and His word is clear. "Or has not the potter the right over the clay . . ." (Rom.9:21). God's place as the divine Potter is automatically presumed by the apostle Paul.

God is the One Who has designed and planned and purposed all. Before one molecule had come into being, His program was completed. That man would sin and need a Saviour was foreseen, for the Lambkin was slain from the disruption of the world (Rev.13:8).

CREATION CALLS FOR PLANNING

Christ cautioned the throngs about the costs of being one of his disciples by telling them the parable of the man

who proposed to build a tower. He said, "For which of you, wanting to build a tower, is not first seated to calculate the expense, to see if he has the wherewithal?—lest at some time, laying its foundation and not being strong enough to finish up, all who behold should be beginning to scoff at him, saying that 'This man begins building and is not strong enough to finish up!'" (Luke 14:28-30).

THE COST OF CREATION

Yet can we not see that we often may unwittingly assume that God has done what man himself admits is very foolish? Surely, if man is wise enough to plan his projects in advance, God has also, figuratively, "sat down" and counted the cost of commencing such a complex creation as that of which we became a part. The cost was Christ's cross. There was no other way. Yet God, in His limitless love, was willing to underwrite even such a costly cure, in order to bring His creation to the pre-appointed goal.

So God planned and prepared, provided the materials necessary directly out of Himself, and carefully created a vast universe, and peopled a seemingly insignificant planet with a race which, through their evil experiences, would be molded into useful, honorable vessels, well suited to serve Him.

VESSELS DO NOT MAKE THEMSELVES

It is obvious that these vessels did not create themselves. The sum and substance of their sorry contribution to the cosmos, thus far, is seen in their one original achievement: They have sinned, and transgressed, and offended their God.

Yet the most popular notion of man's origin, "evolution," is one which awards the crown of the Creator to the creature himself, and is based on the peculiar mathematical assumption that nothing can be added to nothing, and

equal something. Before our very eyes we are witnessing God's sentence on such who "offer divine service to the creature rather than the Creator . . ." so that "God gives them over to a disqualified mind." "Alleging themselves to be wise, they are made stupid . . ." (Rom.1:22,25, and 28).

But, no matter how the creature regards his Creator, God, as the master Potter, has reserved to Himself certain rights, which all the enlightened will concede are inherently *His* alone.

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

God has reserved the right to choose whom He wills. Only God knows who is best suited to display whatever He is at the moment demonstrating. Abram did not choose God. God chose Abram and gave Him instructions (Gen. 12:1). Isaac did not choose to be the son of promise. But God said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," and disregarded Ishmael's priority as firstborn (Gen.21:12). Jacob is the prime example of God's overruling prerogative to choose whom *He* wills. Isaac's favorite was Esau, but God's choice prevailed (Rom.9:11-13; Gen.25:23; 27:27-29). And when men presume, like Joseph's brothers, to eliminate the one whom God has favored, they only serve to promote God's program, so that they themselves have to one day acknowledge God's choice (Gen.43:26).

A PURPOSE FOR EACH VESSEL

In order for the Potter to display His skill He must mold a variety of vessels, each expertly adapted to fill a particular need. So also, God, *wanting* to display His indignation and make His powerful doings known, has molded vessels of indignation adapted for destruction. But His reason for this is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy (Rom.9:22,23).

Oh, that God might grant us to see the wisdom and love

which prompted Him to form *two* kinds of vessels. For without such a contrast we could never know the greatness of His grace and the disastrous results of disobeying God. This lesson learned, we may rejoice in *His* way, rest in *His* will and trust only in Him.

MERCIFUL TO ALL

Thus, it seems quite clear that when this display has served its purpose, two kinds of vessels will no longer be needed. But there is no wastebasket in God's ceramic shop. What is to become of the vessels of indignation? The Potter is not finished! He makes them into other vessels, which please Him; behold! He molds all into the image of His Son. *Now* there are only *some* vessels of mercy yet the Potter's wheel still turns and He shall yet be "merciful to *all*" (Rom.11:32).

"O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and will be repaid by Him? Seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:33-36).

God is the great master Potter, the Creator of the whole universe. As such He has certain prerogatives, including the right to choose, and the right to make two different kinds of vessels in order to carry out His plan and purpose.

RUINED

Now we shall look more closely at these vessels which were ruined in the hand of the potter. That what may look like flaws could develop in any part of God's perfect creation may be hard to understand at first. But we must remember that the planting of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was just as much a part of God's master

plan as was the planting of the tree of the living. As soon as God planted the tree that brought about mankind's original downfall, and truly long before, He knew what the sad result would be.

For sin and death must smash and destroy the vessels before the Potter can make them all anew. If there were another way—a better way—to achieve the glorious goal that God has set for mankind, a way which might have spared the vessels such harsh treatment in the hands of sin, we need not doubt that our loving God would have chosen it. But God knows, even though we may not realize it, that this is the most *effective* way—the perfect way—to attain to His goal and our good.

Let us consider for a moment the millions of humans whom the Potter has made. Is it not staggering to realize we have never looked upon one vessel which was not, in some way, ruined (AV, "marred")? Only one Man has trod this earth Who did not sin, and Who was not condemned by Adam's death sentence. All the rest are ruined. Except for Christ, there is not one vessel that could rightfully occupy a place of honor. All are what the pottery shops refer to as "seconds," which are usually sold only at a great discount.

While most will agree that all humanity bears the pockmarks of sin, very few realize that this situation came about, not by some ancient accident, but as the reasonable result of God's perfect plan. Some have asked: "But how can *imperfection* play a part in the plan of a *perfect* God? We happily answer: "In order to display His unfathomable wisdom and transcendent love." God molds weak vessels and uses them to show His strength. If the powerful do powerfully, how is God glorified? But if the weak overcome the strong, then God's influence becomes apparent. Therefore we are not living in the ruins of an accidental catastrophe, but in a world which unwittingly is fulfilling

every facet of its role, as foretold by Him Who fashioned every fragment of it.

Ruined *in the hand of the Potter* . . . but *still* in the hand of the Potter! Here is peace for all who will ponder these words! For whatever may be their present condition, each vessel still rests secure in His all-sufficient hands. Without Him all life in this vast universe would vanish. In Him we are living, and moving, and are (Acts 17:28). Only when we realize that all, really ALL is still in the hand of the Potter, can we "let nothing be worrying" us (Phil.4:6). For if, in all these many millenniums, God has not chosen to withdraw His hand from these marred pieces of clay, then we can rest in a future equally secure, never doubting that what He has promised, *this He will do!*

REMADE

The God Who formed the old creation will also fashion the new. The potter's prerequisite to remake an unsatisfactory vessel into a useful utensil is recognized by all. The same clay that went into the imperfect piece can be reworked and molded into a fresh form which will reflect his highest craftsmanship and add to his renown.

What is true among mortals also holds true of the marvelous master Potter of the universe, to Whom the wildest rebel is actually only "putty in His hands."

HANDS NEVER LEAVE THE CLAY

God never "gives up." He will finish everything He has begun. As was pointed out above, there is no "wastebasket" in His pottery shop. Nothing need be discarded, for His skill at reworking is infinite. While some vessels now are needed to display His displeasure and are suited for destruction, it is wise to remember that "destruction" is the *same word* as "lost" in Greek, and the Shepherd never sleeps while there are yet "lost" sheep. No matter

how much reforming and refining are necessary, the Potter never takes His hand from the clay. He never throws any lump away, for He knows that its essential elements are most costly, and He believes in "thrift." Did our Lord just litter the landscape with the surplus fragments when He fed the five thousand? No, every scrap was gathered up! (John 6:11-14).

ENDLESS DAMNATION DISHONORS THE POTTER

The current delusion that the Scriptures teach an endless eternity of agony for the unbeliever, the unsuitable vessel, is a dishonor and a disgrace to the name and reputation of the greatest Artisan of all time. God knows what He is doing, and He understands what He is forming. Nothing comes as a surprise to Him, although our sins do bring sorrow to His heart. He recognizes what is best for every one of His creatures, and long ago determined the best method by which to bring each vessel to acknowledge that His way is always wiser.

Men theorize and reason wrongly. Yet, because He knows that they will benefit by swallowing the bitter fruits of their own belligerent behavior, He allows them to acquire nicks and scratches and be disfigured and deformed while following after the follies of their flesh.

But God never gave any of His creatures legs nimble enough to outdistance Him. God's patient pursuit of His wayward prodigals is the longest love story of them all. When Paul asked Timothy to offer prayer for all the sons and daughters of our ancient ancestor, Adam, he says that this will be welcome in the sight of our Saviour, God, Who *wills that all mankind be saved* and come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:3,4). Again, in this same letter, Paul says that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of those who believe (1 Tim.4:10).

After death (the *last* enemy) has been abolished (1 Cor.15:

26), Christ will turn all things over to His Father, in order that God may become All in all (1 Cor.15:28). This is the ultimate outcome of God's infinite grace. This was the purpose for which He brought the universe into being. Vessels filled to overflowing with God's spirit, prepared for His praise and glory and honor; these were all seen in the potential progeny of Adam. Nothing need be thrown away, for the Potter would not rest until every shard has been reformed into the image of His Son. All this lies out there before us. Living in expectation, we anxiously await our new spiritual bodies which will be suited to the celestials. We were not chosen to be the few salvaged fragments from a devastated china shop; rather were we selected to be the chosen channels to carry the Creator's love and graciousness to every piece of unfit "earthenware" in the universe.

D. E. Knoch

DAVID ERNEST KNOCH

Brother, David Knoch, was put to repose June 20, 2014 at age 83. The first grandchild of A. E. Knoch, David was closely associated with the work of the Concordant Publishing Concern for several years both as a contributing editor of *Unsearchable Riches* and eager worker at many tasks, including Linotype operator for the Memorial Edition of the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT and the early publications of the CV of Genesis and Isaiah. In his memory we reprint his meditation on Jeremiah 18:3,4, under the title, *The Parable of the Potter*. Goodnight good friend. We shall rejoice together with you in the oncoming eons when we are all live together with our Lord, and God displays through us the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

HELEN M. TYNDALL

On July 20, 2014 we lost for awhile our dear sister, Helen Tyndall, of Ludington, Michigan, at ninety years of age. Kind in heart and steadfast in faith, she gave of her time and means, and aided others in sharing the evangel and living it in many ways which those who knew her will long remember with thankfulness to God. We will know her again, transformed to the image of Christ, in that day.

EDITORIAL

A FORMER schoolmate, on meeting me many years after we had gone our separate ways, asked me about my occupation. In trying to describe my work I mentioned, among other tasks, that I was involved in producing a translation of the Old Testament. He looked at me with some surprise and asked, "Hasn't that already been done?"

Indeed it has, and new translations come out fairly often, most with far more support, popular appeal and fanfare than the Concordant Version. Yet a translation that conveys God's word to us, in A. E. Knoch's words, "in its original purity," has not been done. That may not be possible, but it has been our endeavor. And now that we have published not only a Concordant Version of the Scriptures originally written in Greek, but of the Scriptures originally written in Hebrew and Aramaic as well, we can only say that it still remains our endeavor.

Nevertheless, we feel that much of what we have done can be of real help to those who use this Version, toward the goal of conveying God's thoughts as they were originally expressed in languages not our own.

Yet why use the title *Elohim* instead of *God* in Genesis 1:1, and such unfamiliar terms, as *chaos* and *vacant* as well as the verb *vibrate* in Genesis 1:2? And where the King James Version reads in Genesis 1:3, "And God said, Let there be light," is it any improvement to translate, "And Elohim said: Let light come to be" (and then add small symbols and abbreviations here and there together with a mixture of lightface and boldface type)?

Is there any justification for the numerous changes based on alterations to the Masoretic (Hebrew) Text, such as placing the words "And it came to be so" at the end of Genesis 1:6 rather than the end of verse 7, as well as adding these words at the end of verse 20? Why emend the traditional text at all (such as using the word "confluence" in Genesis 1:9 rather than "place," and "gratuitously" rather than "lively" in Psalm 38:19)?

We discuss these (and a few other) particular differences from most traditional translations in the present issue (*cf* especially pages 149-158), and have done so in past issues for other such alterations. Yet many emendations of this sort have not been explained beyond what is provided by footnotes in the Version. We do understand that some kind of review of all of these matters under one cover is in order. We have begun working on such a publication, yet realizing that it will probably not be available for some time yet (especially considering the size of our staff), we hope to present notes on many of the more significant emendations in upcoming issues of *Unsearchable Riches* (as well as our website).

Although we have not provided footnotes for them in the pages of the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT, we do introduce a few such textual emendations there, most significantly the insertion of the word "Grace" as the answer to Paul's question of Romans 7:24. The evidence for this is provided and discussed on pages 159-164. This relates directly to my study on verses 24 and 25 as presented in this issue (pages 169-180).

In many ways the CVOT opens up new insights into God's Word, by emendations to the extant Hebrew text (called the Masoretic Text) based on ancient translations such as the Septuagint (Greek) and Syriac versions, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Samaritan Pentateuch and certain other sources such as mediaeval Hebrew manuscripts

of the Scriptures. The changes, however, are not based only on evidence from such external sources, but always we have endeavored to give careful consideration to the context. This admittedly adds an element of subjectivity. For instance, the innovative CVOT translation of Genesis 4:26 is based partly on the Septuagint Version, but mostly on the conjecture that the Hebrew text originally used a verb meaning "wound" rather than the similarly spelled verb "start" (or "begin") which is found in the Masoretic Text. What is most satisfying to us is that the passage becomes meaningful as a picture of Christ on the cross in the contrast it makes between Enosh and the fierce self-centeredness of Lamech described just prior to this passage in Genesis 4:23,24.

The great value of Scripture is its revelation of God, especially as He is made known in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. Of course the full picture that we can see now that we are acquainted with the evangel of God concerning His Son, was not available when the Hebrew Scriptures were given. But the pattern was always there, that is, the pattern of God's way of dealing with evil and bringing about good. God's ways are not our ways. (May I say here, in accord with my article on Romans 7:25, that God's law is not the law of God placed over Israel at Sinai? His own law for Himself is uniquely distinct.)

This is not to claim that every emendation to the Masoretic Text lying behind the CVOT is certain. But we believe that all in all it points in the right direction. The Version remains open to review and to revision based on further investigation and consideration of both textual and contextual evidence. This applies to our translation of the New Testament as well.

And with regard to this as it relates to the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT, the article by James Coram on the Greek word *mellō* (pages 181-191) will be

of interest to many. The suggestion that the English word "pending" serves better than "impending" as a translation of *mellō* is a good one, and should help us better understand many passages where it is used.

I began this editorial on a personal note by recalling a conversation I recently had with a boyhood friend. I want to end it with a personal note concerning my present life. What I have been learning with deepening realization is the joy of thanking God in the midst of frustrations and discouragements and failures (Paul chose some other such terms in 2 Corinthians 4:8,9). As noted in the meditations on Romans 7:24,25, the Greek word for *grace* is the same word as that for *thanks*. And the root meaning of them both is JOY. Consequently (to repeat here what I say several times later), Grace is joy received from God, and thanks is joy given to God.

In Romans 5:17, Paul says, in speaking for us all, *Thanks be to God* that we submissively listen from the heart to the type of teaching to which we are given over. Again in 1 Corinthians 15:57 he says, with regard to our happy expectation, *Thanks be to God*, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Then also it may be so that in Romans 7:25, in response to God's grace in giving His Son for the condemnation of sin, Paul said, *Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord* (though the wording, *I am thanking God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord*, as given in the CLNT, is not without much the same spiritual value).

Especially in times of weakness, fleshly failure, sorrow, being cast down and such kinds of wretchedness, I find rescue in concentrating my mind on God's grace, leading me to say from my heart, *Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, my Lord*. What a joy it is that we may give joy to God in the form of thanksgiving for His joy to us!

That is my major thought in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*. God's grace be with you all.

D.H.H.

CONCORDANT VERSION NOTES

THE following notes on the opening verses of God's Word begin with the idiomatic rendering as provided by the CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, followed by a more literal reading. The notes on Genesis 1,2 offer explanations on certain English words and grammatical forms used in the CVOT, and notes on verses 6 and 9 concern adjustments to the Masoretic Text. The more detailed commentaries are mostly selected from the writings of A. E. Knoch.

GENESIS 1:1

1 In a beginning Elohim created `the heavens and `the earth.

1 In-beginning creates Elohim `the-heavens and `the-earth.

1:1 In a beginning. It is characteristic of mortals, when estranged from God, to look back to the *time* of creation, rather than to the creation itself. The rendering "In the beginning," is probably as close to the significance of the Original as English idiom will allow; still it is sufficiently inexact to cause cloudy conceptions and questionings to arise. It seems to fix a definite point of *time*, and to be limited to the single act of creation, whereas the Hebrew is not the name of a specific instant in the past, but a descriptive term, giving *priority* or *origination* to the contents of the whole book.

created. The element of time is not inherent in the Hebrew verb. That is determined by the context. Hebrew verbs

are concerned primarily with the status of the act, that is, whether it is considered as a fact, or perceived as action going on, whether past, present or future. This verb states a fact. Because the context shows that this is something occurring in the past, we use the simple past tense in our translation: **created**. But in order to render the fact forms consistently we use the simple present throughout in our literal renderings. We might imagine that we are in school where facts and principles are set before us. This is the first fact of the Scriptures, the fact of creation by God.

God is the First Cause. He is responsible for the heavens and the earth and all that is on it.

CREATE

"To make something out of nothing," that is the usual definition of *create*. This is confirmed by the dictionary, which makes it: "To bring into being; to cause to exist . . . the world is regarded as brought into being out of nothing." But we have been unable to find any confirmation for this in God's Word. Indeed, the only passages which throw any light upon this point teach the opposite. Peter wrote to the dispersion, "You may be subject to every *human creation* . . ." (1 Pet.2:13). No human can create anything out of nothing. When God created the Circumcision and Uncircumcision into one new humanity, these were already in existence (Eph.2:11-15). He simply made both one by putting them into Christ.

The Scriptures teach that all is *out of God* (Rom.11:36; 1 Cor.11:12; 2 Cor.5:18), not out of nothing. This includes all the substance of all later creations, for God's creative acts are not confined to the beginning. Not only was the joint body of Ephesians created out of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision, but we are a new creation, created in Christ Jesus, just as all was created in Him in the beginning (Eph.2:10; Col.1:16).

In Christ we can see clearly that creation was not out of nothing. He calls Himself "God's creative Original," or, as the AV has it, "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev.3:14). And He Himself also said, "For *out of God I came forth* and am arriving" (John 8:42). What is better evidence than a double witness from the lips of Truth Himself? It is further confirmed by our apostle, Paul, who calls Him the "Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created . . ." (Col.1:15,16). All was in Him in the beginning, even as all humanity was in Adam at first. And we feel sure that all who love Him and have tasted of His grace will be slow to say that He was nothing, when they would never think of saying that Adam, in whom we were made sinners, was nothing.

God, when He created Adam, and humanity in him, did not create it out of nothing. He used previously created soil and atmosphere. These must be continually renewed in order to keep human beings alive. If we had been created out of nothing, then it might have been our lot to live out of nothing. This, I suppose, would be very welcome to some. But those who have tried it have returned to the soil from which they sprang.

Probably the worst effect which this false view of creation produces, is the warping of our thoughts as to the future. If creation came out of *nothing* it could easily return to oblivion. This would lend color to what is usually termed annihilation. On the other hand, if creation originated in *God*, then it is almost impossible for a sound mind to be fully content with any other ultimate than an enriched return to its Origin. This is marvelously expressed for us in the summary of the didactic portion of the book of Romans (11:36). There we are told that, not only is all *out of Him* in creation, but also *through Him* in the eonian times, and *for Him* in the consummation, when He becomes All in all.

THE DIVINE TITLE

Elohim. This is the common English transliteration of the most frequently used divine title. It is plural (or dual) in form, but is used with a verb that is singular in form. God is identified here as the supreme Subjector (**El**) acting through His Son (*Eloah*, **El-ward**) Who points us *toward El* (cf John 1:1,18).

‘the heavens and ‘the earth. Hebrew often uses a special term that points to the direct object so that there can be no doubt concerning the object of the verb no matter where it appears in the sentence. We represent this with a forward accent mark (‘) in our translation.

The subject is **Elohim**; the verb is **creates**, and the compound object is **‘the heavens and ‘the earth**. It is a fact that God created the entirety of the world as we know it.

Hear Paul's grand declaration (Acts 17:24-28):

God, Who makes the world and all that is in it, He, the Lord inherent of heaven and earth, is not dwelling in temples made by hands, neither is He attended by human hands, as if requiring anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all. Besides, He makes out of one every nation of mankind, to be dwelling on all the surface of the earth, specifying the setting of the seasons and the bounds of their dwelling, for them to be seeking God, if, consequently, they may surely grope for Him and may be finding Him, though to be sure, not far from each one of us is He inherent, for in Him we are living and moving and are.

GENESIS 1:2

²+**As for ‘the earth, it came to be a chaos and vacant, and darkness was over the surface of the abyss.**

And the spirit of Elohim was vibrating over the surface of the waters.

²+**And-the-earth, it-becomes** a chaos and-vacant, and-darkness is over the face-of the abyss.

And-the-spirit-of Elohim is vibrating over the face-of the-waters.

1:2 **became**. This verb also expresses an action as a fact. This process of becoming occurred in the past as the context indicates. But it is secondary to the fact of creation. God *creates* the heavens and the earth, and then the earth *becomes* a chaos and vacant, enveloped in darkness. It is not created out of chaos and emptiness and darkness, nor is it created in this form (*cf* Isa.45:18). God creates the heavens and the earth, and then the earth becomes disrupted.

Scripture gives a clear statement of the origin of the world about us when it informs us that Elohim created it. Then, with this foundational fact established, the subject of evil is introduced as a secondary development. With this in mind we are protected from supposing that evil is eternal, or is in any way outside of God's power and wisdom.

THE VERB "BECOME"

The verb *eie* BECOME occurs about two dozen times in this chapter alone, and everywhere denotes a *change*, and not mere existence. In the third verse it marks a change from darkness to light. In the sixth verse, two changes occur, an atmosphere is made and waters are separated. Four times, in verse fourteen, there are changes connected with the luminaries. The *progress* of events is marked by the sixfold repetition of becoming evening and morning. And so it is throughout the Scriptures. In the course of my work I have had to translate every occurrence in the sacred text, and have found that this is the *sense*, even if English idiom and context occasionally demand that it be rendered *come*, or a form of *be*. These cases are always

indicated in the CV. On the other hand, the forms of the copula BE are usually absent and we have to insert them in English, hence print them in lightface type.

CHAOS

The word *without form*, in the AV, is also rendered *confusion*, *empty place*, *nothing*, *nought*, *vain*, *vanity*, *wilderness*, and *waste* (Deut.32:10). How anything can exist *without form* is impossible to conceive, and hardly prepares us for what follows. Anything with a surface must have a form. The word *chaos* is just what is needed to suggest the necessity for the work done on the first two days. It is in full accord with the term *abyss*. It also implies that the earth was not a chaos when created. Chaotic conditions are not fit to *dwell* in, yet the first earth was created for that purpose. No *human* life was ever on that earth, for Adam, the first human, was *created* later (1:27). So also were the great monsters and every living, swarming soul and every flyer (1:21).

VACANT

The word *void* is also misleading here. To speak of an object as a void would indicate that it has no existence. But if it *contains nothing*, then it is *vacant*. This word is the complement of the word *fill* in verses twenty-two and twenty-eight where living souls are told to *fill* that sphere in which they live. Indeed, it may be in contrast to the fruitfulness and *increase* enjoined on all living souls. It seems to imply that the first earth had once been filled with some forms of life, such as plants, which are not said to have been specially *created* during the restoration of the earth, but only *brought forth*, the term used of soul life *after* the record of its creation (Gen.1:12,21,24).

Confirming and elaborating the assertion of Isaiah that the earth was originally created to be inhabited, Peter

speaks of it as a *world*, that is, all was systematically and orderly arranged, and provision was made to support inhabitants. But a waste and vacant abyss covered with water and shrouded in darkness is not habitable, and it can by no means be called a "world." As a matter of fact, the earth itself was not destroyed by water in the same sense as it will be by fire before the new creation. But the *world*, says Peter, *perished*. Becoming chaos and vacant conveys the same thought in different words. If we wish to express the matter literally and exactly, we would say that the *world* was restored in six days, though it is quite plain even if we say it was the earth.

A point of prime importance, which may only be inferred from the early record, is the positive statement that the earth was first formed *so as to be indwelt*. The fact the animals and man were created later does not deny that the earth was prepared as a habitation. The fact that plants are not definitely said to be *created* later suggests that there was verdure on the surface of the earth as originally created. In other words there was a cosmic order such as would sustain life on the original earth. And this it was which perished.

THE MEANING OF SPIRIT

How difficult it is to define spirit in literal language! But God provides a picture of it preceding even those of light and life. In the original Hebrew the word is WIND. It was a "wind" of God that vibrated over the waters and brought light. It is a pity that we cannot use this for both in other languages, for it is the inspired illustration of *spirit*. The wind *itself* cannot be perceived by our faculties. We can feel and see and hear and smell its *effects*, but the power itself lies beyond our apprehension. Our Lord compared its action to a powerful blast (John 3:8).

So it is that nature provides us with the clearest defini-

tion of the most intangible and spiritual of all things, the very essence of God, for He is not merely a spirit, but *is* literally Spirit.

A clear understanding of the very first action of the spirit of God may be of value in apprehending its further operations. The Authorized Version says that the spirit *moved*. This is correct, but it gives us no clue as to the character of its motion. The Hebrew word occurs only three times, so we will examine them all. The most helpful is found in Deuteronomy (32:11) where we read of a vulture that "*hovers over her young*." In Jeremiah 23:9 the prophet says "*all my bones are tremulous*." Not many of us have seen a vulture hovering over her fledglings. But some of us have observed a hummingbird, as it vibrates its wings when draining the nectar from a flower. I have seen a plungeon, on Lake Galilee, poised apparently motionless, by means of its vibrating pinions. Perhaps all of us have experienced what Jeremiah described as the shaking of his bones.

THE SPIRIT OF LIGHT

In bringing us back from death into life when we first believe, the spirit of God pursues the same course. "The God Who says that, out of darkness light shall be shining, is He Who shines in our hearts" (2 Cor.4:6). First the spirit hovers over the sinner in his darkness and enlightens him through the power of God's Word. One is a fine figure of the other, in a higher realm.

The Son of God, anointed by the spirit, is the Light of the world (John 1:9). We also, who have the spirit dwelling in us, are light (Eph.5:8), and children of light (1 Thess.5:5). We must understand the meaning of the literal operation in this passage before we can fully appreciate its force in these figures.

The procedure of God's spirit in restoring the earth was quite natural in its order and results. It is evident that a

great catastrophe had reduced the surface of the earth, which had been created to be indwelt (Isa.45:18), to one vast mushy mixture, in which the atmosphere and the dry land were mingled with the water.

GENESIS 1:6

⁶ **And Elohim ¹said: Let an atmosphere come to be in the midst of the waters, ⁺that it may ^bbe separating ^{bt}waters [›]from waters. ⁷And it came to ¹be so.**

⁶ **And-saying-is Elohim: Becoming-is an atmosphere in-the-midst-of the-waters, and-it-is-becoming a separating between waters to-waters. ⁷And-it-is-becoming so~.**

1:6 **And it came to be so.** The Masoretic Text has this clause at the end of verse 7. But the Septuagint version has it here at the end of verse 6, immediately following the words of Elohim. That is the pattern in verses 9, 11, 15, 24 and 30. What we see here is a clear and immediate connection between what Elohim says and the exact fulfillment of His words. And with this restoration (as it seems to us) of these words to the end of verse 6 this example of the power and truthfulness of God's words is impressed on us consistently at the very beginning of Scripture. In verse 3 the words of instruction were followed immediately by the identical words as fulfillment. With regard to the creation of the human, there is a fuller description of the way in which Elohim's words are carried out. But throughout this chapter the pattern is maintained. What Elohim says is to be comes to be so.

In accord with this principle, we are assured that God's many promises concerning Israel and ourselves and all mankind will be carried out.

GENESIS 1:9

⁹ And Elohim ¹said: Let the waters ^f under the heavens flow together into one ⁷confluence~^Q, ⁺that the dry ground may ¹appear. And it came to ¹be so.

⁹ And-saying-is Elohim: Flowing-together-are the-waters from-under the-heavens to ⁷confluence~^Q one, and-appearing-is the-dry-ground. And-it-is-becoming so.

1:9 **confluence**. The Masoretic Text has the Hebrew word, *mqum* here, which we generally translated **place**, but the CVOT conjectures that a similarly spelled word *mque* (as used in verse 10 where it is translated **confluence**) was original. A fragment from the Dead Sea Scrolls has this word, *mque*, here, and the Septuagint Version supports this reading.

Although our translation does not note the relationship, the Hebrew verb rendered **flow together** also belongs to the same word family as **confluence**, to which we have given the name, STRETCH-TOWARD (also included in this word family is the word **expect**). It is common in Hebrew for a term and even various forms of that term to be repeated in a single thought for the purpose of emphasis. In this case the waters are said to be *stretching toward* a *stretch-toward*er, called the Sea. In reaching the Sea they did not stop their flowing, but continued to stretch toward another place, that is, returning (perhaps by underground processes) to their starting place in what we call the water cycle (see Ecc.1:7). Because this Hebrew word for **confluence** was used in the Hebrew text of verse 10 some such sense can certainly be understood even if the more general term, *place*, is used in verse 9. But we may give the matter more attention if we see how the concept of flowing waters, ever stretching onward, is being emphasized here, once as a verb and twice as a noun.

“GRACE” IN ROMANS SEVEN

BEFORE the word “grace” was allowed a place in Romans 7:24, more study was devoted to it than to any other critical reading. In extraordinary cases like this we did not confine ourselves to the three main witnesses which we record in the superlinear. We gave attention to the critical readings of this text as given in the most important manuscripts, early fathers, and versions. It will be of more than ordinary interest to note the various ways in which this text has appeared in these sources:

1. “I am thanking the God” is the reading of one set of witnesses, which includes Sinaiticus uncorrected, Alexandrinus, two Syriac versions, the Peshitto and the Harkleian, the Gothic version of Ulfilas, and most other Codices. Origen has it so twice out of three instances, and Chrysostom quotes it so once.

2. “Thanks (or *grace*) to the God” is the reading of Vaticanus and is followed by the Coptic Sahidic version, Origen one out of three instances, Methodius, a Bishop of Olympus, and Hieronymus, once out of two occurrences.

3. “Yet thanks (or *grace*) to the God” is the reading of Codex Ephraemi, a few other Codices, a few of the Boharic and the Armenian versions, and is so quoted by Cyril of Alexandria.

4. “The grace of God” is found in Codex Claromontanus, the Latin version, Hieronymus, one in two instances, and Origen’s Latin in both of its occurrences.

Weymouth gives the consensus of modern editors as favoring “Thanks (or grace) to the God,” but most of them

put "I am thanking" in the margin. Alexander Souter's edition reverses this, putting "I am thanking" in the text, and "Thanks to" in the margin.

OMISSIONS ARE COMMON

It is a point of principal importance that many of the mistakes in the ancient manuscripts are *omissions*. Only those actually engaged in transcribing will realize how easy it is to leave out a few words or a line. There can be no doubt that the scribe of Sinaiticus skipped many words which were restored by the corrector. The Alexandrian manuscript has thus lost quite a few whole sentences, and almost always the reason is apparent from the text itself.

Probably what happened here was that a very early scribe, in copying this passage came to the word *grace*, *charis*, and lifted his eyes from the copy. Then turning to it again, his eyes fell on the same combination of letters *charis* in "I am thanking" (*eucharistō*), a little further on. In this way, his copy skipped the word *grace*, for he had lost it in the word "thanking."¹

This shifting from *grace* to *thanks*, in English, will be clearer if we explain that *thanks*, *gratitude*, *grace*, *rejoice* and *bounty* are all from the same element, *char-*, in Greek, which means JOY. Sometimes we must translate grace *gratitude* (1 Cor. 10:30). The noun *grace* (*charis*) is translated by the noun *thanks* when it is an acknowledgment. The verb *thank* is WELL-JOY.

Surely all who are acquainted with the grace of God can see that there is a much deeper connection than a mere etymological one, for grace is the purest and most inexhaustible source of joy and thanksgiving.

1. The technical name for this type of omission in the process of copying a text is "haplography." It has occurred fairly often in the transmission of the Hebrew text, as noted in the CVOT.

GRACE IN ROMANS

Grace is the greatest gift and principal potency in the epistle to the Romans. To begin with, Paul received *grace* (1:5) as the power of his apostleship. He commences the epistle proper with *grace* (1:7). His first word concerning justification is that it is gratuitously in God's *grace* (3:24). Faith is chosen as the means of receiving it, because it is in accord with *grace* (4:16). Conciliation, also, is called the *grace* in which we stand (5:2). The answer to Adam's offense is *grace*. The *grace* of God and the gratuity in *grace* now superabound (5:15). Those who obtain this superabundance of *grace* shall reign (5:17). Where sin increases, *grace* superexceeds. *Grace* reigns (5:20, 21). We are delivered from sin and the law by being under *grace* (6:14). What else can deliver us from the law of sin and rescue us out of this body of death? Does not God do it by His *grace*?

There are degrees of *grace*. It may mean no more than *favor*, as when used of our Lord. But, with the call of Saul of Tarsus, it received an increase in intensity which pervades all his writings. Sometimes he adds such terms as superabundant (Rom.5:17), or riches of *grace* (Eph.1:7), or transcendent riches of *grace* (Eph.2:7), in order to express the highest degrees, but even without these, when applied to the salvation of sinners, and especially to the favor God shows the nations, that is, to those who deserve the opposite, it shines with a radiance which it reflects from its context. Indeed, how could a human language provide a word for such a marvelous idea? God refines and enriches such terms by the contexts in which He uses them. *Grace* has appeared *in* every administration, but the present is the only administration *of* *grace*.

Let us exult in this glorious *grace*! If we do, it will greatly help us to deal with others in *grace*.

A. E. Knoch

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON ROMANS 7:24,25

THE preceding article is excerpted and slightly edited from the Introduction to the 1930 edition of the CONCORDANT VERSION (New Testament with the Greek Text), page 42, and *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 39, pages 98-101.

It is most enlightening. Both the context and the remarkable variations of the ancient manuscripts strongly suggest that Paul originally answered his question of Romans 7:24 with the word *Grace!* (meaning JOY) and then followed it by giving joy to God in the form of thanksgiving. But there is a problem here. The corrector of Codex Sinaiticus (which Brother Knoch considered the source of the original reading), had inserted the Greek connective, *de*, along with the word *charis*. This little term, which is entered under the English word *yet* in our KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, page 337, is explained there as an "adversative connective" though "sometimes very slightly so," and often "used as a resumptive," and rendered *now*.

However, it would not accord with English idiom to translate *charis de* by "Yet grace!" or "Now grace!" as Paul's answer to his question of Romans 7:24. The first edition of the CV left the *de* untranslated, but the 1944 edition, called The International Edition, represented it by the word "why."

Brother Knoch discusses this problem and his solution in *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 39, page 99, as follows:

"The idiomatic version, however, caused considerable difficulty. It could be readily understood in Greek and other languages, but not carried over into idiomatic English. In German we can say, Yet grace! (Aber Gnade!). Such idiomatic difficulties are by no means rare. The word *de* needs two words, *yet* and *now*, regularly. But even these do not

suffice for all cases. We were also compelled to use *but*, *even*, *however*, and, in this case, *why*, as an expletive, a usage given in Webster's dictionary, as well, in making a readable version. Such cases may occur only once, for they arise from odd eccentricities in our tongue, not from the regular rules of diction."

Yet after reviewing the entire matter for the 1966 edition of the CV, it was decided to leave the Greek term, *de*, untranslated once again. And this continues to be so in our current editions.

At this point, I can only present the case as seems most likely to me in light of the evidence. I am satisfied that Paul originally exclaimed, *Grace!* (*charis!*) as his answer to his question of verse 24, and he followed this with *thanks* (*charis*) to God. He did not first say *charis de*, but simply *charis* as a one word reference to the evangel of God's grace. It is most likely that the words, *charis de*, inserted by the corrector to Codex Sinaiticus (dated Fourth Century) were intended to indicate a replacement to the reading in the Sinaiticus original, *eucharistō*. The corrector's source read "Now thanks [*charis de*] to the God" (as in Romans 6:17) while the manuscript source used by the scribe who prepared the Sinaiticus manuscript read "I am thanking [*eucharistō* I-am-WELL-JOYing] to the God." Neither source manuscript had *both* Paul's reference to *grace* [JOY] received and his expression of *thanks* [JOY] given. Yet, on the evidence of the context and the combination of readings in the manuscripts, I can readily agree with Brother Knoch that Paul originally answered his question with the exclamation, *Grace!* and followed this with thanks to God. He wrote either *charis charis tō theō* [Grace! Thanks to-the God], or: *charis charis de tō theō* [Grace! Now thanks to-the God]. But the first use of *charis* was lost very early in the transmission of the epistle, as Brother Knoch explained it above.

Subsequently, other changes occurred in the copying of the text, mostly preserving Paul's thought of thanksgiving to God. But a major variant reading appeared as represented by Codex D (Claromontanus) and a few other ancient sources: *The grace of God!* Supposing that this was not Paul's original wording, it is remarkable that there were those in these early centuries who were so certain that it must have been that they adjusted the text accordingly.

In this we see a probable attempt to restore what seemed to be Paul's obvious answer to his question. But while it gives witness to Paul's answer to his question, it does not testify to his expression of thanksgiving.

WHO OR WHAT?

Of course the AV (in accord with the majority of the ancient manuscripts) reads, "*who* shall deliver me . . .?" and replies indirectly with the words "I thank God." Indeed the Greek pronoun here can correctly be rendered either "who" or "what" as required by the context. Yet it is doubtful that Paul simply pointed to the fact that God is the Rescuer. As Brother Knoch observed, "*All accept that. It is a question of the means that He uses in doing so. Even if grace is inserted, it is God's grace.*"

Paul reaches a high point of emotion in Romans 7:23,24. A short, direct answer that gets immediately to the point is most appropriate. It also seems most likely that Paul did not use a verb with the pronoun "I" here, but simply used the noun "thanks," so as to end with full attention on the One Who gives us grace and Him through Whom He gives it. *Charis* as *grace* draws attention to God, and *charis* as *thanks* is directed to Him. In accord with this, the words "God's law" in the next line focus our thoughts (our minds), seriously and joyfully, on God's own solution to sin and the wretchedness it brings.

D.H.H.

PSALM THIRTY-EIGHT

A Davidic Psalm, For Remembrance⁻

- 38 O Yahweh, do not ^lcorrect me in Your wrath
+Or ^ldiscipline me in Your fury.
- 2 For Your arrows, they have settled deep in me,
And Your hand is settling down on me.
- 3 There is no soundness in my flesh
^fin view of Your indignation;
There is no peace in my bones ^fin view of my sin.
- 4 For my depravities, they pass over my head;
Like a heavy load, they are too ^lheavy ^ffor me.
- 5 My welts stink ⁷and^c are putrefied
^fIn view of my folly.
- 6 I am wretched; I bow down very ^{fr}low.
The entire day I walk in somberness^l.
- 7 For my hips, they are filled with searing pain,
And there is no soundness in my flesh.
- 8 I am torpid and ^{fr}utterly crushed;
I roar out from the anguish of my heart.
- 9 O ^sYahweh^{ph}, in front of You is all my yearning,
And my sighing, it is not concealed from You.
- 10 My heart, it throbs; my vigor forsakes me,
And the light of my eyes, even that is not ⁷with me.
- 11 Those loving me and my associates,
they are standing aloof from my contagion,
And my near friends, they stand far off.
- 12 + Those seeking my soul ^mlay ^ltraps,
And those seeking after evil to me, they speak woes;
+ The entire day they ^lmumble deceptions.
- 13 +Yet I am like a deaf man; I do not ^lhear,

- And like a mute who does not ^lopen his mouth.
 14 +So I have ^lbecome like a man who is not hearing,
 + In whose mouth there are no reproofs.
 15 'But ^lon You, O Yahweh, have I ^cplaced my hope;
 You Yourself shall answer, O ^sYahweh^{ph} my Elohim.
 16 For I ^{sa}pleaded: Otherwise they might rejoice
^lagainst me;
 'When my feet slip⁻,
 they would magnify themselves over me.
 17 'But I am prepared^l for limping,
 And my pain is in front of me continually.
 18 For I shall profess my depravity;
 I am ^lanxious ^fbecause of my sin.
 19 +Yet those being my enemies ^Qgratuitously~,
 they are plentiful,
 And those hating me falsely have multiplied.
 20 + Those repaying evil ["]for good,
 They are my ^ladversaries ["]in my pursuit⁻ of the
 good.
 21 Do not ^lforsake me, O Yahweh;
 My Elohim, do not be ^lfar from me.
 22 Do hurry to my help,
 O ^sYahweh^{ph}, my Salvation.
^lPermanent^l, For Acclamation

NOTES ON PSALM 38

This psalm provides an excellent background to Romans 7. There are striking parallels, but also important points of contrast. Both David and Paul speak as those who know the law and both are aware of the fact that they fail to keep its righteous precepts. David, however, is a sinner under the law, which, in its goodness and righteousness, calls for judgment on the sinner. And Paul is under grace.

So it is that David pleads before Yahweh from the depths

of his soul: "O Yahweh, do not be correcting¹ me in Your wrath or be disciplining me in Your fury." This was a critical issue for David, who had written in the opening lines of Psalm 32, "Happy he whose transgression is lifted away, whose sin is covered over! Happy the human to whom Yahweh is not reckoning depravity." Yet those under law could never reach to that happiness. In no way could David conclude his thoughts regarding sin with the words: "Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation" to me.

But the fact that law makes sin known (Rom.7:7) is as clear in Psalm 38 as it is in Romans 7. David cries out to Yahweh, "There is no peace in my bones in view of my sin. For my depravities, they pass over my head; like a heavy load, they are being too heavy for me."

When Saul of Tarsus realized what the precept against coveting was saying, it hit him just as the words of Nathan the prophet hit David who had sinned in his coveting for Bathsheba and in all the depravities that followed. Paul recounts his experience when he realized what the tenth commandment was saying: "I died, and it was found that, to me, the precept for life, this is for death. For Sin, getting an incentive through the precept, deludes me, and through it, kills me" (Rom.7:10,11). So David describes himself as "torpid and utterly crushed" (Psa.38:8).

The law is holy, and the precept holy and just and good; indeed it is spiritual (Rom.7:12,14), but we all are fleshly. Sin makes it home in us, as it did in David and Paul. Anyone who knows the law and is gratified that it points to what is ideal, will also become aware of a different law, the law of sin, which wars against it. Hence, Paul, speaking of himself in the flesh, exclaims, "A wretched man am I!"

1. I am rendering this and subsequent verbs preceded by a vertical stroke in the literal sense of action going on, as explained in the Introduction to the CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

(Rom. 7:24), just as David cried out, "I am wretched; I bow down very low. The entire day I walk in somberness" (Psa. 38:6).

The Hebrew word translated "wretched" here in the psalm would ordinarily be rendered "depraved," so that it speaks of recognition of the multitude of depravities referred to in verse 4. But the Septuagint translated it with a Greek word which referred not only to one's sinfulness, but also adds the sense of mental misery. This is the very Greek word Paul uses in Romans 7:24, conveying both the sense of the wretched, fleshly condition and the wretchedness in mind as well.

At this point of wretchedness, David and Paul part company. David roars out in the anguish of his heart. He focuses on his sufferings from the coldness of his friends, the open attacks of his enemies, and his own lack of defense. Thus he turns to Yahweh with the petition that He not forsake him and would hurry to his help. On the other hand, Paul comes to God with thanksgiving in view of His grace. Paul knows his sinfulness, but he keeps listening from his heart to the evangel. This is what vibrates over him with spiritual power every minute. His mind is not centered on himself and his sins, nor upon the law of God given to Israel in the wilderness. Rather it is enslaved to "God's law" by which He sent His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, to the end that sin is condemned. Paul is one of the happy human beings to whom, already, the Lord by no means is reckoning sin.

The Hebrew word for "gratuitously" (*chnm*) in verse 19 is found at this place in the Dead Sea Scrolls of the Psalms and is used in the similar passage of Psalm 35:19. This provides a further example of David as a type of Christ (*cf* John 15:25), and fits the context better than the Masoretic Text's word, *chiim*, meaning "life" (AV, "lively").

D.H.H.

RESCUE BY GRACE

WHEN Paul opened this letter centered on the evangel of God concerning His Son, by saying, "Not ashamed am I of the evangel" (Rom.1:16), he directly faced one of the most common criticisms brought against it. To declare that those believing the evangel are justified apart from works of law, gratuitously in God's grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, was considered highly dangerous. Indeed, it is still distrusted to the extent that where God's grace is announced, it is often, even commonly, replaced by law when it comes to our daily lives. Even when justification is recognized as wholly God's favor through the faith-obedience of Jesus Christ (to God be the glory!), the recognition that this word of the cross is the power of God (*cf* 1 Cor.1:18-25) for salvation in the present as well as the future is not widely appreciated.

Human sin is shameful. But Paul was not ashamed of the evangel, for it announces the condemnation of sin, and *it* is the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing.

Yet those who are believing the evangel and are now standing before God justified gratuitously in His grace, do not always exhibit its power in their present ways of living. Nevertheless, Paul was not ashamed of the evangel. Whether or not the believer comes to know and be a partaker of the power which is there in believing the evangel, that is where it is, not in the precepts of the law, but in listening from the heart to the declarations of grace which are there in the evangel.

SIN AND GRACE

Earlier in Romans, after surveying, at great length, the miserable record of human irreverence and unrighteousness, including that of Israel under the law, the apostle Paul concluded, that by works of law no flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight (Rom.1:18-3:20). Then he turned our attention to the evangel, which towers in contrast:

Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing . . . (Rom.3:21,22)

We cannot be justified and stand before God in righteousness by works of law. *Yet now*, God's own righteousness is not simply attested, but is made *manifest* through the faith of Jesus Christ. This is for all, and this is even now, in spirit, placed on all who are believing.

However, before making plain exactly what this righteousness is, and how it is the solution to the wretched situation described in Romans 1:18-3:20, Paul brought that wretched situation before us again as the factor calling for God's manifestation of His own righteousness:

. . . for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. (Rom.3:22,23)

Even though God's righteousness is placed *on* us (or, as Paul puts it later, "reckoned to us"), we are not allowed to forget that we are sinners in the flesh. This is as true of believers as it is of anyone else. And it is as true of one who sins in relatively small ways as it is of one who is a great sinner. It is only by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ, that we now stand justified before God:

Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus . . . where, then, is boasting? (Rom.3:24,27)

Law and works of law were kept out of the picture as Paul continued in chapters 4 and 5 to unfold the evangel for which he was severed. The deliverance which is in Christ Jesus is reckoned to us as a favor, a gift of joy, not as payment for good deeds we may have done or do:

Now to the worker, the wage is not reckoned as a favor, but as a debt. Yet to him who is not working, yet is believing on Him Who is justifying the irreverent, his faith is reckoned for righteousness. (Rom.4:4,5)

It is *on our believing* that this reckoning takes place (*cp* Eph.1:13), but the righteousness which is reckoned to us is not based on our faith, but on that of Jesus Christ. We are sinners who are graciously granted to be believing and be bringing honor to Christ through sufferings (Phil.1:29). Yet also, in the flesh, we keep accumulating a record of offenses against our God, many of them unnoticed by us, but also there are those that become sources of deep shame. It is while still being offenders in the flesh that we “are believing on Him Who rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead, Who was given up because of our offenses, and was roused because of our justifying” (Rom. 4:24,25). And in the flesh we are still sinners.

We never escape from being sinners while we remain in these bodies of death. “Through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned” (Rom. 5:12). Yet above all this, we stand in grace before God:

Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God. (Rom.5:1,2)

Righteousness and peace are based wholly on the love of God in that while we are still sinners, Christ died for our

sakes, and in that while we are still enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son (Rom.5:6-11).

This is the evangel of God concerning His Son. It is in every way an evangel of grace. God's word of law "came in by the way, that the offense should be increasing. Yet where sin increases, grace superexceeds, that, even as Sin reigns in death, thus Grace also should be reigning through righteousness, for life eonian, through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom.5:20,21).

WHAT SHALL WE DECLARE?

At this point in Romans Paul turns our attention to our present lives. What shall we be declaring about this evangel of grace in relation to our way of living? Does it not encourage sin? Or at least fail to discourage it? Does it not say that we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing? May it not be coming to that! (Rom.6:1,2).

Law tells us what we are to do and are not to do. Does not grace tell us that we can persist in sin and consequently receive more grace?

No! The evangel is not like law in being concerned with what we must do and must not do. Nor is it concerned with what we may do. It is concerned with what God has done through the gift of His Son.

In directing us in our doing, Paul guides us to declare and take account of and listen to and enslave our minds to the evangel which tells us what God has done through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

THE LAW AND WRETCHEDNESS

Now in Romans 7, addressing, in particular, those who know the law, Paul has shown the goodness of the evangel in contrast to the holy and righteous and good law given at Sinai. He has done so by recounting his own experiences as one who knows the law. First he describes his life

as the law affected him when he was under it and so zealously struggling to fulfill its righteous standards (Rom.7:7-12) that in the Pharisaical viewpoint it could be said that he was becoming blameless (Phil.3:6). Yet he knew within himself that he did not stand before God as he stood before his fellow religionists.

And then the apostle has spoken further with fervent honesty, of his life as a believer who is not under law, but still is aware of its effects on the mind in relation to his fleshly failures (Rom.7:13-23). It leads to the cry: "A wretched human am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death?" (Rom.7:24). It is not that Paul did not know what would rescue him (for it is his purpose here to remind his readers of it), but the cry still arose in his fleshly experience when he failed to uphold what his mind knew the law set forth as righteousness. So also the believer is often led to this cry, and then, like Paul, we are led again and again to the evangel of God's grace, the word of God's giving of joy. And in view of this we are led, like Paul, to return grace in the form of thanks to God, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

DELIVERANCE IN CHRIST JESUS

The answer to the cry for rescue had actually been already given (and Paul holds to it with ever renewing faith). It is well to repeat it once again. Paul and we who are believing stand before God "being justified gratuitously in His **grace** *through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus*" (Rom.3:24)!

The apostle greatly expands this evangel, when in Ephesians 1:7 he tells of the deliverance through Christ's blood which we have in Him, and then, when in Colossians 1:12-14, he speaks of the Father's rescue of us *out of the jurisdiction of Darkness, into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in Whom we are having the deliverance.* This

deliverance is justification, figuratively termed "pardon" in order to express the love which is in the Father's heart in conciliating us to Himself through the death of His Son. Thus we are rescued!

It is a matter of gratuitous *grace*.

Yet as we have seen, this rescue is not our present experience *in the flesh*. In spirit we *have been* identified with Christ in His death, and *shall be* resurrected and be living together with Him as He is living, no longer dying and living to God (Rom.6:3-11). Nevertheless (and this has been Paul's point throughout chapters 6 and 7), our devoted attention to this word of completed and future deliverance in Christ Jesus, in God's grace, opens up a most joyful grace ("joyful joy") in the present for us who are believing. This word affects our walk; and in this way it is a rescue for us now, not as it shall be, but a rescue in accord with the firstfruit of the spirit which we have received as believers (Rom.8:23; *cp* Eph.1:13,14). This is a most happy blessing which we have as believers, and which unbelievers do not have simply because they have no viewpoint of what has been done at the cross, and what lies ahead because of Christ's faith-obedience. They are in the jurisdiction of darkness where this grace (JOY) is unseen. There is no firstfruit of the spirit apart from believing the evangel.

For us, however, grace leads us to dwell on what God has done through Christ. Indeed, what God has done in grace superexceeds over every increase of sin (Rom.5:20). To declare and believe and take account of this is not to take our sins lightly, but to take what God has done through Christ seriously and thankfully with joy.

A MIND CENTERED ON GRACE

From this fact of deliverance as made known in Romans 3:24, and the evidence provided by early manuscripts of Romans, it seems altogether likely that Paul originally

answered his question of Romans 7:24 with the one-word exclamation:¹

Grace!

This single word sums up the evangel. By itself it has come to tell us what God has done in sending His Son for sinners in order to justify the sinner and condemn sin in the flesh (Rom.8:3), granting us the sure and certain expectation of God's rescue of us away from our body of death, with all its corruption and groaning (*cf* Rom.8:18-24). It is all of grace, God's operation of joy, soon to be termed "God's law." And this grace works in our minds even now with spiritual invigoration toward a walk that accords with what we believe (Rom.8:4-14).

Paul himself now testifies to this present aspect of our rescue. He continues to know the power of the law of sin in his members against the walk demanded by the law of Sinai. Yet now Paul had been rescued from the wretchedness of a position before God based on his doing what his body of death could not do. He had been rescued into God's gift of the joy of justification and of conciliation and of expectation of the glory of God.

Hence, in shouting the word, *Joy!* in the sense of *Grace!* (as it seems likely he did here) Paul could not refrain from returning *Joy* to God in the sense of *Thanks*:

Thanks² be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord!

In Romans 6:17 Paul gave thanks (JOY) to God for the change that has come about in the believers' lives. Like all human beings, we were "slaves of Sin" in our flesh *without any appreciation of the deliverance in Christ Jesus, or expectation of the glory of God*. But now something new

1. *cf* the article on the evidence for this insertion in the CLNT, p.159.

2. This is the reading of Codex Vaticanus, which seems to me to explain best why the word "Grace!" was lost early in the copying of Paul's letter, and serves best to explain the development of the other readings.

has come into our lives. And this is due to God. It is His grace that we listen submissively to, as the type of teaching to which we were given over. Righteousness and peace and life eonian are not due to us. They are due to God. It is His grace (JOY) to us, by means of the giving of His Son as announced in the teaching, and the fact that we have heard this teaching and are believing it, and live under its powerful influence (Rom.6:14). That is why we give *thanks* to God, returning *joy* to Him.

Now again, in Romans 7:25a Paul is giving thanks to God, giving Him JOY for His joy-gift to us of that rescue which puts our bodies of death to death through the death of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The giving of joy to God is channeled through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for God's gift of joy to us came through Him. The One Mediator of the getting and giving of grace is Jesus Christ, Who has become to us "wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and *deliverance*" (1 Cor.1:30). In view of such a message of grace, we might well take the familiar words of Psalm 119:97 and give them a new reference, exclaiming before our gracious God: *How I love Your evangel! The entire day it is my meditation.* Indeed, now in Romans 7:25b, Paul does this very thing while retaining the word "law," but giving it a new application:

Consequently, then, I myself, with the mind, indeed, am slaving for God's law, yet with the flesh for Sin's law. (Rom.7:25b)

It is from the words of Romans 7:25a that the "Consequently" of verse 25b arises. Grace tells us we have been rescued through God's identification of us, in spirit, with Christ and His death, and we shall be rescued from our body of death as Christ was rescued from death, to be walking in newness of life with transformed bodies, conformed to the image of God's Son. *Consequently*, in view of this

powerful and righteous and loving work of grace, which he now calls "God's law," Paul himself enslaves his mind to it.

THE JOYFUL SLAVE

Paul had introduced himself in Romans as a *slave of Christ Jesus*, a called apostle, severed for the *evangel of God* (Rom.1:1). The word "slave" is connected with the evangel of God's grace, the evangel which speaks of Christ's death for sinners, for their justification and as the foundation of God's gift of conciliation. Again, in Romans 6:16, the apostle asks us, who are believing this evangel:

Are you not aware that to whom you are presenting yourselves as slaves for obedience [submissive listening], his slaves you are, whom you are obeying [submissively listening to], whether of Sin for death, or of Obedience [the submissively listening of the One, Jesus Christ, Rom.5:19] for righteousness?

Paul leads the way. He was a joyful slave of Christ Jesus, in the pattern of the slave who loved his lord and would not leave him, described in the law (Exodus 21:5). Paul was devoted to God's word of grace, which is God's own unique law of operation, listening submissively to the highly welcome message of Christ's submissive listening to His Father's will that He was to die for sinners. So we also are to make this message, which concerns what God has done through Christ our continuing meditation.

THE MIND

The mind comes before the walk. Paul's mind was gratified with the law of God given through Moses. But now, as a great release from wretchedness, his mind becomes enslaved, devoted with joy, to God's law of grace manifested through the faith-obedience of Jesus Christ. This did not wholly rescue Paul's flesh from Sin's law, but in

bringing his mind under God's law Paul was bearing the fruit of the spirit in his living.

Under the law given to Israel, the mind was occupied with what must be done, and it was made wretched by not being able to do it. Under God's law of grace, the mind is occupied with what has been done *by God through Christ*, which means that nothing is now condemnation to us who are in Christ Jesus. It is this evangel which is God's power for salvation. In it is spiritual invigoration for our present walk.

In this is the "renewing" of our minds which Paul speaks of in Romans 12:2. Thus our mind becomes centered on the pities of God, not on what we must do, but on God's love commended to us in the death of Christ, and on God's conciliation of us to Him through the death of His Son. It is with this mind, ever being renewed, that the entreaties of Romans 12-15 become logical in divine service.

A NEW LAW

"God's law" of Romans 7:25 is not the same as "the law of the God" of Romans 7:22 and 8:7. The difference is not easily distinguished by western ears. But among people used to such figures of speech, it would not have been so difficult. The eastern ear would more easily have caught the change of emphasis that was there in eliminating the definite article before the word "law." *God's* law is *God's* own law, to which He adhered in directing His actions against the law of sin, indeed in condemning sin and bringing it to an end. The emphasis is on *God*, while in the wording, "the law of God," the emphasis is on *the law*.

In Romans 7:21-23 Paul tells of his gratification with the law of God given to Israel at Sinai. There is a sense of approval in the word "gratified," but even that is engulfed by wretchedness. The law could not deal with that "different law" in his members which he calls "the law of sin"

in Romans 7:23 (emphasizing it as an effective *law*) and "Sin's law" in Romans 7:25 (emphasizing it as the operation of *Sin*, personified). Yet now in Romans 7:25b our apostle tells of his own *enslavement* (far different from his life under the law of Sinai) to a new law, carried out through the faith of Jesus Christ. At present "God's law" of grace does not bring the operation of "Sin's law" on the flesh to its experienced end. Paul's body of flesh remained a body of death in which he was dying unto the state of death. But the more he devoted his mind to God's law of deliverance in Christ Jesus, our Lord, the more surely he was pleasing God in his walk, living in accord with spirit (as he guides us in Romans 8:4-14), and enjoying the spirit of sonship while awaiting its full realization with expectation (Rom.8:15-25). It was through his present devotion to the evangel of his past deliverance and future rescue that God operated in Paul at present to be willing and working for the sake of His delight (Phil.2:12,13).

OLD WORDS WITH NEW APPLICATIONS

This is not the first time we have had to be alert to unexpected applications of words in Romans. In Romans 6 Paul borrowed key terms from Exodus and Deuteronomy concerning the giving of the law, and applied them to the message he was bringing. We are to *present* ourselves to God (Rom.6:13,16,19). We are to *obey* [UNDER-HEAR] what God says to us, listening to this evangel as Israel was to *hearken* to what He spoke to them at Sinai (Rom.6:16, 17,18,22), in the sense of listening attentively to and taking account of its every word. Yet what we are to be UNDER-HEARING is not what God said there, but what He says to us now. As noted above, we are to be listening as faithful slaves to the type of teaching to which we are given over, that type of teaching which centers on the grace of Christ's obedience and God's righteousness.

And now Paul uses the very word "law" itself in reference to the evangel. The failure to recognize this distinction of laws has introduced a great deal of confusion concerning this passage. Some would remove Romans 7:25b altogether, as spurious. Others would move it back to a position before verse 24, as though it were saying the same thing as verses 21-23. Yet others keep verse 25 in its manuscript position but see Paul referring to the Mosaic law, and then try to explain how he could be enslaving himself to that law after saying we are not under it and have been put to death to it.

No, Paul uses an attention-getting figure of speech here in writing to believers who were used to such ways of speaking. The evangel is put in contrast to the law given through Moses, but it is like that law in that it is a message from God concerned with sin. But unlike the law of God given at Sinai, "God's law" is God's word concerning *His sending of His Son* for the condemnation of sin (Rom.8:3), not concerning the placing on the sinner of rules for getting rid of sin. God condemns sin by putting our old humanity to death in the death of Christ. That is His law.

Nothing is so effective for those whose flesh is subjected to Sin's law for the renewing of their minds and a bearing of the fruit of the spirit in their walk than this law.

NO CONDEMNATION

It is because of this law that nothing is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus. This law, carried out by God in the giving of His Son, has been set against human sin, for *its* condemnation (Rom.8:3). This is what will change human behavior fully when every body of death is put to death and all are constituted righteous. And this now becomes to us who are believing it the source of strength (in accord with the earnest of the spirit) for our behavior in the current era, as we enslave our minds to it.

D.H.H.

CONCERNING WHAT IS “ABOUT TO BE”: “PENDING” VERSUS “IMPENDING”

Question:

I find the KEYWORD CONCORDANCE of the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT very helpful. Through its use, I've been able to determine how the Concordant Version (CV) translates any certain Greek word, and, how the Authorized Version does so as well.

I've noted that in many cases a Greek word is represented in all instances either by a single English word (e.g., *amōmon* by “flawless”) or by several English words that are either synonyms or at least closely related in principle (e.g., *mega* by “great,” “large,” “huge,” “high,” or “loud”).

There are many other cases, however, in which the CV renders a Greek word by a variety of English words in which the underlying (one might say, synonymical-in-spirit) essential nature of these CV variant terms is not evident to me. Generally, the various CV words employed in such cases seem suitable in their contexts. Even so, the essence of their commonality (however diverse in expression) often eludes me.

Since the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT is by no means a word-for-word English rendering of the Greek Original (even though it seeks to be an accurate and faithful translation thereof), it would seem that the word “literal” in its title as being indicative of its nature is a misnomer. But perhaps I am missing something here.

I often compare the way a certain passage is translated in the CV to how it is rendered in the AV, in

many cases comparing it to several other translations as well. Though frequently much is the same or similar between translations, in many cases the differences between versions range somewhere between considerable and tremendous. I find it disconcerting that scholarly men should differ to such a degree as they do concerning what constitutes a proper translation of the same (or similar) original text.

Now, my specific reason for writing you is to ask for your help concerning the meaning of the Greek word *mellō*. The sense of this term is most puzzling to me. In most cases, the CV translates it "about to be" (e.g., "[concerning Jesus,] . . . that He was *about to be* passing through that way"; Luke 19:4). In such cases, *mellō* speaks of something that is soon to occur, whether immediately or in the near future.

Others among the many CV renderings of *mellō* as "about to be" include: (1) ". . . Herod is *about to be* seeking the little Boy to destroy Him" (Matt.2:13); (2) "the Son of Mankind is *about to be* given up into the hands of men" (Matt.17:2); (3) ". . . taking the twelve aside, He begins to tell them what is *about to be* befalling Him" (Mark 10:32); (4) ". . . He dispatches them two by two before His face into every city and place where He was *about to be* entering" (Luke 10:1).

In other instances, *mellō* is translated similarly as "impending" (which means "imminent" or "near at hand"). An example would be, in speaking of a fig tree, ". . . if, indeed, it ever should be producing fruit in the *impending* year . . ." (Luke 13:9).

Many of the occurrences of the CV rendering of *mellō* as impending, however, refer to events that even today are still future—ones which by no means have a relationship of imminency between themselves and the time in which the CV represents them as having been, even then, "impending."

A few examples of such supposedly-impending yet not-actually-impending events, are: (1) "For not to

messengers does He subject the *impending* inhabited earth, concerning which we are speaking" (Heb.2:5); (2) "... neither in this eon nor in that which is *impending*" (Matt.12:32); (3) "having an expectation in God, which these themselves also are anticipating, that there shall be a resurrection which is *impending* for both the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:15).

Further, even in some cases of the rendering of *mellō* as "about to be," it does *not* refer to something that is actually about to be—something that is soon to occur, whether immediately or in the near future. Such instances include: (1) "for the Son of Mankind is *about to be* coming in the glory of His Father, with His messengers, and then He will be paying each in accord with his practice" (Matt.16:26); (2) "nevertheless death reigns from Adam unto Moses, over those also who do not sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him Who is *about to be*" (Rom.5:14); (3) "for I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory *about to be* revealed for us" (Rom.8:18).

(4) "But therefore was I shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who are *about to be* believing on Him for life eonian" (1 Tim.1:16); (5) "I am conjuring you in the sight of God and Christ Jesus, Who is *about to be* judging the living and the dead, in accord with His advent and His kingdom" (2 Tim.4:1); (6) "Are they not all ministering spirits commissioned for service because of those who are *about to be* enjoying the allotment of salvation?" (Heb.1:14).

Similarly perplexing (albeit contextually apt) is the CV rendering of *mellō*—of what is "about to be"—as "defer" (which means to "put off" or "delay"): "And now, why do you *defer*? Rise, be baptized, and bathe off your sins, invoking His name" (Acts 22:16).

I'm aware that I have much to learn concerning principles of faithful translation, of concordancy of

rendering, and, simply of how to determine word meaning. But I appreciate your help and look forward to your response.

Answer:

As you say, “the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT is by no means a word-for-word English rendering of the Greek Original” The common misconstrual here, however, is that what is “literal” is somehow a verbatim representation. Instead, what is literal is what is “*in accordance with, involving, or being the primary or strict meaning of the word or words [in view].*”¹

As you have noted, the Concordant Version often uses a number of English words to represent a single Greek word. This is necessary in translation since the province or range of thought covered by any certain Greek word may be different than that of even the English word which most closely accords with it.

How original word meaning may be ascertained, as well as the nature, purpose, and limitations of an English *version*, are topics of great consequence, worthy of our best efforts in seeking a good understanding concerning them.

I appreciate where you speak of cases in which “the CV renders a Greek word by a variety of English words in which the underlying (one might say, synonymical-in-spirit) essential nature of these CV variant terms is not evident to [you],” where “the essence of their commonality (however diverse in expression) often eludes [you].”

I do not know what to say here except that it takes a certain aptitude as well as developed skill to be able to creatively test, reason, and conclude in such a way so as to note the underlying essential nature and commonality of

1. literal. (n.d.). Dictionary.com Unabridged.
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/literal>

notion inherent to a group of synonyms and variants used to represent in translation a single original term. I would also say that, in the end, any such specialized skill, just as surely as any native ability or even the most hard-fought proficiency, is the gift of God (*cf* 1 Cor.4:7; John 3:27; Psa. 127:1). "May the Lord be giving you understanding in it all" (*cp* 2 Tim.2:7).

DEFINITIVE USAGE AND ESSENTIAL MEANING²

Definitive context alone determines meaning. We have a definitive context when, with respect to the meaning of a word in question, a certain idea alone satisfies such a context. We have the evidence of a word's meaning when that same meaning also fits all the occurrences in which the word appears. Due to considerations of idiom and other linguistic quirks, such a meaning may not always be readily expressed, and even where this is so it may not fit smoothly in all of the original word's contextual occurrences. But if a certain meaning is cognizable in all of a word's occurrences, while being singularly capable of satisfying those of its contexts which *in their nature* are definitive, we may be certain that such a meaning is indeed the word's own meaning.

Many passages simply are not definitive, even if they are otherwise very important passages. It is impossible for a word actually to have two or more meanings, however varied its usages may be. Communication would be impossible were we consistently to adapt the policy that words may have more than one meaning, or, to say the same thing, that they may have primary meaning, secondary meaning, tertiary meaning, and so forth. Meaning, that is, essence, is a singular concept. The existence of a plurality of lexical definitions (i.e., literary *usages*), even as of homonymical forms, does not change this fact.

2. James Coram, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.86, pp.188-192.

Through the passage of time, in the case of any certain word, many specialized usages may well develop, whether figurative or literal. These are the definitions of usage found in our dictionaries, commonly referred to as a word's meanings. Of course most may not realize that these usages, both literal and figurative ones, all stem from a common, basic meaning. We have called some of these faded figures, since, through the passage of time, the original essential meaning of such terms may no longer be widely recognized.

The reader is not to base the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words in the Original upon the ordinary dictionary definitions for the words which appear in any version, including the Concordant Version. Instead, *where necessary, the English words in the Version are to be attuned* by the reader in such a way that they are brought into accord with the Original.

The essential idea or meaning inherent to a word will usually be found, even if not identified as such, among the definitions of usage of a word appearing in our dictionaries. Yet the essential definition is not always the first definition or the most common definition; and certainly, it is not always the idea that most readily comes to mind for the ordinary reader. Instead, the English STANDARDS for the Concordant Version are the words which, in their essence, were found most closely to correspond to the essence of the Hebrew and Greek words which they represent.

Because in certain passages a particular idea may seem more plausible to us than that which the definitive evidence appearing elsewhere reveals a word's true meaning to be, we must not imagine that such a word actually has an entirely different meaning in one passage than in another. This is true at all times, whether we are simply reading in our own language or are making a translation from one language to another. False never means true; good never

means bad; happy never means sad; black never means white, and so forth.

It is vital to distinguish between word meaning and word usage; that is, between denotation and connotation, or essential meaning and referential meaning. It is true that the same word is sometimes used to convey a different idea in one text than in another. It does so, however, not by inherent signification but by contextual application, or usage. In such cases, a common word has in view one thought in a certain passage, and another thought in another certain passage. That is to say, in one text the same word speaks of or refers to a particular idea that it does not speak of or refer to in a different text. Properly speaking, then, such a word has a plurality of references, according to its varied usages. It does not, however, have a plurality of intrinsic significations or essential meanings.

A word's essential meaning is also its universal meaning. Even if not primarily in view, a word's essential meaning is present in all of its occurrences, wherever it is used. If this were not so, we could never determine how a word was presently used, for we would have no idea in mind to serve as a basis for our deliberations. Indeed, if a word's essential meaning were not present in all its occurrences, since the majority of a word's usages are nearly always indefinite, in all such cases, it would be impossible to know what was to be understood by a word in question.

Due to idiomatic differences between the original and receptor language (especially scope of usage or idiomatic range), in translation it is often necessary to use a number of synonyms or other variants to translate a single word in the original. These variants may be quite different from each other in certain obvious respects. Even so, they generally share a common central idea among themselves, and, in any case, always *correspond* to the essential idea of the original expression. It is their idiomatic correspon-

dency which allows them to serve well in the translation of a single, original word. This is true even in rare cases where an original word covering a wide range of thought, requires antonyms in translation for certain of its usages (e.g., *obligate* and *borrow* represent the same Hebrew word in Deuteronomy 28:12). The fact, however, that in a translation intelligible, fluent English often requires the use of idiomatic variants, is certainly no proof that any particular word in the original text has a plurality of meanings.

In certain indefinite passages, a term in question in the original may seem to be more correctly represented in English by some other expression than that which appears in the Concordant Version, even by a word that is of a radically different significance. This, however, does not make such suggested renderings correct, regardless of the zeal and persuasiveness of those advocating such renderings. Such suggestions can only be correct if they accord with the evidence found elsewhere in definitive passages.

THAT WHICH WILL "COME ABOUT"

It is helpful to note that our term under consideration, *mellō*, is to be distinguished from a different Greek word that is also translated "about" (in the sense of "concerning" or "within the sphere of"), the preposition *peri* (e.g., Luke 24:19; Matt.3:4), from which the English "perimeter" is derived.

Mellō, however, [to] be-ABOUT, is a verb (it is often used in the closely related functions of either adverb or participle; in the CV, the participle is often shown as 'about, in reference to that which is "being-ABOUT").³

As you well note in the apt example texts you cite, some

3. In many instances, instructively and largely true-to-sense (even if loosely so), the Authorized Version renders *mellō* simply as "shall" or "shall be," or "will," "to come," "things to come," "afterwards," "yet"; subjunctively, as "should" or "would."

of the usages of *mellō* refer to “something that is soon to occur [or impending], whether immediately or in the near future” (e.g., Matt.2:13; 17:32; Mark 10:32; Luke 10:1; 13:9; 19:4). Yet as you also say, “many of the occurrences of the CV rendering of *mellō* as impending . . . refer to events that even today are still future” (e.g., Matt.12:32; Acts 24:15; Heb.2:5). And, according as you further say, “Even in some cases of the rendering of *mellō* as ‘about to be,’ it does *not* refer to something that is actually about to be—something that is soon to occur, whether immediately or in the near future” (e.g., Matt.16:26; Rom.5:14; 8:18; 1 Tim.1:16; 2 Tim.4:1; Heb.1:14).

These are all good and helpful points. However, it is not actually the case that, properly understood, any of the “not-actually-impending events” are presented in the Concordant Version as “supposedly” being impending. Let me explain:

The entry for *mellō* in the CONCORDANT LEXICON AND CONCORDANCE⁴ (p.11) reads: “ABOUT (be-), be about *to act, that which is* future.” The sense here is, *Mellō* signifies “to be about” [i.e., around, or present] in order to act; it speaks of that which *is* [i.e., has its being in, the] *future*. (Note that the notion of imminency simply does not inhere in the Greek word *mellō*.)

Much of the difficulty in grasping the sense of this word,

4. The title page of which reads as follows: “A companion to the CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES; a comprehensive Lexicon and Concordance; a complete key to the Greek Scriptures and their English translations in the Concordant Version, giving the etymological analysis and idiomatic meanings of every Greek word used in divine revelation, confirmed by a complete concordance of every important grammatical form occurring in the three most ancient manuscripts, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, as well as the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT, the sublinear and the version.” This work is available in its entirety on our website. Strong’s numbers have been superimposed at every entry, greatly facilitating its use:

[HTTP://CONCORDANT.ORG/CONCORDANT_LEXICON/INDEX.HTML](http://CONCORDANT.ORG/CONCORDANT_LEXICON/INDEX.HTML)

mellō, is due to the fact that, in an idiomatic version for the sake of the ordinary reader, it often seems practically necessary to render it either "about to be" or "impending." Now while these English expressions indeed carry the sense of what is imminent or near at hand, *no such notion* is to be understood as the *meaning* (i.e., signification) of *mellō*.

As a matter of usage, many of the occurrences of *mellō* speak of events which *are* (which is to say, happen to be) imminent. Just as surely, however, quite a few other occurrences of *mellō* refer to events that are *not* imminent. It is evident, then, that the notion of imminency is not inherent to *mellō* itself and forms no part of its meaning. It is merely that the *English* expressions "about to be" and "impending" carry such a notion as ordinarily used. Therefore, in the Concordant Version, these terms need to be accommodated and understood by the student in the sense explained herein, not in their everyday usage.

Mellō refers to future presence, not to present imminency.

There is a great difference between an event that is "about to be," and one that, in due course, is "to-be ABOUT," as it were, surrounding us, in our midst.⁵

Even as there is a great difference between what is about to be or impending, and what will, in any case at some point, come to be "about," there is a great difference as well between what is *impending*, and what is simply *pending*.⁶

5. Other examples of the usage of "about" that accord with the meaning of *mellō* are: "Keep your wits *about* you." "There was a lot of flu *about*" (i.e., in the environs or vicinity). "Is John *about* [or "around"]?" "I knew he was somewhere *about*"; "standing *about*." One who is "up and *about*" or "out and *about*," is one who is actively present and engaged. Used thus, "about" speaks of movement in an area, "around here," in the vicinity, in the neighborhood.

6. What is "pending," is what is yet within the period which awaits its conclusion, realization, or actualization. A pending action or event is one that is now in the period prior to its occurrence.

Something that will thus come to be “about” us (as in “roundabout” and “hereabout”), is something that will come to be *present*. Even if its occurrence may not be imminent, its occurrence is nevertheless now *pending*, and we may expect it, awaiting it with anticipation.

A “*mellō*-event” is one that will “come *about*” (or “come to pass”); its future occurrence is now *pending*, and, in its own appointed time, it will come to be.

All *mellō*-events are *pending* between their vantage point and point of future reference; only some *mellō*-events are *impending*, or imminent, between their vantage point and point of future reference. Whether imminency does or does not obtain between any certain *mellō*-event’s vantage point and (future) reference point is strictly a matter of interpretive sense, not of word meaning.

You asked in particular about the CV translation of *mellō* as “defer” in Acts 22:16: “And now, why do you *defer*? Rise, be baptized, and bathe off your sins, invoking His name.” In fact, this is an appropriate idiomatic translation of “to-be ABOUT.” The sense is, Ananias declared unto Saul: “Why do you assign to baptism a ‘to-be-[about],’ that is, *future* as opposed to *present* status? Instead, *at present*: Rise, be baptized, and bathe off your sins, invoking His name.”

ENDURANCE THROUGH FAITH

I find it edifying and encouraging in faith to investigate and consider the many issues related to our present subject, that of the determination of Scripture word meaning in general, and of the meaning and usage of our term of present inquiry, *mellō*, in particular. I trust that you will receive similar benefit as well, together with me, “out of the strength that God is furnishing” (*cp* 1 Peter 4:11).

“Now may the God of expectation be filling you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the power of holy spirit” (Rom.15:13).

J.R.C.

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