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JANUARY, 2004

Volume XCV

Number 1

Concordant Version of The Former Prophets

(JOSHUA, JUDGES, 1 SAMUEL, 2 SAMUEL, 1 KINGS, 2 KINGS)

The *Concordant Version of the Former Prophets* endeavors to follow a pattern of consistency in translating the Hebrew words and thoughts of the Original. Hence there has been an effort to avoid the use of any English term for more than one Hebrew term, even though several English words may be required to do duty for a single Hebrew term. Boldface and lightface type, superior symbols and abbreviations and footnotes are all used to clarify the meaning or to represent some unique features that are otherwise difficult to express in English.

Boldface type is used for words (or parts of words) having exact counterparts in the Hebrew. The regular, lightface type is used for words (or parts of words) which have been added to help express the Hebrew thought in more idiomatic English.

Symbols and abbreviations are used to indicate variant readings in the various Hebrew manuscripts or ancient Versions or to provide more complete information concerning the literal expressions in the Hebrew. These symbols and abbreviations are identified on the inside covers of the book.

We cannot press too strongly that the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings belong among the *prophecies*. They foretell nothing, it is true, yet the histories they contain all revolve about the man of God who was the one link which still united Israel to their God.

We will get very little if we read these merely to increase our knowledge of ancient history, or the annals of the Hebrew nation. But if we fix our hearts on the fact that Yahweh is here displaying Himself in the various vicissitudes of His people, and that He deals with them through His spokesmen, the narrative takes on life and meaning.

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A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS
WORD

VOLUME XCV

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

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God's Boundless Love

Oh no, great God! We feel Thou canst not be
Spectator or upholder of distress,
So long, indeed, as it is objectless.
No! if Thou lookst on sorrow, 'tis to see
Its benefit and end. If before Thee
One hopeless ill could spread the smallest shroud,
Oh, wouldst Thou not dissolve it as a cloud
In the mere fervors of Thy radiancy?
'Tis so! And Thou Thy dearest Son didst send,
That message of a boundless love to make;
Not as a mockery—more the heart to rend,
If all were offered what but few could take!
Not as a thing of words—but as a meed,
Which, like Thyself, is truth and love indeed.

Chauncey H. Townshend

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 2004
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-FIVE

EDITORIAL

IN THE COURSE of presenting our case against the doctrine of eternal punishment, it is important that we do not set up and oppose a straw man (a position which in fact our opponents do not hold, though a position which we suggest that they do hold). Nor should we prejudice our hearers against our opponents' actual position itself by drawing undue attention to the more sensational and bizarre, highly speculative claims concerning "hell" which are set forth only by a few unbalanced and unlearned eccentrics.

Yet even when the best face possible is put on the teaching of conscious, eternal punishment this teaching itself, without embellishment, becomes awful beyond expression.

Those who affirm the doctrine of eternal torment, themselves declare it to be a "terrible," indeed a "horrible," teaching. They speak of it thus, however, not in a sense so as to suggest their disapproval of it, much less as an indication that they deem it to be false. They say that it is a terrible and horrible teaching, simply in the sense that it is a teaching which causes terror and horror, inasmuch as it speaks of a transcendently awful, exceedingly unpleasant and severe, unspeakably ugly and painful punishment, one which, once instituted, will continue on *endlessly*, unabated and unremitted.

The main point which those who hold to eternal hell-fire wish to make is that, regardless of just what hell's exact nature proves to be, it will in any case be of such a nature that all who are committed to its confines will be altogether miserable there, being *continually*—day and night—and *endlessly*—for all future duration—subjected to awful agonies so terrible that they defy description.

Learned theologians, many of them being kindly and

pleasant-mannered individuals, rarely if ever take any satisfaction in the doctrine of eternal burnings. When speaking simply out of their own humanity, quite a few will frankly acknowledge that the proposition of the correction and salvation of sinners, instead of that of the mere warehousing and tormenting of those who must remain in their wickedness for all eternity, seems not only preferable to them but more in accord with what they know of God.

Yet they would likely feel constrained to revise their words here so as to say that while the teaching of the eventual correction and salvation of sinners as opposed to their eternal punishment is more in accord with what they personally know of God, still, since the eternal punishment of the damned is the “clear teaching of Scripture,” a more accurate knowledge of God will make room for the acceptance of this latter teaching instead.

CONFUSION AND DECEPTION

In popular theology, “hell” is the catch-all term under which the disparate themes of *death* (in reference to those who die in unbelief), *Gehenna*, *the unseen* (*sheol*, *hadês*), *Tartarus*, and *the second death—the lake of fire*, are subsumed, not to mention confounded, even as more or less equated.

The usual notion is, in simple terms, that all of these words are speaking of one thing, and that one thing is “hell.” Then, a wide variety of Bible texts are introduced with a common claim being made for each one, that common claim being that each text’s testimony is to be understood as being concerned with the same subject, that of “eternal hell.”

All that such texts actually have in common, however, is that they all refer to one or another, divine adversative judgment. They by no means all refer to the same judgment, and most of them are not in reference to a final adversa-

tive judgment of Scripture at all, but are concerned with various severe judgments both preceding, during, and following the coming eon.

Most significantly of all, in the Greek Scriptures themselves, it is by no means either declared or entailed that any of these judgments will be imposed endlessly, but simply for *the duration of that which is in view*, which, in every case, is for either a part or the whole of an eon, or, at most, for the remainder of the eonian times preceding the consummation, when all will be vivified and God will become All in all, even as declared in 1 Corinthians 15:22-28.

Yet the apostle Paul’s words in this and related passages in which he reveals that glorious immortality, incorruption, and vivification will finally be granted to all mankind, are simply not accepted for what they say. Instead, texts which affirm God’s severe yet salutary temporary judgments, are twisted so as to make them no longer either salutary or temporary.

Thus, in perverted form and as untenably interpreted, one part of God’s revealed Word is set against another part, with the result that the former as it is misused, is set against the latter as it actually stands, the former thus supplanting and precluding the latter.

Now, of course none of this is acknowledged by orthodox scholars; and, if any of them were to accept it, they would, by definition, no longer be orthodox scholars. We can hardly expect any of them or their followers to acknowledge the soundness of our arguments, much less to agree with us in the teaching which we affirm. In general, sound teaching will not be tolerated. Let us seek to hold to what is actually sound teaching (2 Tim.4:3); but let us not expect to be widely regarded as so doing.

THE NATURE OF “HELL”

A few years ago, I was given a copy of a book entitled THE

OTHER SIDE OF THE GOOD NEWS;¹ its subtitle is: "Confronting the Contemporary Challenges to Jesus' Teaching on Hell." Throughout the book, the author, Larry Dixon, interacts with the writings of many well-known theologians, both ones who agree and disagree with his own position.

I am delighted to find in this author, an advocate of orthodoxy who not only, it seems to me, writes out of a clean heart, but in the interest more of upholding the truth of Scripture as much as he is able to perceive it, than of merely upholding orthodoxy itself, *per se*. Too often, the exponents of orthodoxy seem to be much more the zealous and proud partisans of a sectarian cause than objective seekers after truth, ones who truly love and care for all men.

While I find this good-hearted author's arguments to be weak, and his position, that of conscious, eternal punishment, to be mistaken, his writing is altogether calm and sober. He simply wishes to set forth what he believes is true on this terrible theme, which happens to be what Christian orthodoxy also affirms.

As confirmed in this book by Dixon, with citations of and references made to many orthodox scholars, the general orthodox position is as follows:

All sinners (which is all mankind) deserve to go to hell forever; that is, for God to be just, no one at all needs to be saved, much less given an opportunity to hear the gospel and repent. Moreover, there need not even be a gospel, that is, insofar as justice is concerned.

1. Publisher: Victor Books (1992); Wheaton, Illinois.

Of course this title is inapt. The good news of Christ's death for our sins is *entirely* good news and remains so when viewed from any angle. All evil, including all judging, however injurious in itself, is not the "other side" of the gospel, but the necessary background *for* the gospel. When speaking of "the gospel," however, traditional Christians are accustomed to having in view not the scriptural good news itself alone, but the whole of their own message to sinners which they call the "gospel offer," which indeed has an "other side."

The salvation of those who are saved, is a work of divine love and goodness on behalf of those who, when considered in their sins, themselves deserve to go to hell.

All who die in unbelief, will go to hell forever. While God loves even unbelieving sinners during their present lifetime, once they die in unbelief, He no longer loves them. His wrath is devoid of love; after death, there is no meaningful way to say that God loves the wicked, which is to say, any and all sinners.

After death, unbelievers become simply the objects of His unremitting wrath, according to which He therefore consigns them to eternal hell.

The various sayings of Jesus which give some indication of what hell will be like, while they, at least in certain points, undoubtedly accord with literal conditions which will obtain in hell, are not to be understood, as such, as literal descriptions thereof but instead as graphic images of the general character of hell, any particulars aside.

The miseries of hell—which is both a place and a condition—will consist both in what one is excluded from (i.e., the joys of heaven), as well as in what one is subjected to (i.e., the terrible pains of hell itself). Whatever their exact form and various details may be, hell's punishments will be both mental and physical: extreme agonizing pain both for the mind and the senses.

The inhabitants of hell will be endowed with great fortitude both mentally and physically, yet for no other purpose than to be able to bear the full agony of their suffering, day and night, for all eternity, lest they should go into shock, be reduced to a vegetative state, or succumb to death, and thus escape the full weight of their misery.

The sufferings of hell will be so terrible as to far outstrip the worst of human sufferings experienced in this life. For example, as horrible as war is, the horrors of war are only a small foreshadowing of that final condition of the for-

saken in hell, who—let it be known above all else—will remain forsaken there *forever*.

VICTORIOUS GRACE

In briefest form, we need point out only two simple facts to show that all will be saved and that therefore the doctrine of eternal punishment is altogether mistaken:

(1) Christ died for all (2 Cor.5:14), giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for the sake of all (1 Tim.2:6), in accord with the will of God Who operates all according to the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11), and wills that all mankind be saved (1 Tim.2:4).

(2) All salvation is *in* grace and *through* Christ; hence, man has no hand in the matter whatever. Therefore, from the complementary facts that since salvation is in grace hence all for Whom Christ died will be saved, and that Christ died for all, it follows that all will be saved.

We are justified *gratuitously* in God's *grace*, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24); and, it is through one just award for all mankind for life's justifying (Rom.5:18).

If we do indeed see the error of the orthodox teaching of eternal punishment, it is because we first of all have been enabled to see the glorious truth which it ordinarily covers up. Let us be thankful to God for giving us eyes to see and ears to hear, so as to recognize and acclaim Him according as He truly is, the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers (1 Tim.4:10). It behooves us to hold this and all truth in humility and meekness before others, seeking to be gracious especially to those who must oppose us.

Let us be confident in God that He is able to establish us in accord with His true evangel, even that same evangel heralded by the apostle Paul (Rom.16:25), an evangel which, since it is *full* of grace and truth, therefore has no "other side."

J.R.C.

ABRAM AND THE NATIONS

13 +Then Abram went ^lup from Egypt toward the Negev, he and his wife and all ^wthat he ^yhad; and Lot went with him. ² + Abram was very heavily stocked ⁱwith cattle, ⁱwith silver and ⁱwith gold. ³ +So he ^lwent his way ^yby stages from the Negev ⁺ as far as Bethel, ^{fr}to the ^{ri}place where his tent had ^bbeen ⁱat the start, between Bethel and ^{bt} Ai, ⁴ to the ^{ri}place of the altar ^wthat he had ⁱ formerly made there. And there Abram ^lcalled ⁱon the Name of Yahweh.

⁵ + Lot ^{mr}too, ^wwho was going along ^wwith Abram, ^bcame to ^yhave a flock of sheep and a herd of cattle and tents. ⁶ +But the land would not sustain ^wthem ^ywhile dwelling together, for their goods had become so ^{mn}abundant ⁺that they were not able to dwell together. ⁷ + There ^{lb}were disputes between the shepherds^l of Abram's cattle and ^{bt} the shepherds^l of Lot's cattle; and besides the Canaanite and the Perizzite were then dwelling in the land.

⁸ +So Abram ^lsaid to Lot: ^{pr}Please, let there ^{lb}be no^t argument between me and ^{bt} you, and between my shepherds^l and ^{bt} your shepherds^l, for we are men that are brothers. ⁹ Is not all the land open before you? ^{pr}Please part from ^{on} me. If it is to the left, ⁺ I shall ^cgo to the right. And if it is to the right, ⁺then I shall ^cgo to the left. ¹⁰ + Lot lifted up ^whis eyes and ^lsaw ^wthe whole Jordan basin, as you come to Zoar: It was like the garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt; for all of it was well irrigated before Yahweh wrecked⁻ ^wSodom and ^wGomorrah.

¹¹ +So Lot ^lchose for himself ^wthe whole Jordan basin; and Lot journeyed ^feastward. ⁺Thus they ^lparted, as a

man from ^{on} his brother. ¹² Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, + while Lot dwelt ⁱamong the cities of the basin and moved his ^ttent ^{fr}toward Sodom. ¹³ + But the men of Sodom were vicious and intense sinners ^{ag}against Yahweh.

¹⁴ + Then Yahweh said to Abram after Lot had parted from ^{wi} him: ^{pr}Now lift up your eyes and see from the ^{ri}place where you are, northward and to ^d the Negev, + eastward and to ^d the sea. ¹⁵ For ^all the land ^wthat you are seeing, I shall give it to you and to your seed unto the eon. ¹⁶ And I will ^{pl}make your seed like the soil grains of the land, so ^wthat, if a man were ^able to count ^the soil grains of the land, then your seed ^{mr}too might be counted. ¹⁷ Rise, walk about in the land ththroughout its length and thits width, for I am giving it to you ⁷and to your seed, unto the eon⁰. ¹⁸ + So Abram moved his ^ttent and ^came ^{to} to ⁱdwelt ⁱamong the oaks of Mamre ^w ⁱat Hebron; + then he ^built an altar there to Yahweh.

¹⁴ + It ^{lb}came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goyim, ² that they ^dmade war ^wwith Bera king of Sodom, + ^Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, + Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, that is, Zoar. ³ All these joined forces and came to the vale of Siddim, that is, the Salt Sea. ⁴ For twelve years they had served ^Kedorlaomer, + but ^Qin^{cs} the thirteenth year they revolted.

⁵ + In the fourteenth year Kedorlaomer came and the kings who were allied ^wwith him. + They ^lsmote ⁷theⁿ Rephaim ⁱat Ashteroth-karnaim, + ^the Zuzim ⁱat Ham, + ^the Emim ⁱat Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶ + ^the Horites in the ⁷mountainsⁿ of Seir as far as ⁷the terebinth of Paran⁰, which is ^{on}by the wilderness. ⁷ + When they ^turned back, + they ^came to En-mishpat, that is, Kadesh. + They smote ^all the ⁷chiefs^c of the Amalekites and ^{mr}also ^the Amorites

^who dweltⁱ in Hazezon-tamar. ⁸ + Then the king of Sodom marched ^forth + with the king of Gomorrah, + the king of Admah, + the king of Zeboiim, + the king of Bela, that is, Zoar. + They drew up in battle ^array ^{ag}against them in the vale of Siddim, ⁹ ^{ag}against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, + Tidal king of Goyim, + Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings ^{ag}against ^five.

¹⁰ + Now the vale of Siddim had wells upon wells of asphalt, and when the king of Sodom and ⁷the king of^{nc} Gomorrah ^fled, + some ^fell into ^{pl}them, and the remainderⁱ fled into^d the hill country. ¹¹ + The invaders ^took ^all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and ^all their food and ^went away. ¹² They + also ^took ^the Lot, Abram's brother's son, and ^his goods, + before they ^went along; + for he had been dwelling in Sodom. ¹³ + Then one ^who was delivered ^came and ^told th Abram the Hebrew. + He was tabernacling ⁱamong the oaks of Mamre, the Amorite, the brother of Eshkol and brother of Aner + who had entered into a covenant as Abram's confederates.

¹⁴ + When Abram ^hheard that his brother ⁷Lot⁰ had been taken captive, + he ⁷musteredⁿ ^his dedicated men, 318 born in his household, and ^pursued ⁷them⁰ as far as Dan. ¹⁵ + At night he and his menservants ^split up ^{on}against them. + He ^smote them and ^pursued them as far as Hobah which is ^fto the left thof Damascus. ¹⁶ + He ^brought back ^all the goods ⁷of Sodom⁰, and he ^{mr}also brought back ^his brother Lot and his goods, and ^the women and ^the people ^{mr}too.

¹⁷ + thIn the vale of Shaveh, that is, the king's vale, the king of Sodom came ^forth to meet him after he returned⁻ from smiting⁻ ^Kedorlaomer and ^the kings who were allied ^wwith him. ¹⁸ + Then Melchizedek king of Salem ^brought forth bread and wine, + for he was a priest for El Supreme; ¹⁹ + he ^blessed him and ^said:

Blessedⁱ be Abram thby El Supreme,

Owner^l of the heavens and the earth.

²⁰ **And blessed^l be El Supreme,**

Who has awarded your foes into your hand.

And Abram 'gave > him a tenth^f of all the booty. ²¹ **+Then the king of Sodom 'said to Abram, Give > me the souls and take the goods for yourself.** ²² **+But Abram ^{sa}replied to the king of Sodom: I 'raise my hand high to swear to Yahweh El Supreme, Owner^l of the heavens and the earth,** ²³ **+ I shall assuredly not take anything from all ^wthat belongs to you, ^{if} from a thread ^{+ f}to a sandal lacing, so ⁺that you should not say, It is I' who 'made Abram rich.** ²⁴ **Nothing for me, but ^wwhat 'my retainers have eaten, and the portion of the men who went 'with me, Aner, Eshkol, and Mamre; they' should take their portion.**

NATIONS AND KINGS are never mentioned in the eon before the deluge. What restraint there was, was in the hands of Adam and his sons, or successors. They failed fatally, so it led to the deluge. Soon after the flood, however, we read of *nations* (Gen. 10:5). We might render the Hebrew word literally BODIES, as it is translated later on where the Egyptians say to Joseph that they have nothing left to pay for food but their *body* and their ground (Gen.47:18). The AV rendering "Gentiles" (Gen.10:5, etc.) is misleading, especially when used of a time when there were no Jews. So also is the word "heathen" (Zech.9:10) when there were no "Christians." The rendering "people" (James 3: 17) is also confusing, as this term is usually used for another Hebrew word of frequent occurrence.

KINGS OF STRIFE

Kings probably arose soon after the formation of nations, but we hear little about them until they came into contact with Abram, the progenitor of the King of kings, Who will

be the King of *peace*. These, however, come before us, to begin with, as kings of *strife*. There were not only kings, but federations of kings, which sought to subdue, not merely their *own* subjects, but *other kings*. The first glimpse we get of kings gives us a characteristic picture of their activities. A confederation of four kings was arranged for battle against another of five. The four conquering kings sacked Sodom and Gomorrah and took Lot, Abram's nephew, away with them (Gen.14:1-12).

CONFEDERACIES AND SUBJECT NATIONS

Instead of a long and tedious history of the many conflicts and combinations of nations in the first few hundred years of this eon, after the days of Nimrod and Ashur, Babel and Nineveh, we are carried forward and given the situation which had resulted in these central kingdoms. Scripture is thus concerned with their activities as they affected God's plans in connection with His King and the line from which He sprang.

CITY KINGS SUBJECTED

As the names of the kings and countries after Babel need not be Hebrew, we are often at a loss as to their significance. When they seem to yield a meaning in Hebrew, and are appropriate, we suggest the sense. Shinar may mean Double-City, which is quite possible. This name and the whole campaign shows the tendency of the nations toward centralization under one head, which was later accomplished under Nebuchadnezzar, who included the territory of all these kings, and all others, under his sway. As a king of a composite city, Amraphel is put at the head of this list. All the kings of the second confederation are kings of cities, such as Sodom (FOUNDED) and Gomorrah (OMER), and Zoar (INFERIOR), of which we have further information. Kedorlaomer seems to have made these subject to him,

yet they revolted, and now he came with his confederates to subdue them again (Gen.14:1-5).

ABRAM, THE HEBREW

It is notable that Abram was not a part in this strife, although he was a very rich man and had quite a following who could fight, as he demonstrated later. Almost all these kings are spoken of as connected with a *city*. They follow the lead of Cain, who built a stronghold for his own protection. Even Sodom seems to have had a wall, for Lot sat in its gateway (Gen.19:1). Abram, on the contrary, dwelt in a movable tent, so could *pass on*. That seems to be the reason why, at this point, he is called the Passer, or Hebrew (Gen.14:13). He was a wayfarer, an itinerant, a nomad. He was not a king, with a settled city, but passed from place to place. Yet he had quite a number of retainers, who conquered the conquerors, when it became necessary. This foreshadowed that nation, which was still within him, which would subdue all nations and bring peace.

This first inspired account of the activity of the nations of the earth is most suggestive. Two groups of nations go to war with one another, but the victors are vanquished by Abram! That is the history of all nations in the eons in a nutshell. Instead of each one organizing to insure justice and peace among its own subjects, they combine to war with one another, until the Son of Abram intervenes, and restores what they have destroyed.

MELCHIZEDEK

Then, most remarkably, Melchizedek, king of righteousness and king of peace, the type of the King of kings, adds his blessing, even as the Messiah Himself will bless the seed of Abraham in that coming day.

The *unrighteous* kings were wagers of war, and are a picture of *in*subjection. In startling contrast to these early

kings and their injustice and strife, this most mysterious monarch comes upon the scene, whose name and title depict him as the very opposite in character and accomplishments to those defeated by Abram. His name, Melchizedek, describes him as a *just king*, and his title as a *peaceful* one. Moreover, he is a priest, as well, and represents the Supreme Subjector, Owner of the heavens and the earth. What a tremendous difference! The four kings did not even have a valid title to the land over which they ruled, and were seeking to rob the others. Abram, however, insisted on restoring that which he had recovered. Yet he acknowledged the real Ruler and Proprietor of all by giving a tithe to the priest of El Supreme.

A TYPE OF CHRIST

The account given us of Melchizedek is limited to those features in which he and his actions are typical of the Son, Who was with God from the beginning, and had no earthly father or mother. Nothing is known, or should be said, of his genealogy, for it would spoil the picture. Promise deals with the *future*, and here we have a beautiful little cameo of its fulfillment introduced when it was given. It tells us, not simply that Abram defeated unrighteous and war-waging kings in the past, and a righteous and peaceful king blessed him, and gave him bread and wine, but that Abram's *seed* will go through a similar experience in the future on a much grander scale, with the Antitype of Melchizedek, the King and Priest, Christ Jesus, the Son of the Subjector.

In later revelation we are assured that "this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who meets with Abraham returning from the combat with the kings and blesses him, to whom Abraham parts a tithe also, from all; being first, indeed, translated 'king of righteousness,' yet thereupon king of Salem, also, which is 'king of

Peace,' fatherless, motherless, without a genealogy, having neither a beginning of days nor consummation of life, yet picturing the Son of God, is remaining a priest to a finality" (Heb.7:1-3). This incident was only a preview of the end, brought on the scene at the beginning, in order to heighten the great contrast between the failure of earth's first kings and the future perfection of human rule. In order to portray the *Son of God* more clearly, this king is not in any genealogical table, with the dates of his accession and death, or the names of his father and mother, for none of this fits the One Whom he portrays.

ABRAM'S FAITH

Abraham had a good opportunity to enrich himself further, if he had retained the booty which he had recovered when it was offered to him by the king of Sodom. But, by faith, he realized that the Subjector Supreme is the sole Owner, not only of the land, but of all that is on it. Yahweh had promised it to Abram, so it would be wrong to acknowledge the ownership of the king of Sodom, who, as was afterward revealed by his destruction, had forfeited all rights to its enjoyment.

BREAD AND WINE

The unjust kings of war destroyed the sustenance and the enjoyment furnished by the lands they conquered. In contrast to this, Melchizedek presented Abram with a token of that future and final kingdom, over which Abram's Seed, the Anointed Son of the Subjector, will reign. This was symbolized by the bread and wine which he gave them (Gen. 14:18). Then there will not only be justice and peace, but sustenance and happiness. This will not come to pass in this wicked eon, but is waiting until the Seed of Abram assumes His rightful place as King of kings and Lord of lords.

A. E. Knoch

FAITH IN THE SUPREME

THE VICTORY over the kings, in Genesis 14:15, was Yahweh's doing, not Abram's, and Abram freely acknowledged it. This is the testimony of Genesis 14:17-24, in connection with Melchizedek, king of Salem, whose name and title are most suggestive, in view of our present investigation of faith righteousness.

In Hebrew the name Melchizedek means *king of righteousness*, or *righteous king*, and his title is *king of peace* (or king of *well-being*). He is priest of the Supreme Deity, the Owner of heaven and earth, the One Who actually rescued the captives from the kings and Who recovered the property which had been taken from Sodom and Lot. God alone is entitled to recompense. To Him alone is due the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving which His priest will offer in behalf of those who have been saved. So Abram gives Melchizedek tithes from all. *This is faith righteousness*. Before Abram considers any reward for his recovery of what had been carried away, he, through the priest of the Supreme, dedicates a tenth of it to His worship.

THE SUPREME DEITY

It is worthy of note that the august title, *El Supreme* (the *Supreme Subjector*), first appears on the pages of revelation in connection with faith righteousness. Neither one of these exalted appellations is revealed before Melchizedek, the king of *righteousness*, comes upon the scene. Is this not because all genuine righteousness in the universe must be based upon the acknowledgment of God's deity

and supremacy? This is the divine foundation of all real righteousness, the only stable basis on which any permanent right can rest. We will never understand faith righteousness until we realize what true deity involves, and the supremacy which belongs to it. All right must be rooted in the Supreme Deity. None must be derived from any other source. Man's righteousness ignores both His deity and supremacy, hence is little more than a legal fiction, which will melt away once it enters into His august Presence. There may be a relative righteousness, man to man, but even this becomes unrighteousness when it does not recognize the rights of the Deity Supreme.

How few of the saints, even today, know God as *the Deity*! That is because they do not realize their own creaturehood. Like Abram in unbelief, they are convinced that *their* acts, *their* doings are indispensable, or else God cannot succeed in His plans. How many are seeking to forward the kingdom, yet succeed only in gendering Ishmael's that hinder rather than help! The whole of Christendom is like that. It has no real Deity, Who can walk alone without their help. *They*, rather than the Deity, are all-sufficient. How great have they grown in the earth! And almost all are sons of Hagar, in slavery, working, working, working, to save themselves and the world. O that God would give us a realization of *His* Deity and *His* all-sufficiency! That Abram did not fully recognize this is clear, for God immediately goes on to put him through a series of tests, all of which are designed to demonstrate that the flesh is not a deity, and is *not* sufficient.

The title *Supreme* comes from the stem *ol*, *ON*, and branches out into *over*, *ascend* (the *ascent* or "burnt" offering), *elevate*, *surpass*, *uppermost*. It is usually translated *most high*, or *Most High*, either as a mere descriptive adjective, or as a title. It is perfectly rendered by our English title, *the Supreme*. Its meaning is clear. He is *above* all oth-

ers. He should be given that place in every realm. Nothing else can be really right.

OWNER

The title, "Owner of the heavens and the earth," fits perfectly into this picture. The customs connected with leases and property rights vary so much today from those which are recorded in the Scriptures that it is difficult to sort out suitable words in translation. Present practice is basically wrong. It rests on the false assumption that ownership is vested in man, that he can obtain *absolute* control of lands and houses and goods and even living creatures, and can *dispose* of these to others, as he wills.

When God calls Himself the *Owner*, He challenges man's title to everything that he possesses. In Israel, under the law, there were few freeholds. Almost all the land remained in the hands of Yahweh, and was distributed by Him by means of the lot. It recognized that all ownership is vested only in God. To *believe* this because God has said it, is *right*, so that the very faith may be reckoned as righteousness.

As the thought of human ownership is so foreign to the Hebrew scriptures, there seems to be no special word to express it. In this passage it is really the *Acquirer*, the *buyer*, for it was by *buying* that permanent possession was obtained. The Hebrew word is easily remembered, for *kne* is the same as *Cain*. Eve called him this because she thought she had paid for him in some way. Literally she bought or acquired him. This is the first intimation of his rebellion against God (Gen.4:10).

But in English we cannot very well apply the name *Buyer* to God because He did not buy or acquire anything in a literal sense, seeing that all is out of Him. What the Hebrew means is that He occupies the control over all things that a buyer has over that which he has bought. Our term *Owner*

is probably the nearest that we have. Among men, ownership comes by acquiring or buying. God has it by creation.

ABRAHAM'S HOLDING

The word *holding* is another way of expressing permanent possession in Hebrew. When his wife Sarah died, Abraham wanted a place for her and himself in the land as a token of his faith in God's promise. Joseph had the same wish. His bones were also buried there (Gen.50:25). So Abraham requested a *holding* (AV possession) in which to bury his dead. After characteristic palaver, he *bought* the cave of Machpelah (*Double*) for this purpose. The field, the trees and the cave were all "confirmed" by the payment of a large sum of silver (Gen.23:3-20) so that Abraham became the "buyer" or owner in perpetuity. And, remarkable as it may seem, *it is still his!* No one has ever dared to dispute his title to it. I do not know just what its legal status is today, but I consider no other piece of real estate has its title so well insured as the tomb of Abraham. If he arose today, no one would care to take it from him. And his it will remain as long as the earth abides, as a token that God's promise will be redeemed. The land itself is such a "holding." It will be Abraham's for the eons (Gen.17:8).

THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK

A great deal of mystery has been wrapped about the *man* Melchizedek. Some have even insisted that he was the Son of God Himself. But Scripture makes Christ of the order of Melchizedek, hence He can hardly be the King-priest Himself (Heb.6:20). As he is to picture the Son of God, the *record* gives us only such information as is needed in order to show the likeness. The writer in Hebrews emphasizes these points in order to stress the fact that our Lord was not a priest at all according to His birth and genealogy. Mary was no priest's daughter. And He could not even

assume the priesthood on the strength of His legal relations to Joseph, who was of the tribe of Judah. Melchizedek, being entirely outside the line of Aaron, certainly had no place in the Aaronic priesthood. Hence his genealogy is not given. So also, no hint is given of his death. This was omitted in order to create the impression of a final priesthood, which needs no successor. These things are true of the Son of God, and they are stated accordingly in the record of Melchizedek.

KING OF PEACE

The setting of this title is superb. Against the dark background of the kings of strife, who robbed one another of their sustenance and happiness, stands the figure of Melchizedek, in solitary majesty, feeding the faithful Abram with bread and wine. These are symbolic of the life and joy which comes to all who recognize the rule of the Son of God, of Whom Melchizedek was a picture. Devastation and misery, destruction and death followed the footsteps of the conquering kings, and they themselves were smitten by Abram. Many of earth's kings are kings of unrighteousness, kings of strife. Like these of old they serve their purpose when we contrast them with the coming King, Who alone can bring this tortured earth the peace for which it longs.

BREAD AND WINE

Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration going out through the mouth of God (Matt.4:4). Wine is rejoicing the heart of a mortal (Psa.104:15). The bread and wine given to Abram symbolized the sustenance and blessing which he received from Yahweh. It gave not life alone, but joy and satisfaction. Abram already was wealthy. The goods of Sodom might have increased his riches, but they would not have added to his happiness. A man's life does not consist in the superfluity of the goods

that he possesses. Sodom's goods were his by right, from the human viewpoint, yet to accept them would be wrong from the divine, for they would have brought no blessing to Abram, and the loss would probably have made the Sodomites suffer. Had Abram taken them, he would have accomplished the same result as the pillage of the kings, and put himself in a class with them. Rights that bring no blessing are wrong in God's sight.

THE BLESSER BLESSED

Not only is Abram blessed, but his Blessor is also blessed. This is the end and object of all righteousness. Looking at the matter from the standpoint of the universe, what can be basically right which does not contribute to the blessing of its Creator and Sustainer? All of His handiwork proclaims His praise. We need but to look at the stars above to be overcome with amazed awe. We need but to glance at the flowers beneath our feet to be filled with worshipping wonder. But how little does humanity heed these promptings to give Him the adoration which is His due! Even the creature blessings on which his very life depends bring forth no thankfulness. But Abram appreciates and acknowledges the blessings which he has received, and his heart responds. He gives God His due meed of blessing, because he realizes His protecting care and believes that He is the Supreme Deity Who will carry out all that He has promised.

How much blessing accrued to the Deity through the plunder of Sodom by the confederate kings? They, of course, thought that *they* would enjoy their ill-gotten goods, but they had no thought of others or of God. The restoration of the spoil, through Abram, had just the opposite effect. Though he took none of it, he was blessed, as well as those whom he rescued. But, above all, the real Rescuer, the Supreme Deity, received His due in thanks-

giving and blessing. This is the very summit of righteousness. Nothing else is so utterly and inexcusably wrong as the failure to recognize, to appreciate, and to recompense the Deity for His numberless and limitless benefactions. To bless Him is the greatest act of righteousness of which His creatures are capable.

ABRAM AND THE KING OF SODOM

Abram did not try to force his faith or its conduct upon others, who were not ready for it. His neighbors and confederates had a human right to a reward, and he had no right to interfere. So he makes it plain to the king of Sodom that his offer would not hold in their case. Faith cannot be forced. God had not dealt with these men as He had with Abram. They did not realize that the Supreme Deity was the Owner of all. Today, very few take it seriously. Indeed, hardly any of the saints even acknowledge that the Supreme is the Deity. Orthodoxy insists that the clay has the right over the Potter, to mould Him as it will. So we must not expect conduct in accord with faith even from otherwise intelligent believers. We cannot force them into a path for which they have not been prepared before by God.

Abram received no reward for his great services in rescuing Lot and restoring what he and the king of Sodom had lost. Humanly speaking, that was wrong. Did he not have a right to boast of his exploit? Had not he, with a few helpers, overcome the confederate kings? No one would begrudge him a generous share of the booty to recompense him for his efforts on their behalf. But Abram looked at the matter quite otherwise, because he *believed* what Melchizedek, the priest of the Supreme Deity had said, that *God had given his foes into his hand*. If the Supreme had done this, then *He* should get the reward, not Abram. So a tenth of the spoil was given to Melchizedek, as the representative of the Deity, to be used in His worship. This is

faith righteousness. It is based on believing that God not only owns all, but shielded him in his effort to do the right, and that, if he was to get anything for it, the Supreme is the only One Who could pay the price.

The king of Sodom would not have given a tenth for the worship of Yahweh. So he is taught the highest righteousness by the act of Abram. But men are not satisfied with a mere tithe, when they can take all. The king of Sodom expected Abraham to claim all the goods. Indeed, his speech implies that Abraham has a right to everything and everyone that he had brought back. So he begs for the “souls,” the people and the animals, as a *gift*, and asks Abram to take the goods. Abram gladly *gives* him the souls, yet his faith righteousness balked at the idea of *taking* aught from the king of Sodom. He had tasted the bread and wine from the hands of God. He could not receive nourishment or blessing from anyone else, lest they displace the Deity, in Whom his faith found its All. How basically unrighteous it would be for the king of Sodom, who owed Yahweh far more than he could ever repay, to give Abram what he did not really possess!

A. E. Knoch

EDNA CARAMELLA

Our friend and sister in the Lord, Edna Caramella, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, was put to repose on December 24, 2003, at the age of 95. Those of us who were associated with the Baldwin (Michigan) Summer Fellowships will remember her enthusiastic participation. She never missed one of these Scripture conferences through all the forty years of their existence. She manifested a genuine joy in the Lord and appreciation of His glories as the Son of God's love. The Deity of God, His righteousness and power and wisdom and love—these were truly things of consequence to her. The deaths of her husband Frank and daughter Frances, both of whom shared her faith, and an increasing deafness troubled her later years, but the Word of God remained a real source of strength and consolation.

DAVID CONFRONTED WITH HIS SIN

(2 Samuel 12)

12 +Then Yahweh 'sent `Nathan to David. +When he 'came to him, + he 'said to him, There ^bwere two men in a certain city; one was rich and the other was destitute^l. ² It came to be that the rich man ^yhad very many^r flocks and herds. ³ +Yet the destitute^l one ^yhad nothing at all save one small ewe lamb which he had bought. + He 'tended it, and it 'grew up together with him and ^{wi}his ⁱⁿchildren: it 'ate from his morsel and 'drank from his cup and 'nestled in his bosom; + it ^{lb}was like a daughter to him. ⁴ +Then a wayfarer 'came to the rich man, and he 'spared ^ytaking^r some from his own flocks +or from his herds to ^dprepare for the traveler^l 'who had come^l to him; +rather he 'took `the ewe lamb of the destitute^l 'man and ^{ld}prepared it for the man 'who had come^l to him.

⁵ +So David's anger grew very 'hot ⁱagainst the man, and he 'said to Nathan, As Yahweh lives, ^t the man 'who did^l this is a son of death! ⁶ +As `for the ewe lamb, he should repay ⁷sevenfold^r for it inasmuch as he did `this 'thing and ^{on}because ^w he did not take pity.

⁷ +Then Nathan 'said to David, You are the man! Thus said Yahweh Elohim of Israel: It was I' Who anointed you ^yas king over Israel, and it was I' Who rescued you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I +also 'gave ^y you `the ^{Sy}daughter^r of your lord, and `the wives of your lord into your bosom. + I 'gave ^y you `the ^{Sy}daughters^r of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, + I would 'add for you ^{as} this way

and ^{as} that way. ⁹ For what reason have you despised ^{the} word of Yahweh ^{by doing} ^{what is evil in His eyes?} ^{Uriah} the Hittite have you smitten ^{with the sword}; ⁺ you took ^{his wife as your} [>] wife and had ^{him killed} ^{by the sword} of the sons of Ammon. ^{10 + now} Therefore the sword shall not withdraw from your house ^{for} for the eon, inasmuch ^{as} as you despised Me and ^{took} ^{the wife of Uriah the Hittite} to become your [>] wife. ¹¹ Thus said Yahweh: Behold, I am raising up over you evil from your own house; ⁺ I will take your wives [>] before your eyes and give them to your associate; and he will lie down with your wives [>] before the eyes of ^{this} ^{'sun}. ¹² For you ^{'d} acted in secret, ⁺ but I ['] shall do ^{this} ^{'thing} in front of all Israel and in front of the sun.

^{13 +} Then David ^{'said} to Nathan, I have sinned ^{'against} Yahweh. ⁺ Nathan ^{'sa} replied to David, ^{mr} Now Yahweh, He has remitted your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴ Only ^{'because} you made ^{'Yahweh's enemies} ^{'spurn}, yea ^{'spurn} Him ^{'by} ^{this} ^{'thing}, ^{mr} surely the son ^{'born} to you, he shall die, yea die.

^{15 +} Nathan ^{'went} to his house, and Yahweh ^{'struck} ^{the} boy whom Uriah's wife had borne for David, and he became ^{'mortally} ill. ^{16 +} So David ^{'appealed} earnestly ^{to the One, Elohim,} ^{'on} ^{fr} behalf of the lad; David ⁺ also ^{'abstained} for a fast; ⁺ he ^{lin} went and lodged for the night ⁺ ^{lying on} ^d the earth. ^{17 +} Then the elders of his household ^{'arose} ^{on} beside him to raise him up from the earth; ⁺ but neither would he get up nor have a repast of bread ^{with them}. ^{18 +} It ^{lb} was ^{'on} the seventh day ⁺ that the boy ^{'died}. ⁺ Yet David's servants were ^{'fearful} to tell [>] him that the boy was dead; for they said, Behold, ^{'when} the boy ^b was ^{alive}, we spoke to him, ⁺ but he would not hearken ^{'to our voice}. How ⁺ then can we ^{'sa} tell [>] him that the boy is dead? ⁺ He might do something vicious.

^{19 +} When David ^{'saw} that his servants were whispering together, ⁺ David ^{'understood} that the boy was dead.

⁺ So David ^{'sa} asked [>] his servants, Is the boy dead? And they ^{'sa} replied, He is dead. ^{20 +} Now David ^{'arose} from the earth; ⁺ he ^{'bathed}, ⁺ ^{'rubbed} himself with oil and ^{'changed} his raiments. ⁺ Then he ^{'entered} the ⁱⁿ abode of Yahweh and ^{'prostrated} himself in worship. ⁺ When he ^{'came} back to his ⁱⁿ palace and ^{'asked} for bread, ⁺ they ^{lpl} set it [>] before him and he ^{'ate}.

^{21 +} His courtiers ^{'sa} asked [>] him, What is ^{this} ^{'thing} ^w you have done? You fasted and ^{'lamented} ^{'for} the ^p sake of the boy while he was alive; ⁺ but just as you hear the boy is dead, you arise and ^{'eat} bread. ^{22 +} He ^{'sa} replied, I fasted and ^{'lamented} ^{'on} ^{fr} behalf of the boy while he was alive ^{'because} I ^{'sa} thought, ^{'Who knows?} Yahweh may be gracious to me and keep the boy alive. ^{23 +} But now that he is dead, why ^{this} then should I fast? ^{'Can} I [>] bring ^{him back} ^{fr} again? I shall go ^{'to} him, ⁺ yet he ['] will not ^{'return} to me.

^{24 +} Then David ^{'consoled} ^{'his wife} Bathsheba; ⁺ he ^{lin} went to her and ^{'lay} with her. ⁺ When she ^{'bore} a son, ⁺ she ^{'called} ^{'his name} Solomon. ⁺ As for Yahweh, He loved him; ^{25 +} He ^{'sent} word ^{'by} the hand of Nathan the prophet; ⁺ so he ^{'called} ^{'his name} Jedidiah, ^{'for} the ^p sake of Yahweh.

^{26 +} Joab had been fighting ^{'against} Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and had ^{'seized} ^{'the royal city}. ^{27 +} So Joab ^{'sent} messengers to David, ⁺ ^{'saying}, I have fought ^{'against} Rabbah ^M and ^c have ^{mr} just seized ^{'the water city}. ^{28 +} Now gather together ^{'the rest of the} ^{wi} soldiers, and encamp ^{on} against ^{'the city proper}. ⁺ Seize it, lest I myself should seize ^{'the city} and my name would be called over it.

^{29 +} So David ^{'gathered} together ^{'all the} ^{wi} soldiers and ^{lg} marched ^{to} ^d Rabbah; ⁺ he ^{'fought} ^{'against} it and ^{'seized} it. ^{30 +} He ^{'took} ^{'the crown of} ⁷ Milcom ^{off} its head; ⁺ its weight was a talent of gold, ⁺ with precious stones in it; and it ^{lb} was put on David's head. ⁺ The amount of loot of the city that he ^{'brought} forth was very ^{mn} great. ^{31 +} As ^{'for} the people who were in it, he ^{'brought} them forth and

^{hp}**consigned** them [~]**to raze it down** ~ + ⁱ**with iron threshers and with iron severing** instruments, ^{+or} **assigned** [`]**them to brickwork**. And he ^l**did** ^{so}**this to all** the cities of the sons of Ammon. ⁺**Then David and all the** ^{wi}**soldiers returned** to Jerusalem.

SUFFICIENT time had passed to allow David opportunity to judge himself and seek God's forgiveness. But he needed Nathan's parable to enable him to see issues of right and wrong apart from his own perspective. Humans have an amazing capacity to fool themselves and to rationalize their actions. Like most of us, David did not see his own actions in the same light he saw the actions of others. God used David's indignation at the unjust man in Nathan's story to awaken him to his own unrighteousness.

In spite of David's sin, his reaction to the prophet's message endear him to us. When confronted with his sin, he readily and openly acknowledged his guilt, and he sought to restore his broken fellowship with God. The same hand that had penned the letter ordering Uriah's death penned Psalm 51. He owned sinfulness as a part of himself throughout his whole life (Psa.51:5), he recognized that God desired holiness much deeper than any ritual cleansing (Psa.51:6), and he fell solely on the gracious mercy of God to provide his cleansing.

Also, David knew and expected no limits on the mercy of God. David fell on his face and fasted for the sake of the child born out of his adultery. He was not too concerned with his own personal acceptance to avoid the risk of offending the graciousness of God by asking for more. Who knows how much grace God might extend toward us? (2 Sam.12:22). Would we have feared to ask God for more, thinking perhaps that His patience with us might be as limited as our own?

ACCEPTING HARDSHIP AND LOSS

When the child died, David had the answer to his prayer. He rose from his grief and pleading, bathed and changed and went to worship the One Who had judged him. Then he returned and carried on with his life. David accepted what God gave him. It was not what he asked for, and it was not what he most desired, but it was what God gave him, and he accepted it.

Job asked the question, "Indeed, shall we receive good from the One Elohim, and should we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). And should we, whose realm is inherent in the heavens, scorn the momentary lightness of afflictions given to produce for us an eonian burden of glory? There is a time to plead for change, and there is a time to accept what is given, pleasant or not.

THE CONQUERING OF SHAME

Chapters 10 and 11 showed the conquering of the Ammonites to be drawn out over a considerable period of time. It was also noted that Israel's conflicts with Ammon are recorded in such a way as to emphasize shame on Israel. Here in chapter 12, victory over Ammon is finally realized, and it comes after David has been judged for his shameful sin. Judgment is the means of removing shame.

If we would remove the crown of shame that rules over us, we must use judgment. Paul spoke of self-judgment in the believer's life with figures such as crucifixion, slavery and the stripping off of old garments. *Crucifixion of the flesh* is what the believer does to apply the cross of Christ to his own life. "For if we adjudicated ourselves, we would not be judged. Yet, being judged, we are being disciplined by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor.11:31,32). "We, then, should be putting off the acts of darkness" (Rom.13:12). "Now if we

THE YEARS BETWEEN

“WHAT THEN shall we declare to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Surely, He who spares not His Own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?” (Rom.8:31,32).

Prior to this bracing reassurance, the apostle Paul had presented one of the most glorious revelations confided to the creatures of God's universe. *Designates! Calls! Justifies! Glorifies!* These are very special graces of love which are lavished upon those who, led by God's spirit, are described as sons of God. The wonder of such high privilege and honor thus bestowed is expressed by Brother A.E. Knoch:

“Here we have the golden chain of God's sovereignty forged for our blessing. Its four links cannot be separated. He *has* designated us and called us and justified us. Three links are forged. The next is glory! Nothing can compare with the sublime consciousness of a place in God's heart. If *He* is for us, even those who *would* be against us work our weal. No one *can* be against us.”¹

In these years while we walk by faith, all these four links of gold enrich our lives. During these days between our first believing and that day of full realization we feed on these words of God to us, as on our daily bread.

The precious words regarding God's choosing, calling, and justifying the various members of the ecclesia have been safely preserved. Nothing in the whole wide universe could possibly delete or corrupt the amazing clar-

1. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.238.

ity and certainty of such revelation. These are finished works, solid and sure.

Further, that throughout the years and the constantly changing scenes of life these same members should thus be apprised of such reserved glory is both overwhelming to our hearts and uplifting to our spirits. “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” (Phil.3:20,21).

Members of the ecclesia, the body of Christ, thus shall be duly summoned and transfigured to the glory of His exalted dignity. Led by Christ, these shall then participate, together with Him, in bringing full presentation of God's universal, transcendent purpose.

CHOSEN IN CHRIST

In His sacred prayer, our Lord, speaking of His Father's love, referred to this as being *before the disruption of the world* (John 17:24,25). It is not presumption to compare this time as also being when God chose the ecclesia in Christ, His Beloved:

“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 the disruption of the world*, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus” (Eph.1:3-5).

The Son of God's love, in Whom we are chosen, is the Firstborn of *every* creature. There, before all else, God, invisible, imperceptible, created all in the Son of His love. His purpose? His deep, deep yearning? Love responsive! It is imperative that all creation (not just ourselves) should recognize and acknowledge and rejoice in the plain basic

truth, that *all* is created in, through and for Him (Col.1: 15-17). Only thus might we gain some measure of the infinite value of our Father's gift.

IF HE IS FOR US

There are times of uneasy depths of confusion or despair for us all, else Paul would not have written the words of Romans 8 with which we commenced this meditation. Yet his words are operative to those who are believing. May we, once more rehearse the declaration: "If God is for us, who [or what] is against us?"

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.8:38,39).

Let us all reflect that, while physically, we all must learn "to walk before we can run," so also in spiritual matters, maturity in grasping the wisdom of God's purpose is possible only through stages or steps, tenderly enlightened with the patient escort of God's holy spirit.

"With the greatest relish, then, will I rather be glorying in my infirmities, that the power of Christ should be tabernacling over me. Wherefore I delight in infirmities, in outrages, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for, whenever I may be weak, then I am powerful" (2 Cor.12:9,10).

*Lord, for the years Your love has kept and guided,
Urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,
Sought us and saved us, graciously confided,
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.
Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,
Speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,
Teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us:
Lord of that word, receive our grateful praise.*

Donald Fielding

DESPERATE NEED

THE JUDGMENT of God is according to truth (Rom.2:2). There is no partiality with God, Who, in His just judgment, will strictly take into account what each person has done (Rom.2:11-13). Every deed and every thought must be considered, whether good or bad, intentional or unintentional, even the hidden things of humanity. These are for accusation or defense in that day (Rom.2:16).

But despite the fact that human beings do many righteous things, the day of the revelation of God's just judgment is identified as a day of divine *indignation* (Rom.2:5). For if any sin whatsoever is found, the person must perish (Rom.2:12). No flesh at all will be found righteous in God's sight when the truth of the human record is taken into account without partiality (Rom.3:20).

PAUL'S EVANGEL

This is the deeply pessimistic theme of Romans 1:18-3:20 in itself, but pessimism is far from Paul's heart as he writes. Every thought pulsates in anticipation of what the apostle has to say concerning Jesus Christ. The truth of human hopelessness appears here in preparation for the truth of the evangel of God concerning His righteous achievements for good in the giving of His Son for sinners.

Almost in the exact middle of this long section of Romans concerning divine indignation on human irreverence and unrighteousness, and God's just judgment of human acts, Paul suddenly speaks of *accord* between these matters and his evangel (Rom.2:16). The apostle has thus provided a pointed reminder of the ruling theme of the epistle. All

that he writes has the evangel in view, not only by means of contrast but by points of agreement as well. He writes of human failure in anticipation of the message of divine glory.

What Paul has said about the human situation and God's searching judgment of each individual will now be applied to a typical Jew, not wholly unlike Saul of Tarsus. The desperate need is race-wide and all-inclusive. Consequently, were it not for the faith of Jesus Christ, the perishing and death must involve everyone. There are no exceptions (which is also a critical principle in Paul's evangel). Therefore, in Romans 2:17-24 we read:

*Lo! you are being denominated a Jew,
and are resting on law,
and are boasting in God,
and know the will,
and are testing what things are of consequence,
being instructed out of the law.*

*Besides, you have confidence in yourself
to be a **guide** of the blind,
a **light** of those in darkness,
a **discipliner** of the imprudent
a **teacher** of minors,
having the form of **knowledge** and **truth** in the law.*

*You, then,
who are teaching another you are not teaching yourself!
who are heralding not to be stealing, you are stealing!
who are saying not to be committing adultery, you
are committing adultery!
who are abominating idols, you are despoiling the
sanctuary!
who are boasting in a law, through the transgression
of the law you are dishonoring God!
For because of you the name of God is being blasphemed
among the nations, according as it is written.*

DENOMINATED A JEW

Paul now turns directly to one denominated a Jew, who is representative of those chosen and favored by God for a special place among the peoples of the earth. Knowing the truth of the law has not delivered the Jew from the dire need of sinful humanity and from its fundamental failure to glorify God. But what the apostle writes here should not be ignored by us of the nations. It applies to anyone who trusts in self-righteousness.

The best commentary on this passage is that which the apostle provides in the seventh chapter of this epistle: "The law, indeed, is holy, and the precept holy and just and good . . . For . . . the law is spiritual, *yet I am fleshly*" (Rom.7:12,14). Even where the just standards of God are clearly enunciated and preserved, and where the words are honored, the flesh is not able to meet even the most basic standards of the law.

SIGNIFICANT TERMINOLOGY

Embedded in this message concerning the Jew and the law and the bad news of human failure are a number of words and phrases which accord with the evangel. In this present study I would like to look particularly at those which are printed above in bold type. Since the acts of *boasting*, *knowing* and *testing*, as well as the possessing of *knowledge* and *truth*, are associated here with the weakness of the flesh, they never reach the level demanded by the law. Yet Paul uses the same terminology in the context of the evangel which shows that justification is wholly a matter of God's grace accomplished in the giving of His Son for sinners.

Similarly the various efforts in the Lord's service of guiding, enlightening, disciplining and teaching others in need are encouraged in Paul's epistles. But they are not

presented there as precepts of law but rather as logical effects of believing the evangel (*cp* Rom.12:1,2). They are not based on self-confidence but on confidence in God (*cf* 2 Cor.1:9), Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, graciously granting salvation and justification and joy and peace in believing and all that we need (Rom.8:32-39).

RESTING ON LAW

When Moses called the elders of the people together at Sinai and placed before them all the words which Yahweh had instructed him, the people of Israel responded and said: "All that Yahweh speaks we shall do" (Ex.19:7,8). Despite the record of their immediate and stunning failure to carry out the very opening instructions, this self-confidence in fulfilling the requirements of the law was still manifest in Paul's day in the one denominated a Jew. And it is exhibited still today in all who rely on their own personal ability (and "responsibility") to meet the righteous standards of the law for justification before God as outlined in Romans 2:13.

This is a false and hopeless position which inevitably leads to the dishonoring of God.

THREE IDEALS

The one who is being addressed here is one who is "resting on *law*" (verse 17) and being "instructed out of the *law*" (verse 18). Between these two points of identification, Paul lists three ideals which are central principles of the law given to Israel at Sinai. These are high and most worthy objectives for human practice and blessing; to glory in God, to know His will and to test the things of consequence which He reveals in His Word.

These are upheld by the law. The question now is: Can these ideals of the law be reached and maintained by any

human being, even one who is privileged with knowing the law along with enjoying many special prerogatives and blessings granted by God?

BOASTING IN GOD

The law began, not with a commandment, but with a *message* concerning God and His special relationship with Israel: "I, Yahweh, am your Elohim Who brought you forth from the land of Egypt, from the house of servants" (Deut.5:6). The foundational significance of the law for the chosen nation was to be their recognition that "Yahweh is our Elohim; Yahweh, the only One" (Deut.6:4). Their glorying was not to be in themselves but in Yahweh, their Elohim.

This was echoed in the words of Jeremiah 9:23,24, as follows:

*Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom,
And let not the masterful man boast in his mastery;
Let not the rich man boast in his riches,
But rather let the boaster boast in this:
To act intelligently and to know Me,
That I am Yahweh, working benignity,
Right judgment and justice on the earth,
For in these I delight, averring is Yahweh.*

Indeed the appreciation and expression of this ideal was not entirely absent. That mighty Jew, David, sang (Psa. 62:7):

*On Elohim rest my salvation and my glory;
The rock of my strength, my refuge is in Elohim.*

This is holy and right and good. But the law against murder and adultery did not keep David from these works of the flesh, which were, at their very root, matters of sinning against God (*cf* Psa.51:4), resulting in dishonor to His Name. Considering God's work of judging *by itself*,

strictly according to the standards of His righteousness and the record of David's acts, there is no way David could escape from perishing.

What is desperately needed for the sinner, including David, is God's work of deliverance in Christ Jesus.

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL

In its fullest sense, the law focused on God and on His ways and His will. In speaking of the Jew knowing the will, Paul may have had in mind David's words concerning Yahweh in Psalm 103:7 as the passage reads in the Septuagint translation:

*He made His ways **known** to Moses,
His **will** to the sons of Israel.*

The Hebrew (Masoretic) text has the plural word "activities" in the second line rather than a singular term conveying the sense of "will." Without speculating here on how this difference may have occurred, we can have no doubt that the law spoke of that which is pleasing to God. Indeed, what God made known to Israel at Sinai was most essentially centered with His will that they come to know Him and glory in Him and love Him with all their heart, soul and intensity (Deut.6:4,5).

Another passage that reflects Paul's thought here is Psalm 40:8 which (again using the Septuagint) reads:

*I delight to do Your **will**, my God,
And Your law is in the midst of my heart.*

In this case the Septuagint use of the word "will" is more in accord with the Hebrew word in the Masoretic Text, which the CV renders by the phrase, "what is *acceptable*." God's will is that which is acceptable to Him, that which He wants. For Israel this was disclosed in the law.

Here again we discern the holiness and righteousness and goodness of the law. But we also see the certainty of

condemnation against the one who knows the will of God and does not do it. That again is the dire need which prepares the way for the evangel.

THE THINGS OF CONSEQUENCE

The boasting in God and the knowing of the will and the testing of the things of consequence, spoken of in Romans 2:18, are clear objectives set forth by the law given to Moses, on which the Jew rests and out of which he is instructed. The things of most consequence in the law are, as the Lord Himself reminded the people of Israel, that they (first of all) are to love the Lord their God, and (second) they are to love their associate as themselves (Matt.22:37-40; cf Deut.6:5; Lev.19:18). In Matthew 23:23 Jesus described mercy, judgment and faith as among the "weightier matters of the law." These principles are simply corollaries to loving God and one's associates.

They are truly consequential expressions of that which is holy and just and good. But even where these consequential matters are made known most clearly, written in stone, there is always failure.

BESIDES

But that is not all of the holiness and righteousness and goodness of the law. Besides the foundational goals of *glorifying* in God, of *knowing* His will and of *testing* the things of consequence of which the law spoke, the law envisioned a place of usefulness for Israel. They were to be guides and enlighteners and discipliners and teachers in accord with the things of consequence of which the law spoke. This, too, was made known to Moses, by Yahweh: "These words which I am instructing you today will come to be in your heart. Repeat them to your sons, and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you arise" (Deut.6:7).

But because of the flesh, the Jew was not able to be an effective teacher of the high principles of the law. He failed in this because he failed as a doer of the very foundational revelations and instructions of the law.

Nevertheless, Israel will be given a place of service as a channel of blessing not only to their associates but to the nations as well (*cf* Gen.12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4). However, it will not be their own accomplishment; it will come about by the faithfulness of God (*cf* Rom.3:3,4). This is intimated here by the expressions Paul adopts in reference to the Jew's self-confidence in fulfilling his place of instruction and leadership. Paul employs language from the prophets *originally used in reference to the Lord*.

Hence in Isaiah 42:7 we read of the "Servant" and "Chosen One of El," that is, the Messiah, Who will "unclose the eyes of the blind," and in Isaiah 49:6 we read of Him as "a light of the nations." Again, in Hosea 5:2, He is called the "Discipliner." It is only when all Israel shall know Him, "from the smallest of them to the greatest of them" (Jer. 31:34), with the law written on their hearts, that they will be used by God in being a light in the world (*cf* Matt.5:14-18).

This blessing of being a blessing rests, not on the law and on the self-confident efforts of Israel to carry out the law, but on God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises, which in turn is based on that matchless work of God in sending His Son for sinners. Paul will expound on this fulfillment later in Romans 11, but before he does so he will present the evangel given to him concerning Jesus Christ our Lord, upon which Israel's special place of usefulness on the earth is based, just as it is for us.

YOU, THEN

The *having* of this law concerning God and His will, and the *listening* to this law, did not lead to the *doing* of the law. Instead of leading to a loving of God it led to a

dishonoring of His Name. Instead of leading to a life of love for one's associates, it led to all sorts of hypocritical skirtings of the law.

David testifies to this regarding himself in Psalm 51.¹ Paul testifies to this regarding himself in Romans 7. And Paul now exposes this fact regarding the representative individual he addresses. Indeed, as the requirements of the law are defined by our Lord in Matthew 5:21-47, there is no Jew (except Jesus Himself, Who came of the tribe of Judah, and was tried in all things, yet apart from sin) who has met any one of them whatsoever in perfection.

The failure of the Jew to do what he himself taught others to do can be exhibited with respect to every principle he taught. Added to his failure to carry out the just requirements of the law, the Jew became practiced in hiding his failures from others. If his "stealing" was more subtle than Achar's, it probably was just as secretive (*cf* Judges 7). If his "adultery" was more in accord with Matthew 5:28 than David's (*cf* 2 Sam.11), it was no less callously put out of mind. Like those associated with the temple when visited by the One about to die for them, the sanctity he professed with his lips was not what was in his heart (*cf* Mark 11:15-17).

Had our Lord Jesus Christ not been faithful even unto the death of the cross, this failure would be wholly catastrophic, not simply for the Jew but for God Who chose this people to bless them and make them a blessing to all the families of the ground. Indeed, the seriousness of what the apostle writes here, all its evident implications of hopelessness, would be overpowering if we forget what he is leading up to, the great "Yet now" of Romans 3:21 and all that follows concerning God's Son and God's righteousness and love commended in His death for sinners.

1. See p.30 in this issue.

It is the faith of Jesus Christ that leads to justification and the manifestation of the righteousness of God. The promises will be fulfilled. The chosen people will glory in God and know His will and test the things of consequence, apart from all hypocrisy and deception. Although they will not need to teach others (Jer.31:34), they will become a blessing, like that of life itself, to the nations (*cf* Rom.11:15).

This will not be their achievement, but God's supreme accomplishment through Jesus Christ. It will be because of Him that God will put His spirit in their hearts, and they will do the works of the law and become perfect in this doing (*cf* Matt.5:48). Then the welcome words of the Sacred Scriptures, such as noted above, will become realized and exhibited apart from any shadow or flaw.

DISHONORING GOD

A pure and unsullied glorying in God cannot be gained by sinners on the basis of their efforts. The evidence is overwhelming. Both the Jew and the Non-Jew fail of perfection, and thus, in judgment, all must be condemned. Indeed for the "Jew" this failure is, if anything, more pronounced than for the "Greek." For God has shown His mercy to Israel and displayed distinct favor to that chosen nation, and therefore, in their every failure, dishonor comes to God.

Everyone needs the gratuitous and gracious deliverance that is in Christ Jesus. *Everyone* needs the justification gained by His death and made certain by His resurrection (*cf* Rom.4:25).

ACCORDING AS IT IS WRITTEN

As we have seen, a great deal of what Paul has written in Romans 2:17-24 is expressed in the language of the ancient Scriptures. We have noted some of the more obvious sources. In doing this, however, Paul may not cite pas-

sages exactly or even in strict accord with the original contexts. There are similarities in the principles being enunciated, but not always in the details of application. In this way, the original application of the passage or phrase is preserved. But also we see that the patterns of God's will and ways form cohesive themes throughout God's Word.

When Paul concludes, in Romans 2:24, that because of the Jew the Name of God is being blasphemed among the nations, and he connects this with what was written before, he probably had in mind the Septuagint version of Isaiah 52:5, where we read: "Because of you My Name is continually being blasphemed among the nations." (Here again the Septuagint reads differently from the Masoretic Text.) The context in Isaiah suggests it was because Israel was taken into captivity, due indeed to their apostasy, that the Name of Yahweh was dishonored. But Paul borrows and adapts that fact and the way it was expressed to speak of Israel's failure to keep the law. Yet because of what God did in sending His Son for the salvation of sinners, all will acclaim the Lordship of their Saviour, to the glory of God (Phil.2:10,11).

There are likenesses ("according as") in Paul's language here in Romans 2:24 also with Ezekiel 36:20, where we find these words of Yahweh concerning Israel: "When they came to the nations, wherever they came, they got My holy Name profaned among the nations where they came." Again, concerning David (who has already come to our minds because of what Paul says here to the Jew), there is harmony between Romans 2:24 and 2 Samuel 12:14, where the prophet Nathan says: "... you made Yahweh's enemies spurn, yea spurn Him by this thing . . ."

Because of sin in the flesh, the Jew was not able to carry out the ideal works and maintain the right thinking presented to him in the law. The result was that he dishonored the God in Whom he professed to glory.

THE HONOR OF GOD

In speaking of the way in which the Jew dishonored God, Paul directs our attention to the primary issue. It is the glory of God, and the honor of His Name. The problem Paul brings up here in Romans 2 does not simply deal with Israel's desperate need of salvation. More importantly it deals with the faithfulness of God to His promises and His righteousness in all His dealings.

The Jew cannot be justified by doing the works of the law simply because he does not do the works of the law. Yet God has chosen Israel and promised them special blessings, all of which involve bringing honor to His Name. And He will be faithful to His promises, as Paul will soon remind us in Romans 3:3,4.

We have earlier made reference to Psalm 103:7. In the following verses of that psalm David rejoiced in the compassion and graciousness of Yahweh Who does not requite Israel in accord with their sins and removes their transgressions far from them. Yet how can He do so justly if they do not perfectly fear Him and keep His covenant and remember His precepts? The words are clear in verses 17 and 18: "The benignity of Yahweh is from eon unto eon over those fearing Him, and His righteousness continues for the sons of sons, to those keeping His covenant and to those remembering His precepts, to obey them."

Paul is consciously concerned in Romans 2 with the righteousness of God which is revealed in the evangel. This matter has never left his mind since he introduced it in Romans 1:17. God's righteousness as revealed in the evangel very much relates to His dealings with Israel along with His dealings with us of the nations who are believing, and indeed with all mankind (*cf* Rom.3:25,26; 5:12-19). It will be on the basis of the cross of Christ that God brings Israel under the new covenant and places His spirit in their

hearts so that they know God and do the works of the law. So He will be revealed as faithful and just in all His ways.

WITH THE EVANGEL IN VIEW

Indeed all that Paul has said in Romans 2:17-24 is with the evangel in view. The Jew is shown to belong to the ranks of sinners, so that the entirety of humanity is exposed as irreverent and unjust and desperately needing what God achieves through the gift of His Son.

In addition, this portion of Romans also, in speaking of Israel's failures, has introduced matters which are central to the goodness of the evangel. Let us review some of these again, in conclusion:

The evangel revealing the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ, which is being reckoned to us who are believing leaves no room for boasting, or glorying, in ourselves (Rom.3:27). Instead it leads to the grace of *glorifying* in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:1,2). It speaks of justification as the work of God's grace, so that all our boasting is in Him. "Yet not only so, but we are *glorifying* also in God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we now obtained the conciliation" (Rom.5:11).

The evangel centers our attention on the *will of God* for us as it influences our living. By becoming acquainted with God's will as it is revealed in the evangel we discover it is not simply an expression of what God wants us to do, but an expression of what God has willed to do Himself in the giving of His Son and what He shall do because of this. Consequently, our walk in accord with God's will for us is a matter of response, not to law, but to these revelations of God's grace. Hence, what Paul writes in Romans 12:1,2 is based on the evangel as he had presented it earlier in the epistle: "I am entreating you, *then*, brethren, *by the pities of God*, to present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service, and

not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what is the *will of God*, good and well pleasing and perfect.”

In accord with this, the message of God's grace and love and righteousness directs us to an appreciation of God's will as it relates to all mankind. For the welcome words of the evangel testify that *God wills* that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). Indeed the transcendent revelations built on the foundation of Paul's evangel, lead us forward to the *secret of God's will*, in accord with God's delight which He has purposed in Christ, “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 . . . according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His *will*” (Eph.1:9-11).

No wonder it became a matter of continuing prayer for Paul that we “be filled full with the realization of [God's] *will*, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” for this affects our walk and leads to endurance and patience and joy (Col.1:9-11).

Thus, the evangel speaks to us of the *things of consequence*, which Paul prays might become impressed on our minds and hearts. “And this I am praying, that your love may be superabounding still more and more in realization and all sensibility, for you to be testing what things are of consequence . . .” (Phil.1:10).

If the law spoke of love for God and love for our associates as its primary concerns, how much more does the evangel direct us to the love of God, commended in the death of His Son for sinners (Rom.5:8) and a walking in love “according as Christ also loves you and gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor” (Eph.5:2).

D.H.H.

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MARCH, 2004

Volume XCV

Number 2

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EDITORIAL

It is not so great a problem that we frequently make mistakes, but that we frequently *offend* others in many of the mistakes that we make.

To *sin* is to *miss* the mark; it is to make a *mistake*, to *fail* of the ideal. By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight, "for through law is the recognition of *sin*" (Rom.3:20).

To *offend* is to wound the feelings; it is the infliction of emotional injury. Odious, or offensive acts, are not simply a mistake but an affront; they hurt the feelings and displease the taste; since they are unpleasant and undesirable, they are therefore unwelcome.

The Greek word which corresponds to the English "offense" is *paraptōma* (BESIDE-FALL). That which stands "beside" the "fall" (or failure) of sin itself, is the *offense* thereof.

"Law came in by the way, that the *offense* should be *increasing*" (Rom.5:20). That is, sinful acts committed against the dictates of man's own conscience (*cp* Rom.2:14,15) are indeed offensive to God; but sinful acts committed against the testimony of God's own revealed Word, are even *more* offensive to Him.

It is not at all that we simply have made some "mistakes" and yet that God is somehow insensitive concerning them. It is rather that we all are *constituted* sinners (Rom.5:19) and that even the more upright among mankind still continue on day by day in offensive, sinful behavior. Hence God is deeply sensitive to our offenses, finding them *offensive*.

How glorious it is to know, then, concerning God's chosen ones, that we were *conciliated* to God through the death of His Son (Rom.5:10). And, how glorious too it is to know that in Christ, God has conciliated even *the world* to Himself as well. The word of the conciliation is that, "God was in Christ,

conciliating the world to Himself, *not reckoning their offenses to them*" (2 Cor.5:19).

Through Christ, God has conciliated the people of the world to Himself, uniting them to Him and affording them the place of a friend even while they remain practically estranged in unbelief. Though their acts be ever so offensive, even so, He is not *reckoning* their offenses to them.

Therefore, even in the day of judging when He judges their *acts*, this will not be so because He has taken offense and responded in severity accordingly, but because any such judgments are expedient and accord with His purpose *on behalf of* those whom He has already conciliated to Himself, granting them the express benefit of *not* reckoning their offenses to them.

Though humanity remains exceedingly offensive, through Christ a great change has come about in God's treatment of even the most offensive offenders: He has granted them the place of a close friend, and refuses to hold their *offenses* (i.e., the offensiveness of their deeds) against them.

Alas, unlike God, men continually react to the offenses of their fellows by "hitting back" at their offenders with unbecoming offensive acts of their own.

It is because we are constituted sinners that we commit offenses, including the offense of reacting offensively to the offenses of others. Yet the ideal remains, which is: "to be *bearing with* one another and *dealing graciously* among yourselves, if anyone should be having a complaint against any. According as the Lord also deals graciously with you, thus also you [deal graciously among yourselves]" (Col.3:13).

Even if we are not yet mature enough never to react offensively ourselves to the offenses of others, may a sense of our duty to be dealing graciously with those whom we have complaints against, lead us at least to get over our wounded feelings in a timely way, that we may then heed the entreaty, "Bless those who are persecuting you: bless, and do not curse . . . To no one render evil for evil" (Rom.12:14,17).

J.R.C.

ABRAM BELIEVES GOD

15 After these things the word of Yahweh ^bcame to Abram in a vision, [›]saying: Do not ^lfear, Abram! I am your Shield, your exceedingly increased [⁻]Reward. ² + Abram ^{lsg}replied: My Lord Yahweh, what shall You give me? + I am going [⁻]heirless, and the successor to my house—he will be Damascus Eliezer. ³ And Abram ^{lsg}added: Behold, You have given no ^t seed to me; and ^{bd}now a son of my household will take over ^lfrom me.

⁴ + Yet ^{bd}here the word of Yahweh came to him [›]saying: Not this one shall take over from you, but rather the one who shall come forth from your internal parts, he ^⁰shall take over from you. ⁵ + Then He ^cbrought him ^lforth outside ^d and ^lsaid: ^{pr}Now look up toward the heavens and count off the stars if you ^lcan [›]number [⁻]them. And He ^{lsg}promised [›]him: Thus shall become your seed. ⁶ + Now ⁷Abram ⁰believed ⁱon ⁷Elohim ^{cs}, and He ^lreckoned it to him for righteousness.

⁷ He ⁺also ^lsaid to him: I am Yahweh, Who ^cbrought you forth from Ur of the Chaldeans to give [›]you [⁻]this land to tenant it. ⁸ + Yet he ^{lsg}replied: My Lord Yahweh, whereby shall I know that I shall enjoy its tenancy? ⁹ + Now He ^lsaid to him: Take for Me a heifer in her third ^lyear, + a goat in her third ^lyear, + a ram in his third ^lyear, + a turtledove, and a fledgling. ¹⁰ + So he ^lprocured all these for Him and ^lsundered [⁻]them ⁱthrough the middle and ^{lg}put each ^{it} ^lsundered part to meet its corresponding part; [⁻]yet [⁻]the ⁷birds ^{⁻n} he did not sunder. ¹¹ + ⁷Birds of prey ^ldescended on the ⁷severed ⁰cadavers, ⁺but Abram ⁷sat [⁻]with them ⁰ and ^lturned [⁻]them back.

¹² + **When the sun** ^{lb} **was about to set,** + **a stupor fell on Abram, and behold,** the dread of a towering darkness was falling on him. ¹³ + **Then He** ^l **said to Abram: You shall know, yea know, that your seed shall become a sojourner in a land which is not theirs; and they will serve them, and these** ⁷ **will** ^e **do evil to them and** ⁰ **humiliate them for 400 years.** ¹⁴ + **But I will** ^{mr} **indeed adjudicate** ^l **the nation which they shall serve, and afterward they shall come forth** ⁱ **with a great many goods.** ¹⁵ + **As for you, you shall come to your fathers in peace; you shall be entombed** ^l **at a good greyhaired age.** ¹⁶ **And in the fourth generation they shall return** ^{bd} **here, for** ^{bd} **hitherto the depravity of the Amorite is not yet total.**

¹⁷ + **It** ^{lb} **came to pass when the sun had set and a dense darkness** ^b **came,** + **behold, a smoking stove and a fiery torch** ^w **passed between these severed parts.** ¹⁸ ⁱ **On that day Yahweh contracted a covenant with Abram, > saying: To your seed I give this land, from the stream of Egypt as far as the Great Stream, the stream Euphrates:** ¹⁹ **the Kenite,** + **the Kenizzite,** + **the Kadmonite,** ²⁰ + **the Hittite,** + **the Perizzite,** + **the Rephaim,** ²¹ + **the Amorite,** + **the Canaanite,** + **the Girgashite and the Jebusite.**

BECAUSE ABRAM BELIEVED, he was concerned about the promised posterity (Gen.15:2). How could God's word be fulfilled unless he had a son? Was he to adopt one? But he is not allowed to leave the ground of faith. He is still forced to *assume* what he had been told to *expect* (Heb.11:1). He is once more assured that he will have a son. Then he is brought forth outside, and Yahweh says to him, "Now look up toward the heavens and count off the stars if you can number them . . . Thus shall become your seed" (Gen.15:5). The point of this passage lies in the fact that there is no concession to unbelief. No son is

given. No time is set. Physically there is no indication of any fulfillment. Rather the opposite, for Abram was getting older every day. Here we have the highest pinnacle of faith which Abram reached, for it is sheer unadulterated acceptance of God's word, unaided by any outward sign, or the activity of the flesh. That is why this part of Abram's life is the example for the Uncircumcision, who also are justified by faith alone, apart from works (Rom. 4:1-20; 10:1-10; Gal.3:6; Phil.3:9).

GOD IS THE DOER

In the midst of Abram's concern about his successor, *God* steps in and makes a promise. *He does not do* anything, but merely tells what He will do. Abram also *does nothing*. He simply *believes* that God will do it. The entire *absence of works* is the key to Abraham's individual relationship to God in uncircumcision. If God had *fulfilled* the wish of Abram at that time there would have been no room for faith. In that case Abram would doubtless have been grateful, but such help never could have displayed the deep and delightful confidence that Abram had in God. It would certainly not have brought to Abram the most marvelous gratuity that an unrighteous man can ever obtain.

The present Hebrew text says in Genesis 15:6 that Abram believed "in *Yahweh*," but the Septuagint and Syriac Versions indicate an original reading of "Elohim." In accord with this, when quoting this passage, Paul says that Abraham "believed *God*."

At this point in our study the title used of the Deity is highly significant. "God" fits in here ever so much better than "Yahweh," for this is the germ of the Uncircumcision evangel. It reaches out to those who cannot claim Yahweh as their God. "God" is a timeless title, the great Disposer. "Yahweh" is confined to the eons and Israel. He is the special God of the covenant people, in contrast to

the gods of the nations. As the name finds fulfillment it will vanish. A part of it, the Coming One, will no longer apply when He has come (Rev.11:17; 16:5). Here it is out of place. The intelligent saint is relieved to find that the Author has Himself given us the true title through that apostle who was especially used to bring this great truth to the nations. If we are of the Uncircumcision, without a God such as Israel had (Eph.2:12), let us believe the God of Abram, Who is able to fulfill all His promises through the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Then we also will be reckoned righteous.

Eventually *all* mankind will be justified by God, even the Circumcision (Rom.5:18,19). But this is *not* a part of the evangel of the Circumcision, for Abram was not circumcised until later. Now let us note the great contrast between this and the Circumcision evangel, which is brought before us in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, when Abram is ninety-nine years old. First God reminds him of his foolish attempt to make up for God's insufficiency (Gen.17:1). It is a hard lesson to learn. So long as Abram is *able* to assist God in fulfilling His promise, he may try to do so. So God waits until he is *unable*. His body is now dead, so far as procreation is concerned. He could no longer bring Ishmaels into the world, and thus aid the Deity in making good His word. So God begins by reciting His appropriate titles: "I am the *Deity, All-Sufficient*." As such He is able to do all that He promises, and competent to fulfill every engagement that He makes.

THE EXCEEDINGLY INCREASED REWARD

Superficially, it seems as if Abram received no reward for the rescue of Lot and the captives of Sodom and the recovery of their goods. It looked as if he had not been treated righteously, though, of course, it was his own doing. The king of Sodom had offered to do the right thing. But his

faith in God led Abram to act according to a higher rule of righteousness which measured everything by its relation to God, rather than man. He knew that, in God's sight, the king of Sodom had nothing to give, for he had not paid the price for what he possessed to the Owner. How could the king of Sodom enrich him, when the poor ruler had nothing to which he was entitled? But Abram did not offend him by pointing out the truth. He probably felt it rather than knew it. He preferred to get his gifts from the one and only Source of all blessing.

Yahweh engages Himself to be the reward (or: hire) of Abraham! This is doubly marvelous. First of all, Abram had nothing except what God had given him. His servants, his strength, his very life, all were gifts from Yahweh. Besides, the success of the rescue was clearly due to God, Who had awarded his foes into his hand. Abram was an unprofitable slave, as all of God's creatures must ever be, apart from the praise and worship which they offer to the Deity. Nevertheless, Yahweh insists on paying Abram the highest wages, the most enormous salary, the most stupendous reward that it is possible to imagine. *Yahweh Himself is his reward!* That is why Abram is easily the richest of all earth's denizens, the wealthiest of all mundane plutocrats. Almost all other men are burdened or even cursed if they have immense holdings, but Abram's riches always are a blessing because they are really and rightly his, and come from the actual Owner of all.

Dead *things* may contribute to our comfort, but they are not necessarily a source of blessing. The very land given to Abram and his seed has not satisfied his descendants when they held it apart from faith. When they forsook Yahweh the land spewed them out. It is *right* for *things* to be a blessing only when they lead to the great goal which God has set—to be All for everyone. It is *wrong* for *things* to be a blessing apart from the Blesser.

What greater reward could Abram have received than Yahweh Himself? He is the only One Who can assure blessing at any time and for all the eons. If He is for us, who can be against us? In Abram's case we can see the blessing in operation. In the past Abram was blessed temporally with great possessions, such as were reckoned of value in those days. As the friend of God, his name is like a fragrant odor among the sons of men.

How blessed it is for Abraham to have the great Owner of all pledge Himself to look after his lot! Riches have wings. They seldom stay in a family more than a few generations. Abram could not count on conquering the land in his day. Far less could he do aught to secure it for his seed in the future. But, if *Yahweh* promises, *He* will also perform. Abram's faith was not in himself or his holdings, but in the Owner of all, Who is the only One Who can really insure both possession and blessing. The tomb of Abram is the only place on earth with a perfect title. The seed of Abraham are the only nation with a valid right to the land of promise. In the coming kingdom, when they will be subject to the Lord, then they will be blessed and free from want and fear.

RECKONED RIGHTEOUS

Much has been said and written concerning the righteousness which became Abram's. The reckoning has been called "forensic," as though the result of judicial procedure, which might be called a *legal fiction*. Bluntly stated, it hints that Abram did not do right, but God overlooked this and falsified the record. If you look too narrowly at it you are inclined to see things you do not like. It seems almost like a sort of deception. Indeed, some of the more enlightened translators reject this term in favor of "imputed." Theologians "explain" this, "to *attribute* or *ascribe* vicariously." The latter term is further defined as "*substitutional*." This,

again, is generally accepted to mean "the righteousness of Christ" "accepted by the Divine Father as a substitute for the righteousness of mankind." It will be seen that each new term, each new explanation, calls for another, because it not only fails to satisfy, but actually seems to imply *unrighteousness* on the part of God.

Everyone of these non-scriptural, man-made, theological expressions is contrary to the Scriptures and the righteousness of God, the very foundation on which Abram's righteousness rests. *Impute* implies that Abram was *not* righteous. *Attribute* and *ascribe* are milder, but they still need the word *vicarious* in order to relieve their tinge of injustice. *Vicarious* has the advantage of sacerdotal trappings, but it merely means *representative*. The theory is that Christ's righteousness is accepted for man's unrighteousness. A few simple questions would soon show how untenable this is. If Christ's righteousness is taken for man's, is He bereft of righteousness? Of what does Christ's righteousness consist? If His holy life and sacrificial death are a part of it, how could these be imputed to Abram, long before Christ lived on earth and died? One who has seriously studied all these theological makeshifts, cannot help coming to the conclusion that they fail utterly in clarifying this great theme.

Let us rather proceed along the line of *faith*. Abram's passive acceptance, his belief that God is true, whatever He says, is the basis of God's reckoning. This attitude toward God is *right*. *The acceptance of God's revelation is not only more right than anything else in the world, but it also sets all else right*. It puts the Creator in His right place, and man in his. But the point that is generally obscured by unbelief is this: The acts of the believer are made *actually* right by being *combined* with Christ's sacrifice. The two together are infinitely just, and are essential to God's intention, which is to make Himself known to

His creatures. As a dark background is necessary to reveal His glories, the believer provides this by that part of his life which is lived in unbelief. The sins that condemn him are essential to the revelation of God's grace. When cleansed through the sacrifice of Christ, they are not merely nullified, nor are they destroyed, but they are transformed into acts essential to God's glory and the welfare of His creatures, hence are not merely reckoned right by a legal fiction, but are genuinely, gloriously right, reckoned by the highest standards in the universe.

A. E. Knoch

EDITORIAL NOTES

The preceding treatise was not originally part of A. E. Knoch's *Studies in Genesis*. Along with the articles entitled "Faith Righteousness" and "Faith in the Supreme" (appearing in our last two issues of *Unsearchable Riches*), it is adapted from two studies on "The Faith of Abram" which were part of Brother Knoch's earlier series entitled "The Glorious Gospel of God's Grace" (*cf Unsearchable Riches*, vol.36, pages 197,275). These same studies were also reprinted in volume 81 (pages 51,99), but they contribute such important thoughts, especially on Genesis 15, that it seemed well to present them again along with this reprinting of the series on Genesis.

The article by the late, Edward H. Clayton, entitled "Abram to Abraham," is also a reprint adapted from an earlier issue of our magazine (volume 48, p.303, September 1957). We hope even our long-time readers will not find these repeats irksome, but rather find them refreshing and helpful on the theme of *faith*, a most timely subject for us all in these present days.

My own thoughts are often led these days to 1 Corinthians 12:31 and 13:13 concerning faith as one of the "greater graces," or *effects* of God's joy for the members of the Body of Christ. Although many of the spiritual endowments listed in 1 Corinthians 12 have ceased, that of *faith* still remains as a gift graciously granted by God (Phil.1:29) apart from our doings, for assurance in *God's* powerful ability (Rom.4:21).

What we *see* is often disquieting, but what we *believe* is full of joy and peace. What we *hear* is often strident and fearful, but what God says to us in His Word is assuring and well.

D.H.H.

ABRAM TO ABRAHAM

IN OUR STUDIES of Genesis, we now will offer a methodical discussion of the change from Abram to Abraham. Abram had journeyed from Ur of the Chaldeans. At first the journey was with his father Terah, who tended to be a hindrance to Abram's obedience, whatever sympathy he may have had with what Abram would tell him. It was well over five years since they left Ur, for they made a stay at Charan. This stay was concluded, at least in regard to Abram, when Terah died. Then Yahweh renewed His instructions to Abram (Gen.12:1).

It is interesting to trace the journeying and tentings of Abram in the land. They can be used as a skeleton around which to fix some of the notable events, especially the appearances of Yahweh. The *second* appearing of Yahweh was in the land of Canaan. Abram sojourned at Shechem. Shechem is adjacent to Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. At this place we have the earliest history of Abram in his actual sojourn in the land of Canaan. Here he built an altar to Yahweh. This was in response to the promise: "I shall give this land" (Gen.12:7). But shortly Abram moved.

He journeyed some twenty miles to the south, to the hill country between Bethel and Ai. Here he built an altar to Yahweh and called upon the Name of Yahweh. Ai (Rubbish-heap) was at the sunrise. That spoke of the depravity which Abram had left. He was stretching out to Bethel, the House of El. That spoke of the sunset of his expectations (Gen.12:8).

Journeying from the altar between Bethel and Ai to the

southland, below the Judean hills, Abram was overtaken by a heavy famine. This led him down to Egypt, with all the trouble that ensued there. In that country Abram was deflected from the path of faith (Gen.12:10-20). But, due to Yahweh's protection and overshadowing care, he was led to return to Bethel, the place of the altar (Gen.13:1-4).

Back at Bethel, and while there, Abram and Lot separated (Gen.13:5-13). The journey to Egypt had given rise to more trouble than was immediately apparent. Lot had gathered a herd. And a maidservant, Hagar, was also acquired. Each of these became the cause of further vexation to Abram.

In the separation of Abram from Lot, we should note that, though Lot's choice appeared to be prompted by the fertility of the land, in truth, it was necessary for Abram to remain in the land of Canaan, for, at that point, Yahweh's promises pertained immediately to that area.

FURTHER APPEARANCES

A *third* appearing of Yahweh to Abram occurred at Bethel (Gen.13:14-17). This confirmed the gift of the land to Abram. He now moved some thirty miles southward to Mamre (that is, Hebron). This place is about ten miles south of Salem, which is of interest because Melchizedek was resident there (Gen.13:18; 14:18).

At this point it became necessary to rescue Lot, the nephew of Abram (Gen.14). This episode finds its origin in the presence of Lot among these cities, due to his choice of pasturage for his herd in that area. Abram rescued Lot, but this rescue was only the prelude to his later rescue by the intercession of Abram with Yahweh Elohim (Gen.19).

Following this, we have the *fourth* appearing of Yahweh. Here Yahweh revealed Himself as the Shield of Abram (15:1). This refers especially to the dangers which had surrounded Abram in the military expedition he had under-

taken in order to rescue Lot. And it also expresses the certainty of a seed coming from the internal parts of Abram (15:4). Along with the above declaration Abram was told that Yahweh was his exceedingly increased Reward. This was in response to Abram's refusal to take anything of the spoils of battle.

Turning to Abram's side of this appearance, we find the major matter to be the question of the seed. Is Damascus Eliezer, running about in Abram's household, to be the enjoyer of the tenancy? Such an idea was at once rejected by Yahweh (15:4), for Yahweh assured Abram that one out of his loins would be the tenant of Abram's allotment. Furthermore, Abram was told that his seed was to be as numerous as the stars of the heavens. But it was not yet affirmed that this seed would be borne by Sarai. This remained to be said in Genesis 17:19.

These matters were confirmed by a covenant in which Yahweh alone took part. Abram was instructed to take for Yahweh a heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove and a fledgling. These animals were to be severed into parts in readiness for the covenant. Abram was occupied in turning back the opposition of the heavens against the covenant, as indicated by the predatory birds. This lasted until the setting of the sun. Then Abram was overtaken by a stupor (15:12). Thus he was prevented from making the covenant. The signs of Yahweh's presence, a smoking stove (figuring affliction) and a fiery torch (figuring deliverance), passed between the severed parts, and thus the covenant was ratified by one side only. And that Side was Yahweh's, Who alone has the ability to perform it!

Abram was also told that his seed would be afflicted for four centuries. Not until the fourth generation would the seed possess the land. Here was what appeared to be frustration of Yahweh's promise, because the depravity of the Amorite had not yet been filled up (Gen.15:13-16).

Nevertheless, in that day, Yahweh contracted a covenant, and, in view of the assurance given to Abram of his own seed, it was then said (15:18): “*I give this land.*” The statement regarding the land hitherto had been “*I shall give*” (cf Gen.12:7; 13:15). But here, in chapter fifteen, the giving is expressed as a fact, concluded with a specific contract on Yahweh’s part, and the boundaries were now stated in their widest extent.

In view of this fourth appearing, chapter sixteen seems strange. From the human standpoint, there was a feeble element which could be looked upon as an excuse for the deflection which arises. Seeing that Sarai did not bear for Abram, she suggested means whereby this deficiency may be remedied. Abram was to take her Egyptian maid, so that Sarai would be built by her. To this Abram agreed, for this would also be his own seed. Thus the evil of the prior deflection, in the visit to Egypt, provided yet further cause to turn aside. Ten years had gone by since the arrival in Canaan. Ishmael was the outcome. Abram was 86 years old at this time. The flesh still had strength. Sarai’s advice was followed. The results could not be according to promise.

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH APPEARANCES

Thirteen years passed. Then Yahweh responded: “I am El Who-Suffices; walk before Me, and become a man of integrity” (Gen.17:1). This was the *fifth* appearing. Its import is that *walk must agree with faith*. But Abram did not understand about the seed.

Abram fell on his face. This act of worship was Abram’s reaction to the alteration by Yahweh of his own name and that of Sarai (Gen.17:4-17). These were most significant matters. The alterations really concerned the matter which was such a problem to Abram and Sarai, and which had encouraged their compact.

But Abram laughed; he was considering his own body

now deadened, and he exclaimed, “O that Ishmael should live before You!” (17:18).

Now Yahweh confirmed His covenant, asserting (17:19) that *Sarah* was to bear a son for Abram. This is what Abram had not hitherto understood. And now both Abram and Sarai were as good as dead. It is in these circumstances that we should view the institution of circumcision in this appearance. This also was a covenant. Yet it was really more. In the circumstances, it was a figure that the flesh and all its powers were entirely cut off. Abram was obedient to this.

Shortly a further appearing, the *sixth*, occurred at Mamre (Gen.18). This appearing was to confirm the fact that Sarah was to bear a son for Abraham. This time, Sarah takes part in the conversation. And, as did Abraham in the previous appearance, Sarah laughed. This drew forth Yahweh’s question (18:14), “Is anything too difficult for Yahweh?” The answer, of course, is no, for the fifth appearing had rested on the title *El Who-Suffices (El-Shaddai)*.

The son was to be named Isaac. In that name was recorded the folly of Abraham and Sarah. At the same time the name also recorded the joyous laughter resulting from the fulfillment of Yahweh’s promises. Sarah first laughed on her own account, but later she laughed because Yahweh caused her to do so (cf Gen.21:3-7). And here we also laugh with Sarah.

Coupled with this sixth appearing, it is recorded that Abraham interceded on behalf of Sodom. In this service we begin to discern the developed understanding of Abraham. In accord with the promise of blessing through him, Abraham interceded. And the intercession shows his discernment of Elohim’s glory in relation to His creatures.

We are given the gist of Abraham’s understanding when he asked, “Will You indeed, sweep off the righteous with the wicked? Perhaps there are fifty righteous in the midst of the city; will You indeed sweep off and not bear with

the entire place on account of the fifty righteous who are within it? Far be it from You to act in this manner to put to death the righteous with the wicked, so that it would occur with the righteous as with the wicked. Far be it from You; the Judge of the entire earth, would He not execute right judgment?" (Gen.18:23-25).

This is a most remarkable grasp of the mercy of Yahweh. It shows His glory, for He will indeed do right judgment.

After this Abraham was involved in a third deflection (chapter 20). He journeyed south, and came to sojourn at Gerar between Kadesh and Shur. Related to the actual fulfilling of Yahweh's promise concerning a seed through Sarah, there arose a new factor to be reckoned with. Evidently her youth was renewed, for she obtained power for the disruption of seed though beyond her prime. It was most probable that her innate loveliness was revived. The pact between Abram and Sarai (*cf* Gen.16:1,2) still worked for evil.

Despite the height of understanding which Abraham showed in the matter of Sodom, still here, in Gerar, we perceive again the weakness of the flesh, for Abraham, judging that the fear of the Elohim was absent from Gerar, practiced the same tactics as in Egypt. This imperiled the nation of the Philistines. This forebode an issue contrary to Yahweh's ways through Abraham to the nations.

Yahweh used His resources and power to rectify the position, and Abimelech was delivered. At the same time, Yahweh also showed the unique position of Abraham, for he was a prophet, who would pray for the king. Thus blessing came through Abraham (Gen.20:17).

Following this incident at Gerar, the promised seed (Isaac) was born the following season. Sarah bore for Abraham a son in his old age. Isaac was circumcised the eighth day according to Yahweh's instructions (Gen.21:1-5).

We have completed a brief survey of this biography of

Abraham. Abraham seems to have continued to dwell in the neighborhood of Gerar and Beersheba. It was in this district that Isaac was born.

For a moment let us look again over the record to discern, if possible, Abraham's progress before the seventh appearing of Yahweh.

Let us turn back to the beginning of Abram's call, as recorded in Acts 7:3. The details behind Terah's movement "Come out of your land and from your relationship and come hither into the land which I would be showing to you," commence with the word "Come." This is spoken with reference to Abram. He was responsive and obedient. Terah appeared to be sympathetic, but he was dominant, and a hindrance. After the death of Terah, in Genesis 12:1, Yahweh's message to Abram became "Go." This, according to Acts 7:4, is termed an *exile*. He was exiled into this land of Canaan. Abram went out, not versed as to where he was coming (Heb.11:8). In each instance it was by *faith*.

THE SEVENTH APPEARANCE

Let us link together the fact that Abraham was not versed in where he was coming in his early movements and the "Go" of Yahweh when the offering of Isaac was in view (Gen.22:2). This time there was the addition of the words "into the land of Moriah." Moriah means "Bitter-will-be" or "Bitterness."

When *Go* is connected thus, does it not suggest that the ultimate aim has always been in regard to God's only *Son* and His *Sacrifice*? Yahweh called Abram with one aim, to lead him with regard to *His* only Son. And this Yahweh did by means of *Abraham's* only son (22:2). Whether we think of Abram, or of the world, this bitterness is always before Him.

As we reflect upon the words of Abraham to Isaac in answer to Isaac's question, as they were *en route* to the

place of which Yahweh had told Abraham (Gen.22:7,8), can we not realize that on this journeying, Abraham truly was seeing and exulting in the day of Christ (John 8:56)?

Isaac asked about the flocking, and Abraham replied: "Elohim shall see for Himself as to the flocking" (Gen. 22:8). The AV rendering "provide" is a nuance not actually stated. When Abraham named the place, he linked the word *see* to *Yahweh*, that is, Yahweh-jireh (Gen.22:14). Yahweh was seeing to the flocking.

This lays the full stress on the fact that Abraham was walking by *faith*. As to sight, Abraham was seeing his "only son," but, as to faith, Abraham was "reckoning that God is able to be rousing Isaac from among the dead." In a parable Abraham recovered Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19). On Moriah, prophecy was enacted. Yahweh saw, but Abraham believed. Thus Isaac's question brings out that Abraham became acquainted with the day of Christ. And, indeed, also that Abraham is the friend of God (James 2:23; 2 Chron.20:7; Isa.41:8), fellowshiping with Elohim, having matters in common.

But let us consider Abraham's progression in the appreciation of God. For this we need to look again at the details in between his call and this consummation. But we must note that, in whatever way we look at Abraham, whether as the forefather of Israel or as the man of faith, Abraham is God's achievement.

Abram, in his own family and society, was viewed in an exclusive and preeminent way, as a man of dignity. But before, and in relation to Yahweh, Abram was none of these. He was just like the rest of the population, a failure. He missed the understanding that God was greater than creation. But, due to God's operation, Abram did attain a solitary dignity as the friend of God.

At Yahweh's second appearance to Abram, He made clear to him all that He purposed: *To your seed I shall*

give this land (Gen.12:7). This contains all, though specific details are not expressed. We need to keep this in mind, for all that follows is but a working-out, an expressing of that which was fully implicit in Yahweh's first statement to Abram. The appearances (or theophanies) of Yahweh were to instruct Abram. This they did in two senses: (1) They conveyed God's intentions in the form of promises, and (2) They required Abram to conform himself and his walk to Elohim's ways. In this way, during some forty years, Yahweh was revealed to Abraham.

We start with Abram's responsive disposition. Faith led his disposition to obey. But faith was not yet instructed concerning Elohim's glory. This lack of understanding is seen in the fact that Abram's responsive disposition led to failure, for it gave rise to the activity of the flesh. Faith takes its character from the specific words of God. In the early years Yahweh's word stressed that He was giving the land to Abram's seed. When its boundaries were defined (Gen.15:18-21), Abram had come to understand details concerning the land and concerning the fact that Yahweh would give it. The question of the seed was related to the land, but this Abram did not fully grasp. Elohim's words required Abram to believe that which was contrary to circumstances. This is so both as regards the land and the seed, for the former was already possessed by the Canaanite. Nevertheless, it came about early concerning the seed that there was an even higher demonstration of faith exhibited by Abram (Gen.15:5). Yahweh pointed him to the stars to indicate the number to which his seed will attain. Abram believed God. This believing is counted to him for righteousness (v. 6). The question of the seed is settled, as far as what would be. Understanding as to how it could be, this was limited because Yahweh's glory was but partially grasped.

It is in such circumstances that the flesh can become

active. Abram came to fail because his faith did not wait in expectancy. Thus it came to be that Abram's faith was not affecting his walk (*cf* Gen.17:1).

In Abram's responsiveness we see his goodness and his good intentions superceding the walk of faith. This was the flesh seeking to create circumstances whereby God would be assisted in fulfilling His promise. This is enshrined in Ishmael! Thirteen years of experience intervened, so as to bring Abraham beyond expectation. In this period Abraham learned that, though circumstances seem to hide Elohim's glory, even to the extent of being greater than His glory in appearance, yet in actual fact, such circumstances are needed ere God's glory is unfolded. This is what Abraham learned, and so we see him, though *beyond expectation, yet he was believing with expectation*(*cf* Rom.4:18).

Faith reversed reason. Reason does not get hold of that opinion of God's glory which enables the creature to discover that in all possible ways God is paramount. And thus reason ever tends away from the glorification of God. The growth of Abraham's comprehension of the Subjector may be discerned by the use of the Divine titles which occur in the record. God really used these to instruct Abram. In each title, particular aspects of God's glory are enshrined. Here we need the caution that we ought not to think of any feature of the Deity as being greater than any other.

Yahweh is the One Who speaks to Abram right at the start. This is the Subjector's *Name*, and though of special significance, yet it embraces all else connected with the Deity. *Yahweh* is the One concerning Whom Abram must learn.

Amidst the warfare (chapter 14), it is *El*, the Subjector Who is presented. This One is supreme, above any other arbiter. Thus, *El* is greater than any of those arbiters with whom Abram had done battle.

Later (chapter 15), *Shield and the Exceedingly Increased*

Reward is used as the title which settled the question of the giving of the land.

Still later, in chapter 17, *Yahweh* is the *El Who Suffices*. This title really ought to have decided the question of the seed, apart from the impatience and activity of the flesh.

Yahweh Himself formulated all the foregoing names and titles. But, after offering his son Isaac, Abraham himself formulated the divine title which crystallized the position to which he had attained. It is *Yahweh-yireh*, that is, *Yahweh-is-See-er* (Gen.22:14). That sufficed. Because of this, Abraham, for his part, would walk by faith. And now, through the years, Abraham had learned that faith is triumphant. To this end *Yahweh* probed Abraham. *Yahweh* knew this at the start. The probing was to demonstrate fully, concisely and clearly to Abraham, that faith is triumphant.

So taught had Abraham become, that in the evangel of God, he is the great example of faith. It is in his footprints (Romans 4:12) of faith that we are to walk.

Thus Abram, first sought by *Yahweh*, had come to be the friend of Elohim. This came about through much experience. His faith dispelled doubts. It reversed reason. And it invigorated him so that he could give glory to God (Rom. 4:20). What a vast advance from the position he was in, in Ur of the Chaldeans!

Even so, Abraham, though becoming the friend of God, did not know the secret of the evangel. That brings reconciliation. Yet even this may find a faint figure in this family relationship—Father and Son, Abraham and Isaac. In reconciliation, love dispels all opposition and all offense. And love ever maintains the relationship of reconciliation.

The lesson to us in Abraham is this: *Faith is paramount!* In the evangel of God it agrees with grace and makes salvation certain. Obedient faith is triumphant.

E. H. Clayton

REAPING THE WHIRLWIND (2 Samuel 13)

13 + This ^{1b}happened some time afterward: + David's son Absalom ¹had a lovely sister; + her name was Tamar, and David's son Amnon became infatuated with her. ² + Yet > Amnon was ¹distressed so > that he made himself ill- ¹for the ^psake of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin, and in Amnon's eyes it was too difficult to do anything to her. ³ + Now Amnon > had an associate; + his name was Jonadab, son of David's brother Shimeah; + Jonadab was a very shrewd man. ⁴ + He ¹said to him, For what reason are you, the king's son, so weak as this, ⁱ morning ⁱ after morning? Will you not ¹tell > me? + Amnon ^{1sa}replied to him, I am in love! ¹with my brother Absalom's sister Tamar. ⁵ + Then Jonadab ¹said to him, Lie down on your bed and feign yourself ill. + When your father comes to see you, + then you say to him, ^{pr}Please let my sister Tamar come and ^cgive me a ¹repast of bread. + She should ^dprepare ¹the repast > before my eyes, that ^w I may ¹see it and ¹eat from her hand.

⁶ + So Amnon ¹lay down and feigned himself ill. + When the king ¹came to see him, + Amnon ¹said to the king, ^{pr}Please let my sister Tamar come and make ¹heart-shaped cakes > before my eyes, + that I may have a repast of a ^{two} couple heart-shaped cakes from her hand. ⁷ + So David ¹sent word to Tamar in ^d the ⁱⁿ palace, > saying-, Go ^{pr} now to your brother Amnon's home and ^dprepare ¹a repast for him. ⁸ + Tamar ¹went to her brother Amnon's home + while he was lying down. + She ¹took ¹dough and ¹kneaded it. + Then she ^mshaped it into ¹hearts > before his eyes and ¹cooked ¹the

heart-shaped cakes. ⁹ + She ¹took ¹the griddle and ¹poured them before him; + yet he ¹refused to eat. + Amnon ¹said, ^cHave every one go forth from ^{on} me. + So every one went forth from ^{on} him.

¹⁰ + Now Amnon ¹said to Tamar, Bring the repast ^Mtoward^s the bedchamber + that I may eat the repast from your hand. + Tamar ¹took ¹the heart-shaped cakes ^w she had ^dmade and ¹brought them toward the bedchamber to her brother Amnon. ¹¹ + When she ^cbrought them ¹close to him to eat, + he ^cheld ⁱ her ¹fast and ¹said to her, Come, lie down with me, my sister. ¹² + Yet she ^{1sa}replied to him, Do not, my brother, do not ¹humiliate me, for ^{so} such a thing should not be done in Israel! Do not ^dcommit ¹this ¹decadent thing! ¹³ And I, whither ^d should I ^{go} carry ¹my reproach? And you, you would ¹become like one of the decadent men in Israel. + So now I pray, speak to the king, for he will not ¹withhold me from you. ¹⁴ + But he would not > hear-ken- ¹to her voice; + he was more ¹unyielding ^fthan she; + he ¹humiliated her and ¹lay ¹with her. ¹⁵ + Then Amnon ¹hated her with a very great hatred; for greater was the hatred with which he hated her ^fthan the love with which he had loved her.

+ So Amnon ¹said to her, Get up! Go away! ¹⁶ + She ^{1sa}replied to him, This must not be, ⁷my brother^o; ⁷concerning^s ¹this ¹evil ¹of sending- me away, it is ¹greater ^fthan the other one ^wthat you have done ^{wi}to me. + Yet he would not > hearken- to her. ¹⁷ + He ¹called ¹his young attendant who was ministering to him and ¹said, ^{pr}Now send ¹this woman out, away from ^{on} me to ^d the outside, and latch the door after her!

¹⁸ + She had a distinctive tunic on her, for the virgin daughters of the king ¹put on ^{so} such robes. + When his ministering attendant put ¹her ¹forth to the outside and latched the door after her, ¹⁹ + then Tamar ¹took ashes ⁷and ^{pl}put them^o on her head; + she tore the distinctive

tunic ^wthat she had on her and 'placed her ⁷hands^c on her head. +Thus she 'went walking⁻ away, and she cried out.

²⁰ + Her brother Absalom 'said to her, Your brother Amnon, has he ^bbeen with you? + Now be silent, my sister; he is your brother. You must not 'set your heart 'on 'this matter. +So Tamar 'dwelt + in desolation' in her brother Absalom's home. ²¹ +As for 'king David, when he heard 'of all 'these 'things, he was very 'angry 'with him; ⁷yet he did not grieve his son Amnon's spirit, for he loved him 'because he was his firstborn⁰. ²² + Absalom did not speak with Amnon > ^feither evil +or ^{fr} good, for Absalom hated 'Amnon ^{on}for this matter ^wwhere he had humiliated 'his sister Tamar.

²³ + It ^{ib}was 'after the days of two years +that > Absalom ^{ib}had sheepshearers' ⁱat Baal-hazor ^{w wi}near Ephraim. + Absalom 'invited > all the king's sons. ²⁴ +So Absalom 'came to the king and 'said, Behold, I pray, your servant 'has sheepshearers'. ^{pr}Now may the king ^{go}come +with his servants ^Qto~ your servant! ²⁵ +But the king ^{isa}replied to Absalom, Oh no, my son! Let not all of us 'go, so +that we may not be burdensome ^{on}to you. + He ⁷ⁱurged^{-Q} him, +but he would not > go~; +yet he 'blessed him. ²⁶ +Then Absalom 'said, +If not you, I pray, let my brother Amnon go 'with us! + The king ^{isa}replied to him, Why should he go with you? ²⁷ +Again Absalom ⁷ⁱurged⁻ him; +so he 'sent 'with him 'Amnon and 'all the other sons of the king. ⁷+Then Absalom ^{id}prepared a feast like the feast of a king⁰.

²⁸ + Absalom 'instructed 'his lads, > saying⁻, ^{pr}Now ^{see}watch. ^{as}When Amnon's heart is cheerful ⁱwith wine, and when I say to you, Smite 'Amnon, +then you will ^cput 'him to death. You must not 'fear; ^tdid not I myself instruct 'you? Be steadfast and ^bbe > sons of valor! ²⁹ +So Absalom's lads 'did to Amnon just as Absalom had instructed them. +Then all the other sons of the king 'arose and 'fled, + each one 'riding on his mule. ³⁰ + It 'came to pass while

they were ⁱon the road, +that the report came to David, > saying⁻, Absalom has smitten 'all the king's sons, and not one ^fof them is left. ³¹ +At this, the king 'arose, + 'tore 'his garments and 'lay down ^{on}the earth; and all his courtiers were standing by with ⁷their^c clothes torn'.

³² +Then Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, 'responded and 'said, My lord ⁷the king^c must not ^{isa}think it is 'all the lads, the king's sons, whom they have ^cput to death; for it is Amnon, he alone, who is dead. For ^{on}at Absalom's bidding it ^bwas ^{pl}determined' ^fsince the day he humiliated⁻ 'his sister Tamar. ³³ +So now my lord the king must not ^{pl}take to his heart the ^{sp}report, to ^{sa}think that all the king's sons are dead; but it is rather Amnon, he alone, who is dead.

³⁴ +While Absalom was running 'away, + the lad who was the watchman' 'lifted 'his eyes and 'stared, and behold, there were many people walking ⁷ⁱon the road of Horonaim, ⁱon the descent. +So the watchman' 'came and 'told > the king about it. + He said, I have seen men coming down' from the road of Horonaim~ from the side of the mountain. ³⁵ +Now Jonadab 'said to the king, Behold, the king's sons! They have come! According to the ^{sp}report of your servant, thus it has come to be. ³⁶ + It ^{ib}was as he had ^{all}finished⁻ > speaking⁻, + ^{bd}that the king's sons themselves came. + They 'lifted their voice and 'lamented, and ^{mr}so did the king and all his courtiers; they lamented with a very great lamentation.

³⁷ +As for Absalom, he had run away; + he 'went to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. + ⁷King David^c 'mourned all the days over his son Amnon. ³⁸ +As for Absalom, he had run away and had 'gone to Geshur; + he ^{ib}stayed there three years. ³⁹ +Then 'king David's ⁷spirit of anger⁰ to go forth 'after Absalom was ^{all}vanishing, for he was consoled over Amnon that he had died.

"FOR they are sowing the wind, and they shall reap the sweeping whirlwind" (Hosea 8:7). Hosea's statement regarding Israel makes a fitting summary of David's experience. Reaping comes later and in greater quantity than sowing. And so the consequential events from David's sins brought with them far greater sorrow.

Nathan had said to David, "You made Yahweh's enemies spurn, yea spurn Him by this thing" (2 Sam.12:14). "Spurn" means to kick at or drive back with contempt or scorn. Being God's representative, David brought shame on God's Name. Nathan's comment also informs us that the events of David's affair with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah became public knowledge.

David may have suspected that Uriah had been informed of Bathsheba's visit to the palace. Such suspicions would make David indignant, feeling that Uriah was trying to manipulate him. Thinking this way, he could discount Uriah's devotion and justify his own actions to himself. David would outmaneuver Uriah, making him the courier of his own death sentence, and making himself the wise tactician. But God "is clutching the wise in their craftiness" (1 Cor.3:19). Haman was hung on his own gallows, Goliath was beheaded with his own sword, the Adversary is defeated with his own weapon, death, and David was manipulated by his own sons as they copied his sins (*cf* Psa. 7:15,16; 9:15,16; Prov.26:27; Ecc.10:8,9). How much better it would be for us all to be exposed with humility than to double our sins and reap the more bitter exposure later.

FAMILY LIFE IN THE ROYAL COURT

Public knowledge of the king's sins became an excuse to his sons to do no less. David's polygamy was a continual spring of strife. The wives and their children would have had separate quarters. There would have been jealousy and envy among them. Probably all the wives were

ambitious for their sons to become king. With the affairs of state and his family so divided, David probably had little influence over his children as a father, and the prestige of the royal court was sure to attract many opportunistic characters and influences.

Like his father, Amnon lusted after beauty and gave in to his lust. Like his father, Absalom murdered. Like his father, Absalom used wine to weaken his victim. Yet the doting father, David, failed to discipline either of his sons for these wrongs.

David experienced the other side of his own sins through the actions of his children. He may have wondered if Uriah was pained like himself as he suffered the violation of Tamar. Oh, if only Amnon had not given in to lust as David had done! Probably the thought of incest was even more revolting to David than adultery. If only Absalom had not murdered, as David had done! And yet Absalom's crime was committed in broad daylight, before many witnesses, and was against his own brother.

The sorrow that David suffered was more bitter and intense because he himself had sent Tamar to Amnon, and he himself had sent his sons to Absalom's feast. Surely he must have asked himself, "Why did I not see these things coming? Why have I multiplied my own grief?"

"Happy is he whose transgression is lifted away, whose sin is covered over!" (Psa.32:1). When we realize the depths of sin and the tragedy to which it leads, we can realize the heights of joy to be found in that simple, honest life, lived in the light of truth. (And is this not what God has in view for us all?)

Jeremiah voiced God's message to Israel: "Let your evil discipline you, and your backslidings, let them reprove you; know then and see how evil and bitter it is when you forsake Yahweh your Elohim and you have no awe of Me, averring is my Lord Yahweh of hosts" (Jer.2:19). Paul also

gave us a similar message: "Be not deceived, God is not to be sneered at, for whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also, for he who is sowing for his own flesh, from the flesh shall be reaping corruption, yet he who is sowing for the spirit, from the spirit shall be reaping life eonian. Now we may not be despondent in ideal doing, for in due season we shall be reaping, if we do not faint. Consequently, then, as we have occasion, we are working for the good of all, yet specially for the family of faith" (Gal.6:7-10).

FROM THE OUTSIDE, LOOKING IN

We have all had the experience of watching someone very dear to us, whether a close friend, relative or child, undergo sufferings resulting from their actions. In this experience we find that we have the capacity to feel and suffer with others. This should help us understand the far greater capacity that God has to experience our sufferings with us, both personally, and through Christ. "Surely our illnesses has He borne, and our pains—He was burdened with them . . . The discipline of our welfare was on Him" (Isa.53:4,5). "You Yourself know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought from afar . . . Should I make my berth in the unseen . . . even there Your hand would guide me, and Your right hand, it would hold me . . . You have known my soul very thoroughly" (Psa. 139:2-14). "As a father shows compassion over his sons, so Yahweh shows compassion over those fearing Him. For He knows our formation, remembering that we are soil" (Psa.103:13,14).

In watching others suffer we feel their pain, yet we may know that ultimately these circumstances will prove to be of benefit. Faith stands fast in affliction, believing that maturity and joy lie ahead, though hidden from sight.

J. Philip Scranton

NOT OF MEN, BUT OF GOD

GOD IS THE SOURCE of every human benefit and good. This is a fundamental principle of our faith, and yet we often act as though it were otherwise. The Jew, who came to suppose that his own act of circumcision lay at the root of his privileges and blessings, is a good example:

*For circumcision, indeed, is benefiting
if you should be putting law into practice,
yet if you should be a transgressor of law, your
circumcision has become uncircumcision.
If the Uncircumcision, then should be maintaining
the just requirements of the law, shall not his
uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?
And the Uncircumcision who, by nature, are
discharging the law's demands, shall be judging
you, who through letter and circumcision, are
a transgressor of law.*

*For not that which is apparent is the Jew, nor yet that
which is apparent in flesh is circumcision;
but that which is **hidden** is the Jew, and circumcision is
of the **heart**, in **spirit**, not in letter,
whose applause is not of men, but **of God**.*

CIRCUMCISION

When God first gave instructions concerning circumcision He told Abram that it was a covenant *sign* (Gen. 17:11). This would indicate that the act of circumcision was a visible reminder of what was agreed to in the contract. Hence, in Romans 4:11 Paul speaks of circumcision

as a sign and a seal “of the righteousness of the faith which was in uncircumcision.” It pointed to what God had done in Genesis 15:6, and it also pointed to the promises God had already made to Abram, concerning the blessings of descendants and land and being a blessing. As such, circumcision was a benefit itself to the chosen people in that it was a visible reminder of what God had said He had done or would do. In this sense, the attention was predominantly centered on God, Who declared what He would do for them, and Who provided this sign to remind them of His deeds and promises.

However, the covenant established at Sinai involved more than God’s promises of what He would do for Israel. It called on Israel to do its part by carrying out the demands of the law. In this context, circumcision was not simply a sign of what God was doing and had promised to do, but also was a sign of the nation’s agreement to fulfill the demands of the law.

As such it tended to draw attention away from God to the human. It seemed to speak of the promises of God as dependent on the human fulfilling his part. This is the sense that Paul has in view in Romans 2:25, when he says to the Jew, “For circumcision, indeed, is benefiting if you should be putting law into practice.”

In accord with this view, we find that after the law had been given, Moses associated circumcision with both a declaration of *God’s* love for, and choice of Israel, and the requirement that *they* love and serve Him and love the sojourner among them, an apt summation of all the various instructions in the law (*cf* Deut.10:12-22). In view of these expressions of divine love for them and the need for their upright behavior in love, the people were to circumcise the foreskin of their *heart*, and no longer stiffen their neck (Deut.10:16).

Thus circumcision was being revealed as more than a

sign of what God had done and would do. It was a sign of the people’s commitment as well as a sign of what God committed Himself to do. It was also to be more than a surface cutting away of the foreskin. Circumcision was to mean a cutting off of the foreskin of their collective heart, a cutting away of their stubbornness (their collective, stiffened neck). It was to be a genuine, willing and flawless putting away of all their irreverence and self-centeredness.

As such it was an impossibility to the flesh. Consequently, the Jew did not put the law into practice in accord with the sense required. He was a transgressor of law (Rom.1:27). He could not circumcise the foreskin of his stubborn heart. Therefore, any benefit based on circumcision in that sense could not be realized. The circumcision amounted to the same thing as not being circumcised (Rom.2:25).

THREE IF CLAUSES

The three clauses in Romans 2:25 and 26, beginning with the word “if,” pose important questions about human righteousness in relation to law. Does the Jew put law into practice so that he gains the promised benefits? (The answer is No.) Or is he a transgressor of law? (The answer is Yes.) Furthermore, does anyone of the Uncircumcision actually maintain the just requirements of the law made known to his conscience by nature? (The answer is No.)

The scriptural answer to all three questions is that not one is just, not even one (Rom.3:10). By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified (Rom.3:20).

The first if-clause speaks of a human impossibility. The Jew does *not* put law into practice. The Jew boasts in God, but at the same time he is dishonoring God (Rom.2:17-24).

The second if-clause speaks of a well-attested fact. It speaks of a human certainty. The Jew *is* a transgressor of law in one way or another (Rom.2:27), for all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin (Rom.3:9). In a judgment where

the hidden things of humanity are brought to light (Rom. 2:16), the Jew will be found a sinner, wanting of the glory of God, just as surely as anyone else.

The third if-clause reverts to the pattern of the first. The Uncircumcision does *not* maintain the just requirements of the law. Paul speaks here of those of the nations who are aware of right and wrong by means of their conscience (*cf* Rom.2:15), or as he puts it here in verse 27, "by nature." The Uncircumcision, guided by the law written in their heart *by nature*, are most certainly included in Paul's conclusion of Romans 3:9-20. They are sinners. The evangel of God's grace is the only means for discharging the demands of the law.

As we are in ourselves, we all fail.

But Paul's main concern now is the position of the Circumcision in God's just judgment. He speaks hypothetically of the Uncircumcision in order to help the Jew perceive the serious reality and implications of his sinfulness. If righteousness can actually be gained by human effort, then the Uncircumcision can do as well as or even better than the Jew.

ALL ARE SINNERS

The truth is, however, that neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision can be justified *in God's sight* by works of law. Whether under the law given at Sinai or a law of conscience, no one can succeed in meeting all the demands of right behavior and right thinking. Sin entered into the world through Adam, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned (Rom.5:12). God Himself must provide the means whereby His promises of good and benefit can be realized.

And God does do so, as the evangel declares. Because of His giving His Son for sinners, God succeeds in gaining the benefits He has promised. And on the basis of His

achievement through the faith of Jesus Christ, God will justly put His spirit into the hearts of the Circumcision so that they will in fact put the law into practice (*cf* Ezek. 36:27). So also on the basis of His sending of His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh, the just requirement of the law will be fulfilled in the believer, both Jew and Greek (Rom.8:3,4), and eventually because of the righteous act and obedience of Jesus Christ, all sinners will be constituted righteous (Rom.5:18,19).

THAT WHICH IS HIDDEN

In speaking of God's just judgment Paul had made mention of God judging the *hidden* things of humanity (Rom. 2:16). The righteousness of God, in His righteous judgment, demands that all the sins of all humanity be taken into account, including the hidden things which other people could not see.

Now in Romans 2:28,29 the apostle writes, "For not that which is apparent is the Jew, nor yet that which is apparent in flesh is circumcision; but that which is hidden is the Jew, and circumcision is of the heart . . ." Again it is not merely a surface matter. To be a Jew, to be of the Circumcision, as we have seen from Deuteronomy 10, all stubbornness and pride and greed, all coveting and lying and irreverence must be cut away, even that which is hidden from other people. There must be genuine love for God and for one's associate. Every wrong thought and deed must be taken away. Then the Jew is truly a Jew.

A JEW IN TRUTH

This passage is not saying that the Uncircumcision takes the place of the Circumcision. It is not suggesting that people of the nations will manage to succeed where the Jew has failed, so that they become "true" Israel. These verses define for the Jew that which is required of him as a Jew.

What was required was: "Be circumcised to Yahweh, and take away the foreskin of your heart, O man of Judah and dwellers of Jerusalem" (Jer.4:4). But for this to happen, God will have to do it, as indeed was promised long ago: "Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed so as to love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may stay alive" (Deut.30:6). That has not occurred yet, but it will when their Rescuer turns away irreverence from Jacob and sets up His [one-sided] covenant with them and eliminates their sins (Rom.11:26,27).

APPLAUSE OF GOD

The language of Romans 2:29 anticipates the evangel, especially as Paul relates it to Israel in Romans 9-11. It is not their doing of the law but Christ's death for sinners that is the basis for God eliminating the sins of Israel. Because of God's giving of His Son, Israel will truly manifest circumcision of the foreskin of the heart. This will not be an achievement of their own fleshly strength, but an operation of spirit from God awakening them from their spirit of stupor (Rom.11:8). "For unregretted are the graces and the calling of God . . . For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all" (Rom. 11:29,32). God does this on the basis of Christ's death for sinners, including transgressors of the law.

Hence "glory and honor and peace" (Rom.2:10) will come to Israel, not on the basis of their faithfulness, but on the basis of the faithfulness of God (Rom.3:1,2). The applause is not of men but of God (Rom.2:29), which means not only that Israel will meet that standard of righteousness which brings applause to them *from* God, but also that the cause of Israel's eventual faithfulness is found in God, Who is the Source of all benefit and good. It is, as literally stated in the Greek, *out* of God.

ROMANS 3:1-4

What Paul has just written exposes the great need of the Jew for that deliverance which is announced in the evangel. The Jew is not excepted from the irreverence and unrighteousness of humanity. Nevertheless, God has clearly made known in His Word that He has special favors in view for this people. There are many benefits for the Jew, but they are benefits that are wholly sourced in God, not at all in themselves:

*What, then, is the **prerogative** of the Jew,
or what the **benefit** of circumcision?*

Much in every manner.

*For first, indeed, that they were entrusted with the
oracles of God.*

*For what if some disbelieve? Will not their unbelief
nullify the **faithfulness of God?***

May it not be coming to that!

*Now let **God be true**, yet every man a liar,
even as it is **written**:*

*That so **Thou shouldst be justified in Thy sayings,**
And shalt be **conquering** when Thou art being judged.*

In parallel with the words "the Jew," and noting the presence of the definite article in the Greek, we could translate the second half of Romans 3:1 as follows: "or what the benefit of *the Circumcision?*" This may help us to see that Paul is now not thinking of circumcision primarily as a human act (as he was in 2:25) but rather as a name of a people whose stubbornness and failures will be cut off from them by God.

It is God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises, recorded in His oracles, written in His Word, announced in His sayings, that will make Israel a people who are circumcised in heart. Therefore, the prerogative and benefit is much in every manner.

ENTRUSTED WITH THE ORACLES OF GOD¹

The benefit of circumcision, or rather the benefit in being of the Circumcision, is encompassed in the fact that God entrusted His oracles to them. It is in His oracles, or sayings, that God promises them blessings of land and rule and of being a blessing to others. But also He speaks there of the blessing of having the law in their heart and upholding its standards. Those of the Circumcision will indeed be granted circumcision of the foreskin of their heart.

For it is written, "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I bestow within you, and I will take away the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. My spirit shall I bestow within you, and *I will make it that you shall walk in My statutes and observe My ordinances, and you will obey them.* Then you will dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, and you will become My people, and I shall become your Elohim" (Ezek.36:26-28).

This is the new covenant, which fully accords with the benefits promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and even with those announced when the law was given. But now these blessings are not made dependent on prior obedience. The obedience of Israel is now viewed, not as a prerequisite of blessing, but as an aspect of the blessings themselves. The oracles and their realization are great benefits because they are all *of God*.

EN-FAITHED, UNFAITHFUL, FAITHFUL

The English reader is unlikely to catch the wordplay in Romans 3:2,3 where three forms of the Greek term for "faith" appear. The word "entrust" is literally "faith-ed" and refers to something given for faithful keeping. We might invent a word like "enfaithed" in order to make the word-

1. Much of what follows is excerpted and adapted from *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.86, pp.31-40.

play more visible. To the Circumcision were "enfaithed" the oracles of God.

Yet some *disbelieved*. The word "believe" is the verb form of the noun "faith." Here it has a negative prefix, rendered *dis-* in the CV, but in order to continue using the root idea of "faith," we could render the question, "For what if some *were unfaithful*? Israel was *enfaithed* with the oracles of God; they were given the words, or sayings of God for faithful keeping. But some, at least, of them were *unfaithful* to these oracles, and thus the nation failed to uphold its trust.

NON-NULLIFIABLE FAITHFULNESS

Will not their unbelief, their *unfaithfulness* to that which was given to them for faithful keeping, nullify the *faithfulness* of God? May it not be coming to that! The pattern is clear. First of all we have something committed to Israel for their faithful keeping, indeed their faithful doing. Then we have Israel as a nation being unfaithful to the trust. And finally we have God being faithful to it. God is faithful, and His promises will be fulfilled.

This is fully in accord with Yahweh's words *spoken* through the prophet Jeremiah: "Behold, the days are coming, averring is Yahweh, when I will contract a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Not like the covenant which I contracted with their fathers in the day I held fast onto their hand to bring them forth from the land of Egypt, *which covenant of Mine they themselves annulled* For this is the covenant which I shall contract with the house of Israel after those days, averring is Yahweh: I will put My law within them, *and I shall write it on their heart*; I will become their Elohim, and they shall become My people" (Jer.31:31-33).

Israel was unfaithful, but the faithfulness of God cannot be nullified. Because of God's faithfulness, and for

no other reason centered in the human, but because of God's faithfulness alone, the benefits of all the oracles of God entrusted to Israel (including the benefit of putting the law into practice) will be granted to them. No wonder Paul writes that the benefit is *Much in every manner!*

LET GOD BE TRUE

Israel has demonstrated what the human is like, unfaithful and false. But God is faithful and true to His oracles. With the words of Romans 3:4 (partly cited from Psalm 51:4), Paul sums up his thoughts on Israel's benefits for now. (He will carry them forward again in Romans 9, 10 and 11.) God will be justified in His sayings concerning Israel even as in all His declarations. They will not be left unfulfilled because of the failure of His chosen people to save themselves.

The Jew brought dishonor to the Name of God, but this cannot finally be a blot against Him. He will be conquering whenever anyone tries to judge Him, saying that He did the best He could, but the failures of His people were too much for Him. What He has said concerning Israel will be confirmed in realization, so that they will indeed be His people in heart and behavior.

The faithfulness is of God, and this faithfulness is based on the gift of God made known in the evangel of God. Israel's unfaithfulness shows how vital God's giving of His Son for sinners is to that nation. But what is exhibited in the records of Scripture by the Jew is only an example of what is true of us all. Therefore, it is with that message, which is testified to in God's Word, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, that Paul is directing our hearts. Romans 2:25-3:4 hastens us forward to the great unfoldings beginning with Romans 3:21.

D.H.H.

GROWTH IN REALIZATION OF GOD

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

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

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

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

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

DIVINE INDIGNATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

JUSTIFIED FROM SIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHAT THE HUMAN DESERVES

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

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

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

WHAT GOD WILLS

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

OFFENSES NO LONGER RECKONED

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

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

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

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

GOD'S WORK OF JUDGMENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOR GOD AND HIS GLORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to Paul, everything that exists and every-

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

WE RELY ON THE LIVING GOD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

J.R.C.

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MAY, 2004

Volume XCV

Number 3

*Concordant Version
of the
Old Testament*

NEW PRINTING:

**Proverbs,
Ecclesiastes,
and
Song of Songs**

The publication of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament (CVOT) is an ongoing project endeavoring to provide, in a consistent English translation, a closer reflection of the grammar, syntax and wording of the ancient Hebrew manuscripts than can be found in other current versions.

Boldface type is used for words or parts of words having exact counterparts in the Hebrew. Lightface type is used for words or parts of words which have been added to clarify the meaning of the respective Hebrew term. Superior signs and letters give information concerning grammar, more literal distinctions of the Hebrew terminology, and readings based on manuscripts other than the Masoretic Text. These are identified in the Abbreviation Key.

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 2004
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-FIVE

EDITORIAL

THE Concordant Version of the books of 1 Chronicles through Job is now being published with large size print similar to our volume of *The Former Prophets*. With this publication, the entirety of the CV of the Hebrew Scriptures has been published in one form or another, although the CV of Jeremiah, which was issued in 1974 as facsimiles of typewritten sheets, is no longer available. It has been a long time coming, and still there is much to do before the whole can be issued as a single volume, yet we are truly thankful that God has brought us this far in this undertaking.

The concept of preparing a “concordant” translation occurred to A. E. Knoch (1874-1965) and Vladimir Gelesnoff (1877-1921) even before they commenced the publication of *Unsearchable Riches* in 1909. Like many others of their day, they found that the use of a good concordance greatly helped in grasping and appreciating God’s revelations in His Word. Such investigations also helped to uncover inconsistencies in translation which had tended to obscure the clarity of the ancient manuscripts. Brother Knoch’s study entitled “On Baptism” (first published in 1907 in the journal, *Things to Come*, and being presented in our magazine for the first time, starting with this present issue), employed this method of scriptural study. It traces the family of words dealing with *baptism* throughout God’s Word, as listed in a complete concordance, carefully examining their usage in their contexts. Brother Gelesnoff’s own study of the Hebrew word, *olam*, and the Greek words, *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, published under the title, “The Ages,” used the same approach. And in this case, the need of a “concordant” translation became especially apparent.

It may be that there are not many new “breakthroughs” in the Concordant Version of First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther and Job. But the effort to avoid using any particular English word as a translation of more than one Hebrew or Aramaic term gives our translation special value and reliability for the student of Scripture.

Another feature should be mentioned, and that is our use of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, other ancient translations and reasonable conjectures as indicated by the context for adjusting some readings in the traditional Hebrew text. These changes are noted by special markings with a translation of the traditional readings given in footnotes. Along this line, in Chronicles we took into account the evidence provided by the many parallel passages in Genesis, Joshua, Samuel, Kings and the Psalms. There is consistency also in our rendering of verb forms and other grammatical features which can greatly help those who are not familiar with Hebrew to become acquainted with many details that would otherwise be hidden.

In looking back at all the labor on this project, the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:8,9, concerning his ministry in heralding the evangel, seem especially appropriate. But if at present there are afflictions, distresses, perplexities and times of being cast down (as there are “in everything” connected with the believer’s toil in the Lord), we also are daily blessed with “encouragement and delight” (2 Cor.5:8) in focusing on God’s Word. Regarding the Hebrew Scriptures, we are especially encouraged and find increasing delight when we see how they point forward to Jesus Christ.

God willing, our next installment of the CVOT will include our revised translation of the “Major Prophets,” Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. We welcome your suggestions and questions concerning our renderings as well as notices concerning typographical errors.

D.H.H.

THE TWO SEEDS

16 ⁺Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne [›] him no^t children; ⁺yet she [›]had an Egyptian maid, and her name was Hagar. ² ⁺So Sarai [']said to Abram: Behold ^{pr}now, Yahweh has restrained me from bearing[~] children. ^{pr}Please come to my maid. Perhaps I shall be built up^f through her. And Abram [']hearkened to Sarai's voice.

³ ⁺Thus, ^fat the end of ten years that Abram [›]had dwelt in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai [']took [']her Egyptian maid Hagar and [']gave [']her to her husband Abram [›]as wife for him. ⁴ ⁺So he [']came to Hagar, and she became [']pregnant. ⁺When she [']saw that she was pregnant, ⁺ her mistress was [']lightly esteemed in her eyes. ⁵ ⁺Then Sarai [']said to Abram: My wrong is on you. I [']gave my maid into your bosom. ⁺Now that she [']sees that she is pregnant, ⁺ I am [']lightly esteemed in her eyes. May Yahweh judge between me and ^{bt} you. ⁶ ⁺ Abram ^{lsa}replied to Sarai: Behold, your maid is in your hands; do to her [']what is good in your eyes. ⁺So Sarai [']humbled her, and she ran [']away from her face.

⁷ ⁺ A messenger of Yahweh [']found her ^{on} at a spring of [']water in the wilderness; it was ^{on} the spring [']on the way to Shur. ⁸ ⁺ He [']said: Hagar, maid of Sarai, from where have you come, and where are you going? ⁺ She ^{lsa}replied: I have been running away[!] from the face of Sarai, my mistress. ⁹ ⁺Then the messenger of Yahweh ^{lsa}told [›] her: Return to your mistress and humble yourself under her hands. ¹⁰ ⁺Besides, the messenger of Yahweh ^{lsa}spoke to her: I shall increase, yea increase[~] your seed so ⁺that it cannot be [']numbered ^ffor multitude. ¹¹ ⁺Again the messenger

of Yahweh ^{18a}spoke to her: Behold, you are now pregnant and shall bear a son. + You will call his name Ishmael, for Yahweh has heard ^oof your humiliation. ¹² And he' shall become a ^hman like an onager: his hand ⁱagainst all, and the hand of all ⁱagainst him, and ^{on}against the face of all his brothers he shall tabernacle.

¹³ + ⁷Hagar ^ocalled the name of Yahweh ^oWho had spokenⁱ to her: You are an El-of-Seeing, for she ⁱsaid: Have I here ^{mr}indeed seen after the One Who is Vigilantⁱ over me? ¹⁴ Therefore one called ^othis well: The well ^oof the One Living and Vigilantⁱ over me. Behold, it is between Kadesh and ^{bt}Bered.

¹⁵ + Hagar ⁱbore ^oAbram a son; and Abram ⁱcalled the name of his son whom Hagar bore ⁷for him^{es}, Ishmael. ¹⁶ + Abram was 86 years old ⁱwhen Hagar bore ^oIshmael for Abram.

TWO SONS were given to both Abraham and Isaac. In each case one was of the *flesh* and one in the line of *faith*. In both cases the fleshly one was the firstborn, superficially superior to his brother, and the forefather of a nation outside the people of promise. To conform with this Abram's name was changed from Abram (FATHER-HIGH) to Abraham, (FATHER-HIGH-throng) because he was to be the ancestor of two other national lines, Ishmael and Edom, outside the sphere of spirit, which would be antagonistic to the nation of promise. As Adam's seed was divided into the lines of Cain and Seth, so Abram's seed was later divided into the lines of Isaac and Ishmael, and Isaac's into Jacob and Esau.

This is an exceedingly important departure. In the preceding eon it seems that the firstborn according to the flesh were always recognized. Even in the beginning of this eon, from Noah to Abram, the firstborn of the flesh

were reckoned in the genealogy of Christ. But by this time it is evident that the flesh is not benefiting any (John 6:63). Life comes only by spirit. So now we have a double witness, Ishmael and Esau, to the fact that the flesh has lost its priority.

FLESH AND SPIRIT

Sarai, despairing of ever performing her part in the promise, determined to carry it out through another. The immediate effect of the expedient was trouble, symptomatic of much more to come. It prefigured that long conflict between the physical and the spiritual seed, those enslaved under the law of Moses, and, those free in Christ, the unbelievers and those of faith, those generated by the will of man and those springing out of the promise of the Subjector.

Paul's allegory, in which Hagar and Sarai are compared to two covenants, that of the flesh and the law, and that of the spirit and the promise (Gal.4:21-31), is the key to the inner meaning of this episode in Abram's life. He was already eighty-six years old, and his wife, Sarai, seventy-six, so there *seemed* to be little likelihood that the promise of Yahweh could be fulfilled. Sarai seems to have given up all hope, so she proposed to have her maid, a slave girl, take her place. She was quite correct when she said that *Yahweh* had *restrained* her from bearing, but she did not understand that this was intentional, as, indeed, was her choice of Hagar, for the seed must be of two kinds, the flesh acting as a foil for the spirit.

Abram was justified by his *faith*, *not* by his acts. He still believed *what* Yahweh had said concerning his seed. But he had not been told *how* this was to be brought about. As Sarai, his wife, bore him no son, he once thought the seed might come through his adopted heir, Eliezer of Damascus. Now, when Sarai, his wife, whose barrenness seemed to be an insurmountable obstacle to the fulfilment of the

promise, suggested that her Egyptian slave girl take her part, he supposed that this was Yahweh's way of fulfilling the promise, for he did not yet understand God's ways, especially the great distinction between flesh and spirit. So Yahweh used this very action to teach him and his seed this essential lesson. By this method the Subjector *justified* Abram's apparent mistake of relying on Egyptian flesh to fulfill the promise.

FAITH AND PATIENCE

Sarai and Abram had faith, but they lacked *patience*. As time wore on, and they approached the period of life when the fulfilment of the promise would no longer be possible in the ordinary course of nature, they lost patience, and sought to forward it by a device of their own. It is one thing to *believe* a promise, yet quite another to *patiently* wait for its fulfilment. The Hebrews are exhorted to imitate those who, through faith *and patience*, are enjoying the allotment of the promises (Heb.6:12). But Abraham was justified, in this case, because the fruit of this impatience, Hagar and Ishmael, were absolutely essential as a background or foil for God's way of making true His word. Yet, when it turned out contrary to Sarai's wishes, she had to take the blame. Faith believes God's promise. Expectation longs for its fulfilment. Patience waits quietly for it.

Here we have a good example of how Yahweh uses human failure in order to carry out His intention, and guides it into the channel that not only fulfils its purpose, but *justifies* the sinner. When Sarai's harsh treatment of Hagar drove the slave girl away, and she fled into the wilderness, He sent her back to be *subservient*, for *that is the proper place of her seed*, Ishmael, and the nation which sprang from him. The chief function of this error, however, was to demonstrate, by an example, that the promise could *not* be fulfilled by the *flesh*, but must come through *faith*

and the *spirit*. Ishmael, the firstborn, superior according to the flesh, must be displaced by Isaac, the seed of the promise, according to the spirit.

In the Orient it is a terrible trial for a woman not to be able to bear a son for her lord. In this case it was far more trying than usual, for the grand and glorious promises to Abram could never find fulfilment if there was no heir to carry on the line. Where would the innumerable descendants come from if he could not generate even a single son? He would soon be too old. Indeed, Sarai seemed already far beyond the possibility of doing her part. By taking her place and seemingly supplanting her as the wife of Abram, the slave girl greatly increased Sarai's trial by her contempt. But, Sarai, as mistress, could do as she wished, and she so mistreated Hagar that she ran away. Ordinarily, this must be condemned. But, in this case, it served the high purpose of God, so must be *justified*.

SARAI'S WRONG

"My wrong *be* upon thee." is the reading of the AV. This is emphasized in the latest Revision, which has: "May the wrong done to me be upon you!" But the original simply reads MY-WRONG ON-YOU I I-GIVE. The MY before WRONG shows that *she* did it, and the doubled I before GIVE shows that *she* gave it to him, so that now the *results* rest on him. The wrong was not done *to* her, but *by* her.

Abram, moreover, did not do the wrong that Sarai did to her maid at this time. Yet Sarai was justified in her wrong-doing by the messenger of Yahweh, for Hagar had to return and humble herself under Sarai's hands. The right and wrong, however, must not be judged from the standard of human morality, but by the Subjector's revelation. The great conflict between flesh and spirit must be displayed in action. Abram must have two sons. Fleshly Ishmael must come first. And so Yahweh used and *justified* Sarai's recur-

rent wrongdoing. These repeated records of manifest sinning, which was essentially correct in the purpose of God, are given us as examples of God's method of justifying the sins of his saints, and, indeed, all sin, by using it to fulfill His loving purpose.

When Hagar fled, being an Egyptian, she naturally took the road toward her homeland. From this we are able to see her attitude toward the promises. She evidently had no faith in them whatever. Her transient happiness was all that concerned her. But she must have heard of the promises, for these were the underlying reason why she had been given to Abram. But she knew well that the son she might bear would not be her own, but reckoned as Sarah's. So she had no incentive to endure the trial. But this is now given to her. She also is to have an innumerable progeny, and be the ancestress of a nation. So she returns and is subordinate to Sarai, even as the nation she bore was to be subject to the nation of the promise.

THE MESSENGER OF YAHWEH

The appearance to Hagar gives us the first occurrence of the phrase, "*messenger* of Yahweh." Indeed, it is the first time that the word "messenger" is used in the Scriptures (Gen.16:7). Before this, Yahweh *seems* to have spoken directly to those whom He addressed, with the implication that they were *near* Him, within the range of His voice. So He spoke to Abram when He made the promises (12:7; 15:1,4,7,9,18). But Hagar was *not near* in spirit, and her seed, in contrast to the seed of promise, is at a distance from Yahweh. So He deals with them by means of an intermediary, a worker, or messenger. Yet it was Yahweh Himself Who heard of, and saw her humiliation. This was implied in the name of her son Ishma-el (HEARer-is-EL), and by the name she gave Yahweh (SUBJECTor-of-SEEing).

A. E. Knoch

GOD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS WORD

THE FIRST act of God, spoken of in His Word in relation to Abram concerned a piece of land. Yahweh *said* to Abram that He would *show* it to him.

To be sure, Yahweh had told Abram what *he* was to do; Abram was to go by himself from his land, from his kindred and from his father's house to the land that Yahweh would show him (Gen.12:1). We are rightly impressed by Abram's faith obedience, for he did go even though he was not versed in where he was coming (Heb.11:8). As he did later when God promised him seed in number as the stars (Gen.15:5), Abram "faced" the word and believed it (Rom. 4:17), and here also he acted in accord with his faith. "So Abram went just as Yahweh had told him" (Gen.12:4).

But what about God? He also acted in accord with His word and showed Abram the land: "Then Yahweh said to Abram after Lot had parted from him: Now lift up your eyes and see from the place where you are, northward and to the Negev [i.e., southward], eastward and to the sea [i.e., westward]" (Gen.13:14). God spoke concerning what He would do, and He did it.

God's act here may strike us as noteworthy but not exactly remarkable. Abram's faith and its resulting faithfulness were most unusual for a human being. But God's faithfulness in carrying out His word of promise is just what Abram and anyone who knows anything about God would expect from Him.

And that is just the point. The believer expects God to be faithful to His word which He has spoken to us.

The very essence of our faith is to face what God has

said to us concerning what He has done, is doing or will do, and believe it.

In many ways what God did in showing Abram the land was more remarkable than what Abram did in going to the land. No less than for ourselves, God graciously granted to Abram that he should be believing (Phil.1:29). But in telling Abram first of all that He would show him the land, and then carrying out this promise right away, God was strengthening Abram's faith in matters not yet perceived. God was verifying a pattern that was first established in Genesis 1:3. *What God says, He does*. That is more than noteworthy. It is superabundantly grand and glorious, and worthy of much remark. It is the rock bottom of our faith concerning things not yet seen.

I SHALL GIVE THIS LAND

Even before Yahweh Himself actually showed Abram the land, He spoke another word concerning it: "To your seed I shall *give* this land" (Gen.12:7). Then later when Yahweh showed Abram the land, this word was made more personal with reference to Abram: "For all the land that you are seeing, I shall *give* it to you" (Gen.13:17). Certain ancient Greek manuscripts add the words "and to your seed unto the eon" here in Genesis 13, but both the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts have the reading "I shall give it *to you*."

In promising to give the land to Abram's seed, Yahweh was promising to give it to Abram. This would also apply to Genesis 15:18-21, where the dimensions of the land are made more specific: "On that day Yahweh contracted a covenant with Abram, saying: To your seed I give this land, from the stream of Egypt as far as the Great Stream, the stream Euphrates: the Kenite, the Kenizzite, the Kadmonite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Rephaim, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

Later we learn further details, including Hebrews 11:10 where we read that Abraham "waited for the city having foundations, whose Artificer and Architect is God." This word concerning a city cannot be a replacement of the promise of the land, but an addition to the words of Genesis which cannot be nullified. The promised land is to include a city designed and built by God. Nevertheless, Abram sojourned in the land of promise "as in an alien land" (Heb.11:9). His enjoyment of the land is still future.

Nor have Abram's descendants ever received the land in full accord with these words of God in Genesis, neither in Joshua's day nor in Solomon's, and certainly not today. If God is to *give* something, He Himself will give it, unquestionably and exactly in accord with His word. If the land is never received, it could only be because God will never give it. But God is faithful to His word even if every human being involved is unfaithful, and indeed all of us are unfaithful in one way or another.

First Yahweh said He would show Abram the land, which He did, so that Abram actually saw it, looking all about in four directions, and then He said He would *give* the land to Abram and His descendants. That word is plain. God will *give* the very land promised to Abram and to his seed.

I SHALL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION

The second act of God, spoken of in His Word in relation to Abram concerned Abram's descendants, that is, the "seed" which came so prominently in view as God added to His words concerning the land. Yahweh *said* to Abram, "I shall *make* you into a great nation" (Gen.12:2). (Later, of course, God adds to this word and speaks of many nations, but we are looking now at what God says in Genesis 12 concerning one particular great nation.)

This was a new revelation of God's purpose and intention, but it was not unrelated to earlier revelations. There

is harmony in God's Word, which, as the believer now may see, centers on God's Son, Jesus Christ. Before speaking of this great nation which would be composed of Abram's seed, God had spoken of the Seed of the woman, Who would hurt the head of the Adversary (Gen.3:15). At the same time He had told the woman that her restoration would come by her husband (Gen.3:16). Abram surely knew of this and also that he himself was not only a descendant of Adam and Eve, but one born in the lines of Seth (Gen.5:6-32) and Shem (Gen.11:10-26), which held significant places in the divine records. In addition, there was a message from God in Abram's name, FATHER-HIGH. God called Abram by a name that reflected what was not yet so (Rom.4:17).

The great nation that God will make out of Abram's descendants will receive the land shown to Abram (as will Abraham), and they will receive it as a gift and achievement from God.

The verb "make" represents the common Hebrew word usually rendered "do." We are concentrating our attention now on God and His doings, God and His work. In Genesis 12 there is one man, Abram, who is named FATHER-HIGH, who has no children, and who has a wife, Sarai, who is restrained from bearing children. But also in Genesis 12, there is God's word concerning what He would *do*. As with the promise of the land, if the great nation never materializes, it can only be because God did not do what He said He would do.

The doings of Abram and Sarai in Genesis 16 resulted in underlining the fact, stated in Genesis 12:2, that God *Himself* will make the great nation out of Abram. This does not mean that Abraham and Sarah (as they were later named) had no part to play whatsoever. But their part was in receiving from God what He had prepared for them. Their believing and their parenting of a son would be

seen, as they truly were, as the doing of God. The making of the great nation is God's task, and consequently when it is achieved it is wholly to His glory.

Hence we read: "... all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written, Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them whenever I should be eliminating their sins" (Rom.11:26,27). These words are based on Isaiah 59:20,21, and in relation to Genesis 12:2 we might add God's words through Isaiah a bit further on: "And your people, all of them, shall be righteous; for the eon they shall tenant the land, the scion of Yahweh's planting, the *work* [literally, *doing*] of His hands to show His beauty. The smallest shall become a thousand, and the inferior a staunch nation; I, Yahweh, shall hurry it forth in its era" (Isa.60:21,22). All of this is God's doing. When that great nation which descends "out of" Abraham is established in the land, it will be seen by all that God is the One Who *made* it. "To Him be the glory!" (Rom.11:36).

I SHALL BLESS YOU

In speaking about the land which He would *show* Abram and about the great nation He would *make*, Yahweh *said* He would *bless* Abram. This was related to Abram's own day, like the act of showing him the land, but most essentially the blessing was related to the distant future, like the making of the great nation. God blessed Abram in many ways throughout his life, but the full meaning of the blessing of Abram is reserved for the future.

Again much will be added concerning this act of God, His *blessing* of Abram and the great nation made "out of" him, in the land. For example, we read the following words of Yahweh through the prophet Ezekiel: "Then I will set up one shepherd over them, and he will graze them—My servant David. He shall graze them, and he shall be their

shepherd. I, Yahweh, shall be their Elohim, and My servant David will be prince in their midst; I, Yahweh, have spoken. I will contract with them a covenant of peace, and I will eradicate the wild animal from the land; they will dwell in the wilderness in trust and sleep in the wild-woods. I will make these places and those around My hill a *blessing*: I will cause the downpour to descend in its season; downpours of *blessing* shall come" (Ezek.34:23-26).

As for Abram's own day, God's Word lays stress on God's acts of blessing for Abram in contrast to His acts in relation to others. In Genesis 12, as we are noting, there is much that Yahweh *said* to Abram concerning land and seed and blessing, yet there is nothing there about God speaking to others. Rather the divine acts mentioned in relation to others are that Yahweh would *curse* those who male-dicted Abram, and that He *touched* Pharaoh with contagions because he took Sarai to his house, not knowing she was Abram's wife. Abram was blessed with cattle and servants in association with his deception of Pharaoh, while Pharaoh was cursed with a contagious disease.

But the divine work of blessing, such as applied here to Abram, ultimately triumphs over God's temporary work of cursing, in the blessing of all. This is done through the great Seed of Abraham, Who is Christ (Gal.3:16). Here is the ultimate significance of the blessing of Abraham. It is because His Seed became a curse for the sake of sinners (Gal.3:13) that God's blessing of Abraham could eventually be realized in the blessing of all the families of the earth, including those of Egypt (Gen.12:3). It is because of the blood of Christ that we as members of the body of Christ are blessed (Eph.1:3-7). And it is because of the blood of His cross that all enemies will be reconciled to God (Col. 1:20). God is faithful to what has said in all these good and remarkable declarations.

D.H.H.

DAVID AS A FATHER
(2 Samuel 14)

14 + Joab son of Zeruiah got to 'know that the king's mind was on Absalom. ² + So Joab 'sent to^d Tekoa and had a wise woman 'taken along from there. + He 'said to her, Feign yourself to be in mourning ^{pr}now! + ^{pr}Do put on mourning garments! + You must not 'rub yourself with oil, + but you will ^bbehave ^{this} now like a woman who has been mourning ^{on} the dead for many days. ³ + You will come to the king and speak to him ^{as}in 'this manner; + then Joab ^{bp}put 'the words in her mouth.

⁴ + When the Tekoite 'woman ⁷came^{~cs} to the king, + she 'fell on her nostrils to^d the earth, + 'prostrated herself and 'said, Do ^cgrant a salvation, 'O king! ⁵ + The king ^{lsa}replied to her, What is your trouble? + She 'said, Verily, I am a widowed woman; + my husband is 'dead. ⁶ + Your maidservant 'had two sons. + The two of them 'strove in the field; + yet there was no rescuer^l to ^{bt}part them. + Then the one 'smote 'the other and ^cput 'him to 'death. ⁷ And ^{bd}now the whole family has risen up ^{on}against your maidservant, + ^{lsa}demanding, Give up 'the one who smote^l his brother + that we may ^cput him to death 'for the soul of his brother whom he killed, + even ^{mr}though we do 'exterminate 'the tenant'. + Thus they would quench 'my last ember which remains, so as to ^{pl}leave⁻ to my husband no name + or remnant on the surface of the ground.

⁸ + Then the king 'said to the woman, Go to your home, and I myself shall ^mgive instructions on your behalf. ⁹ + Also the Tekoite 'woman 'said to the king, On me, my lord the

king, be the depravity and on my father's house. +Yet the king and his throne be innocent. ¹⁰ + The king ^{isa}replied, If anyone is ^{sp}uttering anything to you, +then you bring him to me, and he shall not continue to touch ⁱ you further. ¹¹ + She ^{isa}replied, ^{pr}Please let the king be mindful of Yahweh your Elohim that the redeemer^l of blood may ^fnot multiply his efforts to cause ruin and that they ^cdo not exterminate my son. And he ^lsaid, As Yahweh lives, assuredly not one ^fhair of your son shall fall to^d the earth. ¹² +Now the woman ^lsaid, ^{pr}Please let your maidservant speak another word to my lord the king. + He ^{isa}replied, Speak!

¹³ +So the woman ^lsaid, Why +then have you devised like this ^{on}against people of Elohim? + ^fWhile the king is pronouncing this decree, the king is just as guilty for failing to let his own expelled one return. ¹⁴ For we all shall die, yea die and be like water spilled to^d the earth ^wthat cannot be gathered up again. + Elohim shall not carry away the soul + of him who devises devices so as not to keep expelled from him one who has been expelled.

¹⁵ And now ^w I have come to speak this word to the king my lord, for the people have made me fearful. +So your maidservant ^{isa}thought, ^{pr}Please let me speak to the king. Perhaps the king may ^dact on the ^{sp}request of his maidservant, ¹⁶ for the king ^lhearkened to rescue his maidservant from the palm of the man ⁷who is seeking to exterminate me and my son together from the allotment of Elohim. ¹⁷ + Your maidservant ^{isa}thought, ^{pr}Now let the word of my lord the king ^bbe final; for like a messenger of the One, Elohim, so is my lord the king, to summon the good and the evil. And Yahweh, your Elohim, may He come to be with you.

¹⁸ +Then the king ^lanswered and ^lsaid to the woman, ^{pr}Now you must not suppress from me anything ^wthat I am asking you. + The woman ^{isa}replied, ^{pr}Please let my lord the king speak. ¹⁹ +So the king ^{isa}asked, Is the hand

of Joab with you in all of this? + The woman ^lanswered and ^lsaid, As your soul lives, my lord the king, assuredly no ^Mman^s can ^cgo to the right or ^cgo to the left from all ^wthat my lord the king has spoken; for your servant Joab, he ^linstructed me, and he ^lput in the mouth of your handmaid all these words. ²⁰ It was in ^oorder to ^mturn about the face of the matter that your servant Joab did this thing. +Yet my lord is wise ^{as}with the wisdom of a messenger of the One, Elohim, so as to know all ^wthat goes on in the land.

²¹ +Then the king ^lsaid to Joab, Behold, I will ^dact ^{pr}now according to^o this word of yours^o. + Go! Bring back the lad Absalom! ²² +Now Joab ^lfell ^Mon^s his face to^d the earth; + he ^lprostrated himself and ^lblessed the king. And Joab ^lsaid, Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your eyes, my lord the king ^wbecause the king has ^dacted on the word of his servant. ²³ +So Joab ^larose, + ^lwent to^d Geshur and ^lbrought Absalom back to Jerusalem. ²⁴ +But the king ^lsaid, Let him turn about to his own house, and he shall not see my face. +So Absalom turned about to his own house, and he did not see the king's face.

²⁵ + There ^bwas no^t man in all Israel like Absalom who was so exceedingly ^ypraised for his well-favored appearance. From the sole of his foot + ^fto the crown of his head there ^bwas no^t blemish on him. ²⁶ + ⁱWhen he shaved his head—+ it ^bwas ^fat the end of days to days^o ^wthat he would shave it; ^twhen it was heavy on him, + he shaved it—+ he would weigh the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the royal standard weight. ²⁷ + To Absalom were ^lborn three sons and one daughter; + her name was Tamar, and she ^lbecame a woman of lovely appearance.

²⁸ + Absalom ^ldwelt the days of two years in Jerusalem; +yet he did not see the king's face. ²⁹ +So Absalom ^lsent for Joab, to send him to the king; +yet Joab would not

come⁻ to him. ⁺When he ^{sent}^f again, the second time, he ^{still} would not [>] come⁻. ³⁰ ⁺Then Absalom ^{said} to his servants, See, Joab's apportionment is ^{'at} the side of mine, and he ^{'has} barley there. Go and ravage it ^{'with} fire! ⁺So Absalom's servants ^{ravaged} the apportionment ^{'with} fire. ³¹ ⁺Then Joab ^{arose}; ⁺ he ^{'came} to Absalom at ^d the house and ^{said} to him, Why have your servants ravaged the apportionment ^w that is mine ^{'with} fire? ³² ⁺So Absalom ^{lsd} replied to Joab, Behold, I sent to you, [>] saying⁻, Come ^{bd} here and let me ^{'send} you to the king to ^{sa} ask, Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were ^f still there. ⁺So now let me see the king's face, and if there is depravity in me, ⁺ let him ^{'put} me to death.

³³ ⁺ Joab went ^{'in} to the king and ^{told} [>] him. ⁺Then he ^{'called} [>] Absalom who ^{'now} ^{'came} to the king and ^{'prostrated} himself ^{'before} him. ⁷ He ^{'fell}^o on his nostrils to ^d the earth before the king; and the king ^{'kissed} [>] Absalom.

JOAB'S PLAN

JOAB KNEW David was pining for Absalom (v.1). He was also well aware of the influence Nathan's parable had on David. This may have prompted his plan to find someone with expertise in oratory to present his yarn. Joab probably thought that the return of Absalom would bring his nation's leader a revitalizing peace of mind.

But even though Joab's story prompted David to act according to his suggestion, it did not penetrate David's heart and open new vistas in David's life, like God's parable from the mouth of Nathan. The stories were quite as different as the tellers. Nathan's parable clearly pointed out a wrong and called for judgment upon it. The Tekoite woman's tale was laced with flattery, and called for David to give in to his natural affections. The effectiveness of

Joab's story was also lacking. Though Absalom returned, he was not allowed in the court or to see the king's face.

As design had it, Joab himself paid dearly for his deed (v.30). Regardless of the sincerity of his motives, Joab would soon undo the results of all his efforts for the sake of Absalom (2 Sam. 18:9-15).

A RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTHOOD

"And fathers, do not be vexing your children, but be nurturing them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

This is instruction to help enable believers to live the spirit-filled life that Paul mentioned in Ephesians 5:18. Nurturing is nourishing towards a goal—enabling to grow in the direction of good and success. Admonition is mind-placing—training and disciplining the attitude of heart and mind. Nurture and admonition are seen in contrast, or as opposites, of vexing.

Parenting is more than providing the sustenance of life for one's offspring. It requires involvement in the mistakes and problems of life. It requires the dirtying of our hands by correcting mistakes and training in behavior that is acceptable to God—even if we are busy. Real love cannot rejoice in injustice, but rejoices together in truth (1 Cor.13:6).

David was as busy as any father. The military, commercial, religious and civil affairs of a nation rested upon his shoulders. David had led his country to unprecedented power and dominance, and he prepared for the building of the temple, and revised the levitical and priestly systems. Still there was fault with him as a parent.

David vexed Absalom. He failed to take any corrective action for the rape committed by Amnon or the murder committed by Absalom. And David vexed Absalom more when he allowed him to return, but completely ignored him after his arrival. Whether David had made a good or

poor judgment would probably have been of little significance, if he had just done something. Absalom could have forgiven a judgment upon himself that he believed was unjust, if he believed that his father had made it with sincere intent. But David's failure to act in one way or another was worse than any decision that he might have made. By his own mouth Absalom declared that his death would have been an acceptable and preferable alternative to the frustration caused by indecision. David caused Absalom to lose respect for him, and then to hate him, and eventually to try to overthrow him.

THE DIVIDING OF A COUNTRY

It should be expected that Absalom had a following early on, and may have been looked upon by some as a righteous hero. He had avenged the rape and shame borne by his innocent sister Tamar. He fulfilled the function of "redeemer of blood" (v. 11) for Tamar. Absalom could easily have been seen as one who would uphold the law of God and not allow even the son of a king to escape justice.

But Absalom was chiefly esteemed for his appearance, not for moral integrity. Absalom was handsome and charismatic, and was a likely successor to the throne. As in our own culture, where celebrities and athletes enjoy fame, few are ever esteemed for their humility and righteousness.

David was aging and weakening. Absalom was handsome and rising in popularity. The wedge driven between father and son was about to begin splitting the country.

This speaks to us all. Yet in considering the lessons set before us in *David's failures* toward his sons, Amnon and Absalom, we keep in view the message of *God's victory* through David's Greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the believer's strength and joy for discipline in righteousness.

J. Philip Scranton

**“OUTSIDE OF THE BODY”
PRAYER, AND THE WILL OF GOD**

Question:

I understand that, in death, the body goes back to the earth, the spirit returns to God who gave it, and the soul is unseen or without sensation. Yet, in the Unveiling, we read where John was said to be, “in spirit” in the Lord’s Day. If this occurred “out of the body,” even as may have been the case with Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-3, it would seem that it is possible for humans to live and know things even when they do not have a body—as most claim is so even in the state of death. I would appreciate it if you could clarify this topic for me and help me with my problem here.

Answer:

THE Concordant Version of Revelation 1:10 is: “I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord’s day” Syntactically, the words, “in spirit,” constitute an appositive. An appositive clarifies or explains what has previously been said. For example, in the phrase, “Marc, my son,” the words “my son” serve as an appositive, clarifying the particular person named Marc that I have in mind.

Similarly, in our phrase in question in the words of the apostle John, “I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord’s day,” the words “in spirit,” clarify the *way* that John came to be “in the Lord’s day,” that is, in the future “day of the Lord.” John did not come to be literally (i.e., temporally) present in that future day (which would be impossible, since that era is yet future, even today); instead, he “came to be”

in the Lord's day, "in spirit." The apostle Paul uses similar language where he says to the Colossians, "For even if, in flesh, I am absent, nevertheless, *in spirit*, I am with you . . ." (Col.2:5; *cp* Rev.4:2; 17:3; 21:10).

When Paul was given "apparitions and revelations of the Lord" (2 Cor.12:1-3), he was not aware whether this experience of his was "in a body" or, in some sense, "outside of the body." I take it, then, that Paul's point is simply that, in any case, what he perceived was utterly authentic and "realistic" to him.

Paul does not say (nor does it follow) that if these revelations came to him "outside of the body," that they came to him "in spirit"—at least in any sense in which "in spirit" were to be understood as the equivalent of "apart from all bodily means." Further, since the brain (functionally, the "mind") is very much a part of the human body, the presence of the "mind" (the faculty through which we gain knowledge) entails the presence of the body.

Therefore, if revelations were somehow to be perceived in a way that may properly be said to be "outside of the body," we need to ask ourselves, How, then, should this phrase in question be understood. In particular, we should not uncritically assume that the sense would necessarily be, as in "orthodox" tradition even as modern-day spiritualism, that of as an incorporeal specter or phantom, one which, putatively, is able to think and act apart from corporeal means.

Surely, the natural sense here in 2 Corinthians 12, is that in light of the "authenticity" of Paul's experience, he was unaware whether he literally—through his bodily faculties of perception—had seen (and otherwise perceived) these revelations, or if instead he simply had come to a mental perception of these things "outside of" (i.e., without the use of) these bodily faculties. In this latter case, though extremely vivid nonetheless, these revelations would then

constitute simply a glorious mental impression, apart from the faculties of sight, sound, and the rest having been employed. I suggest, then, that the phrase here, "outside of the body," should be understood elliptically as, "outside of [the use of] the body" in its normal sentient faculties.

It is vital to keep in mind that "spirit" is "the imperceptible, intangible *power of action*, life, and intelligence" (see entry "spirit," in the Keyword Concordance, p.282). Were Paul to have been given revelations apart from the use of the body's faculties of perception and only through the agency of spirit (i.e., intangible power), he would have, in that case, then—even as John in Revelation 1:10—received such apparitions and revelations purely mentally, apart from the existence of historically-extant, tangible, sentientally-discoverable phenomena.

The human spirit is the power which *produces* all of our perceptions, whether through our sentient faculties, or simply, independently thereof, as mental perceptions. It is not that, whether in life or in death, the spirit somehow "leaves" the body and we then find our incorporeal "inner selves" somehow instantiated therein, continuing to exist and live. Instead, the human spirit (*cp* "my spirit," 1 Cor.5:4) *empowers* the body in *all* that it does and perceives, whether through sentient means, or mentally alone, apart from sentient means.

In death, this imperceptible yet exceedingly capable power, in some inscrutable way (we are not told the particulars) *returns* to God Who gave it (Ecc.12:7). In resurrection, when the dead live again, the human spirit, given by God, will *again* empower its subjects.



Question:

I am seeking light on the true *function* of prayer, especially in light of the reality of eventual universal

reconciliation. Whenever I feel the urge to pray I find myself asking the question, Do I really have the knowledge to ask God to do something other than what He already knows is best to do? Since I became convinced of the truth of universal reconciliation I have not prayed at all. Am I in error? I would add, however, that I have total confidence in God, and none in myself.

Answer:

It is ideal for our confidence to be in God and not in ourselves. That is, this is so ultimately speaking; and indeed this should be our belief and practice throughout the course of our lives, even in the midst of our most industrious undertakings (*cf* 2 Cor.1:9; 3:4,6; Phil.3:3,4).

Still, at the same time, when speaking relatively (which is generally evident from the context or nature of the case), the apostle Paul could speak of having “much confidence” (or “persuasion,” see below) directed “into” (it is literally “into” here, not “in”) those in whom God was faithfully working (2 Cor.8:22). But this is a relative statement, not an absolute one; it speaks of a confidence of which a certain person(s) is the object *as God’s achievement* (*cp* Eph.2:10)—not of some notion of independent confidence merely in humans in and of themselves. Rather, it is a “confidence” *under God* directed toward one or more of His creatures; it is not at all a confidence which inheres in humans *in* themselves, much less *of* themselves.

This is a bit difficult to explain briefly, but the root idea of the Greek cognates which we translate either “confidence” (noun) or “persuade” or “have confidence” (verb; see entries in Keyword Concordance, “confidence” and “persuade”), in essence, all convey the root idea of *persuade*; hence PERSUADE is given as our “standard” for both of these Greek words. Ultimately speaking, we are only to be “confident” (or “persuaded”) about either the truth,

existence, or occurrence of anything, if it is established and brought into being by God.

The elements of the Greek word for “prayer” signify “TOWARD-WELL-HAVING” (see Keyword Concordance entry “prayer,” p.229). Prayer includes but must not be confined to requests; it should also include expressions of gratitude and grace, of praise and acclamation, of fellowship and love, directed toward God.

God is *operating* all (Eph.1:11); however, while it is evident, then, that God *determines* all, we are not told that He *pre-determines* all, at least in such a way that would logically preclude there being any point to or need for our present requests and His corresponding present responses to our prayers. Our Lord prayed frequently, in earnest heartfelt supplications. Therefore, we may be certain that we should be of this same spirit and custom, regardless of the exact manner or other particulars of any prayer activities of our own.

Prayer itself is out of God; it is inspired by Him, whenever we are moved to engage therein. Some blessings and provisions which we enjoy are only given *in response to* prayer, not apart from prayer. Since we do not know which particular prayers these are, from this consideration alone, the vital place of prayer can be clearly seen. In such cases, then, God leads us to pray, and operates in our lives effectively so that we do so. When we choose to pray, or not to pray—even as when we choose to do or not to do any other thing whatsoever—we are choosing and doing what God has appointed for us to choose and to do. Our future course is the result of our present actions. Therefore, rather than it being so that it makes no difference what we do now, since the future will supposedly be however it will be regardless of what we do or do not do at present, to the contrary, what we do now will determine what we have and experience in the future, whether in the imme-

diate future of the next moment, or the extended future of days and years to come.

Undoubtedly, we do not know what is best; undoubtedly, God does know what is best; and, undoubtedly as well, He will do what is best, *not* what is not best, even if what is not best is something that we want. Carefully considered, however, none of these considerations in the least obviate the vital place of prayer. It is simply that we need to learn to pray in accord with wisdom, which includes a recognition of God's deity, as the One Who is operating all, out of Whom, through Whom, and for Whom is all, to Him be the glory.

We will pray, or not, and, we will pray wisely, or not, according as God leads us and inspires us. May it be that He will grant us wisdom, and sustain us in wisdom. An ideal prayer is that God would be giving us a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of our heart being enlightened (Eph.1:17,18). May we be praying thus, doing so as those who, knowing God, are growing in a realization of God and so glorifying and thanking Him *as God* accordingly (*cp* Rom.1:21; Col.1:10).



Question:

Recently, I was studying 1 Timothy 2:4, while noting the differences in the readings of various popular translations. The AV says that God "will have all men to be saved"; yet the reading in the NASB is that He "desires" all to be saved; and, in the NIV, the reading there is that He "wants" [commonly interpreted in the sense of "desires"] all to be saved.

I know that the translation of this verse is a real point of dispute, because if God "wills" the salvation of all men and works everything according to the counsel of His *will* (Eph.1:11), there is no need to debate the topic any further.

So I presume the idea of the partialists is that God "desires" that all men be saved, though He does not actually "will" it. Thus, partialist theology would dictate that God chooses to override His "desires," much like I would if I walked into a bakery and found myself "desiring" a piece of chocolate cake, but then "willed" not to purchase it and eat it.

When I learned that the verb in 1 Timothy 2:4 and the noun in Ephesians 1:11 are from the same root word and only vary as to part of speech, I felt that there was no compelling reason to translate the word fundamentally any differently in either of these passages. Still, I am mindful of the possibility that in Greek, even as in English, the same word can have two or more meanings, dictated by context. This raises the question whether this could be so in the case of 1 Timothy 2:4. Is the meaning in the Greek that, even though God works all things after the counsel of His *will* (Eph.1:11), nevertheless He only "desires" the salvation of all mankind?

Answer:

The essence of your question is whether the Greek text supports the notion that even though God is operating all according to the counsel of His *will*, He nevertheless only "desires" the salvation of all mankind.

My answer to this question is that the Greek text in no way supports any such notion. I say this because the essence of the word in question, which is the verb *thelō* ("to will," CV) is the thought of *decision*, not that simply of the emotion (or feeling) of desire. Besides, even in cases where a connotative usage may be implied, essence of meaning is never "dropped" (i.e., it is never no longer involved), even in cases where, as a matter of interpretation, it may not be in view.

"Desire" corresponds to a different Greek word than

“will,” and is concerned with the “feelings,” *epithumēō* (ON-FEEL). “Wants” is sometimes used in the Concor-dant Version itself, but as an idiomatic variant of “wills” and with this thought still in mind. That is, “wants,” even as “wills,” should likewise be understood as having in view decisions or acts of will, even as in those passages in which the verb “will” itself is used in translation.

In 1 Timothy 2:4, the AV reads “will have,” which phrase speaks not of a matter of decision, but of something quite different, that of the future tense. “Will have” is indicative of the future tense, which is an entirely different idea than that of the verb “will” (*thelō*, Keyword Concordance, p.327), which is a synonym for “decide.” That is, the AV represents Paul as making a prediction (i.e., declaring a prophecy) as to what shall¹ come to pass. Why shall it come to pass? Because God “*will* have” it so.

Though it is certainly supportive of the salvation of all, the AV rendering here is incorrect. The Greek is not in the future tense, but in the present indicative form; that is, it simply indicates that which is occurring: “our Saviour God . . . wills that all mankind be saved . . .” The idea is that God has *decided* (i.e., “formed the decision”) that all mankind be saved. Then, the only question is, Does He operate (“do” or “work”) according to His will, that is, according to the decisions which He has formed. And the answer to this question is, Yes, this is just what He does. In fact, as One Who takes advice from no one else (*cf* Rom. 11:34b), He operates all “in accord with [lit., “down,” i.e., on the basis of] the counsel of His *will*” (Eph.1:11).

All the attempts to “water down” 1 Timothy 2:4 with

1. English usually represents the future tense by “shall” for the first person, and by “will” for the second and third person, both singular and plural. “Will” is a morphological and phonetical homonym; it sometimes speaks of (future) tense, while in other cases, it speaks of the distinct, unrelated idea of choice or decision.

“desires” and the like are surely in vain. Indeed, “desires” will not help the case of advocates of eternal torment, since God’s counsel (i.e., His plans, what He intends to happen) shall stand, and He will do all His “desire” (Isa.46:10; CV and AV; “pleasure,” AS, 1901).

The simple fact is that the Greek word in question is the term concerned with acts of volition or choice, as in, “Thy will be done” (Matt.26:42b; 6:10). It is really very shameful to confuse things here with all these vain claims in English about God “only” desiring but not willing that all be saved—as if God will not achieve what He desires!

You stated that the same word can have two or more meanings, as dictated by the context. While there is truth in what you say here, even so, in any such assertion, there can easily also be serious error and confusion.

In any language, words cannot have two (or more) intrinsic meanings; instead, each word has only one essential meaning. This is so simply in the nature of things. However, words can have, and often do have, two (or more) interpretative senses. These include the various definitions of usage which appear in our dictionaries, which are examples of a word’s possible referential meanings. Verbal interpretative sense (i.e., referential meaning), however, is no part of the meaning of a word itself.

Properly speaking, dictionaries do not record word meanings (except in the sense of referential meanings, as above), but word usages. Nor do they inform us as to what is a word’s “correct” meaning; instead, in their plurality of definitions, they simply factually *report* to us the various usages of each word which at least certain persons, sometimes, have made of it, whether such a usage is common or uncommon. Dictionaries do not tell us what words mean; instead, they *inform* us, definition by definition, as to what at least some *people* mean (i.e., have in view) when they use a certain word, in a certain way.

In nearly all cases, it is not necessary to make interpretations of sense within a translation; and, if at all practicable, this should not be done, else translation becomes interpretation.

This is not to say that in a version judgments of idiom will not need to be made. “Idiom” refers to the way something is expressed, and this, often, cannot be carried over literally from one language to another while maintaining good diction in translation. Such issues of “idiom” arise *between* languages; issues of verbal interpretative sense, however (i.e., the sense in which a certain word should be understood) exist apart from translation and are not in themselves issues of translation at all.

In cases where various idiomatic issues arise, we use variants in translation in order to accommodate the need. In some cases, such variants may be quite different one from another, even though there is an underlying (although not always readily evident) commonality of idea. In fact, there is great, but controlled, plurality and diversity of rendering of the Greek within the vocabulary and syntactical constructions of the Concordant Version. It is far from being the “literal, word-for-word” translation which most imagine it to be.

The faithfully translated fact is that God *wills* all mankind to be saved and come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). This is to say that God has *formed the decision* that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. Accordingly, then, our Saviour, God, Who is also the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10), is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). In speaking thus, our apostle declares, “I am telling the truth, I am not lying, a teacher of the nations in knowledge and truth” (1 Tim.2:7). And, “faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome . . . These things be charging and teaching” (1 Tim.4:9,11).

J.R.C.

WHEN GOD IS BEING JUDGED

IT WAS the subject of *God's righteousness*, being revealed in the evangel of God's power for *salvation* (Rom.1:16,17), that led Paul into the long dissertation of Romans 1:18-3:20 concerning human irreverence and unrighteousness. Consequently, in speaking of our desperate human situation as sinners facing judgment, the apostle continually has God, His operations and His character, especially His *righteousness* in view.

The apostle writes concerning our unrighteousness and God's judgment in preparation for what he has to say concerning God's achievement of justification. He will show that there is no justification for anyone apart from the righteousness of God and His justification (*cf* Rom.3:26) in Christ Jesus.

ALL ARE SINNERS

The sorry situation of humanity does not exclude the Jew. He also is a sinner as shown in Romans 2:17-29. The Jew, therefore, is not exempt from the righteous judgment of God. God's righteousness demands that "the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience" (Rom.2:4) be set aside "in the day of indignation and revelation of the just judgment of God, Who will be paying each one in accord with his acts" (Rom.2:5,6). In that day "God will be judging the hidden things of humanity" (Rom.2:16).

Yet this particular revelation of God's righteousness does not involve salvation. It speaks of God, but it does not speak of His evangel, although it accords with it. As for sinners, apart from God's work of salvation in Christ, they

must *perish* (Rom.2:11), and this includes the Jew who is a transgressor of law. And as for God, His just judgment, if it were the end of the revelation of His righteousness, would mean that He could not keep His word concerning blessing for His chosen people and the world.

That cannot be, for God's righteousness demands not only that all sin be taken into account, but also that He will faithfully keep His promises of blessing. This became the issue in Romans 2:25-3:4 where Paul identified God's righteousness with His faithfulness to what He has said regarding the benefit and prerogative of the Jew. The unfaithfulness of "some" (certainly an understatement) cannot nullify the faithfulness of God. God will not fail to keep His word. He is righteous in His work of judging, but He is also righteous in carrying out His promises of blessing.

These two aspects of divine righteousness must be harmonized, which is to say again that Paul is directing us, with great anticipation, to the evangel.

GOD IS RIGHTEOUSLY FAITHFUL

There is a dilemma here: Romans 3:1-4 has disclosed that there is *much* benefit for the Jew because of the faithfulness of God. God will fulfill every word of good¹ spoken in His oracles to the Jew. Nevertheless, in one way or another every man, including the Jew, is a liar (Rom.3:4a; *cp* Psal.116:11), not simply in what we say, but in what we think and in the covering up of truth as well. Consequently all are liable to God's righteous judgment calling for divine indignation. Yet God is *true*, which is another

1. Some have felt that Paul was speaking of God's faithfulness to His words concerning His indignation. That is a contextual topic, but the immediate concern is the *benefit* of the Jew, of which God often spoke in His oracles from Genesis 12 through the latter prophets. God *said* He would bless this people, and He will.

way of saying He is *faithful*, which is another way of saying He is *righteous*. He will keep His promises.

So the question is: How can this be? How can God be righteously faithful in granting promised benefits to anyone who is a sinner? If God grants Israel the blessings spoken of in His word, which He must do because He is true and does not lie, then what happens to the revelation of His righteous judgment? In His righteousness He cannot overlook the sins of Israel forever (and again this would be contrary to His word), and if He could do so, what happens to His righteous *fairness* in judging the rest of the world?

Clearly the apostle is leading us forward to that message of salvation and justification in Christ of which Paul was not ashamed. God's righteousness as it is revealed in His judgment and as it is made known in His faithfulness to His Word must be viewed in connection with His righteousness as it is made manifest in the evangel.

THE PSALM QUOTATION

This pointing of our thoughts toward Romans 3:21 becomes even more imperative in Romans 3:5-8 where Paul expands on the startling words of David in Psalm 51:4 which he has just cited. That complete verse as rendered in the CV is as follows:

**'Against You, 'against You alone have I sinned
And done 'what is evil in Your eyes,
So that You may be 'justified 'when You speak,
And be 'cleared 'when You judge'.**

Here David acknowledged that his sin was an evil act against, or as literally expressed, *to* Elohim; he spoke of it as it related to God. As a transgression of law bringing evil to Uriah and others and as it encouraged Yahweh's enemies to spurn Him (*cf* 2 Sam.12:9-14), it was a sin against God. But David spoke boldly here of another effect of his

sin; it was “so that” God would be justified in what He had spoken. David’s sin related to God in both a negative and positive way. It caused dishonor to Him in an immediate and temporary sense. But it also produced in David (and in all whose hearts are directed toward God) a growth in appreciation for God, bringing honor to Him Whose righteousness stands in contrast to human unrighteousness. Involved in this contrast is the glorification of God’s righteousness within the believer’s heart in his expectation that *God Himself* will achieve good out of it all. Or stating the matter more specifically, in accord with Romans 3:1-8, David’s unfaithfulness to the law and his place as the king of Israel illuminated the faithfulness of God Whose words of blessing for Israel will be fulfilled as His achievement. And in doing so David’s sin focused his thoughts on God.

The Hebrew term translated “so that” in the CV of Psalm 51:4 speaks of purpose. But when David said, “I have sinned . . . *so that* You may be justified when You speak,” he was not speaking of a purpose he himself had in view in taking Uriah’s wife, but of a good result that must be traced to the purpose and operations of God. David’s sorrow was deep and true in relation to himself and what he had done, but his heart was directed to God with longing and expectation that He would bring “elation and rejoicing” (Psa.51:8). David’s confidence was in God. Besides his personal losses and sorrows, David’s sin resulted in present evil for Jerusalem, and because of that it brought great distress to its king. But in His benevolence, *Elohim* will “bring good to Zion” and “build up the walls of Jerusalem” (Psa.51:18). David’s failure exalted God’s achievement; it *commended* the righteousness of God.

In speaking of God building up the walls of Jerusalem David was clinging fast to the very words of Yahweh which came through the prophet Nathan on an earlier and happier occasion. The message (it was surely an *evan-*

gel) of 2 Samuel 7:4-16 spoke of God giving David victory over his enemies and establishing the kingship under his descendants. Yet now, already David had sown a seed of failure that would lead downward to ruin and devastation for that kingdom and royal house. Indeed it was already having corrupting effects on the kingship and kingdom.

Nevertheless, Yahweh had said through Nathan, “I will provide a place for My people Israel; I will plant them so that they can tabernacle by themselves and shall no longer be disturbed” (2 Sam.7:10). And Yahweh’s word to David also was that “Your house and your kingship will be authenticated before Me for the eon; your throne it shall become established for the eon” (2 Sam.7:16).

David’s unfaithfulness cannot nullify God’s faithfulness to these oracles. It can only stand as a dark backdrop to the glorious righteousness of God Who will be justified in what He said by bringing His words into fulfillment.

Such high thoughts concerning God, however, seem to open up low thoughts in the human mind:

ROMANS 3:5-8

1. *Now if our injustice is commending God’s righteousness, what shall we declare?*

a. **Not that God Who is bringing on indignation is unjust!** (*As a man am I saying it.*) *May it not be coming to that! Else how shall God be judging the world?*

2. *Yet if the truth of God superabounds in my lie, for His glory,*

b. *why am I also still being judged as a sinner, and why not say, according as we are calumniated and according as some are averring that we are saying, that “We should be doing evil that good may be coming”?*

3. *—whose judgment is fair.*

WHAT SHALL WE DECLARE?

In maintaining that God is righteous in His judgments and also in faithfully fulfilling His promises despite human unrighteousness, Paul has focused attention on God *as God* (cp Rom.1:21). God is righteous and faithful and always succeeds in carrying out His word. How He does so is illuminated by the evangel. But the human keeps wanting to get into the picture in some important way as a contributor and helper. The truth of God's deity, expressed in points 1 and 2 (verses 5a and 7a) is twisted by the human rationalizations expressed in points a and b. In effect, these arguments are judgments against God.

If it is so that human unrighteousness commends God's righteousness, and that our lies make God's truthfulness to superabound in glory, what are we to say? But why should we say anything except to laud and praise God for His good achievement where we fail so miserably?

Shall we say that therefore God cannot bring His indignation on those who actually have sinned because their failures have been used by Him to bring His righteousness into sharp and glorious illumination?

Or shall we say that therefore we ought to multiply our lies and acts of evil in order that the good of commending God's righteousness might be advanced more and more?

Paul will have none of such reasonings. They are judgments against God and the fairness and wisdom of His ways. But he brings them forward because they aid in leading us forward to the evangel. Our great need is expressed not only in our sinful deeds but in our foolish reasonings as well.

GOD BEING JUDGED

Psalm 51:4 as expressed in the Hebrew (Masoretic) Text speaks of God being cleared when He *judges*. But the Greek Septuagint Version (LXX), which Paul used in

his quotation in Romans 3:4, speaks of God winning the case when He is *being judged*.² Here the thought is that God will conquer against any accusation upon His faithfulness, such as that intimated by Israel's enemies in view of David's sin, or by those who claimed in Paul's day that Israel's unfaithfulness would necessarily nullify any possibility of God fulfilling His promises to them. This judging of God by mankind will be proved false, for God will conquer and fulfill all His promises.

GOD IS FAIR IN JUDGING SINNERS

Romans 3:5-8, however, brings out further charges being brought against God. First it is suggested that God would be unfair in bringing His indignation upon those whose sins brought His righteousness into high relief.

At the very root of this charge against God is human pride and a desire to make a contribution for which God is made a debtor. Whereas David had focused on God's glory in the midst of his shame, the normal human reaction to personal failure is to search for a silver lining in relation to oneself.

Hence the Jew seizes upon the extraordinary idea that he is exempt from God's indignation because his unfaithfulness drew attention to God's faithfulness. This, in effect, is the idea that God owes him something. Paul will fully dispose of such reasoning later in Romans 11 when he once again speaks of God Himself bringing the benefit of mercy to Israel. "For *God* locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all . . . For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, *who*

2. We followed the Hebrew text in the CV of the Psalms passage, but Paul's use of the LXX reading here urges a reexamination of our rendering. At least a footnote providing the LXX wording would be in order, if not using that reading in the CV text itself.

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.11:32-36).

It is the evangel that opens up the true meaning of God's indignation and judgment and enables the believer to join Paul from the heart in the joyful benediction of Romans 11:33-36. Indignation and fury, affliction and distress (Rom.2:9) are part of the process toward the goal. They are in the same category as our present sorrows and hurts; they are temporary evils which humble humanity (Ecc.1:13; 3:10), not at all such a bad outcome. This is not to say they are not serious and unpleasant. They truly involve suffering and shame, but they are not eternal and not without a purpose for good. The evangel makes this clear.

JUDGING THE WORLD

When Paul testified that human failure can never nullify God's faithfulness (Rom.3:3,4), the Jew, and everyone else ought to cheer with praise and thanksgiving. God is faithful to all the good words He has spoken. He is faithful to His word to Abram, "I shall make you into a great nation, and I shall bless you" (Gen.12:2). And He is also faithful to that earliest word of blessing concerning humanity's increase and sway given in Genesis 1:28. As for us who are now believing, God has spoken of superabundant grace (*cf* Rom.5:17).

The evangel reveals to us that God's work of blessing is the bottom line. And it reveals that this work of blessing is a righteous work, for it is based on the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus. There is much grief along the way, failure and loss, but these are for our learning and for our appreciation of God and His blessing. So also, whether the indignation of God comes upon the sinner, or whether the sinner is rescued from it, this indignation, too, must exist as part of God's temporary operations for ultimate good; it

serves certainly as an eye-opener to the standards of divine righteousness. But God's gift of love in giving His Son for sinners is that which brings salvation and finally and lastingly defines and displays God's righteousness in all things.

Such considerations are not yet directly in view in Romans 3:5-8. Paul patiently rehearses some of the human objections to the processes of God. If God is obligated to withhold His indignation from those who, by their sins, contribute to the commendation of His righteousness, then this would apply not just to the Jew or to the relatively good person, like Job, who walks in the fear of God, but to everyone. For everyone's unrighteousness commends God's righteousness. If one is exempted, then all must be exempted, and so God would not need to judge anyone.

But judgment is part of the process. It has its place toward the appreciation of God and the blessedness of His blessings. It does not gain those blessings, for that is the achievement of God in the gift of His Son, but it is a work of the God Who now has made known His evangel.

THE TRUTH OF GOD

The fact that the truth of God superabounds in our lies is a welcome word for every liar. It ought to bring forth exclamations of joy and praise to God! It ought not to get me thinking that I should keep on lying more and more so that God's truthfulness should be made superabundantly more obvious. Again the judgment being made against God by those who accuse Paul of teaching we ought to do evil so that good may come (Rom.3:8) is an expression of human pride. It reflects the underlying human conviction that we ourselves can bring about good apart from God.

How foolish! The sin of lying, which includes deception and cover-up, brings with it its manifold repercussions of shame and suffering in our current lives, as it did for David. And this is apart from any future indignation and

judgment. And beyond the degrading effects of such thinking on us is the loss that comes from such a wrong view of God. That He is glorified through the instrumentality of our failures does not mean that His glory depends on us. There is an ellipsis here in Romans 3:7. It is the *manifestation* of the truth of God that superabounds by my lie, not the truth of God itself. Trusting in God is right. My lie is wrong and must be judged for itself. That is as far as Paul takes us here. But he will take us much further when he brings us to the pathway marked “Yet Now,” starting with Romans 3:21.

GOD’S JUDGMENT OF SINNERS IS FAIR

The final words of Romans 3:8 bring us back to the issue at hand. Paul refers to “every human” (Rom.3:4), all the people who are irreverent and unrighteous (Rom. 1:18), that is, everyone. Paul speaks of humanity as they are, apart from any consideration of the evangel; we all are sinners, whose judgment [by God] is fair.

The objector is silenced. But he is not saved. To know the truth of God’s work of judging only to this point, that it is fair, is not enough. I don’t know about my readers, but I am ready for the evangel. But in case it has not yet hit home, Paul still has a few words to say about our desperate situation in Romans 3:9-20. Not one is just, not even one!

Nevertheless, let me jump ahead once more and say it: all mankind will be brought into that glorious effect of the one just act of Jesus Christ, the justifying of life (Rom.5:18)!

It is our great blessing to be believing the evangel which tells of God’s powerful work of salvation through the faith of Jesus Christ. God will be justified in all His sayings, and He will conquer when He is being judged. This is so because Christ was given up because of our offenses and was roused because of our justifying (Rom.4:25).

D.H.H.

THE TEACHING OF BAPTIZINGS

“WHEREFORE, leaving the word dealing with the rudiments of Christ, we should be brought on to maturity, (not again disrupting the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith on God, of the teaching of baptizings, besides the imposition of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and of judgment eonian). And this we will be doing, that is, if God may be permitting” (Heb.6:1-3).

These six lessons comprised the elementary course God gave his earthly people. In the preceding chapter they are called the “rudimentary elements” (Heb.5:12). It is customary in our schools today to offer the pupil an elementary course. The same subject may be taken up again in a complete course.

Even so it has pleased God, in His wisdom, to arrange His course of instruction. In the primary grades He taught by means of object-lessons. He addressed Himself to their senses by outward ordinances of material forms. He instituted a parallel between the material and the spiritual spheres. The removal of bodily defilement by water served to illustrate the cleansing from spiritual uncleanness by means of His Word. A tabernacle made of gold and silver and brass, of linen, of wood, and various other materials, typified His glorious dwelling place and the way of approach (Exodus, chapters 25,26,27).

God dealt with His earthly people as with a child. He gave them the law for a “schoolmaster,” or rather an “escort” to lead up to the true Teacher. Until Christ came there could be no complete course of instruction. All from Moses to Christ were in the primary grade, so to speak. The text

book, composed of types and shadows, was elementary, and consisted of *stocheia*, rudimentary observances.

Christ came (Gal.4:7). He was the great Antitype. He revealed the heart of God fully and perfectly at the cross. Since then God has filled up His Words, and a complete course is offered. Christ Himself is our text book. In Him there is maturity.

What gentle graciousness we see in the patient Instructor of His people! To have blazed upon them in the effulgence of His glory would have blinded them. So He led them by gentle steps up the high ascent to the knowledge of Himself. But it is not His purpose that they should always remain on the way and never reach the goal (Heb.5:11-14).

THE MEANING OF THE WORD BAPTISM

Among the elementary ordinances is the "teaching of baptizings" (Heb.6:2), or, if we translate the word *baptizings* as in the AV of Hebrews 9:10, "the teaching of *washings*."

But is there any ground for speaking of baptism as *washing*? We have been taught that it is quite separate and distinct from the washings under the law.

First of all what is the real meaning of the word? It is not an English word at all, but a Greek word with English letters. Its meaning, therefore, must be gathered from its usage by the spirit of God.

It occurs in various forms, but all come from one root *baptō*, which primarily means *to dip* (e.g., Lev.16:24 [LXX]; Matt.26:23; Mark 14:20; John 13:26; Rev.19:13). From this root arise four words:

Baptizō—to make things "*baptō*."

Baptismos—the act of dipping or washing.

Baptisma—the result of "*baptismos*."

Baptistēs—the one who does it.

These words are seldom translated in the AV, but rather are generally transliterated. The few cases where they are rendered otherwise than some form of "baptize" therefore claim special attention.

Baptismos, the act of baptizing, occurs only in Mark and Hebrews. The four occurrences are as follows: Mark 7:4,8 and Hebrews 6:2; 9:10.

Baptisma, the result of baptizing, is used twenty-two times, thirteen of which refer to John's baptism, five to the Lord's, three occur in Paul's letters, and the last one in Peter. This shows clearly that it is not a special term used to distinguish so-called "Christian baptism" from "Jewish washings." The occurrences are Matthew 3:7; 20:22,23; 21:25; Mark 1:4; 10:38,39; 11:30; Luke 3:3; 7:29; 12:50; 20:4; Acts 1:22; 10:37; 13:24; 18:25; 19:3,4; Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.

Baptizō is consistently transliterated "baptize" in the AV except in the following cases:

Mark 6:14, "Baptist."

Mark 7:4, "wash."

Luke 11:38, "washed."

The first is simply an incident of translation. In the other two cases the action is clear. When a Pharisee came home from the market he washed himself before eating.

Baptismos, the act of dipping or washing, is only once transliterated "baptism" in the AV. This is in Hebrews 6:2. The other occurrences are:—

Mark 7:4, "washing."

Mark 7:8, "washing."

Hebrews 9:10, "washings."

These passages do not use the word *baptismos* in harmony with the theological import of the word. We are constrained to acknowledge that both the Authorized and Revised versions are warranted here in rendering the word

“washings.” The reference is clear and unmistakable. It is to the ordinances of Divine service carried on in connection with the tabernacle.

So we see that the washings at the laver for the priests, and the various washings for the defiled of the people, were “baptisms” (Ex.29:4; 30:18,19,20,21; Lev.8:6; 11:40; 17:15,16; 14:8; 11:25; 15:8,13,16,17,21,31). Indeed the Septuagint uses the word “baptize” for the Hebrew word “rinse” (“wash,” AV) in Leviticus 11:25.

The root thought, then, of baptism, is washing.

CEREMONIAL WASHING

It is evident however that this needs modification: for there are three other words in the Greek which also signify various aspects of washing. One of them, *nīptō*, means to wash a portion of the body (Matt.15:2). Another one, *louō*, from which we have ab-lu-tion, refers to *bathing* the entire body (Heb.10:22). Still another one, *plunō*, means to wash or rinse inanimate things (Rev.7:14). Ordinarily this would be used in speaking of the washing of clothes.

These three words fully cover the field. The verb *baptizō*, is used in place of each of them. It must therefore have a meaning in common with all, yet distinct from each.

A study of each separate case will reveal the fact that *baptizō* was not used for the removal of bodily filth, but rather for the removal of *ceremonial* uncleanness. It is, in fact, *ceremonial washing*.

In the ordinary course of life contact with a carcass would not necessitate washing one's clothes. Marketing is hardly so defiling to the flesh as to require a bath. How could the Pharisee (Luke 11:38) have expected the Lord to do more than go through the formal act to which they were accustomed (Lev.11:24)? To this day such baptisms obtain among the Jews. The merest dipping of the hands in water is deemed sufficient.

Thus we see the real application of the original root *baptō*, to dip. When cups were to be baptized they were not thoroughly washed, but simply dipped in the water (Matt. 23:25). Neither were ewers or other such vessels scoured or subjected to a continual and unnecessary scrubbing, but only formally or *ceremonially* washed (Mark 7:4).

We read in Numbers 19:18 that the hyssop was baptized, or, as we know, *dipped* in water. Indeed in the first recorded baptism, that of the sons of Israel in the Red Sea, there was *no contact with water whatever*¹ (1 Cor. 10:2). They went over dry-shod. *The Egyptians it was who were immersed*.²

Washing *may* carry spiritual significance; “baptism” *always* does.

The cleansing, though outward and upon the flesh, is not intended to remove the defilement. But the ideas associated with the cleansing of the flesh are transported into the realm of spirit. Access into the tabernacle was conditional upon the ceremonial baptism or cleansing of the flesh at the laver (Ex.29:4; 30:20; Lev.8:6). Ananias charged Saul, “Rise, be baptized, and bathe off your sins, invoking His name” (Acts 22:16).

Therefore, as baptism is ceremonial washing and is applied to the formal cleansing under the law, and especially in connection with the tabernacle, it behooves us to examine the lessons there taught.

1. As a matter of *fact* the sons of Israel at the Red Sea were not baptized at all in the ordinary sense of the term. By the figure of Metonymy (of the cause) the term “baptism” is used of the *effect* which it produced. Baptism separated between its subjects and a doomed world in the days of the Acts just as the cloud and the sea lay between Israel and the Egyptians in Moses' day. Now since the *effect* of baptism was the same as the *effect* of the cloud and the sea, it is clear that the term “baptism” most appropriately and strikingly describes it.

2. According to Psalm 77:17, it seems that they were “sprinkled” too!

THE TEACHING OF THE TYPES

Beginning with the laver of the tabernacle (Ex.30:17-21), let us compare it with the sea and the ten lavers of Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:23-39); and also with the river of Ezekiel (Ezek.47:1-12). The progress of its typical teaching during the ages will then be discovered to our view. If we then connect each type with its proper antitype, the setting of each with relation to God's administrations will be clear; and we shall be in a position to apprehend the truth which is present with us now.

THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

When Yahweh tabernacled among His people He made provision for their approach; for though He did indeed dwell in their midst, it was behind thick curtains and a veil (Exodus 25,26). In the court of the tabernacle, right in the way between the gate and the portal, stood two structures: the brazen altar and the brazen laver (Ex.40:29-32).

The laver is not included in the description of the tabernacle and its furniture (Exodus 25-28). After all has been described in minutest detail, after the sheltering silver has been provided for (Ex.30:11-16), then the laver is added and set in its prominent place, intercepting every priest who would draw nigh to Yahweh (Ex.30:17-21).

And even then, its description is most meager: no dimensions, no shape, nothing to define its proportions. This is notable indeed where all else, with painful exactitude, followed the pattern shown to Moses on the mount.

What was it for? "For washing" (Ex.40:30). How simple and beautiful a picture of the cleansing necessary for communion with God! Moses bathed Aaron and his sons, thus fitting them for the presence of a holy God (Ex.29:4). Such a cleansed condition speaks of nearness and communion, which is life. So we see that the washing signified a

"bath of renascence" (Titus 3:5). The initiatory washing of the priest led to a new life of nearness to Yahweh.

But why was the laver left out of the description of the furniture of the tabernacle? Why such seeming indifference as to its shape? Does not this proclaim, with no uncertain sound, that it forms no integral part of the completed structure, but was added for the time being because of the tabernacle's own imperfection? If it was laid on them only "unto the period of reformation" (Heb.9:10), we can see why no importance attaches to its form or dimensions.

But is there any other evidence as to its transitory nature?

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

The temple of Solomon, which replaced the tabernacle, had no laver between the altar and the house. In its stead we see the brazen sea at one side of the court and the ten lavers, five on each side of the house (1 Kings 7:23-39).

The brazen sea stood upon twelve oxen (1 Kings 7:25; 2 Chron.4:2-4), speaking of service. The altar before the house has grown to such proportions that it alone fills the court in front of the house, the sea being placed to the left of the porch. The significance of these radical changes will come before us again.

The ten lavers were used to wash the offerings. Though permanently stationed on each side of the house, they were set on bases, each having four bronze wheels (1 Kings 7:30). As the wheels have no other use we may call them tongues, for they tell us once more that the lavers are only "unto the period of reformation."

THE TEMPLE OF EZEKIEL

But again, let us make sure of our conclusions, and look at Ezekiel's temple. What place has the truth of the laver there?

We can hardly expect to find the single laver of the *tab-*

ernacle, for that has already been taken out of the midst. If we look on each side of the house for the ten lavers of the temple, surely enough, they are gone; they have been wheeled away! If we look on the right shoulder of the house eastward over against the south (Ezek.47:1), where the brazen sea stood, that too is gone. But in its place, issuing from under the threshold of the house, flows the river of living water, which removes the curse and brings abundant life and fruitfulness (Ezek.47:8,9).

Here is water indeed! Not a small laver full; not two thousand baths, the limit of the bronze sea (1 Kings 7:26); but a flowing, living river, deepening as it flows (Ezek.47:3-5).

Thus we have pictured for us in the courts of God the metamorphosis of the laver, or rather of the truth which it inaugurates, for the laver itself and the ten lavers disappear, and are all alike finally lost in the river of living water.

A. E. Knoch

(To be continued)

ALICE EVELY

Alice Evely, age 90, died April 30, 2004 in Lake Worth, Florida after a short illness. She is survived by daughter Nina and son Don, also by step-children Paul Evely, René Osborne, and Doris Valentine. Alice was a Concordant believer in Christ, and attended Adlai Loudy's classes in Lake Worth in the 1950's and 1960's. She married Lewis Evely in the early 1950's, and both were a part of the Community Church (Concordant Fellowship) in Detroit, Michigan, where Lewis was a frequent speaker. Lewis died in 1971.

1 CHRONICLES-JOB

Our latest publication, 1 CHRONICLES-JOB, is currently being printed and should be available in stock very soon. This fascicle of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament comprises 242 pages on letter-size sheets, set in large print (perfect bound, uv-coated cover, with abbreviation key; \$14, plus \$2 shipping).

Contents:

- 145 Editorial
- 147 The El Who-Suffices
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- 156 The Humiliation of the King
- 165 "Concealed From the Eons";
"As Deceivers and True"
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JULY, 2004

Volume XCV

Number 4

*Concordant Version of
1 Chronicles through Job*

(1 CHRONICLES, 2 CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER, JOB)

Concerning the books included in this fascicle of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, the book of Job is associated with Psalms and Proverbs in the Hebrew canon. Esther is one of five small scrolls, associated as a group; the others are: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes. Ezra (including Nehemiah) appears along with Daniel in a final section of historical writings, concluding with Chronicles.

1 and 2 Chronicles, are treated as one book in Hebrew under the name "Words [or Annals] of the Days" (*cf* 1 Kings 14:19,29). The history is no mere repetition of the books of Samuel and Kings, but a carefully prepared commentary on the same events as they appeared to the eye of Yahweh. Many events which are assigned to human instrumentalities are here traced back to Yahweh. The purposes and counsels of the heart are unveiled in these divine annals.

Ezra and **Nehemiah** are also to be considered as one book under the name "Ezra" which means **HELP**. This is the perfect inscription to the history of Judah's restoration to their land and city and temple.

Esther is a marvelous manifestation of the care of Yahweh over His people when their sun is set and they are in the power of their enemies. Then He becomes their guiding star, shaping their way by means of a providence which never escapes His control. By the simplest and most insignificant means He turns the fell designs of their enemies into a source of blessing.

Like all the scrolls which are designated by the name of a man, the meaning of the name, **Job**, is the index to its contents. It means "Enmity." Job is a concrete example of the work of the enemy. The philosophy of evil is discussed to a finish. His four friends make evil the consequence of sin. Job maintains his innocence. Yet Yahweh vindicates him and blesses him far beyond what would have been possible apart from the affliction he had endured. Evil is definitely designed by God to work out His beneficent purpose. Thus the philosophy of evil and enmity is fully elucidated in this book, as its title indicates.

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 2004
BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-FIVE

EDITORIAL

NOT MANY have thoughtfully pondered the great question of just what is it that makes the good news of Christ, the *good* news of Christ.

Did Christ die for all or only for some? And, is salvation a gracious gift, or is it a reward? It is only natural for those who believe that the death, entombment, and resurrection of Christ is *good news*—who believe that Christ came into the world to save sinners, that through Him sinners might be saved—to want to know the answers to these questions. Did the work of Christ itself achieve salvation for some, for all, or for none? *How* good is the good news? That is: *Just what is it* about the good news that makes it *good* news?

We would seek the answers to our inquiries here “apart from prejudice, doing nothing from bias” (*cp* 1 Tim.5:21b). Accordingly, to the degree that we know ourselves at all, not to mention our precarious situation—the weakness of our flesh and the craftiness of our adversary (2 Tim.2:26)—we will have a corresponding awareness of our need for God’s enlightening grace in us.

The vast majority of Christians, whatever they may say and suppose, in fact, conceive of salvation as a reward not as a favor. And among the few who do realize that salvation is indeed truly a gracious gift, most insist that it is for themselves alone. Their claim is that all the rest of mankind must be consigned to eternal hell for their sins, especially for their sins of unbelief, even though (as these traditionalists will acknowledge) those who do not believe, cannot believe, inasmuch as God has not chosen to grant them faith.

It is rarely acknowledged that the Scriptures even possibly could be rightly understood as declaring the eventual salvation of all mankind, Christ having died for all,

and salvation ultimately being a matter of the grace of God, plus nothing.

“Universalism,” if it is known at all, is dismissed by nearly all biblically serious people as a worthless heresy, unworthy of serious attention due to its utter lack of basis in the Scriptures.

How glad we are, then, to commend a substantial, new book which at least takes this subject seriously while giving it a considerable hearing. Its title is: **UNIVERSAL SALVATION? THE CURRENT DEBATE**.¹ Its foundational chapters present “A Case for Christian Universalism,” by Thomas Talbott, which are then followed by biblical, philosophical, theological, and historical responses from a variety of scholars, all of whom write irenically and intelligently, if not always substantively and to the point. The book’s last chapter, “Talbott Responds to his Interlocutors” affords Talbott a “Reply to my Critics,” nearly all of whom reject his thesis, that of the eventual salvation of all mankind and universal reconciliation.

We would also commend to our readers Thomas Talbott’s own work, **THE INESCAPABLE LOVE OF GOD**,² which we find to be most interesting. It contains much useful and yet not widely known information. Its key points are tightly and cogently reasoned (Talbott is a professor of Philosophy at Willamette University, Salem, Oregon). It is a defense of the love and goodness of God, as we read early in its first chapter: “Contrary to what we might fear, the Creator and Father of our souls—the Lord of Hosts and King of kings—is good.”

J.R.C.

1. Edited by Robin A. Parry and Christopher H. Partridge (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003).

2. (Universal Publishers, 1999: www.upublish.com/books/talbott.htm)
While both of these titles may be ordered from bookstores, they are perhaps most conveniently obtained through AMAZON.COM.

THE EL WHO-SUFFICES

17 ⁺When Abram ^hwas 99 years old, ⁺Yahweh ^lappeared to Abram and ^lsaid to him: I am El-Who-Suffices; walk before Me and become flawless. ² ⁺I am determined to ^lgive My covenant between Me and ^{bt} you. ⁺I shall increase ^{you} ⁱ exceedingly, yea exceedingly. ³ ⁺Then Abram ^lfell on his face. And Elohim ^lspoke ^{to} him, [›] saying: ⁴ As for Me, behold, this is My covenant ^{with} you: ⁺ You will become [›] the father of a throng of nations. ⁵ ⁺So [›] your name shall no^t ^{fr} longer be called Abram; ⁺ but your name will become Abraham, for a father of a throng of nations have I ^g appointed you. ⁶ ⁺ I will cause ^{you} to be ⁱ exceedingly, yea exceedingly fruitful; ⁺ I will ^g make [›] nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. ⁷ ⁺ I have set up ^{My} covenant between Me and ^{bt} you and ^{bt} your seed after you, [›] throughout their generations, [›] as an eonian covenant, to ^h be [›] Elohim to you and to your seed after you. ⁸ And I give to you and to your seed after you ^{the} land of your sojournings, ^{all} the land of Canaan, [›] as an eonian holding; and I will ^h be [›] Elohim to them.

⁹ ⁺ Then Elohim ^{sa} spoke to Abraham: ⁺ As for you, you shall keep ^{My} covenant, you and your seed after you, [›] throughout their generations. ¹⁰ This is My covenant ^w that ⁼ you shall keep, between Me and ^{bt} yourselves and ^{bt} your seed after you: Every male [›] among you must be circumcised. ¹¹ ⁺ Namely ⁼ you must be circumcised ⁱⁿ the flesh of ⁼ your foreskin; and this will ^h be [›] the covenant sign between Me and ^{bt} yourselves. ¹² [›] Throughout your generations, every male [›] among you must be ^l circumcised ⁺ when he is eight days old, anyone born in the

household ⁺or acquired with money from any foreigner's son who is not ^fof your seed. ¹³ He must be 'circumcised, yea circumcised⁻, the manservant born in your household ⁺or acquired with your money. ⁺Thus will My covenant ^bbe marked in your flesh ⁺as an eonian covenant. ¹⁴ ⁺As for the uncircumcised male who is not 'circumcised [`]in the flesh of his foreskin, ⁺ 'this 'soul will be cut off from his people; he has annulled 'My covenant.

¹⁵ Elohim ^{sa}spoke ⁺further to Abraham: As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call 'her name Sarai; for Sarah will be her name. ¹⁶ ⁺ I will bless 'her; ⁺ ^{mr}indeed, I will give ⁺ you a son ^fby her. ⁷And I will bless him^c. ⁺ She will ^bgive rise to nations; kings of peoples shall ^bcome from her.

¹⁷ ⁺Then Abraham 'fell on his face; ⁺ he 'laughed and 'said in his heart: Can ⁷a son^o be 'born to one who is 100 years old? ⁺Or could Sarah, a ninety-year-old, ^{if}possibly 'bear a child? ¹⁸ ⁺So Abraham 'said to the One, Elohim: O that Ishmael should live before You!

¹⁹ ⁺ Elohim ^{sa}replied: Nevertheless, your wife Sarah will be bearing a son for you, and you will call 'his name Isaac. ⁺ I will set up 'My covenant [`]with him ⁺as an eonian covenant for his seed after him. ²⁰ ⁺As for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I will bless 'him and ^cmake 'him fruitful and increase 'him ⁱ exceedingly, yea exceedingly. He shall beget twelve princes, and I will ^emake ⁺ a great nation of him. ²¹ ⁺But 'My covenant I shall set up [`]with Isaac whom Sarah shall bear for you in the ^{af}next year ⁺at 'this appointed time. ²² ⁺When He had ^{all}finished ⁺ speaking⁻ [`]with him, Elohim 'ascended from ^{on} Abraham.

²³ ⁺Then Abraham 'took 'his son Ishmael and 'all those born in his household and 'all those acquired with his money, every male ⁱamong the ^{mt}people of Abraham's household, and he 'circumcised 'the flesh of their fore-skin ⁱon 'this very 'day, just as Elohim had spoken [`]to him. ²⁴ ⁺ Abraham was 99 years old ⁱwhen he had the flesh

of his foreskin circumcised⁻. ²⁵ And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old ⁱwhen he had 'the flesh of his foreskin circumcised⁻. ²⁶ ⁺On 'this very 'day Abraham was circumcised and also his son Ishmael; ²⁷ and all the men of his household, the homeborn and those acquired with money from 'a foreigner's son, were circumcised [`]with him.

THE HUNDREDTH YEAR of Abram's life is the turning point in his career, for in it the promise begins to have its initial fulfillment. In it Isaac, the first of the promised seed, is begotten and born. And in it Abram's name is changed to include the nations which sprang from him.

By this time the bodies of both Abram and Sarai were practically dead, so far as the generation of the seed is concerned (Rom.4:17-22). To commemorate this he is given the *sign* of circumcision, in the flesh. The significance of this sign should be carefully considered.

Yahweh is about to commence carrying out the promises He had made. Abram was so old that he could no longer help, so the way was clear for Yahweh to display *His* power. In accord with this, He assumes a special title, SUBJECTOR Who-SUFFICES. Hitherto, Abram seems to have been quite concerned to assist Him fulfill His promises, especially in the case of Ishmael. Now Abram was quite helpless, as well as Sarai. What follows, in this connection, is proof that the Subjector *needs no assistance*. He is self-sufficient. In fact, all the human aid He needs is helplessness, so that His sufficiency may not only be exhibited, but also *appreciated*.

THE COVENANT

A covenant, or contract, is generally made between *two* parties, *each* of which must perform his part. But Abram had come to a point where all he could do was to signify his

assent. So the Hebrew here does not read *making* a covenant (as in the AV), but *giving*. Yahweh alone increased his offspring exceedingly exceedingly, and was their Subjector, and assured them of the land of Canaan. All that Abraham did was to *believe*. This would hardly be called a covenant among men. In fact it would not be legal in some lands, where even a “deed of *gift*” must include a small sum or other valuable consideration. But, in the administration of the promise, Yahweh concludes a *gift* covenant with believers *without a single valuable consideration on their part whatever*.

The *meaning* of the *sign* of circumcision should be easier to understand when considered in the context where it is first given, than elsewhere. Hitherto Abram had been promised a seed, due to the vivifying power of *faith*, which could not come till Abram’s physical power had died. Now, however, he *had* begotten a *fleshly* seed. So this must be marked with a sign that signifies the *cutting off of the flesh*. Elohim is *spirit*, and cannot make a covenant with decadent flesh unless it has at least some indication of its excision. The *time* is significant. It was given after *Ishmael* was born, not after the birth of Isaac. *It cuts off the flesh, to make way for the spirit*.

Very few of the so-called “Circumcision” seem to have grasped the sinister significance of the sign. They gloried in it, and considered it a mark of distinction, which gave them a privileged and superior position before the Subjector. Too often it was the seal of a faith that did not exist. It signified the *cutting-off* of the flesh, while they made it a sign of physical *superiority*. Today, our circumcision is in *spirit*, not in letter. Not merely a *part* of the flesh is removed, but we, as a *whole*, *died with Christ*, yet are also risen with Him (Col.2:11; Phil.3:3). With us the physical rite would be *maimcision*. It might indicate a partial, instead of the complete, removal of the flesh (Phil.3:3).

To conform with her new station, and the change in Abram’s name to Abraham, Sarai (REGARD-MY) My-regarded-[one], expressing her personal relation to her husband, is changed to Sarah (REGARD-ess), which signifies “Chief princess.”

Other explanations may be given, but this one seems to conform to the context most closely. Her new name, Sarah, or Chief princess, is immediately followed by the revelation that nations and kings of peoples are to come from her through her son. She had shown her unbelief in the promise in connection with Ishmael, so this added dignity seems to be wholly undeserved. But so is all that comes in the sphere of promise (Gen.17:15). Then she was highly regarded by her husband; now, like him, she is highly regarded by the Ishmaelites and Esau-ites as well as the sons of Israel.

LAUGHTER

Quite a little laughter is connected with Isaac, whose name *I-tzchq* means *Laugh-causer*. Both Abraham (17:17) and Sarah laughed (18:13). Ishmael laughed later on (21:9). To Isaac’s parents his birth seems so improbable, that it bordered on the ridiculous. So it is with most of God’s promises, for they are impossible to be fulfilled in the physical sphere, and need divine spirit power to bring them about. Nevertheless, Abraham considered his body, already deadened, and the deadening of Sarah (so far as reproduction was concerned), yet the promise of God was not doubted in unbelief. He was invigorated by faith, giving glory to God, being fully assured also that, what He had promised, He is able to do also. *Wherefore, also, it was reckoned to him for righteousness* (Rom.4:22).

Ishmael differs greatly from the seed of promise, for he was not given a land or settled abode, but was like the wild donkey (onager), so fully described in the book of Job

(39:5). His descendants were like the bedouin, roaming about, with no settled dwellings, with their hand against all, and all against them. He inherited his mother's character of insubjection, which she had before the messenger spoke to her (Gen.16:12).

Abram seems to have grasped the fact that even Ishmael has his place in the Subjector's plans, though it be a negative one. He seems to have been quite fond of his first son, for he evidently was a fine specimen of the flesh, apart from faith. He played a necessary and helpful part in acting as a foil for Isaac, the seed of promise.

Two special examples of the beginning of circumcision are presented, one in which the sign was in accord with the facts, and the other a mere outward "maimcision" (Phil.3:2), in which the flesh is mutilated without any corresponding spiritual significance. Apart from the sign itself, Abram's flesh had been cut off so far as the promise was concerned. He could never generate a single son, let alone a numberless seed. But just the opposite was true of Ishmael. He was just beginning a long life in which he was to beget twelve princes and a great nation. So, ever since, the sign has lost its real meaning among the fleshly seed of Abraham.

A. E. Knoch

1 CHRONICLES THROUGH JOB

As an accompaniment to our recent publication of the books of 1 Chronicles through Job, we are beginning a series of meditations on portions of these writings, especially viewing them in light of the revelations of God given for us through the apostle Paul. We sometimes dismiss books such as Chronicles, especially the lengthy genealogies, as being of lesser value than other books such as Genesis and Job. But all of God's Word is beneficial and able to make us wise for salvation. All Scripture is inspired by God and is beneficial for our learning and discipline (2 Tim.3:15,16). Even the word "Adam" by itself, placed as it is at the beginning of 1 Chronicles, offers us much of benefit.

WORDS OF THE DAYS

THE TWO BOOKS of 1 and 2 Chronicles represent one complete treatise in the Hebrew Bible, under the name, “Words of the Days.” The Chronicler begins with the days of Adam and concludes his report with the days of the sons of Josiah and the deportation to Babylon, followed by a brief reference to the days of Israel’s return. In the Hebrew canon Chronicles appears at the very end, serving to recapitulate certain themes of Israel’s Scriptures which were relevant for them in their days after the long exile. Yet as part of God’s Word there is much of value for us as well.

In the opening chapters the “words” consist almost entirely of the names of certain people, first mentioned in Genesis, whose days are thus brought into view. By noting these names and seeing their own relationship to them and to their days, the people of Israel, being reestablished in the land, would be greatly strengthened and encouraged. There are few concepts more valuable to a human being than seeing how one fits into the scheme of things.

The real value of this orientation is not the information itself but the reliability of the information. In this respect there could be no doubt in the Israelite’s mind; the Chronicler draws the names from the first book of the Sacred Scriptures; they are the words of God.

In the final respect, the Israelite’s place “in the scheme of things” is based on the sayings and the operations of God.

Consequently, in bringing attention to the names of certain human beings and to their days, Chronicles is truly bringing attention to God and what He is doing. The days of which it speaks must be seen beyond their association

with the individual human beings named, and seen finally in relation to God Who makes all our days (*cf* Psa.39:5).

THE DAYS OF ADAM

The first *word* of Chronicles is the name *Adam* which heads a long section of genealogical lists extending through chapter 9. It may seem unnecessarily obvious to say that all the people named are descended from Adam, and all their days are extensions of his days. Yet that is extremely important and fundamentally relevant to this portion of Scripture. It was important for Israel after seventy years of disorientation in Babylon to become reacquainted with their roots, and even to see that these roots do not simply go back to David and his days, or to Israel and his sons and their days, or even to Shem or to Noah. But, as a matter of priority, they go back to Adam, just like roots of the Babylonians and the Assyrians and the people of Edom and all the nations.

The immediate significance of Israel's relationship with Adam is that they are affected by his disobedience. It was in the days of Adam that sin entered into the world, and through sin came death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned (Rom.5:12). In this respect the Israelite stood on the same ground as the Persian and the Arab and the Egyptian and the Greek.

We too are part of that family which began with Adam. And our days also are what they are because of Adam's days. The disobedience of Adam in the garden of Eden brought a curse into the world which characterized the rest of the days of Adam, and so on down to our own times.

But the name, *Adam*, also connects Israel, and all humanity, with the promises of Genesis 3:15, 16, concerning the Seed of the woman, Who would annul the authority of the Adversary, and Who, being born as a human, would be the Channel of restoration to fellowship with God (and

greater blessings as well, as we now know). Israel will be greatly helped in finding its place in the scheme of things by recalling these promises of God given in the days of Adam. And so also will we all.

Again, however, the Chronicler's reference to Adam does not relate only to the days of Adam as recorded in Genesis 3, both as to sin and the promise of the Seed. It also is to be related to the days of Adam as recorded in Genesis 1. To speak of Adam and his days is to speak of humanity as the creation *of God*.

OF GOD

Even as the genealogy of Jesus Christ given in Luke 3:23-28 ends with the words *of God*, thus revealing God as the Source of all, so also the genealogies of Chronicles must be related finally to God. The days of Adam involve, at their very beginning, God as the Creator Who has the finished creature in view: "So Elohim created humanity [or: *Adam*] in His image, in the image of Elohim He created it [or: *him*]: male and female He created them. Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said to them: Be fruitful and increase; fill the earth and subdue it. Hold sway over the fish of the sea and over the flyer of the heavens, over every domestic animal, over all the earth and over every animal that is moving on the earth" (Gen.1:27,28).

In relating Israel, first and foremost, to Adam, the Chronicler relates them not only to Adam's disobedience and its results and to the promises relating to the Seed of the woman, but also to the purpose of God in creating Adam. God never forgets this stated purpose of Genesis 1:27,28. Israel's hardships in Babylon, and afterwards when they returned to Jerusalem, do not lie outside the vision of Genesis 1:27. Nor do the failures and sorrows of our days. What God has in view is the base of any appreciation we can have of our place in the scheme of things. D.H.H.

THE HUMILIATION OF THE KING

(2 Samuel 15)

15 + It came to ^{be}_f some time afterward +that Absalom ^{ld}provided > himself with a chariot, + horses, and fifty men running before him. ² + Absalom would ^crise early and stand ^{on}at the side of the road to the gate. +Whenever there ^{lb}was any man who ^{lb}came with his contested matter to bring it >before the king for judgment, +then Absalom would ^lcall to him and ^lsay, From what city are you? And he would ^{lsa}reply, From one of the tribes of Israel is your servant. ³ +Then Absalom would ^lsay to him, See, your matters are good and correct; +yet there is no one assigned to you from ^lthe king to hear^l them. ⁴ And Absalom would ^{lsa}add, ^aO that I were ^{lpl}appointed judge^l in the land, and every man who ^{lb}had his contested matter +or plea would ^lcome ^{on}to me, and I would ^cgrant justice to him!

⁵ +So it came to be, ⁱwhenever a man approached⁻ to prostrate himself >before him, +that he would stretch forth ^lhis hand, + ^ctake fast hold >of him and kiss > him. ⁶ + Absalom ^{ld}acted ^{as}in ^lthis manner for all of Israel who ^lcame for judgment to the king. +Thus Absalom ^lstole ^lthe heart of the men of Israel.

⁷ + It came to ^{be}_fat the end of ⁷four^{~c} years +that Absalom ^lsaid to the king, ^{pr}Please, let me ^lgo and ^lpay ^lmy vow ^wthat I vowed to Yahweh, in Hebron. ⁸ For your servant vowed a vow ⁱwhen I dwelt⁻ ⁱat Geshur in Syria, > saying⁻, If Yahweh should restore, yea restore⁻ me to Jerusalem, +then I will serve ^lYahweh. ⁹ + The king ^{lsa}replied to him, Go in peace! +So he ^larose and ^lwent ^{to}^d Hebron.

¹⁰ +But Absalom ^lsent spies^l ⁱthrough all the tribes of Israel, > saying⁻, As soon as you hear⁻ ^lthe sound of the trumpet, + you will ^{sa}announce, Absalom is king in Hebron. ¹¹ + Two hundred men from Jerusalem had gone ^lwith Absalom; they were ^linvited^l and had ^lgone^l ⁱin their sincerity and had ^{no}^t knowledge of the entire matter. ¹² + Absalom ^lsent ⁷and ^lcalled^Q Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor^l, from his city, from Giloh, ⁱwhile he was sacrificing⁻ ^lthe sacrifices. + The conspiracy ^lbecame resolute, and the people going along ^lwith Absalom + were many.

¹³ +Then ^amessage-bearer^l ^lcame to David, > saying⁻, The heart of the men of Israel ^bis following after Absalom. ¹⁴ +Now David ^lsaid to all his courtiers who were ^lwith him in Jerusalem, Arise and let us run ^laway, for there shall ^{lb}be ^{no}^t deliverance for us from before Absalom. Make haste to go, lest he ^lhastens and overtakes us. +Then He would hurtle ^levil on us and smite the city >with the edge of the sword.

¹⁵ + The king's courtiers ^{lsa}replied to the king, As to all ^wthat my lord the king may choose, behold, we are your servants. ¹⁶ +So the king went ^lforth +with his entire household in his footsteps; +but the king ^lleft ^lten wives, concubines, to be in charge of the ⁱⁿpalace. ¹⁷ +Thus the king went ^lforth +with all the people in his footsteps; and they ^lstayed at a house ^lfar off. ¹⁸ + All his courtiers were ^{passing} ^{on}at his side; + all the Kerethite and all the Pelethite and all the Gittites, six hundred men who came in his footsteps from Gath, passed^l on before the king.

¹⁹ +Then the king ^lsaid to Ittai the Gittite, Why should you^l ^{mr}too go ^lwith us? Turn back and ^{sit}stay with the new king, for you are a foreigner, and you were ^{mr}also deported^l ⁷from^{~cs} your ^{ri}place. ²⁰ You came⁻ only yesterday; + should I ^cmake you rove with us today, to go +as I am going, ^{on} ^wwherever I can go? Return and take back your kinsmen with you! ⁷And may Yahweh ^ddeal with you⁰ in benignity

and faithfulness. ²¹ +But Ittai ^lanswered [`]the king ⁺ ^lsaying, As Yahweh lives and as my lord the king lives, but rather in the ^{ri}place where my lord the king may come to be, ^{if}whether for death ^{if}or for life, ^t there your servant shall come to be. ²² +So David ^{lsw}replied to Ittai, Go ahead and ^pmarch by! +Then Ittai the Gittite ^{lp}marched by +with all his men and all the little ones who were [`]with him.

²³ + All in the land were lamenting with a loud voice +as the whole ^{wi}force was ^pmarching by. + The king was [~]standing[~] in Wadi Kidron, +while the whole ^{wi}force was passing ^{on}before ⁷his^o face along the ⁷olive[~] way in the wilderness. ²⁴ + Zadok ^{mr}also was ^{bd}there, and all the Levites [`]with him carrying [`]the coffer of the covenant of the One, Elohim. + They ⁷stood by[~] [`]the coffer of the One, Elohim, and Abiathar came ^lup until [~]the crossing[~] over from the city had come to end[~] for the whole ^{wi}force. ²⁵ +Then the king ^lsaid to Zadok, Restore [`]the coffer of the One, Elohim, to the city! If I should find grace in the eyes of Yahweh, +then He will bring me back and ^llet me see [`]it and [`]its homestead. ²⁶ +Yet if He should say thus, I have no^l delight in you, ^{bd}here I am; let Him do [~]with me just as it is good in His eyes.

²⁷ The king +also ^lsaid to Zadok the priest, ^{7see}Look[~], you and Abiathar, do return to the city in peace, + Ahimaaz your son and Jonathan son of Abiathar, your two sons, [`]with you. ^{28 see}Look, I shall be dallying in the gorges of the wilderness until word comes[~] from ^{wi}you men to tell [~]me. ²⁹ +So Zadok and Abiathar brought [`]the coffer of the One, Elohim, ^lback to Jerusalem, and they ^{lsw}stayed there.

³⁰ + David was going up ⁱ the ascent of Olivet, ascending and weeping; + his head was hooded^l, and he was walking barefoot. And all the people who were [`]with him hooded each man his head; +thus they went up ascending[~] and weeping[~]. ³¹ +When David ⁷was told^{~cs} [~]saying[~], Ahithophel was ^lamong the conspirators^l with Absalom,

+then David ^lsaid, I pray, O Yahweh, make [`]Ahithophel's counsel look unwise!

³² +Now it ^{lb}happened when David came ^{fr}to the summit where people would ^lprostrate themselves to Elohim, + ^{bd}there to meet him was the ⁷long time associate[~] Hushai with his tunic torn^l and dust from the ground on his head. ³³ + David ^lsaid to him, If you ^pmarch on [`]with me, + you will become [~]a load on me. ³⁴ +But if you ^lreturn to the city and say to Absalom, ⁷Your brothers have crossed over, and the king, your father, crossed over after me, and now^o I am your servant, O ^lking; ⁷grant me life^o; I ^lbecame your father's servant, and I have been hitherto, +but now I am your servant +too, +then you ^lcan annul [`]Ahithophel's counsel for me. ³⁵ And are not Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, there with you? +So it will come to be: Every ^wword ^wthat you may hear from the king's ⁱⁿpalace, you shall tell to Zadok and to Abiathar, the priests. ³⁶ Behold, there with them are their two sons, Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan; + ^lby means of them you will send to me every word ^wthat you may hear. ³⁷ +So David's associate Hushai ^lcame to the city +as Absalom was entering Jerusalem, ⁷and Ahithophel was with him^o.

ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY

ABSALOM was a serious threat to David and the spiritual welfare of the country. It was apparent that he had grown to despise his father. He was attractive and well liked, but was also cold and calculating. The same controlled hatred that secretly planned Amnon's murder was now focused on destroying David. Absalom fully occupied himself with his agenda to steal the loyalty of the nation away from his father. He placed himself in the public eye, spending much time at the gate (2 Sam.15:2), the place of public announcement and civil court (*cf* Gen.19:1; 23:10,18; 34:20; Ruth

4:1,11; 2 Sam.18:4,5). Absalom's plan may have been his own, but he could also have been influenced by his mother's royal family during his stay in Geshur, and it is also likely that he was tutored by a secret foe of David in the royal court, Ahithophel.

Under the guise of paying a vow and worshipping Yahweh, Absalom procured David's permission to take 200 members of the court with him to Hebron. At the same time a large number of Absalom's devotees were assembling at Hebron. The plan was to anoint Absalom king, and, in the midst of overwhelming support, to pull the 200 over into firm allegiance to Absalom as well. Ahithophel, David's chief and most trusted advisor, was conspicuously absent from Jerusalem at this time (v.12), but he met Absalom in Hebron and joined hands with him in the rebellion. His presence lent great weight to Absalom's cause.

It has been suggested that Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba (*cf* 2 Sam.11:3; 23:34) and held a deadly grudge against David for his sin with Bathsheba and against her husband Uriah. While this is possible, it is not certain that the same man named Eliam is both the son of Ahithophel and the father of Bathsheba. David seems never to have suspected that Ahithophel had reason to betray him. If David had known that Bathsheba was the granddaughter of his most trusted advisor, that knowledge might even have deterred him from bringing her to the palace. If Bathsheba was Ahithophel's granddaughter, David should certainly have suspected that he had deeply offended his advisor. There is not enough information supplied to determine Ahithophel's motives with certainty.

PSALM 41

Many commentators suggest that Psalm 41 refers to this time in David's life. The Psalmist had a period of serious illness (compare also Psalms 38 and 39). If David had

such an illness, it would explain why he was absent from the judicial duties of the king, providing Absalom with the opportunity to slander him and present himself as a preferable choice for king. Absalom's statement: "there is no one assigned to you from the king to hear them [your matters]" (2 Sam.15:3), is suggestive that something had happened which prevented David from hearing the matters himself. A serious illness would provide both the cause for the need and the reason why David failed to meet the need.

The psalm begins with these words: "Happy is he who is acting intelligently toward the poor and needy; In a day of peril, Yahweh shall provide his escape." From his sickbed the Psalmist also speaks of a conspiracy against himself. He was aware of pretended allegiance and secret slandering. "If one comes to see me, he speaks hypocrisy Together, all who are hating me whisper against me Even the man bidding me peace, in whom I trusted, who was eating my bread, has magnified his heel against me" (Psa.41:6,7,9).

The first verse of the Psalm is often thought to be obscure. How does the thought of the happiness of the one who acts intelligently toward the poor and needy fit into the context? David probably wrote the Psalm later, when he could reflect on everything that had happened. He barely escaped from Jerusalem with family and loyal friends. And it was only with the aid of other friends that he was sustained and was able to evade Absalom. Hushai, Abiathar, Zadok, Ahimaaz, Jonathan, Ittai, Shobi, Machir, Barzillai, and even the scheming Ziba came to the aid of the fleeing king. David saw all of this trial as from the hand of God, and he could see the blessing that came to these people after the trial passed as a blessing from God's hand as well.

The second line of verse one moves to David, the needy one, speaking of Yahweh's provision for him. Then he digresses further to his helpless condition in sickness and the conspiracy of his enemies. Even those who were closest

to David and most trusted by him turned on him. David had always expected the worst from the Philistines and Assyrians. But it was not nearly as painful to be injured by them as it was to have those of his own household and his closest of friends betray him. Yet, even through these deep trials and humiliations, Yahweh upheld him.

ITTAI

When David received word that Absalom was proclaimed king, he gathered his family and loyal friends and fled Jerusalem. Ittai the Gittite stands in sharp contrast with Absalom, showing that the bond of loyalty in service is not something that can be passed from generation to generation by the flesh. It depends upon the faith and love given by God (2 Sam.15:15-22).

CROSSING THE KIDRON

When Julius Caesar led his army across the Rubicon River, it was an unmistakable declaration of war on Rome. "Crossing the Rubicon" has become a catch phrase for "making an irreversible decision." It is said that Caesar charged his steed into the shallow waters of the river and exclaimed, "The die is cast!" The historians say Caesar's actions and words carried a prodigious weight of significance and were a turning point in history. But what are they in comparison with "Crossing the Kidron"?

The night scene before us in 2 Samuel 15:23 bears many similarities and contrasts to the betrayal and crucifixion of Christ. The brook Kidron is mentioned only once in the Greek scriptures (John 18:1). On the night of His betrayal, Christ and His disciples left the upper room (John 14:31), and Christ continued talking with them as they walked along through Jerusalem. He spoke many words of comfort to them, concluding with His prayer in John 17. Then they crossed the Kidron to go to Gethsemane and betrayal. He

crossed the Kidron to humiliation, that sharpest of blades for stripping away the flesh. Kidron means *dark* or *somber*. Christ crossed the brook named darkness to enter God-forsaken darkness. Gethsemane means *olive press*. There in Gethsemane Christ voiced His irreversible decision to be obedient, even to the death of the cross. He crossed into the darkness away from the mountain of God, away from the home of the coffer of the covenant. He entered the press where His will was crushed so that the oil of God's spirit might anoint those graced to believe in Him.

ZADOK AND ABIATHAR

David instructed Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to return the coffer of the covenant to Jerusalem. He assured them that they could be of the greatest help to him by staying in the city, and being a source of information for him (2 Sam.15:24-29). David had learned that Yahweh had no need of his protection, but rather that he, David, stood in need of Yahweh's grace if he was to be permanently established. The inscription of Psalm 3 identifies it as David's prayer and meditation when he fled from Absalom. David saw himself as one whom his God had chosen and was guiding. Whether or not he was delivered was an issue of God's own vindication. Would He allow his chosen one to be forsaken to his enemies, or would deliverance issue forth from His holy mountain? David determined to accept whatever chastisement God had for him, but ultimately he rested in God for deliverance. "I will lie down that I may sleep; I will awake, for Yahweh, He shall support me . . . To Yahweh belongs the salvation; On Your people be Your blessing!" (Psa.3:5,8).

HUMILIATION AND THE POWER OF GOD

David trudged up the Mount of Olives, weeping, with bare feet and his head covered, showing his dire humili-

ation and distress (2 Sam.15:30; *cp* Deut.25:9,10; Isa.20:2-4; Eze.24:15-18 [bare feet]; *cp* Est.6:12; Jer.14:3,4 [head covered]). As he drew close to the place where Judas would betray Christ, he was told that Ahithophel, his most trusted counselor, was among the conspirators with Absalom. He prayed that God would make Ahithophel's counsel look unwise. And there God did make wisdom look foolish, and foolishness look like wisdom (2 Sam.15:31). Even today the world struggles with the wisdom of the humiliation and crucifixion of Christ, calling it stupidity (1 Cor.1:18-2:13). Yet it is the wisdom of God.

Both David and Christ were rejected by their own people. Absalom and Barabbas were both known murderers, and both were preferred over David and Christ. Both David and Christ sorrowed deeply. Both prayed and both were betrayed. David left Jerusalem to prevent Absalom from attacking it and killing many people there, showing his concern for the safety of his people and all those with him. Similarly, Christ cared for the safety of his disciples (*cf* John 18:9), and both men accomplished the safety of their own (2 Sam.17:22; John 10:27-30; 17:12).

Yet Christ's humiliation and sorrow was deeper. David's friends rallied about him, traveling with him and bringing him supplies. But all forsook Christ and fled (Matt. 26:56). David was suffering the results of his own sins, but Christ was sinless, and suffered for the sins of the world. David was continually praying and seeing God's provision for his deliverance unfolding. Christ was truly forsaken, even by God.

"My body I give to smiters, and My cheeks to burnishers. My face I do not conceal from confoundings and spitting. And My Lord Yahweh is helping Me. Therefore, I am not confounded. Therefore I set My face as a flint, and know that I shall not be ashamed" (Isa.50:6,7). Christ came to the Kidron, and did not hesitate to cross it for us.

J. Phillip Scranton

**“CONCEALED FROM THE EONS”;
“AS DECEIVERS AND TRUE”**

Question:

In a recent Bible study that I attended, one of my friends said that he now believes that the words “eon” and “generation” which normally mean, respectively, a period of time, and, the people living at about the same time, are instead titles of Satan and of certain evil messengers (“Eon,” “Eons,” and “Generations”). He gets this from Ephesians 2:2 and Colossians 1:26. He said that many people in church history believed the same as he does on this subject. He also said since these meanings are so obvious in these verses, that if others after hearing him out should still reject what he has to say about this, it must be because they do not truly want new truth, at least if it should be made known through an “unapproved” source.

Answer:

WITHIN the compass of “church history,” it is possible to find “many people” who have believed all sorts of things, however strange and contradictory, in comparison, one to another. Therefore, the fact that the doctrine which your friend now embraces is not new but was held by certain early Gnostics as well as by various others in later periods, is in no way supportive of its correctness.

Further, since even objectively simple ideas, in the eyes of some may by no means be “obviously true” ideas, it becomes mere intimidation, besides begging the ques-

tion even as confounding the subjective with the objective, to press the sheer “obviousness” of putative truth. It is unwise as well as unkind to claim that those who differ with us (at least any who do so after having examined our claims) do so because “they do not truly want new truth, at least if it should be made known through an ‘unapproved’ source.” Such an evaluation of someone else’s heart and motives not only fails to give the benefit of the doubt, but it assumes the worst about a matter concerning which we can by no means be certain.

Now, to address your question itself concerning the word “eon” in Ephesians 2:2 and the words “eons” and “generations” in Colossians 1:26:

*“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 . . .” (Eph.2:1,2).*

*“. . . in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the word of God—the secret which has been concealed from the **eons** and from the **generations**, yet now was made manifest to His saints, to whom God wills to make known what are the glorious riches of this secret among the nations, which is: Christ among you, the expectation of glory—” (Col.1:25-27).*

In Ephesians 2:1, Pauls says that we are dead to our offenses and sins, in which once we 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 . . .” (Eph.2:1,2).

Over the centuries, some have taught that it is to be understood from this passage that in the phrase “the *eon* of this world,” we have a reference to Satan, who, it is claimed, is the chief “Eon” of the world, the world in which we live.

That is, such teachers claim that *EON*, which elsewhere means a period of time, here signifies “evil spirit being” as a title of Satan.

It is pointed out that following the phrase, “in accord with the *eon* of this world,” is a *parallel* phrase, “in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness.” From this the claim is made that each phrase makes reference to the same thing, namely to the same being, Satan.

Similarly, since in Colossians 1:26 Paul speaks of “*the secret* which has been *concealed* from the *eons* and from the *generations* . . .” these same teachers have claimed that not only is an “eon” a certain type of creature (an evil spirit being) but that a “generation” is a certain type of allied creature as well (a wicked celestial messenger). The idea is that in this instance neither an “eon” nor a “generation” are periods of time, but are instead titles of created beings. To make this notion clear, it is suggested that this text be rendered with these words at issue capitalized thus: “. . . concealed from the Eons and from the Generations . . .”

It is further reasoned that since “the secret” spoken of here is now made manifest to *beings* (namely, to the saints), in the phrase “concealed from the eons and from the generations,” we are therefore to understand that these also are beings (namely, evil spirit beings and wicked celestial messengers). It is stressed that this is doubtlessly the correct meaning, since secrets can only be either concealed from or manifested to actual beings, not to things (i.e., to periods of time).

In reply to the above claims concerning Ephesians 2:2, I would say the following: It is true that the phrase, “*in accord with* the *eon* of this world,” is in parallel to the phrase which follows, “*in accord with* the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness.”

Parallelism (which is found primarily in poetry) is a literary device. Its purpose is not to identify one thing with another; instead, it is employed in the interests of somehow making a *comparison* or noting a *similarity* between one thing and another.

Therefore, it does not follow from the fact that these two phrases are set in parallel to one another, that each phrase is in reference to the same thing. Much less does it follow that since the second phrase (“the chief of the jurisdiction of the air . . .”) speaks of a being, therefore the words in question in the first phrase (namely, “the eon”) are also in reference to a being.

The fact that each of these two phrases in Ephesians 2:2 begins with the common term *kata* (rendered “in accord with”) hardly identifies or demonstrates equivalency between the noun “eon” in the former phrase and the noun “chief” in the latter phrase, thus “proving” that the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, presumably Satan, is the “Eon” of this world!

It is by no means revealed to us in this text that the word “eon” here refers to Satan or means some type of powerful celestial being.

Surely “the eon of *this* world” stands in contrast to the respective eons of the other worlds (SYSTEMS) or constitutions of human society which have obtained down the centuries. An “eon” which corresponds to any certain world, speaks of the duration of *time* during which any certain general *order* or “world” exists or prevails.

The eon of this world—the eon in which we live, which continues to endure so long as the present world order obtains—is a *wicked* eon (Gal.1:4). This is so since it incorporates such an abundance of human sins and offenses, including our own, in which once we walked.

These offenses and sins of ours may be accounted for first of all due to the fact that through the disobedience

of Adam we were constituted sinners (Rom.5:19) and thus became members of the old humanity which is corrupted in accord with its seductive desires (Eph.4:22). Yet our offenses and sins are to be accounted for as well in consideration of the fact that in this wicked eon in which we live, besides being involuntarily subjected to the slavery of corruption (Rom.8:21), we are *also* subject to the baneful and deleterious, powerful influences of “the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness.”¹

Thus Paul speaks, concerning our “offenses and sins, in which once [we] walked,” in which we engaged ourselves thus, (1) “in accord with the eon of this world,” and (2) “in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness . . .” (Eph.2:2).

In reply to the above claims concerning Colossians 1:26, I would say this: The main argument of these same teachers here in this text is simply that inasmuch as a secret can only be concealed from beings, and since the secret spoken of here had been “concealed from the eons and from the generations,” therefore eons and generations are beings.

The additional argument is that since a secret can only be made manifest to beings, and since “the secret” is now made manifest to the saints, who are beings, in the phrase “concealed from the *eons* and from the *generations*,” it is therefore beings, denominated thus, who are in view, from whom this secret has been concealed. This argument is specious, however, since it simply does not follow that since the secret is now made manifest to the saints who are beings, that the beings from whom it had been concealed were beings termed “Eons” and “Generations.”

1. Through his employment of the striking phrase, “the chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness,” Paul evidently alludes to Satan, otherwise called the Adversary (cp 2 Tim.2:26; 2 Cor.11:14; cf Rev.12:9).

The claim that these supposed beings, purportedly termed “Eons” and “Generations,” are, as to their nature, “evil spirit beings” and “wicked celestial messengers,” stands on very shaky ground indeed. That ground is merely the gratuitous claim that in Ephesians 2:2 the word “eon” in the phrase “the eon of this world” signifies a title of Satan who is spoken of thus. It is reasoned that since in Colossians 1:26 the word “eons” is in the plural, it must therefore have in view a company of lesser evil spirit beings, ones who are in league with the chief evil spirit being, Satan himself. Similarly, it is reasoned that since the word “generations” is conjoined to the word “eons” which word speaks of evil spirit beings, therefore “generations” must also have in view wicked celestial beings, ones who themselves are likewise associated with Satan.

Of course we are well aware that secrets can only be hidden from beings, not inanimate periods of time. Literally, a secret may be hidden in or during a period of time, but not from it (*cp* Romans 16:25, “hushed in times eonian”).

If, as one might reasonably hope, the reader upon approaching these verses in question, already knew what an “eon” and a “generation” were, it would not be necessary for the writer to define his terms at every turn.

With this in mind, and since we do indeed already know prior to considering these disputed verses that “eons” and “generations,” definitionally, have in view time-duration, and are mindful as well that secrets can only be concealed from and manifested to beings, it follows that the phrase “concealed from the eons and from the generations” cannot be strictly literal but must instead be figurative. The evident figure employed (evident in the nature of the case) is the common figure termed metonymy (i.e., association) in which that which is *associated with* what is expressed is the actual thought in view.

That is, “the secret,” which Paul now reveals, which is,

“Christ among *you*,” had been concealed from *those associated with* the past eons (of time) and generations (of human beings), namely, *those who lived during those former eras*.

I should mention as well that even as Paul often uses the figure of association, he also often uses the figure of *omission*, or ellipsis. That is, he frequently compresses his thoughts, thus avoiding weighing down his sentences with excessive verbiage. This figure is present whenever one refrains from *expressing* what is plainly in view and necessary to the completion of the thought.

Taken in this quite similar sense, the thought here thus becomes, “from [*the beginning of*] the eons” (and of the generations), “the beginning of” being clearly *understood* though not expressed.

Acts 15:18 is a similar passage (“Known from [the] eon to the Lord is His work”), though the definite article is not used there and the thought is more general, being from the Hebrew standpoint. The sense is, as we might put it, that from “of old” or from duration of time “long ago,” known to the Lord is His work. This sort of device is used in many passages, the self-evident, elliptical idea being understood by the discerning reader.

As I have just indicated, in Colossians 1:26, the figure primarily in view would seem to be that of association. Yet this elliptical thought as well may also be present in Paul’s mind. In any event, in the nature of the case, both the metonymical and the elliptical sense are true; and, each one complements the other. Hence we do well to note and to accept them both.



Question:

I must admit that it troubles me that your ministry, though very substantive and useful, is so small, so little known, so little appreciated, and its teachings so

little embraced. Why is it not at least somewhat better known and better received?

Answer:

We empathize with you in your regret that our translation and teaching ministry which over the years has been of much value to many, nonetheless, by the usual standards, has remained very small.

If you are inquiring as to the remote and ultimate cause as to why our work is not more widely known and better received, I can readily answer this question. It is because all that exists and all that occurs is out of, through, and for God (Rom.11:36). This includes not only the character and substance of our efforts, but both their reception or rejection by others, even in the degree to which they are embraced or dismissed (*cp* 2 Cor.6:8,9; Isa.26:12).

But if you are inquiring instead as to the proximate cause as to why our work is not more widely known and better received, perhaps I can also answer this question. The reason why, in this sense, that we have had a little "success" yet only a little success, and why some but no more have received and rejoiced in our teachings and translative findings, is simply because we are the way we are and others are the way they are, according as God is intending.

Regardless of who teaches it and the degree of success any certain ones may have in making it known, the truth of the evangel remains that since salvation is a gracious gift, all for whom Christ died will be saved; and Christ died for all, giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all, in accord with the great truth that our Saviour, God, wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4,6). May God give us not only the grace to accept His truth, but the grace not to be stumbled by the fact that since men love the darkness rather than the light (John 3:19), except where God grants enlightenment, darkness must necessarily prevail.

J.R.C.

ALL UNDER SIN

THERE are no human heroes in Romans, just sinners, among whom we find a few fellow partakers of grace. The Hero is our Lord Jesus Christ, Who indeed is the “One Man” through Whom God’s grace and gratuity is conveyed (*cf* Rom.5:15), but Who stands unique as the Son of God. What we learn of humanity concerns our need, which is minutely detailed in Romans 1:18-3:20 in order to direct our attention to God as He is made known in His Son. Paul writes about human unrighteousness, but in doing so he directs our thoughts to God’s righteousness.

ROMANS 3:9

Still addressing himself to the representative Jew, and identifying himself with him, according to the flesh, the apostle now sums up the manifest fact of human depravity. Here before God’s righteous judgment, everyone stands on the same level:

*What, then? Are we privileged?
Undoubtedly not,
for we previously charge both Jews and Greeks to be
all under sin.*

The Jew, who has the multifarious benefit and prerogative of the oracles of God, belonging to the chosen people, “whose are . . . the promises” (Rom.9:4), is not privileged *when it comes to God’s indignation against sin*. God will be righteously faithful to His word, but He will not be unrighteous and unfair in His judgment. How is this possible? This is the pressing question being set before us.

ROMANS 3:10-18

But lest we do not grasp the magnitude of the dilemma, Paul pens one of those powerful masterpieces of thought which are so typical of Romans (e.g., Rom.5:12-19; 8:31-39; 11:29-36). Drawing from the Sacred Scriptures the apostle shows humanity for what it is before the righteous God and apart from the WELL-MESSAGE he is bringing. We are all irreverent and unrighteous in words and in deeds, to one extent or another. The facts of human depravity are: . . . *according as it is written, that*

Not one is just

—**Not even one.**

Not one is understanding.

Not one is seeking out God.

All avoid Him:

At the same time they were useless.

Not one is doing kindness:

*There is **not even one!***

A sepulcher opened is their throat.

With their tongues they defraud.

The venom of asps is under their lips,

Whose mouth with imprecation and bitterness is crammed.

Sharp are their feet to shed blood.

Bruises and wretchedness are in their ways,

And the way of peace they do not know.

There is no fear of God in front of their eyes.

These are blunt words, dark and pessimistic in themselves. They speak of humanity as a whole as specifically stated in verses 10-12 (the first two stanzas). Hence what is said about our words and thoughts in the third stanza (Rom.3:13,14) and our deeds and disposition in the last stanza (verses 15-18) also apply to all. From head to foot we all are sinners, which means not simply that we do wrong,

but that, at our very core, we are *unable* to do that which is righteous and honoring to our Creator. Regarding ourselves, we are being led to that sobering and yet exultant awareness of our need of God and His righteousness in a work of salvation. We are sinners. He alone can be the true and righteous Saviour. He alone can supply what is needed by all mankind.

The words of Romans 3:10-18 themselves are not original with Paul. He draws them from the Septuagint translation of Ecclesiastes, the Psalms and Isaiah, adjusting and arranging them in accord with his present thought in his epistle to the Romans. As translated in the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, Paul's probable sources are as follows:

There is no righteous human in the earth, (Ecc.7:20a)

—*Not even one.* (Psa.14:3c)

[Yahweh gazes down to see whether] there is anyone acting intelligently, (Psa.14:2a,b)

Anyone seeking after Elohim. (Psa.14:2c)

All withdraw aside; (Psa.14:3a)

Together they are spoiled. (Psa.14:3a)

There is no one doing good; (Psa.14:3b)

There is not even one. (Psa.14:3c)

A sepulcher opened is their throat; (Psa.5:9c)

With their tongue they deal slickly. (Psa.5:9d)

The venom of an asp is under their lips. (Psa.140:3b)

His mouth is full of imprecation, with deceit and fraud;
(Psa.10:7a)

Their feet . . . are hastening to shed innocent blood.

(Isa.59:7a,b)

Devastation and brokenness are in their highways.

(Isa.59:7d)

The way of peace they do not know. (Isa.59:8a)

There is no awe of Elohim in front of his eyes. (Psa.36:1b)

No doubt the Jew understood most of these passages in their various contexts as applying only to those of the nations. It would be startling to them to find Paul applying them to everyone, themselves included. Yet that is exactly what he does here. Hence he has just written, with Romans 2:11-29 in mind, "... we previously charge both Jews and Greeks to be *all under sin*" (Rom.3:9), even as he soon will write: "no flesh at all shall be justified in [God's] sight ... *all sinned* and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:20,23), and, "... through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which *all sinned*" (Rom.5:12).

Concepts of self-righteousness and superiority easily arise where there is favor. But the fact which is declared throughout Scripture is that every descendant of Adam is a sinner, bar none.

NOT ONE IS JUST

The arrangement of Romans 3:10-18 in four stanzas of four lines each, as given above, attempts to reflect a deliberate pattern of thought in Paul's mind as he brings the subject of human irreverence and unrighteousness to a conclusion. In the opening stanza (Romans 3:10,11) the apostle speaks of every human being, no one excepted, not even those who enjoy the prerogative divine promise. All are unrighteous in accord with the standards of divine righteousness which are upheld in God's judgments. And in accord with those same standards, all are irreverent, without a righteous understanding of God and His ways, and without that necessary and perfect disposition of seeking out God in awe and appreciation.

Where is Paul leading us? He does not stop here with this terrible indictment. He has much more to say, and it will not be disconnected and unrelated to this stern and troubling exposure of human failure.

First of all, Paul speaks of righteousness in relation to humanity. Righteousness as upheld and demanded by God is simply not in us, and it cannot ever be in us by human effort in following the demands of the law. If absolute *righteousness* and human beings are ever to come together, it must be of God, which is exactly what Paul will say starting in Romans 3:21 when he unfolds the evangel. We might see this better if we use the variant "righteous" instead of the word "just" in Romans 3:10, as follows:

Not one is righteous

Yet now ... a righteousness of God is manifest

The bad news is that no human being is righteous before God. The good news concerns the fact that God is righteous and that He is now manifesting His righteousness in connection with human beings. How this concerns the faith of Jesus Christ and the deliverance that is in Him, and how this relates to justification of sinners, and how this relates to God's grace and purpose are further important points of the evangel. But it begins with this major revelation that the solution to human unrighteousness lies in God's righteousness.

Paul's conclusion from the fact that no one is righteous is not the command that we must therefore strive to make ourselves righteous. That is the message of the law as given at Sinai, or as placed in our conscience. The law speaks of an impossibility for the flesh. The evangel Paul brings, given in light of the fact that everyone is unrighteous, is apart from law, and it begins with the manifestation of God's righteousness.

That may still be surprising to us if we have not been following the arguments of Romans 1:18-3:20 carefully. We may still think of God's righteousness only as it relates to His righteous judgment, but divine judgment and indignation lead only to the impasse Paul has set before us. No one

is righteous. Therefore no one can righteously be granted glory and honor and peace by their works even though God has promised much to His chosen people along these lines. It is clear: The evangel must present God's righteousness in a further and fresh way, or at least in a fuller way, in order for it to be related to salvation, and as good news for unrighteous humanity.

NOT EVEN ONE

The bad news is that no one is righteous, and this is repeated by the words, "not even one." Paul emphasizes this point of universal human unrighteousness. And in presenting the evangel he will soon emphasize, by way of repetition, the manifestation of God's righteousness, *which he relates to all*. It is appropriate that the terms "not one" be repeated and emphasized in Romans 3:10, and that the terms "righteousness of God" be repeated and emphasized in Romans 3:21,22. But in meeting the need expressed the fact that human beings are unrighteous by reference to "God's righteousness," Romans 3:21,22 does not overlook the scope of human unrighteousness as described earlier in the chapter. In both Paul's conclusion about the human problem and his introduction to the evangel which deals with that problem all mankind are in view.

Again the parallel in structure between Romans 3:10 and Romans 3:21,22 may help us appreciate this more clearly:

Not one is righteous

—Not even one.

A righteousness of God is manifest

*—Yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith,
for all . . .*

In presenting the evangel, the apostle hastens forward to its special significance to the believer. But he does not overlook its significance for all mankind, all of whom are in

dire need of salvation. God is the Saviour of all mankind, and He is especially the Saviour of believers (1 Tim.4:10). God's righteousness in His work of salvation through Jesus Christ's faith is *for all*, and so it is that on this solid foundation the evangel declares that it is *on all* who are believing.

We will find the same pattern in Romans 5:12-19 where the evangel is related to the believer in a special way on the basis of what God accomplishes for all mankind through the obedience of Jesus Christ. The pressing need of the whole of humanity is summed up here in Romans 3:10-18, and the universality of this need will not be forgotten as the evangel is unfolded.

NOT ONE IS UNDERSTANDING OR SEEKING OUT GOD

Romans 3:11 provides the last two lines of the opening stanza of our passage. The references are to human irreverence as expressed in our thoughts and disposition. We do not understand God, and we do not seek Him out.

What human beings know of God seldom seems to penetrate to that real understanding that recognizes our dependency on Him and the glory and righteousness of His ways (*cf* Rom.1:21). Our concepts of God do not envision Him as a God of purpose in accord with the original presentation of God in the Scriptures, a God Who carries out what He says and brings all powerfully and gloriously to a good completion (*cf* Gen.1). Sin has made us doubters either of God's ability or His goodness, and even worse it has made us look to ourselves as the masters of our destiny. But the evangel which Paul is about to proclaim shows God in His power and righteousness actually accomplishing that good which we all need so desperately. The evangel reveals God as the Seeker, Who spares not His own Son but gives Him up for us all.

In this there is no room for human boasting, certainly

not for the thought that we helped out God by our decision in His favor and the giving up of our self-interests. What we have done, if we have done anything positive ourselves (and believing what God has said to us is a positive act indeed) is only evidence of God's grace in our lives; it is part of the salvation which He has granted. It is all God's work and His achievement.

We can never make much progress in understanding God as long as we think of justification as something coming out of ourselves, out of our works, out of our fear of God, even out of our faith in Him. Justification is *gratuitous*, as it must be. It is in God's *grace*, as it must be. That is what humanity does not understand. The evangel provides this understanding, by presenting justification as God's achievement through the faithful obedience of Jesus Christ.

ALL AVOID HIM

The second stanza of our passage (Rom.3:12) speaks of human acts in relation to God and then in relation to human beings. These result from our unrighteousness and irreverence.

Because we fail to understand God and seek Him out in understanding our acts go in the opposite direction of righteousness. We avoid God, and we are self-centered and self-occupied.

Avoidance of God goes back to Adam and Eve. Because they had disobeyed and were aware of their nakedness which made their failure so evident, they tried to hide themselves from Yahweh (Gen.3:8).

The evangel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ shows us that God deals with this avoidance and fear by His gracious work of justification through the faith of Jesus Christ.

If Adam's disobedience can be justified and he himself be constituted righteous, then there would be no avoidance

of God. Yet this is impossible to the flesh. It can only be done by God, and this is what the evangel tells us is done by God, done gratuitously, graciously and righteously. Hence Paul will soon speak of the display of God's righteousness in the current era, where God is displayed as truly just (righteous) and a Justifier of one who is blessed "out of the faith of Jesus" (Rom.3:26). The cause of this justification is the faith of Jesus in dying as the Saviour of sinners.

ALL ARE USELESS

It is a sin to be useless. Few of the sins mentioned here are so definitive as the sin of uselessness. Most human beings do not particularly set out to be useless to God in bringing glory to Him as the wise and able Creator and Subjector. At least to start out with, we do not want to be failures in fulfilling our place as the image and likeness of God. But we are.

Yet God has provided a righteous deliverance from uselessness and all that comes under the heading of sin. As this applies to the believer we are brought into the happy and honorable usefulness of "living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.6:11). The key to this place of usefulness is appreciation of Christ Jesus as Lord, and this aspect of salvation will eventually embrace all, as Paul later describes it in Philippians 2:10,11. What a day it will be when every knee bows and every tongue acclaims that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God the Father!

NOT ONE IS DOING KINDNESS NOT EVEN ONE

The Hebrew of Psalm 14:1c and 3b states that "There is no one doing *good*." The Septuagint (and Paul in quoting from the Septuagint) uses the narrower term "kindness" in place of the general term "good." Consequently, the indictment of Romans 3:10-18 seems to turn from

the theme of direct irreverence toward God to that of unrighteousness toward humanity. The Greek words for "kindness" and "useless" share a root element meaning USE. To be kind to someone is to be of use to them. But in its ultimate sense, kindness is usefulness to God in bringing honor to His Name.

The charge is that not one is doing kindness, *not even one*. The evangel of God is that all *the many* sinners who have descended from the one man, Adam, will be constituted righteous by means of the obedience of the One, Jesus Christ (Rom.5:19). God righteously will bring sinners into that righteous state of salvation in which the fruit of the spirit will be borne in every way (*cf* Gal.5:22,23).

UNRIGHTEOUS WORDS

Romans 3:13 and 14 point to the filthiness and corruption of human speech. The first two lines are based on Psalm 5:9. Our throat from which our speech arises is like an opened tomb in which a dead body has been placed. Our tongues which begin to form the sounds into distinct words produces lies that not only deceive but defraud. Then borrowing from Psalm 140:3, the apostle describes our lips which complete the formation of our words: they are like the mouth structures of a poisonous snake, striking out with poisonous venom. Finally, he completes the picture in the terms of Psalm 10:7. Our mouth is crammed full with foul words of hate and bitterness.

But God's evangel is crammed with words of righteousness and life, of peace and power, of good and grace and glory. It speaks of the astounding work of God in not sparing His beloved Son, but giving Him up for us all. It speaks of His unparalleled love commended in Christ's death for His enemies who are sinners, infirm and irreverent. It speaks of access in peace and conciliation to God through the death of His Son.

The corrupt and bitter speech of humanity often continues to be found even among those who claim to be servants of God, whenever limits are put on the glory and grace of the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus. We defraud those who hear us when we suggest that God cannot save certain sinners, or that He will not do that which He says He wills to do.

The evangel of God delivers and saves those who believe it; it removes them from foul and poisonous speech that repels and harms, and it brings them into full assurance that what God has promised He is able to do also, so that glory is given to God.

UNRIGHTEOUS DEEDS

The severe indictment of human acts given in Romans 3:15-18, borrowed from Isaiah 59 and Psalm 36, may strike us as a generalization that does not apply to every individual. But we recall what Jesus said about the sin of murder in Matthew 5:22. It includes the sin of anger and expressions of hate. People are bruised and made wretched by the thoughtlessness and greed of others, and everyone is included on both sides of the equation. We know what it is to hurt someone else, and we know what it is to be hurt. Most serious of all, the actions of human beings are offensive to God. Furthermore, all laws and all good intentions and desires of those longing to carry out that which is good do not keep us from doing miserable things.

But Paul does not write simply to cast us down. He would have us recognize the truth about ourselves as sinners. But he would have us do this so that we are readied for the truth concerning God as revealed in the evangel. It is not an added burden to our lives to be believing the evangel. It is a message of good with respect to every evil of our experience and within our lives.

D.H.H.

TYPES AND ANTITYPES

THE TABERNACLE with its various ordinances was a type of that which was to come. The temple of Solomon likewise spoke of a future glory to be realized, when He, who is greater than Solomon, shall inaugurate His reign of peace. Ezekiel's temple—still future—will be standing in that Millennial day. It, too, will be a type, not indeed of the Day of the Lord in which it stands, but of the succeeding one, the Day of God (2 Peter 3:10-13) in which the curse will be no more, and a new creation will proclaim that the era of rectification has come.

Types which bring before us such widely different thoughts must picture to us widely different antitypes. It is exceedingly important that we obtain God's mind as to the teaching of the type; and it is no less imperative that we connect each type with the antitype which is proper to it.

THE TABERNACLE PERIOD

The tabernacle stood from Sinai to Solomon. The epistle to the Hebrews deals with the realities which the tabernacle and its ritual prefigured. In it God's Son is set forth as the Antitype of Moses (Heb.3:2-6) and of Aaron (Heb.5:4) and of Joshua (Heb.4:8). The Hebrews are in the wilderness. One worthy of more glory than Moses is their Leader. He is about to bring them into God's rest, which Joshua failed to do. His priesthood far transcends Aaron's, for it is founded upon better promises and is untransferable. The first covenant given at Sinai fades before the second (Heb.8:7-13).

The tabernacle itself is briefly summarized in the ninth

chapter, followed by this significant statement (Heb.9:9): “. . . which is a parable for the *present period*” (instead of “the time *then* present,” as in the Authorized Version; see the Revised rendering). In the eleventh chapter the cloud of witnesses mentioned by name goes no further than the tabernacle days. Mount Sinai of the twelfth chapter, and the “camp” of chapter thirteen, all bring before us truths connected with the tabernacle.

Now the epistle to the Hebrews was manifestly written to those who are the subjects of Divine blessing (Heb. 2:3,4; 6:5) as recorded in the book of Acts. We therefore read of the ruins of the tabernacle of David as a present reality among them (Acts 15:16).

Christ is the true Antitype of the tabernacle. Until His glorious appearing, access into Yahweh's presence must be by means of the antitype of the tabernacle ritual, so far as that nation is concerned. [For the moment it will greatly aid us in understanding these types to dismiss from our minds the ministry of the apostle Paul to the nations in which we are given the truth for the present economy].

JOHN'S BAPTISM

But before the true Tabernacle was manifested John came, baptizing in Jordan. What, in the type, is a picture of this?

Christ was that Prophet like unto Moses (Deut.18:15-19), Who came to deliver His people from bondage (Acts 7:20-39). Israel in Egypt corresponds to Israel under law, and the Lord came to lead them out into that good land He had prepared for them. But, like Israel of old, they tarried in the wilderness. How sadly true is the type in every way! Tens of thousands of them “believed,” but they were “all zealous of the law” (Acts 21:20). They were not well pleasing to God, and were strewn along the wilderness (1 Cor.10:5).

The introduction to the wilderness was by baptism. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor.10:2). This severed them from Egypt and united them to Moses. And so, when John began to preach the kingdom of the heavens, he too baptized them unto the true Moses, the Lord Jesus (Matt.3:6).

If a mother were to take her seven boys, who had been playing in the dirt all day, and wash the faces and hands of three of them, she would thus divide them into two companies. The clean ones would be "sanctified." She would be apt to call them "my" boys, in contrast to those who were not clean. And, besides this, the clean boys would have a common bond, which would distinguish them from the unwashed ones, making them a unit. So it was both in Egypt and in the ministry of John the Baptist and our Lord. When the people were "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea," they not only were separated from the Egyptians, but were identified with Moses.

All the prophets and the law prophesied until John; then the kingdom of the heavens began to be preached. But John did not baptize in his own name. He was not the Prophet who was to come. "John baptizes with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who is coming after him, that is, on Jesus. Now when they [i.e., the people] hear this, they are baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:4,5).

What, then, did John's baptism signify?

First, it was a confession: they needed to be washed, or ceremonially cleansed. They confessed their sins (Matt.3:6).

It was unto repentance, the prime requisite for Israel's blessing. The nation had become a byword and a hissing; they were scattered over all the earth; the nations ruled over them (Deut.28:37,43,48; 1 Kings 8:46,49).

The curses which were written in the law of Moses visited them in their disobedience. So then, in Deuter-

onomy 30:1-5, we read: "And it will come to be when all these things come on you, the blessing and the malediction, which I put before you, that you will recall them to your heart among all the nations where Yahweh your Elohim will have expelled you and that you will return again to Yahweh your Elohim and hearken to His voice according to all that I am instructing you today, you and your sons, with all your heart and with all your soul. Then Yahweh your Elohim will turn back your captivity and show compassion to you; He will return and convene you from all the peoples where Yahweh your Elohim will have scattered you. If it comes to be that you should be expelled to the end of the heavens, from there Yahweh your Elohim shall convene you, and from there He shall take you. Then Yahweh your Elohim will bring you to the land that your fathers tenanted; you will tenant it, and He will bring you good, and let you increase more than your fathers."

Since the days when Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons (Ex.29:4; Lev.8:6), *all baptism was performed by the person baptized*. The priest washed himself at the laver (Ex.40:31). The defiled clothes were to be washed by the man himself (Lev.11:40). Naaman dipped or baptized himself in Jordan (2 Kings 5:14).

But, when John came, he did the baptizing (Matt.3:6). So they called him "the Baptist." By his baptism, those who received it not only became a separate company, but were identified with the Coming One, and thus became a unit.

John came in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the way of the Lord (Matt.11:14; Luke 1:17). And this is why the Lord underwent John's baptism (Matt.3:13). He needed no cleansing. No defilement was there to be removed. But as Moses was with the sons of Israel in the cloud and in the sea, so He also identified Himself with those who had been baptized unto His name. And here, too, is emphasized the two grand methods of baptism

which the cloud and the sea set forth. Here, too, there is a cloud, and its significance is clearly seen; for, through it comes the Dove, that Divine Spirit which is the true cleanser, sanctifier, and giver of abundant life (Matt.3:16).

We pause to grieve over the fearful hypocrisy which reigned in the nation in those times. John himself saw how superficial many of those were who came to his baptism. In his bold and fearless way he denounces them, saying, "O progeny of vipers, who intimates to you to flee from the coming indignation?" (Matt.3:7). Repentance and baptism in name and form were not enough. Suitable fruit must be produced to prove its reality (Matt.3:8). The One to Whom they had been baptized could not be deceived. He would not baptize with water, but by His baptism there would be a severing of the real and the unreal. Those would receive the baptism of holy spirit, but such as these the baptism of fire (Matt.3:11).

BAPTISM AND THE KINGDOM

Repentance is always connected with baptism when administered to the sons of Israel (Acts 2:38). The words of Moses, in Deuteronomy, are the long lost key to the right understanding of this much-abused word. Before Yahweh can bless His people Israel in the land, they must turn to Him. And, to prove the sincerity of their repentance, they must also bring forth its proper fruits. None of them will ever enjoy that earthly kingdom except they enter through this door. But, for the other nations, God opened another door—the door of faith (Acts 15:9,14-27).

Baptism was the outward seal of repentance during John's ministry, and that of the Lord Himself while on earth. The Lord Himself never baptized with or in water, but left that to His disciples (John 4:2).

The oneness of those thus baptized, and their separation from the rest, is seen when there arose a question

between John's disciples and the Jews about purification (John 3:25). They go to John, and tell him of the Lord, how He (or His disciples) baptize, and all come to Him. John's disciples were Jews; but now they are distinguished from other Jews. This incident shows, too, how the ministry of John merged into the Lord's, and how John's disciples formed the nucleus of the Lord's followers. These, while one with the Jews by the fleshly rite of circumcision, were separated from them by the fleshly rite of baptism.

The same ministry is continued by Peter on the day of Pentecost. The kingdom had been proclaimed by John and the Lord. Israel refused it, and murdered the Lord's Anointed. But now, in resurrection, He is proclaimed to them again as David's Son, Whom God had raised up to sit on David's throne (Acts 2:23,29,31). But, before the day of the Lord could come manifestly, God's hand must be displayed in judgment. Prophet after prophet had spoken of the opening of that terrible day. More awful than the judgments that delivered them from Egypt was to be the portion of His enemies (e.g., Joel 2:1-11; Isa.66:15).

How then were they, who were guilty of that sin of sins, the murder of God's Anointed—how could they escape them? "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.' And with more words and different, he certified, and entreated them, saying, 'Be saved from this crooked generation'" (Acts 2:38-40)!

He had shown how that generation was going on to the terrible judgments which would usher in the Day of the Lord. To be saved from these judgments was the end he desired for them. In order to be saved it was necessary for them to repent. Nor this alone; but they must also be

baptized. A priest (in the type of this period, the tabernacle) might have said: "The waters of the laver have no intrinsic value; I will not wash in it." But he would have been reminded of Yahweh's word that he "should not die" (Ex.30:20). So also none of His people Israel will enter into that kingdom except by the way of repentance and baptism. This is the key to that strange word in Peter's epistle (who writes to the *diaspora*, or dispersion, who are in the wilderness and are about to enter the kingdom, and who are surrounded by the fiery trial he spoke of in his Pentecostal sermon): "A representation of baptism, which is now saving you (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the inquiry of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21). Baptism will be the entrance into the Ark of Safety in that day, whose tempestuous judgments will so much resemble the waters of Noah (Isa.54:9; Matt.24:37-39).

Two notable results of John's baptism have been noticed.

(1) It separated its subjects from the nation as a whole and, in addition to this,

(2) it formed them into a separate company.

These two thoughts continue to be seen both in our Lord's ministry and that of the twelve, as recorded in the book of Acts. When the proselyte Cornelius had received the gift of holy spirit, and thus given evidence that God had acknowledged him, Peter could say, "Who should forbid water, that these should not be baptized" (Acts 10:44-48)?

Why should not these men of the nations become one with the baptized company at Jerusalem, since God had sealed them? Not even all of those who had been baptized in water had received the gift of holy spirit. In Samaria they were baptized, but holy spirit had fallen upon none of them (Acts 8:15-17). Simon Magus would have bought the right to impart this spirit with money. If, then, those who had not even received these gifts should be identi-

fied with the saints at Jerusalem, and be delivered from the indignation about to be poured upon that nation and the whole earth, why should not these men of the nations be baptized who had received the gift, even as the apostles themselves at the first (Acts 11:15,17)?

So God comes in and forms a new ground of unity which supersedes (and rules in a sense) that of baptism in water, though both continued together for a time.

Remarkable as was the fact that John baptized his disciples (instead of exhorting them to do it themselves as under the law), still more remarkable is the fact that, after this manner had become so thoroughly established, Saul should be told to be baptized and bathe as acts which he himself would perform³ (Acts 22:16). Had he been baptized like the rest, then he would have been identified with the company at Jerusalem, just as the Samaritans and Cornelius had been. His self-baptism is but one of a variety of symptoms which afterward developed into a clear and definite line of cleavage between him and Jerusalem, and his ministry and that of the twelve.

As his ministries will come before us at length later on, we will not pursue them further now.

Now we know that the temple and its service speaks of the time when our Lord, like Solomon, will sit upon His glorious throne and rule in peace (2 Sam.7:12-16). It is a type of the millennial age. But the tabernacle preceded the temple. It stood during David's reign. Yahweh would not suffer David to build Him a house (2 Sam.7:5-13; 1 Chron.17:4). But now the tabernacle of David is fallen, as the prophet Amos foretold.

But after Israel has been sifted among the nations, and the sinners have died by the sword (Amos 9:9), then will the tabernacle of David be built again (Acts 15:16). From

3. In the Greek, both verbs indicate a reflexive sense.

this we gather, not that the tabernacle itself (as an earthly material structure), but the truth which it represents, the economy which it typifies, will continue until Israel comes into that good land promised to their fathers, and even after this, so long as the Lord, like David, deals in judgment. This is the latter boundary of the antitype. Until then the laver holds its place midway between the altar and the throne. So long will the word go forth—"Repent and be baptized for the pardon of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

While the tabernacle stood no one dared approach Him unless first he be cleansed at the laver. So, in Israel, when the kingdom of God began to be preached by John, and was continued by the Lord and by Peter, and by the twelve at Pentecost, and as it will again be preached at the time of the end, all the way, until the Greater than Solomon is peacefully reigning on His throne, baptism in water will stand right in the midst of the way of approach.

All this is clear; but why a change?

The absolute need of cleansing denotes a state of distance from God. But a cleansed condition speaks of nearness and fellowship (*cf* Ex.29:4). So, in accord with this, Paul spoke of a "bath of renascence" (Titus 3:5). The initiatory washing of the priest was the new birth that introduced him to a life of nearness to Yahweh.

As the sacrifices were continually repeated because of their imperfection (Heb.10:2), so also the washing was continually repeated, adding nothing to the meaning of the type.

In that glorious day when all Israel shall be saved, then all will have been born from above; all will have been cleansed at the "bath of renascence." The whole nation will have been initiated into the priesthood. Hence there is no longer any need for the laver in this aspect. They all will be near (Rom.11:26; John 3:3; Ex.19:6; 1 Peter 2:9; Rev.1:6).

A. E. Knoch

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SEPTEMBER, 2004

Volume XCV

Number 5

Concordant Version of 1 Chronicles through Job

(1 CHRONICLES, 2 CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER, JOB)

Concerning the books included in this fascicle of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, the book of Job is associated with Psalms and Proverbs in the Hebrew canon. Esther is one of five small scrolls, associated as a group; the others are: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes. Ezra (including Nehemiah) appears along with Daniel in a final section of historical writings, concluding with Chronicles.

1 and 2 Chronicles, are treated as one book in Hebrew under the name "Words [or Annals] of the Days" (*cf* 1 Kings 14:19,29). The history is no mere repetition of the books of Samuel and Kings, but a carefully prepared commentary on the same events as they appeared to the eye of Yahweh. Many events which are assigned to human instrumentalities are here traced back to Yahweh. The purposes and counsels of the heart are unveiled in these divine annals.

Ezra and **Nehemiah** are also to be considered as one book under the name "Ezra" which means **HELP**. This is the perfect inscription to the history of Judah's restoration to their land and city and temple.

Esther is a marvelous manifestation of the care of Yahweh over His people when their sun is set and they are in the power of their enemies. Then He becomes their guiding star, shaping their way by means of a providence which never escapes His control. By the simplest and most insignificant means He turns the fell designs of their enemies into a source of blessing.

Like all the scrolls which are designated by the name of a man, the meaning of the name, **Job**, is the index to its contents. It means "Enmity." Job is a concrete example of the work of the enemy. The philosophy of evil is discussed to a finish. His four friends make evil the consequence of sin. Job maintains his innocence. Yet Yahweh vindicates him and blesses him far beyond what would have been possible apart from the affliction he had endured. Evil is definitely designed by God to work out His beneficent purpose. Thus the philosophy of evil and enmity is fully elucidated in this book, as its title indicates.

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 2004
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-FIVE

EDITORIAL

THE HEADLINE on a recent newspaper article asked the question: "Who's right about God?" This seems to invite more attention to the religious ideas of people than to giving heed to what God says about Himself in His Word. What is most important for us in being right about God is to listen to what God says about Himself in His Word.

In this issue of our magazine we learn from Genesis 18 that God delights to do great things for us when we can't do anything for ourselves. And from 2 Samuel 16 we see how God's blessings so often come through our humiliations, so that we are led to say, "God's will be done." The books of Chronicles, with all their lists of names, still point to the One, Jesus Christ, although His Name and God's evangel concerning Him are not directly mentioned. God is One Who, through long years, keeps His highest glories and the measure of His great secret, but when He begins to reveal them as He does in Colossians 2, even then human understanding is often still restrained. Ceremonies and types need to be set aside so that we can see God more clearly through the humiliation and exaltation of His Son, Jesus Christ. Through Him, Who is our Saviour and Expectation, we become acquainted with God, His righteousness, power and love.

If there are pressures and distresses in your life, disappointments and weaknesses and failures, then it may be that you are being readied to know more of God and to be growing in the realization of Him.

"For us there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is" (1 Cor.8:6). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph.1:3). "We rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour" (1 Tim.4:10).

D.H.H.

THE END OF THE FLESH

18 + Yahweh ⁱappeared to him ⁱamong the oaks of Mamre ⁺as he was sitting at the opening of the tent ^{as}when the day was brightly warm. ² +When he ⁱlifted up his eyes, + behold, + he ⁱsaw three men standing by over against him. +As he ⁱsaw them, + he ⁱran from the opening of the tent to meet them and ⁱbowed down toward the earth.

³ + He ⁱsaid: My lord, if ^{pr}now I have found favor in your eyes, ^{pr}please do not ⁱpass ^{f on}by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water ^{pr}now be taken, +then wash your feet and lean back under the tree. ⁵ + Let me take a morsel of bread and brace your heart. Afterward you may pass on; for on ^{so}this account you have passed ^{on}by your servant. + They ^{lsa}replied: 'Do so, just as you ^{sp}said.

⁶ + Abraham ⁱhastened toward the tent to Sarah and ⁱsaid: Take quickly three seah measures of meal flour; knead it and ^dmake ember cakes. ⁷ +Next Abraham ran out to the herd and ⁱtook a young calf of the herd, tender and good, and ⁱgave it to the lad + who ⁱhastened to ^dprepare ⁱit. ⁸ +Then he ⁱtook clotted cream and milk and the young calf of the herd ^wthat he had had ^dprepared and ^{lg}set it before them, +while he was standing ^{on}by them under the tree +as they ⁱate.

⁹ + They ^{lsa}asked [>] him: Where is your wife Sarah? + He ^{lsa}replied: Behold, in the tent.

¹⁰ +Now he ^{lsa}spoke: I shall return, yea return ⁻ to you; according to the season of life, + behold, your wife Sarah will [>]have a son.

+Yet Sarah had been hearing at the opening of the tent, and ^{7she}n was ^{af}behind Him. ¹¹ + Abraham and Sarah were

old, advancedⁱ in days; and the path in accord with women was halted to ^bcontinue for Sarah. ¹² +So Sarah ⁱlaughed ⁱwithin herself, [>] saying⁻: After I have become worn out⁻, will luxury ^boccur to me ⁱwhile my lord is old?

¹³ +Then Yahweh ⁱsaid to Abraham: Why was this that Sarah laughed, [>] saying⁻: Shall I indeed truly bear a child, old +as I' am? ¹⁴ Is anything too ⁱdifficult ^ffor Yahweh? [>]At the appointed time I shall return to you, and according to the season of life, Sarah will [>]have a son. ¹⁵ +Yet Sarah ⁱdissimulated, [>] saying⁻: I did not laugh—for she stood in fear. + He ^{lsa}replied: No^t, ⁱbut you did laugh.

¹⁶ +When the men ⁱarose from there, + they ⁱgazed down overlooking Sodom. And Abraham wentⁱ with them to see them off. ¹⁷ +Then Yahweh ⁱsaid: Shall I ^mkeep coveredⁱ from Abraham ^wwhat I will do[?] ¹⁸ + Abraham shall become, yea become⁻ [>] a great and staunch nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will ^bbe blessed. ¹⁹ For I have become acquainted with him in order ^wthat he may enjoin ^{on} his sons and ^{on} his household after him +to ⁻keep the way of Yahweh to do what is right and duly just, so that Yahweh may ⁻bring on Abraham ^{7all} ^wthat He has ^{sp}promised ^{on}concerning him.

ABRAHAM was circumcised when ninety-nine years old. For him the sign had a fullness of meaning as for no one else. We read in Romans that his body was already deadened at this time. He was physically beyond expectation, while believing in the expectation promised by God (Rom. 4:18,19). Now only vivification by God could fulfill the promise. He had come to the end of the flesh, and looked alone to Yahweh. As a result, he is ready for fuller fellowship with Yahweh. He is given the privilege of *entertaining* Him (18:1-8), and of *receiving* the promise of the fulfillment of his fondest wish, an heir to his allotment.

The whole account of Abraham's entertainment of his

visitors gives us a perfect picture of the hospitality shown to strangers in the East, from ancient times to the present day. The visitors do not even need to make their presence known by some sound or action, as with us, but simply stand a short distance away in an attitude of expectancy. When they are noticed, the host runs to meet them, and humbly begs them to accept his hospitality. His first duty is to wash their feet and make them comfortable. Then a meal is prepared for them. Not till then is the object of the visit discussed. But guests must never be asked whence they come or whither they are going.

GOD'S DELIGHT

The birth of the promised seed had been foretold from the time of Abram's call (12:1,2). Abram had been concerned about it ever since. Now he was too old to do his part. Just before this he had laughed at the idea (17:17). The very name of the son, Isaac (LAUGH-causer), was given (17:19). Nevertheless Sarah, when she heard it, repeated by the messengers, scouts the idea and was laughing within herself. When she was accused of it, she denied and dissimulated. Yet He insisted that she did laugh (18:11-15). Why is so much made of this? On the human side it seemed silly, but, on the divine, it was the basis of much rejoicing and blessing, for Isaac was not only the first of the promised seed, but the first and foremost type of that greater Son of Abraham through whom *all* the promises will be fulfilled.

Apart from the spiritual vitality imparted by Yahweh, Sarah could not have a son, so the account is so worded that this alone was necessary. Only then we read that she is bearing a son for Abraham (Gen.21:2). Only thus could she have done it at this age, so the son was clearly characterized a spiritual, as well as a physical, product. This is further emphasized in the record by his circumcision, the way God had instructed Abraham.

The laughing, and the exultant joy which it expresses, is only an outward indication of the blessedness which comes through the spirit and its operations. Its greatness and spontaneity is enhanced by the previous disappointment and impatience and distress. Had Sarah borne Abram a son seventy years before, their exultation could not have reached the height that it did. So will it be with us, also, when we enter into the promised glory, for which our present tribulation is but a preparatory multiplicand. Alas! How many of us prefer to laugh now, rather than, by temporary suffering, enhance our future endless exultation!

Evidently the joy inaugurated by the birth of Isaac was permanent, for it found expression again in the great feast when he was weaned. And so will be the hilarious rejoicing of all who, like him, are the product of God's gracious vivifying spirit, through the grace that comes to us in Christ Jesus, our Saviour.

A. E. Knoch

NEITHER DEATH NOR LIFE

At the graveside service for my mother, **Dorothy D. Hough**, who died on July 15 at age 93, I read one of her favorite passages of Scripture, Romans 8:35-39. Neither death nor life can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Death is a powerful enemy, and life often is accompanied with struggles and sorrows, but what are these compared with God's love commended in the death of His Son for our sakes and extended to us daily in the gift of faith?

I am sure this passage is a source of timely comfort also to our Brother John Braucht of St. Petersburg, Florida, whose wife, **Luella Braucht**, was put to repose on September 1 at age 87. She had first learned the truth of universal reconciliation over 60 years ago through the ministry of the late Julius Shaw, and shared it with her husband who has been active in its proclamation.

Again, I know the assurance of God's love was a comfort as well to another friend of our work, **Lilian Bell**, of Hamilton, Ohio, who also recently died. May it continue to comfort us all in every loss and through the struggles of our lives.

D.H.H.

CAST DOWN BUT NOT PERISHING

16 + David had passed a little ^fbeyond the summit, + ^{bd}when Ziba the lad of Mephibosheth ^{came meet}toward him +with a team of saddled donkeys, and on them two hundred loaves of bread, + a hundred clusters of raisins, + a hundred cakes of summer dates, and a crock of wine. ² + The king ^{lsa}asked ^{to}Ziba, What ^{are}you doing with these? + Ziba ^{lsa}replied, The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on; + the bread and the summer dates are for the lads to eat; and the wine is for the faint in the wilderness to drink. ³ + Then the king ^{lsa}asked, And where is the son of your lord? + Ziba ^{lsa}replied to the king, ^{bd}Oh, he is ^{sit}staying in Jerusalem, for he ^{sa}thinks, Today the house of Israel shall restore to me ^{the}kingship of my grandfather. ⁴ + So the king ^{lsa}said to Ziba, From ^{bd}now on all ^wthat Mephibosheth ^{has}belongs to you. And Ziba ^{lsa}replied, I bow low; may I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king.

⁵ + When ^{king}David ⁱⁿapproached ^{fr}Bahurim, + just then a man ^fof the family of the house of Saul came forth from there; + his name was Shimei son of Gera. He was going forth and was maledicting as he came forth. ⁶ + He ^{lstn}threw ⁱstones ^{at}David and ^{at}all the courtiers of king David, +while all the ^{wi}soldiers and all the masters of war were ^fat his right and ^fat his left. ⁷ And thus ^{sa}spoke Shimei in his maledicting: Forth! Forth, man of bloodguilt, + man of worthlessness! ⁸ Yahweh has brought back on you all the bloodguilts of the house of Saul ⁱⁿwhose stead you have reigned. + Yahweh is giving ^{the}kingship into the hand of your son Absalom; and ^{bd}here you are in your evil predicament ^{because}you are a man of bloodguilts!

⁹ + Abishai son of Zeruiah ^{lsa}said to the king, Why should ^{this}'dead' ^{'cur}maledict ^{'my}lord the king? Let me ^{pr}now ^{'cross}over, and let me ^{'take}off ^{'his}head! ¹⁰ + But the king ^{lsa}replied, What is it to me and to you, sons of Zeruiah? ⁷ Leave ^{to}him alone! Thus he is maledicting ^{'because}Yahweh ^{sa}told ^{to}him, Maledict ^{'David}! + So ^awho should say, For what reason have you done so? ¹¹ + Then David ^{lsa}said to Abishai and to all his courtiers, ^{bd}If my own son, who came forth from my internal parts, is seeking ^{'my}soul, + how much more ^{'so}now then this Benjamite! Leave ^{to}him alone and let him maledict ^{'because}Yahweh ^{sa}told ^{to}him to. ¹² Perhaps Yahweh will ^{lsee}look ^{on}my ^{humiliation}cs, and Yahweh will restore to me goodness ^{instead}of his malediction on ^{'this}'day. ¹³ + So David ^{lsa}went ^{along}the road +with his men, +while Shimei was walking ^{on}the angular side of the hill to go ^{abreast}of him. + He ^{lsa}maledicted and ^{lstn}threw ⁱstones abreast of him; he +also threw ⁱdirt. ¹⁴ + Then the king and all the ^{wi}soldiers ^wwith him ^{came}to the Jordan, faint with thirst, and they refreshed themselves there.

¹⁵ + Meanwhile Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, entered Jerusalem; and Ahithophel was ^{with}him. ¹⁶ And so it ^{was}, just as David's ^{long}time~ associate Hushai came to Absalom, +that Hushai ^{lsa}said to Absalom, Long live the king! Long live the king! ¹⁷ + But Absalom ^{lsa}said to Hushai, Is this your ^{ki}loyalty ^{to}your associate? Why did you not go ^{with}your associate? ¹⁸ + Hushai ^{lsa}replied to Absalom, I did not ^{'because}I shall ^bbelong to him whom Yahweh and ^{'this}'people and all the men of Israel have chosen, and I shall ^{sit}stay ^{with}him. ¹⁹ And in the second place, ^{whom}should I ^{serve}? Is it not before his son? Just as I served before your father, so I shall ^bserve before you.

²⁰ Absalom +then ^{lsa}said to Ahithophel, Grant us your counsel! What should we do? ²¹ + So Ahithophel ^{lsa}said to

Absalom, Go in to your father's concubines whom he left to be in charge of the ⁱⁿpalace. ⁺**Thus all Israel will hear that you are in bad odor** with your father; and the hands of all who are with you will be ^{fast}strengthened. ²² **So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the housetop; and Absalom went in to his father's concubines** under the eyes of all Israel. ²³ **In those days, the counsel which Ahithophel** ^{fix}gave was regarded just as if ^{one}⁰ had ^{lask}consulted ⁱ the ^{sp}oracle of the One, Elohim. In ^{so}this way all the counsel of Ahithophel was esteemed ^{mr}both by David and Absalom.

ON passing the summit of Mount Olivet, David and his fugitives were met by Ziba, the servant who was the steward of Saul's property for Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. Ziba brought supplies to David, using the opportunity to curry favor with him, hoping to regain possession of Saul's property. Ziba slandered Mephibosheth and David rashly granted him possession of the property. But when David returned later, and heard Mephibosheth's side of the story, he split the possession between them (2 Sam. 19:24-30). It is not clear if this means that each actually possessed half, or if Ziba worked the land and received half of its produce.

SHIMEI

Shimei, a descendant of Saul's family, quickly seized the opportunity to curse David and blame him for all the ills that had befallen the house of Saul. He even blamed David for the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. Shimei threw stones and dirt as if driving away a vicious and unclean dog. He viewed David's situation as if God had smitten him for his sins (compare Isa.53:3,4,7,10). This humiliation of David represented that of Christ at the time of His crucifixion. David's insistence that Shimei be left alone and allowed

to curse him was typical of the silence of Christ toward the false accusations and cursing that fell upon Him (*cf* Matt.26:63-68; 27:27-31,39-44). Similar to Christ, David determined to drink the cup that Yahweh had prepared for him (*cf* John 18:11).

ABISHAI

Abishai's loyalty to David was like that of Peter to Christ, and like James' and John's on another occasion (Luke 9:54). When he struck off the ear of Malchus with a sword, it surely was Peter's intention to stand between Christ and harm (John 18:10). Our loyalty and service to Christ is sometimes well intended, though it may be misguided. It is quite easy to accept benefit and prosperity as gifts from the hand of God, but it calls for a fathomed depth of maturity to welcome adversity and humiliation as gifts from Him.

AHITHOPHEL'S FIRST COUNSEL

Verse 15 repeats that when Absalom came to Jerusalem, Ahithophel was with him (*cf* 15:37). This repetition calls to mind David's prayer for the confounding of Ahithophel's counsel. Hushai appeared to be no threat to Absalom, and was deemed as another addition to the usurper's prestige. It is well that Hushai did not contradict Ahithophel at this time, as it would tend to make him appear to be protecting David's interests. Also, Absalom's sin with David's harem was imperative to fulfill Nathan's prophecy (*cf* 2 Sam.12:11,12).

For Absalom to assume possession of the royal harem was for him to pass beyond the point where any of his followers could conceive of David forgiving him. This was Absalom's Rubicon. Ahithophel's counsel was judicious, and sealed the rebellion.

GOD'S WILL BE DONE

“Leave him alone and let him maledict because Yahweh told him to. Perhaps Yahweh will look on my humiliation, and Yahweh will restore to me goodness instead of his malediction on this day” (2 Sam.16:11,12). In these events, it is the beautiful submission of David to the will of God that is important and which should occupy our mind. This is a foreshadowing of the submission of Christ in Gethsemane: “Father, if it is Thy intention, carry aside this cup from Me. However, not My will, but Thine, be done!” (Luke 22:42). There the death of the flesh was accomplished, even before the cross was reached.

The flesh had overwhelmed David—lust after Bathsheba, murder of Uriah, the indulgence of his sons. But now David is settled. If the Lord will take his life, so be it. But David looks after the priests, the ark, the foreigner who has been in exile with him. He left the capital city to prevent a civil war and slaughter there. While his world is collapsing, he is constantly caring for the welfare of others. He is patient, penitent and mourning over his sins. He obviously has no control, but he is depending on Yahweh.

If God is the cause of all, and not ourselves, then we cannot guarantee that our intentions will be carried out. Nevertheless, our intentions are very important. Solomon said, “Yet Yahweh said to my father David, Inasmuch as it was on your heart to build a House for My Name, you did well that it came to be on your heart” (1 Kings 8:18).

Through this great humiliation and trial in his life, David discovered a new depth of God's grace for him. He came into a deeper submission to Yahweh that was evidenced by a higher level of self-control and patience. David was active, but not trying to control. In it all we see him waiting upon God, and finding deliverance.

J. Phillip Scranton

IN THE DAYS OF DAVID

LIKE a backbone, running through the entirety of Chronicles, the genealogical descent of father to son from Adam to Noah to Abraham, to Israel and then to David unto Josiah and his sons, provides a frame of reference for the other records and topics within this treatise. This is a most exclusive and special line, purposed and continued forward by God in His wisdom and kindness, with one individual only in each generation (not all of whom, by any means, were illustrious). As shown in Matthew this list leads forward to Christ. Here in Chronicles it is drawn from Genesis, and other books of the Hebrew canon, as well as from other records, but as it is presented here it stands out among all other genealogical lines.

The first group of names as listed in Chronicles¹ are as follows:

Adam, Seth Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah (1 Chron.1:1-4). Of the multitude of human beings in that eon from Adam to Noah, only these ten men belonged to this special genealogical line.

With the sons of Noah, three distinct lines are distinguished. But the special line of individuals being marked off through Chronicles descends from Noah's son Shem, who is followed by Arphaxad, Cainan, Shelah, Eber, Peleg,

1. A few individuals are identified by different names in Chronicles, such as Azariah, who is also called Uzziah; the listing of Cainan as a son of Arphaxad is based on the Septuagint Version and is not in the Masoretic Text.

Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham and Isaac (1 Chron. 1:17-28).

The exclusiveness of this special line becomes more apparent starting with Jacob, who is generally identified by his name Israel in Chronicles. He had twelve sons, but only Judah is given a place in this line of honor. Then it continues as follows: Perez, Hezron, Aram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salma, Boaz, Obed and Jesse (1 Chron.2:1-12).

Thus in 1 Chronicles 2:15 we are led to David, with an account of his days given in 1 Chronicles 10:14-29:30. Solomon, who is introduced into the record in 1 Chronicles 3:5 is closely associated with his father David in the latter chapters of 1 Chronicles, with his days as king recounted in 2 Chronicles 1:1-9:31.

We can then trace the remaining descendants of David, who succeeded as kings and stand in this line, as follows: Rehoboam (1 Chron.3:10) and his days (2 Chron.10:1-12:16); Abijah (1 Chron.3:10) and his days (2 Chron.13:1-14:1); Asa (1 Chron.3:10) and his days (2 Chron.14:1-16:14); Jehoshaphat (1 Chron.3:10) and his days (2 Chron.17:1-21:1); Joram, or Jehoram (1 Chron.3:11) and his days (2 Chron.21:1-20); Ahaziah, or Jehoahaz (1 Chron.3:11) and his days (2 Chron.21:17; 22:1-9); Joash (1 Chron.3:11) and his days (2 Chron.22:10-24:27); Amaziah (1 Chron.3:12) and his days (2 Chron.25:1-28); Azariah, or Uzziah (1 Chron.3:12) and his days (2 Chron.26:1-23); Jotham (1 Chron.3:12) and his days (2 Chron.27:1-9); Ahaz (1 Chron.3:13) and his days (2 Chron.28:1-27); Hezekiah (1 Chron.3:13) and his days (2 Chron.29:1-32:33); Manasseh (1 Chron.3:13) and his days (2 Chron.33:1-20); Amon (1 Chron.3:14) and his days (2 Chron.33:21-25); Josiah (1 Chron.3:14) and his days (2 Chron.34:1-35:27); Jehoiakim (1 Chron.3:15) and his days (2 Chron.36:5-8); and Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin (1 Chron.3:15) and his days (2 Chron.36:9,10).

Finally, 1 Chronicles 3:17-24 provides a list of certain

descendants of Jeconiah for several more generations after the deportation to Babylon. But it is not until we come to the first chapter of Matthew that the individuals belonging to this special line during those years are identified. Only the names Shealtiel, or Shalthiel (1 Chron.3:17) and Zerubbabel (1 Chron.3:19) correspond in these two accounts of Jeconiah's descendants. The Chronicler necessarily leaves the list incomplete.

But it is completed in Matthew 1:12-16, where it is carried on to Joseph and Mary "of whom was born Jesus, Who is termed 'Christ.'" Here we see that it is Jesus Christ Who is the culmination of this genealogical line. He is the Seed of the woman promised in Genesis 3:15, in Whom the promise of restoration is centered (Gen.3:16). It was in view of Him that Noah was spared and given grace. He came as the "Son of Abraham" in Whom the promises of the land and multiplied descendants and blessings rest. He is the "Son of David" Who will bring the reign of peace, the kingdom of well-being, to the earth.

A WIDER LINE OF HONOR

The restricted line of honor which began with Adam and ended with Jesus Christ so far as it is given in Chronicles does not deny God's choice and call of a wider group of people. Clearly Chronicles is concerned primarily with God's purpose and operations with respect to the nation of Israel. But it is on the basis of God's special operation in separating a highly exclusive line of descent from Adam to Jesus Christ that He carries on a special work in blessing the people of Israel. The blessing of Judah as recorded in Genesis 49:8-12 ultimately proves to be a source of high and multifarious blessings for the other sons of Israel and their descendants.

Similarly, the special work God is doing in choosing and calling out the nation of Israel must not be thought of as

an end in itself. God's promise to Abram that He would make him into a great nation and that in him all the families of the ground would be blessed (Gen.12:2,3) explains most fully why so much attention is given to the families of Ham and Japheth and to Ishmael and Esau in the first chapter of 1 Chronicles. That special calling of individuals leading from Adam to Christ relates to all the descendants of Adam for good. So also that special calling of the nation of Israel relates to the peoples descended from Japheth and Ham and Ishmael and Esau. Exclusive blessings from God of favor and well being are never ends in themselves.

But let us look further into the books of Chronicles concerning their testimony to God's special work with the nation of Israel:

ISRAEL AND DAVID

As previously noted, the Hebrew title of the books of Chronicles is: *Words of the Days*. Turning back to the list of names given at the beginning of this article we see that more space is allotted to David and his days than to his descendants. Even what is said about Solomon is closely bound up with David, and the subsequent kings are particularly judged in comparison with David and his days.

The reason for this may be found in the words of Nathan the prophet to David in 1 Chronicles 17 which so powerfully connect God's work of distinguishing David with His work in distinguishing the nation of Israel. First of all let us note the words from verses 7-10a which applied immediately to the days of David and foreseeable future:

Thus speaks Yahweh of hosts: I Myself took you from the homestead, from following the flock, to become governor over My people Israel. I shall be with you wherever you go, and I shall cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make for you a name, like the name of the great

ones who are on the earth. And I will provide a place for My people Israel; I will plant them so that they can tabernacle by themselves and shall no longer be disturbed; the sons of iniquity shall not continue to harass them just as at the first, ever since the days when I commissioned judges over My people Israel. And I will make submissive all your enemies.

Then in 1 Chronicles 17:10b-14 we read of blessings to come through Solomon, but now "more than Solomon" is in view:

I am telling you that Yahweh shall build a royal house for you: It will come to pass when your days are fulfilled to go and lie down with your fathers, then I will raise up your seed after you that shall come to be one of your own sons; and I will establish his throne for the eon. I myself shall become for him like a father; and he shall become for Me like a son. As for My benignity, I shall not withdraw it from him as I withdrew it from him who was before you. I will install him in My House and in My kingdom for the eon; his throne, it shall become established for the eon.

In saying that He would establish "his throne for the eon," Yahweh could be taken to refer to the dynasty that continued into the days of the sons of Josiah. The rule continued to be held by succeeding members of one family. But in saying He would install David's son "in My House and in My kingdom for the eon" Yahweh was looking beyond anyone who reigned in Jerusalem from Solomon to the time of the deportation.

It is this word of God given in the days of David that would especially give Israel encouragement and fill them with expectation after their years in Babylon. The testimony of "Words of the Days" is that God is doing a special work involving Israel under the kingship of One Who would come of the seed of David. This work had not been

brought into realization when Chronicles was written. And it still remains unfulfilled even though Christ has come of the seed of David. Yet God is faithful (*cf* Rom.3:3,4).

DAVID AND PAUL

As to the flesh, most of us today, who are believing that Christ died for our sins, are even farther removed than Israel from that physical line which led to Him in the likeness of humanity. Nevertheless, Christ's place as the Son of David holds real and important significance for us as well. Hence our apostle wrote near the close of his life and labors: "Remember Jesus Christ, Who has been roused from among the dead, is of the seed of David, according to my evangel" (2 Tim.2:8). It is not David himself, as king, who is the focus of attention in Paul's evangel, but the Son of David, Jesus Christ, Who will reign until all enemies are put under His feet and brought into that happy subjection described in Philippians 2:10,11, to the glory of God the Father.

In this we have been given a special and most blessed part. As for the present, our hearts are daily in tune with Paul, who wrote: "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome . . . that we rely of the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, *especially* of believers" (1 Tim.4: 9,10). Concerning the future, we also follow Paul in that sustaining consolation which lifted his heart through his final days of loneliness and struggle: "The Lord will be rescuing me from every wicked work and will be saving me for His celestial kingdom" (2 Tim.4:18). This will occur in the oncoming eons (Eph.2:7).

"For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet" (1 Cor. 15:25-27).

D.H.H.

The Law and the Sabbath

“LET NO ONE, THEN, BE JUDGING YOU”

My previous writings on the sabbath as well as more broadly upon the law in general,¹ address many of the various popular claims made by those who advocate sabbath observance and lawkeeping. Since within those articles, however, I only consider Colossians 2:16 (referenced above in our present title) once in passing and do not address the whole of Colossians chapter two at all, I shall consider the entirety of this chapter, including verse sixteen, in the exposition which follows.



COLOSSIANS 2 begins with the thematic declaration, “. . . I want you to perceive what the struggle amounts to which I am having for your sakes” Fully expressed, the apostle’s words here are as follows:

For I want you to perceive what the struggle amounts to which I am having for your sakes and for those in Laodicea, and whoever have not seen my face in flesh (v.1)

The causal conjunction “for” directs us back to Paul’s immediately preceding words which make evident what specific “struggle” it is that the apostle has in mind to which he refers here in chapter two verse one. It is the struggle to be “presenting every man *mature* in Christ Jesus” (1:28) in:

The secret *which has been concealed from the eons and from the generations (Col.1:26a)*

1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.80, pp.219-228: “Grace and Obedience”; vol.80, pp.263-272: “The Sabbath and the Evangel”; vol.81, pp.39-48: “Living Faith”; vol.82, pp.63-70: “The Scope of Divine Law”; vol.82, pp.113-122: “What, then, is the Law?”

Though previously undisclosed, this secret which had been concealed throughout the course of history—"from the eons and from the generations"—is the secret which "yet *now* was made manifest to His saints, to whom God wills to make known what are the glorious riches of *this secret among the nations*, which is:" (Col.1:26b,27a)

Christ among you, the expectation of glory—Whom we are announcing, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we should be presenting every man mature in Christ Jesus; for which I am toiling also, struggling in accord with His operation, which is operating in me with power. (Col.1:27b-29)

In its broadest, collective sense, the expression "the secret of Christ" encompasses all truth concerning Christ that was formerly undisclosed and hidden in God which is *now* revealed through Paul's final writings (his "prison epistles"), which revelations "complete the word of God" (Col.1:25). The whole body of Paul's epistle to the Colossians deals with the details or particulars of the secret of Christ. These various aspects of the secret of Christ include the secret glories of Christ as the Son of God.

"Every false theology or philosophy which places anything of human origin between God and man, is set aside by the great truth that Christ is God's Complement. As our Complement He displaces all the decrees and rites of Judaism. In Christ we are complete and need naught else to fit us for the Father's presence.

"The secret of Christ is presented in its future aspect in Ephesians. There is to be a harvest era in which Christ is to be supreme, not only on earth, but in the heavens also. His sway will be universal (Eph.1:10; 3:3). In Colossians, however, the emphasis is placed on His past headship in creation and His present headship in redemption with a view to a future reconciliation of the universe.

"The unity of creation has led philosophers to trace it

back to a common origin, by some called a 'primordial germ.' This first element in creation, however simple it may be said to be, must possess within itself a potential universe. The Son of God, the Firstborn of Creation, is the satisfactory solution to all questions which concern creation. Creation did not begin in chaos but in Christ. It will not end in ruin wrought by man but in universal reconciliation wrought by the blood of His cross."²

In making known the secret of Christ in its aspect presently in view here in Colossians 1:26,27, which is that of Christ among the nations, even as in the corresponding "expectation of glory" which accords with this transcendent blessing, our apostle declares:

I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ,³ for His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the word of God. (1:24,25)

In its timeless, universal aspect the secret of Christ is presented in Colossians 1:15-20; in verses 21-27 it is presented as it especially applies to us in this present administration.

Most of us are familiar with the Authorized Version rendering of Colossians 1:27b: "... Christ in you, the hope of glory," and may initially be puzzled by the Concordant Version translation which is, "... Christ *among you*, the *expectation* of glory."

The Concordant translation, however, more faithfully

2. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.302.

3. These refer not to the essential sufferings of Christ on the cross, but to those afflictions which He endures in His members, in the sufferings which accrue to them (most especially to the apostle Paul), as they herald His evangel, and "suffer evil with the evangel" (2 Tim.1:8) accordingly.

reflects the sense of the Original. “You” here is plural, not singular; hence English diction calls for “among,” not “in.” Further, “you” refers not simply to any believer indiscriminately, whether Jew or Greek, but only to believers of the nations, ones who were called and blessed according to Paul’s evangel. The secret of Christ here speaks of “this secret *among the nations*, which is: *Christ among you*.”

The basic truth of “Christ *in* you [singular],” which is concerned with the individual believer’s experience, wherein Christ dwells in every believer, doing so quite apart from any consideration of his or her ethnicity, was already revealed by Paul in his earlier epistles (e.g., “if Christ is *in* you . . .,” Rom.8:10; and, “. . . living *in* me is Christ,” Gal.2:20).

According to the measure of faith given us, it is the indwelling power of Christ that enables us to walk worthily. This, however, is never presented as a secret, and had long been known by the time when Paul, in bonds at Rome, wrote his final epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. Therefore, this cannot be the truth set before us here in Colossians 1:27.

Instead, the *new* revelation, presented to us here, is that of Christ *among the nations*—as such—as the One Who is now going among the nations dispensing the blessings which attend the “expectation of glory” which is thus set before us, in these *untraceable* riches of Christ (Eph.3:8).

CHRIST AMONG THE NATIONS

“Christ in flesh, when on earth, confined Himself to one nation, Israel. His presence brought with it the glorious prospect of the kingdom as promised in the prophets. Those who received Him and acknowledged Him as their Messiah were filled with high hopes. Some of them wished to secure for themselves the best places in the coming glory. The question in their hearts was, *When?* ‘Art

Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?’ (Acts 1:6). From His very infancy the saints, like Simeon, looked upon Him, not only as the Salvation of the nation, but as ‘the Glory of Thy people Israel’ (Luke 2:30-32). He was, indeed, Christ *among* them, the expectation of glory.

“In considering this secret we must keep in mind the scope of Christ’s kingdom as set forth in the earlier part of this chapter. It is universal, and embraces all thrones and dominions and sovereignties and authorities, invisible as well as visible, celestial as well as terrestrial (16). This is the secret ‘as it was now revealed’ (Eph.3:5). To administer the kingdom on earth Messiah will use the nation to which He is united by physical ties. The hundred forty-four thousand will rule among the peoples. The apostles will adjudicate the tribes. But in the heavens Christ will use His spiritual relatives, the saints who are joined to Him among the nations. They have the glorious expectation of having an even more exalted position in His celestial realms.

“Before His ascension He never went among the other nations. In a very real sense, His presence in Israel demanded the degradation of Rome from her place as the leading nation on the earth. Even if He had gone among the various nations of that day, it could not have been a token of their glory in the future, but of their subjugation to the favored people. They can only be subordinate in the coming kingdom, on the earth. In flesh, Christ is of the seed of David, and the nations have no part in Him. It is only in spirit, in His celestial domains, that there is any prospect for the saints in the nations. They cannot have a seat at His right or His left in Jerusalem, but far higher honors are open to them in the empyrean.

“‘Christ among you, a glorious expectation’ is that aspect of the secret of Christ which is the counterpart of the secret in Ephesians. It is the secret of Christ as far as it applies to the present administration and to the nations. It gives

believers among the nations the same relation to the celestial kingdom as believers in Israel had to the earthly rule. It gives them an expectation comparable to the kingdom, the longed-for millennium, for which every faithful heart in Israel yearned, yet with a grace and glory as far above it as heaven is high above the earth, and with a kingdom so much greater and grander that our earthborn faculties and expressions fail to function in view of their appalling immensity and majesty.”⁴

COMPLETE IN CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR

Now, following this extended prelude, let us consider the remainder of Colossians 2:

... that their hearts may be consoled, being united in love, and to all the riches of the assurance of understanding, unto a realization of the secret of the God and Father, of Christ, (v.2)

As we enter into these august revelations, how our apostle wishes that we should do so with consoled hearts even as ones who are united in love! That we should enjoy all the riches of the assurance of understanding, unto a realization of the secret of the God and Father, of Christ, is the desire of his heart. When we “understand” something, we “make out” or discern its meaning. The assurance which is afforded us as the fruit of genuine understanding, is in no way a self-assuredness of confidence in the flesh, but is instead the especial blessing of the spirit upon our intellect.

The secret of Christ, as still more deeply spoken of here, is first of all “the secret of the God and Father, of Christ.”

in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed. (v.3)

We cannot but be mindful that so many of the things that have been disclosed to us, which have become a part

4. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.32, pp.44,45.

of our knowledge, are by no means common knowledge among men. Much less, among nearly any at all, are these various particulars of knowledge which we enjoy viewed as constitutive of wisdom. Indeed, if they are noted at all, this is only that they may be caricatured and denied, dismissed and denigrated.

Therefore we ourselves must be wise, and sympathetic too, when we see these revelations mangled and mistreated by others, ones who certainly dismiss and may even mock us as well, as those who believe such “strange teachings.” They cannot but react as they do, for they are but flesh and these treasures of wisdom and knowledge are *concealed* in God, Who, to accord with His own purpose, has not yet enlightened them concerning them.

Now I am saying this, that no one may be beguiling you with persuasive words. For even if, in flesh, I am absent, nevertheless, in spirit, I am with you, rejoicing and observing your order and the stability of your faith in Christ. (vs.4,5)

It is far more important to take careful note of *what* it is that we are persuaded of, than simply to have confidence, as such, merely in the strength of our opinions. Many, indeed, are utterly “sold on” all sorts of notions which are in fact false teachings. The Galatians were certainly “persuaded,” but not by the truth, but by a distortion of the evangel of Christ, even to the extent that, to their perception, in telling them what was actually the truth, Paul had become their enemy (*cf* Gal.1:7; 4:16; 5:7).

As, then, you accepted Christ Jesus, the Lord, be walking in Him, having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith according as you were taught, superabounding in it with thanksgiving. (vs.6,7)

This is ideal advice . . . *for the Colossians*, who had been taught by Epaphras, who was a *faithful* dispenser of Christ (Col.1:3-8). For ourselves, however, having been subjected

to popular myths and false human traditions, we must first *recover* “the faith” (i.e., the true body of teaching) so that we may then *become* confirmed therein. As we then, at that juncture, accept Christ Jesus the Lord, may we be rooted and built up in Him, being confirmed in *the faith* according as we *now* have become instructed, superabounding in it with thanksgiving.

Beware that no one shall be despoiling you through philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world, and not in accord with Christ, (v.8)

“It is difficult to discern that the divine religion given to Israel in the flesh may be one of the greatest hindrances toward an appreciation of the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus. Hence the spirit of God forces it down to the same level with human philosophy and tradition by alternating them in this passage. The empty seduction and elements, the circumcision, baptism, and shadows refer to the rites and ritual Yahweh gave His earthly people. Yet they are interspersed with references to the authority and teachings of men. Ritual is just as dangerous an enemy as rationalism. As God’s Complement, Christ is the answer to philosophy: as our Complement, He is the end of religion.”⁵

A ceremony is an act of a symbolical character and purpose, without an intrinsic purpose. A ritual is a religious (i.e., faith-related) ceremonial observance. The observance of the Passover in its appointed time with its various “statutes” and “customs,” is an example of a ceremony or ritual (*cf* Num.9:3). And, in the nature of the case and just as surely, the observance of the sabbath (i.e., lit. the “ceasing”) in its appointed time each seventh day and with its own statutory prohibition of all work (Deut.5:12,13) even to the point of the preclusion of any cooking (i.e.,

5. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.304.

of “consum[ing] anything with fire”; Ex.35:3), is another example of a ceremony or ritual.

Many a theology is simply a mistaken religious philosophy, contrary to Scripture. Claims about lawkeeping, though devoid of critical truth, through their seeming scripturalness, are seductive to many. They accord not with the truth of Christ, but merely with the “elements of the world,” which refers to the Mosaic system, the essential constituents of which the law of Yahweh is comprised, as set forth in the Hebrew Scriptures (*cf* Gal.4:3,9; Heb. 5:12; Acts 21:24).

for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily. (v.9)

The Greek word for the English “DEITY” is *theotês*. It signifies PLACERSHIP, which is to say, that which *pertains to God*. Strictly, then (though this cannot be well expressed in our idiomatic version), it refers not to “the Deity” Himself, considered as a Being, but to “GODNESS (or “deity”) of God, Who is a Being. Thus: the entire complement of the *deity* (i.e., “GODNESS”) of God is dwelling bodily in Christ. That is, the entire array of the attributes and qualities which *pertain to God* Himself *dwell*, in a *bodily* way, in Christ, in the One Who in Himself is “the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature” (Col.1:15). In this respect, then, Christ Jesus, Who inheres in the visible form which pertains to the invisible God, “deems it not pillaging to be *equal* with God” (Phil.2:6).

And you are complete in Him, (v.10a)

We have no need of any righteousness of our own, especially any that we are apt to fancy as ultimately arising, if not out of our own external acts, at least out of our fancied inward “virtuous passivity” in assent to God’s own work in us. Not only do we have no need for any righteousness of our own for salvation, in which our works are not even a consideration, but for our service as well, in which we

are what we are in the grace of God (1 Cor.15:10); for His achievement are we (Eph.2:10).

Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority, (10b)

Here Paul alludes only incidentally if at all to sovereignties and authorities among the celestials (Eph.6:12), but primarily if not exclusively to those human authoritarian chiefs among the Circumcision who had sought to impose upon the nations, if not the entire law of Moses, then at least certain putatively “necessary decrees” of their own devising (*cp* Acts 15:1,2; 19,20; Eph.2:15; *cf* Col.2:15).

in Whom you were circumcised also with a circumcision not made by hands, in the stripping off of the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ. Being entombed together with Him in baptism, in Whom you were roused together also through faith in the operation of God, Who rouses Him from among the dead, (10b-13a)

The “circumcision” of Christ mentioned here in which we were circumcised also, refers to the death of the cross in which He was “cut off” from among the living. Similarly, in a figure, we were “baptized” together with Him as well, in reference to both His entombment and resurrection. Thus we died, and now live, “together with Him.”

you also being dead to the offenses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, (v.13b)

How glorious it is to know that through the work of the One Whom God makes to be a sin offering for our sakes (2 Cor.5:21), we are now reckoned as dead to our offenses (*cp* Eph.2:5), even as to the uncircumcision of our flesh.

He vivifies us together jointly with Him, dealing graciously with all our offenses, (v.13c)

In spirit, we are already vivified together jointly with Christ; for God has made it so. How can we not rejoice as well in the realization that, accordingly, God is dealing graciously with all our *offenses*? This is so, even though He

will bring every *act* into judgment, whether with mercy, for the vessels of mercy, or through indignation, for the vessels of indignation (Rom.9:22,23).

erasing the handwriting of the decrees against us, which was hostile to us, and has taken it away out of the midst, nailing it to the cross, stripping off the sovereignties and authorities, with boldness He makes a show of them, triumphing over them in it. (vs.14,15)

“The decrees issued by the apostles from Jerusalem (Acts 15:23-29) were a standing symbol of the subjection of the nations to the Circumcision even though they absolved them from observing all the rudimentary rites [or elements], especially circumcision.”⁶

Let no one, then, be judging you in food or in drink or in the particulars of a festival, or of a new moon, or of sabbaths, which are a shadow of those things which are impending (vs.16,17a)

Neither our work, or even our cessation from work, makes us either worthy of salvation or fit for glory. But in the position in which God has already placed us, in Christ, we are already roused from among the dead, vivified, and seated together among the celestials. Knowing this, we gladly heed Paul’s entreaty here to let no one sit in judgment of us, arbitrating against us, should we eat foods deemed unclean under Moses, work on the seventh day of the week, or decline to keep the various festivals found in the law.

We are mindful that *God’s* judgment concerning ourselves with respect to the matter of seeking law-based righteousness through conformance to legal precepts, is that we are to deem any such righteousness a “forfeit” because of Christ (Phil.3:6,7). Indeed, any such forfeit is one which we can well afford to make, being complete in Christ, Who has become to us “wisdom from God, besides *righteousness*, holiness and deliverance” (1 Cor.1:30).

6. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.304.

We are therefore also deeming the righteousness of law-keeping to be “refuse” (Phil.3:8,9): if we have been partaking in it, we are now to discard it; if we have not previously taken up with it, we are to leave it among the refuse. Hence we would “beware of curs” (Phil.3:2), of those who behave as the wild dogs of the east, which insist upon dragging forth from among the items discarded by others whatever appeals to them that they might take it to themselves.

—*yet the body is the Christ’s.* (v.17b)

Let us be ever mindful that the ecclesia which is the body of Christ, of which we are members, belongs to Christ, and each of its members are truly *complete* in Him. What need have we for aught beside?

Let no one be arbitrating against you, who wants, in humility and the ritual of the messengers, to parade what he has seen, feignedly, puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head, out of Whom the entire body, being supplied and united through the assimilation and ligaments, is growing in the growth of God. (vs.18,19)

The law was “prescribed through messengers in the hand of a mediator” (Gal.3:19; *cp* Acts 7:53; Heb.2:2); hence, by metonymy, it is “the ritual of the messengers” (Col.2:18). That the law was prescribed through messengers, agrees with the Septuagint reading in Deuteronomy 33:2, “on His right hand were His angels [messengers] with Him” (Brenton translation, 1851), where the Concordant Version reads, “At His right are warriors who are His.”

Some may go so far in their arbitrations against us in favor of lawkeeping, as to appeal to the legitimacy of their message by a histrionic parading before us of supernatural visions which they, feignedly, have seen. If so, we are to understand that they are instead merely deluded, “puffed up” in their own fleshly mind, as ones who are not properly “holding the Head,” which is a succinct expression of our proper duty as members of the body of Christ. Instead of

being force-fed delusions by charlatans, we would instead be fostered in the faith, receiving our supply out of Christ Himself, that we might be growing in the growth of God.

If, then, you died together with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as living in the world, are you subject to decrees: “You should not be touching, nor yet tasting, nor yet coming into contact” (which things are all for corruption from use), in accord with the directions and teachings of men? (vs.20-22)

The power of sin is the law (1 Cor.15:56b; *cp* Rom.6:7,18). When we died together with Christ, we died from (the jurisdiction or power of) the “elements of the world,” which refers to the precepts of the law. *Why*, then, *as if* ones living in the world, that is, in the system in which law does obtain (even though we are not), would we ever see fit to subject ourselves to any type of mere human decrees? If we are not obliged to even the elements of the system of divine law given to Israel through messengers by the hand of Moses, we are certainly not obliged to heed mere human rules, without any divine authority.

—*which are (having, indeed, an expression of wisdom in a willful ritual and humility and asceticism) not of any value toward the surfeiting of the flesh.* (v.23)

Exercises of “*willful ritual*” (lit. WILL-RITUAL), would seem to have in view those who make a virtual point of law out of their own exercises of choice, in which they glory in themselves, even if at the same time they should try to cover this up through a facade of humility and asceticism (i.e., austere self-discipline and denial). Even so, neither decrees of prohibitions, rituals of will, nor facades of humility and ascetic practices, are of any value toward the surfeiting of the flesh. Spiritual invigoration in the Lord and in the might of His strength—by the *grace* which is in Christ Jesus—*alone* is able to subdue the flesh and further us in a walk that is pleasing to God. J.R.C.

TEMPLE TYPES

THE TABERNACLE was a type of that which is temporary. The laver which was situated between the altar and the throne spoke of Israel's need of cleansing. We see its antitype in the message of John and then of the Lord and later of the twelve, declaring: "Repent and be baptized for the pardon of your sins." But Israel will be brought into that glorious day and kingdom when all will be cleansed. The antitype of the laver in the tabernacle will be replaced by the antitype of the great *sea* in the temple built in the days of Solomon, and then by that typified by the deepening stream depicted in Ezekiel's vision.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

Thus, in the temple of Solomon, the laver is taken out of the midst of the way of approach. In its stead is "the great sea" mounted upon oxen, and the ten lavers on either side of the house (1 Kings 7:23-39).

The great sea speaks of the abundant blessing and consequent holiness which will be the portion of Israel in that day. They will no longer be exhorted to "repent and be baptized," for all will be regenerate. All that is needed is to maintain them in holiness in their priestly service for the nations.

The nations will approach through them. Solomon's temple was "a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isa.56:7). It was but a feeble type of that grand time when all the nations will approach through Israel (Isa.66:23). These sustain no such relation to Yahweh as Israel; hence for them there are lavers. In that glorious kingdom will be brought to pass the

command of the King: "Given to Me was all authority in heaven and on earth. Going, then, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit, teaching them to be keeping all, whatever I direct you. And lo, I am with you all the days, till the conclusion of the eon! Amen!" (Matt.28:18,20).

EZEKIEL'S TEMPLE

During the day of Yahweh, the temple described by the prophet Ezekiel will be built in the holy oblation (Ezek. 40-42; 45:1,7). In many respects it is a counterpart of Solomon's temple. It speaks of a day beyond even the day in which it stands.

The day of Yahweh is characterized by the number seven. In Ezekiel's temple the unit of measure is one-seventh longer than in Solomon's, speaking of the eighth day, or day of God. Seven speaks of completion. Eight speaks of a new beginning. In the day of God all things will be new. There will be a new creation.

Among the notable changes in Ezekiel's temple as compared with Solomon's we are most interested in the fate of the ten lavers and the brazen sea.

The lavers were on wheels, and, as we have already seen, they are gone; they have been wheeled away. And why? In Revelation 21:3-6 we read, "And I hear a loud voice out of the throne saying: 'Lo! God's tabernacle is with mankind, and He will be tabernacling with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them. And He will be brushing away every tear from their eyes. And death will be no more, nor mourning, nor clamor, nor misery; they will be no more, for the former things passed away.'

"And He Who is sitting on the throne said: 'Lo! New am I am making all!' And He is saying, 'Write, for these sayings are faithful and true.' And He said to me: 'I have become the Alpha and the Omega, the Origin and the Consumma-

tion. To him who is thirsting I shall be giving of the spring of the water of life gratuitously.”

The lavers entirely disappear, for there will be no sin to cleanse (Ezek.47:1). The priestly ministry of Israel for the nations is no longer needed. Israel no longer needs to cleanse the sacrifices of the nations, for two reasons: the sacrifices no longer need cleansing, and the nations no longer need the intervention of priests. They, themselves, are clean, and can draw nigh to offer for themselves. What need then for the ten lavers?

The brazen sea has its blessed counterpart. In its place, on the right shoulder of the house, is the river of life, which flows forth and destroys the curse. It proceeds out of the throne of God, an ever deepening stream, bringing life and fruitfulness wherever it goes (Rev.22:1-3). Where there is abundant life there is no need for regeneration. Where there is holiness no cleansing is needed. No, not even a sea; for His servants shall serve Him.

There will be no more doom. God Himself shall dwell with men. He will impose no carnal ordinances between Himself and mankind. *The era of rectification will have come* (Rev.21:3).

APPROACH TO GOD

Thus have we traced, in the courts of God, the way of approach to Him. For His own great Name's sake He put barriers between Himself and mankind. But by Christ He will yet break all the barriers down; and, by Him, bring man back to Himself.

The very existence of a tabernacle or a temple, or even Ezekiel's glorious house, is proof positive of a distant God. So in the new earth there is no temple, but God Himself comes out into the open (Rev.21:22). Means of approach seem to speak of nearness: but they really proclaim estrangement. As we approach perfection they are all done away.

A. E. Knoch

THE DAY OF CHRIST DISTINGUISHED

WHEN Paul prayed that the Philippians would be testing what things are of consequence, he immediately related this to their sincerity in love and realization and lest they be a stumbling block *for the day of Christ* (Phil.1:10). Our expectation in relation to the day of Christ is of great consequence to us. Yet this is often confused with the “day of the Lord.” The two days should be distinguished so that we can truly appreciate our calling and the happiness of our expectation.

To Titus the apostle wrote that we are “anticipating that happy expectation, even the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who gives Himself for us, that He should be redeeming us from all lawlessness and be cleansing for Himself a people to be about Him, zealous for ideal acts. Speak of these things and entreat and expose with every injunction. Let no one slight you” (Titus 2:13-15).

In order for us to anticipate our *happy* expectation we need to know something about it. This can only be done by examining the Scriptures as the holy spirit guides us. We endeavor to correctly cut the word of truth (2 Tim.2:15) lest we apply something to us that is meant for another people at another period of time.

As we grow in realization concerning this glorious advent of our God and Saviour, we are to be speaking concerning it, always entreating and exposing because it is easy for us to be slighted. This is what Hymeneus and Philetus were doing. They were swerving as to the truth concerning resurrection, thus subverting the faith of some (2 Tim.2:17,18).

The Thessalonians also had their faith shaken by hearing false teaching on this subject. And if this could happen to such well grounded and mature believers, then surely we, too, can be deceived.

THE DAY WE ANTICIPATE

The following passages of Scripture record the day we are anticipating as members of the body of Christ. Like Paul, we are yearning to be with Christ, for it is much better than either this present life or “to be dying.” Whether we are living or dying, Christ is to be magnified, but in our hearts we long for that day when we shall be together with our Lord and Saviour (Phil.1:23).

1. “I am thanking God . . . having this same confidence, that He Who undertakes a good work among you, will be performing it until the *day of Jesus Christ*” (Phil.2:13). God is operating in us to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight (Phil.2:13). He is training us to be disowning irreverence and worldly desires, that we should be living sanely and devoutly in the current eon (Titus 2:12). This work will continue until we enter into His presence.

2. As noted above, we are “to be testing what things are of consequence, that [we] may be sincere and no stumbling block for the *day of Christ*, filled with the fruit of righteousness that is through Jesus Christ for the glory and laud of God” (Phil.1:10,11).

3. “All be doing without murmurings and reasonings, that you may become blameless and artless, children of God, flawless, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse among whom you are appearing as luminaries in the world, having on the word of life, for my glorying [boasting] for the *day of Christ*, that I did not run for naught, neither that I toil for naught” (Phil.2:14-16). As we live from day to day we should be luminaries in the world. After all, “the God Who says that, out of darkness light shall be shin-

ing, is He Who shines in our hearts” (2 Cor.4:6). But then again, how can we not be luminaries when we consider this wonderful treasure that is within these earthen vessels. In one way or another the life of Jesus will be made manifest in our mortal flesh (2 Cor.4:7-12).

4. “And do not be causing sorrow to the holy spirit of God by which you are sealed for the *day of deliverance*” (Eph.4:30). Even if we walk in a way which does not please God, we still have the consolation of knowing that we are sealed for the day of deliverance, when we will do so in fullness. As Romans 8:23 states, “. . . we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body.” This sonship and deliverance will be fully realized when we meet our Lord. He will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory (Phil.3:21).

5. “This, also, do, being aware of the era, that it is already the hour for us to be roused out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believe. The night progresses, yet *the day* is near” (Rom.13:11,12). The salvation here is the deliverance of our bodies. There is a sense in which we have been saved, are being saved, and will be saved. Our salvation will be complete when our Lord Jesus Christ extricates us out of the present wicked eon (Gal.1:4).

THE EVENT OF EXTRICATION

Galatians 1:4 provides us with a good segue into the theme of the “out-lifting,” or extricating event of that future day. The following four passages give us further details concerning this event. Notice the progression of details as presented in Paul’s epistles:

1. “Lo! a secret to you am I telling! We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle [tossing] of an eye, at the last

trump. For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality" (1 Cor.15:51-53).

2. "For we are aware that, if our terrestrial tabernacle house should be demolished, we have a building of God, a house not made by hands, eonian, in the heavens. For in this also we are groaning, longing to be dressed in our habitation, which is out of heaven . . . We are encouraged, and are delighting rather to be away from home out of the body and to be at home with the Lord" (2 Cor.5:1,2,8).

3. "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 . . ." (Phil.3:20,21).

4. "Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing, lest you may sorrow according as the rest also, who have no expectation. For 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. 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, console one another with these words" (1 Thess.4:13-18).

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul refers to our change in relation to a secret. He mentions four details concerning this change: It will be in an instant; it will occur at the tossing

of an eye; it will occur at the last trump; we will become incorruptible and immortal. Here also Paul informs that some believers will not experience death prior to this change, for not all shall be put to repose.

In 2 Corinthians 5, Paul adds the information that our new body is *of God* and *not made by hands*, testifying that we long to be at home in this new body *with the Lord*.

Paul gives even deeper and more precious details of our change in Philippians 3. Not only do we put on incorruption and immortality, but our new body that is "not made by hands" is actually going to conform to the body of Christ's glory. This was hinted at in 1 Corinthians 15:35-53 but is clearly stated by the apostle in this text. The change from humiliation to glory fits us for our realm ("city state") which has all along existed in the heavens and is the place which Christ leaves in order to meet us in the air.

More details are added in 1 Thessalonians 4, where Paul confirms what he writes in the other letters. For example, from the 1 Corinthian passage we learn simply that "the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (v.52). What he says there concerning "the dead" and "we" is made certain in 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17 where the apostle writes, ". . . *the dead* in Christ shall be rising first. Thereupon *we*, the living . . ." In 1 Corinthians Paul simply uses the pronoun "He" when referring to our Lord trumpeting. In 1 Thessalonians Paul refers to Him as "the Lord Himself" and "the Chief Messenger," descending with the trumpet of God.

The passages from First and Second Corinthians and from Philippians all tell us important details about the change to our new body, while the passage from First Thessalonians gives the details concerning the event itself. There we learn that the living *do not outstrip* those who are put to repose, for the *Lord Himself* descends from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messen-

ger and with the trumpet of God. The result is the dead in Christ will rise, and thereupon we, the living, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. All of us chosen to be in the body shall be snatched away at the *same time* and *together*, to meet the Lord in the air.

ANOTHER DAY

All of the preceding passages deal with the expectation for people of the current era who are being called into the body of Christ. Yet there is another day which we must distinguish from this one, as it arrives much later and primarily concerns God's chosen nation of Israel and the promises given to her dating all the way back to Abraham. This day is most often referred to as the "day of the Lord."

The apostle Paul mentions this day at least twice in his Thessalonian letters. In 1 Thessalonians 5:1,2, he writes: "Now concerning the times and 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—thus is it coming!" Later in 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3 he says, "Now we are asking you, brethren, for the sake of the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to Him, that you be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet be alarmed, either through spirit, or through word, or through an epistle as through us, as that the *day of the Lord* is present."

In both of these references Paul speaks of features of the day of the Lord which stand in contrast to what he says in the immediate contexts concerning the "snatching away" event (*cf* 1 Thess.4:18; 5:4-11; 2 Thess.2:2).

We will consider details of distinction between these two days in subsequent studies. But we note for now that the revelations concerning the day of Christ do not shake our minds or cause alarm; rather they console our hearts in every way. What a tremendous expectation God has set before us in His Word!

Ted McDivitt

IN GOD'S SIGHT

GOD'S VIEW of humanity is what is true and therefore most essential for our understanding of ourselves. In Romans 1:18-3:20 we learn what we are in the flesh at present in the world as it is apart from the revelation of God's righteousness in the evangel. We are all irreverent and unrighteous, and none of us, as we now are in ourselves and in accord with what we do, can be justified in God's sight. But in the evangel, about to be unfolded in Romans 3:21-8:39, we are introduced to *God's* achievement of justification for all mankind through the faith of Jesus Christ. This also is a matter of God's sight, and speaks of what is true. But its truth is centered in the effects of the death and resurrection of Christ, which have not yet fully become realities in experience. They are matters of faith.

HUMANITY IN THE FLESH

In Romans 3:19,20, the apostle concludes the theme of God's righteousness in relation to humanity in the flesh. This tells of our position in God's sight apart from His achievements as announced in the evangel:

- A. *Now we are aware that, whatever the law is saying,*
- B. *it is speaking to those [in] the law,*
- C. *that **every** mouth may be barred,*
- C. *and the **entire world** may be subject to the
just verdict of God,*
- B. *because by works of law, **no flesh at all** shall
be justified in God's sight,*
- A. *for through law is the recognition of sin.*

This arrangement of Romans 3:19,20 begins with a matter of *awareness* and ends with a matter of *recognition*. These are obvious matters, right out in the open. They do not require faith. In this case, both our awareness and our recognition concern the law. The awareness arises from logic, and the recognition from experience. It is reasonable that everything the law says should speak to the Jew who has the benefit of receiving it. He is the test case. If he fails to keep the explicitly defined instructions of law, everyone of them, this experience of failure makes sin and its power indisputably apparent. Sin is manifest as a reality affecting the entire human race.

Paul earlier had mentioned those who endure in good acts (Rom.2:7) and those of the nations who do what the law demands, maintaining the just requirements of the law (2:14,26). He had also written: "... the doers of law shall be justified" (2:13). But, if there had been any doubt, Romans 2:9-20 makes it crystal clear that he had been speaking theoretically. By works of law, *no flesh at all* shall be justified in God's sight. *Every mouth* is barred from making excuses, and *the entire world* is placed under the righteous verdict of God: Not justified.

THOSE WITHIN THE LAW

Hence, as seen in the "B" sections, the limited group of human beings who have been brought within the province of the law, rather than standing alone apart from human irreverence and unrighteousness, are one with *all flesh* in the failure to be righteous. In their failure to maintain the righteous standards of the law as required, the people of Israel prove the race-wide application of the divine verdict that no one can be justified in God's sight by the efforts of flesh. To say that they *could not* keep the law must not distract from the fact being declared here that they *did not* keep it. The fact that God calls certain Israelites righteous

and sees them as righteous is important in its context (and we will look at this viewpoint of God shortly), but this too does not change the fact that every Israelite is unrighteous with respect to the law and the record of their acts. They can never be justified on this basis. God will be faithful to His promises of good, but this cannot be on the basis of their acts in response to the just requirements of law.

The superior "i" before the word "under" in the CV informs us that the Greek literally refers to people who are "*in the law*." The thought is not simply a matter of subjection under authority but more generally of inclusion in a system defined by law. For Israel this was a position, apparently, of privilege and opportunity, but in its practical effects, where there was a sensitivity to the meaning of its instructions, it only added to an awareness of the wretchedness of sin and the proof of its power (*cf* Rom. 7:7-24). For those who are *in law* are, like all mankind, *under sin* (Rom.3:9).

WE ALL ARE SINNERS

In the center sections of the above arrangement, Paul reaches his conclusion concerning the position of the entirety of humanity (with the Jew specifically included) before the righteous God in His just judgment. In that we all are sinners, we are left with nothing to say in our defense. In that we all are *under sin*, we are all placed *under* that just verdict of God required by the righteous standards of law, apart from the evangel. On the basis of a law of righteousness, no flesh at all can be justified in God's sight in view of the record of human thoughts and acts.

Paul does not lecture here, as though he were a judge who sits apart from the accused. He speaks as one who had been placed in law, with respect to which he had been becoming blameless as it was understood. Yet now he speaks as one who had been brought to see himself as God sees him

in the flesh. As a Hebrew of Hebrews his efforts to keep the law were astounding, but he failed to maintain the underlying demands of even one word of the law, under the true and penetrating sight of God. The evidence of his hypocrisy was always there, as Romans 7:7-23 makes clear, but now he acknowledges it. The “every mouth” and the “entire world” include his mouth and himself as he is as part of the world.

He does speak, but not in defense of himself. Rather he speaks as an evangelist in order to direct attention to that word of joy and peace which so completely occupies his own heart. He speaks the blunt truth about the human situation before God, but he does so as one who has been overwhelmed by God’s grace which brings about justification. He speaks with fervent anticipation of the great good God has revealed to him. The apostle has spoken the truth, but he has not yet spoken the entire truth concerning the situation of humanity before the righteous God.

EVERY MOUTH BARRED

We can have nothing to say in our defense, no excuse, and even no opening for deflecting the subject away from ourselves. We may honestly feel we are more righteous than the next person, but even if that is so it is irrelevant to the charge against us. If there is any measure at all of unrighteousness in us, we are unrighteous. Even if we have not reached the level of clear-sightedness exhibited by David in Psalm 51:5 (“I was with depravity when I was travailed in birth”) or Paul in 1 Timothy 1:15 (“foremost of [sinners] am I”), we recognize that we have missed the mark of righteousness. Our judgment by God is fair, and that means condemnation as the just sentence.

“Wherefore, defenseless are you, O human! everyone who is judging, for in what you are judging another, you are condemning yourself” (Rom.2:1). “For there is no par-

tiality with God, for whoever sinned without law, without law also shall perish, and whoever sinned in law, through law will be judged” (Rom.2:11,12).

It is a good thing to be quieted. Now we can listen to what God has to say. And He does have something to say, first of all a verdict, but then He follows with an evangel.

UNDER-JUST

As Paul is inspired here to present God’s verdict, he uses a word in Romans 3:19 that belongs to the same Greek word family as “righteousness” (*cf* Rom.1:18; 3:21,22), “just” (Rom.2:5) and “just-effect” (Rom.1:32; 2:26). Another key term in this family is “justify” which will appear often through the next portion of this letter. As we have previously noted, that which is *right*, or *just*, is a major theme of these early chapters of Romans.

The Greek word translated “subject to (the) just (verdict)” is [*h*]upo-dikos, (UNDER-JUST). It occurs only here in the Scriptures, expressing the thought of being brought *under* something that is *just*, and here this is spoken of in relation to God. That something is explained in verse 20. It is the divine verdict: Not Justified.

It is not a welcome verdict. But it is just; it is right. It is fully in accord to the truth of what we are in the flesh in view of our deeds and intentions and the thoughts of our hearts.

It is not a welcome verdict, but consider this point again: *It is just*. In our lives we give a great deal of thought concerning justice and fairness. We are upset by wrong decisions of judges and juries and referees. We become angry even at our neighbors and close family members when they act without consideration of what we are convinced is right concerning serious matters that affect us. We do not like seeing others apparently “getting away” with wrong actions. We say in despair, “There is no justice.”

Yet our passage tells us there is justice. It is there in the judgments of God. But we cannot altogether like that either because what is right, in view of the record of human thought and action, leads to the verdict that says: You are not justified in what you have done; you are deserving of death; indignation and fury, affliction and distress will come on you; you shall perish! This is what justice demands if *God's act* of sending His Son to die for sinners is not taken into account.

GOD SPEAKS

The verdict of Romans 3:20 is a word of God in light of His righteousness as expressed in the law and in consideration of human unrighteousness in the flesh. Every bit of evidence drawn from the *human record* has been taken into account. The verdict as stated here is an adaptation of the words God inspired David to write in Psalm 143:2 in a prayer of supplication for God's righteous deliverance from distress:

No living one can be righteous before You.

Now while we stand mute before the charges of Romans 3:9-18, we listen to this same message of God as He inspired Paul to write:

No flesh at all shall be justified in His sight.

We are brought into subjection to that verdict made by God, which we do not welcome but which we know is right. We see that no one is treated differently than anyone else. If we sin, whether in law or without law, we are subject to the verdict "Not justified," and to its consequences.

But that is not the end of what Paul has to say to us. God has revealed to this foremost of sinners, a manifestation of divine righteousness which leads to salvation and the verdict: Justified gratuitously in God's grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24).

This too involves God's sight and speaks of a reality, but one that we can see at present only with the "eyes of our heart" (*cf* Eph.1:18) in faith.

GOD SEES

The phrase "in His sight" which appears in Romans 3:20 is a translation of a compound Greek word meaning literally **IN-VIEW**, joined with the pronoun "His." It is the equivalent of a Hebrew term that occurs often in the Old Testament, and literally means **FACE-OF**, usually translated idiomatically by the English preposition, "before." Hence where we read in Genesis 6:11 that the earth was ruined "before the Elohim," this is expressed in Hebrew idiom: *to-face-of the Elohim*. The passage speaks of that which God faces, that which is before His presence.

This ruin of the earth in Noah's day was something that should have been evident to humanity as well, had there been any honest examination of the facts. But they were blind to what was there right before their eyes.

Another example is David's well-known question in Psalm 139:7, "Whither could I run away *from Your presence?*" that is, "from-face-of-You." That which is before God's face is that which is true. Everything David knew about himself was known by God (Psa.139:1,2).

*O Yahweh, You have investigated me
and are knowing me;*

*You Yourself know my sitting down and my rising up;
You understand my thought from afar.* Psalm 139:1,2

These references correspond well with Romans 3:20. God sees clearly what we are and knows well what we think and do. In accord with what we are and what we do, none of us can be justified in God's sight.

But even in the Hebrew Scriptures this was not the only view of God that is mentioned.

ANOTHER VIEW

Despite the fact that all humanity was ruined in the sight of God, we find God saying to Noah in Genesis 7:1, "I have seen you righteous *to-face-of-Me* in this generation." He saw *all* as unrighteous, which they most certainly were, but he saw Noah, who was a human being on the earth, as righteous.

This may be taken as relative; in relation to the rest of humanity, Noah was righteous. Yet as believers today, we can appreciate a fuller meaning of Genesis 7:1 as an expression of God's view of Noah, ahead of time, as he will be because of the faith of Jesus Christ. This special view is to be associated with the grace God had given Noah. It was a view that will embrace all mankind eventually, for all will someday be constituted righteous because of the obedience of the One, Jesus Christ (Rom.5:19), and all will rightly be seen this way. But God already dealt graciously with Noah, viewing him as he will most certainly be.

All of this, now revealed to us in the evangel, is not directly brought out in Genesis 7, but it lies behind the words "before Me," and gives them their highest meaning. The grace Noah found in the eyes of Yahweh (Gen.6:8) is shown by Noah's faith, given him by God, and God seeing him as He will be.

Hence there are two divine viewpoints spoken of in this portion of Genesis. First of all God saw what was so with respect to the acts and motives and thoughts of humanity. This was apparent to God, and it would not be difficult for human beings to see themselves as sinners. The evidence was clearly there. What God saw, they could see, even though what He said they may not have been willing to say.

But also God says that He saw one individual sinner in an entirely different way. He saw Noah in a way that was not apparent to the flesh. It was not manifest, but Genesis

7:1 was true in the final and absolute sense in the eyes of God. Genesis 7:1 speaks of that which is certain to be so.

This second viewpoint of God was one that David meditated on often. It is remarkable that this man, who was so aware of his own failures to keep the righteous standards of the law, could have clung so firmly to this hope: "Happy is the human to whom Yahweh is not reckoning depravity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!" (Psa.32:2).

As Paul points out in Romans 4:4-8, David longed for that which corresponded very much to what is now being revealed in the evangel.

We have noted Paul's use of David's words in Psalm 143:2 here in Romans 3:20. In that psalm also we find David clinging tenaciously, as he did so often throughout his life, to God's righteousness. As a living human being in the flesh, David could not be righteous before God. Nevertheless he prays in verse 11: "In Your righteousness, may You bring my soul forth from distress."

Now Paul is about to unfold a message from God in which salvation, bringing God's righteousness to all, is the work of God's righteousness.

ROMANS 1:18-3:20

We have reached the end of this long and intriguing section of Romans which began in Romans 1:18. It has led us from the announcement that *God's righteousness is revealed*, to this same announcement, saying now that *God's righteousness is manifest*. It has led us from the statement that God's righteousness is revealed *out of faith*, to a fuller statement that says it is manifest *through the faith of Jesus Christ*. It has led us from an application of this evangel to the *just*, or *righteous person* to an application of this evangel to *all* and to *all who are believing*. Romans 3:21 resumes the very topics brought up in Romans 1:17, but carries them forward in greater detail.

But in the meantime, through 64 verses as we now mark them, Paul has directed our attention to God's indignation on *all* the irreverence and injustice, or unrighteousness, of human beings, and to His righteous judgment of humanity, leading to the conclusion that, by works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight. By itself Romans 1:18-3:20 is bad news for mankind. But as Paul has associated it in such a closely connected way with the evangel it has proved to be extremely helpful in laying the groundwork for our appreciation of this message concerning God's Son, Jesus Christ, and the revelation of God's righteousness through His faith.

In establishing the great and desperate human need for righteousness, these 64 verses have set before us the fundamental character of the righteousness of God. He takes into account all the sins, even the hidden ones, of all human beings. But this does not lead to salvation; rather it leads to condemnation.

On the other hand, within this section of Scripture we are reminded of the riches of God's kindness and forbearance and patience, and of His faithfulness to His promises of benefit and prerogative. These are acts of God which seem to go outside His work of righteous judgment. God's continued preservation of humanity, and His special treatment of certain individuals and peoples seem to bypass the strict requirements of justice.

The solution to all these dilemmas lies in that righteousness of God which is revealed in the giving of His Son for sinners. It takes into account all the sins of all humanity, but it does so in the light of what Christ has done in His faithfulness. That is the message of divine righteousness in His work of salvation now coming before us beginning with the bugle blast of the words "Yet now," and ending with the assurance that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

D.H.H.

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NOVEMBER, 2004

Volume XCV

Number 6

*Concordant Version of
1 Chronicles through Job*

(1 CHRONICLES, 2 CHRONICLES, EZRA, NEHEMIAH, ESTHER, JOB)

Concerning the books included in this fascicle of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, the book of Job is associated with Psalms and Proverbs in the Hebrew canon. Esther is one of five small scrolls, associated as a group; the others are: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes. Ezra (including Nehemiah) appears along with Daniel in a final section of historical writings, concluding with Chronicles.

1 and 2 Chronicles, are treated as one book in Hebrew under the name "Words [or Annals] of the Days" (*cf* 1 Kings 14:19,29). The history is no mere repetition of the books of Samuel and Kings, but a carefully prepared commentary on the same events as they appeared to the eye of Yahweh. Many events which are assigned to human instrumentalities are here traced back to Yahweh. The purposes and counsels of the heart are unveiled in these divine annals.

Ezra and **Nehemiah** are also to be considered as one book under the name "Ezra" which means **HELP**. This is the perfect inscription to the history of Judah's restoration to their land and city and temple.

Esther is a marvelous manifestation of the care of Yahweh over His people when their sun is set and they are in the power of their enemies. Then He becomes their guiding star, shaping their way by means of a providence which never escapes His control. By the simplest and most insignificant means He turns the fell designs of their enemies into a source of blessing.

Like all the scrolls which are designated by the name of a man, the meaning of the name, **Job**, is the index to its contents. It means "Enmity." Job is a concrete example of the work of the enemy. The philosophy of evil is discussed to a finish. His four friends make evil the consequence of sin. Job maintains his innocence. Yet Yahweh vindicates him and blesses him far beyond what would have been possible apart from the affliction he had endured. Evil is definitely designed by God to work out His beneficent purpose. Thus the philosophy of evil and enmity is fully elucidated in this book, as its title indicates.

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 2004
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-FIVE

EDITORIAL

THE GRACE of God, His gifts of faith and expectation, His enlightenment and His provision for His chosen ones, His consolation and comfort, His righteousness and love and His present blessings in spirit—these are some of our themes in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*. They all direct our attention to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind and our Saviour in a special way, upon Whom we rely (1 Tim.4:9,10).

Such reliance is always needed, and always a blessing. But the need and the blessing are never merely repetitious. They are always special, and they are always fresh. Every day we are in need of the evangel and can find it a blessing in a new way. New problems and stresses keep coming, or if they are old troubles, they come with new circumstances. Yet they are well designed for preparing us for the words of God's grace and peace.

For example, as I struggled in preparing my article on Romans 3:21,22, I kept finding these very words about the righteousness of God and the faith of Jesus Christ powerful in dealing with my consciousness of my own shortcomings. What a blessing it is to know that God justifies the sinner, and He does so righteously! On Him I rely.

There are many similar benefits for our daily lives in believing such passages as Romans 11:32-36, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and 2 Corinthians 5:17, just to mention a few scriptures commented on in this issue. These are words of "spiritual grace," as Paul calls them in Romans 1:11. We may not understand them all correctly; we certainly do not grasp them fully. But we pray for such understanding and grasp for our joy and peace in believing. D.H.H.

CONCERNS OF FAITH AND GRACE

Question:

I am the only one in my family who knows the Lord. When speaking here of my own relationship with Christ, I am not speaking glibly but soberly, with an awareness of the imperfection of my own faith. This is even as I have heard you say during our visits by telephone, that as believers we are *getting* to know Him, as in a practical way we thus seek to get hold of eonian life (1 Tim.6:12): “Now it is eonian life that they may *know* Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ” (John 17:3).

As glorious as this is, in meditating upon these things of faith, it still makes me sad to see the indifference and sometimes the hostility to these very revelations by my own children and even by my husband as well. Why must they be so stubborn?

Answer:

BEING STUBBORN “as to the word,” the Word of God (*cp* 1 Peter 3:1), is not unusual, but is the normative (i.e., standard) human condition in the world. Indeed, “we also were once foolish, *stubborn*, deceived, slaves of various desires and gratifications, leading a life in malice and envy, detestable, hating one another” (Titus 3:3). And, even now, we must acknowledge that the deliverance which we now enjoy from such a shameful walk, is only a partial deliverance, not a complete deliverance. Hence we should commiserate our mutual failings, together with unbelievers, not act as if we are no longer acquainted with sin.

It is not simply that your family members *are* stubborn to the things of God, but that thus they *must* be stubborn. This is because “God locks up all together in stubbornness.” Yet if this is so—and it *is* so—it is “that He should be merciful to all” (Rom.11:32).

Even if your beloved ones should die in unbelief, it is evident that through God’s wise and good operations in eons to come, they too will come to know and love their Saviour, God.

It is evident that this is so, because God is their Saviour, too—as well as being our Saviour. We *rely* on the living God; our *expectation* is in Him, as *the One Who is the Saviour of all mankind*, albeit that He is *especially* the Saviour of believers (1 Tim.4:10), to whom alone the special gift of *eonian* life is given.

Since our Saviour, God, Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11), wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4), we therefore acclaim Him as the Saviour of all mankind. “For even as in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified . . . the last enemy is being abolished: death . . . that God may be All in all” (1 Cor.15:22,26,28).

It is only through actively and intensely believing these marvelous revelations of Scripture that we find a joy which is able to militate against the many things that make us sad, especially the sorrows we face in connection with the unbelief of many among our friends and family.

Though we long to see our families and friends receive the gift of faith, God’s calling and one’s membership in the body of Christ simply is not “up to us” to pass on to those whom we may prefer. It is *God* Who places the members, each one of them, in the body according as He wills (1 Cor. 12:18). “For of what are you aware, O wife—if you will be saving your husband—or of what are you aware, O hus-

band—if you will be saving your wife—*except as the Lord parts it to each?*” (1 Cor.7:16,17).

We do not know whom God has already chosen (“before the disruption of the world,” Eph.1:4) for membership in Christ’s body and for life eonian; but we do know that whenever anyone genuinely believes and, due to God’s work within one’s heart, subsequently truly *finds* Christ *choice*, that person will surely *choose* Him accordingly.

There is so much weak talk today about getting “decisions for Christ,” even from those who give us no assurance that they honestly believe. Many, so it seems, only choose the “Christian religion” or church involvement, never having come to personal heart conviction concerning Christ Jesus Himself.

We are aware that faith is out of tidings (i.e., what is heard), yet the tidings through a declaration of Christ (Rom.10:17). Hence we want to share our faith with any who will give us the opportunity to do so. Yet even so, it is only those whom God had chosen long ago who will *faithfully* respond: “Now on hearing this [word of the evangel], the nations rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and they believe, *whoever were set* for life eonian” (Acts 13:48).

It is not just our faith in the distinctives of Paul’s evangel that we would share with others, though these things are surely very important. First of all, we want to share our foundational faith that Jesus is the Christ, that He died for our sins, even as that the Scriptures which bear His testimony are the very Word of God.

No one should be criticized or looked down upon for not believing. We cannot scientifically prove the vital elements of our faith even to ourselves; much less can we do so to others. All believers, then, with regard to their *faith*, are necessarily fideists, not empiricists. A fideist is one who relies solely on faith’s testimony, rather than on sci-

entific (i.e., empirical) reasoning based upon observation and experimentation of tangible evidence.

Therefore we should not act as if we could scientifically prove the truth value of our faith; conversely, neither need we feel guilty about not being able to do so. In the end, we simply believe. We are *relying* on the immanent fullness of truth inherent in the One Whose testimony has convinced us, which we have accepted, the One of Whom it is written that He does not lie (Titus 1:2).

We are not unmindful that as believers we appear foolish to unbelievers, since faith itself seems foolish to them. In a world of falsehood and delusion, why should anyone *believe* anything at all? Certainly we are mindful, as the apostle Paul himself declares, “If we are having an expectation in Christ in this life only, more forlorn than all men are we” (1 Cor.15:19).

With ourselves, however, it is not a question of whether we ought to believe or ought not to believe; instead, it is simply a fact that we *do* believe. We do not, however, seek to justify ourselves for this; yet neither can we fault ourselves for so doing, in light of what even now we still find to be the efficaciousness for conviction of the testimony of the evangel. We freely (and yet joyously!) acknowledge that we are wholly dependent upon the One Whom we have believed both for the truthfulness of His Word and for the realization of His promises.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Question:

I have accepted the good news of universal reconciliation, of the eventual salvation of all mankind, as well as of the blessing of eonian life which is granted to believers, yet not as a reward but as a favor.

Recently, however, I have become disturbed concerning this subject since a friend pointed me to Colossians 1:21-23: “. . . Yet now hath he reconciled [you] . . . to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: *if ye continue in the faith* grounded and settled, *and be not moved away* from the hope of the gospel . . .” (AV).

My friend claims that not only is universal reconciliation mere wishful thinking, but that even believers themselves will not be reconciled unless they endure to the end. She says that not only will unbelievers never be saved, but that even many true believers will not be saved either, since many do not continue in the faith at least in an active and consecrated way, but are instead moved away from the hope of the gospel, if not by overtly wicked deeds, then simply by their love of the world and pursuit of worldly pleasures.

The Concordant Version doesn't say “if ye continue,” but “since surely you are persisting.” But I don't understand this either (and I also wonder which translation is correct) since my friend does have a point that some Christians do become quite worldly and neglectful of their faith.

Answer:

Your friend is mistaken since she has confounded disparate scriptural topics while at the same time accepting her own inferences from the Scriptures as if they were the Scriptures themselves. My task at hand, however, is not to explicate the various ways in which she goes astray, but to deal with your own concerns related to Colossians 1:21-23. If I am able to do so effectively and assuringly, you will then be able to see more clearly for yourself the various particulars in which your friend is in error.

Before considering this passage in question, however, let us first of all rehearse briefly why we believe that eonian life is a gracious gift granted to believers, as well as why

we believe that ultimately reconciliation will truly be universal. Then, on the basis of these established truths, we may subsequently examine Colossians 1:21-23.

We believe that eonian life is a gracious gift, for this is what the apostle Paul says concerning it: “For the ration of Sin is death, *yet the gracious gift of God* is life eonian, in Christ Jesus, our Lord” (Rom.6:23). We are saved *from* indignation (Rom.5:9) and “*for* life eonian” (Rom.5:21). Indeed, this is so such that even “where sin increases, grace superexceeds, that, even as Sin reigns in death, *Grace also should be reigning* through righteousness, for life eonian, through Jesus Christ, our Lord” (Rom.5:20,21).

The very essence of the evangel, which, even now, is “on all who are believing” (Rom.3:22), is the blessing of “being justified *gratuitously* in [God's] *grace*, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom.3:24). We are “*graciously granted* . . . to be believing on Him” (Phil.1:29). “Where, then, is boasting?” it may be asked, to which the apostle Paul's ready answer is, “It is debarred!” (Rom.3:27).

It is a fact that God *chooses* us in Christ “before the disruption of the world” (Eph.1:4). As members of the ecclesia (Greek: *ekklêsia*) which is Christ's body, we too are included among this company of God's OUT-CALLED ones. It is also a fact, then, that “to those who are *called* . . . Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor. 1:24), is the testimony of their faith.

As “God's chosen ones” (Rom.8:33), we “are called according to the purpose that, whom He *foreknew*, He designates beforehand, also, to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren. Now whom He *designates beforehand*, these He *calls* also, and whom He calls, these He *justifies* also; now whom He justifies, these He *glorifies* also. What then, shall we declare to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him

up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be *graciously granting us all?*" (Rom.8:28b-32).

"*Therefore*" (cf Rom.5:12; cp Rom.5:1-11)—that is, in light of the graciousness of the salvation afforded to those who are chosen and granted life eonian, God has determined as well concerning all mankind as follows: "... If by the offense of one, the many¹ died, much rather the *grace* of God and the *gratuity* in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ, to the many superabounds" (Rom.5:15).

"*Consequently, then*, as it was through one offense for *all mankind* for condemnation, thus also it is through one just award for *all mankind* for life's justifying. For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just" (Rom.5:18,19).

We believe, further, in the *reconciliation* of all intelligent creatures universally because the scope of reconciliation is the same as that of creation: "... In [Christ] is *all* created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, *all* is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him. And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him *the entire complement* delights to dwell, *and* through Him [God delights] *to reconcile all to Him* (making peace through the blood of His

1. In Greek, "the many" here is *[h]oi polloi*. The definite article ("the") has the force of a demonstrative pronoun (cp James 2:14), that is, "this." The adjective "many" is a relative term, which speaks of a large or "vast" (as it is often translated) number as opposed to a few. It does *not* signify "a large number, but less than all," but simply a vast number or company, the scope of which is to be determined by the context. "*This* vast [company]"—the multitudinous company set before us here in Romans 5:12-21—is "all mankind" (cf Rom.5:12,18).

cross), through Him, *whether those on the earth or those in the heavens*" (Col.1:16-20; cp Eph.1:10; Phil.2:9-11).

Going on, then (and I will now address your specific concerns as to the passage which follows), Paul further declares: "And you, being once estranged and enemies in comprehension, by wicked acts, *yet now* He reconciles by His body of flesh, through His death, to present you holy and flawless and unimpeachable in His sight, *since surely* you are persisting in the faith, grounded and settled and are not being removed from the expectation of the evangel which you hear which is being heralded in the entire creation which is under heaven of which I, Paul, became the dispenser" (Col.1:21-23).

It is true that the conjunctive particle *ei* which the CV translates here as "since" signifies "if"; but it is true as well that "if" is sometimes used not only in the sense of "on condition that" (i.e., the if of doubt) but instead in the sense of "because" or "since" (i.e., the if of argument; e.g., Rom. 8:31). It should be noted as well that here "if" (*ei*) appears conjoined to "surely" (*ge*), "a particle indicating that no doubt is possible, or that a statement is beyond reasonable denial."² Since the ultra-literal "if surely" as used here is not good diction, the CV translates this phrase as "since surely" (cp Gal.3:4; Eph.3:2,4:21).

Of course all are mindful that in a given instance believers may or may not be faithfully persisting. Some at times may quench the spirit and become dormant of faith, even as neglectful. As you suggest, at least in an attentive way, some may become removed from the expectation of the evangel, by worldly distractions and enticements. Even so, rendered thus (as "since surely") Paul's words may well be taken as an expression of encouragement, in order to foster persistence in the faith in a grounded and settled way in cases where this may not yet be forthcoming.

2. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.294.

More particularly, however, in reference to those who *are* persisting, this passage becomes a word of assurance as to one's own inclusion in the stated blessing. For example, our heartfelt appraisal of Christ is that He is "the wisdom of God and the power of God." Consequently, then, it must be so that we ourselves are included among those whom God has truly called and chosen (*cf* 1 Cor.1:24-28). Similarly, then—"since surely" in our case it is so—as those who are persisting in the faith, grounded and settled, not being removed from the expectation of the evangel, it must also be so that we ourselves are likewise included among those whom God *even now* (*cf* "yet now," Col. 1:22) has *reconciled*.

Reconciliation is a matter of *practice* and *attitude*. At the consummation, all will *delight* to dwell in Christ; at present, even many who believe in Him, still keep Him at a distance even so, finding their delight elsewhere, perhaps in worldly pleasures, but little if at all in fellowship with Him. Reconciliation is expressive of reestablished close relationship, of the removal of barriers, of mutual peace and devotion, of delight in the company one of the other, of love and unity between friends.

As one who is chosen of God, to whom a measure of faith has been granted, one is in Christ and is justified in His blood. Such a one, however, even though he or she is *saved* (from indignation, and for life eonian), may or may not be one who enjoys *reconciliation*.

What we have in grace is not to be confused with its present enjoyment. Obedience worthy of reward must be discriminated from the blessings in grace of our calling, being chosen of God and justified in Christ's blood, being vivified and glorified in that day, immortal and incorruptible. "For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not out of works, lest anyone should be boasting" (Eph.2:8).

J.R.C.

LOT AND ABRAHAM

(Genesis 18:16-33)

¹⁶ +When the men ^larose from there, + they ^lgazed down overlooking Sodom. And Abraham went^l with them to see them off. ¹⁷ +Then Yahweh ^lsaid: Shall I ^mkeep covered^l from Abraham ^wwhat I will do? ¹⁸ + Abraham shall become, yea become⁻ ^ᶜa great and staunch nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will ^bbe blessed. ¹⁹ For I have become acquainted with him in order ^wthat he may enjoin [`]on his sons and [`]on his household after him +to ⁻keep the way of Yahweh to do what is right and duly just, so that Yahweh may ⁻bring on Abraham ^ᶜall⁰ ^wthat He has ^{sp}promised ^{on}concerning him.

²⁰ +Then Yahweh ^lsaid: The outcry over Sodom and Gomorrah is ^{mn}great ^tindeed, and their sin is exceedingly grave ^tindeed. ²¹ I shall ^{pr}now descend and see whether they have ^dacted ^{all}altogether according to the outcry over it ⁻that has come^l to Me, and if not, I will ^lknow.

²² + From there the men ^lturned around and ^lwent toward Sodom. +Yet Yahweh, He was ^fstill standing before Abraham. ²³ +So Abraham came ^lclose and ^lsaid: Will You indeed ^lsweep off the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Perhaps there are fifty righteous in the midst of the city; will You indeed ^lsweep off and not ^lbear ^ᶜwith the ^ᶜentire⁰ ^{ri}place ⁱon ^paccount of the fifty righteous who are ⁱwithin it? ²⁵ Far be it ^ᶜfrom You ^fto ^dact⁻ ^{as}in ⁻this manner, to ^cput to death the righteous with the wicked, so +that it would ^boccur ^{as}with the righteous as with the wicked. Far be it ^ᶜfrom You; the Judge^l of the entire earth, would He not ^{ld}execute right judgment?

²⁶ + Yahweh ^{lsa}replied: If I should find in Sodom fifty righteous in the midst of the city, ⁺then I will bear [~]with the entire ^{ri}place for their sake. ²⁷ + Abraham ^lanswered and ^lsaid: Behold, now, I have ventured to speak to ^sYahweh^{ph}, ⁺though I am soil and ashes. ²⁸ Perhaps the fifty righteous ^llack five. Will You ^lruin [~]the entire city ⁱbecause of five? And He ^{lsa}replied: I will not ^lruin it if I should find there forty-five.

²⁹ +Yet he ^{fr}again ^lproceeded to speak to Him and ^lsaid: Perhaps forty shall be found there. And He ^{lsa}replied: I will not ^ldo it, ⁱfor the ^psake of the forty. ³⁰ +Yet he ^lsaid: ^{pr}Now [~]my Lord must not be ^{lhot}angry, ⁺but let me speak; perhaps thirty shall be found there. And he ^{lsa}replied: I will not ^ldo it if I should find there thirty. ³¹ +Yet he ^lsaid: Behold, ^{pr}now, I have ventured to speak to my Lord; perhaps twenty shall be found there. And He ^{lsa}replied: I will not ^lruin it, ⁱfor the ^psake of the twenty. ³² +Yet he ^lsaid: ^{pr}Now [~]my Lord must not be ^{lhot}angry, ⁺but let me speak [~]only ^{this} ^{du}once; perhaps ten shall be found there. And He ^{lsa}replied: I will not ^lruin it ⁱfor the ^psake of the ten. ³³ As soon ^was Yahweh had ^{all}finished [~]speaking ⁻with Abraham, ⁺ He ^lwent away; and Abraham returned to his ^{ri}place.

YAHWEH APPRISES ABRAHAM

ABRAHAM, who lived at some distance from Sodom, was consulted as to its doom. Lot, who lived within its confines, was unaware of its impending destruction. So it is today. We, who have been enlightened by fellowship with God through His Word, are well aware of the divine indignation which may destroy the world at any time. We will not need to leave, like Lot, however, for we must be caught away before His wrath arrives. But others who live in its midst, do not realize the depth of its degradation, or dread its descending doom, except at the hand of man himself

and his inventions. Lot chose to dwell within the walls of the Sodomites, descendants of the cursed Canaan, who occupied the land promised to Abram.

REVIEW OF LOT'S LIFE

It is worthwhile to trace the life of Lot before he came to live in Sodom, and mark its contrasts with that of Abram. Lot had a good start. His father was Abram's brother, Haran. Although Abram was told to go *from* his kindred and *from* his father's house, when he went to the land of promise, nevertheless Lot, his brother's son, took it upon himself to go along (Gen.12:1-4). But, when they were in the land, their two herds increased so much that there came to be contention between their graziers. Abram gave Lot his choice, and he selected the garden-like district of the basin of Sodom and Gomorrah (13:8-11), and dwelt in one of their cities. While there, he was captured by the confederate kings, yet Abram rescued him. Although he was tormented by the lawless acts of the people, he took his place in the gate as one of their elders.

ABRAHAM'S VIEWPOINT

From the tenor of Abraham's intercession, we can see how like it was to modern ideas, and how far short of the Subjector's purpose. Since Adam sinned, *none* are really righteous, and since Christ died, *all* will become just. Abraham's theology was fractional. If there were fifty righteous, he thought their comparative righteousness would outweigh the wickedness of the rest. It was a good opportunity to teach Abraham the great truth that Yahweh's ways are not as man's ways. In a city like Sodom, the judges should deal with the worst criminals against their laws, but they could not deal with all, even if they were guilty. So Yahweh agrees that He will bear with all if there are fifty so-called righteous.

ABRAHAM'S INTERCESSION

We, who live in the last days of this administration, find ourselves in a position in regard to the world about us much like Abraham in regard to Sodom and Gomorrah. As these cities were doomed to destruction, so with the world in which we live. Thus it may be exceedingly instructive and helpful to consider the whole event, especially the discussion Abraham had with Yahweh. From the human side, his intercession is quite commendable, even if it shows his lack of insight into God's plans and operations. Such a consideration should help us to a closer appreciation of God's ways than Abraham possessed. Then as now, the believers were saved by being *called out*. We cannot keep the judgment from overtaking the world, no matter how hard we persevere in prayer, but we ourselves will be saved because we believe, and will respond to His call to come out, at His advent.

Abraham realized that there might not be as many righteous ones as he supposed. So he kept on lowering the number by fives and tens, from fifty to forty-five, to forty, to thirty, to twenty to ten—one-fifth of the fifty with which he started. Evidently Abraham thought that there must be at least ten, and that any less than this would have to suffer the fate of the rest—which would certainly not be just. As a matter of fact, there were only *four*, Lot with his wife and daughters. Because of their comparative righteousness Yahweh *spared* them (19:16). But *they did not save the city. Yet Yahweh saved them*. Even they were not saved by their *own* righteousness, but by *believing* the messengers of doom, and leaving the city. This is the divine method of salvation during the eons. *After that all will be saved* (1 Tim.2:4).

First, however, let us look at the whole occurrence from the divine standpoint, uninfluenced by human feelings

and historical facts. How can we do this? By simply noting what occurred *in the light of the consummation*. Whatever Yahweh Elohim does is in perfect accord with all of His other perfections, His love, His justice, His truth, as well as the welfare of His creatures. Yet these attributes are in perfect balance. He does not display His love at the expense of His justice, for both are essential, one to the other, especially to their display. In the end they lead to, and prepare for, His grand goal, when the final fruit of his operations will be perfect and perpetual happiness.

FAITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

Viewed in this light, we are assured that the destruction of all the cities in the basin, with the deliverance of Lot and his two daughters, was the only wise, just and loving thing to do at that juncture. Abraham did not know of God's ultimate, nor the path leading up to it, so he erred in thinking a righteous minority could save all the rest, and that the size of this group mattered. He did not realize that "all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23). Lot's comparative righteousness was powerless to deal with the corruption of Sodom. It was his faith that constituted his righteousness, even as it did Abram's, and does ours today. Those of his daughters who had married, along with their husbands did not believe, so were not saved.

ALL SAVED

The lesson taught by Sodom and Gomorrah was especially intended for the nation of Israel, so that it would keep the way of Yahweh, to do what is right and duly just (18:19). There always was a comparatively righteous remnant in it, even in the days of Elijah, who thought himself the only one left, when there were still seven thousand (1 Kings 19:14,18). But salvation is not by minorities or majorities, but by God and His Anointed. Many in Israel

followed our Lord when He was on earth, and His apostles, when He was roused, yet that did not save the *nation*. It was set aside. In the coming kingdom *all* Israel will be saved (Rom.11:26). And, in the consummation, *all* humanity will be delivered and come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). Even Sodom and Gomorrah shall return to their former estate (Ezek.16:55).

Had Abraham known all this, he probably would not have spoken as he did. There are doubtless many since then who secretly agree with him. Good people (like themselves!) should not be judged at all! But the Judge of all did not merely have in mind the fate of these cities but used their doom for the welfare of innumerable others. Sodom and Gomorrah are, in His course of instruction, intended as an *example*. By their ultra-prostitution and coming away after other flesh, they are lying before us, a *specimen*, experiencing the *justice* of fire eonian (Jude 7). Again and again was Israel pointed back to them, for they even exceeded their iniquities.

OTHER SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES

Moses threatened the sons of Israel with a fate like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, if they turn away from Yahweh, their Elohim, and served the elohim of the nations (Deut.29:18-29). Isaiah commences his long prophecy by comparing Israel with these cities, thus (Isa.1:9,10):

*Unless Yahweh of hosts had left for us a few survivors,
As Sodom would we become,
And to Gomorrah would we be likened.
Hear the word of Yahweh, captains of Sodom;
Give ear to the law of our Elohim, people of Gomorrah.*

Again, in his denunciation of Babylon Isaiah says (Isa. 13:19):

*And Babylon, stateliest of kingdoms,
Beauty of Chaldean pride,
Will become like Elohim's overturning
of Sodom and Gomorrah.*

Jeremiah compares the prophets in Jerusalem to these adulterous cities, as follows (Jer.23:14):

*To Me they have become like Sodom, all of them,
And its dwellers like Gomorrah.*

Jeremiah also threatens Babylon with a fate similar to these cities (Jer.50:40):

*Like Elohim's overturning of Sodom and Gomorrah
And their neighbors, averring is Yahweh,
No man shall dwell there,
And no son of humanity shall sojourn in her.*

Ezekiel, however, not only compares Jerusalem with Samaria and Sodom, but predicts the reversal of their captivity and the return to their former state (Ezek.16:53-56).

In Amos, Yahweh complains that He had overturned some as Elohim had overturned Sodom and Gomorrah, yet they do not return to Him (Amos 4:11).

In Zephaniah, Moab is said to be becoming as Sodom, and the sons of Ammon as Gomorrah (Zeph.2:9).

In later revelation, also, it is used as a well-known example. Our Lord, when He sent out His apostles, told them that, "whosoever should not be receiving you, nor yet be hearing your words, coming outside of that house or city, or village, shake off the dust from your feet. Verily, I am saying to you, More tolerable will it be for the land of Sodom and the land of Gomorrah in the day of judging, than for that city" (Matt.10:14-15; cf Mark 6:11).

In Romans Paul quotes Isaiah's words concerning the sons of Israel, showing that, as in the case of Lot, a residue will be saved out of Israel (Rom.9:29).

Peter, also, refers to Sodom and Gomorrah as an example for those about to be irreverent, as well as to the rescue of Lot (2 Peter 2:6-7).

Thus we see how large a place is given to the fate of these cities in the Scriptures. Almost as much as to Noah and the deluge.

MERCY ON ALL

Some, reading the popular versions, suppose that Sodom and Gomorrah are now suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7). If that were the case, then all lovers of justice should agree that the Judge of the entire earth is Himself utterly unjust. First of all He locked all up in stubbornness (Rom.11:32). Then He laid a special curse on Canaan and the Canaanites, to whom these cities belonged. As a result of this, and the urge of their flesh through indwelling sin, they indulged in abominable excesses. With such a background and environment, who could escape pollution? Thank God, even the inhabitants of these cities are included in His great purpose to have mercy on *all* (Rom.11:32).

A. E. Knoch

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GOD RULES IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN
(2 Samuel 17)

17 + Ahithophel ^lsaid to Absalom, Oh let me ⁷choose ⁷for myself^l 12,000 men; + let me ^lset out and let me ^lpursue after David tonight. ²+ I shall come upon him ⁺while he is weary and slack of hands; + I will ^cmake ^lhim tremble; and when all the ^{wi}soldiers ^w ^lwith him flee, + I will smite ^lthe king, him alone. ³+ Let me bring ^lback all the ^{wi}soldiers to you, like the return^l of ⁷a bride to her husband. It is but ^lthe soul of one[~] ^lman ^w you are seeking; as for all the people, they shall come to be at peace. ⁴+ The word seemed ^lupright in the eyes of Absalom and in the eyes of all the elders of Israel.

⁵+ **Then Absalom** ^lsaid, ^{pr}Now call ⁷Hushai the Archite ^{mr}also, and let us ^lhear what he ^{mr}too has in his mouth to say. ⁶+ **Hushai** ^lcame to Absalom, and Absalom ^{lsa}spoke to him ⁷saying^l, This is ^{as} the ^{sp}plan Ahithophel has ^{sp}advised. Should we ^dact ^lon his ^{sp}advice? If it be no, speak up for yourself. ⁷+ **Hushai** ^{lsa}replied to Absalom, ⁱ This ^{du}time the counsel ^wthat Ahithophel has ^{fix}given is not good. ⁸+ **Hushai** ^{lsa}continued, You yourself know ^lyour father and ^lhis men that they are masters of war, and they are bitter of soul like a bear in the open field bereaved of her cubs. + Your father is a man of war, and he will not ^llodge for the night ^lwith the ^{wi}soldiers.

⁹ ^{bd}**Even now he** must be ^lhiding in one of the dark holes or in some other ^{ri}place. And ^{as}if some ⁱof them ^bwould fall^l ⁱat the start, and one hears about it, ⁺then the hearer^l will say, A stroke has ^bcome ⁱover the ^{wi}soldiers who fol-

low after Absalom. ¹⁰ + Even if he is a son of valor whose heart is like the heart of a lion, it shall melt, yea melt away; for all Israel knows^l that your father is a master of war; and ^wthose with him are sons of valor.

¹¹ + Hence I counsel: Let all Israel from Dan + ^{fr}to Beersheba convene in a gathering^{- on} about you, as numerous as the sand ^{w on}by the sea; and your presence be ^{go}marching ⁷in their midst⁰ in the attack. ¹² + When we come upon him in one of the ^{ri}places where he may be found, + we will descend on him just as the night mist falls on the ground; + no^t one will be left alive, neither ⁱ he + nor ⁱ all the men ^wwith him, not even one. ¹³ + If he should proceed into a city, + all Israel will take up lines of rope to that city; and we will pull it in pieces ^{fr}into the wadi, until ^w not even a pebble will be found there.

¹⁴ + Absalom and all the men of Israel ^{isa}agreed that the counsel of Hushai the Archite was better^f than the counsel of Ahithophel, + for Yahweh Himself had determined to annul Ahithophel's good counsel in ^porder that Yahweh might bring⁻ evil upon Absalom.

¹⁵ + Then Hushai ^{isa}told the priests Zadok and Abiathar, ^{as} This and ^{as} that did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; + yet I have counseled ^{as} this and ^{as} that. ¹⁶ + Now send quickly and tell David, saying⁻, You must not lodge tonight in the gorges of the wilderness; + you should ^{mr}rather cross over, yea cross over lest the king be swallowed up + with all the ^{wi}soldiers who are with him.

¹⁷ + Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were stayingⁱ at En-rogel, and a maidservant would go and tell them; + then they would go and tell David, for they dared not be seen entering the city^d. ¹⁸ + But a lad saw them and told Absalom. + So both of them ^{go}left quickly and came to the house of a man in Bahurim + ^{he}who had a well in his court. + They got down into ^{pl}it, ¹⁹ and the wife took a portiere, + spread it over the ^Mmouth of the well and

spread out grist on it, + so that nothing would be known about it. ²⁰ + When Absalom's servants came to the woman at^d the house and ^{isa}asked where Ahimaaz and Jonathan were, + the woman ^{isa}told them that they had crossed over the shallow waters. + Though the servants sought them, + they found no^t one; and so they returned to Jerusalem.

²¹ + It ^{ib}was after they had gone⁻ + that Ahimaaz and Jonathan came up from the well and went and told king David. + They said to David, Arise and cross the water quickly, for ^{as}in this way had Ahithophel counseled ^{on}against you. ²² + Then David and all the ^{wi}soldiers ^wwith him arose and crossed the Jordan; ^{fr}by the morning light not ^{fr}even one was ^{lag}missing who had not crossed the Jordan.

²³ + When Ahithophel saw that his counsel had not been ^dfollowed, + he saddled ⁷his donkey and set out and went to his home in his own city. + Then he ^mgave instructions to his household and strangled himself and died. + He was entombed in his father's tomb.

²⁴ + As for David, he had already ⁱⁿreached Mahanaim^d, + when Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. ²⁵ + It was Amasa whom Absalom had ^{pl}set over his military host instead of Joab. + Amasa was the son of a man + ^{his}whose name was Ithra the ⁷Ishmaelite, who had gone in to Abigail, daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. ²⁶ + The Israelites and Absalom encamped ⁷in⁰ the land of Gilead.

²⁷ + Now it ^{ib}happened ^{as}when David had ⁱⁿreached Mahanaim^d + that Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the sons of Ammon, and Machir son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, ²⁸ ⁷brought⁰ bedding, + basins and potter's^l all vessels, + also wheat, + barley, + meal flour, + toasted grain, + beans, + lentils, ²⁹ + honey, + clotted cream + of the flock, and curded cheese of the herd. They ^cbrought them close

to David and to the ^{wi}soldiers ^wwith him to eat. For they ^{sa}thought that the ^{wi}soldiers would have become hungry, + faint and thirsty in the wilderness.

TWO COUNSELORS

VERSES 1-4 relate Ahithophel's plan. Had his advice been followed, it seems that Absalom's rebellion could hardly have failed. But David's prayer (2 Sam.15:31) was answered when Absalom called for Hushai to speak his counsel as well. Though Hushai's counsel was different, it was couched in common sense and appealed to those listening. They were already in the palace; why not wait till they could fully assemble their forces? "Yahweh Himself had determined to annul Ahithophel's good counsel in order that Yahweh might bring evil upon Absalom" (2 Sam.17:14).

AHITHOPHEL AND JUDAS

Ahithophel had been a close friend of David. He was David's most trusted advisor (2 Sam.16:23) and a member of the court. As such he had quarters at the palace and ate from the king's table. These facts occasioned David's words in Psalm 41:9.

*Even the man bidding me peace, in whom I trusted
Who was eating my bread,
has magnified his heel against me.*

Judas Iscariot had been deemed sufficiently trustworthy to be the keeper of funds for Christ's band of disciples (cf John 12:6; 13:29). He was there participating in the friendship and small talk shared by the disciples and Christ as they stopped to eat during their travels. In front of Judas was spread the feast and blessing of hearing the words of truth from Christ's own lips. At the passover meal Jesus said, "Lo! the hand of him who is giving Me up is with Me on the table" (Luke 22:21).

Ahithophel would have taken a troop of soldiers and gone after David in the night. Judas took the temple guard with him to Gethsemane at night, and there they apprehended Christ. Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss of friendship—a customary greeting of friends or relatives in that culture. David said the one who was "bidding me peace" was his betrayer. *Peace* was the normal greeting of friendship. The Psalmist could hardly have been more accurate in describing Judas' sign of betrayal.

Ahithophel believed his counsel was right, and when it was not followed he was sure the rebellion would fail, and he would be executed for treason. He saddled his donkey, went home, set his house in order, and strangled himself (2 Sam.17:23). When Judas realized what he had done, he went to the temple, returned the betrayal money, and went out and strangled himself (Matt.27:3-5; Acts 1:16-20).

Ahithophel's counsel also found a fulfillment in the prophecy of Caiaphas. Ahithophel said, "It is but the soul of one man you are seeking; as for all the people, they shall come to be at peace" (2 Sam.17:3). "Caiaphas, being the chief priest of that year, said to them, 'You are not aware of anything, neither are you reckoning that it is expedient for us that one man should be dying for the sake of the people, and not the whole nation should perish'" (John 11:49,50).

DAVID'S ESCAPE

David's military experience had taught him the value of accurate information. The chain of communication he hastily constructed through Hushai, Zadok and Abiathar, and their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, proved to be priceless in aiding David and those with him to cross the Jordan to safety.

The house at Bahurim (2 Sam.17:18) was built as a square or rectangle that had an open court in the middle. In this court was a well or cistern for storage of water.

Ahimaaz and Jonathan were hid in the well, the opening probably being level with the ground. The portiere (v.19) was a curtain hung in a doorway. A mat, or something stiff was probably placed over the mouth of the well; then the portiere was spread over that; then grain was spread on the portiere. It was common to dry grain in the sun on a cloth in a courtyard. The cloth made the turning and gathering up of the grain an easy matter. Thus the concealment of the hiding place was very inconspicuous. One would not think of walking on food grain, so the covering was quite safe. After Absalom's scouts left, Ahimaaz and Jonathan were able to deliver their message.

GOD IS IN AUTHORITY

God provided for the deliverance of David through the participation of many individuals, and through many minute details that were far beyond the range of human planning. Years afterward it was made known to Nebuchadnezzar that the Supreme is in authority in the kingdom of mortals (*cf* Dan.4:17,25,32). "To humanity belong the arrangements of the heart, yet from Yahweh comes the answer of the tongue" (Prov.16:1). "A man's heart devises his way, yet Yahweh establishes his steps" (Prov.16:9). In this case, Yahweh established the arrangements of David and those aligned with him, and not the counsels of Ahithophel. We can trace many of the reasons for this as we consider David's place in God's purpose and the types of our Lord and of Judas provided in this account in 2 Samuel 17.

But to Paul was given an appreciation of God's authority in the affairs and experiences of humanity that brings all these individuals, David and Absalom, Ahithophel and Hushai, Zadoc, Abiathar, Ahimaaz and Jonathan together. *For out of God and through Him and for Him is all. To Him be the glory!* (Rom.11:36).

J. Phillip Scranton

WHEREFORE CONSOLE ONE ANOTHER

THE DAY OF CHRIST (Phil.1:6,10; 2:16) in which we meet our Saviour is not synonymous with the day of the Lord. Our expectation as presented by the apostle Paul differs in many respects from that outlined in the prophets of the Hebrew scriptures and by the Lord when He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The unique features of our expectation are fully in accord with our calling.

REJOICING AS OPPOSED TO FEAR

The day which we are anticipating is a day of rejoicing. It is the day of our graduation, the day of deliverance from these bodies of corruption and humiliation into our glorious, celestial bodies like that of our Lord (Eph.4:30; Phil.3:20,21). It is a day of light and the procuring of salvation (1 Thess.5:4-8).

However, the day of the Lord, at least at its inception, is a time that is marked with fear and darkness. We know this in part from the following language of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5.

“Now we are asking you, brethren, for the sake of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to Him, that you be not quickly *shaken* from your mind, nor yet be *alarmed*, either through spirit, or through word, or through an epistle as through us, as that the day of the Lord is present. No one should be deluding you by any method, for, should not the apostasy be coming first and the man of lawlessness be unveiled, the son of destruction, who is opposing and lifting himself up over everyone termed a god or an object of veneration, so that he is

seated in the temple of God, demonstrating that he himself is God? Do you not remember that, still being with you, I told you these things?"

These Thessalonian believers were not looking forward to being in the day of the Lord. Just the thought that this was the case caused them to be shaken in mind and alarmed. They were being deluded by a counterfeit letter written by someone other than Paul, apparently suggesting that they were in that day.

Paul dispels this fear by pointing the Thessalonians to the snatching away of the believers into Christ's presence, or, as he puts it here: "our assembling to Him" (2 Thess.2:1). This must occur before the events that usher in the day of the Lord. In looking forward to that day, we rejoice, first of all, that we will finally see our Saviour face to face, but also we are consoled further in knowing that it will occur before the great affliction that is closely associated with the day of the Lord.

APART FROM SIGNS

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples asked Jesus, "What is the sign of Thy presence and of the conclusion of the eon?" In Israel's case, they look for signs concerning His presence (Matt.24:30). For them to believe, they have to see signs (John 2:11,23; 6:2; Mark 16:20; Luke 2:12; 1 Cor.1:22). In fact, earlier in His ministry Jesus said of the people, "If they should not be perceiving signs and miracles, they should under no circumstances be believing" (John 4:48).

Knowing this, then, also explains how Satan will be able to deceive so many during the great affliction. He too, will use signs and false miracles with every seduction of injustice during the dark inception of the day of the Lord. The very presence of the son of destruction, also known as the lawless one, is in accord with this operation (2 Thess.2:8-11).

We, however, do not look for signs. There is absolutely

nothing that we can look for here on the earth that gives us a physical clue that our snatching away is near. The only thing we know for sure is the day of the completion of our salvation, is nearer than when we first believed (Rom. 13:12). Until then, we need to be "observing how we are walking, not as unwise, but as wise, *reclaiming the era*, for the days are wicked" (Eph.5:15).

SNATCHED AWAY TOGETHER

Notice the language in Matthew 24:37-42: "For even as the days of Noah, thus shall be the presence of the Son of Mankind. For as they were in those days before the deluge, masticating and drinking and marrying and taking in marriage until the day on which Noah entered the ark, and did not know till the deluge came and takes them all away, thus shall be the presence of the Son of Mankind. Then two shall be in the field; one is taken along and one is left: two grinding at the millstone; one is taken along and one left. Be watching, then, for you are not aware on what day your Lord is coming."

In this passage, we learn that the ones taken along are the unfaithful and the ones left are the faithful. This was the case in Noah's day during the flood and it will also be the case in the future day of the Lord. In Noah's day the ones taken along were killed. Many will also be killed in the events leading up to the presence of the Son of Mankind. As Matthew 24:28 states, "Wheresoever the corpse may be, there will the vultures be gathered" (see also Luke 17:26-37). Other passages seem to indicate that many of the Jews will be cast out of the kingdom, perhaps joining those of the nations in the eonian fire of chastening (Matt. 8:11,12; 13:24-30; 36-43; 47-51; Luke 13:28-30). There will be a severing of the ideal seed from the darnel, or the just from the wicked at the harvest which is said to be at the conclusion of this eon. It will be just before and during

Christ's reign that the unfaithful and wicked find their lot cast outside in the outer darkness and furnace of fire where there will be lamentation and gnashing of teeth. They will be "cut asunder" and appointed a portion with the hypocrites. These terms refer to the Jews cast out of the kingdom. It will be the ones who are left who will enjoy the blessings of eonian life on the earth with the Son of Mankind, their Deliverer and their King.

However, in our deliverance mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4 it is the believers who are taken along. We will be snatched away together to meet the Lord in the air.

THE LORD HIMSELF

In many of the parables, the Lord spoke of messengers being sent just before the Son of Mankind returns. It seems their mission is to sever the wicked from the midst of the just (Matt.13:49). We also know from Zechariah 14:3-5 that when the Lord returns to the Mount of Olives, all the holy ones are with Him.

However, when Paul speaks of Christ returning for us, the "Lord Himself" is emphasized. The significance of this is brought out by Donald G. Hayter:

"1 Thessalonians 4:16 might have read, 'The Lord will be descending,' and still convey the fact that the Lord will be coming down from heaven. The addition of "Himself" adds something to the sense as well as giving emphasis. It is a form of phrase that occurs a number of times in the Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 15:28, in the great passage on the consummation of the eons and subjection of all to God we read that 'Then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him.' The emphatic 'Himself also' adds the sense that even the Son will be subject to His Father.

"The construction is used five times in the Thessalonian epistles. In 1 Thessalonians 3:11, for example, we read, 'Now may our God and Father Himself and our Lord

Jesus Christ be directing our way to you!' It seems that when others are involved in what is said they are particularly mentioned. The phrase 'our God Himself' without any addition would draw attention to God alone.

"When the two disciples were walking on the Emmaus road discussing the events of the previous few days in Jerusalem, 'Jesus Himself drew near.' Thus we may be confident that when the Lord comes for us, descending from heaven, He will be alone. No other will distract our attention. We shall have eyes only for the Lord. For this will be our first sight of Him."¹

IN THE AIR

Israel will meet the Lord when He descends and actually stands on the Mount of Olives (Zech.14:3). A picture of this event is suggested in Acts 1:11. As Christ was ascending, two men in white attire standing beside the disciples, asked, "Men! Galileans! Why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus Who is being taken up from you into heaven shall come thus, in the manner in which you gaze at Him going into heaven. Then they return into Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet."

We, however, as members of the body of Christ, will meet the Lord in "the air" (1 Thess.4:17), which is that part of the atmosphere that contains the mixture of gases essential to life on earth and is within sight of our current terrestrial home.

Concerning this unique feature of our expectation, Brother Hayter wrote:

"One most important feature of this meeting place is that it is the territory of the Adversary, Satan, for he is the chief of the jurisdiction of the air. It is from the air that he controls the earth's affairs. To him have been given all

¹*Unsearchable Riches*, vol.65, p.164.

the kingdoms of the earth, and the affairs of mankind are under his sway, political and religious. He is a spirit making his headquarters in the air above us. And it is here that we shall meet the Lord in the heart of the enemy's kingdom."²

CHANGE TO CELESTIAL BODIES

Our meeting with our Lord involves a secret. It has to do with our change. Paul hints at this in 1 Corinthians 15:40 where we read, "There are bodies celestial as well as bodies terrestrial. But a different glory, indeed, is that of the celestial, yet a different that of the terrestrial . . ." Then in verse 49 he adds, ". . . and according as we wear the image of the soilish, we should be wearing the image of the Celestial."

In Philippians 3:20 the apostle gives us further light by saying our bodies of humiliation are going to be transfigured to conform them to the body of His glory. This change is vital, for it fits us for our realm which is located in the heavens. Yes, we have a place in the heavens where Christ is seated at the present time, Who is "making His home in light inaccessible" (1 Tim.6:16).

No such change is described in Israel's expectation. It is true that in resurrection they will be equal to messengers in that they will no longer be dying (Luke 20:36), but their glory will be in line with their terrestrial calling. Note again Paul's statement that there are bodies celestial as well as bodies terrestrial. Just as the new bodies given to Israel will fit them for their terrestrial calling, so our new glorified bodies will fit us for our celestial calling.

Again we quote from Brother Hayter's meditations on our happy expectation:

"The glory of our Lord's presence will differ on each occasion. For Israel He will appear as He was on the mount of

².*Unsearchable Riches*, vol.65, p.287.

transformation, His face shining as the sun. The brilliance of His glory will not be greater than His terrestrial saints can endure. For us He will come as the Celestial One with a different glory, one exceeding in brilliance of the noon-day sun. But we shall be able to look and live, for we too shall be celestials, changed into beings with a glory similar to the Lord's."³

NOT AS A THIEF

Concerning the day of our Lord, Paul says it will occur "as a thief in the night—thus it is coming" (1 Thess.5:2). The Jews, then, need to be watching and enduring. The Lord said to those with Him on the mount that "he who endures to the consummation, he shall be saved" (Mark 13:13). They must Beware! Be vigilant and pray, for no one is aware when the era is. They must be watching, lest the Lord comes suddenly and finds them drowsing (Mark 13:33-37; *cp* Luke 12:37; Rev.3:3; 16:15; Matt.24:13,42-44; 7:21). Such language presents eonian life in association with endurance and faithfulness.

In our case Paul says we are not in darkness, that the day may be overtaking us as a thief, for we are all sons of the light and sons of the day (1 Thess.5:4). Yet, even if we are drowsing (which means we have not been reclaiming the era and growing toward maturity), we still have the assurance of meeting our Lord when He comes for us. *Whether we may be watching or drowsing, we shall be living at the same time together with Him.* "Wherefore, console one another and edify one the other" (1 Thess.5:10,11).

Our eonian life is clearly seen to be a "gracious gift of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.6:23). Nothing can remove us from our future deliverance for we are "sealed with the holy spirit of promise" (Eph.1:13).

³.*Unsearchable Riches*, vol.65, p.286.

EUTYCHUS AND DORCUS

In the book of Acts God provides us with an excellent example of each calling. First, in Acts 9:36-43 we are introduced to a disciple named Dorcas who was said to be “full of good acts and alms.”

Being infirm, she dies, yet Peter being summoned to her, miraculously brings her back to life. This account of Dorcas is quite different from that concerning a young man named Eutychus in Acts 20:9-12. The only thing we know about him is that he fell asleep while Paul was arguing and dropped to his death from the third story. Nothing is recorded of his works, yet Paul, just as Peter did with Dorcas, miraculously brought him back to life.

Dorcas is a type of those in the former resurrection (Rev.20:4,5) who have worked as well as believed, so that their works are kept in view in association with their resurrection. But the saints of the present era of grace are like Eutychus. If Paul’s preaching fails to keep them awake, and they are drowsing, even then, such is the superabundance of grace, that they will be snatched away when the Lord descends for us.⁴ “For whether we may be watching or drowsing, we should be living at the same time together with Him” (1 Thess.5:6).

FINAL THOUGHTS

Twice Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians that we are to console one another with the words he penned concerning that glorious day when we meet our Lord. Hopefully this paper has not only brought some consolation and a good expectation in grace, be consoling your hearts and establish you in every good work and word” (2 Thess.2:16,17). Amen!

Ted McDivitt

4. Adapted from the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.211.

YET NOW, THE EVANGEL OF GOD

THE EVANGEL which we have accepted in faith is the message that Christ died for our sins, was entombed and has been roused the third day (1 Cor.15:1-4). It speaks of great good for us coming as a result of the death of Jesus Christ for our sins. The entombment speaks of the old humanity put away, and in His resurrection (and in that only) is the assurance of vivification (1 Cor.15:22).

But this message of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is not good news in relation to us only. It is good news for all creation. Yet even more than this it is a message of good in relation to God. And this is the root of its goodness for all.

In accord with this view of the evangel (seeing it as that which reveals God's glory), at the beginning of his letter to the Romans Paul calls this message, the evangel *of God* (Rom.1:1). It is a work of God, sourced in Him and carried out by Him, Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11), and it is for Him. As such it makes God known to us, even the depths of God (*cf* 1 Cor.2:10). The evangel concerns Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom.1:3-5), but He is the Son *of God*, Whom God gave up for us all (Rom.8:32).

Hence God is called our Saviour, and indeed the Saviour of all mankind (*cf* 1 Tim.1:1;2:3;4:10). What Christ has done for us is not only that He died for our sakes, but also, in doing so, He has become the One through Whom God makes Himself known to us as Saviour in grace and power and wisdom. The evangel tells us of that which God has done for us through the gift of His Son, and in this we

are not only blessed by knowing of these blessings, but also by coming to know God Who blesses. If we begin in first believing the evangel with much joy because of what it says about us, we must grow in our appreciation of the evangel to even greater joy in appreciating what it says about God.

In that the evangel is *of God*, it reflects His deity. It commends His love and is identified as His power and wisdom (*cf* Rom.5:8; 1 Cor.1:18-24). Now also in Romans 3:21-27 we hear the evangel as it reveals God with respect to His *righteousness* in His work of justification.

A MESSAGE WHICH IS OF GOD

The apostle began to present the evangel of God as a revelation of God's righteousness in Romans 1:17. There he had testified that he was not ashamed of the evangel because it was the power of God for salvation to everyone who is believing. But also, he was not ashamed of the evangel,

for in it God's righteousness is being revealed, out of faith for faith . . .

But for the glory of this revelation to be seen, there needed to be more preparation than simply the claim that Paul was not ashamed of it. As believers, we all can profit from an honest account of the human situation before God apart from the evangel. We need the dark backdrop in order to appreciate the glory of this manifestation of God's righteousness. Hence, in Romans 1:18-3:20, the apostle has brought our attention to the revelation of God's indignation in giving unrighteous humanity over to their depravity, and of His indignation in the day of God's just judgment. In this operation, the many sins of mankind, even those that were hidden from view, will be taken into account. Nothing is overlooked. The result is God's righteous verdict for all, those of the nations and the Jew as

well: "Not justified." With this preparation, therefore, the apostle resumes his thought concerning the revelation of God's righteousness in the evangel:

Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God.

Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus . . . toward the display of His righteousness in the current era, for Him to be just and a Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus—where, then, is boasting?

Romans 3:20 has summed up the dire predicament of humanity because of its all-pervading irreverence and unrighteousness. By works of law no flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight. Yet now, a new view of God's righteousness has come on the scene, which changes the entire situation. God does that which is impossible for the flesh to do (Rom.8:3). No flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight, yet now, God's righteousness is made to appear by means of the faith of Jesus Christ. This is God's righteousness directed to all and applied to us who are believing even now, resulting ultimately in the blessing of life's justifying for all mankind (*cf* Rom.5:18).

This is all of God, and not of ourselves. It manifests His righteousness, a righteousness that is all-inclusive. Like the righteousness of God's just judgment, no sin or failure is overlooked in the righteous justification of sinners. But unlike God's judgment (which is not called "God's righteousness"), His righteous dealing with sin through the death of Jesus Christ results in good for all. It is because of this consummation of glory that it fully and truly can be designated as *God's righteousness*.

It will then be all to His glory, and the glory of His power, His wisdom, His love—and His righteousness.

Indeed, as Paul shows here starting with Romans 3:21, the evangel of God is rich and vast beyond its first impression. Let us look at this grand portion of Scripture now, more closely and in detail.

YET NOW

The “yet” at the beginning of Romans 3:21 speaks of a contrast. And the “now” speaks of something new. What was said in Romans 3:20 was not a final word. It presented God’s righteous verdict solely with the record of human deeds in view. Yet now God’s righteousness as it is made manifest through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ is brought before us.

Some of the force of these two small connecting words might be made more apparent to us by the following arrangement of Romans 3:20-24:

By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in God’s sight.

Yet now:
apart from [works of] law, a righteousness of God is manifest . . . through Jesus Christ’s faith, for all, and on all who are believing, . . . being justified gratuitously in God’s grace . . .

On one side stands the severe and tragic, and yet just, pronouncement of God concerning the whole of humanity. As we are, in flesh and apart from the faith of Jesus Christ, there is no justification. What is revealed there is God’s indignation (Rom.1:18), eventually expressed in the day of His just judgment (Rom.2:3-13). The righteous verdict, “Not justified,” would seem to call for the perishing of all humanity. Even more serious is what it would seem to mean for God: the loss of what He has created, and His

failure finally to realize the vision of His creation which is recorded in Genesis 1:31. “And Elohim saw all that He had made; and behold it was very good.”

What is presented in Romans 3:20 cannot be the last word concerning humanity. A consummation in which all flesh is found “Not justified” would not be a revelation of God’s righteousness, such as the apostle is longing to announce. It is only the dark background which makes the light of the evangel shine more clearly.

On the other side of the “yet now” stands that manifestation of God’s righteousness which is provided by the evangel which announces salvation and justification through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, apart from any human contribution. The “yet now” is the bridge leading from the despair and hopelessness of Romans 1:18-3:20 to the exultation and peace of 3:21-8:39.

The contrast that the words “yet now” point to involves many details. Among these are:

by works of law

yet now

apart from [works of] law,

works of law

yet now

faith of Jesus Christ,

law

yet now

in His grace,

no flesh at all shall be justified

yet now

all being justified,

no flesh justified in God’s sight

yet now

God’s righteousness is manifest.

God's righteous judgment is determined *by* the actions of human beings in accord with the standards set by law. God's righteous justification is determined *apart from* the demands of law by the faithful obedience of Jesus Christ. In the former situation human *works* must all be considered; in the latter, only that one work which is called the *faith of Jesus Christ* is in view. *Law*, as given by God at Sinai or as placed in the human heart, brings the focus of attention upon the record of human unrighteousness. But *God's righteousness* in *His grace* of giving His Son up for us all stands in contrast to His righteous *law*, which is continually transgressed by sinners. God's righteous judgment leads to the verdict: *no flesh at all* shall be justified, while God's righteousness made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ leads to the end of *all* being justified. God's *sight* of humanity as judged by the standards of law leads to condemnation. But in His giving of His Son for sinners, there is a *manifestation* of God's own righteousness which is central to the work of justification.

Paul told the Romans he longed to see them face to face in order to share some *spiritual grace* with them (Rom. 1:11). Already *now*, in coming to them by means of this letter, he has shared an astounding word of spiritual power. The evangel of God which reveals His righteousness in announcing gratuitous justification, apart from works of law, in His grace, through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus, lifts up our hearts and invigorates us in joy and peace. This is indeed God's favor, His grace, to us.

APART FROM LAW

Having just spoken of "works of law," the apostle abbreviates his language to speak simply of "law." The application is the same. "Law" is seen here as a system of instruction for obedience (the word "law" in the latter part of verse 21 refers to a portion of Scripture). It calls for works; its

very nature is works. God's righteousness now is being seen apart from such a system demanding human works, whether it is written or unwritten.

Human works as defined by the law given to Moses and by the law written in human hearts are very much in view in God's righteous judgment (*cf* Rom.2:3-16). But His righteous work of justification centers on the faith-obedience of Jesus Christ. There is no place whatsoever here for human works, and what is said about God's righteousness and our justification is wholly centered on the doing and believing of Jesus Christ. He is the One Who deals with human sin. And He does so fully in accord with what is right, not because of law but because of His faith in what God has set before Him, which He performs faithfully.

God's righteousness is being made manifest in the evangel apart from human works as instructed in the law of Moses or even in law as written on the heart. "For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is *not out of you*; it is *God's* approach present, *not of works*, lest anyone should be boasting" (Eph.2:8). "Being justified *gratuitously* in [*God's*] *grace*, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus . . . where, then, is boasting? It is debarred" (Rom.3:24,27).

We cannot see God's righteousness as it is revealed in the evangel if we suppose it is in any way connected with human works in obedience to law. *Yet now, a righteousness of God is manifest, apart from works of law.* This is a message revealing God's righteousness in the justification of sinners which is:

apart from human endurance in good acts and the seeking of glory and honor and incorruption (Rom.2:7),

apart from being not only listeners to law, but being, in fact, doers of law (Rom.2:13),

apart from anyone of us doing, by nature, that which the law demands (Rom.2:14,26),

apart from displaying the action of the law written in the heart (Rom.2:15),

apart from boasting in God, and knowing His will, and testing what things are of consequence (Rom.2:17,18),

apart from being a guide of the blind, a light of those in darkness, a discipliner of the imprudent and a teacher of minors (Rom.2:19,20),

apart from putting the law into practice (Rom.2:25).

It is not that works of law are not good. "The law, indeed, is holy, and the precept holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12). But we are flesh, and we are sinners, and therefore the law cannot lead to justification. Nor can our works lead to that revelation of the righteousness of God which is given in the evangel. The revelation of God's righteousness is found in what God does for us through Jesus Christ, in grace, entirely *apart from* our doing.

The evangel which Paul is bringing speaks of God's righteousness in His work of salvation, even of the justification of sinners, *apart from* human works of law. Our good efforts (if there are any) must be left out of the picture, so that only God's achievement through the faithful work of Jesus Christ is seen. In this way we will be able to appreciate and honor God's righteousness in its true and saving glory.

A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Paul has led us carefully and firmly to this point in Romans where he shines the spotlight of truth on the theme of God's righteousness. We need to give it further and thoughtful attention as it is related to the evangel and to all that Paul has written so far in this epistle. It is indeed a theme of spiritual grace for our good and to the glory of our God.

D.H.H.

(To be continued)

PAUL AND BAPTISM

FOR clearness sake we have entirely omitted the consideration of our subject as set forth in connection with the ministry of the apostle Paul. There are a number of remarkable features that distinguished him from the rest of the apostles, including his baptism which may well have been self-baptism as indicated by the verb form used in Acts 22:16. The twelve had been with the Lord on earth. When one was to be chosen to supply Judas' empty place, the qualification was one who had accompanied Him from John's baptism onward (Acts 1:21,22). Paul had seen the Lord from heaven after His ascension, but was not qualified to have a part in the ministry of the twelve. They preached repentance and baptism; he preached faith.

The Book of Acts is divided into two parts by these two ministries. The incidents of the first half seem to be repeated in the second. Whatever miracle Peter wrought, Paul did the same. Compare—

Acts 3:1 with 14:8.

Acts 9:34 with 28:8.

Acts 9:36 with 20:9.

Acts 5:15 with 19:11,12.

Acts 10 with 9:3-12; 16:9; 18:9; 22:18; 23:11; 27:23.

Acts 12:7 with 16:26.

“For He who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision, operates in me also for the nations,” said the apostle to the Galatians (Gal.2:8).

This distinction is clearly marked in Acts 13:2: “Sever, by all means, to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Hitherto the evangel had come

through the twelve apostles. But Paul (as his name now becomes) did not receive his evangel from them, nor from any man, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ Himself (Gal.1:11,12).

And not only so, but the time also was revealed to him when he should make it known to the twelve. And this he did separately, first of all to those of reputation, lest a conference should be fatal to his cause. And those of repute did not add anything to him, but rather, when they saw that the evangel of the Uncircumcision had been committed unto Paul as the evangel of the Circumcision had been to Peter, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. They would confine themselves to the Circumcision, while Paul and Barnabas went to the nations (Gal.2:2-9).

Paul's account of this phase of his ministry is found set forth in Romans 15:8-21. The doctrine which characterizes it is justification by faith apart from works of any kind. This teaching is fully opened up in the first four chapters of his letter to the Romans, that to the Galatians, and his first letter to Timothy.

Paul calls it (in contrast to the other apostles) "my" evangel (Rom.2:16; 16:25; 1 Cor.4:15; 15:1; 2 Cor.11:4; 1 Thess.1:5; 2 Tim.2:8).

While it is not the *fulfillment* of the promises God had made, it is in perfect *accordance* with the prophetic utterances concerning blessing to the nations with His people Israel (Rom.15:9-12, *according as*). In it the Jew is first, and the nations get a secondary place. This accounts for the statements found in Romans 1:16; 2:9; 2:10; 3:29,30. Mercy to the nations was to accompany the blessing of Israel: "Be merry, ye nations, with His people." There is no hint that this ministry and grace *exhausts* such Scriptures. Indeed they await their *fulfillment* in Yahweh's day. But the grace dispensed is in perfect *harmony* with the revealed counsels of God (Rom.15:9).

In connection with this ministry, baptism in water still obtained (1 Cor.1:14-16). But, as in the case of Cornelius, the spirit baptism preceded and ruled the fleshly rite. All were baptized in spirit. Only such as had undergone spirit baptism were eligible to water baptism (Acts 15:8).

In connection with the ministry of the twelve, all were baptized in water; but not all in spirit. Now this was reversed. *All were baptized in spirit, but not all in water.*

THE TITLES OF CHRIST

Volumes of precious truth cluster around the names and titles of our Lord, or Master, Jesus Christ. To understand baptism in its various administrations we will need to notice how His titles are used in connection with it.

Kurios is translated "Lord" as a rule. Ephesians 6:5 shows that the title means *master*. We have used the latter as a synonym for "Lord." Likewise *Christos* is generally transliterated "Christ." It means *Anointed*. "*Messiah*" is its Hebrew equivalent.

JOHN'S BAPTISM

John baptized into the name of "the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). It was in view of the personal presence of the Master on earth, to prepare a people for Him. Those who owned the Man "Jesus" as their Master were his disciples.

PETER'S BAPTISM

Peter and the twelve baptized Israelites unto the name of "Jesus" (Acts 2:38), the name associated with Him as the rejected Saviour. The emphasis here is that the man "Jesus"—Whom they had crucified and rejected—He was the Messiah. To be identified with Him was the object of that baptism.

But the Samaritans had no part in the Messiah; that was reserved for the priest nation alone. Jews alone were to be

associated with Him in His anointing. To the Samaritans the Messiah sustained the relation of Master. But when on earth the Master had been among them as a man known as “Jesus,” and so they were fittingly baptized unto the name and title “the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16).

The proselytes of the nations, as shown in the representative case of Cornelius, were admitted into full fellowship with Israel by virtue of their reception of the spirit before baptism. Our Lord Himself, speaking of the proselyte centurion of Capernaum (Luke 7:2-10) said of him, “Not even in Israel found I so much faith!” So they were baptized in the name of “Jesus Christ.”

Thus, while baptism united these three classes in one, it was a compound unity. Just as the space surrounding the temple was one, yet divided into various courts, so the Jews, the Samaritans, and the nations were united and yet preserved their distinctness.

PAUL’S BAPTISM

But when we come to the baptism under Paul’s ministry there is a change. The same name and title is used which Peter employs for Israelites (Paul’s and Peter’s “acts” always seem to have some point of correspondence) but the order is inverse. Peter used Jesus Christ. Paul used Christ (Gal. 3:27), or Christ Jesus (Rom.6:3).

The same as to words, yet different as to emphasis. To the Jews, the great question which their baptism answered was that “Jesus”—the lowly, despised crucified One—was the Messiah. Their baptism was a confession of this.

But with the nations the circumstances were entirely different. Even as their apostle had known Him only after He was glorified, so they acknowledged Him by the title of His glory, “Christ,” or “the Anointed.” And to identify this glorious One with the lowly One Who was crucified for the salvation of sinners, they added His name, “Jesus.”

As their baptism identified them with Him in this new and glorious resurrection sphere it attained a vastly greater force and significance than it previously held. It spoke to them of His baptism on the cross for their sins, and made them one with Him in His death. But it could not stop there, for He was risen. They, too, were raised in Him. He lived a new, a resurrection life. And so they, too, in Christ Jesus, the Glorious One, had a life beyond the grave, beyond the reach of death. This life is eonian, and has its counterpart in the Millennial age, when the nations that believe on Him will be blessed with life (John 11:26).

Thus we see that the apostles did not vary the formula used in baptism because of ignorance or carelessness, but always chose that which was appropriate to the circumstances. They showed the most acute discrimination. It is evident from this that their non-use of the formula at the end of Matthew’s account was dictated by an intelligent grasp of the fact that it was not intended to be used until the kingdom had been inaugurated, as is assumed by the Lord when He gave it to them.

And here we near the summit of the “doctrine of baptisms.” God marvelously develops the simple cleansing of the flesh into a rich and fruitful rite. It speaks of purification indeed but not of the flesh. By His baptism on the cross there is cleansing from every defilement. This is the cleansing that sanctifies and makes meet; that fits for the fellowship of a thrice holy God.

Baptism in water still obtains, no longer after the tabernacle type, but after the temple system. But it is ruled by the baptism of spirit.

THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION

But the time came when the apostle had completed the evangel of Christ (Rom.15:19-23). And so, in Acts 19:21 we read, “*Now as these things were completed*, Paul pur-

posed in spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem saying: 'After I have been there I must see Rome, too.'"

This is a crisis of extreme interest to the saints of God of the present administration. At this juncture the apostle wrote the epistles to the Romans and Corinthians. In these epistles this transition period is clearly marked (Rom.15; 1 Cor.13:10-13; 2 Cor.5:16). Hitherto he had known Christ according to the flesh; henceforth he would know Him so no longer. He speaks of seeing by means of a mirror, in an enigma, but of future vision face to face. He speaks of knowing "out of an instalment," but also of a maturity which would follow.

In another passage he speaks of being caught away to the third heaven, and having heard words which it is not expedient to utter. John, in his Patmos vision, speaks indeed of a new heaven as well as a new earth (Rev.21), but, while he details the blessings of this nether sphere, he merely records the fact of the new heaven, and does not enter there as Paul did.

From 2 Peter 3:6,7 we learn that the heavens which are now are the second. Hence, the one seen by John is the third. This third heaven, then, was the subject of Paul's visions (2 Cor.12:2). It is at this juncture, too, that our apostle shows that "if any one is in Christ, there is a new creation; the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!" (2 Cor.5:17).

A NEW CREATION

Does not all this lead us on in the parallel we have already discovered? If the blessing under Paul's ministry among the nations was on the style of the day of Yahweh, and this ministry came to an end, what shall we look for next? Shall it not be followed by that which reflects the day of God, the perfect state which follows Yahweh's day?

Introduction to the day of the Lord was by regeneration: but *a new creation* ushers in the day of God. Old things will have passed away, and the new will have come.

Such is the new ministry upon which the Apostle now enters—the ministry, or dispensation, of the Conciliation (2 Cor.5:18).

That will be the crowning day of God, when He will be the God of all the nations. In that day there will be no laver, no sea, no ceremonies of any kind on the way to God. Life and nearness will be within each heart. It will be as a flowing river, for thirst as well as for cleansing (Rev.21:3; 22:1-5).

And so it is now.

The forms and ceremonies will have no place there, because the substance will have come which they but weakly shadowed forth.

So now, *in spirit*, maturity, perfection, completeness, fullness, entirety, satisfaction—call it what you will—*has come*. We are complete in Christ Who is the Head of every sovereignty and authority (Col.2:10). That which has come is not the material, on the earth but the spiritual, in the heavenly regions.

How restful it is to look upon a task all finished! And such a task! And so well done! How we should charge our hearts to enter and enjoy this solid satisfying portion. Whatever joys and glories the future may have in store, even though our bodies be changed at His coming, *nothing can add to our completeness in the Anointed*. No ordinances upon the flesh, no prayer, no worship, no service, nothing can make us more acceptable; nothing can remove defilement or any other barrier to approach, for now we are perfectly equipped for His presence. The spirit of our God has cleansed us to His perfect satisfaction. Nothing can bring us nearer, nothing can make us dearer.

A. E. Knoch