

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS
WORD

VOLUME 114

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GOD'S WONDROUS GRACE

Are you trusting in the Saviour?
Do you long for His return?
Does His word become more precious
Though the world does not discern?
There's a work for all believers
In that realm beyond the sky,
Teaching God's celestial beings
Why our Saviour came to die.

Can you glimpse God's love and mercy
In His plan for all the race?
Can you see His whole creation
Finally in His fond embrace?
If you wish to know His purpose;
It's unfolding every hour;
Just believe what God has spoken
And adore Him for His pow'r.

Life is but a fleeting moment;
Time is swiftly passing by;
Soon we'll hear our Saviour calling
Us to meet Him in the sky;
Won't you join that grand reunion
And with Him forever be;
Telling all celestial beings
How His love and grace is free?

There's a happy day awaiting,
When this world will be at peace;
All the sorrow, all the crying
Will at last forever cease:
'Tis the reconciliation
Of the universe, you know;
All will bow in adoration
To the One Who loves us so.

T.K.

EDITORIAL

WITH thanksgiving to God, Who spares not His own Son but gives Him up for us all, we begin volume 114 of *Unsearchable Riches* magazine. The articles center on God and the activities of His holy spirit with a final reminder of His evangel concerning His Son.

Jim Coram writes of God, that “He sees to it that all moves toward . . . the fulfillment of His purpose to become ‘All in all’ (1 Cor.15:28). Whatever occurs has a place to fill toward this end” (pp.11,12).

Concerning God’s spirit, A. E. Knoch concludes his three articles as follows: “The holy spirit is not a distinct personality from God Himself. Christ was born of both God and His holy spirit—one ‘Person’ The earnest of the spirit is the initial instalment which we receive of that plenitude which will be ours in His presence” (p.46).

It is in view of God operating all by His spirit, and of the spiritual blessing of the *earnest* of the spirit, by which we are sealed on hearing and believing the evangel of our salvation—sealed to the deliverance of that which has been procured—that this issue closes with some selected and expanded passages from Paul’s letter, centering on Christ’s faith.

(I wish to add, with thanksgiving to God, the first names of certain ones who take part with me in carrying on the work of the Concordant Publishing Concern: Tony, Alta, Wayne, Sean, David, Daryl and Bonnie Jo.)

D.H.H.

TO GOD BE ALL THE GLORY

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 knows the mind of the Lord? or, who becomes His adviser? or who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid 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)

This is not a passage “to fall back on when everything else fails,” but one that needs to be in the forefront of all our thinking. As with the events of Israel’s history, everything that happens in our lives and throughout all the eons is out of God and through Him and for Him. What is written here concerning the experiences of one group of people is true of everyone.

Indeed, it is evident that “whatever is written before,” throughout the Hebrew scriptures, is *representative* of God’s ways with ourselves, insofar as His direction and control of human affairs is concerned. If this were not the case, those things could hardly have been “written for this teaching of ours,” and it could never be “that through the endurance and the consolation of the scriptures we may have expectation” (Rom.15:4).

It is consoling and a source of joyful expectation to realize that man today is no more the master of his fate and captain of his soul than were his ancestors before him. For “the Supreme is in authority in the kingdom of mortals” (Dan.4:17), and “according to His will is He doing” (Dan.

4:35). Were it otherwise the Scriptures could never help us to endure; they would not console us, and could never afford us expectation out of our own failures and sufferings.

It is significant that the best-known Bible stories, such as Joseph and his brothers and the terrible troubles of Job, focus directly on the work of divine providence. The explicit testimony of God's Word is that He is operating all.

According to the apostle's rhetorical question—since no one at any time already *knows* the mind of the Lord, or becomes His *adviser*, informing Him of things of which He as yet had not been aware, or were in need of repayment inasmuch as they had given Him something *first*—this is why the riches, wisdom and knowledge of God are so deep, His judgments inscrutable, His ways untraceable. Again, none knows His mind, advises Him, or gives anything to Him first, *seeing that* out of Him and through Him and for Him is *all*: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Rom.11:36).

THE ALL

It is clear, then, that in this passage the thought is, *all* that *is*, and *all* that *happens*, is out of, through, and for God. The words "the all," in any text, refer to all that is in view, all that is comprised in the subject at hand, or true in the nature of the case. Therefore, by means of the illuminating rhetoric which Paul employs in this marvelous passage, he clearly manifests the universal scope of that which brings glory to God for the eons.

That these words are used in a limited way in certain other passages (e.g., Col.3:8), is quite irrelevant. The question is: What is the scope of "the all" in Romans 11:36?

Outside of God Himself (*cp* "it is evident that it is outside of Him Who subjects all to Him . . ." (1 Cor.15:27), there is no exception to this "all" of Romans 11:36, nor can there be. For if just once, even concerning a trivial

matter, someone had already known His mind when He as yet had not informed him, or if at any time someone had advised Him of something of which He had hitherto been ignorant, or had given something to Him first that He had not already dispensed, then indeed some things would not be out of God. But since Paul's whole point is that such an idea could never be true, we can be sure that *all* is used universally in this passage.

FOREKNOWLEDGE AND PROPHECY

Since all that exists and all that occurs is out of, through and for God, it is evident that God knows all. He could hardly be ignorant concerning anything that found its origin, ultimate cause, and purpose in His own counsels. Future events are as much an object of God's knowledge as past events. Therefore, the Scriptures having explicitly declared that He *does* know all (1 John 3:20), there is no sound reason to suppose that anything is excluded.

What God *foretells* He first of all *foreknows*, and it is evident He foreknows only that which He will bring to pass Himself. He can hardly rely upon man to help Him out! He fulfills His own word. Surely He has a perfect knowledge of all the great number of prophetic events recorded in the Scriptures, though these events should be ever so complex in themselves, and connected with innumerable other events of equal complexity before and after them.

Prophecy always declares that the events foretold *shall* come to pass, often insisting that they *must* occur (e.g., Luke 24:46; Rev.1:1). Though the prophetic word in itself does not cause events to happen, this fact is very far from being of any aid to the concept of free will.

The sheer existence of prophecy constitutes absolute *proof* that the events it predicts will be caused to happen. For events without a cause would be unpredictable, and our subject is predictive prophecy.

Events which *shall* and *must* take place can never be events of free will. Events of free will, according to their supposed nature, never *have* to occur, and it can never be said that one day they *will* happen, for there is always a “chance” they will not! In the nature of things, they would be absolutely unpredictable, even by God Himself.

By itself, therefore, prophecy constitutes a complete disproof of the theory of human free will. Furthermore, all prophetic events are connected with countless other events upon which they depend for their existence. And these events as well are themselves dependent upon countless antecedent events for their own existence, and so forth. This is true of all things, throughout all time, “up to the fountain, God,” Who alone is self-existent.

To say that the foreknowledge of an event is certain and infallible and yet the foreknown event itself is quite uncertain and may therefore never occur, is completely unsound. For if the event that is foreknown to occur does not occur, the foreknowledge is not foreknowledge.

In order for an event to be known, there must be evidence of that which is to be known. But if any future event should truly be an unnecessary event, that is, one that does not have to occur, the future existence of that event would be absolutely without any evidence whatsoever. It could not be, and therefore would not be, an object of knowledge. The event would not be evident, and so could not be seen to be evident, or to say the same thing, it could not be known. One who has infinite strength of sight and infinite capacity of discernment will be able to see all that there is and all that, in fact, *will* be, quite perfectly indeed. Yet such abilities will not enable anyone to observe evidence which does not exist. To the contrary, they will enable the one who has such abilities to discern with absolute certainty that there is no evidence whatever of any and all unnecessary events.

To claim that things which God knows will occur may not occur, is contradictory. To say, as some have claimed, that He may have ways of knowing of unnecessary events even though we cannot conceive of such things, or at the same time that God knows a thing to be certain, He also knows it to be uncertain, is as foolish as to say that, for all we know, God may know contradictions to be true.¹

It is *impossible* for anything to occur that would disprove God's foreknowledge, and thus make it fore-error. His foreknowledge *must* be correct; it is not enough that it simply turn out that way. At the moment it is subjected even to possible failure, it no longer has to be true. And at the moment in which it no longer has to be true, (1) it is then possible that it may become false, and (2) it then becomes quite uncertain that it is correct; that is, any convictions of it which may yet be entertained, become fallible opinion, and they are no longer *knowledge*.

Consequently, then, it is impossible that something even *could* occur which would prove God's foreknowledge mistaken. No man at any time can even possibly do a single thing that, if done, would disprove His foreknowledge. And divine omniscience would indeed be subjected to possible failure in the instant that it became possible for man to act contrary to it. Yet, as we have shown, this would make it contradictory to itself, and therefore nonexistent.

No clear mind can understand the nature of both free will and foreknowledge and believe in them both. The whole subject is really quite simple: According to the fundamental claims of its own advocates, events of "free will" *never have to occur*. And yet, foreknown and prophesied events *always have to occur*. These concepts are mutually

1. Portions of the preceding two paragraphs were adapted from *FREEDOM OF THE WILL*, Jonathan Edwards, pp. 74-76: Robert Carter and Brothers (1881).

exclusive. The latter one is scriptural; consequently, the former *must be mythical*. And men *have* been turned aside to myths (2 Tim.4:4). "As to the faith, they swerve" (1 Tim. 6:21). Yet we are not to be heeding myths (1 Tim.1:4).

DESIGNATION BEFOREHAND AND "PREDESTINATION"

In the Authorized Version, *proōrizō* is translated "pre-destinate," as well as "ordain" and "determine before." The Concordant Version translates it uniformly as "designate beforehand." This is its sense; it simply speaks of what is designated or specified (*cf* Acts 11:29). Man often fails to accomplish his plans, the things he designates to accomplish. But God's plans, the things He designates to occur in His own wise counsels, always come to pass, for it is He Who fulfills them all (Isa.46:9-11).

In the Scriptures the expression "designate beforehand" is only used in reference to a few subjects, all of them of great consequence. Yet it should never be inferred from this that these are the only things God *designates* beforehand. For God's counsels are concerned with *all* (Eph.1:11). Concerning matters yet to occur, His "counsels" speak of His *plans*—those things which, in the nature of the case, He has *designated* to accomplish. The issues involved in this great question cannot be resolved by merely noting that only a few matters are directly *spoken of* as being designated beforehand. This is especially so when even these are not truly accepted as the work of God (e.g., Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:27,28).

The question is this: Does God *operate all* (Eph.1:11)? or, absolutely speaking, Is there any other God (or Placer) except One, "the Father, out of Whom *all* is" (1 Cor.8:4-6)?

Along with the expression the "sovereignty" of God, "pre-destination" has been the traditional expression which has been employed by many in order to express their belief

(or disbelief) in God's deity or subjectorship, His regulation of man's actions.

Certainly we ought to believe that it is the Deity Who regulates man's actions, for the scripture declares, "And actions are *regulated* by Him" (1 Sam.2:3). This is also true concerning man's "spirit" and "heart" (Prov.16:2; 21:2), "from it spring the outflowings ("issues," AV) of life" (Prov.4:23). Indeed, "Yahweh has made everything for its own outcome, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov.16:4). "I know, O Yahweh, that it is not for a human to choose his way; it is not for a man to walk and to establish his step" (Jer.10:23). For it is our God Who directs our steps (Prov.16:9).

As Benjamin Warfield wrote, "Our difficulties with Predestination arise from a, no doubt not unnatural, unwillingness to acknowledge ourselves to be wholly at the disposal of Another. We wish to be at our own disposal. We wish 'to belong to ourselves,' and we resent belonging, especially absolutely, to anybody else, even if that anybody else be God. We are in the mood of the singer of the hymn beginning, 'I was a wandering sheep,' when he declares of himself, 'I would not be controlled.' We will not be controlled. Or, rather, to speak more accurately, we will not admit that we are controlled.

"I say that it is more accurate to say that we will not admit that we are controlled. For we are controlled, whether we admit it or not. To imagine we are not controlled is to imagine there is no God [no *Placer*]. For when we say God, we say control. If a single creature which God has made has escaped beyond His control, at the moment he has done so he has abolished God. A God who could or would make a creature whom he could not or would not control, is no God. The moment he should make such a creature he would, of course, abdicate his throne. The universe he had created would have ceased to be his universe;

or rather it would cease to exist—for the universe is held together only by the control of God

“The only justification, for making anything is that we both can and will control it. If a man should manufacture a quantity of an unstable high-explosive in the corridors of an orphan asylum, and when the stuff went off should seek to excuse himself by saying that he could not control it, no one would count his excuse valid. What right had he to manufacture it, we should say, unless he could control it?

“It is purely this idea of control which people object to when they say they object to Predestination [or, the deity of God]; not the idea of previousness, but purely the idea of control. They would object just as much if the control was supposed to be exercised without any previous intention at all.

“They ought to object much more. For a control exercised without intention would be a blind control. It would have no end in view to justify it; it would have no meaning; it would be sheerly irrational, immoral, maddening. That is what we call Fate. Say intention, however, and we say person; and when we say person we say purpose.”²

UNIVERSAL GRACE AND GLORY

Since God is so marvelously wise, the end which He has purposed will be a wise end; since He is good, it will be good; since He is love, it will be full of love; since He is just, it will be right.

He can never become All in any who remain all in themselves. Yet to become All in all is His very purpose. Therefore, He sees to it that all moves toward this goal, the fulfillment of His purpose, to become, “All in all” (1 Cor.

2. SELECTED SHORTER WRITINGS, Volume 1, “Some Thoughts on Predestination,” pp.103-106: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. (1970).

15:28). Whatever occurs has a place to fill toward this end. Thus significance, justification and purpose are given to all; there are no purposeless events in all the universe at any time. This is our theodicy; only thus can we harmonize and vindicate even the temporary existence of evil with the goodness and deity of God.

Interminable evil simply cannot be. Indeed, it is not the justice of God that requires an “eternal hell,” but the myths of man. It is God’s *good* news that reveals His righteousness (Rom.1:17; 3:21); horrible predictions about everlasting burnings can never make it known. And the good news is, since all are in need (“for all sin and are wanting of the glory of God”; Rom.3:23), that “being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus” is “for *all*” (Rom.3:22,24)!

Then through these considerations too, besides the other plain passages of glad tidings for all, it becomes evident that the doctrine of endless punishment, even as that of unpurposed eonian evil, is perfectly false, and is impossible to reconcile with the divine attributes.

It is for these reasons, in light of these scriptural considerations, that we believe as we do. In the Scriptures, human affairs are not left to chance, but are to be accounted for on causal grounds. Indeed nothing whatsoever can be *accounted* for except on this basis. And since divine causality is what the Scriptures reveal concerning *all*, we need not apologize for the Word of God, or for our faith in its testimony. Instead, it is in a recognition of these things that we glory in God and in His Son.

May we ascribe all the glory to God for all our achievements, and with much thanksgiving, being aware that He is doing all things well, “the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will” (Eph.1:11).

James R. Coram

HOLY SPIRIT

THE doctrine of holy spirit has been concealed beyond solution in the popular versions of the Scriptures. Any attempt to criticize or correct their unwarranted addition and capitalization is sure to call down the anathemas of those who cleave to tradition. Perhaps no single feature of the CONCORDANT VERSION has occasioned so much criticism as its lack of capitals in spelling holy spirit. This calls for more explanation than has hitherto been given. It is the aim of this version to avoid all interpretation. The use of capitals for holy spirit is, in every case, a matter of judgment. There can be no real reason given why holy spirit should be capitalized. It is not a name of deity. It is God's possession, not His person. Unless it is figuratively used for God or Christ, it should always be printed and written with small letters.

Spiritually-minded translators and revisers have experienced much confusion in this matter. They seldom settled the question to their own satisfaction. J. N. Darby, who would be the last to put a small 's' where a large one should be, calls attention to this in the preface to his translation. Since he sees a glimmer of light as to the reason of this, we quote his words: "The use of a large or small 's' is of extreme difficulty in the case of the word Spirit; not in giving it when the Holy Spirit is simply spoken of personally. There it is simple enough. But as dwelling in us, our state by it, and the Holy Spirit itself, are so blended as to make it then very difficult; because it is spoken of as our state, and then as the Holy Ghost. If it be put large, we lose the first; if small, the Spirit personally. I can only leave it with this warning, calling the attention of the reader to it" Note that he calls the spirit "it," and dimly per-

ceives the cause of the confusion, which arises from the fact that the saints share the spirit of God, and are one spirit in the Lord.

A cloud is cast over the eighth chapter to the Romans by the capital S's. For many years I could not seem to get an intelligent concept of the argument because the Holy Spirit has everywhere intruded. The very first verse is evidently wrong. "Who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" is out of balance. It is the believer's flesh and spirit here, primarily. So also in the second verse. The spirit's law of life, refers first of all to *our* spirit, as in the tenth verse. Verse four speaks of our flesh and our spirit. Surely "the things of the spirit" and "the mind of the spirit" cannot ignore our spirit. Note the curious contradiction in verse nine. "Ye . . . are . . . in the Spirit, if . . . the Spirit of God dwell in you." We are in spirit, not in the Spirit. That is in us. It takes both spirits to "mortify the deeds of the body" (verse 13). Surely "spirit of bondage" should be balanced by "spirit of sonship" (verse 15). Note that even the Authorized Version speaks of "the Spirit *itself*" (verses 16,26) as Tyndale did in his basic English version, which has been modified in this matter to meet the prejudice of ecclesiastical traditions.

The Authorized Version has changed greatly in the course of time. At first it capitalized quite a few nouns, such as Priest, and Sabbath, but now all such words are spelled with small initial letters. The word spirit, however, has been greatly altered in the contrary direction. In many places where they had a small 's' we now have a capital. These changes are not "authorized." The alteration of other nouns is hardly worthy of notice. It is a mere matter of printers' "style." But the change of spirit to Spirit fixes the interpretation. As a result any study of this theme in the Authorized translation is worse than useless. It is misleading.

The Revised Version has followed the same tendency as the previous editorial revisions of the Authorized Version. They use fewer capitals as a rule, yet they still further increase the number of occasions where spirit is capitalized. The result of this tendency is evident on all sides. Not only is there great ignorance on the subject of holy spirit, but editors and reviewers are quite outspoken in acknowledging the fact, though they do not see the inconsistencies in the common translations, and vehemently oppose the uniform rendering of the concordant method. The only possible remedy is the constant use of a version which agrees with the Greek and nowhere inflicts the opinion of the translator on the text by the use of capitals.

The same remarks apply to the Greek texts. Modern editors all differ among themselves, and their opinion on a matter outside their proper province is worth no more than any other man's. The uncials are *all* in capitals. The cursives have very few, and these are mere matters of style. In none of the ancient texts is the word spirit distinguished at any time as in the later Greek and English reproductions. This is why the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT follows the most ancient evidence. This avoids even those unconscious alterations which cast a cloud over our understanding and give the traditions of men all the authority of the Word of God.

The spirit of God and the spirit of a man are often in closest coöperation, so that they ought not to be distinguished. For instance, we are God's dwelling place, *in spirit* (Eph.2:22). What spirit? Surely it must include God's spirit, for that is the only power which can keep us in His holy presence. Surely it must include our spirit, for this is not true except in spirit. It is in contrast with flesh. How perplexing is the Revision! We are "a habitation of God in the Spirit." Either God lives in us, who live in the Spirit, which is a strange medley of figures, or God lives in the

Spirit which lives in us, which is almost as farfetched. The simple fact is that God dwells in us, not in our flesh, but in our spirit, not in any physical sense, but by His spirit. His spirit and ours are both involved in the simple phrase, in spirit. Instead of aiding us to understand, the capital precludes the possibility of intelligent interpretation.

The problem of "personality" is just as complex. The strongest passage which can be produced for the personality of the holy spirit gives it an impersonal name (John 16:13-15). In contrast with the spirit of deception it is called the spirit *of truth*. Truth is an abstract quality. Yet, in contrast with the false spirits which seek to lead astray, it is called a guide, which is neutral. These evil spirits spoke from themselves, but it speaks only what it has heard from God, which seems to be personal. All this refers to the paraclete, the holy spirit. As replacing Christ and opposing evil spirits it is given the attributes of personality, but when considered as opposed to the spirit of error, it is the impersonal spirit of truth. In itself it is neutral, but it reflects the character of that with which it is composed. When replacing a person it is personified.

The doctrine of the distinct personality of the holy spirit probably arose from this passage. Our Lord's figures of speech were often misunderstood by His disciples. When He spoke to them of leaven, they worried about bread. "This is my body" was taken literally, and earnestly defended by the church for a thousand years. So the personification of the spirit of truth, because it was to take the place of a Person, and was in contrast to evil spirits, has been taken literally, leading to the creation of another god in the Christian pantheon. We may rest assured that the disciples never understood it so. No Jew would believe in another deity. They looked for no person at Pentecost. They received a spirit, God's spirit, the spirit of truth, which

was in them and abode with them in a manner impossible to a person.

THE VARIOUS PHRASES

In the original there are a number of striking variations in combining the two words, holy and spirit. There is *holy spirit*, *spirit holy*, *the holy spirit*, and *the holy the spirit*. A laudable attempt has been made to show that these differ in *meaning*. It is supposed that the longest phrase, *the holy the spirit*, is applied only to the "Giver" and the shortest, *spirit holy*, only to His "gifts." The difficulty with this is that it has no analogy in any language. The definite article does not change the *meaning* of the words to which it is prefixed. It cannot change a power into a person. For instance, "spirit of-God" (God's spirit, Rom.8:9, CV) differs from "the spirit of-the God" (1 Cor.2:11) in emphasis, but surely not in sense. "*The God*" is only a *restricted* application of "God." The latter is not a mere power.

In order to show that "spirit" may refer to God's spirit quite as well as "*the spirit*" we will give the occurrences in which it is in direct combination with the name of God. These will, at the same time, give further light on the fact that God's spirit is not a separate deity from God Himself. The two phrases are distinguished, where possible, in the latest revision of the CONCORDANT VERSION by rendering one "the spirit of God" and the other "God's spirit."

the spirit of-the God

- | | | |
|--------|------|--|
| 1 Cor. | 2:11 | that which is of God no one has known except <i>the spirit of God</i> |
| | 2:14 | the soulish man is not receiving that which is of <i>the spirit of God</i> |
| | 3:16 | you are the temple of God and <i>the spirit of God</i> is making its home in you |
| | 6:11 | you were justified . . . by <i>the spirit of our God</i> |
| 1 John | 4: 2 | In this you are knowing <i>the spirit of God</i> |

spirit of-God

- Matt. 3:16 *God's spirit* descending as if it were a dove
 12:28 I am casting out demons by *God's spirit*
 Rom. 8: 9 if so be that *God's spirit* is making its home in you
 8:14 as many as are being led by *God's spirit*
 15:19 in the power of *God's spirit*
 1 Cor. 7:40 Now I presume that I, also, have *God's spirit*
 12: 3 no one, speaking by *God's spirit*, is saying, "Ana-
 thema is Jesus."
 2 Cor. 3: 3 but with *the spirit of the living God* [*living God's spirit*]

Who can distinguish between "the spirit of God" (1 Cor. 3:16) and "God's spirit" (Rom.8:9), which makes its home in us? It is "God's spirit" that leads us, not "*the spirit of God.*" In each case the difference is entirely in the relation of the phrases to the context, not in its meaning.

If the absence of the article before *spirit* denotes that it is a thing, and its presence a personality, then the many passages which treat it as a quality should all be anarthrous. Yet we read of *the spirit* of the truth (1 John 4:6), *the spirit* of the grace (Heb.10:29), *the spirit* of the deception (1 John 4:6), *the spirit* of your mind (Eph.4:23), though, of course the article is usually lacking in such cases. We would also expect that personal spirits always have the article. Yet we read "nor spirit" (Acts 23:8), [a] spirit (Acts 23:9), [a] spirit (Luke 24:37), unclean spirits (Luke 6:18), [an] unclean spirit (Mark 1:23; 5:2; 7:25), etc. The article has no such function.

Moreover, the same spirit is sometimes referred to as "*the spirit*" and "*spirit.*" Our Lord spoke of *the spirit* which the disciples were about to get, and then calls it "holy spirit" (John 7:39). Then it is called "the holy spirit" (Acts 1:8; 2:33). Later it is called "the spirit the holy" (Acts 15:8, see 11:15). So, in many instances, these variations are applied quite freely to the same spirit operating on the same occasion.

We will now give the various phrases in which *holy* and *spirit* are combined, with all their variations in grammar as well as those produced by the presence of the article. Such an analysis is needed, that those who really wish to study the facts as they are in the original may do so with ease and profit. First we give the forms without the article, later those with it. It should be observed that, in Greek, the adjective, as *holy*, normally comes *after* the noun, so that *pneuma hagion, spirit holy*, is the same as our *holy spirit*.

hagion pneuma, holy spirit

Luke 12:12 for *holy spirit* will be teaching you

to hagion pneuma, the holy spirit

Luke 12:10 the one who blasphemes *the holy spirit* shall not be pardoned

In these passages *holy* is emphatic by position. In both God's spirit and its operations are involved, so that neither can be excluded. Indeed, the broad and comprehensive adjective "holy" is used in all of these passages, rather than the limiting "God's," in order to include whatever is within the scope of the context. It is not necessary, nay, it is undesirable, that we should dissect its manifestations into the "personal," and the operative, and the human aspects. All is operative and due to the contact of God's spirit with the human spirit.

pneuma hagion, spirit holy (nom. or acc.)

Luke 1:35 *Holy spirit* shall be coming on you

2:25 and *holy spirit* was on him

11:13 be giving *holy spirit* to those requesting Him

John 7:39 this He said concerning the spirit which those believing into Him were about to get. For *holy spirit* was not as yet given

20:22 Get *holy spirit*!

Acts 8:15 pray for them so that they may be obtaining *holy spirit*

- 17 and they place their hands on them and they
obtained *holy spirit*
19 that on whomever I may be imposing hands, he
may be obtaining *holy spirit*
19: 2 Did you obtain *holy spirit* when believing?
2 neither hear we if there is *holy spirit*

pneumatos hagian, of-spirit holy

- Matt. 1:18 ere their coming together was found pregnant by
holy spirit
20 that which is being generated in her is of *holy spirit*
Luke 1:15 he will be filled with *holy spirit*
41 Elizabeth is filled with *holy spirit*
67 Zacharias, its father, is filled with *holy spirit*
4: 1 Now Jesus, full of *holy spirit*
Acts 1: 2 directing the apostles whom He chooses through
holy spirit
2: 4 and they are filled with *holy spirit*
4: 8 Then Peter, being filled with *holy spirit*
25 who through *holy spirit* . . . art saying
31 and they are all filled with *holy spirit*
6: 5 they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and *holy spirit*
7:55 possessing the fullness of faith and *holy spirit*
9:17 recover sight and be filled with *holy spirit*
11:24 he was a good man and full of *holy spirit* and
faith
13: 9 Saul, who is also Paul, being filled with *holy spirit*
52 The disciples were filled with joy and *holy spirit*
Rom. 5: 5 God's love has been poured out in our hearts,
through the *holy spirit* which is being given to us
15:13 in the power of *holy spirit*
1Thes. 1: 6 receiving the word in much affliction with joy of
holy spirit
Titus 1:14 Guard that ideal thing committed to you, through
holy spirit, which is making its home in us.
Heb. 2: 4 and parting of *holy spirit*
6: 4 becoming partakers of *holy spirit*
2Peter 1:21 holy men of God speak, being carried on by *holy spirit*

pneumati hagiō, to-spirit holy (dative)

Matt.	3:11	He will be baptizing you in <i>holy spirit</i> and fire
Mark	1: 8	He shall be baptizing you in <i>holy spirit</i>
Luke	3:16	He will be baptizing you in <i>holy spirit</i> and fire
John	1:33	This is He who is baptizing in <i>holy spirit</i>
Acts	1: 5	you shall be baptized in <i>holy spirit</i> not many days hence
	10:38	God anoints Him with <i>holy spirit</i> and power
	11:16	John, indeed, baptizes in water, yet you shall be baptized in <i>holy spirit</i>
Rom.	9: 1	my conscience joining its witness with me in <i>holy spirit</i>
	14:17	but righteousness and peace and joy in <i>holy spirit</i>
	15:16	having been hallowed by <i>holy spirit</i>
1 Cor.	12: 3	no one is able to say "Lord Jesus" except by <i>holy spirit</i>
2 Cor.	6: 6	in <i>holy spirit</i>
1 Thes.	1: 5	in <i>holy spirit</i>
1 Peter	1:12	preaching the evangel to you by <i>holy spirit</i> dispatched from heaven
Jude	1:20	praying in <i>holy spirit</i>

It will be a surprise to many to find that most of the mentions of "*the Holy Spirit*," are simply "*holy spirit*," without the definite article. The context usually confines it to the manifestation of God's spirit in humankind. Yet it is also used in the most "personal" way possible, for our Lord was generated by "*holy spirit*" (Matt.1:18,20; Luke 1:35). The theory that the article is latent after prepositions has no support in fact, and is not in point in Luke. There we have a combination which ought to satisfy all that *holy spirit* is God's personal power. We repeat it:

Holy spirit shall be coming on you,
And the power of the Most High
shall be overshadowing you.

Here it is actually paralleled by "power," and the nature of the case demands that it should be vital energy yet it is so personal that it resulted in the generation of a Person.

ton hagian pneumatatos, of-the holy spirit

Matt.	28:19	baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of <i>the holy spirit</i>
Acts	1: 8	you shall be obtaining power at the coming of <i>the holy spirit</i> on you
	2:33	obtaining the promise of <i>the holy spirit</i>
	9:31	the consolation of <i>the holy spirit</i>
	10:45	the gratuity of <i>the holy spirit</i> has been poured out on the nations
	16: 6	forbidden by <i>the holy spirit</i> to speak
1 Cor.	6:19	your body is a temple of <i>the holy spirit</i> in you
2 Cor.	13:13	the communion of <i>the holy spirit</i>

tō hagiō pneumati, to-the holy spirit

Acts	15:28	it seemed good to <i>the holy spirit</i>
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Perhaps no other passage is supposed to prove the existence of the "Trinity" so conclusively as Matthew 28:19: "baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." But there are no logical premises for this idea whatever. Baptism was not necessarily in the name of the deity. The apostles never used this formula. They intelligently varied the name and title of our Lord because this was in harmony with the conditions into which baptism brought its subjects. It is only when the kingdom is set up on earth that this threefold formula will be used. The holy spirit is especially added in that era because it will be a day in which the spirit of God will work marvels among all flesh, and their baptism is the introduction to them. It is a special formula for a special time, not a dissection of the persons of the Trinity. So important a revelation must not be inferred from a casual statement on another theme. When the subject itself is discussed the unity of God is averred and plurality denounced.

to pneuma to hagian, the spirit the holy

Mark	3:29	whosoever should be blaspheming <i>the holy spirit</i>
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- 12:36 David himself said, in *the holy spirit*
 Luke 3:22 *the holy spirit* descended on Him in bodily appearance as a dove
 John 14:26 the consoler, *the holy spirit*
 Acts 1:16 *the holy spirit* predicted through the mouth of David
 5: 3 to falsify to *the holy spirit* and to embezzle
 32 *the holy spirit* which God imparts to those yielding to Him
 10:44 *the holy spirit* falls on all those hearing the word
 47 who obtained *the holy spirit* even as we
 11:15 *the holy spirit* falls on them even as on us
 13: 2 *the holy spirit* said
 15: 8 giving *the holy spirit* even as to us
 19: 6 *the holy spirit* came on them and they talked languages and prophesied
 20:23 *the holy spirit*, city by city, certifies
 20:28 the entire flocklet among which *the holy spirit* appointed you supervisors
 21:11 Now this *the holy spirit* is saying
 28:25 *the holy spirit* speaks through Isaiah the prophet
 Eph. 4:30 do not be sorrowing *the holy spirit* of God by which you were sealed
 1Thes. 4: 8 Who is also giving you His *holy spirit* [*the holy spirit* of Him]
 Heb. 3: 7 according as *the holy spirit* is saying
 10:15 *the holy spirit* also is testifying to us

ton pneumaton ton hagian, of-the spirit the holy

- Matt. 12:32 whoever might say aught against *the holy spirit*
 Luke 2:26 he was apprized by *the holy spirit*
 Acts 13: 4 being sent forth by *the holy spirit*
 Heb. 9: 8 *the holy spirit* making it evident

tō pneumatī tō hagiō, to-the spirit the holy

- Luke 10:21 he exults in *the holy spirit* and said
 Acts 7:51 you are ever clashing with *the holy spirit*
 Eph. 1:13 you were sealed with *the holy spirit* of promise

Many of these passages present the holy spirit acting as a person. We have it as the consoler; it speaks, it predicts, it

appoints, it testifies, it sends forth. Yet, on the other hand, it is imparted and it falls on them, it is a seal—all outside the possibilities of personality. It is only as we combine these two thoughts, and consider it the spirit of a Person, that we can understand all of the passages concordantly.

God's holy spirit is not a distinct individual, with a will, a mind, and an independent existence. It is God at work; the localization of Himself, the means of His activities, the medium of His operations. He does all things by His spirit through His Christ. This spirit is just as "personal" as the human spirit. It is so one with God that it is His mouth-piece. The Scriptures are the word of God, yet actually inspired by His spirit. But the spirit never speaks aught but God's words, thinks aught but God's thoughts, is aught but God's manifestation in His creatures.

The problem is, how can the holy spirit have all the attributes of personality combined with the impersonal qualities of a force or power? The answer is simple: *it is the power of a Personality*. Spirit force is not mere material energy like the wind that figures it. It is a living, intelligent, personal power like that developed in mankind by breathing.

As we also have a spirit, we ought to be able to test the "personality" of God's spirit by our own. There are times when our spirit rejoices, and again it is sad. Only a person can be depressed or joyful. Do we therefore conclude that our spirit is a distinct personality from ourselves? By no means. Do we therefore speak of it as "he" or "she?" By no means. The human spirit, *it* is refreshed (1 Cor. 16:18), *it* is restless (2 Cor.2:13). My spirit is so intimately mine that, like the soul and body, I may speak of it as if it were myself. God speaks in just this way in order that we may understand Him. If He were speaking to spirit beings He might change His method. But to us, human beings, with spirits, He speaks as if He also were human, and His spirit like ours.

Once we see that the holy spirit is not a distinct spirit being from God, but is His spirit, the many difficulties which surround this subject vanish. This reconciles the passages in which it appears to act as a person with those in which it seems to be an impersonal power. Both are true of God's spirit, for it is the function of that spirit to operate as a power in God's creation and in His saints. If we wish to make a distinction between the "Giver" and the "gift," we will find that God Himself is the Giver, and His spirit the gift. He gives "*the* holy [*the*] spirit" (Acts 15:8; 1 Thess.4:8).

A. E. Knoch

WHAT IS SPIRIT?

Spirit is the invisible, intangible power of action, life, and intelligence. It is an intelligent principle of action (Luke 9:55; 2 Cor.12:18), as the spirit of meekness (1 Cor.4:21), of prophecy (Rev.19:10), of faith (2 Cor.4:13), of sonship (Rom.8: 15), of power and love and sanity (2 Tim.1:7), of slavery (Rom. 8:15), of stupor (Rom.11:8), and of the world (1 Cor.2:12). It is used of the life principle common to animals (Ecc.3:21), and mankind (Gen.6:17). It is also applied to metaphysical beings (2 Chron.18:20) without flesh or bones (Luke 24:39), which are usually unclean or evil (1 Tim.4:1), as well as demons (Luke 4: 33) and messengers (Rev.4:5).

Its highest use denotes the divine power as manifested in His invisible, intangible operations (John 4:24), the spirit of God, that holy spirit (Matt.1:18; John 3:8; Acts 13:2) which comes on men for power (Acts 1:8), baptizes for cleansing (Acts 1:5) and unifying (1 Cor.12:13), filling for utterance (Acts 2:4; Eph.5:18), sealing for safety (Eph. 1:13), and homing (1 Cor.3:16) for permanent fellowship.

A. E. Knoch

THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT

THE NEED for the possession of God's spirit has been felt from the earliest times. When Israel left the land of bondage they craved flesh to eat as they were wont to have in Egypt. Moses breaks down beneath their murmurings and cries to Yahweh in his distress. But divine wisdom knows that flesh was not the need, but God's spirit. So Yahweh bids Moses gather seventy elders to receive the same spirit that rested on him. A cloud, the emblem of God's spirit in those dim days, covers them. His spirit rests upon them. They prophesy.

A strange thing occurs. Yahweh said He would put His spirit on *seventy*. As it was, only sixty-eight are in the appointed place, standing near the tent of testimony. Two, whose names mean Affection and Affectionate-Deity (Medad and Eldad) are not there. They remained in the camp. Did God's spirit pass them by? Such a breach as this in the regular ritual of the tabernacle would be an unpardonable transgression (Num.11). But His spirit refuses the limitations of the flesh and ignores what it deems so important. Distance, and time, and place, so vital in physical affairs, are nothing to God's spirit. Eldad and Medad are not left out, though they are not in the appointed place. They lift their voices in the camp, far from the tent, speaking Yahweh's word! What must their neighbors have thought! How dared they! What an awful thing to do! It must be stopped! A young man runs and tells Moses. Joshua chimes in: "My lord Moses, forbid them." But Moses answers: "*O that all the people of Yahweh were prophets! For Yahweh put His spirit on them*" (Num. 11:29).

So the seventy helped Moses bear the burden of the people by the spirit imparted to them by Yahweh. We need not more than make mention of Joshua, who by this spirit brought Israel into the land Yahweh promised them: of Othniel and Gideon and Saul and David, of Elijah and Elisha, and all the prophets who served Yahweh's people as His spirit gave them capacity. The Messiah fills up the measure of the spirit's power and accomplishes all His mighty work by its anointing. "I have put My spirit upon Him," said Yahweh (Isa.42:1). Even in that coming day of blessing for this earth, the power behind material good will be Yahweh's spirit. The essence of that Kingdom does not lie, as some supposed, in food and drink, but in the righteousness and peace and joy which His spirit imparts (Rom.14:17).

THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

Is Moses's wish ever to come true and *all* Yahweh's people receive His spirit? Ezekiel foretells a day for his people when this will be fulfilled. ". . . a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezek.36:26). What new spirit is this? "I will put *My* spirit within you, and make you walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments, and do them. And you will dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, and you shall become My people, and *I* will become your Elohim" (Ezek.36:27,28). Nothing less than the word of Yahweh will bring life to their dry bones. "Behold," says He, "I will cause spirit to enter into you, and you shall live" (Ezek.37:5).

"If anyone should not be begotten of water and of *spirit*, he can not enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Isaiah bears a like testimony. The desolation shall continue "until the spirit from the height shall be emptied out upon us" (Isa.32:15). And again, "I shall pour My spirit on your seed and My blessing on your offsprings" (Isa.44:3). Peter

refers to this on the day of Pentecost: "... and you shall be obtaining the gratuity of the holy spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all those afar, whosoever the Lord our God should be calling to Him" (Acts 2:38,39). Many of Yahweh's people, like "Affection" (Medad) in the camp of old are, physically, at a distance from the place of blessing. They are afar, scattered among the nations. They are not eligible to the physical enjoyments which the land will produce. But this cannot hinder a *spiritual* blessing, however it might interfere with their material welfare in Yahweh's day.

This spirit was not promised to the nations. Moses's wish went the great length, as he thought, of embracing all of Yahweh's people. God's promise, through Joel, goes further than this. It includes *all flesh* (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). Not all flesh at all times, but all flesh after the nation of Israel receives this blessing and thus becomes the channel to convey it to the other nations. The Jews had no thought whatever that the spirit would be imparted to men of other nationalities before the time mentioned by Joel, after God has judged all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

THE PROMISE CONFIRMED

The greatest of all prophets born of woman was John the baptist. He was filled with holy spirit even before his birth. In spiritual capacity he was fitted for and filled the place of Elijah. As that great prophet must come and restore all things, so he came to prepare the people for their Messiah. Elijah himself shall truly come, but the spiritual power he will exercise has already been present in Israel (Matt.11: 11-14; 17:10-13). But greater and higher than all is the One Whose very generation was by holy spirit, the power of the Most High (Luke 1:35), the life-imparting Spirit on Whom the fulfillment of the promise depends. As to His flesh Christ was David's Seed. As to His most holy spirit,

He was God's Son (Rom.1:3,4). God, the Father of spirits (Heb.12:9), was His Father. But, while He was on earth, He did not fulfill the promise concerning the spirit. Ever and anon He referred to it, but deferred its fulfillment until His exaltation.

THE HINDRANCE

What was the hindrance? Strange words fell on their ears when He spoke of this and His departure. Sorrow filled their hearts at the thought of His leaving them. Yet He tells them: "It is expedient for you that *I* may be coming away, for if *I* should not be coming away, the consoler will not be coming to you. Now, if I should be gone, I will send him to you" (John 16:7). While He was with them in the world He kept them and taught them and comforted them. He was their *Paraclete* or Consoler (John 17:12). Lest His departure should bereave them, He promises another consoler, which would remain with them. This spirit would be their teacher and keeper and consoler (John 14:16,26).

But why not have both Paracletes at the same time? Why wait until after His departure? Speaking of it once, He cried, "If anyone should be thirsting, let him come to Me and drink. He who is believing in Me, according as the scripture said, out of his bowels shall gush rivers of living water." Then we are informed that He said this concerning the spirit which those believing in Him were about to get. For holy spirit was not as yet given, seeing that Jesus *was not as yet glorified* (John 7:37-39). He was the only temple of the divine spirit during His humiliation (John 2:21). He alone could furnish a draught for the thirsty. But, wonderful to relate, the time was to come when those who believed in Him should become a channel for this living water, this life-imparting spirit. Let us embed this deeply in our hearts: The spirit was not given by the "lowly Jesus," but by the glorified Christ. *The measure and plenitude of the gift of the spirit is gauged by the glory that He gets.*

After His sufferings He returns to them in the subdued glory of the pre-ascension days, and gives the disciples holy spirit, with authority to forgive sins (John 20:22). Yet He bids them remain at Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the Father's promise, after He Himself has ascended into the heights of heavenly glory, from whence He would send the gift.

At Pentecost Peter proclaims the exaltation of Messiah, thus removing the hindrance to the free outflow of the spirit. He proclaims the conditions on which the spirit will be imparted. "Repent and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the pardon of your sins, and you shall be obtaining the gratuity of the holy spirit. For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all those afar, whosoever the Lord our God should be calling to Him." This is not confined to the land. Like all the spirit's work, it is unhindered by place or distance. The sons of Israel who (like Medad and Eldad at a distance from the tabernacle) were scattered among the nations, were eligible to this spiritual blessing, as well as those in Jerusalem.

Israel knew, from Joel's prophecy, that after Yahweh's day set it, God's spirit would be extended to all flesh. Yet at this time they had no such thought, not even that it might include non-Jewish proselytes dwelling in the land. Indeed, until they once more rejected Christ in the stoning of Stephen, this blessing was confined to Israel's narrow pale and the city of Jerusalem. But after that, Philip proclaims Messiah to the Samaritans, and they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. But holy spirit did not fall on them. The kinship they claimed with Israel was based upon the flesh. The spirit repudiates the flesh and ignores its pretensions. The flesh cannot channel spiritual gifts. Only in answer to the apostles' prayers, and the laying on of hands, do they also receive God's holy spirit (Acts 8:5,15-17).

How different is Cornelius's case! Physically, he is further removed than the Samaritans. In fact, though he was a proselyte, a devout worshiper of Yahweh, the God of Israel, and dwelt in the land He gave them, he was loathed, instead of loved as Yahweh's laws commanded (Deut.10:19). Even Peter dreaded to enter his house or eat at his table, and his fellow saints were furious about it. Israel had forgotten Egypt and their bondage, so, instead of loving a stranger as themselves, they made him keep his distance.

God uses extraordinary means to induce Peter to go to Cornelius and proclaim that which was sent to the sons of Israel (Acts 10:36). But, having been convinced that God is not bound by the letter of their law, he is persuaded to go with Cornelius's messengers. His first words were not at all reassuring: "*You* are versed in the fact how illicit it is for a man who is a Jew to join or come to another tribe . . ." (Acts 10:28). While Peter was still telling them what Jesus of Nazareth did by the power of holy spirit, and of the pardon of sins through His name, a marvelous thing occurred. *Holy spirit fell on all the aliens who heard his word!* And not only so, but they spoke languages and magnified God, even as the apostles themselves had done at Pentecost (Acts 10:44,46).

The Circumcision who were present were astonished. It was too late for baptism or prayer, or the laying on of hands, or any ceremony prior to the spirit's coming. The flesh had such a large place with them that God's gracious action seemed inexplicable. Since Cornelius and his household received the spirit, Peter is forced to join them by baptism to the cleansed company at Jerusalem. Though he was chief of all the apostles, he had to answer for such a flagrant transgression as this! "You enter to men having uncircumcision, and you eat together with them!" It took much talking to stop the mouths of these believers.

Until this time the disciples, the repentant, the bap-

tized, the proselytes, received this gift. But nowhere did God promise it to His enemies. If we read His word aright, they were to be utterly destroyed from among His people. The most malignant enemy Messiah ever had among mankind rose and wrought havoc among the ecclesias and destroyed His saints. In the very height of his rebellion Saul of Tarsus is stricken to the ground, blinded by the glorious brightness of Messiah's presence. Ananias (meaning *Yah-weh responds*) is sent to him to restore his sight and that he might be filled with holy spirit. Saul eventually becomes a prophet and a teacher at Antioch (Acts 11:19-30; 13:1).

SENT FORTH BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The first mission ever directed by holy spirit was that of Barnabas and Saul. Christ Himself, before His ascension, had sent out the twelve. This new ministry was not only distinct from theirs, but also from the previous service of Saul and Barnabas themselves. The *holy spirit* separated them. The *holy spirit* sent them forth (Acts 13:2-4). It is only as we see this that we realize the intensely spiritual character of the work they did.

The first extended account of this mission is concerned with their visit to another Antioch, in Pisidia (Acts 13:14-52). For the first time we hear of *justification*. For the first time we read that the law is superseded by faith. For the first time the *nations* are brought into the light and receive eonian life. After Barnabas and Paul are forced to leave, we find that the disciples are filled with joy and holy spirit (Acts 13:52). What stress is laid on the operation of God's spirit in all this! They are sent by holy spirit. The blessings proclaimed are spiritual. The disciples are filled with holy spirit.

When the mission had been accomplished, and they had returned to Antioch, from whence they started, certain men came down from Judea, insisting on the necessity

of physical circumcision for salvation. In the subsequent discussion the one point which outweighed all others, and which finally decided the matter against the Judaizers, was thus put by Peter: "God, the Knower of hearts, testifies to them, giving the holy spirit according as to us also, and in nothing discriminates between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:1,5,8,9). So it was acknowledged, even by their opponents, that believers among the nations received holy spirit by faith, when they believed, apart from repentance, baptism, or laying on of hands.

This seems to be a departure from the strict letter of the promise, for it contained no hint of spiritual blessings for the other nations until after the Lord had entered upon His earthly glories. Perhaps the reason is this: Though His glorious feet have not yet stood upon Mount Olivet nor touched a spot in Israel's land, He has come, in undismaying splendor, *outside that land*, upon the distant Damascus road, leading to an *activity* (such is the meaning of the city's name), in harmony with such grace, for He claims the worship and fealty of His worst enemy.

The ministry of Saul (or rather Paul, his spiritual cognomen) is based upon and proceeds from this glorious sight. Just as John the baptist anticipated Elijah, being endued with his spiritual capacity, so Paul anticipates the mission of Israel in the coming eon, by means of his enduement with the nation's spiritual power. Messiah cannot be present in person among His people in their land, nevertheless, *in spirit*, He now goes outside the land, where He never could have gone while still on earth. In spirit, He now walks up and down the land of aliens, who have no claim on Him in flesh.

THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT

The characteristic feature of Paul's itinerant ministry was that all received holy spirit on believing. Nothing but

faith was required for the gift. It was by faith in order that it might accord with grace. Consequently, while it was not, strictly speaking, the promised gift (for it was so gracious that it came to them apart from any promise) it is a gift *with* a promise. It is a promissory gratuity. God does not give His spirit without, at the same time, pledging Himself to further favors. Hence it is called the holy spirit *of* promise (Eph.1:13).

An earnest is not only a pledge of future payment, but is a part of it. It is the same in character. All our blessings are spiritual, hence we are given the spirit as an earnest. This of course is temporary, pending the deliverance of all that has been procured for us. Our heavenly honors cannot be realized until the usurping powers of darkness, who now reign among the celestials, are cast out. Meanwhile, we have not only the promise in the Scriptures, but the pledge in our hearts. We have a small foretaste of our spiritual wealth the moment we believe.

A. E. Knoch

SOUL AND SPIRIT

A glimpse of the vast gulf between the soulish and the spiritual will save us from many deceptions which afflict Christendom today. Almost all religious literature gives the soul the place which God reserves for the spirit. The soul is strictly limited to the physical senses. It uses the various bodily members to function. It feels and sees and hears and tastes and smells. It is consciousness and sensation. It yearns for physical pleasure and carnal comfort. It dominates the human body now, before it is vivified by the spirit. The joy and satisfaction which are ours in Christ do not come through sweet smelling incense, or fulsome food, or solemn, stirring music, or majestic cathedrals, ornate without and beautiful within, or even through moving emotions in great mass meetings. It comes through the still small voice of revelation, striking the strings of the spirit, engaging it with the delicious thoughts divine, energizing it by the Living Word. A. E. Knoch

THE SEALING OF THE SPIRIT

IN the Sacred Scriptures, a seal is the symbol of security. Back of Caesar's seal on the stone which secured our Lord's sepulcher (Matt.27:66), was the full force of Rome's imperial power. He who dared to break that seal must reckon, not only with the procurator Pilate, but with the Roman senate and the emperor himself. Opposed to the risen Christ were the *custodians*, or Roman watch, and these could call the host of armed men in Jerusalem and in Judea and, if necessary, the whole military force of the empire. The greatest earthly power was back of Pilate's seal. That it was broken does not disprove this, for God's weakness is greater than man's might.

The sixth chapter of Daniel gives us a notable instance of man's farcical efforts to imitate the adamantine solidity of God's determination. "The law of the Medes and Persians, which changes not" has passed into a proverb. Nothing on earth was supposed to be more inflexible or secure than the decrees of these ancient kings. They themselves could not alter or change them once they had been passed. And when the seal of the kingdom is added to this, we may well consider Daniel in the lions' den as the most hapless and hopeless of that faithful host who have laid down their lives for the faith of their fathers. The seal on the lions' den is symbolic of man's utmost limit in securing his victim's doom. But it is God's sport to hold man's majesty and might in derision. Let them put on seven seals if they will, He will frustrate all of them! Daniel shall not die! Man seals to destroy, but God will circumvent him. God seals to save, and man is impotent to prevent Him.

What a contrast when God seals! When Satan is locked up in the abyss for a thousand years He sets His seal on it, and not all the opposing powers of earth or heaven are able to loose him from his jail (Rev.20:3). When God seals a hundred and forty-four thousand (Rev.7:4) all the onslaughts of Satan and his minions do not diminish their number by a single one. They are secure in the midst of the most terrible times which earth will ever know. Were only a hundred forty-three thousand nine hundred ninety-nine saved, God would forfeit His throne and lose the lustre of His great name.

The seal upon the hundred and forty-four thousand was put on their foreheads by a messenger of God (Rev.7:4). It will save them from the torment of the locusts out of the abyss (Rev.9:4). Most probably it will be a literal, visible mark, the counterpart of the emblem which all the worshipers of the wild beast must wear on their right hands or on their foreheads (Rev.13:16).

It is most significant that, in dealing with the Circumcision in the accounts of our Lord's life and in the Acts, nothing is said of a seal for the safety of the saints. It is true that their circumcision itself should have been a seal of the righteousness of faith, as it was with Abraham (Rom.4:11). But, alas, it had degenerated into the merest physical form, without any spiritual significance whatever. The followers of Christ or of His twelve apostles were not sealed. That is why so many fell away. Most of the Pentecostal believers apostatized.

The so-called doctrine of the "security of believers" would gain much force if it were kept in its proper place. All attempts to prove that the Pentecostal believers were saved beyond the possibility of being lost are fatally weakened by the distinct statements in the sixth and tenth of Hebrews that they did fall aside (Heb.6:6) and trampled on the Son of God and outraged the spirit of grace (Heb.

10:29). At Pentecost they became partakers of holy spirit (Heb.6:4), for they were baptized for cleansing (Acts 1:5) and filled for utterance (Acts 2:4) by the holy spirit which came upon them for power (Acts 1:8), and those who repented and were baptized in water obtained holy spirit, but it was not a *seal* to secure them to the day of deliverance.

The first intimation of the sealing of the holy spirit is found in Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians. After expostulating that his actions are not governed by the flesh, and that his whole preaching to them was based on God's faithfulness and that Christ was the Amen to it all, he concludes, "Now He Who is confirming us together with you in Christ, and Who anoints us is God, Who also seals us and is giving the earnest of the spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor.1:21,22).

It will be noted that the *seal* and the *earnest* of the spirit are closely associated here and in our next passage, in the first chapter of Ephesians. The two thoughts have much in common. While the earnest has not the supreme sense of security conveyed by a seal, it also implies a pledge of that full measure of the spirit which comes only with our deliverance. Perhaps it would be best to consider the earnest of the spirit as the seal which secures our ultimate deliverance, for when we have the fullness of the spirit security will be beyond question.

Now let us note the contrast between this seal and that given a limited number of the sons of Israel. The hundred and forty-four thousand had a visible token on their flesh. They were a chosen company out of the nation. In the body of Christ there is no such division. All are sealed. And the seal is the invisible, intangible, life-giving spirit which is the only token given by God to distinguish His own from the sons of Stubbornness, who are actuated by the spirit of the aerial jurisdiction (Eph.2:2).

The time element is very prominent in the two remaining references to the spirit's sealing. In Ephesians we are

told that it occurs when we believe (1:13) and continues until the day of deliverance (4:30). This is important. Security depends on uninterrupted vigilance. If the sealing were delayed a year or a day or even a second after believing, what assurance would His saints have of “enduring to the end?” Our salvation, past, present, and future, is wholly of God, and by His spirit. The briefest interruption in the spirit’s presence would expose us to the fearful fate of the Circumcision who were partakers at one time, but later fell aside.

We should never confuse the falling upon of the spirit in the past with the present surpassing grace. The spirit is now making its home in us. Yet it is instructive to note the contrast between the tardy reception of the spirit by the Circumcision after repentance, baptism, and pardon (Acts 2:38), and its precipitate outpouring on the proselytes in the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:44,45). And in Paul’s epistles the gift of the spirit is always predicated of all who believe apart from any acts or ceremonies whatsoever. Faith is the only requisite. It comes on believing.

In Paul’s earliest epistle, he tells the Thessalonians that God has given them His holy spirit (1 Thess.4:8). In Romans, it is the basis of conduct (5:5) and is fully discussed in the eighth chapter. He assures the Corinthians that we have obtained not the spirit of the world, but that which is of God (1 Cor.2:12). As we have seen, in his second letter, he assures them that they are sealed by the earnest of the spirit (2 Cor.1:22). In Galatians he reminds them that they had *begun* in spirit (3:3). Ephesians clearly commences the sealing coincident with faith (1:13), and continues it until our deliverance (4:30).

We may rest assured that the God Whose seal suffices to secure Satan for a thousand years can safely be trusted to see that no one violates His seal in us for the brief span of our mortal existence. All the assaults of the Adversary

and his hosts can do nothing to break His seal. We are invulnerable to his attacks. The weakest believer now is far more certain of ultimate deliverance than if he had been one of the twelve apostles. One of them was lost, for they were not sealed. Not one of the Pentecostal saints was sealed. Only those to whom Paul preached the message of boundless grace immediately received the seal of the spirit and the absolute assurance of salvation.

The most precious point for us is the character of this seal. The seal of faith given to Abraham was in his flesh, because his blessings included the physical. Not so this: it is a purely spiritual seal, because the blessings it guards are exclusively metaphysical. *It coincides with the pledge given to those of the Circumcision, associated with Paul, whose faith was placed in Christ Jesus, who looked for His presence in the air, and whose changed destiny and new spiritual allotment among the celestials depend on its possession.*

This is the key to the somewhat enigmatical statement in Ephesians 1:13: "In Whom *you* also—when hearing the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation—in Whom, on believing also, you are sealed . . ." Before this the apostle has been limiting his exposition to himself and his circumcised associates in this grace. Now he includes the gentile believers. *Because those of the other nations who believe receive the same spiritual seal, the same spiritual earnest, as this special remnant of believing Israelites, they are entitled to the same spiritual allotment among the celestials.*

Physical differences cannot be transported into the celestial, spiritual sphere, hence they vanish. Thus we arrive at the logical conclusion which coincides with the first item of the "mystery" that *the nations are joint-enjoyers of the celestial allotment.* Beloved, this is where we come in. This is the first and choicest portion of the threefold secret. It reveals our relationship to God. The second deals with our

relationship to Christ, as members of His body. The third has to do with our relationship to one another.

Now, if we wish, we may read the preceding part of Ephesians again, with the comforting assurance that, though, in its first intention, it is concerning Paul and those of Jewish blood, its extended arms enfold us also in its embrace! Some years before, when Paul wrote to the Galatians and to the Romans (among whom he now is), he had taught them that they were sons of God and consequently enjoyers of Christ's allotment. Wherein, then, lies the secret which he now reveals?

At that time Christ's celestial dignities had not been made known. His highest place was over all the earth. The blessings of His people were all in this nether sphere. It had been clearly defined by the prophets. The hope set before them was not in heaven but on earth. But in that sphere there could not be equality of blessing for the nations. Israel must have the first, the highest place. They must rule. Even in Pentecostal days the apostles at Jerusalem lorded it over the faithful of the nations and laid down decrees for their observance. However high their spiritual blessings, as sons of God, or as members of Christ's body, these never raised the nations to the same level or rank as Israel.

It is only after the mystery of Messiah, the secret of Christ's universal headship, is revealed, and the consequent destiny of those having the prior expectation is changed from earth to heaven, and altered from a partly material to a purely spiritual allotment—it is only then that equality is possible. This is the secret: not that the gentiles were to be heirs, but the nations are to be *joint* allottees, on an absolute equality with a remnant from the favored nation. The nations have become the peers of Israel! A realization of what we are and the covenant relation He sustained to them, coupled with a sense of that latest, highest destiny,

in which we share, should moisten every eye with tears of abundant gratitude.

THE FILLING OF THE SPIRIT

The filling of the holy spirit is for utterance or expression. The twelve apostles at Pentecost, Stephen before the Sanhedrin, and Paul before his namesake Sergius were all filled with holy spirit to prepare them for speaking forth the mind of God. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth is talking. When the holy spirit surcharges a human heart it is bound to overflow in exultation, in denunciation, in declamation, or in melodious musings.

The filling of the spirit is one of the operations of God which comes to us through His previous activities. It characterizes the proclamation of the kingdom. John the baptist, our Lord Himself and His mother Mary, Peter and Stephen—all the chief heralds of the coming kingdom were filled with holy spirit to give utterance to the proclamation.

Before considering the effect of the spirit's filling in the present economy, it is of prime importance that we consider its previous operations. The first example is John the baptist (Luke 1:15). He was filled with holy spirit even before his birth. Yet we are told explicitly that *he did no sign* (John 10:41). No miracles attended his ministry. No power attested his proclamation. It is evident that the *filling* of the spirit fitted him for oral testimony, not supernatural demonstrations.

His parents, Zacharias and Elizabeth, both were filled with holy spirit in connection with his birth and signaled it by breaking out in inspired peans of blessing (Luke 1:41,67). The presence of the unborn Christ provoked the outburst of Elizabeth. The filling overflowed in a loud shout of exultant praise (Luke 1:42-45). Zacharias' experience is most striking. His unbelief makes him dumb and he remained a deaf-mute until the spirit filled him

and loosed his tongue to prophesy (Luke 1:18-23). In an inspired poem he foretells the ministry of Messiah and the service of his son. It was the filling of the spirit which opened his dumb lips and gave him utterance.

The supreme example of the spirit-filled life is found in our Lord Himself. At His baptism in the Jordan, the spirit not only *came on* Him to remain, so that He performed powers and miracles and signs, but He was also *filled* with holy spirit in order to proclaim the kingdom (Luke 4:1). His anointing with the spirit gave Him the needed authority, but the *filling* gave Him utterance. Yet the *leading* of the spirit controlled the time and place of its exercise. Though full of holy spirit, He did not immediately go out to begin His proclamation, but was led out into the silence of the wilderness with the wild beasts.

There is a needed lesson in this action of our Lord. Even though we are full of utterance, we need not imagine that this gives us the right to public proclamation. That comes from the *anointing* of the spirit. Nor does the filling call for immediate relief in words. The time and place depend on the *leading* of the spirit. Undoubtedly our Lord was full of what He wished to say while He was in the wilderness. It may be that He gave voice to the spirit's urge even though no one could hear. But He waited till God's time ere He loosed the pent up stream of sayings upon the populace. Hence His words themselves were spirit, and were life.

It was with this that He met the Slanderer's words. It is only as we are filled with holy spirit that we refuse to entertain the suggestions of an unholy spirit. One who is not full has room for other and different spirits that use but abuse the words of God.

THE SPIRIT OF PENTECOST

It is exceedingly interesting and instructive to distinguish the three different operations of the holy spirit on the day

of Pentecost. They were *baptized* in holy spirit (Acts 1:5) for cleansing and unity. The holy spirit *came on* them for power (Acts 1:8). They were all *filled* with holy spirit and begin to speak different languages, according as the spirit gave them to declaim (Acts 2:4). The failure to distinguish these diverse manifestations of the spirit's presence has led to serious misconceptions. Both baptism and filling have been incorporated into the present grace, modified to suit the later and higher revelation, but the *coming on* of the spirit has been displaced by its *homing in*.

As spirit baptism was the actual of which water baptism was the symbol, it stands for the cleansing of conduct and consequent unity of all thus cleansed. All God's saints have part in this. All have their hearts cleansed. At present this baptism effects the unity of the body of Christ, then it was associated with its symbol, water, in producing the body called the bride. Above all things let us not fall into the common error of associating spirit baptism with *power*. It is never so in God's word.

The filling of the spirit is likewise continued down to the present. It also changes in character. Only a few notable cases occur before our Lord's resurrection. At Pentecost all the *apostles* were filled. Later, under Paul's ministry (Acts 13:52) the *disciples* were filled with joy and holy spirit. The tendency is clear. It is to diffuse the spirit. It is from few to many. And it varies according to the purity of the grace revealed. Little grace calls for the filling of a few for denunciation and exhortation, such as was done by John the baptist, and Paul before Sergius. Much grace is always accompanied by a more liberal diffusion of holy spirit, yet a change in the character of its operations.

The very word "grace" is but a form of JOY in the Greek. So that the filling of the disciples was a compound of joy and holy spirit. This is the form in which it passes on into the present. Being gracious, it is joyous. Only once in the

range of Paul's epistles do we read of the filling of the spirit. But then it is a positive command. And it is not the occasional and unusual, but the normal state of the beloved believer. The command to be filled with spirit is preceded by a negative charge which throws light on its fulfillment. "And be not drunk with wine, in which is profligacy" is at once an injunction to be obeyed and an illustration to be observed. He who is filled with wine becomes drunk; so he who is filled with spirit falls under its mellowing influence. But here we need to walk warily, for the fulfillment of the figure is confined to the *utterances* of the wine bibber and of the one who imbibes intemperately of the spirit.

Someone has defined the various stages of drunkenness on this wise: Jocose, verbose, lachrymose, bellicose, comatose. There is joy and garrulity, followed by tears and quarrelsomeness and insensibility, to say nothing of the morning after. Let us not force this figure beyond its bounds. Let us not follow the bubbling joy of spiritual intoxication with the bibulous babbling and quarreling, the stupor and headache, not to say heartache, which follow the toper's potations.

The point of the comparison is limited to the effect of wine on the tongue. It loosens and lubricates that organ until it functions perfectly. I have heard of singers who could not carry their part unless under the influence of liquor. Many a man cannot speak sincerely, unless he is filled with mellowing spirits. In the old days a man in his cups could be depended on to talk truthfully and freely. It gave a joyful release from self and a hilarious and irrepressible abandon that overflowed in speech and song.

There are altogether too many symptoms of the other stages of drunkenness among the saints of this day and generation. We have the bellicose and the comatose on all sides. But these are not within the scope of this passage. Such conditions come, not from *filling* with spirit, but from

failing to be filled. And let us never imagine that those grotesque physical antics and contortions which excite our risibility in the case of the drunkard have any counterpart in the spirit-filled believer. Our conduct should always be decorous and dignified.

And what is the effect of the filling of the spirit? Speaking, singing, playing. It is the impulse of utterance. It fills the air with the cadence of sweet sounds. It raises the harmony of song. It wakes the instruments of music. We have all heard of the music of the celestial spheres. And now that we know that light and sound are convertible, so that we can step sound up to light and light down to sound, we may rest assured that the universe is filled with sweet harmonies. It is God's harp to accompany the praises of the celestial choir.

We need no longer hesitate as the poet has done, and say,

What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball!
What though no real voice nor sound
Amid their radiant orbs be found,
In reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
Forever singing, as they shine,
"The hand that made us is divine."

To the perceptions attuned to the whole range of physical vibrations, from the lowest sound, inaudible to the human ear, beyond the swiftest speed of light, the universe will respond by the power of this same spirit, with ineffable symphonies.

The filling with spirit finds expression in harmony. It sets our speech to stanzas. It makes our measures melodious. It finds outlet in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

We have briefly considered the doctrine of spirit. It is a *power* comparable to the force of the wind. It is applied to

beings, good or bad, who have no flesh or bones as is the case with mankind. We are not in need of the ministration of good spirits, such as served the Circumcision. The holy spirit warns us explicitly, however, that, in this closing era, some will be withdrawing from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and the teaching of demons. True spirituality recognizes but avoids spirits which ape the holy spirit among the saints. No one should rest until sure that such deceptive forces are not a factor in his experience. Never become the passive instrument in the hands of an unknown spirit. God calls for our active coöperation.

The human spirit differs from all others, because it is sustained by the breath and the body. Destroy either, and the spirit departs. There is no active spirit apart from the body, and there is no life apart from the spirit.

The holy spirit is the power of God. It is not a distinct personality from God Himself. Christ was born of both God and His holy spirit—one "Person."

The *baptism* of the holy spirit is for cleansing and unity, never for power. The *sealing* of the holy spirit is for safety, and was not given to the Circumcision, many of whom fell away. The *earnest* of the holy spirit is the initial instalment which we receive of that plenitude which will be ours in His presence. The *filling* of the spirit is for utterance. The *coming on* of the holy spirit was for power, but is entirely absent in this economy of grace, in which God's power is perfected in infirmity. It is replaced by the *homing* of the spirit, which is the characteristic function of God's spirit in this administration. As never before, God has His home in the hearts of His hallowed.

We are now ready to consider, once more, the spirit of wisdom and revelation which alone will open to us the portals of "the mystery."

THE RIGHTEOUS ONE'S FAITH

For not ¹ashamed° am I of the evangel: For it ¹is God's power ¹⁰for salvation to everyone ¹who is believing it—to the Jew first, and to the Greek as well. For in it God's righteousness is being revealed° out of [the Righteous One's] faith, ¹⁰for [the believing one's] faith, according as it is ¹written°: ¹Now the Righteous One, out of faith shall He be living° (Rom.1:16,17).

... out of works of law, no^t flesh at ^eall shall be ¹justified in His sight, for through law is the recognition of sin. Yet now, apart from law, God's righteousness has been made manifest° (being attested° by the law and the prophets), yet God's righteousness through Jesus Christ's faith ¹⁰for all (and on all ¹who are believing it), for there ¹is no^t distinction, for all sin and are wanting° of the glory of ¹God, being justified° gratuitously in His ¹grace, through the deliverance, the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Whom ¹God purposes° for a Propitiatory through ¹that faith, in His ¹blood . . .) toward the display of [God's] ¹righteousness in the current era, ¹⁰for Him ¹to ¹be righteous and a ¹Justifier of the human out of Jesus's faith (Rom.3:20-26).

^{1g}With Christ have I been crucified°, Yet I am living; no^t longer I, ¹But living in me is Christ. ¹Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith, the faith of the Son of ¹God, ¹Who loves me, and gives Himself up ^{ov}for me (Gal.2:20).

¹Now that in law no^t one is being justified° ^bwith ¹God is evident, ¹for: The Righteous One, out of faith shall He be

living° ʔNow the law 'is not out of faith, but: He 'who does them shall be living° 'by them. Christ reclaims us out of the curse of the law, 'becoming° a curse °vfor our sakes, 'for it is °written°: Accursed is everyone 'hanging° on a pole, that the blessing of 'Abraham may 'bcome° °io to the nations in Christ Jesus, that we may obtain the promise of the spirit through 'His faith (Gal.3:11-14).

... the scripture locks up 'all together under sin, that the promise out of Jesus Christ's faith may be given to 'those who are believing it. ʔNow before the coming of 'that faith we were being garrisoned° under law, being locked° up together °io for 'that faith 'about to be revealed. So that the law has become our escort °io to Christ, that we may be justified out of His faith. ʔNow at the 'coming of 'that faith, we 'are no' longer under an escort, for °you 'are all sons of God in Christ Jesus through 'that faith (Gal.3:22-26).

For in [God's] 'grace 'are °you ones having been saved through [Christ Jesus's] faith, and this is not out of °you; It is God's 'approach present, not out of works, lest any-one should boast° (Eph.2:8,9).

... that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of 'God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in 'Christ Jesus, our 'Lord; in Whom we are having 'boldness and 'access 'with confidence, through His 'faith (Eph.3:10-12).

The preceding passages, expanded with bracketed insertions from the context, are a few examples of the important place of Christ's faith in the evangel and for our blessings.

D.H.H.

EDITORIAL

IN the opening “meditation” of this issue of *Unsearchable Riches* A. E. Knoch conveys “a tremendously transcendent truth” that “virtually none” are preaching today. Thus our brother writes: “Now that we have discovered our own distinct destiny and the unparalleled favor which is involves, let us join the apostle in his prayer for all the saints who belong to His body” (p.51).

This is followed by James R. Coram’s article, “Boasting in God’s Will” (pages 63-70). Here again is a subject seldom preached: “God’s operations are concerned with *all*, all that exists and all that occurs. There are no exceptions to what is out of, through and for God, and to His glory” (p.69).

Then in what is called a “devotional” study when it was reprinted in 1969 (vol.60, p.255) from its first appearance in 1920 (vol.12, starting on page 41), Alan Burns turns our attention to “Christ’s Supremacy” (here abridged on pages 71-74). This is a theme, which, if not neglected in preaching, is nevertheless much opposed by the Adversary and denied by the wise of this eon. Yet for us: “On such a sublime subject we cannot take less than the whole Bible for our text” (p.71).

My own article, “The Singular Faith of Christ,” which follows on pages 75-86, concerns an important matter that has been covered up by tradition and translation. This, too, calls for special consideration and prayer. It is not new to the pages of this magazine, but still calls for renewed clarification and expansion in accord with God’s evangel set before us by Paul in his epistle to the believers in Rome. It is carried through all his letters, (and given support

through all of Scripture). God's operations and blessings are founded on Christ's faith unto the death of the cross, not on our faith in Him. In the matter of faith, Christ's faith is supreme. Our faith is centered on His faith. The expectation of our calling, and the riches of the glory of a celestial allotment, and the transcendent greatness of God's power are in Christ and based on His faith. They are for us who are believing this evangel, but the evangel is a message sourced in and channeled through Christ's faith, and His alone. So also God's will in His operations of all that exists and all that occurs always is carried out through Christ's faith, His faith, not human works or even human faith (which is graciously granted to us in measure).

Abraham is the great example of faith, but at first it was much flawed and imperfected where he serves as an example of human faith. It is not until Genesis 22 that we see his faith as "Faith Perfected" (see pages 87-96). There his faith was that "God was able to rouse [Isaac] from among the dead (Heb.11:19)" (*cf* p.87). In this we can perceive a picture of Christ's faith, Whose faith is perfect. Hence Paul testifies of Abraham that "he believes [the promise] of the God Who is vivifying the dead" (Rom.4:17), in which "the promise of God is not doubted in unbelief, but he is invigorated by faith, giving glory to God, fully assured also that what He has promised He is able to do also" (Rom.4:20,21). Do we not perceive in this a picture of Christ's faith?

Although this parallel of Abraham's perfected faith with Christ's faith is not noted by Brother Knoch, he closes this article with reference to "the One Whose faith led Him from the highest heights of glory to the deepest depths of shame, and has called us to share the fruits of His faith with Him, by blessing us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials."

D.H.H.

CELESTIAL SOVEREIGNTY

EPHESIANS 1:17-23

THE JOINT ENJOYMENT of the allotment among the celestials is such a tremendously transcendent truth that no one is able to receive it without a special spiritual endowment. The apostle knew this. We ought to realize it far more keenly, for nearly two millennia have passed, and practically no one seems to have enjoyed this secret, and virtually none are preaching it today. There is no hint in ecclesiastical literature, so far as we are aware, that any theologian, from the early fathers to the latest commentaries, had grasped this grand foundation stone of the present secret administration of grace. It certainly calls for prayer! It calls for prayer today! Now that we have discovered our own distinct destiny and the unparalleled favor which it involves, let us join the apostle in his prayer for all the saints who belong to His body.

Paul prays that we may perceive the expectation of God's calling, the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of God's allotment among the saints, and the transcendent greatness of God's resurrection power, operative in Christ and in us while we are believing.

God has given us a special call or invitation. What is its expectation? He has endowed us with an allotment. What are its opulent glories? He has exalted us with Christ. What is the measure of the power of this tremendous transaction?

We have seen that the whole epistle is devoted to three subjects, the three articles of the secret. In general, it seg-

regates our relation to God, to Christ, to one another. In a secondary sense, these divisions are repeated in discussing each subject. This is true of this prayer. As a whole, it concerns our joint allotment, which comes to us from God, but in detail, this is divided into the same three aspects. It is *God* Who calls us, the *saints* who enjoy the allotment with us, and *Christ* in Whom its transcendent power is displayed (*cf* chart, vol.53, p.138).

OUR CELESTIAL CALLING

The prospect presented by this special revelation has been degraded to an indistinct idea that all good people go to heaven when they die and become angels or members of the celestial choir. Nothing is known of Christ's headship. Blessedness is entirely selfish and not based on blessing others. This is a travesty on the truth. Before Paul received his revelations, what human dared to dream of dwelling in the heavens? In the ancient myths, a man must be deified before he could claim a heavenly home. Even Elijah did not go into the heavens, as our version suggests. He simply went in that direction. More we are not told. Our Lord alone ascended into the heavens. There is no reason to believe that any saint of the Circumcision ever went or will go into heaven. His blessings come from there, but he enjoys them on the earth (*cf* Acts 2:34).

We are not looking forward to a Mohammedan paradise, with every sensual delight and selfish dream. Our joy will not spring from soulish sensations but from spiritual dignities and activities. Above "angels," or messengers, we shall not only rule in the heavenly regions, but bring to them the blessings that can come only through such as we, who are the most perfect picture of God's grace, and the best example of the lavishness of His love in all creation. We shall be blessed in blessing. Such is the prospect of the calling of the present secret administration.

Its most precious phase, as well as a true index of its graciousness, lies in the fact of its fulfillment *before* Israel's hope is realized and *before* the fearful inflictions of Yahweh's day. It is first in time as well as foremost in rank. It is a present, an imminent expectation. There are no signs to prevent its instant fulfillment. It is a most wonderful thought that, at every moment of our lives, we are on the very threshold of our glorious future. We are waiting for the door to open. We do not know when this will be, but its constant imminence should keep us in a state of expectation. There is nothing between us and its realization. Even death, so far as our consciousness is concerned, is immediately followed by His glorious presence.

OUR CELESTIAL WEALTH

In the present day wealth is measured by legal possession. In reality we have only what we enjoy or can donate to the enjoyment of others. In both ways we are supremely supplied. The height of human avarice seeks to own the earth. But if we should succeed in making all here ours, we would be very poor, indeed, compared with the illimitable possessions of the celestial realms. In Christ all this is ours. We need no title deeds, for no one can dispute His right. All is ours to use and to enjoy, in Him. But this is but a tiny fraction of our wealth. Mere material possessions do not satisfy the spirit. It is the prestige that wealth gives, and the place that it provides in human society, the associations to which it leads, which are its true glory.

Our glorious riches not only give us entrance into the presence of God Himself, but to the highest and most exclusive social set in the universe, the society of His saints, who are the ruling aristocracy of the eonian times. Our wealth was not tainted in the getting, nor will it be a curse to us in the withholding. It was gained in glory and will be given in greater and grander glory. We will have limitless stores

of that spiritual sort which increases with its dispensation. Our wealth will not impoverish creation. We will enrich all to whom we are sent. The knowledge of God's grace, which is our most precious deposit, will add to the wealth of every creature in the universe.

CHRIST ROUSED FROM THE DEAD

Some day we shall be ever with the Lord. Meanwhile we cannot do better than to anticipate that overflowing joy by the spirit's enablement. But before we find Him on His present seat, let us trace more leisurely the steps that led Him there.

All of the forces of evil, headed by Satan, aided by Rome, the sovereign of the world, and abetted by the nation of Israel, were combined to accomplish the death of Christ. The Adversary knew that God had sent His Son to undo his work and to destroy him. So he strains every nerve to bring about His death. Judas did not betray his Lord of his own accord. Satan entered into him. So every actor in that dreadful drama, on the side opposed to Christ, was but a puppet in his hands; he was the moving cause of all, he was the spirit that impelled the dull clods of earth to fulfill his dark behests.

Our Lord well knew that they were not aware what they were about. Satan alone, of all His enemies, had some conception of what was involved. Rome did not realize that she had everything at stake. Messiah is the rightful ruler of the earth. Even in their stupidity they acknowledge it in the superscription Pilate wrote. Satan, their spiritual overlord, their true Caesar, made sure that the Roman power is pitted against God's Christ. The high priests, who should have worshiped Him, seem most malignant of them all. Though they pose as Yahweh's representatives, urged on by Satan, they mock Him with a trial, and loudly demand

His death. The great power of God, which once shielded Him, seems now to stand aside.

Satan's unseen hosts, the Roman legions, and Israel's religious leaders comprise a full array of all the enemies of God. All the powers of evil combine to accomplish His death and thus defeat His God. And there was every indication of their success. They had bound Him in the chains of death and they would keep Him bound! If God had given Him into their hands, who could deliver Him from them? But, in reasoning thus, we show our ignorance of that great sacrifice, and the vast change it wrought.

Why did God allow them to crucify His Son? Yea, rather, why did He abandon His Beloved in His hour of direst need? For His enemies He cries, "Father, forgive them, for they are not aware what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). God's ear is open to this prayer. But not for long. He is on the accursed tree. He is made sin. Soon a dense and dreadful darkness hides the scene, feebly figuring the hiding of God's face. Christ bears not only the fierce offensive of the forces of evil, but God Himself, true to His word, sends fire from above to consume the Sacrifice. The arrows from His quiver find lodgment in Messiah's heart. Himself so sinless, He becomes sin. He is not only shut out from God's presence, but is the object of His furious indignation. God Himself becomes His enemy.

But God did not cast Him off forever. Even as the darkness of nature passed away and the sun once more smiled upon that sight, so does His spirit again enjoy the radiance of God's face. "My God! My God! Why do You forsake Me?" could not have been uttered in those three hours of darkness and distance and estrangement. God would not have lent His ear to any cry He could have made. Now, as the Sufferer recalls their awfulness, what does He remember? Not the gibes of men, not the roars of Satan, but the silence and desertion of His God. Fire has consumed the

sin He bore. God's smile beams upon Him once again. In His very death He commends His spirit to His Father's care.

Now that sin's Sacrifice has been accepted, Satan's triumph is short-lived. The high priests see that Caesar's seal secures the dead, and Caesar's soldiers guard the lifeless form, so that all of evil's power is present to keep the Christ in the clutches of death.

HIS ASCENSION

Christ arose! The high priest's guards, affrighted, flee! He breaks the seal of Caesar! He escapes from Satan's jurisdiction, death! With victorious and majestic calmness He carefully strips off His swathings, the tokens of their temporary triumph and lays them in their appropriate place. He comes forth the Victor over the vast confederacy of the forces of evil!

HIS REST

In Matthew's account we are told that all authority in heaven and on earth is given to Him (Matt.28:18). Yet it is so foreign to that account to enter upon His celestial glories, that His ascension is not so much as mentioned. His earthly exaltation is anticipated by His ascent into a high mountain. The Son of David's Kingdom has not yet come.

Mark, speaking to us of His *service* as the Son of God, sets before us a completed course, a finished work. His part of this ministry was fulfilled, and its proclamation also was accomplished according to the creation commission that He gave before the gospel was put on record (Mark 16:20). Therefore it is that we read, at His ascension, that He is seated at God's right hand (Mark 16:19). This rest is confined to the service of which Mark's evangel speaks.

Luke presents us with a picture of Adam's greater Son. The very fact that Acts takes up the unfinished thread of

Luke shows that this aspect of His work is incomplete. In view of this we need not be surprised when Stephen sees Him *standing*. There is no seating of the *Son of Mankind* until He comes in His glory to rule the nations of the earth (Matt.25:31).

Let us seek to understand these various attitudes of Christ. Let us not miss their true spiritual import by a strict insistence on their literally. A king may be aspiring to a throne or he may be warring in its defense. In either case, he is not *seated*. When all the authority which the throne represents is truly his, when all opposition has been broken down, when the regal and judicial functions which pertain to it are in undisputed exercise, then he is *seated*.

This does not mean that he continually occupies the piece of furniture called the throne. He may be far from it, visiting in distant parts of his empire, and yet, while thus absent, find a continual acknowledgment that he is upon it. The kings of earth feebly figure Messiah. But Christ has many glories. On earth He is still rejected. He certainly is not seated on its throne. Only in a spiritual sense, as the Son of God, and as swaying over *creation*, is He seated. Every aspect of His work as Son of God is finished; every aspect of the human side still bides its proper season. This is the key to the seemingly contradictory attitudes in which He is presented to us. Mark says the Son of God sat down. Luke says the Son of Mankind is still standing.

John's evangel presents a distinct aspect of His ascension, as the Son of God, which we should not ignore, for it is a prelude to the present grace far more fitting than the subsequent public scene on Olivet. Even as He, as the Son of God, partially anticipated Pentecost by breathing the spirit on them beforehand, so He also ascended on the resurrection day. Mary was forbidden to touch Him because He had not yet ascended (John 20:17). Thomas was asked to touch Him on a later occasion. It is not so

very strange, then, that the later ascension is not recorded in John's account. The spiritual tendency of the narrative forbids it. The ascension of which He spoke to Mary is the one for us, *before* the forty days sojourning, before any human contact.

Interesting and important as these various aspects of His ascension are, it is of still greater profit to note that this Ephesian epistle contains not the slightest reference to the forty days during which He manifested Himself on earth after His resurrection. There is no recognition of the ascension scene in the book of Acts. In relation to us and the spiritual blessings He has wrought for us, and has brought to us, His work was completely finished when He rose, and on that day, as He intimated to Mary, He ascended untouched into God's presence, and sat down at God's right hand. All opposing forces have been defeated. His work is finished. The Son of God is seated.

CELESTIAL SOVEREIGNTY

Christ descended into the depths at the mercy of Satan and Caesar, of Pilate and the priests, of the centurion and the soldiers, of the Pharisees and the people, and was the scorn even of the crucified robbers at His side. None so lacking in power, in influence, in authority, none so far from God, so helpless and weak, so poor and vagrant, none so guilty as He! But when He arose, not only was every shadow of sin forever gone, but God exalted Him above His every enemy.

When He was on earth He had no allotment for His own. Now, as the Son of Abraham, every inch of the promised land is His. The jackals had their burrows, the winged creatures had their roosts, but the Son of Mankind, their rightful Head, had nowhere to pillow His head. Now all of Adam's lost authority is vested in the erstwhile homeless Nazarene. The One Who left His riches in the glory

to become poor has returned to become the Owner of the universe. The weakness that permitted His arrest in Gethsemane has given place to a personal power and presence of such awful intensity and force that it fells His beloved apostle at His feet (Rev.1:17). The Man Who submitted to Pilate's petty power and Satan's suzerainty has seized all that and vastly more. Satan once offered Him the sovereignty of the earth if He would but worship him (Matt. 4:1-10). Soon He will receive it from the hands of God.

These were but earthly dignities. Earth's rulers are the unsuspecting tools of higher spiritual powers. Satan claimed—and Christ did not deny his claim—that the kingdoms of this world, with all their pomp, belong to him, and to whomsoever he might give them. At times the veil is lifted which hides these spiritual powers from our sight. A parallel is apparent between earth's sovereignties and spiritual suzerains. A messenger sent to Daniel is hindered twenty-one days by "the chief of the kingdom of Persia" (Dan.10:13). He is aided in his warfare by Michael, one of the head chiefs, who is also called "the great chief, standing over the sons of your [Daniel's] people" (Dan.12:1). Like those of earth, the heavenly rule and influence is apportioned by various grades. The highest are called "princes" or "sovereigns." Their dominions are first-rate powers or empires. The Authorized Version calls them "principalities," but this name is now used of a third rate power, below the rank of a kingdom. This is not the thought. They are the highest among the heavenly hosts.

Like those of earth, however, they are divided into lesser jurisdictions, with delegated power or authority. Pilate is a good example of such rule, exercised on behalf of a superior. They told him if he let Messiah go he would not be Caesar's friend, and thus would lose his office. Pilate also imagined that he derived his ultimate authority from Rome, and could do just as he wished, provided it was pleasing

to the emperor. But our Lord pointed out his error when He said, "No authority have you against Me in anything except it were given to you from *above*" (John 19:11). He, and his overlord in Rome, were only underlings, obeying the behests of spiritual forces they did not even suspect.

Israel's Messiah still waits for the actual transfer of earthly government to His shoulder. But in the highest heavens He is already seated at God's right hand, up over every sovereignty and authority and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but in that also which is future (Eph.1:21). God subjects the whole universe beneath His feet and gives Him headship over all. Peter, viewing this from the standpoint of the future kingdom on the earth, sets Him above messengers and authorities and powers (1 Peter 3:22). He cannot, from his standpoint, speak of sovereigns being subjected, for as yet Satan holds his heavenly place and is supreme above all earthly powers. But we can see that even Satan, though he seems opposed to Christ, is preparing the apostasy predicted by God, which is the necessary prelude to the kingdom.

Messiah's headship over all the earth was a mystery long known and the delight of many an initiate in Israel. Now it is our privilege to anticipate and enjoy His heavenly honors, which were not revealed until His earthly headship seemed hopelessly deferred. The coming Kingdom awaits the repentance of His earthly people, but His spiritual kingdom waits for naught. We, His celestial saints, already realize, by the spirit He has given us, what it means to be rescued out of the authority of darkness and to be transported into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col.1:13).

These thoughts, these kingdoms, do not clash. The future realm to be set up on earth replaces earthly kingdoms. He will rule His people as the Son of David and all others as the Son of Mankind (Dan.2:44). The kingdom now in force is opposed, not to any earthly government

(for we are bound to be subject to such), but to the spiritual overlordship of which Satan is the sovereign. It does not lead us to acknowledge Christ as David's or as Adam's Son (though we gladly hail Him these as well), but as the Son of God, the true Suzerain of the spirit realm. All hail to the Son of God, the Sovereign of the universe! All hail to His God and Father, Whose power has placed Him at the summit of creation!

HEADSHIP OVER THE ECCLESIA

Sin is not confined to the earth. It existed long before its presence in Eden's paradise. The heavens are not clean in the sight of the Deity. Sin has invaded the whole cosmos, and has drawn away a host of God's celestial creatures from allegiance to His will. God's great purpose to reconcile the universe to Himself (Col.1:20) implies that they have been alienated before they can be brought back. Enmity must always precede reconciliation. Before perfect friendship can be restored sin must be restrained. There must be subjection. The celestial realms must be administered as well as those upon the earth.

In the process of earth's restoration many are associated with Messiah in its administration. Only the saints of the Circumcision will have a hand in its government. The twelve apostles will rule the twelve tribes, the hundred forty-four thousand will wield the iron club among the other nations. Messiah will administer His millennial reign through the priest nation. So, also, will it be in His far greater celestial sovereignty. His body, composed of saints of this present secret economy, will be His subordinates, the executives of His throne. He is Head of all *to* the ecclesia which is His body (Eph.1:22,23). This body is the hope of heaven, as well as heavenly in its hope.

This is the key to high heaven's restoration. Christ's blood not only avails for all, but fills the throne of the uni-

verse with the dregs of earth. They become the wonder and amazement of the celestial throng, for they display the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the plenitude of His power, the overwhelming redundance of His grace and love. Through them, His name, His fame, will form the theme of praise from the pole star to the southern cross.

Here, then, we have the final arrangement necessary for a complete and finished universe. The earth is Messiah's footstool, and He will win it back to God by means of His chosen people. Then heaven, too, will be subject to His sway. The ecclesia which is His body is the means of its administration. Thus this becomes the "fullness that filleth all in all," or, more clearly rendered, "the complement of the One completing the all in all" leaves nothing still unattended to. It is the finishing touch which will round it out to its consummation.

The figure of the body is not new. Paul had used it before in writing to the Corinthians and the Romans. At that time he stressed the mutual relation and dependence of the members on one another. This is also the prevailing aspect in Ephesians, though it has now been made a joint body. In Colossians the salient feature is *our relation to the Head*. So it is in this passage in Ephesians. It is concerned with the transcendent greatness of God's power as displayed in the exaltation of His Christ to the place supreme. This is the power which is ours in Him. It has no parallel. It is appalling. Maggots of the dust are made the mightiest monarchs in the empyrean.

May this meditation aid us to grasp, in some degree, what is the transcendent greatness of the power which operates in this administration for us, for it is the same as the mighty strength which operated in Christ, and roused Him from among the dead, and seated Him among the celestials (Eph.1:19,20).

A. E. Knoch

BOASTING IN GOD'S WILL

IN LIGHT OF our own pride it is well to remember the account recorded by Daniel concerning King Nebuchadnezzar: In His wisdom, God brought the great king to utter abasement, and caused him to make his abode with the animals of the field. He was shoved from among mortals, and ate herbage even as the oxen; his body became streaked with the night mist of the heavens till his hair increased as vultures' feathers, and his claws became as those of birds. God did this "to the intent that the living may know that the Supreme is in authority in the kingdom of mortals" (Dan.4:17), "and He gives it to whomsoever He will" (Dan.4:32). This was needed. For Nebuchadnezzar had said (and no doubt believed for many years), "Is not this Babylon the Great that I myself have built for the royal house with the might of *my* safeguarding walls and for the esteem of *my* honor!" (Dan.4:30). Yet "While the declaration was still in the mouth of the king, there was a voice that fell from the heavens: 'This has been decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar, that the kingdom has passed away from you'" (Dan.4:31).

Yet at the end of the appointed days, rather than complaining of this tremendous judgment, when his understanding returned to him, Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes to heaven in praise: "Then I blessed the Supreme, and I lauded and honored Him." The king found that God's jurisdiction is not an occasional thing but is "an eonian jurisdiction, and His kingdom is with generation after generation" (Dan.4:34). Nebuchadnezzar continued, "All those abiding on the earth are reckoned as naught; *according to His will*

He is doing with the army of the heavens and with those abiding on the earth. And there is no one who shall stay His hand and say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” (Dan. 4:35). “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, am lauding and exalting and honoring the King of the heavens, since all His deeds are verity and His paths are adjudication, and *He is able to abase all those walking in pride*” (Dan.4:37).

God is the Maker of good and the Creator of evil (Isa.45:7). And, righteous is Yahweh in all His ways, and benign in *all* His works (Psa.145:17). To the illuminated believer, when he learns of God’s wisdom and perceives His purpose, this becomes evident even in those things which are so terrible in themselves. It is not at all sinful for God to create those evils which are *men’s* sins. Rather than this being wrong, in light of evil’s necessary yet salutary ministry for permanent and universal good, it would be wrong were He to fail to do so.

If God is good, able, and knows what is best, and if it is best that evil should not exist, then it would be necessary for Him to make its existence impossible. For in order to retain one’s attributes, one must act in accord with them. Since God *is* good, able, and knows what is best, and since evil *does* exist, it must be best that evil should exist.

If it is best that evil should exist, there can be no doubt—instead of leaving its existence to chance—that it is also best that God alone should create and superintend it. Otherwise, if it should even come into being at all, it might well dissipate before accomplishing its mission or, alternatively, overflow its bounds altogether.

Likewise, if we would experience good, it follows that God is the One best suited to determine the times in which we should enjoy it, and all the particulars attending it, lest our enjoyment of it be less than ideal or even never occur at all.

Would we not far prefer to have what *is* best according

to the only and wise God, instead of what merely seems best in the eyes of shortsighted and sinful man?

Yet even these meditations concerning our own best interests must never be our main concern. The greatest thing—what we desire the most—is that all should be for God's glory and according to His purpose: "Yahweh has made everything for its own outcome" (Prov.16:4). "Out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:36). Our own unique experience of good and evil is only of secondary importance. Only in the wisdom and goodness of God, for His own glory, can we find our own perfect blessing.

FATALISM IS FALSE, EVEN AS FREE WILL

God *is* operating all. His operations, however, accord not with fatalism, but with the counsel of His own will. The divine will *includes* the human will. God's will does not eliminate man's will. To the contrary, it *creates* it. God imparts to men's hearts whatever is needed that they might do His "opinion," that is, whatever He has wisely concluded is best and has decided should occur.

This principle is well illustrated for us by the leading events which will occur in Babylon in the Lord's Day, during the time of the end, the conclusion of the eon. We read that the ten kings will be led by God Himself in their opposition to His will!

The messenger is saying to John, "These waters which you perceive, where the prostitute is sitting, are peoples and throngs and nations and languages. And the ten horns which you perceive, and the wild beast, these *will* be hating the prostitute, and they *will* be making her desolate and naked, and they *will* be eating her flesh, and they *will* be burning her up with fire, *for God imparts to their hearts to form His opinion*, and to form one opinion, and to give their kingdom to the wild beast, until the words of God shall be accomplished'" (Rev.17:15-17).

"The Jews in Babylon will be supported principally by the toil of the great masses in the Western nations. The enormous interest on the national debts will make the people comparative slaves of those to whom the interest is paid. When it becomes known that the greater part of this money is used by the Jews in Babylon for their luxurious magnificence, it will arouse the hatred of the peoples and the governments who are under a perpetual tribute, as there is no possibility of paying off the principal. This hatred will lead to the unanimous opinion that Babylon must be destroyed. The wild beast upon which Babylon rests, after being obsessed by the dragon, becomes her implacable enemy. This is God's means of destroying the apostates in Israel.

"By a bold figure of speech God is said to have an 'opinion.' The ten horns pride themselves in forming their own opinion and in carrying it out, when, as a matter of fact, they are obliged by the purpose of God to think and act as they do. Man is moved by ulterior motives. God provides these, and men, conscious only of their own selfish aims, accomplish His end. God wants Babylon destroyed: They gladly do it for their own sakes, not for Him."¹

It is important to recognize that the truth on this theme repudiates fatalism as much as free will. The idea that God's will shall prevail and the things He intends occur without or regardless of our own wills is fatalism. This is not the scriptural position. According to God's operation of all, however, events do come to pass just as inevitably as they do according to fatalism. (After all, at least fatalism is not so foolish as to deny causality.)

Let us consider an example: A man is extremely ill with a terrible disease; apart from the power in his medicine (an excellent one), he will surely die. Yet, if he takes it, he

1. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.400; A. E. Knoch.

will recover. And, God knows he will take it, and has even designed that he should do so, and then recover. The man is free to do whatever he wants. *All these things are true.* Thus it becomes obvious that apart from and except for man's essential choices and actions a given state of things cannot and will not be achieved.

Under God's operations, what we choose and what we do are no less *essential* and vital than under the mistaken concept called "free will." Avoiding laziness and being industrious are just as important as we always thought they were. In the example, though the man will surely take his medicine, and cannot fail to do this, he is still free to do as he pleases. And, *due to* all the causal factors with which this is connected, whether heredity or early childhood training, internal or external considerations, inclinations or disinclinations toward certain things, or special immediate circumstances, the man *will* do this very thing, and *not* something else.

That which he does will be that which he wants to do, at least at that moment. Or at least it will be something connected with his wants, of which his actions are a consequence. It will be the product of all the factors, from within or without, distant or immediate, which cause him to act accordingly.

Prayer remains essential. Indeed, God will provide it whenever this is so. For many things are only given to us in response to our requests in prayer. It certainly is true that in many cases, not having been given to ask, we have not because we ask not. God graciously sustains us in any case, but for believers much of His provision is directly related to prayer.

Let us consider a further example: My child becomes injured in some type of accident. We are miles away from all help, and I do not know what to do to save his life, though one who was well trained to care for such inju-

ries would know just what to do to take care of this matter ideally. Now I believe that since this has happened, ultimately speaking this is only because God has given us this experience. And I also know that in themselves all men are useless and incompetent, including myself. Yet if the proper emergency care is not given, my child will soon die. It should be added that I also believe God has already decided what is best. Whether my child should recover or not, God will bring to pass His own will in this matter.

In ourselves, my child and I are absolutely helpless. Actually our case is always this very way continually, apart from God's saving hand. We are always in need of salvation, whether for preservation or deliverance. Not at any time, nor in any situation, can we say, "I have no need of You." But we are often simply too unenlightened to realize this.

However, because God has *given* me at least some uprightness of mind, I do not want my child to die. Indeed, I cannot even bear the thought. Yet he will die if *I* do not do something about the matter immediately. It is not at all that he will either recover or die whether I do anything or not, or whether I do the right thing or the wrong thing. No, I must choose to do and then actually act to carry out the proper choice. Yet I do not even know what that may be! But God knows, and He is able. So being the person I am, as God has shaped me, I make my request—my urgent plea—known to Him. With much heartfelt concern and anguish, I ask Him, *if it be His will* (cf Matt.26:39), to cause me to do whatever is necessary to save my child, or that He otherwise provide for his deliverance.

Since I am aware that prayer is essential, I have not a thought toward the neglect of prayer. Besides, I love God and am glad to pray to Him. In fact, I instinctively cry out to my God, Who alone is able to save. Nor do I pause to entertain any fancies concerning the glories of free will, craftily asking the Deity to help me only in part, so that

I might still remain the key to it all, and have a glory of my own, and a tremendous one at that! I am not interested in either fatalistic or freewill foolishness—I want my child to live!

Let us be no more fatalistic than autocratic. Let us make our plans and have our goals. And when we have made and even accomplished some of them, let us account for this as due to the providence of our God. For He is doing all things well. God's operations are concerned with *all*, all that exists and all that occurs. There are no exceptions to what is out of, through and for God, and to His glory. Indeed, the passages that declare this can have little practical value to us apart from this realization.

Though to the calumniator and to the immature our teachings may somehow appear to promote laziness and apathy in particular, and sinfulness in general, they actually do no such thing. Whatever weaknesses we have had along these lines may still remain in us, but they are certainly not made the worse by our faith. To the contrary, many have been given special strength through their reliance upon God alone, while recognizing that any good they may achieve is due entirely to His gracious work in them: "For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience: that in holiness and sincerity *of God*, not in fleshly wisdom, but *in God's grace, we behave ourselves* in the world, yet more superabundantly toward you" (2 Cor.1:12).

It is "not that we are competent of ourselves, . . . but our competency is of God" (2 Cor.3:5). To those who are "puffed up, one over the one, against the other," Paul says, "For who is making you to discriminate [differ]? Now what have you which you do not obtain? Now if you obtain it also, why are you boasting as though you do not obtain?" (1 Cor.4:7). In this way the apostle guides us to boast, like Nebuchadnezzar after his experience of humiliation, to boast in God's will and the glory of His ways. Only such

convictions as these can deal effectively with our pride and reliance upon the flesh. They afford us a special happiness which we can otherwise never know.

James Coram

ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE

Let us now consider Paul's allegory, based upon the story of Hagar and Sarah, which he places before the Galatians (Gal.4:22-31). As a preface to his allegory, however, the apostle first declares,

Tell me, you who are wanting to be under law, are you not hearing the law? For it is written . . . (Gal.4:21,22a).

That is, if the Galatians wished to become such ardent devotees of the law, Paul would ask them only to comply with its own dictate (viz., Drive out this maidservant and her son; Gen.21:10), as recorded in the story of Hagar and Sarah, of Ishmael and Isaac. Essentially, the story teaches that works of the flesh, under a system of bondage, rather than being the key to God's allotment, are the lock which debars entrance into God's allotment.

The allotment which the Galatian believers longed for (even as we ourselves who are believing today) was salvation out of this present wicked eon (*cf* Gal.1:4), and salvation into glorious life and joy, in the presence of Christ Himself, in the oncoming eons.

Paul would have us know that God has *promised* this allotment to us, doing so in His *grace*. He chose us for it before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4), in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian (2 Tim.1:9). Accordingly, He has designated us beforehand for it (*cf* Rom.8:29), having *not* appointed us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess.5:9).

The allotment of life eonian is our expectation, not merely our hope, for it is God's gracious gift to us (*cp* Titus 3:7; Rom.6:23). Thus it is that Paul declares that we who now are blessed according to his evangel, even as Abraham, Sarah and Isaac of old, are "enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise" (Gal.3:29). That is, we are enjoyers of the allotment which God has for us according to the promise which He has made to us (*cp* Titus 1:1,2).

This is the evangel of our salvation. The evangel is not at all the foolish notion to the effect that if (and only if) we will keep the law satisfactorily (or otherwise engage in sufficient upright behavior) we then will be granted eonian life.

James R. Coram

CHRIST'S SUPREMACY

ON such a sublime subject as this we cannot take less than the whole Bible for our text. Not that we shall do more than lightly touch upon certain portions of it.

So uniquely exclusive are the claims of Christ that they will not be satisfied with a mere percentage of our time, or our thoughts, or a portion of ourselves. ALL it demands, and ALL it will ultimately possess. "Eventually, why not *now*?" The place that Christ is given in modern literature is that of an ALSO rather than an ALL. Suppose an allusion is made to the great religious leaders of the world. There you have the catalog: Buddha, Krishna, Confucius, Muhammad, Moses, and somewhere in the middle of the list, or maybe at the tail end, an allusion to Jesus. To the modern literary and religious world He is one of many. Know here and now that you cannot say He is good. He must be BEST. You cannot say He is great. He must be GREATEST.

The supremacy of Christ in the Old Testament is a prophetic one. That supremacy lay enshrined in the promise that Eve's Seed would crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). For more than a thousand years that one verse was the Bible Prophecy of the race. We now have Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Daniel and a host of others, but for many centuries the human race had just one little verse of prophecy. We have John's great Evangel and Paul's mighty exposition to the Romans, but all the evangel the race had then was contained in a sentence or two. Little do we appreciate the overflowing abundance of revelation with which we are blessed. Those sentences however were pregnant with as yet unuttered truths concerning the Coming One's supremacy. This verse was revelation. All succeeding prophecy and gospel was but added explanation.

The reader is familiar of course with the way Hebrews 12:24 brings out the supremacy of Christ's shed blood in contrast to that of murdered Abel. The latter cried aloud for vengeance, but the former petitioned for peace. What marvel is this, that the blood of a murdered man may shield his murderers from the penalty of their crime! History gives us no comparison. Christ is supreme over all analogy!

Again, was not His unique supremacy shown forth in the ark? Ark, mind you, not *arks*. It was not one ark amongst many. You had no choice in the matter. It was the ONE ARK or NONE! Nor did that one ark have *two doors*—only one. And when Christ Himself was speaking He did not say "I am A door" as if He were one of many, but I am "THE door" (John 10:7,9). He gave His hearers no alternative choice. When the law was given it made a demand that none but the Supreme One could comply with. The types in their incompleteness required a sacrifice which none but He could offer. The prophecies are silent without Him, and the Psalms lack music and meaning.

The New Testament opens with an account of His antecedents. Some of them we would gladly expunge from *our* records. If Rahab were in our family you would not find her name in the family Bible. Nor would we care to perpetuate the remembrance of Uriah's wife. Yet there they are, and the remainder of the New Testament shows how gloriously supreme was Christ over all His antecedents.

Herod plots, but He is supreme over the enemies' plotting. Satan himself appears at a later date, but He rises supreme over every bribe to leave the pathway of obedience. Again, through Peter, does the Serpent hiss out his suggestion to avoid the cross, but He rises supreme once more and cries "Get thee behind me Satan!" (Matt. 16:23).

And then upon that mount where He was transfigured, we see Moses and Elijah and Christ, but the first two dissolve and leave the Master supreme. The disciples,

we read, “saw Jesus only” (Matt.17:8). Reverse the words and you describe what He means to a world that sees in Him “only Jesus.”

And now let us look at what seemed the eclipse of His ministry. The cross itself was like a burning glass that focussed a myriad scattering rays into a scorching point. The “fiery darts” of the Adversary must have been showered upon Him by His envenomed antagonist. Not a possible weapon in all of Hell’s offensive armory but was employed in this the last crushing attack upon the defenses of His soul. Listen now to that word “Father” as it comes from torture-wrung lips commending His spirit to His God. “Father” He cries (Luke 23:46), and rises in majestic supremacy over DOUBT. “I claim Thee as Father” cries the Suffering One “in spite of this cross, this darkness, and this pain.”

Let us listen again. “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34). Thus, did He rise supreme over MALICE. They had scourged Him, and mocked Him; their spittle smeared His blessed person; and they had nailed Him to the tree. “Now,” Satan would suggest, “get even with them!” “Father, forgive” is the Sufferer’s reply.

And that mystery of God’s silence through it all! The heavens seemed as brass. They had opened before, at Jordan, and upon the mountain. God’s voice had come proclaiming the divine Sonship of the Man. And now the Man needed God as He had never needed Him before. And Heaven was silent! “Father”—thus does He rise supreme over the silence of God.

If the Gospels reveal to us the story of His personal supremacy, the Epistles continue to reveal its rising tide. In Romans we have the righteousness of God in Christ rising superior to the unrighteousness of man, and the grace of God rising supreme over human sin. Consider all the wars and murders, and lies, and uncleanness, and what a

vast filthy ocean of sin it is. Yet over all this the justifying grace of God rises supreme. The supremacy of His wrath as revealed in Revelation is but auxiliary to the supremacy of His righteousness as displayed in Romans.

In Colossians the grace of God in Christ rises over the creature's enmity and hatred. Through His Son, God reconciles the universe unto Himself. In 1 Corinthians the life of God in Christ rises supreme over death in its every aspect. The supremacy of His life is such that it will quicken the Universe and expunge death from His domains. Lastly we remind ourselves of Philipians—the heart of the New Testament writings—and there we learn anew of Christ's supremacy. Then, in that scene of universal worship and praise, the Christ of God will not be one amongst many; the Supreme One of Calvary will be recognized as Lord in all His gracious and glorious supremacy “to the glory of God the Father” (Phil.2:9-11).

He will be supreme THEN.

It is our privilege to recognize His supremacy NOW.

Alan Burns

REPOSING

Born deep in lumber country, Charles Willis Booher (1920-2022) worked Oregon's mills, fished her coastlines, and with his wife Dorothy, raised a big family, reveling in the truth of the evangel. Late in his life, Chuck liked to tell people that “if we are believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him” (1 Thess.4:14). “It's just that simple,” he'd add. Dorothy was happy to explain that her favorite scriptural word was All.

Chuck and Dorothy Booher were beloved to a cohort of believers who learned of concordant truth through their faithfulness and suffering in the evangel—“appearing as luminaries in the world, having on the word of life” (Phil.2:15). Chuck was put to repose on January 27, 2022—his one-hundred and second birthday. Dorothy predeceased him by twelve years. This is the epitaph on their gravestone in the Comstock Cemetery, Curtin, Oregon: “Asleep until we are called to rise to meet our Lord in the air.”

THE SINGULAR FAITH OF CHRIST

“THE FAITH OF CHRIST is brought before us in the otherwise enigmatical statement ‘*from faith to faith*’ (Rom.1:17 AV). Literally this is ‘*out of faith into faith*.’ There are two faiths in view. The latter is our faith; the former is Christ’s. Justification is founded on His faith; it is conferred on our faith Hence we find the statement (which is so often referred to us who believe) ‘the Just One shall live by [His] faith.’ This refers to One only, not many or all, however aptly it may be ‘applied’ to them

“Just as it was in Abram’s case, faith and righteousness are inseparably linked together. Not only that righteousness will be ascribed to us as it was to Abraham when we, too, believe God, but the faith of Jesus Christ is always put as the basis out of which this blessing flows.”¹

So wrote A. E. Knoch in 1916. Such clear and positive application of this verse to Christ as the Just One of Habakkuk 2:4 must have been surprising to say the least. (Yet several theologians in Germany and England had made similar claims, and surely other students of the scriptures had understood and taught along this line independently without leaving a written record. For indeed the context of Romans and the parallel with Romans 3:21,22, as well as the grammar give the strongest of support to this application).

However, when the first edition of the Concordant Version was published in 1926 there were no initial capital letters on “just one” and no indication in the explanatory notes for verse 17 that Christ was in view. Nevertheless, the note for Romans 3:22 read as follows:

1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.7, pp.266,267.

“The channel through which we may obtain this righteousness is the *faith* of Jesus Christ. He alone of all mankind, not only did good and kept the law, but He believed God even when He smote Him for our sins. It is out of His faith for our faith (Rom.1:17).”²

Finally in 1938, in an article entitled “Jesus Christ’s Faith,” Brother Knoch explains how he came to this understanding.

“I do not remember ever reading of Jesus Christ’s faith until I began to read my Greek text. Then it impressed me very much in my studies of the third of Romans. Nevertheless I was rather diffident in regard to it and said little until I was forced to translate this phrase in the version. Then the question arose, Am I mistaken as to the force of the genitive here? It does not seem possible that it denotes the faith of others in Him, as usually rendered, but perhaps it denotes the faith, or body of belief, which is derived from Him, not His own believing.

“But it is not a translator’s duty to interpret, yet he ought to preserve distinctions, especially in connection with such an important matter as faith, so there was no way but to bring over the genitive into the English, leaving the student to decide this by means of consistent renderings.”³

Later in the same article (p.380), Brother Knoch takes up the matter of Christ’s faith in relation to Romans 1:17, under the heading OUT OF FAITH INTO FAITH: “It is only as we take it of Christ in the first place, the Just One because of His faith (though He did not need to be *justified* from sin through faith), the *source* of the revelation of God’s righteousness, and make our faith the *object* (as the grammar of the Greek), that we can understand that,

2. These notes are presently published separately from the Version as the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

3. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.29, p.375.

in both cases, a just one is living by faith. Indeed, the word *just* is in the singular here, as it is in Habakkuk 2:4, so that its first application may be to Christ Himself."

THE RIGHTEOUS ONE ALONE

It will be noted that there was less certainty about the "just one" in the 1938 article than in that of 1916. Earlier Christ alone was identified as the Just One. Later, albeit in the first place, He is presented as sharing this title with the believer (which is still an advance over the long-held view which sees the believer only in Romans 1:17). There are two faiths in Romans 1:17a (this is correct and the only understanding that accords with the whole context. "Out of faith" points forward to "the Righteous One, out of faith" and "for faith" back to "everyone who is believing.") But are there two singular just ones in 17b? This cannot be. God's evangel as promised before through the prophets in the holy scriptures concerns God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom.1:1-4). So also the evangel of Romans 1:15-17, which as verse 16 makes clear is the evangel of our salvation spoken of in Ephesians 1:13, concerns God's Son. The revelation of God's righteousness is "out of" (sourced in, founded in) Christ's faith. The promise of the Just One in Habakkuk 2:4 concerns the Coming One of Habakkuk 2:3 (as rendered in the Septuagint, *cf* Heb.10:37,38). It is "out of" His faith that He is to be living. (It is best to use the English word "righteous" in Romans 1:17b to show its association with the word "righteousness" in 17a. It is the *Righteous* One Who, by His faith and obedience unto the death of the cross, reveals God's *righteousness* in all its purity and power.) The singular designation, the Righteous One of Romans 1:17b refers to One alone, and that is God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Paul speaks in the singular of that One's singular and flawless faith.

Brother Knoch wrote of this faith often without iden-

tifying it by the term, "Christ's faith." A good example of this is the following where this is seen in Gethsemane and then on the cross.

"It is evident on the surface that the latter part of our Lord's ministry was weighted with His impending doom, which even caused a clash between Himself and one of His disciples. But it is not till we reach Gethsemane that the veil is torn aside and we get a glimpse of the awfulness of the cross as it affected His fellowship with God. Hitherto the will of Christ was in perfect parallel with that of His Father. True, He did not do His own will, but He acquiesced in the divine will cheerfully and with His whole heart. But now He begs the cup pass from Him. His will was not at all in line with the will of God. But the will is not the final arbiter. The heart may furnish motives deeper and more powerful. So He adds 'Not My will, but Thine, be done'

"We are now concerned only with those most mysterious and terrible of all His sufferings, the loss of fellowship, the averted face, the active hostility of God Himself, which wrung from Him the orphan cry 'My God! My God! Why do *You* forsake Me?' The terror of those three hours of darkness when the Sun of His life was hid from His soul surpasses the power of the pen, yet the psalmist compares it with the power of fire and water and the sword."⁴

This is Jesus Christ's faith. Paul presents this faith as the *mindset*⁵ of *humbling himself and of obedience* which is in Christ Jesus "Who, being inherently in the form of God,

4. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.15, page 134,135.

5. The word "disposition" which the CV used in previous editions is not misleading, and serves well concordantly. But in its present usage it speaks of a mental *tendency*, while the relatively new English word "mindset" is more in accord with the word "faith" with regard to a settled conviction (*cf* Heb.11:17).

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

OUT OF FAITH INTO FAITH

We have thus seen that Romans 1:17 speaks of Christ's faith, first of all by the words "out of faith" and then by the words 'the Righteous One, out of faith.' God's righteousness is being revealed out of Christ's faith. Its revelation is sourced in Christ's faith in His God and Father even unto the death of the cross. (We can understand why some who see this use the word "faithfulness." Indeed true believing involves faithfulness to what is believed. Our own faith does not appear to reach this standard. But the point is that Christ's faith does.) Then (in Romans 1:17b) this is repeated as it was promised in Habakkuk. Christ Jesus as the Righteous One lives out of faith, that is, His faith is the source of His living when He emptied Himself and came in the likeness of humanity unto death, and when He was roused from among the dead ones, no longer dying, but living to God (*cf* Rom.6:12; 1 Cor.15:14,20).

This evangel of Christ's humiliation, suffering and death is what we are believing. It is only that most believers have not seen this evangel here in the words "out of faith," and none of us perhaps have seen it as clearly and fully as it is presented here in connection with other wordings of God's evangel. We have a great way to go in tracing out the prominence and dominance of this message.

Now let us review some of the evidence that Romans 1:17 directs attention to Christ's faith, doing so for our faith:

1. God's evangel concerns His Son (Rom.1:1,3). We should expect that in telling us he was not ashamed of the evangel, Paul would make reference to God's Son.

2. So also, where God's evangel was promised before through His prophets the promise would have concerned God's Son. Indeed without parenthesis the words "concerning His Son" are connected directly to such a promise. If the evangel concerns God's Son, the promise would concern God's Son. So already we see that Habakkuk 2:4 concerns God's Son; it is a "Messianic" promise.

3. The remarkable parallel of Romans 3:21,22 with 1:17, extending to their associated verses, matches "God's righteousness revealed" with "God's righteousness manifested" and "out of faith" with "through Jesus Christ's faith" among other parallels. Clearly Romans 3:21,22 takes up in repetition and expansion what was said in 1:16,17 after the long section on God's indignation and righteous judgment of Romans 1:18-3:20. What is in view in 3:21,22 is surely in view in 1:17, and a consistent understanding of Paul's presentation of God's evangel directs us to understand the words "Jesus Christ's faith" as a reference to His humbling Himself to the death of the cross. It is in this that God's righteousness is made known.

4. But not only does this open up the critical connection of Romans 1:16,17 with 3:21,22, but it opens up the harmonious connection between the opening chapters of Romans with chapters 5-8. The teaching to which we have been given over (Rom.6:17) is God's evangel concerning His Son ("apart from law," Rom.3:21). It is the message of the Righteous One's faith, which says (in one later wording of God's evangel), "God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ dies for our sake" (Rom.5:8).

It is not our faith that reveals and manifests God's righteousness, putting it on display. It is the Righteous One's faith, God's Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord's faith in dying for our sakes that reveals God's righteousness in His operation of the justification of the irreverent. (The believer's faith

is flawed, yet, in God's grace, it is the channel through which God reckons already to us what Christ Jesus gains for all). Consequently whenever we read of Christ's faith we should see God's evangel concerning His Son.

This is true of the three citations of Habakkuk 2:4, twice in Paul's letters (here in Romans 1:17b and then in Galatians 3:13) and once in Hebrews where the Septuagint version of Habakkuk 2:3 is reflected along with 2:4 (Heb.10:37, 38). It is true of the passages noted in A. E. Knoch's 1916 and 1938 articles where the noun "faith" is followed by a reference to God's Son, our Lord in the genitive case (faith of Him, that is, His faith). These are: "Jesus Christ's faith" (Rom.3:22); "the faith of Jesus" (Rom.3:26); "the faith of Christ Jesus" (Gal.2:16); "the faith of Christ" (Gal.2:16); "faith of the Son of God" (Gal.2:20), "Jesus Christ's faith" (Gal.3:22); "His [Christ Jesus, our Lord's] faith" (Eph.3:12); "the faith of Christ" (Phil.3:9); and "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ of glory" (James 2:1). To these may be added "My faith" (Rev.2:13) and "the faith of Jesus" (Rev.14:12).

These passages where Christ's faith is explicitly stated are expanded by other passages where only the word "faith" or the phrases "out of [Christ]," or "through [Christ]" appear in their contexts. Without attempting to defend this claim in any full way, I would like to trace some of these passages as indicated by the proposed Concordant Version of the New Testament.

ROMANS 2:16b

Starting with Romans 2:1 Paul writes of the revelation of God's righteous judgment which stands in contrast to the revelation of God's righteousness made in God's evangel of salvation sourced in the Righteous One's faith (Rom.1:1-17). There is no salvation in God's righteous judgment which is based on what the human being does in accord with the standards of law. For both Jews and Greeks are

all under sin; not one is righteous—not even one (Rom. 3:9,10). Out of works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified (Rom.3:20). This was a foregone conclusion already in Romans 2:16a where it is declared that in God's righteous judgment even the hidden things of human beings will be taken into account.

It is at that stern and bleak point almost exactly halfway through the long dissertation of Romans 1:18-3:20 that Paul inserts the cryptic words "According to my evangel, through Jesus Christ" (Rom.2:16b). In all the 63 verses of this diatribe this is the only use of the word "evangel" and the only reference to Jesus Christ by any terminology. Paul interrupts his consideration of God's indignation on and judgment of human irreverence and righteousness with the shout (surely he shouts!) of Romans 2:16b. The desperate need of humanity's salvation and of the revelation of God's righteousness is the third reason Paul is not ashamed of the evangel: (1) it is a message of salvation. (2) In it God's righteousness is revealed. (3) The human situation is hopeless and God's righteousness remains a mastery without solution apart from this evangel.

Paul cannot wait to bring us back to Romans 1:16,17, when he has reached the terrible truth of Romans 2:16a, and before he has finished its application to the Jews. He turns toward his readers face to face and declares with his full soul "According to my evangel [which is God's evangel for which I am severed], [God's righteousness is manifested] through [the faith of] Jesus Christ!" In this way he connects Romans 1:1-17 to 3:21-26 and beyond.

There is no room for boasting in Paul's evangel. There is no place for human beings to make a contribution. There is no human "part." And Paul is not ashamed of it as much as the religious person thinks it is shameful.

ROMANS 3:3-8

There is one more positive connection of Romans 1:18-

3:20 to the resumption of the evangel in 3:21. Near the close of this dissertation, Paul contrasts God's faithfulness with the Jew's unfaithfulness and God's righteousness with Jew's unrighteousness (Rom.3:3-8). Here Paul draws attention to God's righteousness, which was introduced in Romans 1:17 and is about to be given detailed consideration starting with 3:21.

God's righteousness in *His judgment* of the Jews is not God's righteousness in *their salvation* when "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom.11:26) and the Rescuer comes out of Zion and God eliminates their sins (Rom.11:26,27).

Paul points in Romans 3:3,4 to the testimony of God's oracles to God's faithfulness as a matter of being true (Psa.116:11), associating this faithfulness of God with His righteousness (Rom.3:5) as was done in Psalm 143:1. All this prepares us for Romans 3:21-22. All humans beings, including the Jews, are sinners who stand in need of God's righteousness now manifested through Jesus Christ's faith in His death for their sake, that faith through which God's faithfulness to all His promises is assured.

ROMANS 3:21-23

²¹ **Yet now, apart from law, God's righteousness has been made manifest° (being attested° by the law and the prophets), ²² yet God's righteousness [*made manifest*] through Jesus Christ's faith ^{io}for all (and on all who are believing it), for there is no' distinction, ²³ for all sin and are wanting° of the glory of God.**⁶

This is an extremely important passage where every point is critical to our understanding and appreciation of God's evangel. It does not stand alone but collects from what has

6. This is the translation of the proposed CVNT except I have added in brackets the words "made manifest" in verse 22 as probably to be understood. D.H.H.

been said and directs forward to what follows. The parallels with Romans 1:16,17 assure us that this is the evangel of which Paul was not ashamed, being resumed after 1:18-3:20 which is not evangel but which makes the evangel so very good and welcome.

The "yet now" tells us that the passage speaks of something in contrast to what has been said in 1:18-3:20 (except for the exclamatory interjection of 2:16b).

The "apart from law" explains why Paul said he was not ashamed of the evangel (Rom.1:15), for law had been so essential to God's message to Israel that had dominated previous scripture. So we are now being brought to a new and fuller understanding of justification (explained in 3:24) which had been greatly limited to "the doers of the law" in 2:13, and in 3:20 declared to be an impossibility.

What is now being evangelized (but previously attested) is first of all that God's righteousness has been made manifest. This directly repeats the happy announcement of 1:17 that God's righteousness is being revealed in the evangel. And this leads forward to what is said in Romans 3:25,26 concerning the display of God's righteousness, and is even brought back into the picture in Romans 9:30-10:13 where Paul considers Israel's present stumbling and future rescue.

But now, God's righteousness is being revealed and has become manifest in the evangel being heralded by Paul. It is apart from law, although attested by the law and the prophets. Paul had previously noted this at the beginning of this epistle. God's evangel for which Paul was severed was promised before in the holy scriptures. In particular Paul cites the prophet Habakkuk and soon he will turn our attention to Abraham and his experience in Genesis 15 as a type of what the evangel says about faith.

THROUGH JESUS CHRIST'S FAITH

With this reminder in view Paul returns to the matter of God's righteousness which has been made manifest

through Jesus Christ's faith. The preposition "*through*" replaces the "out" of 1:17 but was prepared for in 2:16b by the phrase "*through* Jesus Christ" and continues in 3:24 by the words "*through* the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus." God's righteousness has been made manifest *through* Jesus Christ's faith which led Him to the cross and thus is the means of deliverance from sin and death and to the expectation of the glory of God, of which glory we all are now wanting (that is, lacking), as sinners. All human beings sin, and all are now wanting of the glory of God. So it is that the manifestation of God's righteousness is *through* Jesus Christ's faith, which speaks of the deliverance which is in Him, in His suffering and dying, is "for all." This accords with Romans 5:18,19 where we read, "Consequently, then, as it is *through* one offense for all human beings for condemnation, thus also it is *through* one righteous response [to God's will] for all human beings for life's justifying. For even as *through* the disobedience of the one human the many are constituted sinners, thus also *through* the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted righteous."

A PRESENT SALVATION

The justification which manifests God's righteousness and comes *through* (and is sourced out of) Jesus Christ's faith is for all as must be if it is a righteous operation. It is presently on (but not yet in) all who are believing, who are sealed with holy spirit of promise which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment to the deliverance of that which has been procured (Eph.1:13,14) *through* the faith of Jesus Christ. This is a matter of present salvation given to those who are believing it (Rom.1:16). Justification is reckoned to us (as it was to Abraham in view of what his Seed would do, Rom.4). We have a special salvation as believers. But the salvation itself is because we are part of

the all *for* whom Christ died. God is the Saviour and this is due to Christ's faith.⁷

God's judgments are righteous, but in that no one is saved through them, they do not reveal or manifest or display God's righteousness. It is made known out of and through Christ's faith. Thus not one will be left out of this justification—not even one.

It is thus that God's righteousness has been made manifest. In that Christ dies for all, all die (2 Cor.5:14). The old humanity is put to death, proleptically to be sure, but certainly in God's own time, for it is through Christ's faith, in dying for the sake of sinners.

There are special callings along the way (and most transcendently gracious is ours in Christ), but all shall be vivified in Christ, and God shall be All in all (1 Cor.15:22,28).

D.H.H.

7. This is also true of Israel, but their special salvation in the promised, terrestrial kingdom, is granted on faith and backed up by signs and miracles *and* works of law.

WITH FAITH AND EXPECTATION

Three widows of "Concordant" teachers, rejoicing in Paul's evangel and the salvation of all, have recently been put to repose in faith and expectation of the time when we will all be together with our Lord.

Helen Niemeyer died September 22, 2022 at the age of 92. She, her husband Fred and their family immigrated from the Netherlands to Ontario, Canada in 1959 already believing in God's ultimate purpose.

Susanne (Friesen) Goerzen was born in the Ukraine and lived much of her youth in Siberia. She was enabled to immigrate to Alberta, Canada after World War II, where she met and married Jacob W. Goerzen. Supporting him in domestic matters and in faith, they raised seven daughters. She died January 19, 2023 at age 97.

June Bowerman aided her husband, Leonard, in a ministry in Lansing, Michigan, joining with him as he grew in understanding of God's grace and purpose. She died at age 96 on June 12, 2023.

FAITH PERFECTED

THE UNFOLDING FAITH of Abram went through many phases before it was perfected by the offering of his only son, Isaac (James 2:22). Each of these had a special quality and has been characterized by giving it a name. We will copy these, and seek to improve on them if possible. The *obedience* of faith brought him to the promised land (Gen.12:4). The *humility* of faith gave Lot the first choice (Gen.13:8). By the *strength* of his faith he conquered the kings (Gen.14:15). The *firmness* of faith enabled him to believe when all hope of an heir seemed futile (Gen. 15:6). The *boldness* of faith led him to intercede for Sodom (Gen.18:23). In the *joyfulness* of faith he named the son of promise (Gen.21:3). By the *loyalty* of faith he submitted to Sarah, and expelled Hagar and Ishmael (Gen.21:14). In the *gratitude* of faith he planted a tamarisk (Gen.21:33). In its *perfection* he offered up his only son (Gen.22:2).

It is said that the Canaanites, among whom Abraham dwelt, made a practice of propitiating their deities by sacrificing their dearest possessions, even their children (2 Kings 3:27). But, in his case, it seemed to be directly contrary to all of Yahweh's previous promises, besides being an *only* son, the fruit and fulfillment of faith. Yet many tests had shown him that God could even bring back from death. He himself had been deadened before he generated Isaac. Abraham was quite prepared to actually slay his son, for he reckoned that, even so, God was able to rouse him from among the dead (Heb.11:19). Thus we are given a parabolic representation of the important fact that the chosen

nation is the fruit of *faith*, and the resurrection power of God, but not of the *flesh*.

PROBE, NOT TEMPT

The AV reading, that “God did *tempt* Abraham,” may have been allowable when it was first translated, but, like, “lead us not into *temptation*” (Matt.6:13), it throws a dark shadow on the divine character. Elohim was not inducing Abraham to act contrary to His will, but was probing him to *prove* to all concerned that he would obey Him, even when it was contrary to his own desires. His reaction to this test entitled him to his high place among those who are famed for their faith (Heb.11:17).

MOUNT MORIAH

Mount Moriah was the eminence on which the temple of Solomon was later built, where millions of sacrifices were offered, which prefigured the supreme sacrifice of God’s Son. It *may* have included Golgotha, the place of a skull (Matt.27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33, John 19:17), which is north of the highway which borders the temple area. Otherwise, it is not clear why it was necessary to travel the long way from Beersheba, perhaps a two days’ journey northward, to where Jerusalem now is. Ordinarily an altar could be built in any location. Doubtless Abraham had one near his tent, and offered flocklings upon it, for Isaac knew of this (Gen.22:7). The distance is given as fifty-four miles. But, as it is measured by days, a time period, each of them may represent an eon, for the Lamb of God was sacrificed in the middle of the third of the five eons, that is, in the symmetrical center of the eonian times.

THE ASCENT APPROACH

The character of the offering is of prime importance here, for Abraham possessed God’s righteousness, and

had no need of a sin-, or a trespass-, or even a present-approach. Being justified by faith, there was no necessity for one of these. He had access into the divine presence, so required no approach gift. The only one he could offer was an *ascent* approach. It is remarkable, and most significant, that the ascent approach comes before us in Genesis only when Noah (who also was a just man) brings it after the deluge, and in this passage, when Abraham offers Isaac and the ram (Gen.8:20; 22:2,3,6,7,8,13). It *all ascended* to God as an act of pure *worship*, and may be brought only when there is no need for minor sacrifices, or when they have already been offered.

Today, such an ascent approach can be brought only by those believers who know that, in Christ, all the other sacrifices have been offered for them, and there is *nothing* to *hinder* them from worshiping God, not even their shortcomings and failures. These His divine alchemy transmutes into His own righteousness, for He uses them as a foil to reveal the opposite in Himself.

WORSHIP

Abraham's faith assured him that, even though he should offer up Isaac as an ascent approach, his son *must* later be alive to fulfill Yahweh's promises concerning the seed, seeing that "In Isaac shall your seed be called." "He reckoned that God is able to rouse him from among the dead, also, whence he recovers him in a parable . . ." (Heb.11: 18-19). This is evident from his words to the two lads who were left behind: "We will worship and return to you." (5). Usually, Abraham is represented as terribly distressed, his heart sorrowing in anticipation of the loss of his son, and shuddering at the thought of shedding little "Laughter's" blood. But that is not the reaction of faith. That is the fruit of unbelief. No, he seems to have given no sign of unbelief-

ing trepidation, because he had the assurance that, whatever he did, Isaac must live to fulfill God's promise.

ELOHIM WILL SEE

They went together, Isaac carrying the load of wood, while his father had the fire and the knife. Isaac evidently realized that they were about to offer a sacrifice, so was perplexed as to the victim, for that prime essential seemed to have been forgotten. Very diffidently, he asks permission to speak. When his father assents, he points out that they have the wood and the fire for an ascent approach, but no flocking. His father's reply was such as no one without perfect confidence in the Subjector could have expressed: "*Elohim will see for Himself . . .*" (8). He knew that this must be so, but how it would be done he could not say, and he did not venture to express a conjecture. It was doubly fulfilled, once at the time, by a divinely provided ram, but not fully till the death and resurrection of the great Antitype, God's beloved Son, our Saviour.

The usual reading, "God will provide himself a lamb" is not warranted by the text. Isaac did not *see* any sacrifice. Abraham did not say that Elohim will *provide* one (Isaac), but that He is seeing, or will see, this apparent lack, and implies that they must leave that to Him. He saw the ram (and He saw the Lamb), but they could not.

It is hard to imagine how Abraham could help being perturbed while making the actual preparations; building the altar, arranging the wood, trussing LAUGH-causer, stretching out his hand, taking the knife, and—but he is not allowed to raise it, for a voice calls out his name repeatedly: "Abraham! Abraham!" Thus, at the last instant, the Subjector, having attained His object, reverses His previous command: "You *must not* stretch out your hand on the lad, and you *must not* do aught to him . . ."

FEARING GOD

Even in this day of transcendent grace, we are exhorted to carry our salvation into effect with *fear* and *trembling* (Phil.2:12). So long as we are in our mortal flesh we cannot help having a holy awe in view of the fact that, apart from faith in Christ, and reliance on God's grace, we are not able to do a single thing or speak one word, with absolute confidence that it measures up to the divine ideal, and is perfectly acceptable to our Creator and Subjector. To do that which we ourselves would doubly dread to do, in fact would not dare to do, at the divine behest, must have a powerful motive. No *man* could have persuaded Abraham to sacrifice his son. Only the fear of Elohim could cause him to commit such a murderous deed as this.

GOD PROVIDES

As Abraham had told Isaac, Elohim saw the need of the sacrificial victim, but it was not a flockling, as Isaac proposed. There were different grades of ascent offerings, which correspond to the faith of the offerer. The highest was taken from the herd, the second from the flock, the third from the flyer. Elohim's opinion of Abraham's faith, and the value He put upon His offering is shown by the *ram* which He Himself had foreseen. This was the highest, for it closely foreshadowed the supreme sacrifice of His Own Son on Golgotha (Lev.1:2,10,14).

EVIL

This transaction has a close bearing on the so-called problem of evil. Was it good or evil for Elohim to charge Abraham to do this? Was it not an evil merely to truss up his son and then act as if he were about to murder him? But this was only a typical preview of that future scene in this very vicinity, in which Elohim's own Son was not

merely trussed up, but cruelly crucified, not only menaced with a knife, but pierced with a lance head, and not simply threatened with death, but actually forsaken by His Father and left to die. This, the greatest evil ever committed, was due to the deliberate decision of Elohim, so that it could actually be rehearsed here long before it took place. Yet, out of this, the greatest of all evils, will come the greatest and grandest good.

THE ANTITYPE

Such a memorable place as the scene of Isaac's sacrifice deserved a name, so Abraham calls it *Yahweh-irae* (Yahweh-is-See-er) which implies, not that He merely *observed* Abraham's offering of Isaac, but that He saw the ram which Abraham saw and sacrificed later, and He also "saw" the future Antitype, His only begotten Son, which was to be seen later in this mount. This led to the proverb "In the mount of Yahweh it will be seen." (Gen.22:14). It can hardly be interpreted as Yahweh *sees*, or *is seen*, or *appears*. He was not Himself present, but sent a messenger. Even the following promise, perhaps the most memorable and magnificent that Abraham received, was relayed to him through a mediating messenger. In the great Antitype, Christ Jesus, He already saw the sufficient Sacrifice, fore-ordained before the eons, ample for all.

At Beersheba (WELL-SATISFY, or -oath) Abraham had sworn *by* Elohim. Now, however, that *Yahweh swears to* Abraham, *by* whom can He swear? Men swear by a Greater, but there is no greater one than He, to swear by, so He swears by Himself (Heb.6:13). No assurance can be more certain than that. And no list of Abrahamic blessings can be greater than that incorporated in this oath. Being based on faith, it includes all who believe, not only his physical seed on the earth, but also Abram's innumerable celestial star-seed as well.

THE STAR SEED

Abram was assured of a seed as numerous as the stars on two occasions. After the conquest of the kings and the blessing of Melchizedek, and after the refusal to take any of the goods of Sodom, when Abram feared that he would have no heir, then he is told of a numberless star seed (Gen.15:5). Then it was that he was justified by *faith*. Later, once again, after the severest test of his *faith*, in the offering of his son, the promise is renewed (Gen.22:17). It seems clear from this that the star seed is connected with his *faith*, and consists of that great and glorious company who *believe* God during the eons, as Abram had done, not merely those of His physical progeny, many of whom did not believe. As was most fitting, this promise was renewed to Isaac, when he was about to go down to Egypt (Gen.26:4).

THE SAND SEED

On this occasion Abraham is also assured of a sea shore seed (Gen.22:17,18). This is most appropriate, for it was not a question of the *faith* of *Isaac*, but of his *physical* life. No doubt he did believe, and may belong to the star seed. Yet it is as sand seed that Israel will rule over their enemies in the kingdom. But it is principally as believers that they will *bless all the nations* (Gen.22:18) in the day of Yahweh. Later this promise is repeated to Jacob, when he feared the wrath of Esau, as he was returning to the land, as he recalls this promise (Gen.32:12).

CELESTIAL

The secret of a celestial seed (1 Cor.15:51) was not made known to Abraham. The soil of the land and the sand of the sea may suggest their presence on the earth. Abraham's name is brought in nearly twenty times when justification by faith is taught and enforced in Paul's preparatory epis-

ties. This grand theme is illustrated in the fourth chapter of Romans by seven references to the patriarch (1,2,3,9, 12,13,16). To sum up, we are told that the *righteousness* which was *reckoned* to him will be *reckoned* to us also, who are *believing* on Him Who rouses Jesus, our Lord, from among the dead. But nothing is said of any further blessing, beyond this, among the celestials. It is only after the celestial calling is revealed by Paul, that we see the aptness of this illustration when referring to the saints in this secret administration.

In Galatians we may see the same truth, when in conflict with the flesh. Circumcision *signified* the *cutting off* of the flesh. They were trying to make it the *completion* of the flesh (3:6,7,9). Here, again, the blessing is confined to the *justification* of *believers* of the nations. This is the blessing of Abraham which comes to the nations by faith. The law, which came later, and the present celestial blessings do not subtract or add to the justification by faith that we have in common with Abraham (14,16,18,22,29).

THE GATE OF ENEMIES

Israel according to the flesh, the soil and sand seed, did not always tenant the gateway of its enemies (Gen.22:17). This picturesque phrase is based upon the fact that the elders, the rulers of a city, sat in the gateway. They held court there and ruled the city from its entrance. Literally, *faithful* Israel is to govern its foes, and thus be at peace. The reason they have not always done so is that this promise is limited to those who had inherited Abram's faith as well as his flesh. In the days of David and Solomon, who had this faith, this was the case. And it will be so in the future when Israel, as a nation, will accept its Messiah. Even today we can see the plight of the Jews in unbelief. Even though they are the sand seed, they are threatened

by their enemies because they refuse to put their faith in the Messiah Yahweh has given them.

Beersheba (*Bar-shbo* WELL-oath) was the southernmost city of consequence in the land of Israel. Indeed, “from Dan to Beersheba” is the common phrase for the whole length of the land (1 Sam.3:20). It lies in the center of the Negeb, or south rim, on the regular road through central southern Palestine to Egypt. It remained the headquarters of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, until the latter went to Egypt. Now it seems to be once more within the boundaries of the nation of promise. Dan is also inside the northern boundary, so they may speak of having the land from Dan *around* to *Beersheba*, though much of that lying between, including ancient Jerusalem, is in the hands of their bitter enemies.

DEATH OF SARAH

Sarah, like Abraham, must have been rejuvenated when she bore Isaac, for she was beyond the normal age for child-bearing. So she lived on to the age of a hundred and twenty-seven years. It seems that Abraham no longer lived in Beersheba, but somewhat northeast of it at Arba (*Arbo* FOUR), sometimes called Kirjath (*Kirth* CALL, town) of Arba, or Arba-town. It is here identified with Hebron (*Chbr-un* JOINED), in the foothills that lead up along the road to Jerusalem. It was in the land of Canaan (*Knon* SUBMITter), given to the grandson of Noah (Gen.9:25). The inhabitants were descended from Heth (*Chth* Dismay) whose name seems to indicate that they were daring and defiant men, who would be difficult to deal with.

ABRAHAM BUYS A TOMB

Abraham calls himself a *sojourner* and a *settler*, not a “stranger,” as the AV has it. The word sojourn comes from STIR, to move about. But he was not continually moving

either, and seems to have remained in some locations for a long time. This would give him the right to ask for a tomb, for he could hardly carry a corpse with him. But he wanted a *permanent possession* for a tomb, so he asks for a *holding*. Land tenure in the Scriptures is of various kinds. The principal methods were *tenancy* and *holding*. Israel as a nation never acquired, or bought, or owned, or held, or possessed, the land, for it *belongs* to Yahweh Elohim, and they were only *tenants* at His pleasure, and were evicted when they did not serve Him, and will never be safe as long as they refuse their Messiah.

A tomb should not be a transient abode. It should last until the resurrection. Abraham did not get a temporary tenancy, but *acquired* (23:17) a *holding* (23:4,9) and weighed out four hundred shekels (250 ounces') of silver (15), which *confirmed* it (17) as his. It included the field of Ephron (*Ophr un SOIL-er*), in which is the doublet cave which is adjoining Mamre (*Mmra CHANGE or Bitterness*) with all the trees in its boundary by acquisition, before the eyes of the sons of Heth to all entering the gates of the city. Is there any other transaction of this kind in the Scriptures in which such extraordinary emphasis is laid on its permanence? What a contrast to the rest of the land, which had been promised to him, of which he did not own enough to place one of his feet? And several hundred years had to elapse before his seed could take over its tenancy.

In conclusion, may we look beyond the picture presented by Abraham and Isaac, to the *inaugurator and Perfecter* of faith Who, for the joy lying before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God (Heb.12:2). Isaac was only a type, a dim shadow of the One Whose faith led Him to descend from the highest heights of glory to the deepest depths of shame, and has called us to share the fruits of His faith with Him, by blessing us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials (Eph.1:3).

A. E. Knoch

EDITORIAL

THE MOTTO of this magazine is "For God and His Word," and in accord with this A. E. Knoch writes that "The end and aim of all things is the revelation of God" (p.109). Taking up the astounding passage of Ephesians 2:1-10, our brother expounds on the glories and transcendent riches of grace of the joint allotment for the members of the body of Christ.

So also, James Coram writes of the word of "the deity of God, His sole subjectorship" and of the making known of this truth (p.113). "If we would do well to emphasize and keep before us the truth of our security in Christ or the ultimate salvation of all, why should we not be similarly edified by a constant awareness that all things are of God, especially in light of the ever present practical importance of this revelation?" (p.116).

Much of the last two articles center on Romans 3:21-26. However, there are differences in detail between them especially regarding the faith in view in verses 25 and 26. Brother Knoch writes from the CV as he had "compiled" it (just as he does of course in his first article), and I write from it as presently rendered in my revision which is given on page 134 (the revision of Ephesians 2:1-10 is also given on page 99). The whole matter revolves around the question: Whose faith is in view in its five uses in Romans 3:21-28? And this applies also to Ephesians 2:8 (as well as further passages in Romans, Galatians and other places). It was A. E. Knoch who introduced this matter of Christ's faith in the pages of this magazine (see its development

as traced in volume 107, pages 49-63 along with later testimony of others throughout this second quarter issue of 2016). Yet he did not extend the thought much beyond those passages where our Lord is specifically referred to as the subject of faith. Yet now that further evidence such as that of the Septuagint translation of Habakkuk 2:3,4 indicating a Messianic interpretation of that prophecy and a reexamination of the grammar and the contextual development of Paul's thought, it seems apparent that often when "the faith" or even "faith" by itself appears it refers to Christ's faith.

This is so important that the words "the faith" in Romans 3:25 are rendered as "His faith" in the CVNT and a lightface "His" is inserted in the translation of Ephesians 2:8 (see my article entitled "Whose faith?" in volume 112, pages 111-118, *Unsearchable Riches*, second quarter, 2021).

This of course calls for adjustment not only in translation but in many of our explanations of the relevant passages. The CV has always made it clear that "faith of Jesus Christ" in Romans 3:22 refers to *His* faith, and should not be rendered "faith *in* Jesus Christ" as done by many modern English versions.

So also we ought to read Romans 3:25 as speaking of Christ's faith and the suffering of His soul (which is in the blood).

Accordingly, whenever I hear or read the words "justification by faith" I mentally insert reference to Christ, whether as God's Son, or Jesus, or the Lord, or combination of designations to Him, thus: "justification by [Jesus Christ's] faith." In certain cases I suggest in footnotes, how I would adjust Brother Knoch's wordings, while leaving his own wording intact in the article itself. In doing this it is my hope that we may be growing in appreciation of God's evangel.

D.H.H.

SEATED AMONG THE CELESTIALS

"And you, being dead to your offenses and sins, in which once you walked, in accord with the eon of this world, in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness (among whom *we* also all behaved ourselves once in the lusts of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the comprehension, and were, in our nature, children of indignation, even as the rest), yet God, being rich in mercy *because of His vast love with which He loves us* (we also being dead to the offenses and the lusts), vivifies us together in Christ (in grace you are ones having been saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials in Christ Jesus, that in the oncoming eons He should display the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For in grace are you ones having been saved through His faith, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not out of works, lest anyone should boast. For His achievement are we, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should walk in them."

(Eph.2:1-10)

THE exaltation of Christ is God's most notable exhibition of power (Eph.1:19-23). Let us remember that we are reminded of it in order to give us an intimation and an example of God's power on behalf of those who believe. If the Head of the body is exalted, then the members must be likewise. *The power that raised Him has raised His members also.* It is to this aspect of the present grace that we now address ourselves. As in the first chapter of this epistle, there are two classes here, *you*, the Uncircumcision, and *we*, the Circumcision, both of whom believe

Paul's message and, because of the utmost grace which it displays, are united by its reception.

The long and involved sentence (Eph.2:1-7) which presents this truth has been a trial to translators. They usually insert *hath he quickened* (AV), or *did he make alive* (RV). This is quite correct, yet a true rendering of the rest of the sentence requires the repetition of these words in the fifth verse. It is better to leave it as it is in the Original. The connective also is confused. It is simply the dative case, not *in* your (AV) or *through* your (RV) trespasses and sins, but *to* your offenses and sins. Both *in* and *through* suggest a period when each individual actually sins, whereas the passage deals with two classes in relation to sin in the abstract, whenever committed. As a matter of fact we were dead *to* the sins in the death of Christ, but not dead *in* or *through* them until after our birth.

It is true that Vaticanus has added the preposition *in* when dealing with the Circumcision, making them "dead *in* the offenses and the lusts" (Eph.2:5). As this reading is not well supported, and may easily have been added after the truth had been lost, we have decided that it also should read "to." The *in* should be omitted. It is not an individual death recurring each time a sinner receives the evangel, but a figure embracing all who are in the body of Christ. It took place concurrently with the fact of Christ's death and His vivification and rest at God's right hand. Death is a figure of oblivion. We were oblivious to our sins when Christ died and was roused and vivified and seated in the heavens.

To get the controlling thought of the passage, let us leave out the secondary clauses. "And you . . . *we* also [3] . . . God [4] . . . vivifies us together in Christ [5] . . . and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials [6] . . ." It is, in fact, an expanded statement of the second item of the mystery—the joint body—and, by the repetition of the Greek *sun* (*together* or *joint*), enlarges on the fact that Jew

and Gentile are united in death and vivification, and are seated together in Christ among the celestials.

In connection with the joint allotment, we were chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world to be holy and flawless in His sight (Eph. 1:4). Our saintliness was ours in God's purpose long before we had sinned. So it is with this grace also. When Christ died, we died with Him. When He was roused and vivified, we were in Him, and we ascended and sat down among the celestials in Christ Jesus. Let us not blur this marvelous truth by imagining that all this occurs for each individual after becoming dead *through* sin, or *in* trespasses. Death is oblivion. We were dead *to* everything before we were born. All these high honors were ours before we could make or mar them. They are absolutely independent of our conduct.

JEW AND GENTILE JOINED IN DEATH

"The love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died" (2 Cor. 5:14). It is impossible to view the death of Christ aright without coming to the conclusion that the One Who bore its bitterness was not receiving His own deserts, but suffered on behalf of others. In its effects, His death was not only for them, but was their death in relation to sin and to offense. In this reckoning there can be no discrimination between Jew and Gentile, for death allows of no degrees. This is the sad yet solid basis on which our equality with the Circumcision rests. A dead Jew is no better than a dead Gentile! His advantages disappear in death, yet all the more in His death, which ought to have repealed every promise or benefit ever conferred on the Circumcision.

Death is the great equalizer. The death of Christ, involving the death of all others, is the one plane on which the Circumcision can claim no preëminence. Yet it is not death in the absolute sense which is in view. It is death

relative to sin, to offenses, to lust. These things, if allowed a place, would debar us from all blessing. It is marvelous to escape the consequences by faith¹ in the blood of Christ. But it is ineffably more precious to realize that God thought of us before we were sinners and bestowed all these rich benefits and high honors upon us long before we proved our utter unworthiness of them by our life. The power, the wisdom, and the grace thus revealed are calculated to draw out *our most heartfelt love and ardent adoration*.

Once more the common version obscures this precious truth in verse 2 by translating *pote*, as *in time past*, and *periepatêsate*, the indefinite *walk*, by the past *walked*. The Revisers corrected the first, but not the second. Dating from the death here spoken of, our walk was future, rather than past. With reference to the present it is past. So it is well expressed in the aorist, which we indicate by prefixing a horizontal bar to the verb form "walked," since "once walk" may seem odd in English. The only possible way to express the *truth* is to render it "in which once you -walked."

A slight inaccuracy in translation has robbed us of the grand truth of our death *to* sin in His death. It has substituted the popular but erroneous "dead *in* trespasses and sins" and applied it indiscriminately to all sinners, who are not in view in this connection at all.

We are now called upon to consider the conduct of those who form the body of Christ, before they believe. In keeping with the theme, the walk of the Gentile is treated separately from that of the Jew. The nations are under the influence of the world and the evil spirit of the air; the Jew was influenced by the flesh and the comprehension. The possession of the divine oracles seems to have separated them from the world and shielded them from the spirit

1. In context Paul speaks of Jesus Christ's faith as in v.22 as expressed in His blood, (see p.138) D.H.H.

operating in the Gentiles, yet they were just as stubborn and equally subject to the divine indignation. Their great advantages increased their responsibility rather than lessened their offense.

THE EON OF THIS WORLD

The present is a wicked eon (Gal.1:4) because it coincides, in time, with a world, or *kosmos*, or system of things which is opposed to God and devoted to the deification of man. Both the eon and the world began after the deluge, and will end with the change in the constitution of earthly affairs brought about by the advent of the Son of Mankind. The two terms, eon and world, are not interchangeable, but they synchronize. The time occupied by each world is its eon, and corresponds in character with the *kosmos* with which it is associated. The point is that the members of Christ's body were all born at a time when the world was estranged from God, and they became a part of it and were in harmony with it. They were, by nature, introduced into the sphere which deserves, and will yet receive, the divine indignation. This is in contrast to God's previous purpose for them in Christ.

There is a sense in which this charge was not true of the Jew, for he moved in a modified "world," or order of things, in which God was at least superficially recognized. Instead, the charge against him is that he conducted himself in line with the flesh (Eph.2:3). The Gentile was surrounded on all sides by that which made him an enemy of God; the Jew found the enmity in himself. Consequently, he also was "by nature," a child of indignation. The difference between the two is one of externals. The system into which the Jew was introduced by birth was largely divine, and had his flesh responded to it, he would not have entered into the same condemnation as the nations.

Let us avoid the false deduction that there is something

radically wrong with human "nature" or instinct. If that were the charge, it certainly would be just as true of the Gentile as of the Jew. The phrase "by nature" in this passage merely limits the thought to natural processes, apart from the operation of grace. Human instinct, or "nature," is not corrupt. It is still arranged against sin (Rom.1:26). By the correctness of their instinct it is actually possible for the Uncircumcision to exceed the Circumcision in fulfilling the law's demands (Rom.2:27). It is a law written on their hearts (Rom.2:14). Scripture knows nothing of an "old nature" or "new nature." Our natures do not make us children of wrath. The Jews were such, not because of their instinct, or nature, but by the natural process of birth and upbringing.

Let us not imagine that the nations are left to themselves. They, like the Jews, are under the influence of unseen spiritual powers. God made Himself known to Israel, and gave His Word to guide them. Their lack was mental. They did not understand Him. Their darkness was in themselves. The nations are also led, and pursue a path chosen for them by a higher power. Since Eve hearkened to the serpent, until the dragon is chained in the abyss for a thousand years, the real sovereign of the earth is the chief of the aerial jurisdiction, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness (Eph.2:2); his is the hand that reaches "through darkness, molding men." He who first estranged mankind from God has arrayed it against its Maker ever since; he is the great deceiver of the nations. One of the chief blessings of the thousand years is the withdrawal of his deceptive influence over humanity (Rev.20:3).

The hateful history of mankind may be summarized, in a sense, by that strange statement, "Satan entered into Judas" (Luke 22:3). After that he became the medium of the Adversary and betrayed his Lord. So it is with the nations. They are unconsciously the puppets in the hands

of unseen spirit powers, which are urging them on to oppose or counterfeit all that is of God and of His Christ. Latterly they have even succeeded in enlisting the nominal church in the schemes for human betterment and aggrandizement, which God plans to perform only through His Christ in the coming eon. Mankind is stubbornly against God and His Word, not because of a defective or sinful "nature," but because of the superior spirit forces which control its actions.

Sometimes there is actual "possession" or obsession by demons. These extreme cases serve to show what is true of all in a more moderate degree. The victim does not follow his own bent or volition, but is forced to act as the demon dictates. In ancient times the nations seem to have had a clearer consciousness of this, for they worshiped and served the demons, as the arbiters of their destiny. The apostle warned the Corinthians that "that which the nations are sacrificing, they are sacrificing to demons and not to God" (1 Cor.10:20). With this agrees the psalmist, "They also sacrifice their sons and their daughters to demons" (Psa.106:37).

Our Lord connects the demons with the dominion of Satan (Matt.12:26). They are probably under his jurisdiction. There is no hint that they are heavenly beings, for they seem always associated with the earth. Their ascendancy and possession of humanity will cease when the Kingdom of God is established on the earth. When the sixth bowl is emptied, demon spirits are sent out to mobilize the kings of the whole inhabited earth for the battle of the great day of God Almighty (Rev.16:13,14). As a result the next bowl is poured out on the *air*, and great Babylon is overthrown, to become the dwelling place of demons and a jail of every unclean spirit. Thus the air is cleared of the unclean spirits which have mobilized mankind against God from the beginning (Rev.18:2).

The various divinities of ancient and modern times are too often dismissed as mere figments of a vivid imagination. Yet Paul assures us that there are many gods, though, for us, there is only One. The spirits of the air are real beings, into whose charge Satan has put the details of human affairs. God's messengers will not accept divine worship (Rev.22:9), but these demons crave the worship of their dupes. They can perform real miracles, as is evident from the power of Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses. We are distinctly told that they will do so in the future, to induce earth's kings to mobilize at Armageddon. To most of mankind the supernatural is a synonym for the divine. Hitherto these spirits have been accorded the worship of the greater part of the race. The goal to be gained is to bring all to the worship of the dragon, their chief.

The fact that the Jews as well as the Gentiles are children of indignation is fully sustained and exemplified by the fearful judgments in the book of Revelation. The few who are faithful are shielded from God's wrath, but the apostates of the chosen nation are overtaken by judgments more terrible than those which visit God's displeasure on the nations. Thus, once again, we have the Circumcision leveled with the Uncircumcision. They are both sunk in sin. God's purpose operated on their behalf when they were dead *to* these sins. Salvation is not an afterthought with God. He plans to save, and uses sin to make it possible. We were dead *to* sin before we became dead *in* it or *through* it. This is Godlike and grand. It is a fitting foundation for the gracious structure which is built upon it.

In tremendous contrast to the conduct of the members of His body is the career of Christ Himself. He came into this sinful eon, but was not carried along by its current. He met the chief of the aerial jurisdiction, who appealed to His flesh, but failed to swerve Him from His fealty to God. Far more than this, on Golgotha He was made sin in

order that we may become God's righteousness in Him. He brought God, as it were, under such heavy obligations, He has enriched Him with such a vast store of glorious wealth, that God is engaged to recompense Him for His work. His deserts are high, yet not higher than His rich reward.

God rouses Him from the dead. He gives Him immortality. He seats Him at His right hand among the heavenly hosts. *Glorious to relate, the Jew or Gentile whose faith lays him low with Him in death—both were roused and vivified and seated together with Him. This is the fullest expression of God's rich mercy, the supreme revelation of His vast love!* (Eph.2:4-6).

It is not merely together with Christ, however. It is the believing Gentile together, conjointly, with the believing Jew. The mother of Zebedee's children could form no greater wish than that her two sons might sit one on His right, the other on His left, in His Kingdom. He could not promise that. But suppose this, the highest earthly honor, were given to a gentile cur! How excessive were such grace! Even as the heavens are higher than the earth, so also is His heavenly throne exalted above His earthly sovereignty. And this, the loftiest place in all the universe, is reserved for an election out of the nations as well as a remnant out of Israel! Surely they will have the honor of His right, and we shall revel in a place subordinate at His left! Not so! We are peers in these celestial dignities! We are not merely members of His body. We are *fellow* members. It is a *joint* body. This is the secret! This is the truth that God concealed from previous generations! *As members of the joint body of Christ, the believers among the nations are of equal rank with those out of Israel who are chosen for this high honor.*

Leveled in the dust of death, the physical differences which divided us have passed away. This exaltation is an

exclusively spiritual grace. The flesh has no place in it at all. We are not members of "the body of Jesus." He has a glorious physical frame. He has flesh and bones as real as our own. But we are in Him only in His official role, as God's Anointed, Christ, the Messiah. We are members of the joint body of Christ. We cannot claim kinship to Him, like Israel. We are joined by the one spirit, which is our common life.

Let us note that the secret here revealed is not "Christ Mystical," by which is meant the figurative body of Christ. That had been made known years before to the Corinthians (1 Cor.12) and to the Romans (Rom.12:5). These earlier uses of the figure of a body were by no means intended to bring out the heavenly equality of the nations. The figure was confined to the spiritual relations of individual saints to one another in their behavior down here on earth. That body is not a joint body. Christ is not seen as its Head. This is the same figure—a human body—but it is now applied to the relationship of the two great classes, Jew and Gentile, and makes Christ the Head. The same Christ, the same apostle, the same saints, the same body, but the relationship of each is rearranged to reveal the secret hitherto unknown.

SAVED IN GRACE AND FOR GRACE

The parenthetic ejaculation of the apostle, "in grace are you saved!" is one of those high pinnacles of faith that few ascend. Our translators, in rendering it "*by* grace," have not reached any higher than that elevated peak in the Roman epistle. Were it in the text, we would gladly expatiate on the marvels of such a salvation. "Therefore it is out of faith, that it may accord with grace" (Rom.4:16) deserves a sermon by itself. But we must not allow it to rob us of this far greater grace, which is much more in keeping with the transcendent nature of the context. Literally, we read that

it is *to grace*. Salvation *by* grace is past. Salvation *in* grace is our present and future position. There are glories awaiting us which are ours as freely and gratuitously as the gift of life when we believed.²

There are many who wish to work for salvation. They cannot have it on such terms. Many who have it by grace, through faith,³ imagine that all further blessing must be earned by their own efforts. There will be a reward for faithful service, but this could never include the supernal glories which are in store for us. These are the common lot of all who are members of His body, not because of their attainment, but because God's love gives it to them before they had any deserts, either good or bad, and apart from their faithfulness or service.

It will help us to realize the gracious character of God's dealings with us if we forget ourselves for the moment and consider one of His motives in this lavish outpouring of His favor. The end and aim of all things is the revelation of God. In order to display His attributes He first allows mankind to discover its weakness and folly and hate in the past and present eons. Then He intervenes, and in the coming eon He discloses His power and wisdom and love in His mercy to Israel and to the nations. The fruitful earth, with curse restrained, will teem with plenty. What an exhibition to show what He can do! Yet in that day, and in the still more glorious eon when a new creation reveals His heart in far fuller measure, what will be His most prized gem of grace? Will He point us to these scenes to learn the power of His love? Not so. He points us not to them. *He points them to us!*

2. *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 31, pages 141-142, deals with the grammatical evidence for our rendering "in grace" in Ephesians 2:5,8.

3. Whatever the measure of grace, it is surely based on *Christ's* faith. D.H.H.

FAITH FINDS FAVOR

The oncoming eons will be freighted with blessing, yet they will look to us to learn the transcendent riches of His grace. Such a redundant wealth of favor is not an outgrowth of the grace that has saved us. It does not spring from our efforts. It is not a reward for our faithfulness. It is naught of ours. It is God's oblation, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting (Eph.2:9).

It is precious to ponder the goings of grace. Full of comfort is the fact that righteousness flows from faith,⁴ apart from works. Moreover, where sin abounds, grace superexceeds. Grace reigns! For us there is no condemnation. Being justified, we shall be saved from future indignation. Whether watching or drowsy, we shall live together with Christ when He comes. All these footprints of grace are good—far better than we know. Yet they are only the symptoms and beginnings of the amazing grace which the future shall unfold. All of these leave us naught to boast of. And so shall be the future favor. It is God's oblation. He alone will be able to boast.

The use of the word *dōron*, *oblation*, commonly confused with a simple gift, is a most exquisite and appropriate touch of the Divine Author. It is a special gift offered to win another's favor. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew *corban* (Mark 7:11). This is the approach offering, or oblation, of Leviticus 1:2. It was not concerned with sin, but was intended as a present with which those who approached the Divine Majesty sought His favor. This is the term applied to the gifts of the wise men (Matt.2:11). Is it not astounding to discover that, far from God's favor depending on *our* oblations, He has turned the tables, and makes that very favor *His* oblation by which He wins our regard! This, we submit, is grace beyond our fathoming.

4. Once again faith refers to Christ's faith, for our faith. D.H.H.

HIS ACHIEVEMENT

To everyone who knows a little of the plague of his own heart, and has a hint of the impotence of his own hands, there is intense satisfaction and exultation in the contemplation of ourselves as *His* achievement. We do not feel worthy of taking His name upon ourselves, and consider our own efforts at self-improvement so far from our ideal that the less attention drawn to us the better. But this is not our permanent condition! It is the best preparation for that future day when God Himself will be proud to own us as His handiwork, the highest specimens of His skill.

We have been created for good works, which God makes ready beforehand in order that we should be walking in them (Eph.2:10). Our desire to render acceptable service shall be gratified. It may not be fulfilled on earth, for this is not the normal sphere of our activities. What good deeds are these for which we have been created? What employ will be ours as the glory-laden eons roll their bounty to the feet of God? How strange that we, who look to spend the eons with our Lord, should have so little knowledge of our future work! All we need to know is what is *His* employ. If we learn this, then we have the knowledge that we seek. So intimately are we one with Christ that His official duties are ours as well. An unselfish interest in His work and exaltation is enough to stir our hearts to study this. But when we see that He is not alone in all He does, that we share in His activities, how much the more should we search the future glories that are His!

This is the alchemy that transforms the dull and heavy page of prophecy into a program of intense delight, a bulletin of future bliss. More blessed is the blesser than the blessed. So, if we read of blessing that is not for us, we share the happier portion of the blesser. Not only is the future fully known to God, but every detail has been pre-

pared and arranged by Him to fulfill the purpose of the eons. Our every step is chosen for us as for a child who follows in his father's footsteps across a muddy street. We do not need to scheme and plan to improve the condition of mankind. Our Head has done all this in His own inimitable way, and He, unlike poor creatures such as we, can carry out His plan. He will not waste His efforts now, but do it in its proper time, through the instruments He has chosen and fitted for the task.

We do not need to scheme and plan our own work for Him, as though we were "workers *together* with God," as the common version mistranslates. We are not fellow workmen by any means. He is our Master. We work *for* Him. He lays out the task we are to do. Our wisdom lies in conforming to His plan, in seeking light from Him at every step, in order to achieve the consummation of His purpose. Let us exult that He has prepared our good works for us and created us in Christ Jesus so that we are competent to perform them.

Thus closes the divine discussion of the second item of the secret. Jews and Gentiles had already been closely associated by Paul's evangel. They were members of the body of Christ. But now that Israel as a nation is temporarily repudiated, all blessing is based on spirit and transferred to celestial realms. This relieves the Circumcision believers of their preëminence, based on flesh, and puts all the members of the body on the same plane of transcendent grace. There is no figure in nature to illustrate this. The members of the human body are variously esteemed. Some are far more honorable than others. So a new figure must be invented to adequately set forth this most glorious grace. It is called a *joint body*, in which each member is equally and preëminently exalted, in order to display the transcendent riches of God's grace.

A. E. Knoch

HERALD THE WORD!

THERE ARE TIMES when the Word is held back rather than heralded. For example, some believers who hold to the teaching of the ultimate salvation of all feel that even though the teaching of the deity of God, His sole subjectorship, is true, its being made known will be more of a hindrance than a help to those to whom it is proclaimed. Although this teaching is considered important, they tend to set it aside. And even when it is considered in some measure, they may not speak of it with the openness and depth which other teachings enjoy.

It should not be assumed that there is never a place for such an approach, especially when we consider the dangers attending human pride when antagonized. Moreover, the power of tradition is great, and if we would contend against it, we must do so carefully and wisely. Indeed many of us, to our shame, have sometimes been imprudent and ungracious in sharing the Word of God with others. Yet though the importance of the manner in which we present truth must not be minimized, it should not be an excuse for not making the truth known.

Our motive for so doing is very important as well: Do we seek to glorify God and build up our brethren in the faith, or do we seek to exalt ourselves while being unmindful of the feelings of others? This is not to suggest that reserve is to be our constant companion. But there is a time for everything.

An extensive printed exposition such as the present

work, which is prepared for the purpose of teaching and of encouragement in faithful service, can hardly have the advantages which are afforded private words among friends. So we commit it, as well as ourselves and all our brethren, to God, "and to the word of His grace which is able to edify" (Acts 20:32).

Things good in themselves, and very helpful to some, may not be helpful at present to those who are not yet ready for such "solid food" (1 Cor.3:2). "Now solid nourishment is for the mature, who, because of habit, have faculties exercised for discriminating between the ideal and the evil" (Heb.5:14). The ideal is to be "pursuing that which makes for peace and that which is for the edification of one another" (Rom.14:19). It is not that we are to be seeking peace at the price of truth, but that peace is to be our desire and active pursuit, for it is essential to the welfare of all. Still, there is a time, as Paul found with the immature Corinthians, when it becomes needful to present vital revelations in a plain way, even at the risk of offense.

Some have said it is inadvisable to make various teachings known to young people, certainly including this one, as if it were somehow better for them to be instructed in error, or at least left to its influences. Surely this is a mistaken approach, for all scripture is beneficial (2 Tim. 3:16), and the sacred writings are founded upon and filled with this teaching.

We seek to give no one cause to stumble in anything, even if we should fail in this at times. Besides, we can only serve others well, or at all, where God opens a door, an "operative" one (*cf* 1 Cor.16:9; *cp* Col.4:3). This is all we wish to do, having no taste for iconoclasm, or desire to disturb anyone. Yet it is important for us all to remember, "He who is not with Me is against me, and he who is not gathering with Me is scattering" (Matt.12:30).

THE STRUGGLE

Wherever truth of such great importance is opposed or neglected, in God's wise counsels there always seems to be a struggle involved in making it known. And there is always a danger, due to the pressure of having been critically perceived as doing so, that in our own weakness we will indeed be driven to the point of overemphasis or of becoming reactionary, or at least somehow become less than edifying in our presentations. Yet if this should occur, it would be more helpful if criticism—constructive criticism and support—could come from those who freely teach the truth. We trust that where God gives us grace to present this truth in wisdom, in a good spirit and with patience, there will be little danger of actual overemphasis. Indeed, boldness is needed, and, so is loving-kindness.

By practicing protracted reserve and employing ambiguity of expression out of loving concern and a fear of offending certain ones, we fail to provide the instruction which is vital to the growth of those whom God may graciously enable through instruction to think sensibly and fairly, and receive the clear declarations of Scripture. Boldness is not without draw-backs, yet it has a great many advantages. These thoughts are not presented as a criticism of any approach, but as observations taught through experience.

It is a very difficult task to herald and teach the word concerning these matters. "And for this, who is competent?" (*cp* 2 Cor.2:16). May God be adapting us to do His will, "doing in us what is well pleasing in His sight," that we may be offering divine service to Him (*cf* Heb.12:28; 13:21).

Let us not assume that some teachings are just "too dangerous" to be helpful. There is not a major revelation of Scripture which some have not appraised thus. Though it has often proved dangerous for truth to be placed in the hands of foolish men, in itself it is error, not truth, that is dangerous. Indeed, if men will wreak such havoc from

the possession of truth, what will they do when entrusted with error?

If we would do well to emphasize and keep before us the truth of our security in Christ or the ultimate salvation of all, why should we not be similarly edified by a constant awareness that all things are of God, especially in light of the ever present practical importance of this revelation?

If indeed we do live our lives by these principles, we also need to make this known to others in order to set an example and to help them do the same. In order for the heart to be touched, the mind must be instructed. Otherwise, we can do no more than "put on a fair face in the flesh" (*cf* Gal.6:12).

THE PHARISEES AND THE GALATIANS

This is the very point of the Lord's figure, "whitewashed sepulchers," concerning the hypocritical Pharisees: Outside, indeed, they are "appearing beautiful," yet inside they are crammed with the bones of the dead and all uncleanness. "Thus you, also, outside, indeed are *appearing to men* to be just, yet inside you are distended with hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matt.23:27,28). Paul told the Galatians, "So foolish are you? Undertaking in spirit, are you now being completed in flesh?" (Gal.3:3). The Lord's order of things is, "*Cleanse first the inside* of the cup and the plate, that their outside also may be becoming clean!" (Matt.23:26).

Those whose arrogance is apparent do not even have a fair face, and do not even appear to men to be just. It is those who seem modest who are found commendable. Pride and self-righteousness, however, are not at all confined to those who are offensive and constant in talking about their own virtues and generally obnoxious about it, but include as well all who appear humble in manner but who nonetheless fail to *believe* that all good character, especially their own, is *solely* due to the grace of God, with-

out any help from man. The self-righteous are those who "have confidence *in themselves* that they are just" (Luke 18:9). For this reason, though they may well go through the motions of thanking God for their virtues, practically speaking and to no small degree, they pray these things toward themselves (Luke 18:11).

They boast of "letting" the Lord work in them, and insist on having a "part" in it all, especially in the formation of personal uprightness. When all that God will do for them is finished, their salvation remains unfinished, awaiting their help to turn defeat into victory. Many are, so to speak, glad to travel "the sea and the dry land to make one proselyte" (*cp* Matt.23:15), zealously proclaiming, "*Christ is the answer*" while singing of "victory in *Jesus*," but do they actually believe it?

The truth is, nearly all believe that it is not Christ at all, but some type of human cooperativeness that is the final solution to weaknesses of the flesh. Similarly, stripped of outward forms and nominal claims, victory is actually seen to consist not in the all-sufficient grace which is in Christ Jesus, but in the independent power that is said to inhere in the human will.

Such an approach is the essence of popular Christianity, ancient and modern. In fact, these are the Pharisees and Galatians of today. They may be friends of the Lord, but they are "enemies of *the cross* of Christ" (Phil.3:18). They are opposed to the *sufficiency* of Christ's sacrifice in effecting salvation, and are antagonistic toward the glorious *consequences* which it alone ensures. For they boast of what *they* have done to be saved from wrath, or at least of what *they* must contribute if they would avoid an unworthy walk. "Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in *the cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal.6:14). May it not be, through this present exposition, as with the Galatians toward Paul, that I "have become your enemy by being true to you" (*cf* Gal.4:16).

The Galatians had been "bewitched" (Gal.3:1), they were "under a spell" and in "the trap of the Adversary, having been caught alive by him, for that one's will" (2 Tim. 2:26). They had been transferred from the evangel of *grace* which Paul had first taught them, to a very different message (Gal.1:6), one in which the flesh had a vital place, that of "finishing up" what Christ had left undone.

Yet they were *persuaded* of this false message anyway, instead of the truth (Gal.5:7,8). Their only accord was with these deceptions. As to the evangel, "they [knew] nothing but to do evil" (*cp* Ecc.5:1). However well-intended and innocent in appearance it may be, evil includes—whether in word or in deed— all that is destructive, all that is the opposite of good. Therefore, Paul avers, "if ever we also, or a messenger out of heaven, should be bringing an evangel to you beside that which we bring to you, let him be anathema!" (Gal.1:8).

Paul had no illusions that, of themselves, the Galatians would respond to his entreaties. Instead, his prayer was that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ would be with their spirit, enlightening them anew (Gal.6:18). God "manifests His word in its own eras *by heralding*" (Titus 1:3; *cp* 1 Tim.2:6). And our hope is always, May this be the day, and our message the way.

Eventually *all* in the province of Asia turned from the apostle Paul (2 Tim.1:15). By today's foolish standards of success, the apostle to the nations would be an abject failure. "Howbeit, the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: The Lord knew those who are His, and, Let everyone who is naming the name of the Lord withdraw from injustice" (2 Tim.2:19). Injustice is not confined to external deeds, but includes what we believe and what we say as well. It is important, then, for us to be "sober, grave, sane, *sound in the faith*, in love, in endurance" (Titus 2:2).

SUFFERING EVIL WITH THE EVANGEL

If we would fully follow the apostle Paul, we will need to follow him not only in his "teaching, but in his "motive, purpose, faith, patience, love, [and] endurance." We will also find ourselves identifying with him in his "persecutions [and] sufferings, . . . persecutions such as I undergo, and *out of them all the Lord rescues me*" (2 Tim.3:10,11).

"The Lord is near" (Phil.4:5b), but we need to realize this and be aware of it. Let us not look to ourselves, but instead make our requests known to God concerning our need for this important realization and awareness. For we know and are certain that He *shall* be *filling* our *every* need, in accord with His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Phil.4:19). But concerning any particular need, we cannot say whether it will be met next week or in the next eon. We would have Him fill our needs whenever His own wisdom and purpose dictates, not every time our foolishness wishes to beg for an immediate deliverance from suffering.

Paul was afflicted in everything, perplexed and persecuted, yet he was not distressed, despairing or forsaken (2 Cor.4:8,9). This was so, for the Lord was with Him: "Yet the Lord stood beside me, and He invigorates me, that through me the heralding may be fully discharged, and all the nations should hear; and I am rescued out of the mouth of the lion" (2 Tim.4:17). In spirit, by faith, we are aware that the Lord is with us as well, standing beside us in the work which He gives us to do. We find that He indeed invigorates us, and that we accomplish all that He intends, if not all that we desire.

It is *His* work, not ours (*He* is our Saviour, in grace are you saved!), to make His Word live in us, and to open our hearts to heed what is spoken by Paul. It is much better to wait upon Him and to trust in the ability of the word of His grace, "in its own eras," than continually to con-

ceive of ourselves as the key to success, and then fancy that *we* have achieved it simply because many of our acts may be upright.

It simply will not do to point to all the good that is *present* in men's behavior and then give credit to the flesh for the existence thereof. What an insult this is to God! No human virtue is due to ourselves, but is a resultant phenomenon produced by *the spirit of God* which effects good characteristics to some degree in the lives of all.

Galatians 5:19-23 contrasts what man in his present state is able to do of himself ("the works of the flesh"), with what the imperceptible power of God is able to produce in him ("the fruit of the spirit"). The figure "the flesh" points to our own inherent *weakness*. The figure "the spirit" (*pneuma*, BLOW-effect, "blast" or "wind") points to God's great *power*.

Just look at the shameful sins of the flesh and consider what *we* can do! The works of the flesh are adultery, prostitution, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, enchantment, enmities, strife, jealousies, furies, factions, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkennesses, revelries, and the like of these. If we did have a "part" in it all—if we *had* been called upon to assist in our own salvation—the works of the flesh would be our only offering.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

So let us turn away from a consideration of man's depravities to gaze upon the glory of those marvels which God alone can create even in such ones as ourselves. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, and self-control.

Here we see the practical value of heralding the Word. It is an exercise that dwells on the glory of God and His achievement. Joy and peace especially are the fruit of confidence in the Deity, and of assurance that He is doing all

things well. The conviction that His love is fully triumphant is a genuine source for the walk of love. That all is of God leads to genuine meekness, and that all is for good to kindness, goodness and faithfulness. The assurance that God is in full control is the proper and only effectual motivation for self-control.

There is a world of difference between fleshly discipline and spiritual self-control. True self-control, in the scriptural sense, is a thing of purity, for it is a fruit of the spirit. Unless good deeds are performed under the influence of God's love or because of the assurance of His deity, they are actually works of the flesh. Inner motive must be distinguished from outward result. Even if many of his deeds are disciplined, "he who is sowing *for* his own flesh, from the flesh shall be reaping corruption" (Gal.6:8a). External morality is often the product of sinful motives. Stronger lusts of the flesh merely restrain weaker ones when the latter fail to serve the purpose of the former.

The apostle presents these striking contrasts between the flesh and the spirit for the consideration of the Galatians. They were under the delusion that they themselves were capable of "completing" if God would only "begin": "So foolish are you? Undertaking in spirit, are you now being completed in flesh?" (Gal.3:3).

The contrast is *not* between, as popularly imagined, the deeds of "Christians" and "non-Christians," but between that which *proceeds from* the old humanity in itself and that which God is able to *produce in* such ones nonetheless—whether they be believers or unbelievers.

Though it is humiliating to the flesh, if we are to do what is pleasing to God, God must see to it that we do so. He not only does not need our help, but He will not have our help. He will bless us as He intends and when He intends, not otherwise or before.

"The Lord *will* be rescuing me from every wicked work

and *will* be saving me for His celestial kingdom" (2 Tim. 4:18a). Salvation and glory and power is of our God (Rev. 19:1b). This is the word which we herald; it has even become the testimony of our conscience (*cp* 2 Cor. 1:12). Our God is great, and greatly to be praised, "to Whom be the glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!" (2 Tim. 4:18b).

James R. Coram

THE VALUE OF CHRIST'S BLOOD

WHO will place an estimate on the value of the sufferings of Christ? Who will dare to limit the preciousness of His outpoured blood? Justice may indeed demand the loss occasioned by sin, but the sternest righteousness cannot complain when it overpays the "price" with such rich redundancy that it not only fends against all future failure, but adds an infinite superabundance of richest grace and glory to those who are beneath its shelter. It does not return us to Adamic innocence, but brings us God's own righteousness, beyond the reach of condemnation, and leads us into fullest harmony with the heart of God. No mere equivalent could do this.

A. E. Knoch

A CONTEMPLATION

ONCE one contemplates the absolute miracle
of just being in existence,
THAT every day granted to us
is an outright miracle,
THAT after this life we have an eternity
of perfect life, perfect joy and perfect love,
NOTHING, and I mean absolutely nothing
in life is too difficult.

Tony Nungesser

FORBEAR—JUSTIFY—PROPITIATE

NOAH IS A JUST MAN. Noah finds grace in the eyes of Yahweh Elohim. With the Subjector *walks* Noah (Gen. 6:8,9). These lines concerning the ancestor of all who live in this eon are startling statements which give us a very different introduction to this eon than was true of Adam, in the previous one. It is too radical a change, and too far-reaching to be grasped from the simple statements, so we will enlarge on it by casting a glance over this and the next eon, and considering the subjects of *justification by grace* and the walk connected with it. As a contrast to these we will consider God's *forbearance*, and *propitiation*, which also have a large place in these periods, as well as their relation to *evil*. But justification by grace will be the controlling theme, for this is not only connected with Noah, but is also our own peculiar portion in the present parenthesis between Yahweh's dealing with the nation of Israel.

God's relationship to His people during the two central eons may be summarized by the words, *forbear—(justify)—propitiate*. Under the law covenants, He displayed His *forbearance* in passing over the penalties of sins through the sacrifice of animals, in the *past*. In the *future* He will be *propitious* to His people, and not remember their sins in the Kingdom, because of the sacrifice of Christ. But at *present*, under grace, *He is just* when He *justifies* us apart from law, through the deliverance in Christ Jesus. To fully grasp these important parts of God's plan, let us look at them from His side, and consider all three and their differences, so that we may be able to adore and worship Him

for *His* justification, and its importation to us now, and to all at the consummation.

The differences between forbearance, propitiation and justification are seldom understood today because His people are far more concerned with their own salvation than with God's glory. They think of little beside their own welfare. In fact, the weak and confused ideas of "atone-ment," or "forgiveness" or "pardon," etc., and the fearful mixture of these in the popular versions, has made it practically impossible for them to fully enjoy the greatness of the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus, as expressed in the terms *justification* and *reconciliation*. As justification is usually confused with propitiation, it may help to contrast these two, and discover their proper places in God's plan.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In John's first epistle we read of the position of the Circumcision saints in verse nine: "if we should be avowing our sins, He is faithful and just that He may be pardoning us our sins. . . ." This seems to be the position taken by many serious saints today. But the question arises, how can we possibly know all our mistakes? For example, those who appeal to this text today, do they realize that this act itself is a serious error? Moreover, it may make us self-centered, concerned with our own failings, instead of exulting in the transcendent truths that God has justified us through what *Christ has done*, and freed us from our sins *and* from ourselves.

VERSION VARIETIES: PROPITIATION

Four forms of the stem *-il-* are translated in so many different ways in the later Scriptures that it is less than useless to study the subject by means of the popular versions. But it may be helpful to give their translations just to show how confusing they are. The first rendering below is that

of the AV, and the second is the Revised Standard. The last is the Concordant Version.

- Matt. 16:22 *Far be it from thee. God forbid.* Propitious be it.
 Luke 18:13 *merciful. merciful.* make a propitiatory shelter.
 Rom. 3:25 *propitiation. expiation.* propitiatory shelter.
 Heb. 8:12 *merciful. merciful.* be propitious.
 Heb. 9: 5 *mercyseat. mercy seat.* propitiatory shelter.
 1 John 2: 2 *propitiation. expiation.* propitiatory shelter.
 1 John 4:10 *propitiation. expiation.* propitiatory shelter.

In three cases the AV had it correct, but the RSV has actually perverted, rather than revised it!

SHELTER

Shelter is the thought which underlies the word *propitiation*, while *vindication* may be the nearest synonym for *justification*. The basic idea of *shelter* was almost entirely ignored or expunged from the Hebrew stem *kphr*, from which springs the word *propitiation*, by translating it *pitch, atone, forgive, merciful, pardon, purge, put off, reconcile, cleanse, disannul*, and *ransom*. However it can still be dimly discerned in such terms as *appease, pacify, village* and *bribe*. The word's background is impending danger or disaster. A *village*, for instance, is a cluster of habitations which *shelter* the inhabitants from the elements. Only when *not* used of the sacrifices the renderings are usually nearer the truth, as *appease, pacify, satisfaction*, etc. Thus the translators themselves have shown us the impropriety of rendering it "atonement" at any time.

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT

This may have been dimly seen by some who have tried to explain its force by its derivation, at-one-ment. But this meaning is now obsolete. The dictionary defines it as:

"The saving or redeeming work of Christ wrought by His obedience, personal sufferings, and death. Prior to Anselm (*d.* 1109) Christ

was thought to have paid a ransom to the Devil by His sufferings and thus wrought the deliverance of those who believed in Him. But since that day the leading theories are:

a. The Anselmian, or the vicarious, or substitutional atonement. This is the generally accepted orthodox view, and is held by Roman Catholic and by Calvinistic theologians. According to this, the righteousness of Christ was accepted by the Divine Father as a substitute for the righteousness of mankind lost through the fall, and the suffering and death of Christ were accepted as an equivalent of the punishment justly incurred by mankind; men being consequently released from punishment, on condition of their acceptance through faith of Christ's sacrifice.

b. Governmental atonement, a theory originated by Grotius (*d.* 1645) the Dutch statesman, but common among New England theologians, that violated law must be followed by punishment, for the deterrent effect on the community as in the penalties inflicted by human society, and that Christ's death as a spectacle to the universe serves this purpose of warning, and obviates the necessity of the punishment of man.

c. Moral atonement, set forth by Maurice (*d.* 1872) and Robertson (*d.* 1853) in England, and Bushnell (*d.* 1876) in America. Christ, it is held, reveals by His holy life and love-inspired suffering, the nature of God, and so wins man to repentance and the pursuit of holiness, which is the only satisfaction God requires."

We do not usually give so much space to human theories, but, in this case, we hope to show how contradictory and confused Christendom is on this simple subject, and what a false impression it produces in respect to God's righteousness and grace and love. The great and glorious truth that all is out of God and is designed to glorify Him and reveal His love is nearly eclipsed by all the theories of the atonement, even in the orthodox Bible schools today. We hope our readers will rid their minds and hearts of these false theories, so that they may be able to grasp and enjoy the rich truths which replace them.

SUBSTITUTION

A favorite method of "explaining" the "atonement" is

by calling Christ a "Substitute" for those who believe on Him. He "took their place" and "suffered in their room and stead." The writer preached this as the gospel to unbelievers for a while, as he had been taught. But when he failed to find the word "substitute" in the Bible, and began to consider closely what this involved, he had to stop. If Christ had suffered in the place of those to whom He preached, then it would be the most flagrant injustice if they were not saved. As comparatively few believed, the theory of substitution was false, because it was unjust. Christ suffered and died *for* us, not *instead* of us.

The idea that past sins can be "atoned for" by future good conduct is absolutely unscriptural and irrational. Even human adjudication does not recognize it. If a man steals a thousand dollars, he cannot atone for it by stealing no more. The use of this expression in theology is most unfortunate, and has led to much obscurity in understanding God's dealings with humanity. It bolsters up the idea that salvation is due to human efforts rather than the sacrifice of Christ.

One reason, and probably the principal one, why so few really grasp the full import of justification, is the prevailing view that God's attempt to salvage mankind is a huge failure. Only a small percentage will be saved, and the vast majority will suffer everlasting punishment. If that were true, then God is *not* just Himself, and how can He justify others?

SHELTERED FROM THE FLOOD

We are given several instructive pictures of the shelter afforded by propitiation in the Hebrew Scriptures. The earliest and simplest occurrence refers to the sheltering coat which was put on Noah's ark to keep it from leaking and sinking in the deluge. It is usually rendered *pitch*, although there is nothing in the original to indicate what

material was used. That is quite immaterial. Here we are given the basic idea of falsely called "atonement," really propitiation, in tangible form. Noah's ark, although intended to *preserve* him and all soul life through the flood, was in dire danger, for it might become waterlogged and sink with all on board. The ark represents Christ. With the sheltering coat it *includes His propitiatory sacrifice*. This shelters from *impending judgment*.

JACOB PROPITIATES ESAU

Jacob had robbed his brother Esau of his birthright and his blessing, so Esau was only waiting for the death of his father, Isaac, when he would kill his brother. So their mother sent Jacob away to Padan, in Syria, in order to be out of Esau's reach. Now, however, Jacob was returning to the land, and was about to meet his brother again. He knew that he was in danger of his life, so he sent a series of presents to Esau, "for, said he, a propitiatory *shelter* will I make before his face with the present offering which is going before me, and afterward I will see his face" (Gen. 32:20). Here we have a good illustration of the meaning of our word in the ordinary dealings between men. Jacob wished to turn Esau's anger away from him, and so shelter himself from the danger of his brother's wrath.

The whole narrative shows plainly that Jacob is not making any "atonement" for his own previous sins, but rather preparing for amicable relations with Esau in the future, especially in stopping Esau from killing him. The dictionary says that atonement is *satisfaction* or *amends* for a *previous* injury. But this was not at all Jacob's intention, for he retained both the birthright and the blessing. Later on, when he met Esau, he explained that all the presents were intended to *find grace* in the eyes of Esau in the *future*. This is the great difference between "atonement," and propitiation, which shows that all talk about "the atonement"

is beside the mark. It gives a fatally false impression. No wonder there is so much disagreement as to its meaning!

SHELTERED FROM THE LAW

Another picture is given us in connection with the *law* of Sinai. The law, when observed, should bring blessing, but, if not kept, it is a very dangerous thing, for it transformed sin into transgression, and this draws down the wrath of the Lawgiver. Israel broke the law before it really reached them, so Moses broke the tablets before they could call down a curse upon the people. When he descended with the second set, what could he do to *shelter* the people from the curse which it denounced on all law-breakers? He put them in the coffer of the covenant and put a *sheltering* lid over it, and called it the *propitiatory shelter* (AV, mercy-seat), and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on it. This kept it from killing all who came near.

TEMPORARY PROPITIATION IN THE PAST

Propitiation, in the past, under the law, before the sacrifice of Christ, was a temporary affair, repeated daily (Ex. 29:36), or year by year, as in connection with the so-called "day of atonement" (Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16). It was deadly dangerous for Israel to have a holy Subjector dwelling in their midst, Who would judge the least infringement of His holy law. Even the priests, the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, were devoured by fire when they used the wrong fire to burn their incense (Lev. 10:1-3). To shelter the sons of Israel from such catastrophes, Aaron was told to make a propitiation, to last for a year, for the priests and the people. Aaron had to confess the failures and transgressions of the sons of Israel, and put them on the head of a live goat, which took them away into the wilderness for a year. So was Yahweh, the Subjector of Israel, temporarily propitiated. There was no "atonement" for past sins.

As the sheltering sacrifices were intended to be an object lesson, which would hardly be comprehended from a single occurrence, they had to be repeated in each generation, and every year, and every day, so that the truth they taught might be impressed on the hearts of the holy nation. These were at once the token and the reason why they could dwell so near to Yahweh Elohim without being consumed by His presence. And the fact that these offerings were continually made to shelter them from *prospective* sins, should have impressed them with His *protective* provision and care, as well as their own ingrained sinfulness.

EONIAN PROPITIATION

It was only before the sacrifice of Christ that propitiation had a very limited scope in time. The animal sacrifices had no permanent value, so had to be repeated again and again. They were only temporary shadows of a future Sacrifice whose value was unlimited in every way. The sufferings and death of Christ provides *beforehand* for all future sin and offense. It will never need to be repeated. So it comes that, in Israel, in the kingdom eon, God is *propitious* to their injustices, and is not reminded of their sins and lawlessness (Heb.8:12). This is the fulfillment of the types and shadows of the past.

PROPITIATION IN THE PAST

Propitiation is limited to Yahweh's earthly people, although justification will eventually include all (Rom.5:18). This is clear, not only from the fact that it is used almost exclusively in the Circumcision writings, but is clinched by its single occurrence in Paul's epistles. In Romans 3:24,25 we read: "Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory Shelter, through faith in His blood,¹ for

1. see footnote p.102.

a display of His righteousness because of the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God) . . . ”

Here we have propitiation located in the *past*, in contrast to the present, as well as a definition and description of it at that time, before Christ Jesus, *the Antitype of all the sacrifices*, had offered Himself. It was a *passing over of the penalties of sins . . . in the forbearance of God*. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and of he-goats to be *eliminating sins* (Heb.10:4), so they were merely *passed over*, not in view of God's righteousness, but in His *forbearance*. The penalties still stood against them. They were not eliminated until later by the Great Sacrifice. Such was the propitiatory shelter provided by the sacrifices in Israel in the past. Because the Great Sacrifice has since been offered, propitiation will mean much more in the future.

The first reference to propitiation in the Greek Scriptures is very striking when we know the meaning of the term. It deals with the first occasion on which Jesus speaks of Himself as the true Propitiatory Shelter, and shows how little it was understood even by the most spiritual of the disciples. “Thenceforth begins Jesus to show His disciples that He must be coming away into Jerusalem and to be suffering much from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and the third day to be roused. And, taking Him to him, Peter begins to rebuke Him, saying, ‘*Propitious* be it to Thee, Lord! By no means shall this be for Thee!’ Now He, being turned, said to Peter, ‘Go away behind Me, Satan! A snare are you to Me, for you are not disposed to that which is of God, but to that which is of men’” (Matt.16:21-23).

The AV translates, “*Far be it from Thee,*” and so covers up the meaning of the passage. The RSV says “God forbid!” which is worse. The whole point of the passage lies in the fact that Jesus could not have a propitiatory shelter

for *Himself*, because *He* was to be it for *others*. Besides, there was no need for God to be propitious to Him, for He neither sinned nor had sin in Him, so no one, not even God, could be propitious to Him. Peter was asking for the same thing that Satan wanted, that is, to enter the kingdom apart from the cross. Therefore Peter fully deserved to be called an adversary. Jesus was just beginning to tell them the opposite, that is, that the opposition of the people was about to lead up to *His propitiatory sacrifice*, so that He *must* suffer, not for Himself, but for their sakes.

THE TRIBUTE COLLECTOR

Tax collectors, even in our day, are in an unenviable position. But a tribute collector who takes the tax for a foreign power, is in a far worse fix, for who wants to pay for their own oppression? It was even worse, under the Roman government of that day, for the tax collectors had to add their own wages to it. The worst was when a *Jew* demeaned himself by sinking to this low level. The self-righteous Pharisee, in the parable in Luke (18:9-14), considered one of them as the lowest in the scale of sinners. The tribute collector agreed with this estimate of himself, evidently, for he kept his distance. With down-cast eyes, he beat his chest, saying, "God, make a *propitiatory shelter* for me, the sinner!" Such is the power of propitiation, however, that our Lord considered *him* righteous, rather than the self-righteous Pharisee who thought that he needed no shelter.

PROPITIATION FOR THE WORLD

In the book of Hebrews we are told of the new covenant with Israel, that under it, He will be propitious to their injustices. The apostle John, however, widens the scope of blessing, so that it flows through Israel to the whole world. So will it be in regard to propitiation also. Speak-

ing first of Israel, he says, "And He is the propitiatory shelter concerned with our sins, yet not concerned with ours only, but concerned with the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

A. E. Knoch

CHRIST'S BLOOD

"Through His blood" indicates that a sacrifice has been made. The blood is associated with the soul, and we remember the passage in Isaiah 53:12. "He gives up His soul unto death." Peace is to be made with all creation "through the blood of His cross" (Col. 1:20). This has reference to the *manner* of Christ's death, and indicates the intensity of the suffering which He underwent in order to fulfill God's purpose. So extreme was the suffering that Christ Himself, always obedient to His Father's will, at one point prayed that, if it were possible, the cup might pass from Him. The chief component in that suffering was undoubtedly the temporary, yet complete, alienation between God and His Son, indicated by the darkness which hung over the cross for three long hours. Yet there were other factors, too, which would grieve Christ's sensitive spirit, such as the numbering of the sinless Son of God among the malefactors, the mock trial, the gibes of the throng, the crown of thorns and the scourging, and the curse of being hanged upon a tree.

John H. Essex

REPOSING IN EXPECTATION

Our brother in Christ, **Delbert "Del" Cornwell**, age 92, died July 18, 2023. He grew up in the small town of Vernon, South Dakota where he learned how to farm alongside of his father. Farming remained his interest and vocation even after moving with his family to California where he was employed by a college as Poultry Manager. But there also, along with his wife, Kathryn, and especially through the ministry of her uncle, Joseph E. Kirk, he came to rejoice in God's purpose of love and righteousness for the reconciliation of all.

We have recently heard of the death of **Joyce (Davies) Orton** of Bramcote, England, at the age of 103. Fervent in faith she held to the teachings of Paul along with her father, Bernard Davies and husband, Frank Orton, and others who fellowshiped in the Nottingham area.

ROMANS 3:21-28

- 21 Yet now, apart from law,
God's righteousness has been made manifest°
(being attested° by the law and the prophets),
22 yet God's righteousness
through Jesus Christ's faith
 ^{lo}for all
(and on all who are believing it),
for there is no distinction, ²³for all sin and are wanting°
of the glory of God, ²⁴being justified°^o gratuitously in
His grace, through the deliverance, the deliverance which
is in Christ Jesus ²⁵(Whom God purposes° for a Propitia-
tory through His faith,° 'by° means of His blood, ^{lo}for a
display of His righteousness because of the passing over
of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the for-
bearance of God) ²⁶toward the display of His righteous-
ness in the current era,
 ^{lo}for Him to be righteous
and to be justifying the human
 out of Jesus's faith.
²⁷ Where, then, is boasting? It is debarred! Through
what law? Of works? No! But
 through faith's law.
²⁸ For we are reckoning° a human to be 'justified° by faith
apart from works of law.

3:24 being justified°: the process of being righteous-ified is proceeding, having begun, apart from law, through Jesus Christ's faith.

3:25 'His faith: the faith is that of v.22, the faith of Jesus Christ; 'by: in probably has an instrumental sense here as well as in Ro5:9 and Ep2:13, cp through in Ep1:7 and Col1:20.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS MANIFESTED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST'S FAITH FOR ALL

FIRST OF ALL we must recognize that the subject—indeed the critical and glorious subject of Romans 3:21-28 is the manifestation of *God's righteousness*.

Then we need to see that this manifestation of God's righteousness is by means of *Jesus Christ's faith*—not by means of our faith in Him, but by His perfect faith to which He was fully faithful unto the death of the cross.

Furthermore it is essential for our joy and peace that we understand that God's righteousness as it is manifested (and secured) through Jesus Christ's faith is *for all* human beings—not one is left out—not even one.

Connected with these three fundamental facts are three further facts that are no less important and critical, but which stand in relation to the fundamental, evangelical facts of (1) the manifestation of God's righteousness (2) by means of Jesus Christ's faith (3) for the benefit of all human beings and indeed all creation.

These associated facts are that the message Paul is bringing concerning the manifestation of God's righteousness through Jesus Christ's faith for the good of all is (1) apart from law (2) yet attested by the law and the prophets and (3) that it already benefits those who are believing it, not with its full enjoyment of benefits but still in a truly significant and powerful way. This is expressed here by the

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preposition "on" and in Romans 4 by the verb "reckoned," and in 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5 and Ephesians 1:14 by the noun "earnest."

Each of these grand and happy facts may be considered by itself, but as it relates to the others with the manifestation of God's righteousness heading them all. We are presently focusing on *Jesus Christ's faith* which is a condensed way of speaking of gratuitous justification through *the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus* (Rom.3:24), and of saying: "Christ dies for our sins" (1 Cor.15:3), or more fully: "God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that while we are still sinners, Christ dies for our sakes" (Rom.5:8), or even more fully: "Christ Jesus, . . . being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be to be equal with God; nevertheless He empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of human beings, and found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:5-8).

This justification through Jesus Christ's obedience in faith unto death is what makes God's righteousness manifest. And it is for all (*cp* 2 Cor.5:14). But it has a special connection to us who are believing it (*cp* 1 Tim.4:10).

"FOR" AND "ON"

Both Jews and Greeks ("Greeks" referring here to all humans who are not Jews) are all under sin. "Not one is righteous—not even one" (Rom.3:10). Out of works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight (Rom.3:20). Yet now, through Jesus Christ's faith, God's righteousness is made manifest in gratuitous justification, in God's grace (Rom.3:21-24). This is "*for* all . . . for all sin and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:22,23). Justification in God's grace is marked out for all, and therefore all human

beings will, in God's own time, enjoy the justifying of their lives (Rom.5:18). The many (counted now at least in the billions) who are descended from Adam and are constituted sinners shall be constituted righteous (Rom.5:19).

Yet also, concerning those who are believing (to some extent, whether with strong and growing faith, or with the merest flicker of faith, as God measures to them, Rom. 12:3), God has already placed this justification *on* them, reckoning it to them (Rom.4:5).

FIVE REFERENCES TO FAITH

There are five references to faith in Romans 3:21-28. First we hear of "Jesus Christ's faith" (v.22) and later of "Jesus's faith" (v.26). These have dominated our current attention. They speak to us of grace, which is essentially JOY. They take us back to Paul's greetings in which he writes: "Grace to you . . . from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom.1:7). These two references especially point to gratuitous justification in God's *grace* through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24) as the manifestation of God's righteousness.

But in between these references are the words literally rendered "through the³ faith" (Rom.3:25a). This brief prepositional phrase is followed by another, "in His blood," and these together are directed "for [INTO] a display of His [i.e., God's] righteousness" in relation to both "the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before, and toward that display in the current era.

What is "the faith" of Romans 3:25? Most certainly "through the faith" points us back to "through Jesus Christ's faith" in verse 22 and ahead to "out of Jesus's faith" in verse 26.

3. 3:25 ~~the~~: supplied by Codex Vaticanus.

We have already noted how the words "through Jesus Christ" in Romans 2:16b prepare us for "through Jesus Christ's faith" in 3:22 and from this how we are led forward to the "through one righteous response" of 5:18 and the "through the obedience of the One" of 5:19. The words "through the faith" of Romans 3:25 make the same connections.

CHRIST JESUS AS PROPITIATORY

The CV puts Romans 3:25 in parentheses. This is to suggest that Paul's principal concern is the evangel of gratuitous justification in God's grace by means of ("through") the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus which is directed "toward the display of [God's] righteousness in the current era." Yet Paul is also concerned that this display of God's righteousness relates to what occurred "before" as "attested by the law and the prophets" (v.21).

Propitiation by means of the blood of the sacrifices was a temporary shelter from God's indignation. Now Paul points to Christ Jesus as the Antitype of that provision of old. Using a fact verb (which is not concerned with the time of the act, but wholly concentrates on its truth), the apostle tells us that God *purposes* Christ Jesus for a Propitiatory, not as a temporary shelter from indignation, but as a Deliverer from all operations of God's indignation, such as those brought before us in Romans 1:18; 2:5,9; 3:5. This purposed deliverance of God is not carried out by our faith in Christ's blood (as we have understood and thought) but (as indicated in the revised CV on page 134) by means of that faith of verse 22, the faith of Jesus Christ which is vividly brought before us here in terms of His blood.

For ourselves who have the completed word of God (Col.1:25) we may well carry forward the subject of peace by propitiation to the present blessing of the conciliation (Rom.5:1-11; 2 Cor.5:18-21) and then to the ultimate

blessing of the reconciliation of all when peace is made through the *blood* of the cross (Col.1:20). So also the passing over of the penalties of sins which occurred before in the forbearance of God, and which was not righteous in itself, is made righteous by that of which it was a foreshadow, the display of God's righteousness (rather than His forbearance) through Christ's faith, by means of His blood. "The soul of the flesh is in the blood" (Lev.17:11). Thus "blood" refers to the *sensation* of suffering and agony endured by our Lord in His obedience unto death.

THE RIGHTEOUS JUSTIFIER

Romans 3:26 points us back to 3:21-24. God Who is manifest as righteous *is* righteous. This has been made manifest and is put on display through the faith of Him Who empties Himself of His glories and becomes obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that is, Jesus.

Consequently, if there is a display of God's righteousness there must be a righteous justification of irreverent and unrighteous human beings (as we are identified in Romans 1:18). God does this. And He does this righteously. He cannot do this by means of unrighteous human beings, not even by their faith. It can be done only by means of (literally, sourced *out of*) One (*cf* "One" in Rom.5:15, 17,19) Who is Himself righteous. Romans 1:17 identifies that One as "the Righteous One." Romans 3:26 identifies Him as "Jesus." This is the Name of the One Who empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in the likeness of human beings, He Who humbles Himself in obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, *Jesus*, in Whose Name every knee shall bow and Whose Lordship every tongue shall acclaim to the glory of God the Father, Who is thus made manifest and put on display as both righteous and One Who is making all righteous (*cf* Rom.5:19).

It dishonors Jesus, the Righteous One, and it makes

God's righteousness a mystery at best and a mockery at worst, to say that God justifies sinners by means of their faith. He reckons righteousness to those who are graciously granted to be believing with whatever measure of faith God, by His spirit, endows on them, but the basis and source and channel is Jesus Christ's faith.

God appears in Romans 3:26 as both *righteous* and the *Justifier* (the One Who is justifying). Christ appears as *Jesus*, the humbled and obedient and faithful One Who dies. But the human appears only by the definite article "the" in the singular. Who is the (one) of Romans 3:26? It is the individual human being. Adam, Eve, Abel, and also Cain—Peter and also Judas—Paul and each one named in Romans 16—you who read this and I who write it, sinners as we are in flesh, each one of us is the one of this verse. "O human!" (Rom.2:1). "For we are reckoning a *human* to be justified by [Jesus's] faith" (Rom.3:28). God already reckons righteousness to the believer who is believing on Him Who is *justifying the irreverent one* (Rom.4:5), and will constitute all righteous (Rom.5:19), but the achievement of justification is through Jesus Christ's faith alone. "A *human* is not being justified by works of law except through that [law work] of Jesus's faith . . . (Gal.2:16).

Here in Romans 3:26, however, the means of justification is expressed by the preposition "out" rather than "through." Accordingly we read that "God's righteousness is being revealed *out* of [the Righteous One's] faith" (Rom. 1:17 *cp* Gal.3:11; Heb.10:38). And in Galatians 2:16 Paul testifies that those Jews who believe in Christ Jesus are "justified *out* of Christ's faith and not out of works of law" (nor out of their faith). Furthermore the scripture was perceiving before "that God is justifying the nations *out* of faith" (Gal.3:8,9). Indeed, "the scripture locks up all together under sin that the promise *out* of Jesus Christ's faith may be given to those who are believing it" (Gal.3:22).

(This will affect our understanding of Romans 3:30, which calls for consideration in a separate article.)

EXPLANATION

In all this there is much that is different from the usual explanation of Romans 3:21-28. Paul is not speaking of righteousness from God (though righteousness is from Him), but of the righteousness *of* God, that is, God's own righteousness. This is what has been made manifest, or "revealed" (Rom.1:17), or put on "display" (Rom.3:25,26). In that our apostle speaks of the justification ("righteousification") of the sinner (Rom.3:23,24) this evangel is the manifestation of God's righteousness, so that it may be established that God is righteous (Rom.3:26).

What has been obscured is Jesus Christ's faith, so that God's righteousness is obscured. Where Paul speaks of Christ's faith, it has been widely understood to be our faith in Him, both in Bible translations and expositions. Even now when it is proven by some scholars, noted in some translations and felt certain by some believers, the old error dominates in much of our thinking and teaching.

The CVNT translation of Romans 3:21-28 above is not perfect (for no translation is perfect), but by its efforts for consistent renderings in vocabulary and grammar and attempts to keep the context in view where wrong premises and self-centered mindsets are most likely to creep in, it points in the right direction.

It is blessedly true that our faith is in Christ, but that is not what Paul is saying here. God is in first place. The human is in third place, with Jesus Christ as the connecting link, the Mediator in second place. The passage concerns God's righteousness made manifest and put on display by means of Jesus Christ's faith as it relates to the fact that all human beings are sinners. This is *for* our faith

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(Rom.1:17) but not by means of our faith. And this is for all (*cp* 1 Tim.2:3-6).

FAITH'S LAW

"Where, then, is boasting? It is debarred!" (Rom.3:27). But boasting is not debarred if gratuitous justification is achieved by means of our faith in Jesus Christ. It is a most blessed and glorious gift to be believing and to place our faith in Jesus Christ as the One Who dies for our sakes. This brings joy and peace into our present lives and in full measure during the oncoming eons. But if these blessings are based on what we do (and to believe, even in the smallest measure, is to do something) there is room for our boasting in ourselves.

We see, then (since boasting is debarred), verses 27-28 continue the theme of God's righteousness through Jesus Christ's faith for all human beings. Boasting is debarred because of this "law" of Jesus's faith.

The two words, "faith's law," in context, say much the same thing as the two words, "God's law," in Romans 7:25 in their context. There they refer to God's evangel concerning His Son. Paul enslaves his *mind* to "God's law," that is, to God's evangel in contrast to "the law of the God" laid down at Sinai which, for all its righteousness and holiness brings wretchedness into his life because of the different law, "the law of sin" (indeed, "the law of sin and death") which is in his flesh. So now in Romans 3:21-28 we hear the evangel of faith's law. In lieu of saying, "we are believing," Paul says "we are *reckoning*." We are accounting it a fact that a human is justified by Jesus Christ's faith apart from works of law. We are enslaving our minds to this evangel. Believe—reckon—enslaving our minds—these terms are all ways of saying the same thing, each way bringing out its special aspect. Thus Paul takes us back to the "for faith" of Romans 1:17. It is for our faith, for our believ-

ing, for our reckoning, for the enslaving of our minds that justification is out of the Righteous and Humbled One's faith, indeed out of Jesus's faith.

So also Paul is pointing ahead to what he will say in Romans 5:8, that while we are still sinners Christ dies for our sakes. This is faith's law, which is for our faith.

APART FROM WORKS OF LAW

If it is so that God is righteous and that this is made known by means of the faith of Jesus Christ in His obedience unto the death of the cross, then it is this that is apart from works of law. Our faith is neither the cause nor the channel of the revelation that God is righteous and that all He does is justified. That our faith could be the cause and means of such supremely good results is as incomprehensible as it is impossible.

Once again, our faith is a spiritual endowment from God (1 Cor.12:1; 13:13), which He graciously gives to us in measure (Phil.1:29; Rom.12:3) on the basis of what He has done for us (even for all) out of and through the faith of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Consequently we are reading Romans 3:21-28 as we read Romans 5 where Paul speaks of God's love commended in that while we are still sinners Christ dies for our sakes. There also we hear of the One Human through Whom the lives of all human beings are being justified and of the One through Whom the many sinners descended from Adam shall be constituted righteous.

Again we read in chapter 8 of God sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh, which speaks of Him in His humiliation as Jesus, and this is "concerning sin" so that sin in the flesh is condemned. God spares Him not, but gives Him up for us *all*. Even as God's righteousness is manifested through Jesus Christ's faith, so also His love is expressed in Christ Jesus in His death for us, not as a

response to the imperfect and much varied faith of a limited number of human beings. God's evangel is not one thing in Romans 3:21-28 and another thing later on. All our blessings are based on Jesus Christ's faith, which makes it clear that God is righteous. This is for our believing.

A CLOSING NOTE

There are important distinctions that need to be noted, not only between what Paul means when he speaks of Circumcision and Uncircumcision (Rom.3:30, *cp* "Jews and Greeks," Rom.3:10), but here especially the distinction between what is sometimes called *cause* and *occasion*, and between justification in the full and literal sense of *make* righteous and its frequently used sense of *call* righteous.

God's evangel as set before us most directly in Romans 1:16,17; 3:21-28 and 5:1-19 (and ever kept in view throughout his epistles) tells us of the cause of literal justification (being made righteous to the end of vindication) by means of the faith of Jesus Christ, that is, His death of humiliation and suffering, followed by His being roused by God. It reveals what has been done and its results which are assured, but are not yet brought into effect—into full enjoyment. On the other hand, in the meantime, we who are believing this evangel are justified in the sense of *reckoned* by God to be righteous, which is a matter of God "calling what is not being as if it is being" (Rom.4:17), for it is certain to be so. Our believing (that is, our faith) is not the cause (or means) of this reckoning of righteousness, but it is the *occasion* in which what has been achieved through Christ's faith is even now put to our account by God (*cp* Eph.1:13). Hence, in spirit, in the renewing of our mind, in faith and expectation, we are enjoyers of justification and may be enjoying peace toward God (Rom.5:1).

D.H.H.

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 114th Year
(1909–2023)

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EDITORIAL

THE RECOGNITION of God's ways with humanity and the world in which we live is of prime importance for us. God's ways have not always been the same in their details and will not always be as they are now. Yet this one thing is so—that He is working all together for good. This is the conviction of those who are loving God (Rom.8:28).

In this issue of our magazine, the opening article is a reprint of A. E. Knoch's comments on Ephesians 2:11,12. It concerns "The Era Preceding the Present" (pages 147-157). That era was a time of transition in the operations of God, the period covered by the book of Acts.

It was during that era that many spiritual blessings were introduced through the apostleship of Paul alongside of visible and tangible blessings and a priority maintained by Israel in such matters. Paul describes that situation in Ephesians 2:11,12 in terms that seem puzzling to us who never lived in that transitional period. In order for us to appreciate more fully the blessings for believers now in contrast to the situation in the previous era, Brother Knoch states: "We must dismiss from our minds the rich *spiritual* blessings such as justification, conciliation, sonship, which had come to the nations through Paul's ministry. Though they had a spiritual circumcision far more effectual than the fleshly rite, still they remained the 'Uncircumcision.' Though they enjoyed a knowledge of God quite supreme to that possessed by the twelve apostles and their followers, they had no fleshly standing though 'in Christ' *in spirit*, *they were apart from Christ in flesh* (Eph.2:12). They were aliens of political Israel. They were allowed to partake of her covenants as guests only"

But now, having recognized that there were limitations having to do with the position in flesh of the nations as compared to Israel, we bring our minds back to "the rich *spiritual* blessings unfolded in Paul's epistles, even in those written during the previous era. Thus in his article, "The Word of Christ, its Grace and Power" (pages 158-166), James Coram writes "Paul speaks to us from the vantage point of his own evangel which came to him through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal.1:2), which he heralded among the nations (Gal.2:2). He does not even take up the many details of the personal ministry of Jesus, those things associated with the Lord's 'personal entrance' to 'the entire people of Israel' (*cp* Acts 13:24; Matt.15:24)," (page 159).

Similarly John H. Essex traces steps toward our always being "Together with the Lord" (pages 167-186) as revealed through epistles written throughout his ministry: "With the cross comes a change. The flesh is mentally discarded—considered to be dead—crucified together with Him, and, as Paul puts it in his second letter to the Corinthians, 'If anyone is in Christ there is a *new creation*. the primitive passed by. Look! there has come new' (5:17). A new creation! This change is so radical that, from now on, we are to be acquainted with no one according to flesh. 'Yes,' adds the apostle, 'even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer' (1 Cor.5:16,17)" (pages 175,176).

Finally this issue ends with my own comments on Romans 3:21-31 (pages 187-192). Here in an epistle written in the previous era Paul dwells on one of those spiritual blessings. A. E. Knoch advised us to dismiss from our minds in considering Ephesians 2:11,12, that of justification. In this there is no distinction between Circumcision and Uncircumcision (Rom.3:22), for all sin (Rom.3:22), being justified gratuitously in God's grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24).

D.H.H.

THE ERA PRECEDING THE PRESENT

Wherefore, remember that once you, the nations in flesh—who are termed “Uncircumcision” by those termed “Circumcision,” in flesh, made by hands—that you were, in that era, apart from Christ, being alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and guests of the promise covenants, having no expectation, and without God in the world. (Eph.2:11,12)

WE have now considered the two leading aspects of the “mystery,” joint enjoyers of an allotment, and joint members of Christ’s body. In the first (Eph.1:3-14) we discovered our new relationship to God. In the second we considered our relationship to Christ. In both we fare equally with an election out of Israel. It now behooves us to study the third aspect of the mystery. What is our direct relationship to the saints of this and of all other divine administrations? Here is a rich field of truth, almost unexplored, because the key had long been lost (Eph.2:11-22).

The saints among the nations who first received the mystery were the same ones whom Paul had reached in his previous ministry. When the mystery was made known, Paul could not send it to an entirely new company of people, for no such saints existed. He sent it to those who had a part in that transitional economy which preceded the present. Those saints did not form a special body apart from us. They will not be one body of Christ and we another. If so, Paul must be in both! Some of his friends would be likewise embarrassed. Christ would have two figurative bod-

ies! Paul would have two distinct destinies, if, indeed, any definite destiny can be found for the earlier saints, apart from the Ephesian revelation. The mystery was made known to and through those saints who had received the truth taught in Paul's previous epistles. It is most significant that it was not sent to or through the twelve apostles or those to whom they ministered.

First of all we are invited to remember what a low place was accorded the nations during the era preceding the revelation of the mystery (Eph.2:11,12). This is difficult to apprehend unless we give due attention to the stress laid upon the word *flesh*. During Paul's previous ministries he had brought rich *spiritual* blessings to the nations. We will do well to forget them in this connection. The various points God charges us to remember here are *all dependent on physical descent*. The rite of circumcision placed an impassable boundary between Israel and the nations. "Wherefore, remember that once you, the nations, *in flesh*—who are termed 'Uncircumcision' by those being termed 'Circumcision,' *in flesh, made by hands . . .*" Miss this, and we miss all.

We must dismiss from our minds the rich *spiritual* blessings, such as justification, conciliation, sonship, which had come to the nations through Paul's ministry. Though they had a spiritual circumcision far more effectual than the fleshly rite, still they remained the "Uncircumcision." Though they enjoyed a knowledge of God quite superior to that possessed by the twelve apostles and their followers, they had no fleshly standing. Though "*in Christ*" *in spirit*, they were *apart from Christ* in flesh (Eph.2:12). They were aliens of political Israel. They were allowed to partake of her covenants as guests only. They were not "strangers *to*," but guests *of*.

In *spirit* the nations had an expectation, a "blessed hope." At that time it was not very well defined. Their destiny was

obscure, yet gloriously covered by the wondrous words "always together with the Lord" (1 Thess.4:17). But they had no physical heritage in view. "Having no expectation" (Eph.2:12) must be limited to the controlling theme—*in flesh, or physically*. It is not to be applied to the unbeliever, but to the company of saints who had believed Paul's message. They did not become proselytes in order to share in Israel's physical benefits. They remained uncircumcised, and lacked all fleshly claims.

Strange as it may seem, they were without God in the world (Eph.2:12). How very far from true this was in the spiritual sphere we leave each one to imagine. The *spirits* of those who had turned to God from idols (1 Thess.1:9), who reveled in the eighth of Romans, who had the spiritual endowments of Corinthians, were certainly not without God in the world. But that is not the point. In *flesh* they had no God to call their own. Even the unbelieving Israelite could claim Yahweh as his God, and enter His sanctuary to perform his devotions. The believers among the nations had no such privilege.

It would be an easy task for the Ephesians to recollect that in which they themselves had been vitally concerned. They could readily look back to their own experience. Not so with us. We cannot recall such an experience. We have never lived in a different administration such as this, which covered the period dealt with in the latter half of Acts, so long as Paul preached the evangel of God, during his itinerant ministry among the nations. But it is urgent for our understanding of the present grace that we also may compare and contrast the present superlative grace with the favor previously shown to the nations. To do this we shall consider the personal experience of Trophimus, who was given a powerful object lesson on this very theme.

The Scriptures give us three typical men who may illustrate for us the various experiences of the believers among

the nations in the time of transition which preceded the revelation of the mystery. These three men are Trophimus, Tychicus, and Onesimus. Their very names are significant. Trophimus means *Nourished*. Tychicus can probably best be rendered freely by *Fortunate*. Onesimus is *Profitable*. In the personal histories of these three men God has given us a living and moving panorama of the inauguration of the present order of things. Each name, together with every detail recorded of them—where they are, what they do, what befalls them—is full of meaning. The history of these three men forms a picture in miniature of God's dealings in their day. If we associate each with such a knowledge of God and His ways as had been revealed, and rigidly exclude and deny to each things not recorded of them and those revelations which were yet future, we shall enjoy an engaging and instructive picture of the inception of the present secret administration.

Nourished (Trophimus) brings before us the era which we are considering, which came between the Pentecostal and the present administrations—the things we are exhorted to remember. His presence in Jerusalem with Paul is the touchstone which will apprise us of the real nature of that era and the prominent place given to the physical supremacy of Israel. We will return to him presently.

Fortunate (Tychicus), the bearer of this message to the Ephesians, is a true picture of those to whom he was sent. While Nourished is left behind (for lack of nourishment, 2 Tim.4:20), Tychicus is "fortunate" indeed, for he leaves the past era and enters the present. He has had the experience of Nourished, but to him it becomes a mere memory, in the light of the amazing grace which he brought with him from Rome to Ephesus.

Profitable (Onesimus) was like us. He had no personal experience of a previous administration. He was the fruit of Paul's *bonds*. Like the nations of whom he was a represen-

tative, he had, in time past, been *unprofitable*. The nations had not been on terms with God. They could never wipe out the debt they owed Him, or destroy the fact that they were His property. They were His slaves, but they had run away from His service, like Onesimus. How strange that a man *in chains* should catch the runaway and return him to his Master! Yet that is God's way with us. Paul's chains, borne for the sake of the nations, have turned many an unprofitable fugitive into a freeman who is "profitable" indeed (Philemon 10-19).

Trophimus, the Ephesian, was seen in Jerusalem with Paul, on his last visit to the city (Acts 21:29). The Jews supposed that Paul had brought Trophimus into the sanctuary. This was the cause of Paul's imprisonment. It is a most graphic illustration of the truth we are considering. Trophimus was far nearer to God spiritually than anyone in the mob that assaulted Paul. But the mere supposition that he had approached *physically* precipitated a riot. All Jerusalem is in an uproar! The captain of the Roman squadron is hurrying to the scene with centurions and soldiers. As he arrives at the center of the disturbance he finds the mob seeking to kill a man, a Jew, after they had drawn him out of the sanctuary and shut the gates. After he had seized and chained the man, he demanded who he was and what he had done.

Had he been an alien it would have been a clear case of going beyond the "soreg," or "middle wall of partition," the central wall of the enclosure beyond which it was unlawful for a Gentile to go. But this man was evidently a Jew. The crowd was so vociferous in their denunciations that he could not find out what really was the matter, so he ordered him to be brought into the castle. As the Jew is about to enter he obtains leave to speak to the people. As his speech is in Aramaic, the Hebrew dialect used among the Jews, the tumult is hushed and they listen with rapt

attention. At length, however, he speaks one word which breaks the spell. Once more they cry, "Away from the earth with such a one, for it is not befitting for him to be living!" They strip off their clothes, ready to stone him, and throw dust into the air. Paul is taken into the castle and disappears from view (Acts 21:27-22:24).

As the cause of all this disturbance was the report that Paul had brought him into the sacred precincts and had defiled the sanctuary, this occurrence must have powerfully impressed Trophimus. His name and physical environment are but a parable of the truth. Though not a Jew, he is in Jerusalem, "nourished" on Jewish food and in Jewish lodgings. For a time he sojourns there as their *guest* (Eph.2:12). This was the position of the nations. They were partakers of Israel's spiritual blessings (Rom.15:27). Now he is to learn that, in flesh, he is without God in the world. Some Jew from Asia had recognized him with Paul, and had jumped to the conclusion that Paul, having brought the nations near to God spiritually, now intended to bring them close in flesh. Otherwise why bring him there at all? The guess was received with conviction. No evidence was needed. This is how it started. But how did it end? What was that horrid word which broke the spell the apostle cast over the angry mob? It was the hated "goyim," the name for the alien *nations*.

They gladly heard the story of Paul's conversion. They did not object to the fact that Israel had rejected God's mercy. But to hear that God had sent Paul to the other nations—curs, uncircumcised—this was far beyond their endurance. And the man who dared voice such a thought—"Away from the earth with such a one!" Little did these faithful Pentecostalists dream how God would yet use these words to describe His purpose for Paul and the nations. They were, indeed, unfit to live, so reckon themselves crucified with Christ. They have no place on the earth. They are to be

taken away from the earth, not, indeed, in the sense in which these prophets intended, but to take a higher place among the celestials.

How must poor Trophimus have felt at the thoughts these scenes compelled? He was nothing but one of the despised "goyim." As such he knows his place far, far away from the dwelling place of Yahweh. He had sad proof of this today, when the mere rumor, that he had dared to come as near to Him as they had precipitated all this tumult. The great gulf between him and the meanest of the Circumcision was accentuated by his presence in Jerusalem, near the reputed dwelling place of Israel's God. In his journeys with Paul among the nations no such stress had been laid on the rite which he now found made such a difference. True, Paul had circumcised Timothy, but his mother, at least, was a Jewess. Trophimus had no title to the ordinance or to the privileges it conferred.

"Uncircumcision" meant nothing in most countries, for that was the normal state of man. It is only as he came into contact with the Circumcision, and in condescension to them that he must acknowledge that he belonged to a lower caste—the "Uncircumcision." It was not a matter of merit or attainment or character—merely an incident of birth. Above all, it was not the possession of God's grace or a knowledge of Himself. Scores of godly, devoted believers in his native city lived better lives than these circumcised Israelites. But this was of no avail. They came of the wrong stock. The great thing was to reckon the patriarchs among your ancestors. If you are not a physical descendant of Abraham you are not entitled to the rite of circumcision and must keep your distance from God's dwelling place.

APART FROM CHRIST

"Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal

promises" (Rom.15:8). During His ministry He scarcely set foot outside the land of Israel. In the ecclesia of His day there were no *goyim* (nations, or Gentiles). Indeed, when He explains to them how to shun a brother who refuses to hear the ecclesia, He bids them treat him as they did tribute collectors and aliens (Matt.18:17). Traitors and non-Jews were equally excluded and condemned. He came to take hold of the physical seed of Abraham (Heb.2:16).

The Canaanitish woman had to learn this humbling lesson. "Be merciful to me, Lord, Son of David" failed to touch a responsive chord in His gracious heart. His disciples hear, but do they sympathize? Strange sympathy they gave! "Dismiss her," they say. He seems to acquiesce in their harsh demand, for He says, "I was not commissioned except for the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He was the true David Who tended His Father's sheep. But the woman was not of this fold. As Son of David He could not help her. It is only as *Lord* that He is over *all*. So, when she cries "*Lord*, help me!" He seems to relent a little, yet answers, "It is not ideal to be taking the children's bread and to be casting it to the puppies." She received a blessing only by claiming the crumbs which are falling from the table of her lords. She was forced to acknowledge Israel's prior, almost exclusive place. This was the only ground on which blessing was dispensed to uncircumcised aliens. They were slaves of the Lord, but they had not Messiah. They were apart from Christ (Eph.2:12).

GUESTS OF THE PROMISE COVENANTS

Christ is not only the Servant of the Circumcision, but also gives occasion for the other nations to glorify God for His mercy (Rom.15:9) This mercy was dispensed by Him in the character of their Lord, or Master, for *He is Lord of all*. It was on this basis that Peter proposed to baptize Cornelius (Acts 10:36,48). The covenants God made with

His people were not for themselves alone, for their greatest privilege is to be a channel of blessing to the other nations. God promised Abraham that through him, and through his Seed, *all* the families of the ground would be blessed. The normal place of the Gentiles is to be the invited guests of Israel. This was their place during the era preceding the present secret administration.

ALIENS FROM ISRAEL'S CITIZENSHIP

No citizenship on earth can compare with that of Israel. Other nations rise and fall, but it will supersede them all, and confer on its citizens a power and prestige above all others and lasting for the eons. To Israel alone belongs the rule of the earth. Our ancestral tree may be most glorious, and full of famous names, but if it does not lead back to Abraham's grandson, whose name was changed to Israel (Upright-with-God), we lack the one essential to real political eminence on earth. Between the Jew and Gentile must ever be the disparity that exists between the ruler and the ruled, the sovereign and the subject, for such will be the place of aliens in the promised Kingdom on the earth.

NO EXPECTATION

As Gentiles, *in flesh*, we can have no national expectations. Egypt once boasted in world supremacy, and was followed by Assyria and Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, Caesar, raised their realms into the place of preeminence and their citizenship into high esteem. Paul claimed the privileges of a Roman citizen. But all these mighty empires had no future. They have passed away, as will the many which have inherited some of their prominence and pride. The page of prophecy assures us that gentile rule is doomed. Israel alone has any expectation. If we are aliens, in flesh, the best that we can look forward to on *earth* is a place subordinate to them.

By far the most interesting and impressive sight in all Jerusalem was the temple on mount Moriah. "The outward face, in its front, wanted nothing that was likely to excite either admiration or astonishment; for it was all covered over with plates of gold of great weight; and at the rising of the sun reflected a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it turn their eyes away as they would have done at the sun's rays. It appeared at a distance like a great mountain covered with snow, for those parts of it that were not gilt were exceedingly white." Such is the description given by Josephus.

Had we come to the holy city with Paul and Trophimus, our chiefest wish would be to get a close glimpse of the sacred structure. So we enter the gate through the outer wall, into the court of the nations (which was an unwarranted addition to Herod's temple) and admire its cloisters, with polished marble pillars and a cedar roof. Beyond this we tread an open space with polished inlaid stones. As we approach the second court, with its high wall, we see that it is surrounded by a lower wall of elegant construction. Upon it stand pillars, at equal intervals, declaring the law of purity, some in Greek, and some in Roman letters, warning us that further progress is at the peril of our very lives.

One of these inscriptions was recently unearthed. In our **CONCORDANT COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT**, page 290, we have published a tracing of this inscription together with the following translation:

"No alien is to enter within the balustrade and embankment about the sanctuary. Whoever is caught will be responsible for his death, which will ensue." This is the "soreg" which they thought Trophimus had passed with Paul.

True, Trophimus had never transgressed this central wall of the temple enclosure. But what comfort was there in that? If Yahweh, the only true and living God, dwells within those walls, why are we refused access to Him?

Why must we keep our distance? Trophimus, in his Ephesian home, dwelt in the city which was the sexton of the temple of the goddess Artemis, whom the Romans called Diana, whose worship had spread over all the earth (Acts 19:27,35). Perhaps he also had worshiped at her shrine, but now he had turned to God from all idols, to serve the living and true God. And now, at last, he is in the city which kept His temple, and he is denied access by God Himself! Truly, he had no God to call his very own, since, in spirit, he cannot but acknowledge Israel's God, Yahweh.

Such is a true picture of that era, preceding the present, which we are exhorted to remember. The nations who turned to God and His Christ, and received His Spirit, and sent succor to the saints in Jerusalem, had no standing in flesh. They were by no means equal to the Jews who shared the same salvation. Nor is there any indication in the previous Scriptures of any better thing in store for them unless we wait for the far-off day when this earth is dissolved and a new creation takes its place (Rev.21:3). Then, indeed, God will dwell with the nations. Even then they are secondary and subordinate.

THE FATE OF TROPHIMUS

True to the truth, Trophimus (Nourished) found scantier nourishment at Israel's board as time went on. Jerusalem was herself stricken with a famine (Acts 11:27-29). He follows Paul a little way, but is left at Miletus, sick [from lack of nourishment] (2 Tim.4:20). His experience is a fit picture of the waning weakness of the administration which fails with Israel's failure. But Tychicus (Fortunate) follows Paul all the way to Rome (Col.4:7). He received and relayed the truth of this epistle to the saints. Surely he was "Fortunate"! So are we!

THE WORD OF CHRIST, ITS GRACE AND POWER

“LET the word of Christ be making its home in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves; in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to God. And everything, whatsoever you may be doing, in word or in act, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him” (Col.3:16,17).

The word of Christ needs to be making its *home* in us, not merely visiting upon occasion. And it needs to be present in abundance, or “richly,” not in short supply, or “poorly.” How we need to be thinking Christ’s thoughts and to be governed by His motives! “Therefore we also, from the day on which we hear” (Col.1:9a) concerning the realization of “the *grace* of God in truth” (Col.1:6)—whenever we learn that it has been given to any of our fellow believers—we “do not cease praying for you and requesting that you may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col.1:9b).

This is Paul’s prayer for us, for “you to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God; being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, *for all endurance and patience with joy*; at the same time giving thanks to the Father, Who makes you

competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light" (Col.1:10-12).

THE WORD

As a figure of association, Paul uses the expression "*the word of*" in a number of places in reference to various foundational unfoldings of truth entrusted to him by the Lord Jesus Christ. Each of the following seven expressions or passages from Paul's ministry present or make reference to "the word of" (the teaching concerning) a particular consequential theme: "the word of [God's] *grace*" (Acts 20:32); "the word of promise" (Rom.9:9); "the word of *the truth*" (2 Tim.2:15); "the words of *the faith*" (1 Tim.4:6); "the word of *life*" (Phil.2:16); "the word of *the cross*" (1 Cor.1:18); "the word of *the conciliation*" (2 Cor.5:19).¹

Yet here in Colossians 3:16 Paul's expression is "the word of Christ." We are to heed his entreaty concerning it: "Let the word of *Christ* be making its home in you . . ." Just as any consideration of "the word of God's grace" will concern itself with the nature of and various key elements pertinent to grace, all our meditations upon "the word of *Christ*" will be centered upon those most notable things pertaining to Him.

Paul speaks to us from the vantage point of his own evangel, the evangel which came to him through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal.1:12), which he heralded among the nations (Gal.2:2). He does not even take up the many details of the personal ministry of Jesus, those things associated with the Lord's "personal entrance" to "the entire people of Israel" (*cp* Acts 13:24; Matt.15:24). Paul begins his evangel where Matthew, Mark, Luke and John conclude theirs. From beginning to end (*cp* Acts 13:16-48;

1. for a consideration of each of these expressions, *cf* "Herald the Word," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol. LXXVI, pp.89-94.

Phil.2:8-11), Paul's message is the sacrifice of Christ and "the blood of His cross" (Col.1:20).

THE SCANDAL OF THE CROSS

To Paul, "the word" which is "of Christ," is vitally connected with "the word of the cross," the sufferings and shame associated with His death. Yet it centers upon, to borrow a phrase from Peter, "the glories after these" (*cp* 1 Peter 1:11), upon glories which were hidden from the prophets of old of whom Peter writes, glories which are only revealed through the "prophetic scriptures" (Rom. 16:26) of the apostle Paul.

In itself, the word of the *cross* heralds not Christ glorified, but Christ *crucified*. To those not called, it appears to be a very stupid message (1 Cor.1:21). It "is stupidity, indeed, to those who are perishing, *yet* to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor.1:18). It speaks of the terrible suffering, the pain, humiliation, cursedness and abandonment of the cross. It presents a *bloody* Sacrifice—in all its stark ugliness and terror—yet a Sacrifice which is a fragrant odor to God (Eph.5:2).

The "word of Christ" reveals to us, most notably, the *significance* and *consequences* of His sacrifice in achieving God's purpose. Briefly, all is for God and His glory, and is according to His purpose. This entails the highest measure of blessing for His creatures. The entire ecclesia, and eventually all mankind, will one day find their All in God, yet only through Christ. God is working all together for good, but only through, and because of, the cross.

Sadly, many who gladly receive the word of the cross with respect to the terrible event itself and its sacrificial nature on their behalf, nonetheless become "enemies of the cross" (Phil.3:18). For they insist on adding something of their own to its saving power, insisting that Christ's work

alone is insufficient to ensure their salvation. Though a few of them may succeed in doing so modestly, they all boast in their own flesh, in the supposed "part" which they fancy they had in the whole matter. Thus they nullify the "scandal" (*skandalon*, AV "offence") or "*snare of the cross*," its completeness or all-sufficiency for salvation, and so avoid being persecuted for the *cross* of Christ Jesus (*cf* Gal.5:11; 6:12-14).

When God enlightens us, He makes known the word of Christ to us. He reveals the truth to us concerning His own righteousness, the good news concerning gratuitous justification for all through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:21-24). It is this word "of Christ," this gracious message pertaining to Him, which must dwell in us if we would *enjoy* and *experience* its practical benefits.

So, by His grace, we are heeding Paul's entreaty to "be rejoicing *in the Lord*. To be writing the same to you is not indeed irksome for me, *yet it is your security*. Beware of curs; beware of evil workers" (Phil.3:1,2). We are "glorying in Christ Jesus," not in ourselves (not in "that flesh of yours"), for we "have no confidence in flesh" (Phil.3:3; Gal.6:13).

We must *beware* of those who teach differently, who, like wild dogs of the street, voraciously take to themselves all manner of things from Scripture (since they are "in the Bible") which, as employed by them, detract from, if not altogether deny, the work of Christ. Thus many are distracted from a greater appreciation of the word of Christ, and many more are debarred from it altogether.

FAITH IN WHAT GOD HAS SPOKEN

The word of Christ needs to be making its home in us not only richly, but "in all wisdom" (Col.3:16). "Brethren, do not become little children in mindset. But in evil be minors, yet in mindset become mature" (1 Cor.14:20). "Do

not become imprudent, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph.5:17). It is not sufficient simply to read the Scriptures casually, or to repeat many passages from its pages merely by rote. We would become *aware* of the facts which it contains, and acquire an intelligent grasp of what the Scriptures actually say. This itself is a great advance. Even then, however, we would judge each passage as to whom it concerns, when it applies, and in what sense it is true. This calls for competency, and especially for *wisdom*. Wisdom is "the faculty which makes the highest and best application of knowledge" (KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.329). We need to use our minds² and to use them well.

"Faith is out of tidings [what is heard], yet the tidings through a declaration of Christ" (Rom.10:17). "The sword of the spirit . . . is a declaration of God" (Eph.6:17). As Paul says, "In accepting the word heard from us, from God you receive, not the word of human beings, but, according as it truly is, God's word, which is operating also in you who are believing" (1 Thess.2:13).

Our faith, if it is "the faith [which is] of God" (*cp* Mark 11:23a), is found only in what God has spoken, not in man's mistranslations, misapplications, or inferences. We need to be fostered (NOURISHED) in "the words of the faith" (1 Tim.4:6), and to learn to think and express ourselves accordingly.

It can certainly be helpful to be "admonished" (MIND-PLACED) by those who teach us well, but we also need to be admonishing *ourselves*, "in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs singing [whether literally or figuratively], *with grace in our hearts to God*" (Col.3:16). It is at least as important for true grace to be a matter of the heart as it is for it to be a matter of the intellect. The joy and assurance of God's

2. It is interesting to note that the elements of the Greek word for "foolish," *anoëton*, are UN-MINDED.

gracious goodness to us cannot live in mere intellectual correctness. It is vital for us to be *correct* that we might be faithful, but it then becomes vital for us "to know the *love* of Christ as well which is transcending knowledge—that you may be completed for the entire complement of God" (Eph.3:19).

Everything, whatsoever we may be doing, in word or in act, is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with thanksgiving to God, the Father, through Him (Col. 3:17). Anything that cannot be done in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not to be done at all. This entreaty reminds us of Paul's words, in Romans 12:1,2, to present our bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God. This is our logical divine service. We are not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, for us to be testing what is the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect.

If it was foolish for Israel of old to say, "All that Yahweh speaks we shall do" (Ex.19:8a), it is beyond foolishness for us to make a similar response when reading these words of Paul's. We laud and commend the ideal, but we recognize that we must have a Saviour if we are even to begin to live in accord with these lofty admonitions.

FAITHFULNESS VS. SUCCESS

In the phrase, "Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly" (Col.3:16), the idea is not "let" in the sense of "permit," but "let" in the sense of, "Let each one be fully assured in his own mind," or, "Let there be light." It is the imperative mood, not the thought of cooperation. We, who are nothing (Gal.6:3), are nonetheless given this imperative.

If we have any hope in heeding this imperative, however, it is not to be in ourselves. The confidence that we have is

“through Christ toward God” (2 Cor.3:4). “Not that we are competent of ourselves, to reckon anything as out of ourselves [would be wrong], but our competency is of God” (2 Cor.3:5). “*He*, then, Who is supplying you with the spirit, and operating works of power among you—” [will be completing what He has undertaken] (Gal.3:5; *cp* Gal.3:3).

Concerning the one who is infirm in the faith, the apostle says, “he will be made to stand, *for* the Lord is able to make him stand” (Rom.14:4). Patience will wait upon God and for His appointed time. Similarly, wisdom will shun all human wisdom, especially that concerning “the free will of man,” while recognizing and accepting God’s wise counsels as to “what must be” (Rom.8:26). We simply wish to be meek and humble, to rely upon God instead of man, to boast in our Saviour instead of ourselves. It is not that we wish to be lax in the meantime, until God gives us further saving grace. Not at all. To the contrary, as in all things, we long to be faithful and we seek to be faithful. Indeed, we are thrilled that, in measure, we *are* faithful, and we give God *all* the glory.

But when we fail, as we often do, we wish to recognize that this is because of what we are in ourselves. We are members of the old humanity. We sin because of what we are. We are flesh. “The mindset of the flesh is death . . . because the mindset of the flesh is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able” (Rom. 8:6,7). Indeed, whenever we obey or disobey, we act due to a cause, and therefore must act as we do whenever we *do* act as we do.

Until we recognize and understand this simple fact, we can never be humble of heart. Regardless of what we may *say*, so long as we finally see something of ourselves as the key to our problems, we are boasting in the flesh and not relying on God. The question is not what is popular, but

what is true; not what “works,” but what is faithful; not what *seems* right, but what actually is right.

Everyone wants to *succeed*, even those who have no interest at all in obeying God or in pleasing Him. No one enjoys the suffering which attends failure. Since all genuine believers have a new mindset and walk, it would seem that each one would have some measure of interest not merely in success, but in *faithfulness*. However, unless we have a greater desire to be faithful than merely to be successful, we will care more about success than faithfulness. Even if we have a considerable desire to be faithful, if our desire to succeed—to have what we want—is greater than our desire to be faithful, we will surely be disqualified as to the faith (2 Tim.3:1-7).

We may well attain a great many of our goals, even including an externally upright walk, while all the while being remarkably *unfaithful*. Unless our desire for *faithfulness* is greater than our desire for success, we will not enjoy the former even if we should have the latter in abundance. If we do not care *how* we succeed, we will never actually succeed at all. The only true “success” is found in faithfulness to God. Yet faithfulness is impossible apart from the faith.

Knowing the truth and loving the truth—while making some progress in pursuing righteousness even though falling far short of the ideal—is ever so much better than being ignorant of the truth or willfully repudiating what is actually true, even if we should manage to gratify many of our desires for success and happiness by so doing.

The withdrawal (or “apostasy”) from the faith is inevitable, for the spirit is saying “explicitly” that it *will* occur (1 Tim.4:1,2; 2 Tim.3:1-13; 4:3,4). The only question, from the human standpoint, is whether we will be a part of it. Therefore, under God and in His grace, we wish to save ourselves from such a course (*cp* 1 Tim.4:1,16). Paul’s

words to the Ephesian elders serve ideally as a solemn entreaty for us as well: "Now I am aware that, after I am out of reach, burdensome wolves *will* be entering among you, not sparing the flocklet. And from among yourselves will arise men, speaking perverse things to pull away disciples after themselves. Wherefore, *be watching*, remembering that for three years, night and day, I cease not admonishing each one with tears. And now I am committing you to God *and to the word of His grace, which is able to edify* and give the enjoyment of an allotment among all who have been hallowed" (Acts 20:29-32).

LIVING BY THE FAITH OF THE EVANGEL

If to us Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, we *have* been called and we are "in Christ" (1 Cor. 1:24). But to be growing in assurance that we are indeed living our lives in the faith of the evangel, we need to be growing in an understanding of the evangel itself and in a practical realization of God's faithful hand in our daily affairs.

"The word of the cross . . . to us who are being saved . . . is God's power" (1 Cor. 1:18). Or, to say the same thing, the power of God is the word of the cross. It constitutes God's appointed means. The word of the cross is the agency which God uses to savingly affect us. It is "powerful to God" (*cp* 2 Cor. 10:4). Wisdom will not drink from any other fountain, no matter how sweet its water or promising its cures.

The word of the cross, and its associated revelations, constitute the word of Christ. It is the agency which God uses to effect our practical salvation. He causes us to be influenced by it in ways which result in salvation, in our preservation or deliverance each day according to His own counsels. "The evangel . . . is God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing it" (Rom. 1:16). Consequently, we say, Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly.

James R. Coram

TOGETHER WITH THE LORD

THE HOPE of being together with the Lord has been very real to all believers in Jesus since that distant day when He stood upon this earth and announced to His immediate followers that He would soon be leaving them. "I am going," He said, "to make ready a place for you. And if I should go . . . I am coming again and I will be taking you along to Myself, that where I am, *you* also may be" (John 14:2,3).

Many dear people have read into this passage far more than Jesus actually said, and have supposed that He was going to prepare a place for them in heaven, whereas He was actually telling them that He was going to heaven to prepare a place for them on earth, where all their longings and expectations lay. His followers were looking for the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. This was the theme of the two who walked with the risen Lord on the way to Emmaus; this was the question on the tongues of those who were with Him on the day of His ascension; this was the last question they put as He was about to leave them (see Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6).

There is something very touching in the effect of the Lord's ascension on His disciples. In the last chapter of Luke, we find that Jesus had been telling them that the message of repentance for the pardon of sins was to be heralded in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Then He took them to Bethany, to the Mount of Olives (Luke 24:50; Acts 1:12). They sensed that something was impending. Important things had happened on previous occasions when Jesus had gone up a mountain: His initial preaching of the rules of the Kingdom (Matt.

5:1); His healing of the multitudes (Matt.15:29-31); the transfiguration (Matt.17:1). All these events took place from mountainsides, and now they were on another mountain. The disciples asked anxiously, and perhaps expectantly, "Lord, are You at this time restoring the Kingdom to Israel?" But Jesus gave them what would seem to them to be an evasive answer. "Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father places in His own jurisdiction." And then He left them—and that was nearly two thousand years ago, and still He has not come back, and the promises concerning the Kingdom remain unfulfilled!

How the surprised eyes of the disciples followed the vanishing figure of the Lord into heaven, until He disappeared in the cloud! How longingly they continued to gaze after He had gone! Had He really gone? Would He perhaps reappear in a moment or two? What were they to do next?

It was very necessary that their disturbed minds be put at rest, so two messengers in white attire suddenly appeared beside them and brought them back to earth with the question, "Men! Galileans! Why do you stand, looking into heaven? This Jesus Who is taken up from you into heaven shall be coming thus, in the manner in which you gaze at Him going into heaven" (Acts 1:11). But, we repeat, nearly two thousand years have passed, and still the Lord has not come back.

"If I go," Jesus had said, "I am coming again." The messengers were reminding the disciples of this promise. Earlier, on this same mountain, the disciples had pressed the Lord to tell them what would be the sign of His presence, and of the end of the eon (Matt.24:3). Jesus had told them that His presence would be preceded by terrible and violent events, including a time of affliction such as never had been known before, nor would ever occur again. So severe, in fact, would it be that no flesh at all would be saved, unless those days were in some way short-

ened—discounted, lopped off at the end. For the sake of the chosen in Israel, this would actually happen—they would be discounted.

Many of these calamities which will beset mankind, and Israel in particular, are listed in Matthew 24, and in verse 29 we find Jesus continuing, “Now immediately after the affliction of those days the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not be giving her beams, and the stars shall be falling from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” In short, an intense darkness will set in, an unnatural darkness probably accompanied by great noises. “And then shall be appearing” the sign for which the disciples were asking, the sign of the presence of the Lord, “the sign of the Son of Mankind in heaven, and then all the tribes of the land shall grieve, and they shall be seeing the Son of Humanity coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory” (Matt.24:30).

In Revelation 1:7, John says, “Look! He is coming with clouds, and every eye shall be seeing Him—those also who stab Him—and all the tribes of the land shall be grieving over Him. Yes! Amen!” Though some may become aware of the imminence of His approach by taking note of events as they occur, His presence will not be manifest until He is really here, and many will be taken unawares by the suddenness of His appearing. The only sign that they will get is when He actually reveals Himself as the Son of Mankind in heaven, and the tribes of the land will then grieve because they will at last realize the insult and the injury which mankind as a whole, and they in particular, have done to Him.

The faithful in Israel are preserved through this period of affliction which precedes the second coming of the Lord, but even for them it will be a very trying experience. In reference to them, it is said, “He who endures to the consummation, *he* shall be saved” (Matt.24:13). But they

will not be without encouragement. Quite apart from the words of Jesus Himself, which they will surely remember and take to heart during those dark days, the epistles of Peter were specially written for the faithful ones of persecuted Israel in the end time. They were probably penned during the persecutions of Nero, and would have had an application at that time, but they have undoubtedly been preserved to be a stimulant towards endurance during the far greater afflictions that are to test the nation before the return of the Lord. To try to apply them to the ecclesia of today, in this intervening period of grace, is to remove them completely from their correct setting.

Now, just as the afflictions under Nero were the possible occasion for the writing of Peter's epistles, so a different persecution was the immediate cause of Paul's earliest writings, the two letters to the Thessalonians. For the Thessalonian ecclesia was suffering a rather grievous, though limited, persecution as a result of agitations stirred up by fanatical Jews who were opposed to the teachings of Paul. And again, while Paul wrote to the afflicted saints of his own day, his letters, like Peter's, have a future application which is even more important than the immediate one. For they too point to the coming day of the Lord, and to the terrible events which introduce it. But *with a difference*, for Paul is not writing to those who are called upon to *endure to the end* to be saved, but rather to a people living in a day of absolute grace—a community whose salvation is entirely of God, and who, consequently, are not called upon to pass through a day of indignation. Paul, in fact, presents the Lord to the saints in an entirely new light—as a “Rescuer out of the coming indignation.”

We find this phrase in the tenth verse of the first chapter, where Paul reminds the Thessalonians that they are waiting for God's Son out of the heavens (1 Thess.1:10). But now let us look at the first few verses of chapter five. Here the

apostle writes, "Now concerning the times and the eras, brethren, you have no need to be written to, for you yourselves are accurately aware that the day of the Lord is as a thief in the night—thus is it coming! Now whenever they may be saying 'Peace and security,' then extermination is standing by them unawares, even as a pang over the pregnant, and they may by no means escape" (1 Thess.5:1-3).

They may by no means escape. That is one side of the picture, but now let us look at the other (verses 4-5): "Now *you*, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day may overtake you as a thief, for *you* are all sons of the light and sons of the day." And now Paul associates himself with them. "We are not of the night nor of the darkness. Consequently, then, we may not be drowsing, even as the rest, but we may be watching and be sober. For those who are drowsing are drowsing at night, and those who are drunk are drunk at night. Yet *we*, being of the day, may be sober, putting on the cuirass of faith and love, and the helmet, the expectation of salvation, for God does not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, the One Who dies for our sakes, that, whether we may be watching or drowsing, we should live at the same time together with Him. Wherefore, be consoling one another and edifying one the other, according as you are doing also" (1 Thess.5:9-11).

These words should of themselves be sufficient to make us realize that here is a different revelation of truth from anything given elsewhere. When, for example, Jesus spoke of the day of the Lord, it was with an exhortation to His followers to keep awake, lest, being asleep at the time, they might miss the opportunity of entering into its blessings. Over and over again this thought is pressed home. But here it is not so. Paul is absolutely positive. Though likewise urging us to be watching, he insists that it will nevertheless make no difference to our prospects of being with

the Lord whether we are found watching or drowsing when He comes, for we are not appointed to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Then how is this rescue out of the coming indignation to be effected? The apostle tells us in the previous chapter. Before ever the Lord is manifested to Israel and to the world—before ever the great day of indignation sets in, He is to make a prior descent to the atmosphere surrounding this earth, to call His ecclesia to meet Him in the air. This is something Peter, James, John and the rest knew nothing about. It was revealed only to Paul, and disclosed by him to the saints. Let us reread the well-known words of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18:

“Now we are not wanting you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing, lest you may be sorrowing according as the rest also who are having no expectation. For if we are believing that Jesus dies and He rises, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, be leading forth together with Him. For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that we, the living, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose, for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first. Thereupon *we*, the living, who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord. So that, be consoling one another with these words.”

These verses form the basis of our expectation today, as well as the expectation of all those who have fallen asleep in Christ all down the years. Let us note that they are held together by three solid assurances, each beginning with the little word “for.”

"For if we are believing that Jesus dies and He rises." This is the first assurance. Well then, let us ask ourselves, do we believe this? If we do not, then we have no expectation at all (1 Cor.15:17-19); but if we do, then we should see this assurance as a firm guarantee that those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him.

"For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord" (1 Thess.4:15). This is the second assurance. Paul stresses that he is not voicing his own opinion, but rather a direct declaration from the risen Christ. Do we believe Him, and understand that Paul is His mouthpiece to the nations today? If so, then we shall accept as a fact, his declaration that those who survive to the presence of the Lord, will gain no advantage whatever over those who have died during the intervening time, even though, in consequence, they may not have had this full knowledge which is available to us today.

"For the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command . . ." (4:16). In another epistle we read that *"The Lord knows those who are His."* This is in the second letter to Timothy (2:19), written at a time when the ecclesia was already in disarray, just as, to be sure, it is at this present time. Only the Lord knows all those who are His, and we may be sure that not one of them will be missing on that day when He calls them to meet Him in the air.

We may not be always certain
Whom the Lord has made His own,
But to Him, Who comes to call them,
Each is intimately known.
And in this we may be happy,
When He greets them in the air,
Every member of His body
Will assuredly be there.

Regardless of all the confusion caused by so many sects

and religions, the Lord most surely knows those who are His, and the fact that He is coming in person to meet them, is the third great assurance that we, who believe that He is our Saviour, will one day be *together with the Lord*.

SUFFICIENT QUESTIONS

Let us begin this section by asking ourselves a few questions. If it is part of our expectation that we shall be together with the Lord, would it be true to say that we are together with Him now? If being together with the Lord is something which is promised for the future, as it is in Thessalonians, can it be a present experience? And where is this lasting association with the Lord to be maintained? In the air, where our meeting with Him is to take place? And what is the purpose of this association? In other words, what are we going to do together with Him throughout the time encompassed by the word "always"?

Let us remind ourselves that the order in which the Pauline letters appear in our Bibles (canonical order) is not the order in which they were written (chronological order). In the order of writing, the two letters to the Thessalonians come first, although (apart from the personal letters to Timothy, Titus and Philemon) they are last in the canonical order. Being the first of Paul's writings, they *never rise higher than this earth and its surrounding atmosphere*. That is to say, *they never take us higher than a fleshly body can breathe. The Lord meets us in the air. He descends from heaven to do this*.

The astronauts, in their journeys to the moon, have risen much farther from the earth's surface than Paul raises the saints in Thessalonians; and (within the context of this letter) although the cumulative effect of the gathering together of the saints to meet the Lord in the air is far, far greater than anything that has gone before,

individually it is not so. Wonderful things had happened all down the years. Enoch was taken out of the impending judgment of his time, though Noah was called upon to go through it. Elijah was caught up into heaven. Lazarus was raised from the dead with a shout. In the context of Thessalonians, there is nothing to suggest that the individual experience of each believer is anything greater than what had happened before, with the exception of the one great promise, "Thus shall we always be together with the Lord." This stamps it as something exceptional, for no such promise was made to Enoch, to Elijah, or to Lazarus.

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

In his letters to the Thessalonians, Paul tells us no more than that we are to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. He does not say anything about a change of body to suit a celestial environment. That is why he has to keep us within the earth's atmosphere. In Thessalonians, he *cannot* speak of a change of body. Why is this? Simply *because he has not yet preached the word of the cross*. This he does in the *very first chapter of his next letter*, the first letter to the Corinthians. Let us remember, Corinthians was written before Romans. It is well that we should appreciate this. The second group of letters, which includes Romans, first and second Corinthians and Galatians, has its basis in the word of the cross. The cross is not mentioned at all in Thessalonians.

With the cross comes a change. The flesh is mentally discarded—considered to be dead—crucified together with Him, and, as Paul puts it in his second letter to the Corinthians, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a *new creation*: the primitive passed by. Look! there has come new" (5:17). A new creation! This change is so radical that, from now on, we are to be acquainted with no one according to flesh. "Yet," adds the apostle, "even if we have known

Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we are knowing Him so no longer" (2 Cor.5:16,17).

The disciples, who had watched Jesus ascend, had known Him only according to flesh. The Thessalonians too were acquainted with Him according to flesh. To them, Paul was the apostle of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, not the apostle of *Christ Jesus*, as He is in Corinthians and in all his later epistles. (*Christ Jesus* is the title of the *risen Lord*.) Only now, after the preaching of the cross, can the saints be acquainted with Christ according to spirit; now they can attain to heights to which the mind of the soulish man cannot aspire (1 Cor.2:14-16). And so, to the Corinthians, Paul redescribes the scene which he had first portrayed to the Thessalonians, but now he is able to add more detail. He can now raise it to a plane *higher than the earth*, and so the actual meeting with the Lord in the air is not mentioned. This is what he says in 1 Corinthians 15, beginning at verse 42:

"Thus also is the resurrection of the dead ones. It is sown in corruption; it is roused in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is roused in glory. It is sown in infirmity; it is roused in power. It is sown a soulish body; it is roused a spiritual body." Notice the change in each instance.

"If there is a soulish body, there is a spiritual also. Thus it is written also, the first human, Adam, becomes a living soul; the last Adam a vivifying Spirit. But not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual.

"The first human was out of the earth, soilish; the second Human is the Lord out of heaven. Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image also of the Celestial." Contrast after contrast!

"Now this I am averring, brethren, that flesh and blood

is not able to enjoy an allotment in God's kingdom, neither is corruption enjoying the allotment of incorruption. *Look! a secret to you am I telling!*" (Here the apostle picks up the theme, of Thessalonians). "We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet *we all shall be changed*, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead ones will be roused incorruptible and *we shall be changed*. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.

"Now, whenever this corruptible should put on incorruption and this mortal should put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word, the word which is written, Swallowed up is Death by victory."

Here, in 1 Corinthians, the facts as given to the Thessalonian friends are confirmed, but enormously amplified. We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be *changed*, in the twinkle of an eye, at the last trump. This does not refer to any of the seven trumpets brought to our notice in the book of Revelation, but to the trumpet of God, which our Lord sounds when He comes to meet His saints in the air. With the early notes of that trumpet, the dead will be raised; with the final note, the last trump, the living will be changed.

But let us note carefully that the verses we have just read in Corinthians do not apply, at this stage, to all and sundry; they are often read at funeral services as though they do. They only apply to those who have been brought to the cross of Christ. We believe that all will eventually be brought to that happy position—that the work begun at the cross will go on until all are ultimately reconciled to God, but it is simply not true to say, apart from the cross, that this corruptible will put on incorruption and this mortal immortality.

We are prone, at times, to speak of immortality as though it were something that the Scriptures are proclaim-

ing all down their pages, whereas Paul is the only one, in the whole of God's Word, who introduces this theme, and he uses the Greek word *athanasia* (immortality) only three times (1 Cor.15:53,54; 1 Tim.6:16). And he only uses it after he has proclaimed the word of the cross. Paul is the only one who draws the distinction between mortality and immortality. Even Jesus never spoke of immortality. It could not be promised to anybody until the word of the cross had been preached, and this commission was given to Paul. Even Paul could not say anything about immortality to the Thessalonians, for he had not then written anything about the cross.

But Paul did promise the Thessalonians that they would be "always together with the Lord." He did not say this to the Corinthians. Why not? To find the answer, let us look at the Roman epistle, chapter six, verses 1-11:

"What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing?

"May it not be coming to that! We, who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His death? We, then, were *entombed together with Him* through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus *we* also should be walking in newness of life. For if we have become *planted together in the likeness of His death*, nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that our old humanity was *crucified together with Him*, that the body of Sin may be nullified, for us by no means to be still slaving for Sin, for one who dies has been justified from Sin.

"Now if we *died together with Christ*, we believe that we shall be *living together with Him* also, having perceived that Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying. Death is lording it over Him no longer,

for in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time, yet in that He is living, He is living to God. Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

There we have it. What is put before the flesh in Thessalonians as a future expectation (although the later revelation of Corinthians shows that the flesh must be changed before the expectation can be realized) is enjoyed by the spirit in Romans as a present experience. There is, however, a subtle difference. In Thessalonians, it is "Together with *the Lord*;" in Romans, it is "Together with *Christ*." And this is a closer 'togetherness' than that which is presented to us in Thessalonians, which is a "togetherness" of future association; this is a "togetherness" of vital spiritual experience, which takes us on to the cross with Him, and into the tomb with Him, before we enter into a state of glorious living with Him. We are *united with Him in His sufferings* as well as in His glory. Because we have now reached the cross, we can regard our flesh as dead—as having been crucified together with Him. In spirit, we are living, even now, with the risen Christ; waiting only for our bodies to be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye, when He comes, for us to enjoy to the full the "togetherness" of living with Him.

We are watching, we are waiting
For that long expected sound,
That will call us to His presence,
And to joys that will abound.
In an instant, in a moment,
In the twinkle of an eye,
Changed from weakness into glory
For that gathering on high.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE PRISON EPISTLES

Have we yet reached the summit of Divine revelation concerning our theme? By no means! The scene which

Paul has already described in Thessalonians, and enlarged upon in Corinthians, is again brought to our notice in his letter to the Philippians. Now Philippians is one of the prison group of epistles, being sandwiched between Ephesians and Colossians in the canonical order. These were the last of Paul's general letters to be written, and undoubtedly contain the highest revelations ever made by God to man. They unfold to us the secrets of the celestial realms, and make known to us God's purpose both concerning His Son and the ecclesia which is Christ's body.

In Corinthians we learned that, when the Lord comes, we are all to be changed. Changed into what, and for what purpose? Corinthians does not tell us. Corinthians *cannot* tell us, because, when Paul wrote that letter, *he had not revealed the secret of Christ*. This he does in Ephesians and Colossians. Not until Paul writes from his prison in Rome does he unfold the greatness of God's purpose; that it is eonian in its extent and universal in its expanse; that it includes the heavens and all their vast contents as well as the earth; that Christ is exalted to a position of 'Head over all,' and that the whole universe is to be headed up into Him. And what of the ecclesia, the church? Why, it is shown to have been chosen in Him *before the disruption of the world*; it is declared to be blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials; to it, Christ has been given as "Head over all" that the ecclesia may be used in the work of subjecting all to God. And then, in Philippians 3:20, we have this most remarkable phrase, which should cause us to ponder deeply, "For our realm is inherent in the heavens."

Inherent in the heavens: What do we understand by the word, "inherent"? Let us note two of its other usages. The man whom Peter and John healed at the gate of the temple in Jerusalem was "inherently lame from his mother's womb" (Acts 3:2); that is, his lameness was inseparable

from him; it had always been with him; it *belonged* to him. According to Paul, Peter was “inherently a Jew” (Gal.2:14). He *belonged* to Israel; he could never disassociate himself from Israel. Peter could never have written, as Paul wrote, that in Christ “there is no Jew nor yet Greek” and that “neither circumcision is availing anything, nor uncircumcision” (Gal.3:28; 5:6). Peter’s realm was inherently Jewish; ours is inherently celestial. Our realm belongs to the heavens, and has belonged to the heavens since that far-off day before the disruption, when we were chosen in Christ.

We cannot really appreciate the prison letters of Paul unless we take up our position in the midst of the heavens. Astronomers tell us that the earth is, in fact, fairly central in the universe, and is surrounded by space stretching for billions and billions of light years in all directions. Countless numbers of stars and nebulae form the material content of the heavens, but their spiritual content is undoubtedly a correspondingly uncountable number of celestial beings. All the evidences of Scripture suggest that they are both very numerous and very powerful.

In these prison letters we learn quite a lot about them. They have degrees of status, for in both Ephesians and Colossians we read of sovereignties, authorities, powers and lordships among them, and it is above all these that Christ is raised, and it is as Head over all these that He is given to the ecclesia. And why is He thus given? Because the realm of the ecclesia is inherent in the heavens, and it is the privilege of the ecclesia to be used of God in the work of reconciling all in the heavens to Himself. This will be no simple task.

It is a complete fallacy to imagine that all in the heavens is at present in happy relationship with God. True, the Hebrew Scriptures speak of heavenly hosts, who hearken to the voice of the Lord, and do His pleasure (Psalm 103:21). But Ephesians 6:12 speaks of “spiritual forces of

wickedness among the celestials." It is because our realm is inherent in the heavens that we do not wrestle with humanity, flesh and blood, but with these celestial forces of wickedness. Colossians 1:20 makes it quite clear that the reconciling work covers those in the heavens as well as those on earth.

The work of reconciling the universe to God will take a long time, but there is no force even among the celestials which can prevent it, for Christ is exalted above the very highest powers that exist. He is graced with the Name which is above every name, that in His Name, Jesus, "every knee should bow, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should acclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2:10,11). It is in Christ that the lot of the ecclesia is cast, and it is this superior One Who is given to it as Head over all.

Let us now look at three Scriptures which show unequivocally that the realm of the ecclesia is "inherent in the heavens."

Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before world disruption . . ." This shows the *origin* of the ecclesia: "*among the celestials.*"

Ephesians 2:6: ". . . rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons, He should display the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus." Here we see the *future place and function* of the ecclesia in God's operations: "*among the celestials.*"

Ephesians 3:10: "That now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God." Here is shown the *present influence* of the ecclesia: "*among the celestials.*"

In the context of these prison letters we are clearly out of place on earth; against this celestial background these fleshly tabernacles in which we now dwell become bodies of humiliation, tending always to retard us, and the sooner that they are out of the way the better. The only body really suitable for one whom God has chosen for His ecclesia is one conformed to the body of Christ's glory.

And so, in Philippians 3:20,21, the third account of the Lord's coming amplifies still further the descriptions that we have noted in Thessalonians and 1 Corinthians, for now we read:

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

Nothing here about a meeting in the air, or about the sounding of a trumpet! In the context of the prison letters these are irrelevant details. And what about our always being together with the Lord? Is this now a future expectation or a present spiritual experience? It is both of these, but in the prison letters, something far deeper as well. It is an *eonian* "togetherness" of purpose. What is future in Thessalonians, present and future in Romans and Corinthians, becomes past, present and future in the prison letters. The ecclesia is shown to be with Christ—nay, more, to be *in* Christ—from the time when it was chosen in Him before the disruption of the world (long before any of its members appeared on earth) until that grand consummation when God will be All in all. The bond between Christ and the ecclesia becomes a fundamental and essential component of God's purpose; the ecclesia is Christ's complement, by which all in all is being completed.

Paul is the only apostle to speak of the purpose of God, and again only after he has preached the word of the cross.

In all but two instances, whenever Paul uses the term purpose, either as a verb or as a noun, it is to draw attention to the closeness of the relationship between Christ and His ecclesia. In Romans 8:28,29, for instance, he speaks of those "who are called according to the purpose that, whom He [God] foreknows, He designates beforehand, also, to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren." But it is in Ephesians where the intensity and strength and importance of the bond is most fully brought out. Let us read Ephesians 1, from verse 9:

"In all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He *purposes* in Him) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth—in Him in Whom our lot is cast also, designated beforehand according to the *purpose* of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ."

"In Him in Whom our lot is cast." This is the state of "togetherness" as portrayed in the prison letters. Or, to quote from Colossians, our lives are "hid together with Christ in God" (Col.3:3). These expressions are far more intense, far more dynamic, far more penetrating than the one in Thessalonians, "Thus shall we always be together with the Lord." They contain within them the basic ingredient of the whole of the Divine operations. When God first conceived His purpose for the universe, He built it upon the basic unity of Christ and the ecclesia, and the calling with which He now calls us is "in accord with His own purpose and grace, the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian" (2 Tim.1:9). It is because of this radical oneness that Paul can write, again in reference to God's purpose, that remarkable passage in Ephesians 3:9-11:

"To enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, *our Lord*."

Readers of *Unsearchable Riches* will be well aware how necessary it is to correctly partition the Word of Truth, and nowhere is this more desirable than in the writings of Paul himself. We should mentally place them into three boxes. The box containing the two letters to the Thessalonians should be placed on the ground. The second box, containing the two letters to the Corinthians, Galatians and Romans, with its key, the Word of the Cross, should be placed on top; and the third box, containing the prison letters of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, should be lifted higher still.

And whether we only comprehend the truths of the first box, or whether we assimilate the more advanced teachings of the second box (and many believers have lived and died without understanding the preaching of the cross!), or whether we are given the ability to grasp the length, breadth, depth and height of the marvelous treasures of the third box—in whichever category of believers we find ourselves, let us rejoice in this—**THE LORD KNOWS THOSE WHO ARE HIS**, and *all* whom He calls in that day will always be together with Him. No one is saved by knowledge; each is saved in grace through faith (Eph.2:8). And whatever knowledge we may lack in that day will be made up to us when the Lord comes to meet us in the air, and we are all changed in an instant, and these bodies of humiliation are conformed to the body of His glory.

So let us not be despondent if we cannot for the moment grasp some of the deeper truths of Scripture. This does not

mean that we should give up trying to understand them. Paul's aim was to present every man mature in Christ Jesus, but he realized that this would not be easy. He calls it a toil and a struggle. But if we can enter into the truths of the prison epistles by seeking that which is above, where Christ is—by being disposed to that which is above in preference to that which is on earth—then, even in this life, we shall enter into joy unspeakable, for we shall see our unity with Christ as something really vital to God's designs—as nothing less, in fact, than the firm central pillar around which the whole edifice of God's eonian purpose is being constructed. And with this realization, our lives will take on a new meaning. Every vestige of vagueness and despondency will vanish; doubts and disappointments will melt away; frustrations and failures will become insignificant, for our lives will have become supremely purposeful in the Beloved, Whose complement we are.

Our lives are hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then we also shall be manifested *together with Him* in glory (Col.3:4).

This the summit of our blessings,
To be always with the Lord,
And to wear the glorious likeness
Of the One we have adored;
Then throughout His Father's kingdom,
For God's glory we shall shine,
With a splendor all transcendent
And a radiance Divine.

John H. Essex.

A SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE

In the preceding article, John Essex begins with "hope," but thereafter uses the CV term "expectation." A few lines into the article he writes of "longings and expectations" (p.167). This helps direct our minds to the fact that the Greek word *elpis* expresses both certainty and a longing for what God has prepared for us in the future.

D.H.H.

GOD IS ONE

WE come now to Romans 3:29-31 which is a passage of transition. We have seen that God's evangel to begin with, is the message that God is righteous in His operation of justifying all human beings. All sin and are wanting of the glory of God, yet now on the basis of the faith of Jesus Christ (in His obedience unto the death of the cross) God is manifested to be what He is, the righteous "Righteousifier" of each and every irreverent and unrighteous human.

²⁹ Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not of the nations also? Yes, of the nations also, ³⁰ if so be that God is One, Who will be justifying the Circumcision out of faith and the Uncircumcision through that faith.

Paul does not deny that God is the God of the Jews in a special way in the past (as, for example, announced at Sinai, *cf* Deut.6:4) and in the future (*cf* especially Jer.30 and 31, and note Matt.1:22; 2:6). In this epistle itself he affirms that their prerogative, the Circumcision's benefit, is "much in every manner." They are entrusted with the oracles of God (Rom.3:2). It is out of Israel that Christ comes according to the flesh (Rom.9:5), becoming "the Servant of the Circumcision . . . to confirm the patriarchal promises" (Rom.15:8). Nevertheless, as made clear in Romans 3:21-28 (CV, as revised), God's evangel for which Paul is severed, the evangel which manifests God's righteousness through Jesus Christ's faith in the gratuitous justification of the sinner is "for all" (Rom.3:22), whether of the Circumcision or the Uncircumcision.

The viewpoint of Romans 3:21-30 is wider than that of

the law and the prophets. It is wider than shown in the evangel of the Circumcision (Gal.2:7), and even wider than Romans 4. It spans the eons and brings us to Romans 5 which tells of God's love commended in Christ Jesus, when all shall be constituted righteous. It accords thoroughly with Philippians 2:6-11 and anticipates Ephesians and Colossians concerning the revelations there of the administration of the complement of the eras and the reconciliation of all.

It has been shown in this passage of God's word that God as the righteous God Who makes each individual human righteous by means of Jesus's faith is One in this work. He is not only the God of the Jews, but the God of the nations—not only the God of those who are of the Circumcision but of those who are of the Uncircumcision (to speak of humanity as divided in so much of Scripture). God is the God of us all in the giving of His Son in His purpose and goal unto the end that all people and all their deeds be justified.

WHO WILL BE JUSTIFYING

In Romans 3:21-24 justification is viewed as a present accomplishment. Now in 3:29,30 it is viewed as a future realization. In both cases the viewpoint is without tangible evidence. We have only the word of God's evangel that God is righteous and that Christ's death and resurrection is the means by which all human beings have been delivered from sin and death and will be made righteous with glorious vindication of their existence. That evangel is a great treasure to have, yet God must endow us with faith that the evangel is true and shall become reality in every way.

God will be bringing the Circumcision into the righteousness which has been made certain when Christ died, and they, as a part of *all* humanity, died (proleptically) with Him (2 Cor.5:14). They, in God's appointed time, will be enjoying literal justification achieved *on the basis of* Jesus's

faith. This is expressed by the preposition "out" (Greek *ek*), which was the preposition used in the Greek translation (the Septuagint) of Habakkuk 2:4 and just now in Romans 3:26 used to speak of justification by means of *Jesus's* faith.

So also God will be bringing the Uncircumcision into the full enjoyment of righteousness which God has secured *by means of* "that faith," the faith of Jesus Christ. Now Paul uses the Greek preposition *dia* to express the thought of "by means of." This is the preposition that was used more readily to express this idea in the Greek of Paul's day.

Both *ek* and *dia* basically express the sense of "by means of" in this passage, except that *ek* points to the source of the means, and *dia* to its channel. God's righteous, gracious, and gratuitous work of justification is based on Jesus Christ's faith in His God and Father's will for Him.

But here I would agree with many others that the "through that faith" as used of the Uncircumcision suggests something distinctive about them in relation to the Circumcision. As to that future when all will be constituted righteous and God will be revealed as righteous in all He is and does, the basis is the faith of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners. In this the "out of faith" and the "through that faith" express the same thing. But as to the past and concerning the intervening future before the ultimate glory involving all human beings, and all their sins, there is a distinction between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision with regard to justification.

This distinction is expressed in Galatians 2:7 where Paul says, "I have been entrusted with the evangel *of* the Uncircumcision as Peter *of* the Circumcision." Paul is about to narrow the scope of God's evangel in Romans 4 as it relates to those presently believing it, to whom Paul is commissioned as their apostle.

This is a *reckoned* justification, not that ultimate justification when all shall be constituted righteous and God

will be perceived by all as the righteous Justifier. This reckoned justification is like that of Abraham in Genesis 15:6, bestowed on his believing God apart from works of law.

On the other hand, James, who is of the Circumcision and writes to the twelve tribes, says, "You see that by works a human is being justified and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Here, as with Paul in Romans 4 justification is not used in its literal sense of made righteous but of being accounted righteous. But James adds works to faith.

George L. Rogers, in *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 20, page 334 claims that, "To justify is always to account righteous." He overstates the case. In support of this claim he points to Luke 7:35 and 10:29 along with Romans 3:4, and I would add Romans 4. Yet Pastor Rogers was commenting on Romans 3:24 where (as we can now see) justification goes far beyond a declaration of righteousness. Justification through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus and which manifests God's righteousness can be nothing except the making of irreverent and unrighteous human beings righteous (*cp* Rom.5:19). When Christ died, all died (2 Cor.5:14). This was death in the sense of the annihilation of the old humanity. Christ was given up *because* of our offenses and roused *because* of our justifying (Rom. 4:25). Christ's faith in dying for sinners justifies us in that we were put to death in His death (Rom.6:3) and this is true of all (though not yet recognized, and hardly so by believers). It is on this basis that all will be vivified in Christ (1 Cor.15:22). Thus God's righteousness will be fully and gloriously made manifest to all.

It is true that both Circumcision and Uncircumcision will be justified in its literal grammatical sense of being made righteous, and either "out of faith" or "through faith" can express this fact. But Paul chooses "through" to express the relationship of Christ's faith to the justification of the Uncircumcision, and it may well be that he does so with a

glance ahead to what he is about to say about a reckoned ("accounted") justification.

In this way, by such a double application of "through that faith [of Jesus]," Paul turns our attention to justification as it is placed "*on* those who are believing" (3:22). This will be an exposition on the words "for faith" in Romans 1:17. In Romans 3:21-30 he has dealt with the revelation of God's righteousness by means of the Righteous One's faith, but now he will deal more directly with this evangel as it is the evangel for our faith—for our believing.

LAW SUSTAINED

³¹ Are we, then, nullifying law through that faith? May it not *'come'* to that! But indeed we are sustaining law.

Paul has finished, for the present, the evangel as it is given "for all" (Rom.3:22) and he turns his attention to the "on all who are believing" of that same verse. The believers are justified gratuitously in God's grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (through His faith) because they are part of all humanity. But now Paul will speak of them separately as those who are presently believing God's evangel concerning Jesus Christ, *our* Lord.

Consequently Jesus Christ's faith (His giving of Himself for all sinners) is apart from human works of law. But so is our present, reckoned justification which is ours on believing. (Similarly the Circumcision will be declared righteous before actually made righteous. This will be for one thousand years and will be received when they both believe and do the works of the law under the new covenant.)

Thus Paul turns directly to those who are believing God's evangel, who, whether of the Circumcision or Uncircumcision, are sons of Abraham as he was before circumcision was laid down as law. In doing this he sustains what is written in the law, the Torah. Genesis 15:6 speaks of a reckoned justification based on what Christ would do

later by faith's law. Consequently, in Romans 4 Paul will speak of accounted justification. But the basis of such a limited and temporary justification has been set before us in Romans 3:21-30, all proleptically made righteous by means of Jesus Christ's faith, for the manifestation of God's righteousness.

D.H.H.

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