Unsearchable Riches

A Quarterly Magazine
For God and His
Word

VOLUME 103

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

CONCORDANT PUBLISHING CONCERN
15570 Knochaven Road
Santa Clarita, CA 91387, U.S.A.

The Supremacy of God

God is supreme, all-knowing and all-wise
Who can advise Him, or to Him dictate?
None is like Him, so glorious and so great.
His Name is written in the star-filled skies
And in the earth His power unerring lies.
His was the Mind to purpose and create,
And to allot to each his humble state;
In Him all live, Who every need supplies.

"Whose equal shall I be?" inquires the Lord.
Before His challenge other claims must fall.
His declarations stand; His sovereign word
May not return in vain, but must fulfill
The pleasure of the One, Who worketh all
According to the counsel of His will.

John H. Essex

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, FIRST QUARTER 2012
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED THREE

EDITORIAL

As long ago as 1916, in an article entitled, "The Son of Abraham," A. E. Knoch wrote, "The faith of Christ is brought before us in the otherwise enigmatical statement *'from* faith *to* faith' (Rom.1:17, AV). Literally this is "*out* of faith *into* faith." There are two faiths in view. The latter is our faith; the former is Christ's. Justification is founded on His faith: it is conferred on our faith."[1] Later in his notes on Romans 3:22, he observed, "The channel through which we may obtain this righteousness [of God] is the *faith of* Jesus Christ. He alone of all mankind, not only did good and kept the law, but He believed God even when He smote Him for our sins. It is out of His faith for our faith (1:17)."[2] Then he repeated this important point in a study entitled, "Jesus Christ's Faith," published in 1938: "[Jesus Christ's] faith is the basis of justification just as our faith is the channel through which it is received and enjoyed."[3]

The five articles by Brother Knoch appearing in this issue of our magazine are abridged and edited from his series entitled *The Glorious Gospel of God's Grace,* first published in volumes 36 and 37. They distinguish the Evangel of the Uncircumcision as brought by Paul from that of the Circumcision as taught by Peter (*cf* Gal.2:7,8), doing so by comparing the events surrounding Abraham before he was circumcised (when he was called Abram)

1. *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.7, p.266.
2. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.233.
3. *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.29, p.382.

with those after he received the covenant of circumcision, having received the name Abraham. In this way the great feature of the evangel of the Uncircumcision, which we have received, that of *faith alone, apart from works of law,* is clarified to our hearts. In taking up the subject of justification by faith, our brother concentrates on faith as it relates to the believer. We may say that these articles are expositions on the words "for faith" in Romans 1:17 and the words "on all who are believing" of Romans 3:22.

Yet, even though it is not put in terms of the faith of Jesus Christ, these articles fully recognize that justification is solidly based on Christ's death on our behalf. That needs to be kept in mind as we consider the glory of God's grace in conveying justification to us on the basis of faith alone. Justification has been gained by means of the faith of Jesus Christ alone, and it is reckoned to us on the basis of our believing, and that alone.

Furthermore, it is well for us to appreciate that even our believing is a gracious gift of God (Phil.1:29). Yet what a grand and glorious gift! Our whole reliance is on the living and supremely operative God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10). Like Abram in Genesis 15:6 we direct our faces, our attention, to what God has said concerning Himself as the Source and life and righteousness, through His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.4:17).

Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, where, then, is boasting? (Rom.4:24,27). There is no room in this evangel for boasting in ourselves, for we do nothing in receiving the benefits it announces, except believe that God speaks truly in saying to us that we are saved in grace, through faith (Christ's faith in which we place our faith), and this is not out of ourselves. It is God's present, bringing us near to Himself in peace and love (Eph.2:8,9).

D.H.H.

THE DIFFERENT EVANGELS

SALVATION, as seen in God's dealings with the Circumcision, *differs radically* from that which graces us who believe in the present secret administration. What is needed is an intelligent grasp of the *underlying purpose* of each, so that we cannot help keeping them distinct. This alone will enable us to enjoy the transcendent grace which is ours in Christ Jesus. Then we will never adulterate it with the greatly inferior ingredients which characterize the evangel of the Circumcision, as is almost universally done in Christendom today. We have already set forth the evangel for today at some length, in *The Mystery of the Gospel* and other works. Now we will explore still deeper, and also consider the evangel of the Circumcision in order to form a foil, to create a contrast, so that our hearts may grasp the transcendently transcendent grace which we enjoy in Christ Jesus. At the same time we will seek to understand why there are two evangels, and why one is concerned with faith and grace and the other with works and reward.

TRANSFERRED AWAY FROM GRACE

Let him be anathema (Gal.1:8,9)! How solemn are these words! We usually ignore them with the thought that they cannot possibly apply to us. Yet the appalling fact is that, with few exceptions, the beloved saints of God both believe and preach a *different* evangel, which is not another, and do not even realize it. Unlike the Galatians, they have not been transferred *swiftly,* but very slowly, away from the grace of Christ. Indeed, the most of them have not

changed, for they have never known it. Alas! A few who once seemed to enjoy His grace have suddenly turned from it, as did the Galatians. May God make His grace abound in their behalf!

How terrible it seems, when we look about us, and see great and good men, zealous in the work of the Lord, eager to spread the "gospel," or make known God's truth, that we are compelled to acknowledge that they come under this *anathema*! We dare not tell them that they are included, lest we give offense, and, figuratively, cut off their ears, and they will not even listen to the truth that alone is able to set them free.

This is probably our last effort to differentiate between these two evangels, so we solicit the prayers of all God's saints, that we may be empowered to reach the hearts of those who are under this solemn adjuration, but have never considered the possibility that it applies to them. We especially pray for those who, like the Galatians, have fallen out of grace (Gal.5:4), after having had a glimpse of the evangel which is ours in Christ Jesus.

A DEMONSTRATION OF FAILURE

Israel's salvation is a great *national* demonstration, in which that people as a unit are segregated to show what is in humanity. God deals with them in the *flesh,* and under *law,* and under a *covenant,* with a gradually increasing admixture of grace and faith. *The prime object of this prolonged and varied demonstration is not their salvation, but to show beyond question that mankind, even under the most favorable conditions is utterly lost without God.* Their testings prove conclusively that there is *nothing good in the flesh.* Their trial shows that men cannot *observe a law.* The tryout makes it clear that they are *incapable of keeping a covenant.* Works are of no avail in salvation. *Man's failure in this great demonstration is of the greatest*

value to the race and the universe. Until we see this, we are inclined to question its worth, and charge *God* with failure, and to repeat the experiment in our own experience, only to involve ourselves in defeat, and in the disillusionment which is bound to follow.

The salvation we have today begins where Israel's leaves off. The Adamic race is discarded and there is a new humanity. We have no *confidence* in the *flesh*; we are *dead* to the *law*; we keep *no covenant*; we are *crucified* and *entombed* with Christ, and, by faith, are *roused* and *seated* with Him in a totally new environment, among the *celestials.* We profit by the failures of the Circumcision, and need not and should not imitate the distressing experiments which demonstrate, for all who can see, man's inability to save himself or to contribute anything towards his own deliverance. If we persist in repeating these tests, it will only further confirm our inability to our own confusion and discomfiture. The admixture of Circumcision truth, the mingling of Peter's evangel with Paul's, has made a medley which lacks the essential features of both. It is this mixture which has caused most of the confusion among the saints, and has well-nigh eclipsed the evangel of the Uncircumcision.

WORKS AND FAITH

There are really only two means of salvation in the eons, *works* and *faith.* Israel is the chosen example to expose the *futility* of works, even when flavored with faith. Not knowing God, or acknowledging His deity, Christendom is inevitably drawn away by self-confidence into the sphere of works, and seeks to justify this course by appealing to that part of the Bible which belongs to Israel, where works have a place. The continual confusion and conflict on this subject will never be settled until it is seen that both sides have support "in the Bible," when all of it is applied indis-

criminately to all, when it is not correctly cut. But when we realize that God uses works in Israel in order to demonstrate their *futility,* then we are more than ever satisfied to leave salvation to the Saviour, and to repudiate the false foundation of our own deeds.

DO AND LIVE *vs.* LIVE AND DO

The contrast between the gospel of the Circumcision and that of the Uncircumcision may be expressed in the same words if we only change their order. *Do and live* is the order for the Circumcision and all other religionists. Life as the result of human effort is one of the most illogical and preposterous propositions that can well be expressed. Nowhere, in the course of human history, has a man ever evolved *life* by his acts. He has succeeded infamously in doing his fellows to *death.* Why, then, should he be so insufferably conceited as to imagine that he can defeat death or bring about life by his puny and powerless practices? On the other hand, no one can do anything without the loan of life from God. This is evident everywhere, not only in the sphere of the evangel. Nothing but the salvation that gives life can enable us to work. The only salvation worthy of the name begins with the gift of life. With us it is *live and do.* We work because we *are* saved, not because we want to save *ourselves.*

The same kind of impermanent, transitory salvation will be found throughout the Circumcision writings. In my early life of faith I was troubled by these scriptures and sought a solution. I was deeply impressed by what we called the assurance of salvation, but could never find a satisfactory explanation of the sixth of Hebrews and other texts of like tenor until I began to see the difference between the truth for the nation of Israel and that for the other nations in this administration. Even the great stress laid on "safety, certainty and enjoyment" by my friends failed to explain how

some who had actually tasted of the powers of the future eon fell aside and were disqualified for the kingdom (Heb. 6:4-8). This clearly refers to those who listened to Peter on the day of Pentecost, who were saved from that crooked generation and added to the rest by the Lord Himself (Acts 2:40,47). The record in Acts runs along the same lines as the exodus. Many who were saved from Egypt fell in the wilderness, and many who were saved from that crooked generation fell away when the kingdom did not come, in the period of the book of Acts.

The unbeliever's favorite form of salvation is undiluted works, independent of God. The believer's favorite form of salvation is works with the help of the Lord. Few, indeed, dare to trust Him unreservedly as their Saviour. This sad state is largely due to the use of scriptures which do not apply to us today, but concern the Circumcision and their temporary testings, which are intended to show the *uselessness of works* as a means of salvation. Even those of us who are profoundly convinced that *grace* is the prime spring of God's dealings with His saints in this administration are inclined to leave it out of our dealings with one another. We prefer justice because we each feel that we have been just and, in case of a clash, the other has been unjust. We would like to display the justice of our cause before the saints and the world, when we ought rather to consider our fellow saint and hide his injustice, if it is that. Let us not seek to get our rights, to square up accounts now, but rather suffer wrong. The bema of Christ will set all right. It cannot be done before that day.

THE GREAT ENIGMA

"Enigma" is the divine description of God's earlier revelation to the Circumcision, to whom first were confided the oracles of God (1 Cor.13:12). Our venerable Authorized Version speaks of it as being seen "through a glass,

darkly," which is itself difficult to understand in these days of almost invisible glass. Rather, God spoke to them indirectly, and they perceived it as by means of ancient mirrors, or as we see things reflected in an imperfectly polished, uneven surface. Now, however, that we have the later revelation through Paul, all this can be rectified. We can by-pass the mirror and see things as they actually are, face to face (1 Cor.13:12). In order to look beyond the puzzling revelations before Paul came, we should always consider what he has to say, first, in order to get to the bottom, the solid substratum of actuality.

PAUL'S BASIC REVELATIONS

In these studies, before we search for the truth in the Circumcision writings on any point we will first see what Paul has to say, for he gives us the *result* of the experiments which were tried with Israel, and shows that, beneath the superficial and apparent object, there was a different and deeper aim. The surface failure is deceptive because, in reality, it is a success, seeing that the demonstration was intended to expose the inability of man in all his efforts. Nevertheless, when we examine the earlier records more minutely in this light, we will discover, as a rule, that it contains *intimations* of the truth which can hardly be seen without the later revelations. God knew very well how His experiments would turn out. He does not try them in order to learn the truth for Himself, but in order to demonstrate them to His creatures, and so prepare them for the consummation, when they will not look for aught in themselves, but find their All in Him.

SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE

One cause of confusion is the fact that Paul uses the same terms as the Circumcision evangel to denote the reality which has displaced the riddle. He goes so far as to

flatly contradict himself in the most important difference of all. Although he draws a sharp line between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision in Ephesians, he actually insists that the *Un*circumcision *are the Circumcision* in Philippians 3:3! As we have the reality, of which circumcision is only the outward sign, he boldly dubs *them* the *Maimcision,* who mutilate the flesh, while *we* are the true and *genuine Circumcision,* who cut off the flesh entirely. The figurative use of literal terms concerned with God's dealings with Israel, such as kingdom, pardon, etc., leads many to miss the force of God's latest unfoldings, and to mix it all into one incoherent mess.

BAPTISM

This highly figurative language has caused much confusion in connection with baptism. Although we are no more baptized than we are circumcised, the mere fact that our baptism is spoken of (Rom.6:4; Eph.4:5; Col.2:12), has led to great confusion of thought between the shadow and the substance. The circumcision evangel demands the shadow, ceremonial cleansing in water, whether the heart is purified, or not. But the evangel of the Uncircumcision insists only on the reality, our cleansing in Christ. An infant may be sprinkled with all the waters of the Jordan river, yet it will not be cleansed from sin. A man may be dipped under all the water in the seven seas, yet his heart will not be pure in God's sight. Baptism in Christ's death, that alone clears us completely from everything that defiles.

WHY THESE TWO EVANGELS

Why are there two evangels? Were the object of both merely to rescue the sinner from a terrible doom, then one should suffice. But when we see that one evangel is part of God's great demonstration of the futility and failure of the flesh, hence must be based on flesh, and the other

acknowledges the result of this demonstration, hence is based on spirit, then we see that they are nearly as wide apart as the poles. With such totally divergent objects in view they cannot help but differ radically, and any mixture is bound to be confusing and contradictory.

The confusion in Christendom comes from mixing and muddling two evangels with entirely different objects, and the result is a bewildering chaos in which neither one survives in anything like its scriptural form. Our religious leaders draw most of their doctrines from Peter, and have little patience with Paul, who alone has the truth for today, and who is the only one who can clear up the enigma of Peter's evangel as well. A great deal has been done by pointing out the differences which lie on the surface of the Scriptures. These definite statements should be enough. But there is such a tremendous weight of tradition to overcome that few are able to see what is so plainly written. For their sakes, and to establish those who see the truth, we will try to dig deeper, and examine more minutely those passages which deal with the matter. As Abraham's justification by faith is the seed plot of the uncircumcision evangel, his experiences will be considered at length.

ABRAHAMIC CONTRASTS

It will be of great interest and profit if we note carefully the striking contrast between Yahweh's dealings with Abram, His friend, before and after his circumcision, the differences between the fifteenth and seventeenth chapters of Genesis. In the former we have *faith* and *righteousness* and the *star seed.* In the latter we have *walk* and a *covenant* and the *sand seed.* These should never be confused, even when they seem to merge in the spiritual members of Abram's physical offspring.

A. E. Knoch

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

ABRAHAM is set before us as the great example of justification by faith. In the epistle to the Romans, after showing that no one comes up to the standard of God's glory, Paul makes known the foundation truth of the evangel of the Uncircumcision, that justification is by gratuitous grace, through faith (Rom.3:22-26). He then enlarges on this and shows that Abraham was justified by faith *before* he was circumcised. In our search for the underlying basis for the evangel for today, we will consider carefully what is revealed concerning Abraham at the time of his justification, and, later, when he was circumcised, and, in this way, throw further light upon the truth, so that we may grasp the full import of justification, the importation of God's righteousness, as contrasted with pardon or forgiveness, which is for the Circumcision, for this is a basic distinction between the two.

First, however, let us consider briefly what Paul reveals concerning this great grace. To begin with, he tells us that his evangel is God's power for salvation to everyone who is *believing* because in it *God's righteousness* is revealed out of faith *for faith* (Rom.1:16,17). Here we have a tremendous contrast to almost all previous revelation. There we are occupied with *man's* righteousness or rather *un*righteousness, from Adam on, and especially after Israel was given the law of Moses. *Hitherto God's righteousness condemned man. Now it is made a part of the evangel to save him.* Heretofore the revelation of His justice was *against* all because of their unrighteous *acts,* now it is *on*

all who are *believing* because it is a gratuitous gift of grace bestowed on men for their *faith* (Rom.3:21-24). Hitherto man has sought to display *his* righteousness through his *deeds,* and failed. Now God displays His righteousness by justifying those who *believe,* and it is an *unqualified success* (Rom.3:24-26).

No man, of course, could acquire God's righteousness by means of his deeds. At best he could only establish one of his own. Nor can a man acquire *his own* righteousness by believing. It is *God's* righteousness that is reckoned ours by faith. This shows one of the vital distinctions between the evangel for the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision. In uncircumcision Abraham received this favor quite apart from what he had done (Rom.4:1-6). Just how it was "reckoned" to him we hope to see when we consider the passage itself.

Paul goes on to say that the Uncircumcision who *believe,* like Abraham, overtake this divine righteousness, while the Circumcision who seek it by *works of law* do not find it (Rom. 9:30). Because they are ignorant of *God's* righteousness they seek to establish their *own* (Rom.10:3). The only One Who knew no sin was made a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming *God's* righteousness *in Him* (2 Cor.5:21). Paul considered his privileged place as one of the Circumcision a hindrance, and deemed it refuse, because it demanded a righteousness of his own, which he could not supply, and kept him from appropriating God's righteousness in Christ (Phil.3:8,9).

FAITH RIGHTEOUSNESS

Why should *faith* be reckoned for righteousness? Whatever is not of faith is sin. What God says is supremely right, and it is a mistake not to assent to it. Confidence in God is the aim and object of all human experiences, along with distrust in man. At the consummation, God will become

All in all, and man nothing in anyone. Whatever leads in that direction is in accord with God's purpose and will. When God speaks, no matter what He says, the only right lies in confidence in and conformity to His revelation. This alone will guide us to the universal goal. Nothing, therefore, can be more righteous than faith. It not only is right, but guides the believer aright, along the path that leads to the bread and wine of God, the life and joy which await all creation at the consummation. Those who have no faith cannot but stray from the way. They follow false trails that lead away from the goal. Even those who are respectable, and who know nothing of sordid sins, are bound to miss the path apart from faith. It is impossible to be right unless we believe what God has revealed.

HUMAN RIGHTEOUSNESS

In view of this, let us consider man's conception of justice. What is right and what is wrong? Where is the boundary between that which is good and that which is bad? Many vices are misplaced or exaggerated virtues, and virtues may easily become vices. Even grace without truth may harm more than help. Where shall we put the dividing line between firmness and obstinacy? When we consider ourselves justly indignant, others may think that we are unduly angry. When they are mild, we may mistake it for lack of zeal. Who is competent to judge another whose motives are hidden, and whose heart he cannot read? How much allowance shall be made for immaturity, ill-health or nervousness, which makes us act unnaturally? As we grow in grace we become more lenient, more sympathetic. That is why novices are not given control in an ecclesia, for the experience of evil is needed to temper the hand of justice and guide the heart in its decisions.

At the bema of Christ the decisions will be based on the *motives* behind our acts which no one else can see. That

is why we are told to judge nothing before the appointed time, till the Lord should be coming, Who will illuminate the hidden things of darkness and manifest the counsels of the hearts. The apostle adds the comforting conclusion that applause will be coming to *each one* from God (1 Cor.4:5). In another place he asks, Why are you judging your brother? Or why are you scorning your brother? For all of us shall be presented at the dais of God (Rom. 14:10-13). We all do things which some saints would condemn because of their background and upbringing, but which others would commend because of a different environment and experience.

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS *vs.* GRACE

I do not wish to be merely righteous in myself. I wish to be *gracious.* I do not demand my rights. I sigh for grace alone. I am already righteous in Christ, and I need no righteousness of my own. Much as I strive to be just, I am not at all satisfied that I attain to anything like that which God demands. Even if I fulfill my duty to my fellow men, I certainly do not do it to God. Even if my conscience is clear, that does not justify me. The most exemplary of all saints, when they enter the presence of God's glory, realize how imperfect their highest attainments must appear to Him.

Once we are thoroughly satisfied that self-righteousness is not within our reach, that we cannot live up to the standard set before us by God, or even attain the much lower grade of righteousness which would justify every act in the eyes of our associates, we will throw ourselves entirely on the grace of God and on the favor of our fellows. We will steer a course quite the opposite of those who feel that they must justify themselves at all costs or lose their pride and self-respect. We will acknowledge our shortcomings, even if we are not conscious of them, and throw ourselves on the forbearance and love of others.

The grand doctrine of justification or divine righteousness is not readily apprehended in the abstract, so we will take concrete and conspicuous examples which will help us to see how and why God can and does justify and vindicate that which is contrary to His will. Perhaps the best illustrations and the most glaring sins can be found clustered about the cross of Christ. And there we can easily distinguish between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision, for both were involved, yet they differ greatly from each other in their words and deeds. And here we can see also how necessary it is that judgment should be according to *words* as well as *works,* for the Jews really did not do very much outside of their false and furious accusations, while the aliens actually crucified the Christ. It was the words, rather than the works, that revealed the *heart,* on which all true adjudication must be based.

THE SOLDIER WHO STABBED HIM

Let us take the case of the soldier who stabbed our Lord, with a lance head (Matt.27:49, omitted in AV, John 19:34). In his case the great white throne judgment has already been anticipated in the Scriptures in a very remarkable way. There is no question that this soldier committed this crime, for we have a double witness in the Scriptures, and, in one case John, who was there, adds his solemn attestation, as follows: "And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true. And *he* is aware that he is telling the truth." Nevertheless other scriptures seem to contradict this, for they insist that the *Jews* stabbed or pierced Him. The prophet who foretold this circumstance lays the blame on his own people. In John's account, right after testifying that one of the soldiers pierced His side, this is given as the fulfillment of Zechariah 12:10: "*They* shall see Him Whom they *stab.*" According to this it was not one soldier, but the house of David and the dwellers in Jerusalem who

were chargeable with this climacteric and vindictive act which was to put His death beyond a doubt.

John, in the introduction to his Unveiling of Jesus Christ, seems to widen its scope still further, for he adds that all the tribes of the land will be grieving over Him (Rev.1:7). Indeed, the impression is created that Israel will acknowledge this crime as their own, although, as we have seen, a Roman soldier really perpetrated the deed.

All of this should help us to see how God can justify the nations, yet must demand repentance from Israel, although, in the last analysis, He will justify all (Rom. 5:18). In every case we must go beneath the surface and discover the *heart.* We will find that this is more important than mere *fact.* Israel did not stab Him in *fact,* yet in *heart* they were the guilty parties. The soldier was guilty in *fact,* but not in *heart.*

Let us seek to pronounce judgment on this Roman soldier. It is quite likely that he acted as a representative of the nations, and illustrated the relation of the nations to the death of the Saviour. Let us sit as judge and see if we can justify his deed. He was acting under orders. The centurion in charge stood by. He, also, was simply doing his duty. There is no record that they exceeded this or showed any personal cruelty or vindictiveness. On the contrary, the centurion was powerfully impressed with the manner of our Saviour's death, so unnatural in that He cried out with a loud, strong voice, just before He breathed His last. Then it was that he exclaimed, "Truly, this Man was God's Son!" (Matt.27:54). From the human standpoint it would be difficult to convict these men of any crime. Indeed, if they had refused they could have been court-martialed and disgraced. But what is right in the sight of men may be very wrong when related to God.

Can this act be justified in the sight of God? It is most remarkable that this deed was foretold in the Scriptures.

God's Word must be fulfilled! I doubt very much that the soldier knew of this prediction or that he deliberately set about to carry it out. He could not justify *himself* on this score. But can God condemn an act like this when there is no disobedience or enmity? It is possible that the stabbing was done twice, once before and once after His death. In that latter case it was done to make sure that life no longer was present. This alone was important, as, later on, rumors were spread that He had not really died. In this light it could be called a necessary or even a good act. But, much more than this, it not only fulfilled one part of God's Word, but made it unnecessary to break His bones, which would have made Him unfit to be the great Antitype of the Mosaic sacrifices (Num.9:12). If the lance head had not shown that He was already dead, they would have fractured His legs as they did those of the two robbers and the two malefactors.

So here we have an act, done ignorantly and in unbelief by one of the Uncircumcision, which might superficially be construed as an atrocious crime against God's Beloved, yet, judged from God's side as well as man's, we would not have it otherwise, and cannot justly condemn the one whose hands handled the lance head. Rather we find it in our hearts to justify his acts, even though we ourselves are immeasurably thankful that we were not called upon to have any personal part in it. We cannot say that we would *forgive* this soldier, for there are no feelings involved. We would not even be right to *pardon* him, for that would imply that he had done wrong. We simply are compelled to vindicate this evil deed. He did right. Does not this open up a vista of possibilities in regard to all the evil committed by sinners of the Uncircumcision? Nothing that they do is quite so bad in itself as giving the deathstroke to God's Beloved Son, so it may also be found within the scope of His gracious justification.

THE JEWS CALL DOWN JUDGMENT

But can we, in any way, *justify* the Jews? That they can be *pardoned,* or *forgiven,* is evident from our Lord's prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they are not aware what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). O that His saints would show this spirit to their persecutors! The Jews will eventually be justified *by* God when this is the portion of all mankind (Rom.5:18).

But judged by their law, and in the light of their evangel, we must condemn them. Had they been as true to Moses' law as the soldiers to the law of Rome we might have justified them also. But they went *contrary* to the law and the oracles that God had committed to them. The very revelation that should have prepared them for the Messiah, condemns them for rejecting Him.

The great Antitype of all the sacrifices was about to be offered. He was the true Passover Lamb. No bone of this is to be broken (Num.9:12). Yet they ask Pilate to have his legs fractured so that He could be taken down from the cross, lest He defile their festival! They are so holy that they commit the greatest of all sins! They break the law in order to break His bones!

Yet all had been foretold and must be fulfilled. They were the appointed priests, and must offer the Sacrifice, for all blessing depends upon it. Therefore they also will be justified, but not until the close of the eons. So long as they are under law, so long as they stand on the flesh, they receive pardon or forgiveness, or judgment.

In this their evangel differs from ours. We are pictured by the soldier who ignorantly thrust his spear into the side of His Saviour and was justified. They brought down upon their heads the sore afflictions and distress which still pursue the stubborn nation, which will not be pardoned until He appears.

A. E. Knoch

THE FAITH OF ABRAM

ABRAM was justified by faith. One would suppose that, henceforth, this would be God's method with His people always. How remarkable it is to find that, until Paul writes Romans, it is practically ignored! The Hebrew Scriptures and our Lord's ministry abound with the words *just* and *righteous,* but hardly a word is said concerning *faith* righteousness. Paul dwells upon it at great length. It is basic in the evangel of the Uncircumcision. But after Paul it is dropped once more. In fact James denies it and says that a man is not justified by faith only (James 2:24). It is only after Israel had failed utterly that the prophet Habakkuk reverts to the basic truth that the righteous by his faith is living (Hab.2:4). And it is only in view of Israel's apostasy as recorded in Acts that God goes back to the fundamental fact made known to Abram before he was circumcised, that faith in Him is reckoned as *righteousness. This great and gracious truth is no part of the evangel of the Circumcision.*

The evangel of the Circumcision is occupied with the righteousness (or rather the *un*righteousness) of man. The righteousness imparted by faith is *God's.* It is *His* power for salvation because in it God's righteousness is revealed. Paul puts this as the foundation of the evangel for today (Rom.1:17). It displays *God's* righteousness, that *He* should be just and the Justifier of the one who is of the *faith* of Jesus (Rom.3:25,26). The justification of the Circumcision is by law observance. Because they are ignorant of God's righteousness they seek to establish their own

(Rom.10:3). Even Peter, the greatest of the Circumcision apostles, who had been chosen to go to Cornelius (Acts 15:7) and who came nearer to understanding the power of grace than any other (Acts 15:11), had to be corrected and shown the truth (Gal.2:14-16).

Faith righteousness is first found in connection with Abram. He was prepared for the righteousness of faith by his previous experience with his fellow men. Everything *they* do is below the strict standard of justice. Everything *God* does far exceeds it. There is no neutral condition such as men would deem just and right. The action of Lot in going to Sodom was wrong. The men of that city were exceedingly wicked. The war of the kings was unjust. The spoiling of Sodom cannot be defended, especially the fate of Lot. Even the rescue of Lot does not set matters right. On the other hand, the act of Abram *exceeds* the strict line of justice. He *refused* his *just due* for the rescue. It is only when we come to the declarations of God that we have divine righteousness, but this far surpasses what we understand by that term. Abram's acceptance of God's unmerited favor is what constitutes his righteousness, because this is the aim and object of God's dealings with him, as it is with all of His creatures.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

Faith righteousness is about to be reckoned to Abram. It is with this in view that we are given the episodes which precede it. There is a strong contrast between the unrighteousness connected with the conduct and capture of Lot, the campaign of the confederated kings, the offer of the king of Sodom, and the course of Abram in rescuing the captives, in refusing to accept a reward, and especially in paying tithes to Melchizedek, king of Salem. If we once see how wrong all of these doings were, excluding Abram's acts of faith, it will throw a flood of light upon the great

truth of justification by faith, and enable us to understand what faith righteousness really is. These incidents are not mere historical records. We must look beneath the surface to see their purpose. They are a moving picture showing that God is always right, and, unless man believes His Word and accepts His righteousness, he is always wrong. Everything which is not out of faith is sin (Rom.14:23).

The human idea of right is one of exact reciprocation, so much service for so much hire, so much protection for so much reward. Our great failure is that we carry this into our relationship with God, and thus drag Him down to our own level. Men are ever trying to pay God for His protection and give Him wages for His work. This may be considered right among men, but it is utterly wrong when applied to God. It is an insult to patronize Him. It is a shame to offer Him wages. We have nothing that He has not given us, and can do nothing for Him except in the strength which He provides. We are bankrupt when it comes to paying for His salvation and utterly destitute when we seek to settle for His services. It is absolutely wrong that we should even attempt to do these things, for they are contrary to His present place as the Deity and His future goal as our All.

When we focus our eyes upon men and their activities we are bewildered if we try to judge between them. There is no fixed standard by which to determine right from wrong. No one seems to be absolutely right or utterly wrong. The only settled standard is God's revelation. The simplest and most practical test is the consummation. *Whatever directly tends to subject men to God and make Him their All,* that is divinely right. Whatever tends otherwise and only indirectly effects God's intention, is wrong, even if it eventually contributes to His glory and His goal. It is only as we consider Abram's experience in the light of God's ultimate that we can understand how his faith is reckoned for right-

eousness. His acceptance of the Deity as his Shield and Hire was a great step toward God's goal. It was supremely right on the part of Abram although it far exceeded what we call righteousness on the part of God.

The roots of justification by faith are best seen in the early life of Abram. If we will compare his deeds and the acts of those about him with the divine standard, we will find that he is in harmony with God's goal, and that therefore his righteousness was not the neutral thing which exactly squares accounts, but, like God's, it exceeds the strict confines of justice as men see it, Abram allowed Lot to use a part of the land promised to him (to which Lot had no right), because it separated them, which was according to God's word and plan. This made it possible for God to deal with Lot apart from Abram. He refused all compensation for his efforts in rescuing Lot and in restoring to the king of Sodom what he had lost. This is far above the human idea of justice.

Abram was given the land of Canaan. From the superficial human standpoint it may appear *wrong* to take the land away from its inhabitants and give it to Abram and his seed. Seen from the vantage of the divine, it was supremely right. God alone is the actual Owner of the earth and its treasures, and He alone has the disposal of any part of it. The nations of Canaan not only had no title to the land they held, but they did not recognize the true Owner. They brought Him nothing for its use. Superficially again, Abram had even less claim on the land, for he was a stranger and made no improvements. The only rights he had were divine, and looked forward to the future, when Israel would bring a tenth of its produce to support His worship, and it would become a place where Yahweh would dwell and glorify His name. Neither Abram nor the nations in the land could make any *material* return for the use of the land, for this was also Yahweh's, and He has no need of anything that

they had. Abram alone paid the proper price when be built an altar and offered a sacrifice. *Worship, thanksgiving and praise,* the outflow of a grateful heart, these are the precious gems which God can use to adorn His diadem, and they are a rich rental for the promised land.

THE UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF LOT

Let us consider Abram's dealings with his nephew. Lot was not the possessor of the promises, and he had no rights in the land of Canaan, either human or divine (Gen.12:7). As there was not room for the flocks of both of them, he should rightfully have withdrawn. Abram would have been within his rights if he had driven him out. When strife arose between their herdsmen, Abram was in line with God in his desire for peace, for God will eventually reconcile all to Himself. As the younger, Lot ought to have been subject to Abram, for that is the proper place of humanity in the consummation. In the East there is a constant reminder of this in the subjection of the younger to the elder. Of course, those who are older have had more experience, and are more fitted to rule, but that is not the basic fact. All, in their youth, should learn to realize the place which properly belongs to the creature, the necessary complement of the place of the Deity. But Lot does not volunteer to take this place. He probably thinks he has rights as well as Abram.

Abram, strange to say, although it does not belong to him, takes the place of subjection! He not only refuses to make good his rightful claim to the whole land, as promised him by God, and his rights as the elder, but gives Lot his choice. He took what was left. This Lot should never have allowed. Abram had taken *God's* choice for him, and was, acting along the line that leads directly to the consummation. This is what counts as righteous with God. This is divine righteousness. Abram had it, not because

he made a just division of the land between himself and Lot, but because he anticipated, by faith, the end that God has in view. On the other hand, Lot, though righteous among men, did not act according to faith righteousness, so he takes advantage of Abram, and appropriates the best part of God's gift for himself. His choice was soulish. He looked for physical satisfaction from the rich pastures of the Jordan valley. But when he came to dwell in Sodom, his soul was tormented by the lawlessness of his surroundings. Later, he lost all, and Abram had to come to his rescue. He was not in God's will, but served as a foil for God's dealings with Abram. His descendants became foes of the chosen people.

THE KINGS' INSUBJECTION

Abram's contact with the warfare of that day gives a further insight into his faith righteousness and the wrongdoing of the times. Of some of the kings, engaged in this conflict, we know that they had no right even to live, for later they were destroyed by God Himself. The rest of them were probably not so very much better. What real right did they have to the territory they claimed as their own? Did they pay Yahweh for the use of it? Did they give Him a tithe of what it produced? Did they thank and praise Him for it? And now some of them band together and subjugate the peoples about them and demand tribute, just as if they were God, the true Owner of the neighboring lands as well as their own. Had they been subject to God and acknowledged His rights, no such wrongs could have been perpetrated.

Abram, with his vast wealth, must have been a tempting object of plunder, but God kept the marauders away from him, although he was very close to their line of march. This was because he had set his heart on God, not on His gifts. Lot, on the contrary, was after wealth. His heart was

occupied with the lush land and the cattle and the goods, which he really owed to the God of Abram. He had no right to them, so they are taken from him, and he himself is carried captive together with all that is his. Abram could have said that it served him right. That would have been quite just from the human standpoint. In a land given to Abraham he had made trouble, and then actually took what he considered the choicest part of it for himself. He had treated Abram most unjustly. Abram was under no obligation, from the standpoint of human righteousness, to go to his aid, especially when he had to do it at the risk of his own riches and even of his life.

GOD AWARDS THE FOE TO ABRAM

The Authorized Version gives this episode a far more sanguinary coloring than the Hebrew warrants. It speaks of *arming* his *trained* servants, as if Abram had surrounded himself with a fighting force in order to be able to defend the land which Yahweh had given him. And then it speaks of the *slaughter* of the kings, as if there had been a bloody carnage, in which all the kings were slain. This would be quite out of line with faith. As Melchizedek said, the *Supreme* had *awarded* the foe into his hand. It was not due to his superior military might.

Abram's small band of three hundred and eighteen were *dedicated* to him, not *trained* to bear arms. It is not said that he *armed* them. The Revisers change to *led them forth.* The Hebrew uses the word *empty.* He *emptied* his establishment in order to get so many. We may suppose that the women looked after things during their absence. He *smote* the enemy and *pursued* them to the neighborhood of Damascus. He routed them by a surprise night attack, so that they fled, and left their prisoners and booty behind. It was God's doing, not Abram's, and he freely acknowledged it.

BEING BLESSED AND A BLESSING

In the righteousness of faith there is more than mere *possessing.* There is *blessing.* Abram was given a much greater gift than the land. He and his seed were to be *blessed* in it, and, far more than this, he was to be a blessing *to all the families of the earth.* Instead of resenting Lot's mercenary conduct and refusing to help him in his distress, he takes hold of God's promise by faith and rescues his relative and neighbors from their foes. He is confident that God will prosper him in it, for His word must be fulfilled. His land and his life are safe in Yahweh's keeping. As he has no son, he cannot die until provision has been made for the innumerable progeny which Yahweh promised. His life was insured by the Life Giver Himself. Later, the nation of Israel lost sight of this great truth. They wanted blessing for themselves, but were little concerned about the blessing of others. They implored for deliverance when in distress, but made no move to insure the well being of other nations when they needed help. In the future their blessing will rest largely on their ability to bring peace and plenty to the other nations of the earth.

What a contrast between Abram and the kings! They had no title to their own land, yet seek to extend their unjust holdings by force of arms. He had a perfect title to all that Yahweh had given him, yet he yields to Lot when he calmly appropriates the best part that he could find. They not only robbed God of His rights, but this led to much loss and harm and woe to their fellows and probably cost them many lives besides. So it must always be. Those who do not glorify and thank the Deity as God must suffer the righteous retribution of this fundamental error by being barred from blessing themselves, and of being a blessing to others. Abram's faith led him to give God His place, and this led to restoration and blessing.

A. E. Knoch

FAITH IN THE SUPREME

AT this juncture (Gen.14:18) a most remarkable character is injected, whose name and title are most suggestive, in view of our present investigation of faith righteousness. In Hebrew his name, Melchizedek, means *king of righteousness,* or *righteous king,* and his title is *king of peace* (or *king of Salem*). He is priest of El Supreme (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. He 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 El Supreme dedicates a tenth of it to His worship.

It is worthy of note that the august title, *El Supreme,* 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 unrighteous when it does not recognize the rights of the Supreme Deity.

A REALIZATION OF GOD'S DEITY

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 Ishmaels 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,* or *supreme.* 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 others. 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.

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 for this purpose. The field, the trees and the cave were all "made sure" 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).

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 of 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. He 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 suf-

fer. 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 Blesser 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 worshiping 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, El Supreme, received His due in thanksgiving 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 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. 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 El Supreme 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 (Gen.14:21). 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!

THE GROUND OF FAITH

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.' And He promised him: 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).

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 EXCEEDINGLY VAST 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.

Consequently, after these things we read that Yahweh engages Himself to be the reward of Abraham, his exceedingly increased hire! (Gen.15:1) 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 hire*! 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.

RECKONED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Much has been said and written concerning the righteousness which became Abram's. It 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 *un*righteousness on the part of God.

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

THE WALK OF ABRAHAM

WALK is the keynote of the salvation of the Circumcision (Gen.17:1,2). This is in crass contrast to the salvation of the Uncircumcision, which had been revealed to Abram at first (Gen. 15:6). There it was FAITH. But Abram had failed to believe as fully as he should have done. He still had confidence in the flesh. *This must be destroyed.* Therefore it is that Yahweh said to him, "*Walk* before Me, and become flawless." To me this now seems an impossible, a dreadful load. But to Abraham and to most of the saints, it is just such a task as they like, and for which they feel quite competent. The whole evangel of the Circumcision is based upon their fearful ignorance of themselves and their overweening confidence in their ability to please God to perfection. Even in my spiritual infancy I could not see why God should demand *flawlessness* of Abram. No one could fulfill that! Certainly Abra*ha*m did not! Why, then, demand the impossible? I did not see then that God did not intend that Abraham should succeed. He intended that he should fail, and thus lose the confidence he still had in his flesh, and place it in the Deity.

This is the essential distinction between the two evangels. God *wants us* to trust *Him* unreservedly and implicitly. He does *not* want *us* to trust in *ourselves. He* does not expect perfection in the keeping of a covenant, or a law, for *that* would lead to the very reverse of His intention. Only their *failure* will teach them their utter lack and His all-sufficiency. Of course He could not reveal this intention of His to them, or the demonstration would have been fruitless. This not only explains the failures of Abra*ha*m and the patriarchs, but the threefold apostasy of the nation,

as seen in the Hebrew Scriptures (e.g., Isa.6), in the "gospels," and in the book of Acts. They walked before Him very *im*perfectly indeed! Yet, in so doing, they have manifested to the world that the creature is impotent and sinful and offensive apart from the Creator. Man needs God, not only to create him, but to save him and to keep him. When this has been learned by bitter experience, men will be ready to recognize God as their All, and thus attain the goal of the eons.

The friend of God had a taste of both of these salvations, for he was justified by *faith* (Gen.15:5; Rom.4; Gal.3) and also by *works* (Gen.17:1; James 2:21-24). One was *before* he was circumcised, and apart from it. The other was *sealed* by circumcision. In the first, Abram did nothing but *believe God,* and righteousness was reckoned to him unconditionally, apart from works. In the second he is exhorted to *walk before God,* and be flawless, so that there should be a *covenant* between him and God, to make him a father of many nations. Let us not confuse the latter phrase with his faith-fatherhood of many believers *among the nations.* Here he is not the father of the nations as such, but only of a few individuals who have faith, chosen out of the nations.

ABRAM AND ABRAHAM

The name *Abram* comes from the Hebrew stems, *ab* (FATHER) and *rm* (HIGH). *Abraham* (with the *h*) is just the same except that an *e* is inserted *Abrem.* This implies the addition of another stem, making *Ab* (FATHER), *r(m)* (HIGH), and *em* (CLAMOR or throng). One of the *m's* is dropped in combining. Others derive it from *Ab* (FATHER), *rb* (GREAT), and *em* (throng). The difference is not much or vital, for GREAT and HIGH are both used as a faded figure merely to magnify the idea. Abram is the *personal* name, while Abraham unites him with descendants by including the stem THRONG. This corresponds to the two salva-

tions. One is individual, the other *national.* Contrary to the usual idea, we are associated with *Abram,* not *Abraham.* The earlier part of his life, before his circumcision, is associated with the nations. The later enlargement was given in order to connect him with his physical seed.

I well remember listening with rapt attention to a brother who sought to show the difference between Abram and Abra*h*am. His thought was that the letter *h* was inserted in Abrm in order to indicate the addition of the holy spirit! Of course this would not be known to Abraham himself, or Paul, because neither the Hebrew nor the Greek has a letter *h.* The Greek simply doubles the *a, Abraam.* The Hebrew inserts an *e,* which is commonly mistaken for an *h.* As we have seen, it adds the element THRONG to the name. Besides, the name *Abram* is connected with *faith* and *righteousness. It* is the *spiritual* name, rather than Abra*h*am, which is not used until *walk,* with *physical* and *national* blessing, is in view. In *Un*circumcision it is Abram. Since this distinction is not observed in the Greek Scriptures, it is very difficult to carry it out, so we use Abraham, as a rule, to denote the man, apart from these distinctions. But in these studies we will try to keep the names separate.

THE ORIGIN OF CIRCUMCISION

It is in *this* light that we must view the rite of circumcision. It is the *sign* of the covenant which characterizes the salvation of the Circumcision. After promising the land to Abra*h*am and his seed, God goes on to confirm it by the covenant of *circumcision* (Gen.17:9-14).

The *significance* of this sign is almost totally overlooked. In it God gives a foreview of the result of the demonstration He is giving. *It signifies the futility of the flesh.* As this small sample of the flesh is snipped off, so would God have us deal with the flesh in its entirety. This sign ought to have opened their eyes to the failure of the flesh,

which has been fully demonstrated since Abraham's day by no other group of the race as thoroughly as by the Circumcision. Let us note in passing that it is not intended for all mankind, but only the throng of nations who have descended from Abraham.

THE FAILURE OF FAITH

Just as Abram's experience from his call to his justification by faith is the key to the evangel of the Uncircumcision and righteousness by faith; so his further experience up to the time he received the rite of circumcision prepares us to understand the evangel of the Circumcision and righteousness by works. It is based on *the failure of the faith* and *the activity of the flesh.* Instead of waiting for Isaac, the promised son by the freewoman Sarai, he generates Ishmael by Hagar, the slave. This brings bondage, in which we find *walk,* and a *covenant,* and the *sign* of circumcision without in place of faith within (Gen.16, 17).

The actual acts of Abram which preceded his justification by faith were all righteous when reviewed in the light of God's rights and purpose. His faith in God's declarations had kept him from all wrong. But his walk which led up to his circumcision was wrong, because it was not founded on faith, but on the flesh. And, indeed, circumcision is a sign of this, for why should the flesh be cut off if it is righteous? Sarai acknowledges that she has done wrong, (Gen.16:5), and that this wrong comes upon Abram. He was wrong in that he hearkened to her advice. The wrong of it is much clearer when we consider how much evil it brought upon Abraham and his descendants. It brought immediate suffering on Sarai and Hagar.

THE REAL CIRCUMCISION

We are the *real,* the *genuine* Circumcision, because we offer divine service to God *in spirit,* and glory in *Christ*

Jesus and have *no confidence in flesh.* The so-called Circumcision are only a *Maim*cision, for they merely mutilate the flesh, and lack the faith of which circumcision is simply the sign (Phil.3:2-5). They worship God in *flesh,* and glory in their *flesh* in direct contradiction to the import of this sign, which consists in the *removal,* the *cutting away* of a part of the flesh as a token of the stripping off of the *whole.* Let us be clear concerning this. We are not the *literal* Circumcision. We are the *figurative* Circumcision, the literal *Un*circumcision. The fact is that literal circumcision is itself only a sign, an indication, a token, an earnest, a label, in which a small part of the flesh is literally removed to signalize its utter failure and bankruptcy in its entirety. We realize and *enjoy* that which it merely *indicates.* We are the genuine *Circumcision,* even though our flesh is not mutilated as theirs is.

This is the actual, ultimate truth as to circumcision, and should form the *basis* of our study. We must remember, however, that all revelation previous to this is not written from this standpoint, but in an enigma, and is seen distorted, as in a mirror (1 Cor.13:12). *Yet even in that earlier unfolding we will find hints and intimations which would have led a spiritually minded saint into the truth.* This is clearly suggested before it was given to Abraham, for he was ninety-nine years old and his flesh was dead, so far as fulfilling the promise of God as to the seed was concerned. Abraham knew this, and said as much to God. He wanted to substitute other flesh, as his heir, but God wished to show that *all was dependent on Him, and not on flesh at all.* So He vivified, invigorated Abraham, gave him life after death, and then insisted on a sign of this, to keep it in continual remembrance, by cutting off a part of the flesh.

If a descendant of Abraham were spiritually minded, he would have deduced thus: I am supposed to be the literal seed of Abraham, but, in reality, I am not, for Abram had

no issue, except Ishmael, until he was physically incapable of propagation. At ninety-nine years he could not have further descendants, and he knew it and acknowledged it. His flesh was beyond hope. I am really a descendant of his faith and of God's vivifying power. This is what my circumcision signifies. Otherwise I would be an Ishmaelite, a product of Abram's unbelieving flesh and a slave girl, doomed to servitude and humiliation.

—But, alas, few in Israel were humble enough to feel the futility of the flesh.

All that we have that is of any value is *in Christ,* not in ourselves. Our circumcision also is in Him. Was His circumcision on the eighth day reckoned to us? By no means. That was made by hands, and consisted in cutting off a very small portion of the flesh. His real circumcision came at the cross, when He was cut off from the land of the living, and His flesh as a whole was stripped off and laid in the tomb. In Him, at that time, we stripped off the body of flesh (Col.2:11). This brings us into the place denoted by circumcision. We possess the spiritual reality of which the physical rite was merely the symbol. Having the thing itself we do not need the label. The label on an empty bottle is of no value. The contents are just as valuable without the label as with it, especially when its qualities are evident by their virtue and potency.

THE SIGN AND SEAL

It is of great help to impress upon our hearts, that circumcision is a *sign* and a *seal* (Rom.4:9-12). Then we will look beyond for that which it *signifies* and that which it *secures.* When we come to consider the case of Abraham, let us note that he had God's righteousness, by faith, long before he was circumcised; the rite did not add to either his faith or his own righteousness. It merely labeled him as one who possessed these things. Abram was secretly *reck-*

oned righteous in uncircumcision; but he was openly *recognized* as righteous by the sign and seal of circumcision. The reckoning was by *God* and was *immanent.* The *recognition* was for *men* and was *superficial.*

Our Lord acknowledged that the Jews were Abraham's seed in a physical sense; so also were the Ishmaelites and Esau's descendants. But they claimed Abraham as their father in a much deeper sense than that. He would not acknowledge that they were Abraham's children. That was presumption on their part. God, said He, could rouse such children out of the very stones, which they resembled, for they were hard hearted and lifeless clods of earth (Matt.3:9, Luke 3:8). They were so unlike Abraham in their *conduct* that they had no right to claim him as their ancestor. They were seeking to kill their own Messiah. Imagine Abram doing this! By their works they proved themselves to be descendants of the Adversary, not of Abram. So our Lord said to them, "If you are children of Abraham, did you ever do the *works* of Abraham?" (John 8:31-47). They had the circumcision on the eighth day, but they not only lacked the *faith* of which it was the sign and seal, but also the works which perfected it (James 2:22). Abraham offered Isaac by *faith*; they crucified Christ by *unbelief.*

I often think of this in connection with a story told by Dr. Weizmann, the Zionist leader, at a Jewish rally that I attended in Los Angeles. It concerned a Russian Jew who sought to escape from that country, who had a false passport. His name was Abraham, but his passport was in some other name, which was thoroughly drilled into him, as he could not read. But when he came to the border he was too excited to remember anything. They asked him his name, and he answered in great agitation: "I don't know! I forget! But I do know that it is not Abraham!" How true that was of all the Jews even Dr. Weizmann did not know. Whatever their name may be, they are not the children of

the friend of God, who trusted Him, and not their own arm. The Jews present (I was the only Gentile, so far as I know) were like that poor fellow. They collected money to *buy* Palestine, the land that was *given* to Abram and his seed! They were not even Jacob. He would not pay out good money to buy his own land!

As a result, Abraham became the father of two distinct classes, one of which the apostle associates with the reckoning of faith righteousness in *un*circumcision (to which the saints of the nations today belong) and the father of the Circumcision, but not those who merely have the outward sign and seal, but to those who *observe* the fundamentals of the *faith* in the footprints of Abram before he was circumcised. This distinction is vital, if we wish to understand the difference between the evangel of the Circumcision and that of the Uncircumcision. As the apostle explains fully elsewhere, Abram was not the father of those of the Circumcision who did not follow in his steps (Rom. 2:25-3:1). The Uncircumcision know him as their father on the ground of *faith alone.* The Circumcision may claim him only when they have the faith, the sign, *and the walk.*

When I first went to Denmark, the saints there were much disturbed by some teaching that had reached them, that Romans was "Jewish" because it brought in Abraham. As soon as I pointed out that it referred to His faith *before* he was circumcised the whole matter was clear, and they no longer repudiated Romans and other epistles of Paul on such dubious grounds. Abraham *before* he was circumcised was certainly not one of the Circumcision. The faith that he then had was the ground of blessing which made him the father of the Uncircumcision who believe, apart from works. He was certainly not a Jew, a descendant of his great grandson, Judah, or of his grandson Jacob, who, later, were all called "Jews," when they associated with the descendants of Judah as worshipers of Yahweh.

As circumcision is only an outward sign, its benefits are limited to those who have the corresponding inward reality. Those who walk flawlessly before God will be benefitted, but those who do not keep His law are practically uncircumcised. They are like an empty jar with a label. The label only misleads if the contents are gone. Another jar containing that which the label indicates, even if it has no label, is the real thing. Not only are the Uncircumcision who *believe* the real Circumcision (Phil.3:2,3), but the Jew who is circumcised in *heart,* in *spirit* not literally in the flesh is the genuine Circumcision. Nevertheless the outward sign entitled them to benefits not to be despised, the chief of which was that they became the repositories of God's revelation (Rom.3:2).

THE OBLIGATION OF CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision lays an obligation on all who have it far beyond their capacity to pay. It is like a label guaranteeing that the whole law has been observed. Anyone who uses it thereby advertises his ability to get along without Christ and His sacrifice. Circumcision is the real falling "from" grace. It is a fearful load to take upon ourselves, when God has not laid it upon us. No one can live up to this label. It must inevitably lead to the curse that rests upon all who fail to fulfill the least item of God's law. So blind were the Jewish "believers" in Paul's day that they insisted that circumcision was necessary for the nations for their salvation! Rather it clinched their condemnation.

The needlessness of circumcision for the nations is repeatedly emphasized by Paul in his epistles. It is so unimportant that it is not even worth the trouble to get rid of it. Each one is to remain as he was when God called him, either circumcised or uncircumcised. We ignore external nonessential labels and recognize only internal essential realities! For the Circumcision it is a precept of God to be kept. For

us circumcision is nothing (1 Cor.7:17-20). In Christ Jesus neither circumcision is availing anything nor uncircumcision, but faith, operating through love (Gal.5:6). In Him there is a new creation (Gal.6:15). It was the self righteous Pharisees who opposed Paul and insisted on circumcision and law keeping (Acts 15:5; 21:21). Not having *God's* righteousness, they sought to make one of their *own,* and managed to make the opposite.

The question of circumcision for the Uncircumcision was the cause of much grief and conflict during the early ministry of the apostle Paul due to the fact that circumcision was the hallmark of Yahweh's people. When Paul returned to Antioch after his first missionary journey, the Jews, especially some from Judea, opposed him violently because he had not made proselytes nor had them circumcised nor put them under the law. The commotion became so severe that the matter was referred to the apostles in Jerusalem. Peter seems to have been the only one among the Circumcision who had any sympathy with Paul's position. Even he would not have understood if he had not been prepared by means of the vision which he saw at Joppa, and had not seen God's hand in dealing with Cornelius (Acts 10:34).

Paul in his epistles, tells us far more about circumcision than any other inspired writer, even though he is the apostle of the *Un*circumcision. This is due to the fact that the true intent of the rite was not understood, and that religious unbelievers still clung to their own flesh and its works. Once we see the great contrast between Abram and Abraham, between faith and works, between God's righteousness and man's, between Paul's evangel and Peter's, our hearts will be filled with exultation that we did not receive a probationary pardon which depends upon our deeds, but were justified by grace apart from works dependent entirely upon faith in God. We are weak and wanting. He is the All-Sufficient!

A. E. Knoch

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, SECOND QUARTER 2012
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED THREE

EDITORIAL

CHRIST DIED. But did He have to die? Or rather, *Why* did He have to die? And, getting even more to the point, What does it mean that He *died*?

If we do not have some understanding of what death is, literally and actually, we will not be able to appreciate fully the absolute necessity of Christ's death, and its vital importance to us and to all mankind. Nor will we be able to grasp the full value of resurrection and the superiority and grandeur of the newness of life which is ahead for us (and indeed for all) in vivification (Rom.6:4-7; 1 Cor.15:22-28).

At the end of his article entitled, "Figures of Death," first published in 1914, A. E. Knoch, added the following comments: "Death is not only described by means of figures, but it, in turn, is used, in several instances, as a figure of oblivion. An important example is its use to describe the relationship believers sustain to Sin (Rom.6:5-11). We were planted together in the likeness of Christ's death. He died to Sin once and for all. Thus we are to reckon ourselves to be dead to Sin . . . . If death is life in another sphere, then we are to live to Sin in a different way from formerly. If death is oblivion then we are to be living just as though we had really died and Sin no longer had any claims on us. This figurative use of death is a most powerful proof of an unconscious death state."[1]

I would add to this that in Christ's death, once and for all, there was not only oblivion, but the elimination of His own existence as the Sin Offering, the One Who faced

1. *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.6, p.81.

and endured the death of the cross. When He was roused from among the dead, Christ was no longer dying (see the article on Romans 6:2-11 in this issue). So much of the immense and vital value of the cross of Christ is covered up by the traditional teaching concerning death. It is not in any way a state of life. In the death of Christ, death and sin were put to death. This will ultimately be realized in the vivification of all.

Yet many passages of Scripture as they are translated or as inferences are drawn from them seem to support the idea that there is life in death. It seems timely, therefore, to reprint here the studies entitled, "Untenable Texts" (including that on "The Rich Man and Lazarus") which were included in Brother Knoch's series, *The Secret of the Resurrection.*

May they be helpful toward growth in appreciation for the evangel of God concerning His Son. It is not our death that brings us into life, but God's achievement in and through the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Death is an enemy, and the last one to be abolished (1 Cor.15:26). We see its operation all around us, and we feel its effects within. We know its ongoing reign of horror. Yet, because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the experience of death has this great value, that it teaches, as nothing else could do, the glory and goodness of life as it shall be. Death is the end of all that is wrong, but it is not the end of us. For we shall be of the resurrection, walking in newness of life, and living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Now, whenever, this corruptible should be putting on incorruption, and this mortal should be putting on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, Swallowed up was Death by Victory! (1 Cor. 15:22,54). D.H.H.

HE DIED, HE DIED—
HE IS LIVING, HE IS LIVING

THE EVANGEL of God concerning His Son is a message of death and life. We see this first in Romans 1:4 where our Lord is introduced as being "designated Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the **resurrection of the dead.**" Here we see the grand culmination of Christ's death and resurrection, as it applies to humanity, all of whom are deserving of **death** (Rom.1:32).

Thus, at the very start, we know where the evangel is taking us. It goes from death to life, addressing humanity at its most helpless level (the level of absolute helplessness), and bringing it life of highest value because of acquaintance with that helplessness.

Yet in considering what the evangel means to us, we must never forget that it centers on Jesus Christ, our Lord. God "spares not His own Son, but **gives Him up** for us all" (Rom.8:32). The basis of this consummation of life out of death is the death and rousing of Jesus Christ Himself out from among the dead. We who believe place our faith on God "Who **rouses** Jesus our Lord from among the **dead,** Who was **given up** because of our offenses, and was **roused** because of our justifying" (Rom.4:24,25).

GOD'S WELL-MESSAGE

This evangel is explicitly proclaimed in Romans 5. It is a message of righteousness, peace and love. In believing this message we are positioned before God in grace and may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God (*cf* Rom. 5:1,2). Here is what we believe:

For Christ, while we are still infirm, still in accord with the era, for the sake of the irreverent, **died** *. . . . God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ* **died** *for our sakes. Much rather, then, being now justified in His* **blood,** *we shall be saved from indignation through Him.*

For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the **death** *of His Son, much rather, being conciliated, we shall be saved in His* **life**. (Rom.5:6-10)

We are sinners because of the one offense of Adam which brought the operation of death into all his posterity. Yet through the righteous deed of Christ in dying for our sakes, the multitudinous race shall be brought into righteousness and a life otherwise unknowable:

. . . 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)

For if, by the offense of the one, **death** *reigns through the one, much rather, those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness shall be reigning in* **life** *through the One, Jesus Christ.*

Consequently, then, as it was through one offense for all mankind for **condemnation,** *thus also it is through one just [act] 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.5:17-19)

A PSALM OF PAUL

The apostle is addressing the believer. We are to know that what Christ has done for us is a special application in grace of what He has done for all. Grace has already been set over us as a power, through the righteousness of God operating and manifested through Christ Jesus, for

life eonian (Rom.5:21). Thus we come to Romans 6:2-11 where the evangel as it speaks of death and life in relation to the believer is expressed by ten couplets of paralleled lines in a psalm-like form:

1. *We who* **died** *to sin,*
   How shall we still be **living** *in it?*
2. *Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into*
   Christ Jesus are baptized into His **death?**
   We, then, were entombed together with Him
   through baptism into **death,**
3. *That, even as Christ was* **roused** *from among the* **dead**
   through the glory of the Father,
   Thus we also should be walking in newness of **life.**
4. *For if we have become planted together in the likeness*
   of His **death,**
   Nevertheless we shall be of the **resurrection** *also,*
5. *Knowing this, that our old humanity was* **crucified**
   together with Him,
   That the body of Sin may be **nullified,**
6. *For us by no means to be still slaving for Sin,*
   For one who **dies** *has been justified from Sin.*
7. *Now if we* **died** *together with Christ,*
   We believe that we shall be **living**
   together with Him also,
8. *Having perceived that Christ, being* **roused**
   from among the **dead** *is no longer* **dying.**
   Death *is lording it over Him no longer,*
9. *For in that He* **died,** *He* **died** *to Sin once for all time,*
   Yet in that He is **living,** *He is* **living** *to God.*
10. *Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be* **dead,**
    indeed, to Sin,
    Yet **living** *to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.*

The language of the declaration and question of the first couplet reappears in the exhortation of the last couplet. Our present living is a matter of reckoning that the evangel of God concerning His Son as it is presented in Romans 6:2-11 (and indeed in Romans 3:21-6:11) is true. Our living is continually affected by our believing of the evangel, by our declaring in faith, and getting to know in faith, and perceiving in faith the grace of God in giving His Son, Who died for our sakes—the grace of God in already identifying us with Christ and His death and entombment, and the grace of God as it will realized and enjoyed when we are resurrected to newness of life in the future. This believing and declaring and getting to know and perceiving with the eyes of our heart is a matter of reckoning. It is a matter of taking account of what the evangel concerning Jesus Christ our Lord says. In this act of believing, this act of reckoning, the power of God is engaged in our day by day living (*cf* Rom.1:16,17).

Thus it is critical for us to be listening to the evangel, to be declaring it, to be mentally, from the heart, recognizing that all its vast goodness and wealth is ours. The old humanity is crucified. We have been justified from Sin. It is not a message telling us what we must do. It is a message centering on what God has done in and through His Son, Who died, and Who was roused from among the dead, and Who is living to God. He died, He died to Sin. He is living, He is living to God. And so also, we died to Sin and shall be living to God.

HOW SHALL WE BE LIVING?

1. *We who* **died** *to sin,*
   How shall we still be **living** *in it?*

There is power in truth and in meditating deeply on words of truth. In view of the truth of the superexceeding

superiority of God's grace over all sin, what shall we be declaring? (Rom.5:20-6:1). What is the truth that will guide us aright for living in a world of sin in which we are sinners? The first step the believer is urged to take, as Paul indicates here, is to declare the evangel which tells us we died to sin. Declaring and believing and perceiving the message of grace is the gateway to worthy living. The evangel that Christ died for our sins contains within it the earnest of the spirit for present living, not in declaring that we must die to sin, but rather that we died to sin.

This is not a statute of law, but the proclamation of grace. It is explained in the next few verses by means of several passive verbs which point to God as the active Doer, through our Lord Jesus Christ: We *are baptized* into the death of Christ Jesus. We *were entombed* together with Him into death. We *have become planted* together in the likeness of Christ's death. Our old humanity *was crucified* together with Him. The body of Sin *[shall] be nullified.* In that the believer has died, such a one *has been justified* from Sin.

We are sinners, but in God's sight, Who is calling that which is not as if it were (Rom.4:17), we are justified. Sin is not reckoned to us (*cf* Rom.4:8). Thus, with regard to our present living, we are reckoning ourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

BAPTIZED AND ENTOMBED

2. *Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus are baptized into His* **death?**
We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into **death,**

In believing the evangel we are believing that we are justified gratuitously in God's grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). It is the work of God through His Son. It is not our work, lest we be boast-

ing in ourselves (Rom.3:27; Eph.2:8,9). While we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes (Rom.5:8). And, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son (Rom.5:10), and thus are those who have *obtained* the conciliation (Rom.5:11).

Consequently, we are not ignorant that when we accepted the evangel in faith something was done to us by God, entirely apart from our physical acts or soulish feelings. "To him who is not working, yet is believing on Him Who is justifying the irreverent, his faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom.4:5). It is "on hearing" the word of truth, the evangel of our salvation, and "on believing also" that we are sealed, in Christ, with the holy spirit of promise, an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured (Eph.1:13,14). Justification and conciliation have been procured, and will be delivered to us. The figure of speech in Ephesians 1 is "sealed," and in Romans 6 it is "baptized." In both cases it is the operation of God by means of His spirit.

It is a great loss that so much of traditional comment on Romans 6:4 takes the baptism referred to here as a physical rite performed by sinners upon sinners. In spirit, God has "dipped" us into the death of Christ. By this means He has put our dead selves away, as the dead body of our Lord was entombed. This did not require an act of physical baptism occurring after we believe, as was practiced by the apostles (though seldom by Paul). It is truly a matter of spiritual grace, apart from works of law and involvement of the flesh. Let us get to know this grace and its powerful and good effect on our present living.

EVEN AS CHRIST

3. *That even as Christ* **was roused** *from among the* **dead**
through the glory of the Father,
Thus we also should be walking in newness of **life.**

Here the passive verb is related to Christ. He was absolutely unable to do anything, but in this position He was able to become a channel through which the glory of His God and Father would be manifested. In death, Christ depended fully on the Father for life. That is what death makes abundantly clear. It is the glory of the Father to bring life out of death, the glory of His power, the glory of His righteousness, the glory of His wisdom, and the glory of His love. This is the assurance of our future walk in newness of life. We shall be roused from among the dead by the Father's operation of power and love through Jesus Christ. And when this occurs we shall be walking in newness of life. Even as it has occurred for Christ, thus also it shall occur for us (except that this is channeled to us by God *through Christ*).

DEATH AND RESURRECTION

4. *For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His* **death,**
Nevertheless we shall be of the **resurrection** *also,*

We look back at what God has done in planting us together in the likeness of Christ's death. And we look ahead to standing up in newness of life in which we will be living to God as Christ is doing. The figure of baptism is changed here to the figure of planting. Paul uses a similar figure in 1 Corinthians 15:35-41 where, speaking of our resurrection bodies, he draws attention to what happens to a seed when it is *sown.* The old kernel dies and a plant with a new body emerges. As with Christ, when we believe and are identified with His death, something is done away with. And as with Christ, when we are resurrected to life, that which was done away with no longer exists. When Christ was roused, His existence as the Sin Offering was left behind, never to be repeated, never to be

needed again. Our existence as sinners will likewise be gone when we are resurrected. This is expressed in 1 Corinthians 15:22 and 53 by the words "vivified" and "immortality."

This evangel of what has happened and will happen, as it is patterned and made possible by the death and resurrection of Christ, has a powerful impact on our present lives as we are believing it. As he does in Colossians 3:16,17, Paul is saying here that we are to let this word of Christ be making its home in us richly, teaching and admonishing ourselves in *psalms,* in hymns, in spiritual songs, singing with *grace in our hearts* to God.

We are not affected by a message which says we must live a new life in order to be of the resurrection. No. We are affected by the message which says that, because of Christ's death and life, we shall be of the resurrection and enjoy a new life; thus may this faithful word work on our present thinking and living.

OUR OLD HUMANITY CRUCIFIED

5. *Knowing this, that our old humanity was* **crucified**
together with Him,
That the body of Sin may be **nullified,**

If we have been planted together with Christ in the likeness of His death, our old humanity has been crucified together with Him. And if our old humanity has been crucified together with Him, the body of Sin in which we presently live shall be nullified, abolished, fully and finally discarded.

The old humanity, being susceptible to corruption, became corrupted by the process of dying, through Adam's disobedience (Rom.5:12-19). This corruption is manifested in our bodies of Sin by means of infirmity and irreverence and unrighteousness. Paul writes of the future change of believers, noting that "The first man was out of the earth,

soilish; the second Man is the Lord out of heaven. Such as the soilish one is, such are those also who are soilish, and such as the Celestial One, such are those also who are celestials. And according as we wear the image of the soilish, we [shall] be wearing the image also of the Celestial" (1 Cor.15:47-49). In the wider viewpoint of the consummation the entire old humanity will be discarded and fully replaced by the new humanity, for in that Christ died for all, all died (2 Cor.5:14).

That this shall be for all, and that it is true already in God's sight for us, is an essential aspect of the righteousness of God, now being manifested through the faith of Jesus Christ (Rom.3:21,22). All that is wrong must be nullified and replaced by all that is right and good to the glory of God. This standard of God's righteousness is made manifest through the faith of Jesus Christ (Rom.3:21,26).

But now Paul speaks to the believer. As for us, each of us may be declaring, with Paul, that "With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God" (Gal.2:20). In this declaration of living faith there is an earnest of the spirit, bringing to us a foretaste, day by day, of our future living, when the fruit of the spirit (Gal.5:22,23) will fully dominate our lives.

JUSTIFIED FROM SIN

6. *For us by no means to be still slaving for Sin,*
   For one who **dies** *has been justified from Sin.*

The evangel tells us that there will be a day in which Sin shall not reign over us, when the body of Sin is absolutely nullified. We will not be slaving under Sin's tyrannical effects of infirmity, irreverence and unrighteousness. It is in view of this future that Paul's entreaties about pre-

senting ourselves to God and obedience to righteousness in the coming paragraphs have their basis and presently exercise their force.

This great expectation of emancipation from slavery to Sin is matched here with the grand assurance that we have been justified from Sin. Whereas Romans 1:18-3:19 led to the conclusion that, by works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight, now in Romans 6:7 we are assured that our identification with the death of Christ has brought us into that very position of justification in God's sight. It does not come by the channel of works of law, but rather by the channel of the death and resurrection of Christ and our death together with Him and expectation of life in which we will be living as He is living.

WE ARE BELIEVING

7. *Now if we* **died** *together with Christ,*
We believe that we shall be **living**
together with Him also,

Here is faith for our walk at its most essential level. We believe with respect to our past that we died together with Christ. We believe with respect to our future that we shall be living together with Him also. Indeed, as the exact form of the Greek verb expresses it, we who died together with Christ by means of God's grace, *are believing* that we shall be living together with Christ. Faith is an ongoing activity.

Our present is shaped continually by faith. We have no empirical proof that what the evangel says has happened and shall happen is so. From a human standpoint the faith that we can contribute nothing to the deliverance which Christ has already gained invites the suffering of scorn and rejection by others. Yet to us "it is graciously granted, for Christ's sake [for the honor of His Name], not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also" (Phil.1:29). Therefore, the believer keeps on believ-

ing that Christ crucified is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor.1:23,24).

NO LONGER DYING

8. *Having perceived that Christ, being* **roused** *from among the* **dead** *is no longer* **dying.** **Death** *is lording it over Him no longer,*

Christ is the One gazed upon by our eyes of faith. He is the One we perceive in coming to know what has happened to us in spirit and what is ahead for us. His complete deliverance from death is what ours shall be. We are deeply thankful for this death for what it has eliminated from our existence. In being the death of death, it is the final death which will never occur again. But this means nothing without Christ being roused from among the dead in a state in which there is no more dying and no more reign of death. As He was freed from death's bonds, so shall all mankind be freed when vivified in Christ (1 Cor.15:22).

Concerning Christ, George L. Rogers wrote, "Death once mastered Him completely. He really died . . . . The severity of the sentence was not commuted in favor of the Person Who endured it; He was not treated as the Son of God, but as sin itself. Death's mastery could be broken only when justice had no further claim of any kind. Death had the same mastery over Him that Sin had over the race. He took the doom due, not to individual men, but to a whole humanity, which was destruction, that is, death. Our old humanity is not to be tormented, but abolished; it shall die. Death mastered Him only because it had first mastered us, and unless some one carried away the divine condemnation, no deliverance from the reign of death was possible."[1]

1. *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.23, p.371.

HE DIED TO SIN

9. *For in that He* **died,** *He* **died** *to Sin once for all time*
Yet in that He is **living,** *He is* **living** *to God.*

Christ died. And in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time. And in that He died to Sin once for all time, He died for our sake, we who are sinners under the reign of death, that we too might die to the sway of this tyrant and its effects, and thus be justified from Sin and be living to God.

Christ died to what He had been made to be, the Sin Offering, the Antitype of all the sin offerings of old (2 Cor. 5:21). What He had been made to be was exterminated. That has no longer any rule over Him.

Yet as for us, through the one man, Adam, we have been made to be sinners, who are dying and will die (*cf* Rom. 5:12-14), absolutely helpless apart from the operation of God, the Father, through His Son, through His death to Sin, and His rousing from among the dead, in which He is no longer dying, and death is lording over Him no longer.

Throughout this section of Romans, our attention is called to the death of Christ, the very first declaration of the evangel as it is set before is in 1 Corinthians 15:3,4. *Christ died for our sins.*

Even though Paul speaks now in Romans 6:10 of Christ's death as it relates to Himself, in its context this is clearly related to the believer (and indeed, with Romans 5:12-19 in view, to all mankind as sinners). It is Christ's death to sin that establishes the righteous and loving process which leads to the ideal and glorious consummation when we shall be living to God. Yet already, as we are believing this evangel it works in us in accord with its spirit of grace.

Paul could have written simply that Christ died to Sin once and for all time. But he repeats the words "He died." This gives these words special emphasis. To say that the

Anointed One of God died is shocking enough. But to repeat it is calculated to make us stare and stagger and then to focus and seek to comprehend. This is serious. This is momentous. This is big.

And then Paul adds that this happened only once. It will never happen again. What it was meant to do was done. The one-time event was successful, and its happy results are sure and certain.

BUT DID CHRIST DIE?

It is uncanny that so many who testify that Christ died for their sins claim He was still alive while He was dead. The Adversary is very clever. As he attempted to do with our Lord in the wilderness (*cf* Matt.4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13), he has used words of Scripture to deceive even the chosen.[2] The result is that the value of Christ's death is only dimly perceived. When Christ died, He was no longer living, just as being roused from among the dead, He is no longer dying. He was among the dead. He was as they were and still are. But in this, Christ as the Sin Offering and corrupted humanity were done away with.

CHRIST IS LIVING

In being roused from among the dead, Christ is living ("He is living—He is living"), but not simply being alive once again. He is living to God!

But was He not always living to God, from before the world came into being, enjoying glory with His Father (*cf* John 17:5), and still doing so until He emptied Himself, yet truly even throughout His time in the form of a slave and likeness of humanity remaining obedient in all ways to His God and Father (Phil.2:6-8)? Yes indeed! But now He is One Who "has learned obedience from that which He

2. *cf* the articles discussing "Untenable Texts" in this issue.

suffered" (Heb.5:8), and Who has tasted death (Heb.2:9). So it is that here in the context of Romans 6:10, we perceive that Christ is living to God, *having died and having been roused from among the dead!* He is living to God as no other has (yet) ever done.

In this way Christ is the Firstfruit of vivification, but we shall follow (1 Cor.15:22,23). We shall be living together with Christ (Rom.6:8), but indeed we shall be living as He is living, living to God as those who know what death is and who will know with full realization the depths of the glory of God's provision of life in all its power and purity, in righteousness and peace and love.

Christ died. This is past tense. It was done once, and will not be repeated. Christ is living. This is present tense, action going on through time, but action that is shaped and defined by that which was done once for all time. So also, because of Christ's death and resurrection, it shall be for us.

THUS YOU ALSO

10. *Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be* **dead,**
indeed, to Sin,
Yet **living** *to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.*

We have heard a message of incalculable grace rising from the death and life of Jesus Christ, already granted in spirit to us who are believing and certain of future realization. What has been done and what shall be are as certain to be realized in experience by us as they are already by Christ. God has said this is true. We are reckoning it is true. This is an aspect of believing. It will come before us in the following verses, expressed by such verbs as "presenting" and "obeying" (putting our hearing under what God has said to us).

Now thanks be to God!

D.H.H.

UNTENABLE TEXTS

PERHAPS THE SUREST way of obtaining a satisfactory grasp of the relative weight of the two positions as to the "intermediate state" is to consider the character of the evidence adduced. On one hand we have plain statements of truth and fact. In dealing directly with the subject, the Scriptures inform us that death is a sleep, devoid of knowledge; that resurrection is an awakening from this condition. This is illustrated by examples. On the other hand we are not given a single positive statement, but all is inferred from passages which are obscure.

The book of Ecclesiastes makes a distinct point of the conditions of life and of death. The state of mankind during death is vital to its argument. "All that your hand finds to do, do with your vigor, *for* there is no doing, or devising or knowledge or wisdom in the unseen, where you are going" (Ecc.9:10). The death state is here described in unequivocal terms, and is made an incentive for earnest living. This is the testimony of David, too, when he says concerning a son of humanity: "His spirit shall go forth, and he shall return to his ground; *in that day his reflections perish.*" (Psa.146:4).

Yet it is claimed that the contrary view that death involves some kind of life is given support by a number of other passages of Scripture. In the following pages the major texts so used are examined in light of their contexts and sound translation principles. In each case the text used is found to be untenable in support of the claim of consciousness in death.

"TO DEPART AND BE WITH CHRIST"

sunechomai de ek tōn duo tên epithumian
I-AM-beING-pressED YET OUT OF-THE TWO THE ON-FEELing

echōn eis to analusai kai sun christō
HAVING INTO THE TO-UP-LOOSE AND TOGETHER tO-ANOINTED

einai pollō gar mallon kreisson
TO-BE much for RATHER better

> Yet I am being pressed out of the two, having a yearning for the solution and to be together with Christ, for it, rather, is much better (Phil.1:23).

Perhaps no passage presents greater difficulties than where the apostle is supposed to be in "a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ . . ." (Phil.1:23, AV). And perhaps no passage presents the translators in a greater strait than this one. A glance at the Greek or the accompanying sublinear will show that the word which they rendered "betwixt" is really OUT. The evidence for this is overwhelming, for these very translators have made it so one hundred and sixty-five times. Besides this, they render it *of* with this significance three hundred and sixty-eight times, and *from* one hundred and eighty-one times. Only once are they driven to use *betwixt.* It is easy to see how they would be compelled, because of English idiom, to vary *out* to *from* or *of,* for these all have the same meaning and differ merely in usage. But if a thing is *betwixt* two others that is quite the opposite of being *out* of them. To show this difference more clearly, let us render a passage or two with "betwixt" and see what we get. We have already spoken of the resurrection *out from among* the dead and shall have occasion to enlarge upon this in the future. How silly this would sound if we render it "the resurrection *betwixt* the dead!" How dangerous it would be if Colossians 1:13 read, "Who hath delivered us *betwixt* the power of darkness!" How could we be "absent *betwixt*

the body" (2 Cor.5:8)? We may rest assured, then, that the apostle is not *betwixt* two things but out of them. The word rendered "I am in a strait" means to *press together,* and could be rendered "oppress" when used of sickness (See Matt.4:24; Luke 4:38; Acts 28:8). It is graphically used when the multitudes "thronged" Jesus (Luke 8:45). The word *strait,* having the idea of *confine* does not seem to give us the proper thought when He speaks of His ministry being *straitened* (Luke 12:50). Rather He was pressed together, constrained. Just so Paul was constrained by the love of Christ (2 Cor.5:14). The love that pressed upon the apostle Paul *broadened,* rather than straitened or narrowed him.

From this we see that in Philippians Paul was in no strait at all. He was being *pressed* out of the two (either living or dying) by a *third* thing—the glorious expectation of the return of his beloved Lord.

That the translators knew nothing of this blessed hope seems almost incredible, yet such was the case. It was nothing short of heresy. They knew of nothing *very* far better than living or dying. They could not see how death was *very* far better than life, so they simply left the word out altogether. Actually, the rendering "very" is still not ideal, for the thought of the Greek is not simply one of degree but of preference. We can say that Paul would much *rather* have the coming of Christ than either life or death, but we cannot say, in English at least, that it is "much *rather* better." The idiom of our language forces us to compromise and render, "for (it), rather, (is) much better." The sublinear, being consistent and unhampered by English idiom, will give us the true thought. There was really not much choice between life and death for one like the apostle, for whatever either might hold for Christ, they were both totally eclipsed by the expectation of serving Him in His very presence. For Paul to live was *Christ.* For him to die

would also be gain—for *Christ.* That this gain was to be for Christ rather than himself is also implied by what he had just written: "as always, now also, *Christ shall be magnified* in my body, whether through life *or through death* (v.20). His death as a martyr would further the effect his imprisonment had had; it would glorify Christ and encourage the saints. But such service cannot be compared with the service which we shall be able to render when we are in His ineffable presence. Not life for us—nor death—but the "solution," the presence of Christ! This is what "pressed" him out of the two—life or death. This is indeed "rather much better!"

The word here translated "depart" by the AV, is, in its only other verbal occurrence, rendered by "return" (Luke 12:36). Is there any reason for such opposites? Or, is it rather that the translators had not seen the real import of the word? When we turn to the only occurrence of the noun (2 Tim.4:6), we find it is also rendered "departure," but this is hardly satisfactory, for it must explain the idea of being "ready to be offered." Let us take a closer look at this word and its family to find its literal basis; then we will evaluate this meaning, to see if it agrees with the usage of the word.

The word is a compound of the prefix *ana-,* UP or *back,* and *luō,* LOOSE. We recognize this compound in our word *analysis.* English uses it in its literal sense, to loose a compound back into its elements. By looking up the usages of the simple uncompounded form, *luō,* we will find much evidence which will establish the sense of the compound; for example:

Matt.21:2 *loosen* the colt	Acts 27:41 *break up* ship's stern
John 2:19 *raze* the temple	2 Peter 3:10 *dissolve* elements

All these have the broad sense of disintegration, and this is the literal idea in the words *analuō* and *analusis,*

which we are considering. The effect of the added prefix *ana-* does not alter the basic sense, but rather gives a preciseness to *luō.*

When we combine these details, we conclude that Luke 12:36 speaks precisely of "*breaking loose* from the wedding festivities." It is not the "return," for this is covered by the next part of the verse. Paul uses this thought at 2 Timothy 4:6, for he is concerned with his imminent "dissolution," that is, his disintegration into the elemental parts of the human makeup; this he compares to what he was already—a libation.

We may now return to Philippians 1:23. Employing this understanding, we are able to correct the AV rendering "depart," and in its place put something which is in full agreement with all the occurrences. Paul was pressed out of the two—living or dying—and he yearned for the "solution" to his position, for only *that* would cause him to be together with Christ. Thus, Paul hoped to be called to meet his Lord in the air. This was his yearning.

The connection between the words "solution" and "dissolution" can be perceived when we reflect that we *dissolve* an element or substance, yet we *solve* a problem, and this was what Paul needed when he wrote from the Roman prison to the Philippians.

That this is the meaning intended, we are further assured by the next statement: "to be with Christ." How shall we be with Him? in death? No! When He comes and calls us to Himself in clouds, *then* (and not till then) we read "and *thus* shall we always be together with the Lord" (1 Thess.4:17).

"TODAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE"

In approaching this passage we will step aside for a moment to point out that this was not spoken to a dying *thief.* Two *malefactors* were led *with* Him to be put to death (Luke 23:32). After the soldiers had crucified Him and

parted His garments and watched Him and set the accusation over His head, *then* there were two *robbers,* beside the malefactors, crucified with Him. Both robbers afterwards reviled Him (Matt.27:35-38,44). When one of the malefactors blasphemed Him, then it was that the other one rebuked him and confessed his own guilt and the innocence of the One Who hung at his side. That he knew and believed the Scriptures and had heard of the Christ is evident from his request: "Be reminded of me, Lord, whenever Thou mayest be coming in Thy kingdom." Of that kingdom the prophets had foretold and he believed that the Man at his side was the King. That kingdom will not come until the kingdoms of this world are destroyed and give place to the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev.11:15). Among the glorious promises of that day the malefactor had doubtless often heard Isaiah's consolation read from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the old Hebrew writings:

> And I will be comforting you, O Zion,
> And I comfort all her deserts,
> And I will place her deserts as paradise
> And her wilderness as the Lord's paradise.
> They shall find gladness and exultation in her,
> Confession and the voice of praise.
> (Isaiah 51:3, SEPTUAGINT)

To him the Kingdom was familiarly known as the "paradise" or park, the garden of Yahweh, Eden of old. It was to be a place of gladness and exultation. What a contrast with his present plight! Our Lord seizes this aspect of the coming Kingdom and holds it up against the dark background of that day's doings: "Verily, to you am I saying today, with Me shall you be in paradise" (Luke 23:43). At such a time, on such a day, what a comfort for the malefactor to look forward to the delights of the coming Kingdom!

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER PUNCTUATION

It is possible to strain this passage so as to punctuate as the AV, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The original, with a consistent sublinear, is as follows:

kai eipen autō o iêsous amen soi legō sêmeron
AND said to-him THE JESUS AMEN to-YOU I-AM-saying toDAY
met emou esê en tō paradeisō
WITH ME YOU-WILL-BE IN THE PARK

> And Jesus said to him, "Verily to you am I saying today, with Me shall you be in paradise."

It will be noted that "today" follows immediately after "I am saying" and is separated from "you will be" by two words. Unless especially emphatic, the adverb (today) usually follows its verb (I-am-saying) as here. The most natural and unforced reading is to leave "today" with "saying" as it is in the Greek. The absence of the word oti, *that,* in the Greek, has been given as evidence to this effect, but such passages as Hebrews 3:7,15, James 4:13, where "that" is lacking, as in this passage, show how little dependence can be placed upon this argument. It proves nothing.

The Word of God knows of no paradise to which the malefactor and his Lord could go on that day. Both knew well that the Kingdom, of which they spoke, was a paradise. Hence our Lord tells this suffering companion that they both will be in *the* paradise. Not simply a paradise of which they had not heard, but *the* paradise of the Kingdom of which the prophets had written.

The phrase "to you I am saying *today*" may sound strange to our English ears, but no expression in the Scriptures may be judged by such a test. On many occasions it was used when the day referred to was especially notable (See Deut.30:15,16,18,19). Yet which of these could be compared to the day when Jesus spoke these words? For it was

a day of days, unpeered, unparalleled— the very opposite of paradise.

ALL, TO HIM, ARE LIVING

"God," we are told, "is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all, to Him, are living." This is supposed to prove that the dead are not really dead; hence they need no resurrection. But our Lord uses it to prove the opposite. "*Now that the dead are rousing,* even Moses divulges at the thorn bush, as he is terming the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. *Now* God is He, not of the dead, but of the living, *for* all, to Him, are living" (Luke 20:37,38).

This is the reply which He gave to the Sadducees, who deny that there is any resurrection (Luke 20:27). The mere fact that this passage could even be supposed to prove that the dead are alive shows how far the present attitude towards these things differs from their standpoint.

The point which the Lord proves is not life *in* death, but resurrection *from* death. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob died (Gen.25:8; 35:20; 49:33). Should the dead not be raised, then God would be the God of the dead. But as there is no life apart from resurrection, they must be raised. If there is a life apart from resurrection; if the dead are already alive, what need is there for resurrection? If Abraham is now alive why could not God be his God without resurrection?

The Sadducees were silenced and the scribes were so impressed that they dared not ask Him any more questions.

"ABSENT FROM THE BODY—PRESENT WITH THE LORD"

This quotation is not from the Scriptures, but rather a popular mis-quotation of 2 Corinthians 5:8. The contention is that "absent from the body" can be true only in a

disembodied state before the resurrection. This looks very plausible and demands consideration. The statement that "absent from the body" can only be realized in resurrection has been held up to ridicule on the ground that, in resurrection, we are *not* "absent from the body."

A careful canvas of the context will show, however, that the reference is not merely to *a* body, but to this burdensome body which we lay aside, and not to our glorious bodies of the resurrection.

First of all, let us consider the statement of 2 Corinthians 5:6, last clause:

> "whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord" (AUTHORIZED VERSION).
>
> "being at home in the body, we are away from home from the Lord" (CONCORDANT VERSION).

All will agree that the body here referred to can only be *this* body, not the spiritual body which we get in resurrection, for we will *not* be away from the Lord when we are at home in our heavenly habitation. The sense absolutely demands that we restrict the word "body" to the present burdensome tent or tabernacle.

Consider also, a few lines later; 2 Corinthians 5:10:

> "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (AUTHORIZED VERSION).
>
> "For all of us must be manifested in front of the dais of Christ, that each should be requited for that which he puts into practice through the body, whether good or bad." (CONCORDANT VERSION).

Here, too, at the *bema* or dais of Christ, we are compelled to limit the application to the deeds done in *this* body, not in the one we shall then wear.

In both of these passages the definite article (the) is depended on in the Greek to point out that not simply *a* body is intended but *the* body of which Paul has been

speaking. It will appear from this that an English version would be justified in treating the article as a demonstrative pronoun, which it really is in some passages. We might render it "this" without even going as far as the Authorized has done in inserting "this" in the first verse of the chapter.

But to the Scripture in point: it occurs midway between the two passages which have been quoted. It contains exactly the same words and in exactly the same grammatical construction as the one last quoted. It is this (2 Cor.5:8):

> "rather to be away from home out of the body and to be at home with the Lord." (CONCORDANT VERSION).

We now have, in a continuous connection, these three occurrences of the word "body":

Verse 6,	*tō sōmati*	to the body.
Verse 8,	*tou sōmatos*	of the body.
Verse 10,	*tou sōmatos*	of the body.

In the first and last the sense is limited to *this* body. Why not in the other?

Consider, also, the context, especially the first four verses of the chapter. The apostle had no desire to be "unclothed." Why should he change his mind so suddenly and now "much prefer" the unclothed condition?

The form which this text usually takes—"absent from the body: present with the Lord," is unscriptural and comes under the condemnation of 2 Timothy 1:13. When this text is read in the light of its context (always the best way), we cannot at all see how it can be forced to teach that "sudden death" is "sudden glory." This thought arises and is fostered by the omission of the words which are (unconsciously, perhaps) repudiated—*and to be.* The very fact that these words are almost universally discarded by those who use this text in opposition to the truth shows that they are an encumbrance to their understanding of the meaning of the passage. A true appreciation of the message con-

veyed absolutely demands that we retain them. It does not make them "of none effect."

It is well, then, to attune our hearts and heads to the spirit of the passage, which is not to contrast *a* body with the Lord's presence, but this temporary, burdened tent with the eonian weight of glory which awaits us. In *this* we groan, earnestly longing, *not* for the naked state of death, but the clothed eonian condition. Thus this Scripture agrees with the general tenor of God's Word, which teaches that those whom we reckon as dead have only been put to sleep (1 Thess.4:14).

"THEM WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS WILL GOD BRING WITH HIM"

The silence of Scripture as to the state between death and resurrection is most marked. Men are foolish enough to say that no one has ever returned from the realm of the dead, so that we might inquire as to what they saw and how they felt. Did not Lazarus come back after a sojourn of four days? What had he to say? *Nothing.* But the apostle Paul, when seeking to relieve the feelings of the distressed Thessalonians speaks right to the point. *"I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing . . . ."* Surely *now* we will have some light on the vexed question! Our ignorance is to be taken away. We are to know! But not a word is given concerning the present state of those who are sleeping (except the fact that they *are* asleep). We are pointed forward to resurrection. Not a present harp but a future hope. And this is further emphasized by the statement that we who are alive and remain to the presence of the Lord shall not *precede them!* If they are already in His presence these words are worse than nonsense. They have not preceded us nor will we precede them in that glorious day, but together shall enter the Presence Ineffable.

Once more we are compelled to call attention to the defective translation which has been the cause of the difficulty in this passage. The following is the Greek and a consistent sublinear of 1 Thessalonians 4:14,15, followed by the Concordant Version rendering:

ei gar pisteuomen oti iêsous apethanen kai anestê
IF FOR WE-ARE-BELIEVING that JESUS FROM-DIED AND UP-STOOD
outōs kai o theos tous koimêthentas dia
thus AND THE GOD THE *ones*-BEING-REPOSED THRU
tou iêsou axei sun autō touto gar umin
THE JESUS WILL-BE-LEADING TOGETHER to-Him this for to-YOU
legomen en logō kuriou oti êmeis oi zōntes
WE-ARE-sayING IN saying OF-Master that WE THE LIVING
oi perileipomenoi eis tên parousian tou kuriou
THE *ones*-SURVIVING INTO THE BESIDE-BEING OF-THE Master
ou mê phthasōmen tous koimêthentas
NOT NO SHOULD-BE-OUT-STRIPPING THE *ones*-BEING-reposED

> 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 . . . .

The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the great example for all His saints. Just as God raised Him, so He will raise us through Him (2 Cor.4:14). It is a great pity that we should even be asked to look upon such a phrase as "sleep in Jesus" or even the revisers marginal correction "sleep *through* Jesus," for He is not and will not be the Author of death, but of life. It is a most incongruous idea to give Him the work of the Adversary (who has the jurisdiction of death, Heb.2:14), and have God working counter to Him and without Him in resurrection. No, indeed. We believe that God has raised Him and, since we

are one with Him, how can it be otherwise than that God will bring us from the dead *with* Him and *through* Him?

So that, when He comes to call His waiting people unto Himself, He does not bring the dead with Him to earth, but brings them with Him from death.

Let us, for the moment, suppose that the dead had already been with Him in the heavens. How then shall we reconcile this with the very next statement? We who survive, says the apostle, shall not *precede* (outstrip) those who are asleep. How foolish this would sound if the *dead* had already preceded *us,* some of them for nearly two thousand years! We shall not get ahead of them, even if they are asleep, for we are assured that *both-together*—those who have fallen asleep and we who survive—we shall unite to meet Him in the air. And *thus*—in resurrection— shall we always be together with the Lord! Not disembodied, but with glorious bodies. That glad day is not satisfied with introducing the living alone to their Lord, but the dead too, shall accompany them to our gathering together unto Him. Then we shall be like Him. Then we shall be for Him. And *He* shall be satisfied with us, for His beauty will be seen in us. His glory shall shine through us; His love will illumine us. But, best of all, God will gain the goal of His heart's desire when death and distance are defeated and life and love have brought His creatures back into His bosom.

"IN THE BODY OR OUT OF THE BODY"

Scattered throughout Scripture are unusual exhibitions of Divine power. These may never be appealed to in order to establish a general truth. The protest of the beast which Balaam rode is no proof that his kind are endowed with human speech (Num.22:28). Elijah was caught up in a whirlwind, yet who dreams that this describes the departure of all God's saints? (2 Kings 2:11). It is manifestly unwise

to bring up special and extraordinary experiences to disprove the ordinary rule. We would hardly care to walk the waves even though we have our Lord's case as proof that it can be done. How much more, then, when we have positive and particular instruction as to the state of the dead, should we refrain from discrediting God's Word by marshalling miraculous instances which seem to contradict it!

The case of John, who was "in spirit" in the Lord's day, shows the power of *God* to communicate with the human spirit. For the purpose of revelation, John was transported to a time or to a place which the body could not then have occupied, yet he is able to see and hear.

Paul, too, was caught away to paradise and the third heaven, and he was not aware whether it was in the body or out of the body, yet God was aware. The allusion was to an occurrence fourteen years prior, when his battered and bleeding body was left for dead outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14:19). The revelations then received augmented Paul's ministry, for they gave him transcendent truths and put them into their future perspective.

We must not decide that Paul was dead, for that is the very detail withheld, yet we do know that of itself, his spirit would have no consciousness when apart from the body, and it could receive no revelations unless his spirit was specially vivified. This is very evident in the case of the dead, for though they are asleep, they shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live (John 5:25). They cannot remain dead, for His words are life, and they will be roused to life by His vivifying call. The power of God which was able to project John's spirit into paradise in the new earth, so that he saw and heard the wonderful future in store for the earth, or the still more marvelous visions which Paul had of that same paradise and the heavens above, these do not deny what God has revealed concerning the death state.

"WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH ON ME SHALL NEVER DIE"

Upon the surface, taken apart from its context, this Scripture seems to teach the deathlessness of all believers. But if we consider its context and the real meaning of "never," this teaching becomes untenable.

That faith does not infer immortality is clear from our Lord's previous statement: "He that believeth in Me, *though he were dead,* yet shall he live." (John 11:25. The Concordant rendering is much more exact: "He who is believing in Me, even if he should be dying, shall be living."). When will this be? At the resurrection which ushers in the kingdom eon. With this in mind, He proceeds, "And everyone who is living and believing in Me, should by no means be dying for the eon." (v.26, CV). Those Israelites who have died in faith before the thousand years begin will be made alive at resurrection, but those who, *at that time,* will still be living will continue to live for the whole eon. They will not die for that "ever." It is important to put due stress upon the fact that it does not read simply, "whosoever believeth" but rather "whosoever *liveth* and believeth." This double thought must be taken in the light of the previous statement that *those who believe do die,* which debars the inference that faith is a guarantee of deathlessness, except in the case of those who are living when the resurrection takes place. They alone shall "never die."

"THE HEART OF THE EARTH"

The sooner the English reader realizes that he has but a translation of the Word of God, and that the idiom is not English nor even Greek so much as Hebrew, the sooner will he make solid progress in the knowledge of the truth. There is no doubt but that the phrase "in the heart of the earth" means in the *center* of the earth, in *English.* But

it matters not how *we* understand it. The real question is, how did those to whom it was spoken understand it? That they did not apprehend it to mean the *center,* but referred it to the *surface* is clear from other instances of its use.

We have the similar phrase, the "heart" of a tree, meaning (to us) the innermost part of the trunk. Absalom was left dangling by his hair from the branch of an oak. Yet we read that Joab took three darts and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while yet alive in the heart (KJV "midst") of the oak (2 Sam.18: 9-14). The two words we have rendered "heart" are exactly the same in the Hebrew.

But more conclusive is the phrase "heart of the sea." It is applied to the place at which the Israelites crossed the "Red" Sea (Ex.15:8; C.V. "heart of the sea"). It describes the way of a ship upon the surface of the sea (Prov.30:19). But the most striking and instructive example is its fourfold reference to the city of Tyre, which was partly on an island on the coast of Canaan. Indeed, the island was so near the shore that Alexander the Great, in order to conquer it, built a mole out of the ruins of the shore city and thus connected it with the mainland. Tyre was far, indeed, from being in the center of the sea in any sense. And if Tyre might be described as being in the heart of the sea, what difficulty can there be in speaking of our Lord's tomb as "in the heart" of the earth? (Matt.12:40). It may sound strange to *us,* but most natural to those who heard Him.

The same principle applies to the phrase "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph.4:9). Neither the Psalm which is quoted nor the context in Ephesians, give any color to a subterranean visit. The contrast is between Sinai (Psa. 68:17,18), when our Lord did not condescend to the lower parts of the earth (but came down only to a high, inaccessible mountain, and the captivity to the law was thus prefigured), and the humiliation of His earthly life, when He, literally as well as figuratively, condescended into the very

vales and depths (bringing gifts, and, through His death, resurrection and ascension, leading captive the captivity which Sinai had brought). The rendering "multitude of captives" has no foundation in fact. The baptism of our Lord actually took place at the lowest spot on the surface of the earth.

"THE SPIRITS IN PRISON"

Much of the misunderstanding on the subject of the death state arises from the supposition that man is essentially spirit and that the body is only a temporary imposition on the spirit. As a result it is popularly inferred that consciousness inheres in the spirit rather than in the soul. This view requires us to believe that the spirit which was imparted to Adam had a previous conscious life in God's presence to which it returned at death. It demands that each one of Adam's descendants come consciously from the Divine presence and return consciously as they came. As the Scriptures know nothing of any such previous life, and as no one has any distinct recollection of it, we are driven to the conclusion that the return of the spirit to God at death, far from proving that it returns consciously, is rather the unanswerable argument that its return is not a conscious one.

The very passages which are produced to prove this position are likewise evidence of its falsity. The one most frequently referred to is Acts 7:59. Yet Stephen did not go consciously into his Lord's presence, but, as the common text has it, he *fell asleep*. If we bow to the inspired account we dare not say that it was not Stephen who fell asleep, but merely his body. In line with all Scripture, sleep is associated with the whole man. It knows nothing of spirit-sleeping, or soul-sleeping or body-sleeping. All of these, at death, enter into a state which the Word of God compares to the repose of sleep.

The case of our Lord Himself, which has already been alluded to, ought to put this point beyond all question. He commended His spirit to His Father. How could He say, then, after His resurrection, that He had *not* yet ascended, if all the while His spirit had been consciously in the Father's presence, and had just *descended?*

A vast distinction, however, must be drawn between *being* a spirit and *having* one. In a figurative sense, if we wish to emphasize man's spiritual side, it would, in a sense, be just as right to call a man a spirit as it is to use the term "body," as is often done in English, or, when referring to sensation, to describe a man as a "soul," as is often done in the Scriptures. This is the well-known figure "synecdoche" or association, in which a part is put for the whole when that part pleads for prominence. It does not appear, however, that man is ever called a spirit even in this figurative fashion. A spirit has not flesh and bones, as our Lord had after His resurrection (Luke 24:39). A man may be obsessed or "possessed" by spirits, but nowhere is he spoken of as being a spirit himself. This fact will help us in the consideration of 1 Peter 3:18-20:

> . . . seeing that Christ also, for our sakes, once died concerning sins, the just for the sake of the unjust, that He may be leading us to God; being put to death, indeed, in flesh, yet vivified in spirit, in which, being gone to the spirits in jail also, He heralds to those once stubborn, when the patience of God awaited in the days of Noah while the ark was being constructed, in which a few, that is, eight souls were brought safely through water . . .

The spirits here spoken of are not the spirits of dead men, but they are messengers, spirit beings, commonly regarded as angelic. These are said to have been "stubborn" in the days of Noah. That was a time when the patience of God waited, for the irreverence of the ancient world had risen to heights where it was defiant to God, and really called for

the deluge to end their insubjection to Him. Noah became a herald of righteousness in the earth, heralding a judging by his building of the ark. Yet outside the earth, there were beings charged with controls, of whom we get brief glimpses in the Scriptures, yet who failed in their service.

By means of messengers, God carries out His many beneficial activities in the heavens and earth. Israel was inducted to the law on Sinai through messengers (Heb.2:2; Acts 7:53). Messengers or spirits (sometimes referred to as saints; compare Deuteronomy 33:2 AV, "holy ones" CV) also execute judging (Jude 15) and other duties. In the period while Noah was constructing the ark, certain spirits, evidently charged with this judging, became stubborn, resisting the execution of God's righteous judging of the earth; and instead they seem to have calumniated higher authorities, These "sinning messengers" were thrust into gloomy caverns and kept for chastening judging (2 Pet. 2:4,5). Due to their stubbornness, it was necessary to guard Noah, for his salvation was involved because of the activity of the stubborn messengers. To these "spirits in jail," Christ heralds the triumph of His obedience; this is said of Christ with reference to His resurrection, in the words "being gone to the spirits in jail." Thus these spirits become aware of Him, and that messengers and authorities and powers are subjected to Him.

Before Christ could be *made* alive (vivified) in spirit He must have *died.* There is no possibility here of a *continuance* of life in any sense. What evidence is there that only the body and soul were affected and that the spirit continued in consciousness? The spirit of mankind has no soul, or consciousness, apart from the body (Gen.2:7). It was not until resurrection that He was loosed from the pangs of death (Acts 2: 24). If this passage had read *"preserved* alive" or suggested that His spirit was not unconscious

when He was put to death, then there would be some ground for denying that death involves the whole man.

The peculiar phrases "put to death . . . in flesh" and "vivified in spirit" are in closest harmony with the context. The apostle of the Circumcision is encouraging his brethren by the example of Christ. Physical force was being used against them even as it had been used against their Lord. His enemies could reach His flesh and put Him to death in that way. But He was not raised from the dead into the same condition as before. He was "made alive" or vivified beyond the power of death. His body was such as defied death. They could not kill Him again because the spirit so energized His body that it was immune to the effects of physical force. He became a life-giving (vivifying) Spirit (1 Cor.15:45). This passage, then, deals with the vivification and ascension and exaltation of Christ, and the heralding of His accession to power to the spirits in the jail, who are under His jurisdiction, and not to some dim, uncertain experience before He was vivified.

Spirit beings may have consciousness, but *human* spirits under normal conditions have none apart from the body. At death they become as they had been before they were united to the body. Consciousness, in humankind, lies in the living soul.

HOLD FAST TO THE WORD

These are the principal texts which are adduced to prove an intermediate state. The closer they are read, the more apparent it becomes that they are *per*versions. They reflect the theology of the translators, instead of the inspired Word of God. Whom shall we believe—God or man? As for us, let it be ours to know and to appreciate Him through His Word, and to tear aside every veil that bars our raptured gaze.

A. E. Knoch

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

IN THE REVOLT against the traditions concerning the so-called "intermediate state" there has been a return to the teaching of the Scriptures. A careful consideration of the Law, the Prophets, and the Literature—as the sacred Hebrew writings were known (*cp* Luke 24:44)—and especially the book of Ecclesiastes, is proof positive that "the dead know nothing whatsoever" (Ecc.9:5). This is further confirmed by a close study of the later Greek Scriptures. In spite of the attempts on the part of the translators to conform their versions to the accepted tradition, enough of the truth was left to show that, apart from resurrection, even those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished (1 Cor.15:18).

But there is one passage which seems to teach the very opposite. It seems to run counter to the entire tenor of Scripture. As a result, there have been many attempts to explain it away. Many who see the truth clearly still feel that the features in which the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is presented create a very real difficulty (Luke 16:19-31).

This thought also tends to linger because the passage is not contemplated as part of a larger discourse which extends from Luke 15:1 to 17:10. In this section the Lord deals with the situation which has arisen through His ministry; that is, the fact that it has divided the people into two classes: (a) those who wished to hear more, and (b) those who resent and reject His teaching, as well as despising the

class of people who do receive Him. Of the former class (a) were the tribute-collectors and sinners (15:1), while the latter (b) was comprised of the Pharisees, scribes and law teachers (15:2).

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION OF LUKE 16:19-31

The translation of this passage, as it is found in the "Authorized" version, is not far from the mark, though it might be more accurate in a few places. It may be well to point out that the story was not given out as an actual incident. This is the thought conveyed by the word rendered "certain." It really signifies "*un*certain." It is a very indefinite term, usually rendered "any"—and is often used to introduce ideal or typical characters. There is no evidence to support the assertion that "there *was* a rich man." Our Lord asserts the contrary when He inserts the word *tis* (ANY), making it an ideal rather than a real case. The "sumptuous fare" of the rich man has no particular reference to food, and cannot be taken in the derogatory sense which is usually attached to feasting. It is an element necessary to the parable and was but the exuberant gladness which even saints are exhorted to entertain, strengthened by the addition of the word "splendidly" (Acts 2:26; Rom. 15:10; 2 Cor.2:2; Gal.4:27; Rev.11:10; 12:12; 18:20). The CONCORDANT VERSION renders this "make merry" or "be glad." The "great gulf" or yawning chasm evidently was a waterway, for Abraham tells the rich man, "Neither may they *ferry* from thence to us" (verse 26). This word is used only when speaking of crossing water. And there must have been water for Lazarus to dip his finger into.

ABRAHAM'S TEACHING?

The gist of the teaching in this tale is summed up by Abraham when He says to the rich man, "You got your good things in your life, and Lazarus likewise evil things.

Yet now here he is being consoled, yet you are in pain" (16:25). This is not teaching from God's Word. It is contrary to all revelation to base happiness in the next life on poverty in the present one. This point alone should be sufficient to show that we have a parable before us. The doctrine is that of the Pharisees, and its untruth is being turned back upon them. The Lord is borrowing from the traditions current among the Pharisees, and into them He places the two classes of His hearers. The Pharisees are placed in a position completely contrary to that which they think they will be accorded. This is a very important point in the parable and really prepares for the concluding words which are placed in the mouth of Abraham (16:31).

WAS THE RICH MAN WICKED?

We are not at liberty to add to this scripture and to imagine that the rich man was wicked as well as wealthy. We are not told so, and his "faring" sumptuously was not necessarily any worse than the joy of heaven over the advent of the Kingdom and the authority of the Christ, for the same term is used of both (Rev.12:12). He was daily "making merry splendidly," regarding himself as under the favor of heaven, symbolized by the cambric and purple dress. Lazarus, who had been cast at the rich man's gate, yearned to be satisfied. Yet he was given no special attention by the rich man, even though he possessed the means to supply all his needs. These are the distinctions positively implied, and the parable is specially concerned with them, for these teachers should have supplied Yahweh's truth to those of Israel: figured by Lazarus. This class was now giving heed to the teaching of the Lord.

OBEDIENCE AND BLESSING

While it is true, in this administration, that God is selecting the base things (1 Cor.1:26-29), it is not so, necessar-

ily, under the law. Obedience to the law brought temporal blessing; suffering was generally the law's penalty for disobedience. Those who hearkened diligently to Yahweh's voice were to be blessed in every way (Deut.28:1-14), like the rich man. Upon those who would not hearken, came the curses which afflicted Lazarus (Deut.28:15,16). He had the "botch" or boils of Egypt (Deut.28:27), the sore botch which cannot be healed (verse 35). Lazarus had the sure tokens of Yahweh's displeasure, the rich man had every sign of His favor. This position (from the law's viewpoint) should be noted, and put alongside other distinctions in the parable. Considered thus, it is again confirmed that it is not the teaching of the law which is being considered, but rather the major theme of the whole discourse; that Messiah was being rejected, yet the despised were giving heed to Him.

"LIES" IN THE BIBLE

With these details clearly before us, we are led to inquire as to the reason for the elements which are brought into the parable: Abraham's bosom, the great chasm, and the impossibility of crossing it. Why are these particular things used to illustrate it? Before we go further, it is essential that we realize that much that is in the Bible is *not* true. Satan's first statement, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen.3:4) was not true, even if it has been incorporated into the creeds. And the woman's first utterance contains an element of falsehood, for God did not say "neither shall ye *touch* it" (Gen.3:3). The greater part of the book of Job is composed of man's false philosophy. Many a text has been taken from it because the preacher did not distinguish between the unsullied word or expression of God Himself and His *inspired record* of the false views and utterances of others. But we cannot put the details of the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus into this category, for it fell

from the lips of our Lord Himself. We must see that He is using the teaching of others in order to show its falseness.

FIGURES AND FACTS

The fact is that it is an impressive figure of speech. Figures are not, and indeed, cannot be, true as to fact, but are true to feeling. We never think of accusing Jesus with falsehood when He said "This is My body," or when He speaks of that same body as "the temple," so that He was misunderstood. Nor is it true that His disciples were "salt," or that the other Lazarus was literally "asleep" in the corrupting tomb. So that, when we suggest that our Lord told a story which was not true as to fact, but most impressive in the finer realm of feeling, we are simply expressing in words what is acknowledged by all, in various degrees. And we are simply applying a recognized principle to the case in hand. If anyone wishes to know where the denial of this plain principle leads, let him follow the controversy between the learned Luther and Zwingli. Luther's contention that the bread *is* the Lord's body was unwarranted by the facts. Faith is the acknowledgment of a *truth* which our senses are unable to test, not the acceptance of a *lie* which our senses deny.

If, then, this is a figure of speech, what figure is it? It is the figure we call Admission. By it, one side of this parable is admitted as though true, in order to deny it in the other side which corresponds and explains it. Although the verses are not directly termed a parable, it is apparent that the basic details were well known, and this is an essential element in a parable. The story must be familiar and commonplace. A picture is presented to the eye as one side of a parallelism, alongside of which we are supposed to put the hidden meaning. Though ideal, it may well be true as to fact; it is the interpretation which is true in a different realm.

ABRAHAM'S BOSOM

That the scene is a figurative one is evident, for the literal bosom of Abraham is not sufficiently capacious to hold the blessed dead. Yet he is made to figure felicity, since he was given the original blessing. In accord with this, Abraham is also made the principal speaker. It is essential that we take the terms and elements of the parable as the Lord's listeners would take them. They were accustomed to use Abraham's bosom as a figure of the highest blessedness. Their vivid oriental imaginations clothed the abstract idea of blessing with appropriate concrete forms. This presents no difficulty to their eastern minds. Many stories almost identical in their figures, were common in their traditions.

THE "GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS"

Later on these crude errors were repeated in the apocryphal "Gospel of Nicodemus," sometimes styled "The Acts of Pontius Pilate." The writer of this, adding to the record of the resurrection which occurred after the Lord was crucified (Matt.27:53), tells how Charinus and Lenthius, sons of Simeon (Luke 2:25) were raised, but could not talk until they had made the sign of the cross with their fingers on their tongues. Then they asked for a piece of paper on which each writes the forbidden account of what they saw in hell. Charinus gave what he wrote into the hands of Annas and Caiaphas and Gamaliel. Lenthius gave his to Nicodemus and Joseph. Then they vanished. What they wrote was compared and found to agree. Not even one letter was different, in the entire chronicle.

This narrative of what was seen in hell should be read by all who wish evidence (?) for the orthodox position on the "intermediate state." All was dark at first, but suddenly a "substantial purple-colored light" enlightens the place. Isaiah cried out that this was the fulfillment of his prophecy! (Isa.9:1; Luke 2:29). John the Baptist appears in his

part as the forerunner, reminding Adam of what Michael had told Seth at the gates of Paradise, when Adam had a headache. Michael had said to Seth, "Do not pray to God in tears and entreat Him for the oil of the tree of mercy wherewith to anoint thy father Adam for his headache, because thou canst not by any means obtain it till the last day and times, namely, till five thousand five hundred years be passed." Then comes Satan, boasting of his defeat of Christ in death, but he is soon followed by Christ Himself, Who makes the sign of the cross on Adam and upon all His saints, and leads them all, including David (in contradiction to Acts 2:34), into the heavenly paradise! There they met Enoch and Elijah. The "thief," too, had preceded them, having been given the sign of the cross so that the angel who is the guard of paradise will admit him! Lest anyone should take this as the Rich Man and Lazarus story is generally taken—as a narrative of facts—I beg to explain that I repeat these fables only that they may afford a contrast with the real source of truth on this question and to show that orthodoxy is following fables instead of the pure presentations of holy writ.

JEWS SIGNS ARE SEEKING

It was natural for the Jews to seek for a sign. They preferred to have someone rise from the dead rather than listen to Yahweh's words as recorded by Moses and the prophets. But, when another Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, did come forth from the tomb, having been in the unseen four days, what did they do? They sought to kill him (John 12:9-11)! And what did he report as to the realms of the dead? *Not one word!* Why? Because there was nothing for him to tell! Had he some tale like this, which would uphold their traditions and give the lie to Moses and the prophets, he would have been the petted idol of the day. This is the truth taught here: *Faith.* "They

have Moses and the prophets. *Let them hear them!"* Nothing else will persuade them, not even the return of Lazarus from the dead. *The great object of the story is to drive the faithless Pharisees back to the Scriptures.* The whip He uses is one of their own traditions.

THE TABLES TURNED

The Lord shows the powerlessness and absurdity of their departures from the written law by forcing these to their legitimate conclusion. They did not hesitate to put their doctrines into the mouth of Abraham, but the Lord used Abraham, the great example of faith, to turn them from their puerile deceptions back to the Scriptures which they had deserted. Thus, while, for the moment, He allows a portion of the position they hold, He does so in order to show them where they stand in respect to His own ministry, for Lazarus, representing those whom the Pharisees despised, is in the happy position which the Pharisees had appropriated for themselves, though they rejected Messiah.

"EPITROPE" OR ADMISSION

As we have mentioned, the real name of the figure of speech used here is "Admission" or *Epitrope*[1]. That which is false is seemingly granted or admitted for the time. It is closely allied to irony, which states the opposite of what is really intended. Figures such as these depend upon the occasion, upon the attending circumstances, to make them understood. They may be used only in the most serious discourse, when the climax is being attained. It must, of course, be clear to all what the speaker *really believes.* What he states must, in its first count, be that which his *listeners teach.* Then there is no possibility of mistaking the

1. See FIGURES OF SPEECH USED IN THE BIBLE, by E. W. Bullinger, page 972.

speaker's real meaning. For instance, when Micaiah told the king of Israel, "Go, and prosper, and Yahweh deliver it with the hand of the king," *we* would naturally think, unless we had entered into very close sympathy with the state of affairs, that the king ought to be pleased. But he knew what was in his own heart and that it was not in line with Yahweh, so he sees the meaning hidden behind the prophet's words. Yahweh was encouraging him to his own destruction (1 Kings 22:15).

Thus we see that Yahweh, by his prophets, actually used words *which were not true* as to literal fact, yet full of truth and force for the king in his rebellion.

Like this is the advice of the Assembler (AV, the "Preacher," Hebrew, *Qoheleth*). "Rejoice, choice youth, in your childhood, and let your heart make you cheerful in the days of your prime. Walk in the ways of your heart and by the sight of your eyes, yet know that for all these the One, Elohim, shall bring you into judgment" (Ecc.11:9). We do not take this advice as it stands. In fact it arouses the opposite desire, to *avoid* the ways of one's own heart and *distrust* one's own eyes, for, as he goes on to say, "childhood and early days are vanity" (Ecc.11:10).

Another example is in the prophecy of Amos:

> Go to Bethel and transgress!
> At Gilgal increase the transgression!
> And bring your sacrifices every morning,
> And your tithes every three days!
> Fume incense with leaven as acclamation,
> And proclaim the voluntary vows!
> Announce it, for so you love, sons of Israel,
> averring is my Lord Yahweh.
>
> —Amos 4:4,5. CV

This, indeed, pleased *them,* but who imagines that it pleased *Him,* even if He had not said plainly, "Go *not* to Bethel"?

In line with this was the advice given by our Lord to the scribes and Pharisees. After denouncing the murderous crew, He adds, "And you! Fill full the measure of your fathers!" (Matt.23:32). This they did in crucifying Him, but even they would hardly claim that it was done at His instigation.

THE LORD BORROWS THEIR TRADITION

Details for the story of the rich man and Lazarus are taken from the Pharisaic traditions of the day. As our Lord uses these traditions, He is careful to phrase His speech with their peculiar terms, such as "Abraham's bosom," "carried by 'angels'" (or messengers), etc., all of which He borrowed from the so-called "oral law," which He had denounced, and none of which has the least likeness to that written law which He hid in His heart. They knew full well that He was giving them their own and not His doctrine. In fact, matters had come to such a crisis that they would no longer listen to *His* teaching, so He uses some of their own, yet alters it to form a rebuke to their opposition to His ministry.

Seeing that this was the case, we have just the right material for the figure of Admission. Feeling gets the better of mere fact.

THE SETTING

The parable occurs at just such a juncture. The Lord had been speaking of another rich man and his unjust steward or administrator. He made friends for himself with his master's money. His master commends him for his prudence. Our Lord comments to His disciples, "And am *I* saying to you, Make for yourselves friends with the mammon of injustice, that whenever it may be defaulting, they should be receiving you into the eonian tabernacles? He who is faithful in the least, is faithful in much also, and he who is

unjust in the least, is unjust in much also. If, then, you did not come to be faithful in the unjust mammon, who will be entrusting to you the true? And if you did not come to be faithful in that which is an outsider's, who will be giving you that which is yours? No domestic can slave for two lords, for either he will be hating the one and loving the other, or he will be upholding one and despising the other. You cannot slave for God and mammon." And the Pharisees also, inherently *fond of money,* heard all these things, *and they scouted Him* (Luke 16:9-14). The Lord's disciples were to become the new stewards because Israel rejected Him (Luke 17:1-10).

The Pharisees scouted the Lord. But He does not leave them. He touches their weak point and holds them by it until He can enforce the lesson they so much needed. To go on correcting and denouncing them was useless, for they "stuck up their noses" in disdain and would not listen. The object before Him is to enforce His dictum, "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass by than for one serif of the law to fall." And, since they would not listen to plain truth, He gives it to them in their own terms. Though, in the rich man, the Pharisee would fain see the Sadducee, yet by the realistic portrayal of his own conception of *hades* or the unseen (AV, "hell"), both are brought within the scope of the Lord's words. This is made doubly clear, for the rich man had five brethren who would not hearken to Moses and the prophets, either.

The skillful introduction of Abraham by means of their own pet phrase "Abraham's bosom" gives Him the opportunity of impressing all with the real sentiment of the "father of the *faithful.*" They claimed Abraham for their father while they were doing the work of the Adversary. And all because they did not follow in the faith which Abraham exemplified. How impressive, then, when their ears were closed to the Lord's teaching, to hear Abraham's voice

from the dead, as it were, warning them of their apostasy! *"They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them!" "If Moses and the prophets they are not hearing, neither will they be persuaded if someone should be rising from among the dead"* (16:29,31).

LET US BELIEVE ALL THE WORD

And may we press home this very exhortation? May we suggest that our Lord always believed and taught what had been revealed on the subject of death, and that not even the Pharisees themselves were deceived into thinking that He had abandoned the Scriptures and had instead embraced their notions as to the state of the dead?

It is to *faith* that we appeal. On another occasion, when our Lord was dealing with an unfaithful slave, He admitted that He was a harsh man (Luke 19:22). Shall we take this as our authority for denying all the grace and love which illumines almost every page of the sacred text? He admitted that He was a harsh man—but *is He?* And just so He admitted the traditions of His enemies, the Pharisees—but shall we follow them or take His own words *when dealing with His disciples on this very subject and heed His advice to believe all that God has spoken?* We will not place our expectation in Abraham or in any traditional intermediate state, but in Christ, not as—what shall we say? Scripture has no name for Him in connection with the intermediate state, so we will not invent one—but in CHRIST as THE RESURRECTION and THE LIFE.

A. E. Knoch

For those interested in further study on this subject we have available: *Death, Resurrection, Immortality* by Joseph E. Kirk, (111 pages, $7.00), the booklet: *The Rich Man and Lazarus* by Alan Burns, (30 pages, $2.00) and the booklet *What is Mankind, the Soul, Death?* by A. E. Knoch (48 pages, $4.00).

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, THIRD QUARTER 2012
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED THREE

EDITORIAL

IN our current issue, in his writing, "The Word of the Cross" (p.99), John Essex sets forth this glorious "word," as it is declared and developed in Paul's evangel. This *word* is the word (that is, teaching) which *pertains to* the *work* of the cross. While it is based solely upon that work, the *word of* the cross is not the word which simply *affirms* that work itself (that of the death, entombment, and rousing of Christ), but is the word that reveals to us what are the *consequences* of Christ's death for sinners, in His obedience unto the death of the cross.

The article by George L. Rogers (p.123), in consideration of Romans 6:9-11, encourages us to be "*reckoning* [ourselves] to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord." To "reckon" is to "take into account"; to consider; to view (thus). We are to *reckon* ourselves: "*dead,* indeed, to Sin," doing so, in order that, *through the grace inherent to this perspective,* we might be "*living* to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

In its original form, the article beginning on page 127 of this issue, "Human Destiny," by Alan Burns, was first published in *Unsearchable Riches* nearly one hundred years ago (volume 4, December, 1912).

In 1929, in an obituary announcement of the author's death, A. E Knoch wrote concerning him: "Alan Burns was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but spent his youth in Ireland, where he was associated with the Salvation Army and the Plymouth Brethren. At about twenty-one years of age he went to New York City.

"An earnest seeker after truth and a student of the Scriptures, he became interested in the teaching of Dr. Bullinger,

and strongly attracted to the work of Vladimir Gelesnoff [co-founder of the Concordant Publishing Concern], when he began his ministry in New York. Brother Gelesnoff considered him the best gospel preacher he had ever heard.

"With the help of a few friends, who did the printing, Brother Burns started *Grace and Glory,* a little magazine which gave promise of much good. For lack of support, it languished and soon ceased, to be followed, not long afterwards, by *Unsearchable Riches,* which virtually took its place.

"Brother Burns became a valued contributor to the earlier volumes of our magazine . . . . The logical and powerful introductory articles in ALL IN ALL are by his pen . . . . We were continually receiving letters urging us to have more from Brother Burns."[1]

Dean Hough's article, "Taking Account of Grace" (p.115), while giving much attention to the faithful imperatives of our service as set forth by the apostle Paul in Romans 6:11-13, addresses these same imperatives from the true foundation of all faithful service, that of the grace of God. "Now in chapter 6 [Paul presents] the welcome *effects* of this evangel on the lives of those who are [attentively] believing it . . . . The message we are believing not only tells us of God's power in saving sinners for the life to come, but as it is being believed it becomes itself God's power for salvation in our present lives."

Though it is a grace that indeed comes to us "through many dangers, toils, and snares," we are thanking God for this same grace, which alone enables us to remain and continue on in our testimony thereunto. We do so in anticipation of the day in which this "grace glorious" will reach its zenith, when death is abolished, when, "in Christ, shall all be vivified," "that God may be All in all" (1 Cor.15:22-28).

J.R.C.

---

1. *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.20, p.67.

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

"THE WORD of the cross has a far deeper significance than the death of Christ for our sins. It brings before us the manner of His death. The curse of the law was attached to such a death. It brought down the curse of God. On the human side, however, it showed what human religion and human wisdom can do. When God's Image was present among men they not only failed to appreciate Him, but displayed the innate hatred of their carnal religious hearts by dooming Him to the death of the vilest criminal. He Who spoke as never man spoke should have been welcomed by the wise men of the world, but they showed the essential stupidity of human wisdom by gibbeting the embodiment of all wisdom upon the ignominious cross. Yet God has made that scene of weakness and shame the brightest exhibition of His power and glory. Though it seems to sound the depths of powerless infamy, it eclipses all the power and wisdom of men. The word of the cross is still despised, but its proclamation is salvation to all who believe. The height and summit of man's wisdom cannot reach to the divine folly."[1]

Shall we, too, be writing stupidity and be penning utter foolishness? Does not the apostle Paul describe our subject as "stupidity indeed"? Have we not confirmation of this in the writings and sayings of many who profess to be wise in the world? Do not most of them expose their lack of interest in the theme by ignoring it completely!

1. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.249.

Yes, Paul describes "the word of the cross" as "stupidity, indeed, to those who are perishing," but he adds by way of contrast, "yet to us who are being saved it is *the power of God*" (1 Cor.1:18). And then the apostle proceeds, in perhaps the most scathing terms since Jesus lashed the scribes and Pharisees, to denounce the wisdom of the supposedly wise men of this eon, who seek in their own ways, and often without reference to God at all, to settle the great problems that only God can resolve. They seek salvation through science, and peace through philosophy; God provides both through the cross. But let us see what Paul says:

"For it is written, I shall be destroying the wisdom of the wise, and the understanding of the intelligent shall I be repudiating. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the discusser of this eon? Does not God make stupid the wisdom of this world? For since, in fact, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God, God delights, through the stupidity of the heralding, to save those who are believing, since, in fact, Jews signs are requesting, and Greeks wisdom are seeking, yet we are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity, yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, for the stupidity of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (1 Cor.1:19-25).

Now what does all this mean? There was some reason why humanity as a whole could not easily accept the teaching of Paul concerning the cross. The Jews, who were highly religious, viewed the matter with suspicion—to them the cross was a snare. The nations who were highly cultured, viewed it with disdain—to them the cross was stupidity. We may see why later. But for the moment let us realize this, that though Paul occasionally speaks of "*my* evangel," as in Romans 2:16, he never claims to be the author of it. Quite the contrary. In the very first verse of his Roman epistle, he

explains that he has been *severed*, or separated, from the rest to proclaim *the evangel of God*, which, in verse 16 of the same chapter, he declares to be "*God's* power for salvation to everyone who is believing—to the Jew first and to the Greek as well."

Yes, to those who are called, whether Jew or Greek, this evangel, which has for its keystone the word of the cross, is both the power of God and the wisdom of God, and it is something separate and distinct from anything that had been proclaimed before. It is fundamental to the purpose of God, and yet there are some peculiar things about this teaching of the cross.

For instance, if the cross is so important a feature of God's operations as Paul maintains, how is it that John never refers to it in his later writings? There is no mention of the cross in any of his three epistles, nor in the book of Revelation, the Unveiling of Jesus Christ, which he also wrote. True, we find allusions to "the *blood* of Christ" and "the *blood* of the Lambkin," but the *cross* is not mentioned. Why, again, has Peter, in his two letters, nothing to say about the *cross* of Christ? Or James? Or Jude? If the word of the cross is as important as Paul suggests, how is it that all these others (who, after all, were contemporary with Paul) seem to ignore it?

This is a question which all believers must face up to. It implies—it *must* imply—that Paul was giving a different message from the rest. If, as we surely believe, Peter, James, John and Jude all spoke as they were moved by the holy spirit, then, without doubt, they too would have been impelled to speak of the cross if it had been essential to their messages. We are forced to conclude that there is one great difference at least between the evangel as proclaimed by Paul, and that proclaimed by Peter, James, John and Jude, and that this distinction is to be found in their relationship and attitude to the cross of Christ.

For look how freely and emphatically Paul speaks of the cross. In 1 Corinthians 1:17 he expresses a concern lest, in his own preaching, the cross of Christ should be made void; and in the next verse he describes the word of the cross as the *power of God* to those who are being saved. A little later, in verse 23, he infers that, in his preaching of "Christ crucified," he is in fact proclaiming "Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." Again, in the second chapter, he affirms his decision "not to perceive anything among you except Jesus Christ, and Him *crucified*." And yet Peter, James, John and Jude have nothing to say about the cross of Christ.

To put the matter simply, we would suggest that Peter, John, James and Jude are writing to a people who have not yet come to the cross of Christ, and therefore they find no occasion to mention it. Paul, on the other hand, is addressing a message to some who have reached the cross, and, indeed, have passed beyond it. Therefore, he refers to it freely. Peter and those with him are looking forward to the millennial reign of Christ in which many glorious things will be happening, particularly in relation to Israel and through Israel to the rest of humanity, but a time in which, nevertheless, the effects of what was accomplished on the cross will *not* be observed. After all, Jesus presented Himself to Israel as their King, and proclaimed and practiced the evangel of the Kingdom, before ever He was crucified. Paul takes us by faith into a time *beyond* the Millennium—into the fifth eon, the Day of God—an era in which the effects of the cross will be fully operative. And—wonder of wonders and grace beyond measure—he even invites us to enjoy the benefits of those effects over one thousand years in advance—now. This we do in spirit, and by faith. To find out what these benefits are—what the message of the cross really is—we must look at what Paul has to say about it.

THE WORD OF THE CROSS DEMANDS A NEW CREATION

Now you may be surprised to learn that the word "cross" never occurs in Paul's great epistle to the Romans—the first of his writings as they appear in our versions. In a letter which deals with such fundamental matters as justification, conciliation, and God's sovereignty, one might have thought that a mention of the cross would be indispensable. It is certainly there by implication, but the word "cross" itself is absent. It is implied in the one usage of the verb form, "crucify," and this, in its context, is significant, for it gives us the real clue to the meaning of the message of the cross. This is what Paul says:

"What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing? May it not be coming to that! We, who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His death? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life. For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death, nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that our old humanity was crucified together with Him, that the body of Sin may be nullified, for us by no means to be still slaving for Sin, for one who dies has been justified from Sin" (Rom.6:1-7).

"*Knowing this, that our old humanity was crucified together with Him, that the body of Sin may be nullified*"—that is, brought to nought. Paul is simply telling us that there is no place for this body of Sin in the evangel of salvation which he is proclaiming. He confirms this in his letters to the Corinthians and Galatians. Let us look at Corinthians first.

The brethren at Corinth had acquired a not very enviable reputation on account of their panderings to the vices and lusts of the flesh. This was evidenced by their petty quarreling, by their strifes and divisions among themselves, and even by other practices that had been heard of among them. It is as a counter to all this that Paul, when he writes to them, lays such stress on the significance of the cross. "The word of the cross," he declares is "the power of God"; "Christ crucified," the "power of God and the wisdom of God." Far from pandering to the passions of the old humanity, tied to a dying flesh, they should have been thinking in terms of a new humanity, which comes with a new creation. "If anyone is in Christ," Paul tells them in his second letter, "there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! There has come new!" (2 Cor.5:17).

The new creation is something entirely of God, and shows forth *His* power and *His* wisdom. In His sight, the old humanity of a believer in Christ has had its day. It is regarded as being crucified on the same cross as that on which God's Son was crucified. The Corinthians should have seen it that way. And so, too, should we look upon our bodies of Sin. They cannot help our spiritual life in any way; rather, they only hinder. They cannot contribute one iota of merit towards our salvation; they cannot even in the most minute degree please God. No dying body can, and these are, in fact, dying all the time, as every ache and pain testifies. Then why not reckon them as being dead already! In the words of Romans 6:11, "Be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

But to be living in Christ implies a *new creation*. What a privilege, indeed, that God counts us as living to Him, even while we are physically retarded by these bodies of humiliation; but that is only because His Son dealt with the problem of sin in the flesh once and for all time on

the cross, and our bodies of Sin are reckoned by God as having been crucified on the same cross.

The Galatian case is rather different from that of the Corinthians. Their fault lay in trying to exalt the flesh, to give it an honor and a prominence to which it was not entitled. They sought to enforce the law of Moses on the basis that the flesh ought to be able to justify itself by keeping the law. Paul had to point out that "by works of law shall no flesh at all be justified" (Gal.2:16). Far from bringing credit to the flesh, the law only made sin in the flesh more manifest. Every additional commandment was one more to break. He asks them a direct question, "Undertaking in spirit, are you now being completed in flesh?" (Gal.3:3). The works of the flesh are given as adultery, wantonness, enmities, strifes, jealousies, dissentions, etc.; the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control. "Those of Christ Jesus," says Paul, "crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts" (Gal.5:24).

The Galatians were even being pressed to return to circumcision—the ritual which God had established with Abraham— but Paul counters this by saying that it had now become merely a means of glorifying the flesh. And then he adds, "Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but *a new creation*" (Gal.6:14,15).

Again, *a new creation*. The word of the cross demands a new creation. Peter, James, John and Jude have nothing to say about this. They are looking for a new birth, in conformity with the words of Jesus to Nicodemus, "You must be begotten anew" (John 3:7). They are looking for a new birth within the framework of Israel's promises; this is a vastly different thing from a new creation outside of Isra-

el's promises. The new birth is a national blessing to fit Israel for the Kingdom, the thousand year reign of Christ on earth; the new creation is an individual blessing, and transports us in spirit past the millennial eon into the day of God, and fits us for our celestial destiny.

When Paul speaks of a new creation, he means "new" in every sense—new absolutely. This is not the case with Israel during the millennial eon, for Israel is but a nation reborn, of the same stock as the nation originally born at Sinai. In fact, the promises originally made to Israel at Sinai are repeated to the regenerated nation by Peter in his first epistle, when he calls them a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation." During the thousand years they will serve humanity as a priestly nation, fulfilling the functions originally assigned to them at Sinai, but which were lost to the old nation through its repeated idolatry.

But in spite of the new birth, and in spite of all that the regenerated nation of Israel can do during the millennial eon, let us not forget that it all ends in a tremendous rebellion against God, when Satan is loosed out of his prison, and he comes to deceive all nations which are in the four corners of the earth, to be mobilizing them for battle, their number being as the sand of the sea. This tremendous event is followed by the judgment of the great white throne, and in Revelation 20:11 we read that from the face of Him Who sits upon the throne, earth and heaven flee, and no place is found for them. They just cannot abide in the presence of the absolute righteousness and purity of the majestic Occupant of the throne. And John goes on to describe how all those who appear before the throne are judged in accord with their acts, and are condemned. This is the final condemnation of the flesh, and all that has been done in the flesh. But this is not the end, for John next perceives "a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth pass away." And all the sor-

row and mourning and misery connected with them pass away, too, for He Who is sitting upon the throne declares that He is making all *new*. This is in line with what Isaiah had prophesied centuries earlier when he said, "For behold Me creating new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor shall they come up on the heart" (Isa.65:17, CV).

This is the new creation, which John perceives only at the end of his visions, but to which Paul is pointing from the very beginning of his writings. The great point to be noted is that there is a complete break with the old. Nothing is carried over. And so it is, too, with the advance application of the new creation, as it affects a believer in Christ in this day of grace. The primitive, the old, is passed by. "Lo! There has come new."

The cross demands a complete break with the old, and provides the way for the provision of a glorious alternative in the new. To those who are not prepared to make this break, the word of the cross is just stupidity; for in clinging to the old, they must perforce be like the Corinthians, and pander to the desires of the flesh, or like the Galatians, and give the flesh an importance to which it is not entitled. It is in these two factors that many sincere believers, who are also religionists, become enemies of the cross of Christ.

But to see the full effects of the cross, and to appreciate its message in even greater grandeur, we must now turn to the prison letters of Paul.

THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS

"The blood of *Christ* is a most expressive figure of the *permanent power of His sufferings*. Thank God it is past, but its potency is permanent. It avails today, and will *never lose its power*.

"But the blood of His *cross*—this goes far deeper still. It

is not a mere literary variant, but a deliberate endeavor to distinguish between the death of God's Son and the *manner* of it. *Peace* is made by the blood of His cross. The blood is a reminder of its permanence. In Colossians 1:20 . . . the cross is the basis of reconciliation. On this basis He will carry on all His future work of ruling and judging, of rousing and vivifying the dead. We will have our share in His work of reconciling God's creatures among the celestials, for we are His complement . . . *as living examples of the power of the cross*. For this reason we read in Colossians 1:20 of the *blood* of His cross, for its abiding power will be the means at our disposal in bringing out *perpetual peace*."[2]

It used to be a practice among Greek writers to enter literary competitions in which they had to submit what was termed a trilogy, that is, three pieces with themes related to each other. Generally these were tragedies. Only a few specimens are now extant. But no trilogy submitted by any Greek writer for a competition could even remotely approach in grandeur the wonderful trio of letters written by Paul, which have come down to us as the epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. We have compared them to a Greek trilogy only because we wish to emphasize that they should be regarded as a trio, with themes that are connected, and not as individual messages. There is, of course, nothing of a tragedy about them. On the contrary, their grandeur lies in the fact that they expand our conception of God's purpose to include the whole universe. Whereas earlier writings, not excluding those of Paul, have their settings on earth, the prison letters usher us straight into the vastnesses of the celestial realms. Outside of the prison letters, we have God's salvation extended to all mankind; inside the prison letters, it reaches out to include heaven as well.

---

2. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.52, p.174.

Now, one of the most interesting features of the prison letters is that in each one we have a remarkable description of Christ. The wider scope of these letters makes these descriptions necessary, and, as we examine them, we find that they are connected in a wonderful way. Let us do this, taking the Colossian account first.

Here we find Christ in His relationship to the *motive* behind all God's operations. God's purpose was conceived in *love*, which finds its first and greatest expression in "the Son of His love" (Col.1:13). It is as the Son of God's love that Christ is presented to us in this epistle, where He is also declared to be "the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and *He* is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him" (Col.1:15-17).

Here we are among the heights indeed. These are the mountain peaks—the Himalayas of the Scriptures. And we are among the heights again when we come to the Ephesian description of Christ, for there He is portrayed as being seated at the right hand of God, among the celestials, "up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending." It is in this account that Christ is given "as Head over all, to the *ecclesia* which is His body, the complement of the One Who is completing the all in all" (Eph.1:20-23). So, in Ephesians, we have Christ portrayed in His relationship to the ecclesia, the *medium* through which God's purpose is to be accomplished.

But what about the Philippian account? The description of Christ takes us again into the heights. On the one hand, we have Him "inherently in the form of God" and deeming it "not pillaging to be equal with God," and on the other

hand, we have Him highly exalted, and graced "with the name that is above every name." No heights can be higher than these, but between them, what do we find? A deep chasm, an almost bottomless rift, at the foot of which lies the cross. For He Who was in the form of God emptied Himself of all His pristine glory to take upon Himself the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and having done that, descended the valley still farther by humbling Himself and "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:5-9).

In this Philippian portrayal of Christ, we see Him in His relationship to the *means* by which God's purpose is to be accomplished. That means is the cross, and here the theme of the cross takes on a more profound significance. For the depths of a valley can best be appreciated from a vantage point on the heights, for then we can look straight down into the gulf below. That is exactly what we do in the letter to the Philippians. We endeavor to place ourselves (mentally) in the position that Christ occupied when He was in the form of God, and then, peering down, try to comprehend all that is included in the *death of the cross*. It is not just the death of Christ that counts, but all that goes with it—all that was attached to the cross—the degradation, the shame, the ignominy, the opprobrium, and above all the separation from God. For the cross was an execution stake for malefactors and murderers, and carried with it a curse.

If you really want to see what is implied in the term, "Christ crucified," which Paul was so determined to preach to the Corinthians, go to the Philippian epistle. No two words can be wider apart, yet they are brought together. *Christ*, the Anointed of God, once on the heights in the form of God, and deeming it not pillaging to be equal with God, yet now *crucified*, cursed among the malefactors at the bottom of the abyss. Cursed (Gal.3:13) because it was

to the *cross* that He nailed the old humanity with all its sin and wickedness, thereby settling the problem of sin once and for all. Truly, the depths of the Philippian epistle are the depths of love!

Now, what about the effects of the cross?

The Philippian account gives us the effects of the cross on *Christ Himself*. "Wherefore, also," continues the apostle—that is, *because* He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross—"God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father." Praise be to God!

The glory with which God graces His Son because of His obedience unto the death of the cross, is such that it not only exalts Christ above all else in the universe, but also brings all creation into recognition and acceptance of this fact. Every knee will bow to Him, every tongue will acclaim Him as Lord. All in earth and heaven will ultimately rejoice in Him as their Saviour, for it is at the name of *Jesus* that every knee will bow. Truly He will see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And God too will be satisfied, for the acclaim that will be given to His Son is in accord with His own will and purpose, and will redound to His own great glory, for the Son is the One in Whom He constantly delights.

The Ephesian letter gives us also the *effect* of the cross on the *ecclesia*. It has a peace-making influence, settling differences between members. At the time Paul was writing, the most vital difference was that which divided the nation of Israel from the rest of humanity. This was a fleshly difference, inaugurated by God through the covenant which He made with Abraham, and marked by the rite of circumcision. For many centuries Israel had been the favored

nation, and will be again during the coming millennial era. But see what Paul says in Ephesians 2, verses 11-18:

"Wherefore, remember that once you, the nations in flesh—who are termed 'Uncircumcision' by those termed 'Circumcision,' in flesh, made by hands—that you were, in that era, apart from Christ, being alienated from the citizenship of Israel, and guests of the promise covenants, having no expectation, and without God in the world. Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become near by the blood of Christ. For He is our Peace, Who makes both one, and razes the central wall of the barrier (the enmity in His flesh), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees, that He should be creating the two, in Himself, into one new humanity, making peace; *and should be reconciling both in one body to God through the cross*, killing the enmity in it. And, coming, He brings the evangel of peace to you, those afar, and peace to those near, for through Him we both have had the access, in one spirit, to the Father."

There are those today who would strive to make the unity of the church. The unity was made nearly two thousand years ago—on the cross! Ephesians goes on to ask us to *keep* the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace. Ephesians emphasizes unities—one . . . one . . . one! One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one expectation, and so on (Eph. 4:4,5). And if the cross effectively kills the racial enmity between Israel and the nations, so that those of either group can be at peace with each other in the ecclesia, we may be sure that it equally effectively kills all other fleshly enmities. In the flesh we may be of different nationalities, different colors, different sexes, yes, even of different sects, but if we are called believers, members of that one ecclesia which exists today, the ecclesia which is His body, we should recognize that the cross kills all these barriers to unity, and try to live as an example to the universe, doing our utmost to keep the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace.

Let us then be done with idle words, with thoughtless remarks, with petty complaints, with unnecessary criticisms, with everything that might hurt or offend, for such things are of the flesh, and tend to destroy peace. It is necessary that we should remain in the flesh for the time being, for we have a mission of peace in the world. As ambassadors for Christ, we preach conciliation (2 Cor. 5:20). God is holding out the hand of friendship to all who will grasp it. But how can we preach peace—how can we be true ambassadors of the Prince of peace—if we allow strifes to arise among ourselves?

Discords are evidences of the old humanity recapping itself; by just so much as we give encouragement to the flesh do we become enemies of the cross of Christ. Let us never forget that the term "enemies of the cross" is used of those who are not walking according to the model offered by Paul (Phil.3:18,19). It was against a background of dissentions among such brethren that Paul preached his word of the cross (1 Cor.3:3,4).

The prison letters abound with advice as to how we should conduct ourselves, and rightly so, for we are God's achievement, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, and what is being accomplished in the ecclesia today is but a sample, a demonstration, of what will be accomplished throughout the universe tomorrow. Colossians opens up the field, and gives the widest possible application of the message of the cross, extending its effect to the whole of God's creations. Here we read:

"And *He* [Christ] 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 to reconcile all to Him (*making peace through the blood of His cross*), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens" (Col.1:18-20).

This is the scripture which truly proclaims universal reconciliation. It is achieved through the blood of the cross. Because the One, Who was above all, descended to the point where He was below all; because the One, Who created all, humbled Himself to the point where He was accursed for all; the effects of the cross can, and will, be extended to incorporate every one of God's creation. For in that curse is included all the sin, all the iniquity, all the unrighteousness, that have plagued heaven and earth throughout the eons; in that curse is included all the enmity and alienation that have stood between God and His creatures; *and they are crucified for all time!*

This is the triumphant peace-making achievement of the love of God operating in the Son of His love. It is God's power for salvation, untouched and untainted by human effort, and it is all-sufficient, all-conquering, all-embracing, all-satisfying, and all-glorifying to God.

This is the Word of the Cross!

John H. Essex

RECONCILIATION TO GOD

Sin, offense and wickedness should not be judged and measured by the relations between man and man, but between man and God.

Justification is by blood, yet reconciliation is through death (*cf* Rom.5:9,10). The first has to do with acts, and calls for suffering. The second has to do with a condition, and demands the death state. We deserve both. To put it popularly (but imperfectly) mankind deserves both torment and annihilation, and Christ endured them on our behalf. Sinners will suffer affliction and distress in the judgment for what they *do,* and enemies enter the second death for what they *are.* The judging is concerned only with their acts, hence is followed by the second death, which deals with the deeper aspect. Their vivification at the consummation, being the nullification of *death* (1 Cor.15:22-26), deals with what they are, and so they are brought into reconciliation to God, which is established through the blood of Christ's cross (Col.1:20).

A. E. Knoch

TAKING ACCOUNT OF GRACE

FROM the "Yet now" of Romans 3:21 to the "Thus you also" of Romans 6:11 we have heard powerful and highly welcome declarations of truth. The evangel of God concerning His Son has been unfolded with words of *spiritual grace* (*cf* Rom.1:11), revealing God's righteousness, commending His love and opening the way of access to Him in peace. And all of these gratuities are channeled to us through our Lord Jesus Christ, through His faith-obedience, in that He died for our sake.

This evangel is wholly a message of human inability and deepest need and of divine achievement. We have nothing of ourselves to boast in. But we do boast (glory) in God (Rom.5:11) and in His evangel concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, for it is God's power for salvation (Rom.1:1-5,16; *cf* 1 Cor.1:23-31; Eph.1:19; 2:8,9). It is in God's grace that we, who are sinners, are justified through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:23,24). It is in God's grace that we, who are enemies, stand before Him in peace, being conciliated to Him through the death of His Son (Rom.5:1,2,10). It is the grace of God and the gratuity in grace which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ, which superabounds beyond the disastrous effects of the one offense of Adam, superexceeding every increase of that sin with indisputable righteousness (Rom.5:12-21).

This is the evangel which Paul is bringing us in Romans. Now in chapter 6 the welcome effects of this evangel on the lives of those who are believing it are set before us. The message we are believing not only tells us of God's power in saving sinners for the life to come, but as it is

being believed it becomes itself God's power for salvation in our present lives. The evangel is so characterized by grace that it can be identified by that one word, *grace,* under which we are securely placed (Rom.6:14).

The evangel tells us that God has achieved what is direly needed by us, yet impossible for us to gain by our efforts. It is the message of God's work of grace, carried out in His gift of His Son. Over and over Paul has made this clear:

A. *By works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in [God's] sight.*
B. *Yet now . . . a righteousness of God is manifest . . . through Jesus Christ's faith.* (Rom.3:20,21)

A. *For all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God.*
B. *Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus . . .* (Rom.3:23,24)

A. *While we are still sinners,*
B. *Christ died for our sakes.* (Rom.5:8)

A. *Being enemies,*
B. *we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son.* (Rom.5:10)

A. *As it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation,*
B. *thus also it is through one just deed for all mankind for life's justifying.* (Rom.5:18)

A. *Even as through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners,*
B. *thus also, through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just.* (Rom.5:19)

A. *Where the sin increases,*
B. *the grace superexceeds.* (Rom.5:20)

A. *As Sin reigns in death,*
B. *thus Grace also should be reigning through righteousness for life eonian.* (Rom.5:21)

The reality of sin and its effect on humanity, bluntly stated and boldly faced in points "A" is dealt with by the reality of God's righteousness and grace operating through the faith of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners as announced in points "B." Points "A" present the need of the evangel, and points "B" present the evangel which meets that need.

There is One, and One only Who carries out the delivering work set before Him by His God and Father. We do not and cannot add to this work. For us the justification and conciliation and life are gratuitous. It is a work of God's grace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. The way in which this evangel speaks to us today, while death and sin continue to operate in us and all around us, now comes before us in Romans 6.

What we are to be doing these days as believers in a world dominated by irreverence and unrighteousness, and in a body corrupted by mortality, is to be *believing* the evangel, *declaring* it, *coming to know* it, *perceiving* it with the eyes of our heart, and *reckoning* its value that is, continually *taking it into account.* Consequently, in the opening verses of Romans 6, in urging these actions, Paul expands the evangel by expounding points "B" as they particularly apply to believers:

We are baptized into Christ's death.
We were entombed together with Him through baptism into death.
We shall be walking in newness of life through the glory of the Father even as Christ was roused by this means.
We have become planted together in the likeness of Christ's death.
We shall be of the resurrection also.
Our old humanity was crucified together with Christ.
Our body of Sin shall be nullified.
We shall by no means still be slaving for Sin.

We have been justified from Sin.
We died together with Christ and shall be living together with Him also.

To these vibrating words, telling us what has been done and what will happen, the apostle adds words of evangel as they relate personally to our Lord. In doing so he shows both the basis and the pattern of our death to Sin and our life of living to God:

Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying.
Death is lording it over Him no longer,
For in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time,
Yet in that He is living, He is living to God.

THUS YOU ALSO

This description of Christ's current life, in which He is dead to His former contact with sin as the Sin Offering, and in which He is living to God, has uplifting significance for us. Christ has died to Sin once and for all, and in that we are identified with Christ in His death, we are "dead to Sin." Furthermore, Christ, having experienced death, is living to God, and in that we, who know mortality, are "in Christ Jesus, our Lord," we stand in grace before God as living ones, as those who are alive to Him.

At present, this is our position in Christ, but not yet our experience. Nevertheless, our apostle draws us to his side and exhorts us to be taking account of the evangel's every word of grace, and of its certainty. It is the word of the faithful God. It is God's WELL-MESSAGE, allowing no boasting in ourselves, but bringing spiritual power for our living as it speaks to us of God's overwhelming grace:

Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed to Sin,
yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

THE IMPERATIVE MOOD

Paul gives stress to the value and importance of this reckoning by expressing it in what is termed by grammarians as the "imperative mood," which he continues to use in the next two verses. In everyday terms this verb form is often explained as making commands as distinct from giving information (the "indicative mood"). But more harmonious with the context of grace we might better see these imperatives as *exhortations* which arise from brotherly concern. When, in Romans 12:1, Paul repeats the exhortation of verse 13 concerning presenting our bodily members to God, he uses the verb "entreat," which, in Greek, has the sense of calling another person to one's side. There Paul relates his words to us as his *brethren* and speaks in view of *the pities of God.* So also here in Romans 6 Paul connects his imperatives firmly to the evangel of *God's grace.* Taking up the matter of our current living, which was introduced in Romans 6:1, our apostle and brother draws us to his side and directs us to be taking account of what has happened to us in grace and what shall occur, as a source of spiritual strength in our living.

BE RECKONING

The exhortation of Romans 6:11 serves as the major premise for the imperatives that follow. Paul does not begin by telling us we are to be living to God. Rather he first directs us to be taking account of the evangel most particularly as it relates the believer to the death and resurrected life of Christ. This is the leading imperative. The following exhortations, (1) "Let not Sin be reigning in your mortal body," (2) "[do not] be presenting your bodily members as instruments of unrighteousness to Sin," and (3) "[do] present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as instruments of righteous-

ness to God," are built on the exhortation: "Be reckoning yourselves to be dead to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

The root meaning of *reckon* is LAY*ize*,[1] that is, to lay to one's account, or to lay before one's consciousness, to take account of. God laid, or put righteousness to Abraham's account when he believed the promise concerning his seed (Rom.4:1-12), and God does the same for us who are believing His evangel concerning His Son (Rom.4: 23-25). Now in Romans 6:11 Paul exhorts us to be taking account of the blessings God has put to our account, in this case that God has baptized us into the death of Christ, and we stand before Him alive *in Christ Jesus, our Lord.*

Indeed, we are to be taking account of every blessing of God's grace, as they have been set before us in Romans, but especially in the present context, we are to take account of the high favor of our present standing before God as we are in Christ Jesus, Who is our Lord.

IN CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD

By works of law, no flesh at all can be justified in God's sight (Rom.3:20). Yet now God has identified us with the death of Christ and views us in Christ, as He is, having died to Sin and living to God. Here Paul opens up this momentous theme of the believer's inclusion in Christ, which is greatly expanded in Ephesians and Colossians. God blesses us in Christ, chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world and graces us in the Beloved, in Whom our lot was cast also, that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ (Eph.1:3-12). Eventually all will be vivified in Christ (1 Cor.15:22), but already, in spirit, God has placed us into the death of Christ. Thus now God sees us in Christ Jesus our Lord, dead, indeed,

1. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.241.

to Sin, yet living to God, as Christ is living to Him. It is our happy task, to be setting this and every detail of the evangel of God's grace before our minds, taking account, over and over again, of its majestic glories.

THE LINKAGE

The imperative of Romans 6:11 leads us into the imperatives of verses 12 and 13. They are linked to the exhortation to be reckoning ourselves to be dead to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord, as indicated by the little word *then* at the beginning of verse 12. This term tells us that the new imperatives are logical conclusions to the imperative of verse 11.

Hence we may fill out Paul's words in such ways as the following:

[As the logical conclusion of taking account of God's grace in identifying us with the death of Christ and with His life,] *let not Sin be reigning in your mortal body, for you to be obeying its lusts.*

[As the logical conclusion of taking account of the grace of being made alive to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord,] *do not be presenting your members as implements of righteousness to Sin.*

[As the logical conclusion of taking account of God's grace in seeing us in Christ Jesus, our Lord,] *present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as implements of righteousness to God.*

If we do not see this connection between these exhortations and taking account of God's grace in identifying us with Christ in His death and resurrection, we may easily lose that happiness which grace (literally, JOY) brings with it. This is what happened to the Galatians (*cf* Gal. 4:15; 5:4), who wanted to bring in law, where all is grace. Hence Paul wrote to them, "O foolish Galatians! . . . This

only I want to learn from you: Did you get the spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal.3:1). It is by the hearing of the evangel which manifests the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ, and in believing it and taking account of it, that we are endowed with spiritual strength. "Now the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal.5:22,23).

WE ARE UNDER GRACE

We all want to heed Paul's imperatives of Romans 6:12,13. To be freed from the reign of Sin sums up our future state, and to present ourselves to God, living to Him, sums up our future sphere of activity. Yet how can even an earnest of such happiness enter into our lives today? It cannot be by law, for that only increases offense to God and our personal wretchedness (*cf* Rom.7:21-24). It is by taking account of grace! We are not under law, but under grace (Rom.6:14).

This is the type of teaching to which we are given over (Rom.6:17), which we are "obeying," UNDER-HEARING, or submissively hearing. Worthy walk comes by attentively listening to the evangel and making a reckoning of its superabundance of wealth in righteousness, in peace and in life. With reference to our current lives, Paul always points us to this message, not only as it is presented in Romans but in all his epistles. "For the word of the cross is stupidity, indeed, to those who are perishing, yet to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor.1:18). "Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly" (Col. 3:16). "Be invigorated by the grace which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim.2:1).

We are to keep this grace in view always. This is Paul's exhortation for believers today with regard to our way of living. We are secured and directed under grace. D.H.H.

CHRIST'S DEATH AND THE BELIEVERS' RECKONING

(Notes on Romans 6:9-11)

DEATH is mastering Christ no longer for the reason that He Who died, died to sin once. Unlike the Levitical sacrifices; or the sin offerings on the Day of Atonement, which were repeated annually, His death occurred once for all time. Just as He is the last Adam excluding any possibility of a successor, so His death was the one judgment-death of the whole race excluding possibility of repetition. Adam's one sin is met and counteracted by the last Adam's one death. God, Who so severely punished Moses for smiting the rock a second time instead of speaking to it, as he was bidden, will not smite His Son a second time. To do so would deny the efficacy of the one death. Only apostates crucify for themselves the Son of God again (Heb.6:6).

If it be asked how sin and death could have a claim on the one sinless Man, the explanation is found in the declaration that "the One knowing no sin, He [God] made to be sin for our sakes" (2 Cor.5:21). The fact of His personal sinlessness must ever be maintained beside the fact that He was made sin. Sin was always foreign to Him personally, even when He was bearing the shame and doom of the sin of mankind. Though He was undefiled by sin, even when on the cross, being then, as always, absolutely devoted to the accomplishment of God's will for Him, He took upon Himself the responsibility for all humanity's sin and bore its utmost penalty. Thus He loved mankind, thus He loved justice, and thus He loved His God and Father.

The second part of verse ten, "yet He Who is living, is living to God," gives a further proof that death is no longer mastering Him. There is no connection with sin and death in that life which He now lives. Unlike His earthly life, in which He assumed responsibility for sin, His present life is righteously released from the connection He once had. Consequently, death cannot touch Him. God sent His Son into this world in the likeness of sin's flesh, and for sin, that is, as a sin offering. He participated in blood and flesh that He might accomplish a deliverance through His death (Heb.2:14). The abolition of sin and death being one of the chief purposes of His incarnation, it follows that He was much occupied with this part of His earthly mission until His task was accomplished. The redemptive work being done, and that which caused the estrangement of that dark hour being removed, the incarnate One can live to God as never before.

BE RECKONING

In verse eleven, Paul turns from revelation to exhortation. The condensed speech of inspiration allows no unnecessary exhortation and application. The first of many exhortations found in the epistle begins here. Exhortation is in contrast to what has been presented, for at no point have the readers been exhorted to believe; saints who have been justified by faith are addressed. But inasmuch as they may not be reckoning on the truth of their likeness to Christ, there is need of exhortation to do so. Justification is appropriated by faith; but we are not dead to sin and alive to God by reckoning. Baptism into Christ Jesus, with all that such a union brings, is not made ours by reckoning; it is true apart from our knowledge or reckoning. Such knowledge and reckoning are, however, prerequisites to practical deliverance.

"Thus you also be reckoning yourselves to be dead,

indeed, to sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus." This verse answers the following questions: Who are exhorted? You, the saints. What are we exhorted to do? To be reckoning. What are we to reckon? That we are dead to sin and alive to God. How far is the likeness between Christ and His members true? Even "thus also." What makes this likeness ours? We are in Christ Jesus. What is the practical value of such reckoning? It is a prerequisite to a walk in newness of life, to making sin's body inert, and to freedom from sin's slavery. There is also the value of transformation by occupation with God instead of occupation with sin, which is the first formula for holiness of life.

Reckoning is the mental activity of faith. The word has frequently been used in this epistle; God reckons faith for righteousness (4:3,6,8,9,10,11,22,23,24). Just as we reckon mankind to be justified by faith, so we must reckon ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus (3:28). Unless they are ignorant of this part of the gospel, believers must make this reckoning. Be reckoning is an imperative call to a continuous calculation of faith, and this is made necessary by the actual presence of the sin from which we have been justified. Reckoning, like faith, comes from hearing the good tidings, therefore the section before us should be our frequent study, since forgetfulness of the facts may lead to doubt and consequent loss of assurance and peace of conscience. Instead of being called to attain the impossible, the gospel calls us to believe what the power of God has wrought for us. We are not told to die to sin; reckoning turns our eyes to Christ and occupies us with His cross and His vindication and the blessedness of our union with Him.

SALVATION ACHIEVED IN CHRIST JESUS

God is true, and He speaks with accuracy. Had believers heard accurately they would have escaped many errors.

He has not told us to reckon that sin as a force in us is dead. The death of Christ did not eradicate sin's presence. If sin were eradicated, we should have no need to reckon it to be dead; it would be a constant realization in daily experience. The absence of evil thoughts and inclinations and spontaneous faith and all goodness would attest to all that sin had vanished. Reckoning sin to be dead is false and produces false professions of sinlessness and the evils of self-delusion and self-complacency. The presence of sin can be removed only by literal death. The change that is wrought in those who are alive at the presence of Christ is necessary just because sin dwells in us. Corruption and mortality are the results and evidences of sin, and these cannot have an allotment in the kingdom of God. Sin will be eradicated only when we exchange mortality for immortality (1 Cor.15:50-54).

When God says reckon we should not substitute realize, or walk, or struggle. This salvation is objective; it was achieved outside ourselves and in Christ Jesus. Therefore we must not look inward. The facts are not verifiable by our experience, though they make an experience possible. We shall fail to grasp what God has done if we seek to bring it down to the level of experience, for no one can presently experience the crucifixion of his old humanity, his death to sin, and his justification from sin.

We may substitute no other word for reckon, such as walk or struggle. Justification from sin is not ours because we may be walking in accord with spirit, but, on the contrary, it is a prerequisite to such a walk. Nor am I dead to sin when I am victorious in a struggle with temptation to sin; sin and death reigned, and I was not delivered by fighting, but by dying. Christ was not fighting sin on the cross; He was accepting sin's doom and dying to it. We shall get the exact truth as we note carefully just what happened to Christ and then reckon ourselves thus also.

George L. Rogers

HUMAN DESTINY

(Part One)

AM I a mere passing flash in the universal pan—a transient spark struck off on the anvil of Chance—an accident in the realms of Space? Have I just "happened?" or am I instead the partial fruition of some great design—a finite expression of an infinite thought, atomic in proportions, divine in grand potentiality? If there be a "Power not ourselves" behind the phenomena of creation, have I a place in His purpose? Have I been included in the wide sweep of His extensive plans? or am I of as little consequence to Him as is the mote in the sunbeam's path? Such is the problem as it affects the individual; and full evidence of its universal interest may be found in the never-ceasing attempt to dissolve those mysteries which hide its solution from the eyes of men, as also in the case with which priestcraft has gained its unholy ascendancy through claiming a special knowledge of, and power over, such matters.

When we rise from the problem as it affects the individual to the problem in its relation to the race, the sheer immensity of the question stuns us. The mere thought of an ocean of souls sweeping with unceasing flow over the falls of death makes us realize how impotent we are to find a solution of the enigma through a mere process of logic.

Such problems are the heritage of every man; and every religion which men have followed, and every philosophy which has engaged the mental powers of humanity, owe their existence to the pressure with which such problems have borne in upon the human heart. Religion—the man-

made kind—need not even be considered by us here; in its most presentable forms it is but a pious agnosticism—a devout ignorance. Religion seeks for feeling: philosophy knowing; but neither the head nor the heart are competent in themselves to grapple with the problem of destiny. Philosophy must necessarily prove itself inadequate for the task, for it has nothing from which to reason as a starting-point, and beginning nowhere it naturally ends nowhere. Philosophy being nothing more than a comparison of possibilities, ending in the selection of the most probable, cannot ever hope to attain to assured certainty. From such broken reeds we gladly turn, and all the more gladly since God has not left us like

> "Orphans crying in the night;
> Orphans crying for the light;
> And with no language but a cry!"

He has graciously revealed Himself, and in His Word has given us all necessary knowledge concerning "things to come."

In Christianity alone can we find the solution of this great mystery. Its teachings bear no trace of the labored speculations of the philosophers. Its assertions have no affinity with the rash dogmatism of mere cultured guesswork. Its pronouncements have the finality of truth. It lifts the veil between things present and things to come without the slightest vestige of that timidity which naturally springs from uncertainty of mind. It pushes materialism aside as being nothing but the weird fancy of disordered brains and callous hearts, shows that man is more than a product of blind forces with an origin in the unknown and a destiny in chaos, and instead traces his genesis to the God of a love which knows no ending, a patience which never wearies, and a wisdom able to overcome every obstacle

with which rebellious wills would seek to thwart His purposes of grace. It declares that this earth is not a whirling speck of matter severed from all other spheres of being, but rather that its past and future are intimately linked with the history and destiny of all other worlds, and that instead of its being—like a straw in a whirlwind—the sport of gigantic forces, is guided on its onward course by the finger of God to a place of government and rule in the reconstruction of the universe. Nor must we imagine that the plans of the Creator include merely the majority of men, for the God of the seemingly surplus sparrow will have no ultimate "waste" in the fulfillment of His will.

But the truth of God's Word and the theories of Christians are not synonymous terms, and as we are about to examine the latter the question as to how we may distinguish the true from the false here presents itself. Or if every theory contains something of the truth then we must determine how we may separate those elements we should accept from those we should reject. If we bear in mind that there is in truth a symmetry between its parts, then we shall find that harmony is one of the best tests we can apply to any doctrine submitted to us for examination. If a belief does not harmonize in full with the teaching of Scripture, and the revealed character of God, or if it emphasizes one of God's attributes so as to exaggerate it over His other perfections, then it must be more or less untrue.

In reading a poem if there is not a perfect balance maintained between the different lines we become aware of its imperfection of the lack of rhythm which it betrays, and we know that the meter has been thrown out of balance either by the presence of a superfluous syllable, or the absence of a necessary one. God is the great Poem of the universe, and His ways are but the poetry of His attributes in their activity. When, therefore, we seek to translate His ways into the terms of doctrinal statement, and our trans-

lation betrays a lack of the poise and balance belonging to His perfections, we know that such lack of harmony owes its existence to our having put into our statement something that should have been left out, or having left out something we should have put in.

In studying the theories of human destiny, instead of finding this symmetry and balance in them, we find the reverse: and, as this doctrine does not stand alone but is intimately connected with such vital subjects as the atonement, etc., we are not surprised to find that incongruity here has transmitted itself to these other articles of faith. And we may consequently expect that clearness of vision in one of these doctrines must exert a clarifying influence on our views in regard to those other subjects.

The importance of the doctrine of human destiny may also be inferred from the fact that so many departures from the Christian faith owe their existence to a revolt of conscience against those dogmas we call "traditional." Much of the deplorable teaching in regard to such doctrines as Inspiration is but the result of a revulsion against intolerable conceptions of God. If we can show that Scripture gives us a view of God marvelous in its perfect harmony, and altogether foreign to the caricatures of the creeds, then we shall have deprived Error of the main apology for its existence.[1]

Without further preface we will proceed to the examination of the principal theories which men have held, and still hold, in relation to the future life.

---

1. It is not denied that in many the apostasy is due to a moral antagonism to evangelical truth, with which we cannot have the slightest vestige of sympathy, but this should not blind us to the fact that with others the departure from traditional views arises rarely from intellectual difficulties. The latter class call for sympathy rather than caustic stricture.

THE DOGMA OF ETERNAL TORMENT

An exhaustive examination of the doctrine before us would require more space than could be profitably allotted to it in the pages of a magazine. The reader must therefore be prepared for a suggestive, rather than an exhaustive treatment of the subject; and not be disappointed should he find here but seed-thoughts requiring mental effort in their proper development.

We cannot rise from nature up to God; nor can we ascend from theory to truth. When we know God, then we can descend to an intelligent and enjoyable knowledge of nature, for then we have the key which unlocks the mysteries of the material world; similarly, when we possess truth we are in a position to analyze theory, for only then can we accurately discriminate between the various elements of which each and every theory is composed.

There is no truth (as held by man) entirely free from error, nor any error altogether devoid of truth; indeed, not a few doctrines which we call false are but grotesque truths—orthodoxies become heretical by distortion, exaggeration, or under-statement. The theory of everlasting punishment is no exception. It has elements of truth without a doubt, elements which have never failed to commend themselves to such as are "spiritual"; but, because other of its elements are "carnal," or earth-born, these latter have ever been the producing causes of heart-pain and soul-misery, the entire doctrine being accepted, nevertheless, supported as it apparently is by what purports to be a translation of the words of God, but which in reality is merely a transcription of certain theories of the translators. This is no reflection upon the personal integrity of the translators, nor upon the general excellency of their version, their work being referred to only so far as it touches upon the subject of human destiny. The truth of this will become evident as we proceed.

The dogma of endless torment rests upon a threefold basis, viz.,

(1) ASSUMPTION;
(2) TRANSLATION; and
(3) TRADITION.

These are the three main props of an unsound doctrine, the strength of each depending to a large extent upon its fellows. We shall see how they bear the test of investigation.

(1) ASSUMPTION. Speculation—the mother of assumption—has, of course, no power for either good or evil in itself, it being simply a wild hazard at possible truth—drawing the bow at a venture, as it were; but when erroneous speculation crystallizes into unquestioned dogma, when its assumptions are foolishly and blindly accepted as incontrovertible fragments of absolute truth, then it acquires an authority, and wields a tyrannical despotism, to which it can advance no rightful claim. The baneful effects of such folly may be found in abundance in the sphere of science, where learned men have fathered not a few absurdities and, on the discovery of their mistakes, have attributed them to this very practice of accepting certain assumptions as being so obviously true as to require no proof. Many a scientific dogma has collapsed the moment its assumptive basis was called in question.

Taking things for granted, receiving without question certain propositions the truth of which is supposedly self-evident, has produced its own evil harvest in the domain of theology. Thus, having preconceptions as to what God cannot be, we interpret every scripture which declares what He is in such a way as will not conflict with those preconceptions of ours; having assumed that heaven cannot be this or that, we read every biblical reference to it in the light of these suppositions; having affirmed that the

only way the saint can leave the world is through death, we explain (?) every allusion to the second coming in harmony therewith. The church has found to its sorrow that its assumptions in regard to these and kindred subjects have been but so many barriers and obstacles in the way of entering into the mind of God on such topics, and that real progress only commenced with a searching criticism of theories we had brought to Scripture, rather than derived from it. But we have been slow to question the assumptions on which the dogma of endless torment is founded, assumptions just as gratuitous as those which have hindered progress in the other subjects referred to.

Now when Scripture describes the duration of punishment it does not do so in terms expressive of eternity. The Greek language was not without terms descriptive of endlessness, but the holy spirit, in revealing the truth of God, persistently refused to use those terms in connection with either sin itself, or its consequences. Instead of those terms—terms which man unquestionably would have employed—the spirit of God made use of others, denoting not endless but age-long duration. Whether the "ages" are eternal or not is a question which obviously cannot be determined by the word itself. In order to settle this point appeal must be made to that which alone can define the meaning of words, i.e., usage.

Just at this point we would mention one of the self-evident axioms of literary interpretation, namely, that to understand the scope of a writer's terminology we must study—not some other author's usage, but—the usage of that particular writer whose meaning we would obtain. If the writer himself defines the sense, and points out the limitations attached to the words he employs, then it would be sheer idiocy to try and force upon them the sense which other writers may have attached to their use. If Aristotle was the author of Romans through Philemon, then Aris-

totelian usage would define New Testament terms; but, seeing that Paul was the apostle whose pen was used in their production, common-sense itself demands that we consult the Pauline usage.

Had Paul's use of words been studied, the assumption that the age-times are eternal would never have been made. Had that assumption not been made, the dogma of endless torment would never have been foisted upon the church of God; but once made, the sluice-gates were opened to admit a torrent of semi-philosophical trash into the crystal stream of Bible truth. It is our urgent duty to filter out the adulterations as rapidly and as thoroughly as we can, depending on our gracious God for the ability necessary in such an important ministry.

As this—the definition of terms—is an important point, we will be pardoned for repeating ourselves a little. What the writer desires to emphasize is—even if it were granted that Grecian philosophers conceived the ages and eternity as being synonymous terms—that would not prove that Christian writers intended to convey pagan conceptions, especially when the New Testament use of the terms forbade such a supposition. To say because Christian writers and heathen philosophers employed the same terms they must therefore have used them with exactly the same associated ideas, is equivalent to saying because the term, "eons," was used to describe personal emanations from Deity— beings midway in station between Creator and creature—that consequently Paul taught the same Gnostic ideas when he also employed the same word in view.

The theory that the ages are eternal is the main assumption on which the dogma of endless torment rests, being always appealed to in fact as the final "proof" of every other assumption it contains. Think of appealing to one error in order to prove others! Imagine a heretic appealing to heterodoxy in order to prove his heresy! A chain,

we are told, is only as strong as its weakest link. This link in error's chain is not only weak, but FRAGILE.

Hitherto we have considered the purely assumptive basis on which the dogma of eternal torment is founded. God said *this,* but as men thought He meant *that,* they found no difficulty in omitting the words He used, and employing instead such words as they felt sure He meant to use! Alas for the day when theology undertook to correct revelation!

It is now in order to mention some other assumptions which have given to this dogma whatever consistency it possesses. Proving these assumptions false we destroy its consistency; and, its consistency destroyed, further belief in it is an affront to both revelation and reason.

The ideas of endless torment and the soul's inherent immortality are closely related; endless pain being impossible apart from conscious endless existence. And it is in keeping with this, that if men derived their doctrine of the ages from Aristotle, they should derive their doctrine of immortality from Plato. They are therefore related in their being so dependent on each other, as well as in having their sources amongst the gentiles, to whom without a doubt the oracles of God were *not* entrusted.

The supposition that immortality is the birthright of the natural man, without any reference to his moral fitness for such a priceless treasure, is one absolutely foreign to biblical revelation. So self-evident is this, many advocates of the doctrine feel constrained to claim, "Immortality in Scripture is nowhere revealed but everywhere assumed." The point they would wish to make is that inherent immortality was so obvious a truth it required no statement! Gladstone, in his *Studies of Butler,* remarks that the doctrine of immortality "crept into the church by the back door" and his concluding remarks on the *History of Opinion* are of value:

"Another consideration of the highest importance is that the natural immortality of the soul is a doctrine wholly unknown to the Holy Scriptures, and standing on no higher plane than that of an ingeniously sustained . . . philosophical opinion. And surely there is nothing, as to which we ought to be more on our guard, than the entrance into the precincts of Christian doctrine, either without authority or by an abuse of authority, of philosophical speculations disguised as truths of Divine Revelation. They bring with them a grave restraint on mental liberty; but what is worse is, that their basis is a pretension essentially false, and productive . . . of other falsehoods."

How true is his closing statement, "productive of other falsehoods"! One error must be sustained by another error; one assumption demands another in its support. "Taking for granted" something about the "ages of time," is quickly followed by "taking for granted" something about the souls of men. And if the assumption concerning the ages produced evil fruit in its effect on related subjects, so also did the acceptation of philosophy's "grand guess" in regard to the human soul weave a web of enchantment over every doctrine affected by it.

The Scriptures defined the limits of the ages, and clearly distinguished them from the eternity of which they formed a part: men, blinded by false pre-conceptions, defined the ages to *be* eternity, and not merely a part of it. The Scriptures emphasized man's mortality: men, under the glamour of philosophy, wrote poems about their immortality. The Scriptures spoke of the Creator as a God who suffered from sin, who could love and hate with an intensity of emotion unknown to man: men taught that God was beyond being affected by men's misdeeds. We cannot illustrate such methods of interpretation by the Philosopher's Stone, for whereas that mythical wonder-worker turned all it touched into gold, this method transformed the gold of divine truths into the dross of human deceits.

To examine in detail the other assumptions on which this doctrine is founded is hardly necessary just now, it being desired to merely emphasize the fact that these preconceived theories concerning the endlessness of the ages, the immortality of the soul, and the impassivity of God—theories which have so largely molded current theology—are but assumptions, and consequently are not to be regarded as clinching proofs of such a tremendous doctrine as the one before us.

(2) TRANSLATION. The second great support of this dogma is to be found in "versions" of the Bible, which we should ever bear in mind are not Scripture but translations of it. When the Bible was written, in its various parts, it was not written in English, French or German, but in Hebrew and in Greek; and, therefore, whenever a question of doctrine arises, resort must be made to the very terms God used, in order to obtain the very idea which God meant to convey. That the assumptions made by translators influenced their translations of the Bible is an undeniable fact, patent to every student who compares a literal translation with the ordinary version. For instance, where we read in the AV "everlasting" and "eternal," in Young's Literal Translation, we find the term "age-during"—the latter leaving the question open as to whether age-duration is eternal or not. The assumption that age-duration *must* be eternal led the translators of most versions to use infinite terms to describe a duration which the very Bible they were translating proved could not be endless.

False philosophy having produced this false translation, finds most of its strength and proof, to the great mass of Bible readers, in its own production. If Englishmen thought that the framers of the Magna Carta meant something other than just what they said, and altered it accordingly, subsequently appealing to this altered document as proof of their ideas, the situation would be anal-

ogous to the one before us—theologians appealing to the translation of their own views in order to prove them.

(3) TRADITION. Next, we find the element of stability which tradition yields. Tradition is the time-element in both truth and error; it does not make the truth a whit more certain, nor does it in the least detract from the falsity of error. Buddhism is older, but not truer, than Christianity. Sin itself is hoary-headed.

If we but grant the premises on which the dogma of endless torment is based, we cannot deny the rationality of the doctrine itself. The doctrine, as developed, may be manifestly inconsistent with the attributes of God, and still retain a logical consistency with its own arguments. Viewed in relation to its premises it may have a logical consistency; viewed in relation to the divine perfections it may manifest a moral inconsistency. The mental conflict, which the doctrine has occasioned in the minds of men whose orthodoxy cannot be questioned, cannot be attributed to any glaring, logical absurdity in itself—if all its premises were correct, the absurdity would lie with those who would contradict it. *If sin be eternal,* there is nothing illogical, and certainly everything is moral in the conclusion that eternal suffering is eternal sin's natural concomitant. We therefore find a logical consistency in the doctrine's agreement with its premise, but a moral inconsistency in the relation of that rashly-conceived premise with the known attributes, and revealed truths, of the God who made man for Himself.

Assumption, Translation and Tradition are then the triple foundation on which this mighty dogma rests. The assumptions may have been made by very wise men; the translations made by men of vast literary skill, who had accepted these assumptions; and the doctrines, thus supported, may have been accepted in unquestioning simplicity by very good men—AND STILL BE WRONG! In order, then, to regain the Word of God in all its purity, we must pass by

good men, learned men, and wise men, not because they have been wise, good, or learned, but just because they were *men,* and get back to *God.* We must let God speak for Himself, and instead of molding His words into conformity with our philosophies, rather mold and fashion all our thinking into harmony with His truth. And, instead of vitiating His divine revelations with our human premises, find all our premises as well as our conclusions in Himself alone, who is the Alpha and the Omega of truth.

UNIVERSALISM AND ANNIHILATION

Having considered the soul-crushing dogma of endless torment, it becomes us to make brief reference to its alternative doctrines. Before dismissing from our minds, however, the Augustinian doctrine—as it is called—of endless woe, we must be permitted to remark that if the assumptions on which that dogma is based are correct, and harmonious with Scripture—no matter how strange it may appear to us, nor how foreign it may seem to our conceptions of truth—we must, in the name of reason as well as faith, bow unquestioningly before the utterance of the Omniscience to which alone the entire and unbroken circle of truth can be familiar.

The same "reason" that insists upon a thorough criticism of every human interpretation demands, with equal insistence, an unquestioning acceptance of every divine revelation. The mere whisper of God into the listening ear of faith is more conclusively final than the loudest thunder of unaided reason. "*Unaided* reason" we say, wishing to distinguish between that misnamed "reason" which seeks to wrench the secrets of the universe from God by sheer force of mental powers, and the "reason" which most amply evidences its rationality in a recognition of its own limitations.

Nor should we forget that reason is as much of a necessity to faith, as is faith to reason—to an idiot, bereft of rea-

son, faith is impossible. Without faith, reason degenerates into agnosticism: without reason, faith declines into superstition. Faith, then, is not irrational; it may be opposed to sight, but should not be spoken of as if it were in opposition to reason. If, then, faith exists not apart from reason, and if reason be blind apart from faith, the question presents itself, will the truth as touching human destiny produce such a mighty conflict between the two as history and personal experience shows to exist in relation to the dominant doctrine? The consequence of such a conflict has been that some have doubted that to be faith at all which could so disagree with reason, and others have denied that to be reason which could be so out-of-joint with faith.

True reason acknowledges that sin must be met with punishment, and acquiesces in the thought that punishment must continue as long as sin endures. With such a doctrine it is not reasonable to quibble. But the theory to which reason objects is that of *endless* sin and *endless* punishment as necessary factors in a universe supposed to come from the creative designs of a perfect Deity; and the picture of a universe eternally midway between chaos and perfection—eternally half-damned—is one to which reason has never been able to reconcile itself.

Universalism, however, is not the product of either faith or reason, but the result of a sentimental shrinking from the facts of life, and the stern necessities of moral government—in short, it is neither rational nor believing. It is the extreme of two other extremes—the third point in a triangle of opposing theories: materialism, deifying reason and excluding faith; orthodoxy, exalting faith to the denial of reason; universalism, denying both by its misuse of sentiment. The Augustinian dogma failed to preserve the equipoise of the divine attributes, and sustain the harmonious relation of every divine perfection. But the universalist did not right the wrong by merely shifting

the undue emphasis from one set of attributes to another. Nor does a system commend itself to us which, in order to evade all thought of future punishment, found the fulfillment of every prophecy of judgment in the fall and ruin of Jerusalem. We may, therefore, brush universalism aside without further comment and proceed to the less objectionable views of annihilation, or as its advocates prefer to call it, "conditional immortality."

The doctrines of endless torment and conditional immortality have this in common, that both view the sinner's punishment as being eternal in its infliction—the first consciously so, the second unconsciously. Further, both doctrines are based upon assumption—the former assuming the endlessness of the ages, the latter assuming the endlessness of death. The prematurely accepted theory of the infinity of the age-times yielded strong support to the assumption concerning death's endlessness; for, the punishment of sin being revealed in Scripture as age-lasting, and that punishment being death, the supposed endlessness of the ages naturally attached itself to the wages of sin.

The advocates of eternal torment declare that, once sentence has been passed upon the offender against law, that offender can never come from under the law's decree. In this the exponents of conditional immortality agree. Both schools, therefore, are united against any possible restoration of the lost; the Augustinian finding the impossibility of such restoration in the fixed character of the punished; the annihilationist finding it in the nature of the punishment. The Augustinian reached his dogma by a series of presumptions as to man's being: the annihilationist reached his by presuming that death in its final infliction is instantaneous instead of being a process spread out over the periods of the eons; or, of acknowledging its infliction to be protracted, by concluding that the sinner's destruction is such as will preclude all hope of his resurrection in a body

minus that depravity of nature which so loudly demanded its own eradication.

The problem which confronts the annihilationist, of the dead being raised to die again, those once punished being raised in order to suffer a repetition of their punishment, is one of those jagged difficulties which no line of reasoning can ever remove from the doctrine of conditional immortality as generally formulated. But the suggestion that this resurrection of the wicked dead has reference to a fulfilling of God's gracious purposes in them is one which the annihilationist must reject in consequence of his assumptions regarding death, even as the Augustinian must equally reject it because of his assumptions regarding the eternity of eonian time.

The universalist exaggerated the scriptural terms descriptive of universal bliss—i.e., exaggerated them by ignoring, or minimizing, the import of those scriptures describing God's punitive attitude towards sin. No attempt was made to explain, or reconcile, the discord between these two classes of scripture, but one class was taken and the other, by a process of gross misinterpretation, simply ignored or explained away. The annihilationist, on the other hand, lacking a full-orbed conception of the divine wisdom, and failing to perceive how those threats of destruction could be reconciled with the promises of salvation, by minimizing the extent of the promises, exaggerated the real import of the threats.

The problem as to how there can be a real and complete fulfillment of the threats, and yet an equally real and complete fulfillment of the promises, is but the old problem of how law and grace can both be fulfilled, without being fulfilled at the expense of either. It is but the old problem re-stated in the future tense—the problem of soteriology becomes eschatological.

If God's righteousness and mercy both are abundantly

magnified and satisfied in the salvation of one soul, it is ample intimation that the restoration of every soul, without diminishing or dimming the glory of that righteousness, is not within the sphere of improbability.

Augustinianism involves the idea that some grim necessity demands the continuous maintenance of an eternal inferno within the bounds of the universe. Men have tried to apologize for such conceptions, and have not hesitated to teach that the terror of such a spectacle will effectually prevent a repetition of sin's entrance into the heavenly realms. This, however, is a universe dependent for its stability partly upon love, and partly upon hideous terror—an apology as nauseating as is the concept for which the apology is made.

Annihilation involves the view that whereas puny man possesses the unlimited ability to resist the will of God indefinitely, God is limited in His power to overcome that resistance, unable to influence the human heart so as to remove all rebellious feelings, unable to control circumstances so that by bitter experience itself man may learn the unprofitableness of sin, and turn from it to find true life and liberty in obedience to the divine will. We must choose either horn of the dilemma: either God is limited by man, or else man is encompassed by divine limitations, ones which, while not interfering with the practical freedom of the creature, still prevent ultimate suicide on his part. On our doctrine of destiny, will depend our belief whether God, in creating man, created him so that he could never really get beyond the reach of his Creator's love and enabling grace, or else made him as the pioneer engineers contrived their experimental locomotives: without a safety-valve.

The three great theories of human destiny may consequently be described as three great exaggerations. The Augustinian exaggerates the duration of punishment. The

annihilationist exaggerates the nature of punishment. And the universalist exaggerates certain elements in the nature of God. Each and all of these views amply illustrate what we referred to in the introduction as being "mistranslations of the divine perfections in the terms of our doctrinal statements." The final truth we must look for elsewhere, satisfied that when found it will combine the truth common to each, while eliminating the error attached to all.

We may talk, and write, as we please concerning the Creator's right to do as He pleases with those He creates; but we must not forget that the will of God is not something which can be understood apart from the nature of God. "Show me Thy glory," was Moses' plea, and God revealed it to him in the statements of His power and freedom to confer forgiveness upon His erring creatures. God is not experimenting in human life. He does not adventure at His creature's risk. He does not gamble on chance, or trust to a lucky turn of the wheel of life to bring a possible handful of His creatures back to Himself. In order to save one soul He is not compelled, by some hideous necessity, to damn a hundred. When His purpose in human life is completed, no debris will remain to mar the finished perfection of His work. The circle of human freedom is itself enclosed within the larger circle of the divine decrees: "Known unto God are all His works."

Sin's entrance into the universe did not take the Almighty by surprise. God knew what it would do prior to its entrance; and, when sin finally vacates the scene, it will do so defeated in every particular, not even a partial victor over any that God brought into existence for Himself. Sin will not remain in the universe, either as wielding the lash of endless torment, or holding the scepter of endless death. Death itself shall die, and destruction be itself destroyed. That such a glorious end is to be the grand climax of eonian time, it is now our province to show from the storehouse of God's revealed truth.

Alan Burns

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, FOURTH QUARTER 2012
BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME ONE HUNDRED THREE

EDITORIAL

THAT "Law demands *justice,* not *grace,*" is the fundamental point underlying the entire argument of A. E. Knoch's article in our current issue, "Israel Under the Law" (p.161). Therein, Brother Knoch concludes by saying: "For mortal man, justice means *death*, but grace gives *life*. May God grant that all who read these lines may not be enslaved by a law which is not theirs, but revel in the secret riches of grace, which God has reserved for faith among the *nations*, while Israel is not His people!"

In Alan Burns' article, "Human Destiny (Part Two)" (p.147), the author contemplates "the glorious end [that] is to be the grand climax of eonian time." As Brother Burns wrote in part one of this same exposition (*Unsearchable Riches,* vol.103, p.144), and which theme he now addresses in this concluding portion of this same writing, "When sin finally vacates the scene, it will do so defeated in every particular, not even a partial victor over any that God brought into existence for Himself. Sin will not remain in the universe, either as wielding the lash of endless torment, or holding the scepter of endless death. Death itself shall die, and destruction be itself destroyed."

Beginning on page 173, in his article, "We Are Under Grace," Dean Hough centers his thoughts upon the apostle Paul's astonishing words, "*you* are not under law, but under grace" (Rom.6:14). "One of the most startling summations of the evangel ever given," as it appears in "the words of Romans 5:20, [is] that 'where sin increases, grace superexceeds'! . . . . This highly unconventional teaching (all of grace) is still very much in the foreground in Romans six, and necessarily so. The faithful work of Christ in dying for

sinners is God's powerful means for complete deliverance from sin in the future, yet also, where it is being believed, it is God's means for joy and peace and all the fruit of the spirit in the present, in accord with the earnest of the spirit (*cf* Rom.1:16; Gal.5:22,23; Eph.1:13,14)."

My own article in this issue, continuing in our *Questions and Answers* series, is entitled, "Perceiving the Grace of God" (p.183). The question to which I reply is: What does salvation "by grace" *actually* mean and entail? It is clear that, that "Christ died for our sins," is the essential message of good news having to do with our salvation. But, does Christ's sacrifice for our sins secure and ensure our salvation, or does it just secure and ensure the possibility of our salvation?

My answer to this vital question is centered in the consideration that, "A favor or gracious gift . . . is not something that is due us because of something we have done, but is simply an act performed or provision made granted out of kindness and love in order to bring us joy, *irrespective of what we have done or not done, whether good or bad.* This is what grace *is;* and most importantly, this is what the grace of God is." J.R.C.

Currently, my wife Suella and I are visiting in our Almont, Michigan office, working here together with Dean Hough, Tony Nungesser, and Jerry Upton, who live nearby and ordinarily work from this location..

The new mailing address and phone number of the Concordant Publishing Concern is: P.O. Box 449, Almont, MI 48004; 810-798-3563.

Following our visit here, Sue and I plan to return to the Concern's property (and our home of many years) in Santa Clarita, California in order to attend to various duties there. These include the shipment of additional stock of Concordant publications from our old warehouse in California to our new office in Michigan.

We look to God for direction and wisdom in our continuance of the Concordant ministry, while at the same time asking our friends in faith to join us in earnest prayer for His gracious hand upon these same endeavors.

HUMAN DESTINY

(Part Two)

WHAT men teach about destiny we have seen. It is our province now to inquire what God has to say concerning it.

THE EONS

The reader will bear in mind that the words "eternal" and "everlasting" are not a translation of Scripture but an *interpretation* of it. Where man has "for ever" the original has such terminology as "for the age [eon]," or "for the ages [eons]." The perversion of the idea contained in the Scriptural terms may be seen in the fact that whereas the Hebrew and Greek words preserve and in fact emphasize the age-broken, or periodic character of that portion of eternity within the scope of revelation, the English terms *obliterate* its age-divided peculiarity, and state the idea of duration in the form of monotonous changelessness.

What God revealed (and man *concealed*) was that sin and its punishment are age-during, and what He did not reveal was that age-duration is eternal. But what God (in the Old Testament) had left undefined, that is what man hastened to stereotype into an exact term. God's foolishness was in this, however, as in everything else, wiser than man's wisdom, and God's silence more eloquent than human speech; so much so indeed, that it is more necessary we should have a right understanding of what God left out of the words He used in describing duration, than that we should have clear ideas of what man brought into them. Such phrases as "the endless ages of eternity," so remarkably present in religious literature of every descrip-

tion, are just as remarkably absent from the inspired literature of the Bible. The phrase "immortal soul" is a similar unscriptural expression.

PAUL'S TEACHING

The full doctrine of the eons and the final truth of destiny are to be found in the Pauline epistles. The endeavor to find a fully developed teaching of the ages in the Old Testament can only be likened to an attempt to read the detailed doctrine of Romans into the prophecy of Isaiah. True, it may be granted that as we have germinal beginnings of the apostle's masterpiece in Isaiah's "Old Testament Gospel," even so the intimations of the Hebrew Scriptures involve the subsequent teaching of Paul concerning the eons. Nevertheless, whatever may be said as to the *involved* truth of the Old Testament, it is only in Paul's writings that we find the *evolved* and complete doctrine of the ages. In Paul's epistles we therefore find the key to Old Testament teachings on this subject, and the solution of the entire problem.

In 2 Timothy 1:9 Paul uses an expression which is absolutely opposed to the theory that the eons and eternity are synonymous terms. The Greek words used are *pro chronōn aiōniōn,* which we find rendered in our English Version thus: "before the world began." Now the word for *world* is not *aiōniōn* ("eonian") but *kosmos* ("cosmos"), and as we do not find *kosmos* in the text, but *aiōniōn,* it is apparent at our very first glance that here was something in Scripture which its translators did not understand and which their translation was certain to keep anyone else from understanding either. Giving the word *aiōniōn* its rightful meaning, we translate the phrase thus, "before times eonian." (See also Titus 1:2 and 1 Corinthians 2:7.) Eternity cannot have had a beginning, but here we learn that the eons, or "ages," *did* have one. They are therefore not synonymous terms.

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF DESTINY IN ROMANS

The doctrine of the eons is by no means an isolated one, but is intimately associated with every other scriptural teaching. Clarity in this subject is essential to clearness in others, and error here will inevitably produce confusion elsewhere. Proof of this is very evident in the epistle before us, the very lack of anxiety, or carefulness, on the author's part to prevent the reader from accepting his teaching in a full race-wide sense being only equalled by the corresponding anxiety on the part of his interpreters lest his words should be construed to have that meaning. Why Paul should have been so careless, and his modern expositors so careful, shows, if anything, a difference in point of view between him and them. Should we accept the scriptural teaching of the eons, then Paul's choice of terms will be appreciated by us; but, should we prefer the pagan notions concerning them, Paul's lack of restrictive language will become a matter for wonder, if indeed it does not become a fit subject for our criticism.

The most casual reader of Romans chapter five must recognize that the author deals in all-inclusive terms. He does not balance a race-wide over against an elective expression, but when writing of sin's ruin and redemption's scope employs the same unrestrictive word in both connections, without even a passing hint that we should understand sin and salvation as being other than co-extensive. He does not contrast "all" with "some," nor "many" with "few." His parallels are consistently drawn, and show that his object is not to present a numerical contrast but a moral one—the number involved remaining unaltered throughout his argument, the same *quantitative* words being used, where different *qualitative* terms are employed. The marked contrast between the qualitative words is no more evident than

is the lack of contrast between the quantitative expressions. Paul's object then is not to show the difference between one part of the race and another, nor between a majority in one condition and a minority in another, but to develop the difference between the race as related to Adam in flesh and the race as related to Christ in grace.

The mischievous assumptions concerning the ages effectually paralyze every attempt to interpret this great chapter in a way that will allow such obvious facts as these to have their proper force. The taking away of the limitations with which Scripture has surrounded the eons compels the adding of limitations to the revealed extent of reconciliation. Adding to Scripture in one respect necessitates taking from Scripture in another. The introduction of the eternal element into the age-terms leads naturally to the elimination of the universal element from the redemptive-terms. The commentaries of Christendom are witnesses to the beggarly, shrinking processes which men have resorted to in order to make Romans five utter the shibboleths of the Augustinian dogma.

Crediting the average man with an intelligence sufficient to express his thoughts in adequate language, it ill becomes us to question the ability of the divine Author of Scripture to reveal His mind in terms remarkable for their delicate and exquisite precision. When the Word declares "the many shall be constituted righteous" (in exact parallel to the phrase, "the many were constituted sinners"), why should we find it necessary to whittle down, or discount, such a statement into meaning no more than that they shall have an opportunity presented to them to become righteous? If what God meant was different to what God said, shall we conclude from that that God was at a loss for the right word when Romans was indited? Perish such thoughts! And yet the reader who would seek to learn the very thoughts of God by closely scrutinizing His very words

must recognize that his method must ultimately lead to believing what God has taught concerning the finite eons, and enjoying what He has revealed concerning His infinite grace. The belief that the words used by God in revelation adequately and exactly reveal His thoughts will not so much enable us to interpret the Scriptures as it will manifest how wonderfully the Scriptures interpret themselves.

Without the doctrine of the eons Romans five becomes a labyrinth, or maze, which the truth-seeker, bewildered by a thousand conflicting thoughts, and harassed by a myriad theories, may well hesitate to tread. With the key-truth of God's eonian purpose grasped, the passage loses its terror, and invites the simple to enjoy the rich banquet it sets before them. It reveals the awful potency of a single sin to ruin the race of man but shows on the other hand an act of righteousness no less potent in effecting its redemption. In Romans Paul declares: "By one man— sin; by one Man—righteousness." In Corinthians he proceeds: "By one man—death; by one Man—resurrection." Throughout the entire Pauline literature, the apostle exhausts the possibilities of both logic and language in showing the super-ability of God in dealing with His erring creatures. Romans five is especially remarkable for the manner in which it combines an exposition of "the love that will not be denied," with an exaltation of the righteousness that will not be stained.

Human sin and divine righteousness—what are they but the antipodes of the moral universe? How then can the righteousness be maintained, the sin condemned, and yet the sinner saved? We are writing on destiny, shall we then bring in the cross? Nay! rather, how shall we write of destiny and leave it out? It is the cross which has made grace possible. It is the cross which has made grace righteous. The eons find their center in it. Before they had being, it loomed—the altar of the sacrificial lamb—in all its crim-

son majesty, full in the vision of Deity (*cf* 1 Peter 1:19,20; 2 Tim.1:9; Titus 1:2). And the eons face crossward, bearing onward to its sacred base the humanity committed to the restoring discipline of Time. The cross is the grand foundation on which grace alone can build, and the appointed ground for the divine dispensation of life.

What would the reader have? Whittle off, and pare down the terms which Paul employs in our chapter, contract the language of the apostle, and the glories of that cross must inevitably be dimmed. View it as the triumph of Infinite Wisdom over the finite folly of the race, and we bow in worship before the One Who planned it, and Him whose blood has stained it red. Widen its sphere of triumph, and we deepen our conceptions of it as the instrument of Omnipotent Grace. The cross is adequate to the task of cleansing the Adamic race from the moral pollution of sin. May our faith prove adequate to believing that glorious truth!

DESTINY IN CORINTHIANS

Romans reveals to us the coming triumph of divine righteousness over human sin: Corinthians discloses the ultimate victory of vivified life over Adamic death. The resurrection of all is involved in Romans five; the righteousness of all in 1 Corinthians fifteen. In both epistles both righteousness and resurrection are viewed in their racial issues.

In line with the method adopted in these articles, the writer is more anxious to point out the erroneous assumptions which have molded current theology, than to give a detailed exposition of each passage. When we succeed in reading *out* of the Scriptures the many additional phrases which men have read *into* them, then the way becomes clear to enjoy the truth as Paul wrote it, and as God inspired it. Allowing the Bible to be its own interpreter; receiving its definitions as needing no correction by us; paying strict

attention to what it says, and how, in order to learn what it was meant to reveal; and accepting its language as requiring neither contraction nor expansion by us, has shown itself to be the only method of interpretation worthy of being called exact. We mention this because the unhappy process, and habit, of "discounting the grace of God," and the unfortunate position which compels those who occupy it to be perpetually explaining how the terms descriptive of salvation's scope really mean much less than they appear to convey on their surface, is as apparent in comments on 1 Corinthians fifteen, as it is in those on Romans five.

It is of course self-evident that if limitations be introduced into Romans five similar limitations must be also introduced into 1 Corinthians fifteen.

The doctrine of Romans forbids our contracting the scope of vivification in 1 Corinthians fifteen—in fact the revelation here can only be limited by ignoring the Scripture evidence concerning the eons, by changing or weakening some of the words employed, and by interpolating others.

It is generally conceded that in verses 23 and 24, vivification (AV *being made alive*) is spoken of as taking place in three grand divisions, or companies. Now, the only method by which allowance may be made for three such resurrection groups, in order not to conflict with the daring assumption of endless sin and torment, is to divide them as follows:

(1.) The resurrection of Christ;—"Christ the firstfruits."
(2.) The resurrection of those in Christ;—"those who are Christ's at His coming."
(3.) The resurrection of those out of Christ;—"the end when Christ delivers up the kingdom."

But it is evident that the Scripture under consideration challenges such a classification, for while the above analysis makes the third and last rank, consist of the unsaved dead—those *out of* Christ—the passage itself refers only

to the resurrection of those *in* Christ. To be "in Christ" means righteousness and life; "out of Christ" means condemnation and death. To read the resurrection of Revelation twenty, with its dread uprising of sinful men to meet their doom, as if it could thus be described as a resurrection "in Christ," is but to betray a deplorable ignorance of the precious and fragrant truths which cluster around these immortal words. But if Paul's language forbids our reading the rising of the lost into these three orders, or ranks, what shall we do with the third resurrection group spoken of here, which consummates the ranks, and which the context shows synchronizes with death's destruction?

How impossible it is to read Revelation 20 into 1 Corinthians 15 may also be seen from what both passages have to say about death. In the Apocalypse we learn that, at the close of one thousand years of the reign of Christ, death is limited to the lake of fire. Nothing is said about death's destruction, nothing about its cessation, but on the contrary its continuance for "the ages of the ages" is revealed. In Corinthians we read not of its limitation, but of its destruction. To interpret its destruction as being fulfilled in its localization is not to distinguish between things that differ, and in short, is but to quarrel with God's choice of terms, and question His mastery of man's vocabulary.

The attempt has been repeatedly made to identify the reign spoken of here (v.24) as being Messiah's reign as Son of David, an attempt which may only succeed when the testimony of the context is either explained away or placidly ignored. It is evidently as the divine Son that He finally subordinates Himself, and as Father that God takes over the kingdom rule from Him. As the reign of the Son is not located in the "impending eon," but in the "eon of the eon" (Heb.1:8), it becomes evident that the "end" or "consummation" spoken of here, has nothing whatever to do with the events connected with the transition from the

thousand years to the new creation. The truth is the event of Revelation 20 is not so much as touched on, or referred to in our chapter, the order of resurrection being:

(1.) The vivification of Messiah from the dead:
(2.) The vivification of those who are Christ's at His presence; and,
(3.) The vivification of all who become Christ's in the "age of the ages."

The final rank rises in the last eon, that age which witnesses the termination of the eonian reign, the triumph of eonian love, and the full and final extermination of death—God's last enemy.

The design and purpose of all creation is that it might be the temple of its Creator, God. Before ever a creative fiat went forth, the purpose that He should be "all in all" was formed—not All in *some,* not *Much in All,* but ALL in ALL. But, if death be eternal, God must necessarily be excluded from being all in some. Should eternal death be spiritual, then God must be excluded from the most kingly part of many of His creatures; should it be physical, His design of being All in all is just as impossible of attainment. But the destruction of death, connected as it is here with resurrection, shows that He will be *All* in all *physical* beings; while their being raised "in Christ" shows that He will be *All* in all *spiritual* beings.

That the ultimate subjection of the Universe to God will be internal and spiritual, rather than merely external, may be gathered from verse 28. In the matter of the "classes" of resurrection, as detailed in verse 22, we drew attention to the way in which all those ranks were grouped together under the common designation "in Christ." Here we notice that the subjection, to be shared in by all creation, is one which knows no difference in its intensity or reality, is no more perfect in some than in others, but equally perfect

in all, and indeed, linked as it is with the subjection of the Son, intimates that their subjection is not different in kind from His, nor His from theirs. It is true of course that the acts of Christ in both resurrection and subjection are unique, for He is the *First* in resurrection, and the *Last* in subjection—the Alpha of the one, as He will be the Omega of the other; but, as His vivification is the ideal norm, or type, of all subsequent vivifications, so will His subjection be the glorious crown and consummation of all preceding subordinations. The exponents of endless torment must be sadly conscious of the infinite difference between that merely, external subjection which they consider possible in the outer darkness of the damned, and that true and spiritual submission which will characterize the attitude of the redeemed, and the filial subjection which the divine Son will render to His Father—God. Recognizing such distinctions, let such find them, if they can, in the language before us.

Here let us direct our attention to the result of God's eonian dealings. God is ALL in ALL. The kingship has been delivered up to God, even the Father—as if to suggest that the family, rather than the kingdom, characterizes the ultimate state. The Adamic dead have *all* been raised *in Christ*; and now, perfected in His perfections, God Himself becomes ALL *in them.* Humanity in the Son, and God in humanity—do we wonder if the eyes of faith at times have blinked when called to gaze upon that wondrous goal? And God will have it *all*; He has written it *all*; and He meant to write *all*, and not a weaker word. Nor is it *over* all, as He could only be, in part at least, were millions damned in endless antagonism to His will. Nay! nay! Faith, too, will have it "God All *in* all."

DESTINY IN THE PRISON EPISTLES

In our remarks on the teachings of Paul's earlier epistles,

we noted that the burden of their message concerned the "things on the earth"—in other words, the Adamic race. In them we found no definite allusion to the future destiny of celestial beings, except so far as it was involved in, or affected by, that of humanity. But, if explicit mention of the "things of heaven" is absent from Paul's earliest writings that certainly cannot be charged to his later epistles, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians. These, forming perhaps the smallest group of the New Testament writings, have the largest scope of any of the groups. They contain a digest of universal history, a compendium, we might say, of "the ways of God with men," and celestial beings, too. The group is a complete Bible in itself, though compressed within the narrow confines of a trinity of sacred writings. These epistles especially (and not the writings of Plato, nor the philosophic guesses of any other heathen writer) contain the solution of the problem of universal destiny, as Paul's earlier writings solve the question of human destiny.

Pharisaism is of many kinds. There is, for instance, the *individual* Pharisee, who, priding himself upon his fancied attainments, duplicates in every age him who, "speaking within himself," said "God, I thank Thee." Again, we have the *national* Pharisaism so sadly prominent in Israel's history, which looks upon special national place and privilege as being the result of, instead of an incentive to, a greater holiness than that manifested by those nations who were not so favored as they. And we also have a *racial* Pharisaism which speaks, and reasons, as if the children of Adam had a peculiar right to divine grace, a title to mercy, and a claim on God, not shared by any other race or rank of beings, in all the vast spaces of the universe. It is but the "I more" spirit of Saul the Pharisee drawn to the scale and magnitude of the human race. The publican (whether an individual, a nation, or a race), who draws nigh on the

ground of sprinkled blood alone, is surely not the one who should dictate to God as to who shall, and who shall not, be partakers of the bounteous largess of grace divine.

In Ephesians, where the vision of faith is directed onward to the "administration of the complement of the eras," in which *the all,* heavenly and earthly, angelic and human, are seen as headed up, consummated and completed, in God's Anointed One. There is not the slightest indication, in the language used, of a special class who are excluded from the universal Headship of Christ. It is apparently a *heading up* of the universe which knows nothing of an exclusion from, nor a distinction within, its sphere.

In Colossians, where the same words, *the all,* are used in different connections, first as created products and then as the subjects of reconciliation, we are reminded of Romans five, where, throughout the argument, the quantitative terms remained rigid and unchanged, and entirely unaffected by the constant flux in the qualitative expressions.

Philippians will be found to combine in one the teachings of both Ephesians and Colossians. In Ephesians we have Messiah's future Lordship, or Headship, over the *all.* In Colossians we find Him reconciling these *the all* unto Himself—for He must first cleanse in blood, before He may crown with glory, the sin-stained creation which He by grace has made His own, though it were already His by virtue of creative power. Philippians, without drawing distinctions of extent or degree, brings the entirety of universal being within the sphere of Jesus' name. "*In* the name of Jesus," or Yahweh-Saviour—not "*at* the name," which could imply a merely external, or formal acknowledgment—"every knee shall bow." Here we have the Colossian grace, as we are now to view the Ephesian glory. "And every tongue avow Jesus Christ as Lord"—the Headship of Ephesians, and the perfect submission of Corinthians, in one precious verse. As we remarked the absence of dis-

tinction between different kinds, or degrees of submission, in the Corinthian epistle, so must we likewise notice how distinguishing expressions are similarly absent from the passage before us. The acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord is not to be the product of the lash in some, and in others the luscious fruitage of redeeming love. The bended knee of all creation will be the uniform token of a universe whose heart is bowed in loving worship before the divine Joshua of God.

In Colossians we had a passing glimpse of the cosmos as it came fresh from the hands of the Creator. "In Him are the all things created, in heaven and on earth." Then ensued creation's swift descent into chaos, moral and physical. But Philippians discloses One "mighty to save," Who looked not unmoved upon the sin-wrecked scene. The glory of the "form of God" is laid aside, and He who bore it empties Himself. If ruin had entered by means of hateful pride, redemption comes by way of Him who "humbled Himself." If vain pride expressed its nature in acts of disobedience, He (whose glories were past the telling) "made *Himself* of no reputation" and "became obedient." The cross itself could not deter Him who already had sacrificed so much, from becoming Himself the crowning sacrifice of God upon the accursed tree. Sin had emptied heaven and earth of God; He takes upon Himself the emptying of earth and heaven of sin. And the result? Who can find words which will bear the burden of glory the answer holds? He who lay a lifeless form within the tomb, breaks forever the iron rule of death. He died, but not for Himself. He lives, and it is still for others. Heaven, earth, and subterranean now share without restriction in the glories of His exaltation. And if redemption had its genesis in the abdication of His rights on the part of the Lord of All, it finds its revelation in the abdication of all rebellious self-will, and insubordination, on the part of those who, in every

sphere, have questioned and denied the authority of God. Beginning with the laying aside of glory, Philippians 2:6-11 ends with the in-gathering of all the glory gladly rendered by a redeemed universe. Nevertheless, He Who "thought equality with God not a thing to be grasped," receives not the glory to Himself alone. The Self-subordinating One of 1 Corinthians 15 is the Self-emptying One of Philippians 2, who lays the glories of a restored creation, in all its parts, at the feet of "God, the Father."

CONCLUSION

We have but barely suggested the Biblical doctrine of destiny. An exhaustive exposition would require many volumes. Nor have we more than outlined the false methods, and the baneful results, of traditional interpretation. The "exegesis" which would seek to crush the idea of eternity into the time of the eons, which would inject a supposed numerical contrast into the moral contrasts of Romans five, which would insist that the raising of those "out of Christ" at the end of the impending eon is identical with the final rank of those raised "in Christ" at the end of the eon of the eon, as revealed in 1 Corinthians 15, and which would make the *limitation* of death to the lake of fire the fulfillment of its *destruction,* bears its own refutation in the confusion which its methods create.

It is not to be wondered at if such modes of interpretation necessitate the continual introduction into Scripture of countless interpolations and distinctions, the inspired omission of which can be appreciated by us when we start our inquiries with an acceptance of the Biblical doctrine of the ages, but which becomes a baffling mystery when we seek to open the locks of Scripture with a key forged on the anvil of Pagan philosophy.

Alan Burns

ISRAEL UNDER THE LAW

THERE ARE DEGREES of punishment in God's dealings with the Hebrew people. That is to say, a man is punished according to the light that he has. Those who came under the law when it was first given were judged according to the law. Although it was so severe even then, they did not, at that time, deserve the severity which came upon them later, when they had much more light (Heb.10:26-31). In Deuteronomy 17:2-7 we read:

In case there should be found among you, within one of your gates which Yahweh, your Elohim, is giving to you, a man or a woman who does evil in the eyes of Yahweh, your Elohim, so as to trespass against His covenant, and he goes and serves other elohim, and bows himself down to them or to the sun or to the moon or to any of the host of the heavens, something that I have instructed not to do, and it has been told to you, and you have heard it, then you will inquire diligently. And behold, if the truth of the matter is established that this abhorrence was done in Israel, then you must bring forth the man or the woman, who did this evil thing, to your gates, the man or the woman, and you will stone them with stones so that they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, the one about to die shall be put to death. He shall not be put to death at the mouth of one witness. The hands of the witnesses shall come to be the first against him to put him to death, and the hands of all the people afterward. Thus you will take out the evil from among you.

This is Moses' law. In these days even some of the saints seem to *want* the law. I marvel that anyone who has tasted God's grace should voluntarily descend from the heights of grace to the quicksand of law. Yet I was like that myself once. After having experienced the *grace* of God, however, there should be no tendency to go back to *law*. But such is man! We cannot grasp the fact that *in the flesh there dwells no good thing*. All that the experience of Israel under the law is intended to teach the universe is this simple lesson. As long as they depend upon themselves and what they can do, there is nothing for them but judgment. This is the basis for the epistle to the Hebrews. It is an entirely different basis from what we have today.

Seeing a "newspaper pulpit," I glanced it over and was astonished at the attempt to put everyone under law. They do not seem to be able to get along without bringing in something outside of the Scriptures to put us there. The main contention seems to be that man *must* be under God's "moral" law, though he need not fulfill the rest of it. I have not only translated the entire law, from the Original, but have compared the Hebrew text with the Greek. *There is no trace of such a distinction to be found in it.*

Who knows what God's "moral law" is? I looked it up in the dictionary. I confess I did not know even after that what it is. "Moral" has to do with right and wrong. Yet the greater part of the law has to do with right and wrong, so there is hardly any of Moses' law which has no "moral" tinge.

This "pulpit" speaks about the *ceremonial* law having been nailed to the cross, but goes on to say that God's ten moral precepts were spoken by His own voice from Mount Sinai and were entitled the "Moral Law." It might be that they were called that in the introduction to some translation, but you will not find such a designation anywhere else in the Bible. We are told that "It was written by the finger of God, and is *perfect* and *unchangeable*." I could not

help thinking that the Lord Jesus did not know this! He said, "You hear that it was declared to the ancients, 'You shall not murder.' Yet whoever should be murdering shall be liable to the judging. *Yet I am saying to you* that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to the judging" (Matt.5:21,22). Here we have something much more moral than this "moral" law. It goes much deeper. It is *spiritual*. It reaches the *heart*.

Again He said, "Yet whoever may be saying to his brother 'Raka!' shall be liable to the Sanhedrin. Yet whoever may be saying 'Stupid!' shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire" (Matt.5:22). Who has not done that? The admonition is far beyond the law written in stone. You can see that the latter is *not* unchangeable.

Again, "You hear that it was declared, 'You shall not be committing adultery.' *Yet I am saying to you* that every man looking at a woman to lust for her, already commits adultery with her in his heart" (Matt.5:28). *The law is intended to kill*. The law given by Christ cuts even deeper than the law given in the ten commandments. "Again you hear that it was declared to the ancients: You shall not be perjuring, yet you shall be paying to the Lord your oaths. *Yet I am saying to you* absolutely not to swear . . . ." What an idea that the law was the last thing! It was the kindergarten grade in regard to moral teaching.

The crime mentioned in Hebrews 10:29 is something far worse than anything that Israel could commit under Moses. It was not possible at Sinai to do things such as could be committed later. The light that came to Israel came not only through the prophets. It also came through their history. God revealed Himself to them step by step. They should have seen, but they were blind. That was all under the law. The whole generation that received it was buried beneath the desert sand. That is what the law did for them.

Moses himself was put to death. He did not die a natural death. This is in accord with what he gave to Israel. His was the dispensation of *death* (2 Cor.3:7). He gave a death-dealing thing to Israel and he was executed as a felon in the full vigor of his life.

Under the Judges also there was failure. What did they learn from their mistakes? At that time God was their Ruler, and they rejected Him. Then they wanted a king. At first God gave them a king of the kind *they* wanted—Saul. And then God very graciously gave them David. Even after all their sin and their deportation, God brought them back to the land. And then, in the fullness of time, He sent them His Son. Christ gave them illumination *far beyond* the light of the law. But, long before His ministry was completed, He had to tell His disciples that they were no longer to proclaim Him as Messiah, because the nation had rejected Him. After all their training under the judges and the kings and the prophets, when they were brought face to face with the very One Who gave the law, they rejected Him. They did not even observe the law when they put Him to death. They did not kill Him by stoning, but by a much more ignominious method. They did their very worst to Him.

But, according to His prayer, God forgave the *nation*. Then Peter comes along with a ministry that goes *far beyond* anything that they had had before. The *spirit* of God operated among them in a way that had been unknown to them previously. So we see that the epistle to the Hebrews is written to a nation that has repeatedly been warned and taught, and repeatedly rejected God's message. They had rejected God and the Messiah as King when on earth, and they had rejected Him as their Sacrifice, after He ascended to heaven.

In a sense it is true that the crime which called for the severest judgment was the crucifixion of Christ. Yet it is

after this that God introduces the *evangel* of the kingdom, with its pardon of sins, based upon the fact that Christ's death has settled the sin question for them. But when they also rejected this, they deserved a severer fate than they had ever had in the past because their guilt was much greater, the light they had was very, very much brighter, and the message much more precious.

The book of Hebrews describes this crisis in Israel, which comes at the end of the period dealt with in the book of Acts, and it is concerned with the *Hebrews*. This was my first great heresy: that *the book of Hebrews was written to the Hebrews!* It was written not only to Hebrews, but to some who had apostatized after all the light that God had given them. This is the condition in which they were. In passing, let us note that Saul of Tarsus was in the same place when God met him. But there is nothing about him in the book of Hebrews, and he was dealt with altogether contrary to its warnings.

If, after all that the Hebrews had seen, they sinned voluntarily when they should have been further convinced, and then went back, what can you do with them? There is nothing more for them. In Hebrews it is recognized that they all died. Yet some died in *faith*. The tree that had one thing after another done to it to make it produce fruit, but did not, that is Israel as a *nation*. They did not receive the grace accorded to the arch-sinner, Saul of Tarsus.

According to Scripture, the Hebrews were "holy" (set apart by God) whether they believed or not. They were God's people. They had a holiness that we cannot have. Again and again there was a measure of grace shown to Israel. But it is not to be called grace in comparison with what God has shown to us. After all their failures, there is no hope for these people as far as the kingdom is concerned. They will be justified and vivified with the rest of mankind at the consummation. But none of the Circumci-

sion writings deal with the consummation. That is entirely beyond their range. Their writers were acquainted with Him Who is saying: Mine is vengeance! I shall be repaying! [that is not grace] the Lord is saying . . . "Fearful is it to be falling into the hands of the living God." I can use that same sentence if I change only one word. For me it is *wonderful* to fall into the hands of the living God! David had a choice and fell into the hands of God instead of into the hands of men (2 Sam.24:14). I agree with him that this is by far the best. Don't fall into the hands of man, not even into your own hands! Don't fear if you fall into the hands of God. It is now entirely different from what is presented in Hebrews. Grace reigns!

We did not owe 10,000 talents, but Saul of Tarsus did. He was worse than the other Hebrews. He had the right to call himself the foremost of sinners. What Paul received and what we get, is not merely grace, it is the *riches* of God's grace. There is a tremendous difference between grace and the riches of His grace. If Christ had not prayed for the Israelites, I do not see how one of them would have escaped, except His own followers. But this grace that is ours does not simply put Paul into the kingdom, as apostle number thirteen, but he skips it into the new creation. The Israelites in the millennium may not have such a good place as we have been taught. Some of the nations they have baptized will join in the rebellion at its close.

The only way to escape from the flesh is to die. For us the beautiful thing about it is that Christ not only died, but *rose* and *ascended*, and we are *in Him*. And that brings us the *riches* of His grace!

THE TEN THOUSAND TALENT DEBTOR

The 10,000 talent debtor was *forgiven* (Matt.18:27). There we have forgiveness, and if that is all we have, we are not very fortunate, because even after such a tre-

mendous amount was forgiven, the debtor did not behave himself, so he had to pay it back. Of course he never did, because he never could. The way he treated the man that owed him a small amount is a picture of Israel's relation to God. Israel was forgiven a tremendous debt, but when the nations wanted to be their pet dogs, their proselytes, they were not welcome. Cornelius did not owe anything like the amount that Israel did, because he never had the same light and obligations. Yet they objected to Peter's going to the foreigner. He merely *sinned*, while they *transgressed* and *offended* God. But when Israel did not want the evangel to go out to the nations, so that they too should be forgiven, then these pentecostals, who had been forgiven, had their pardon withdrawn. This corresponds to what we have in the epistle to the Hebrews.

Ephesians gives us forgiveness *according to the riches of His grace*. This is a very, very different matter. The great offense mentioned in the sixth and tenth chapters of Hebrews is that, after they had received light, after they had seen real miracles from the hand of God, then they went back on it. They were the very ones who, like the ten thousand talent debtor, would not let the nations have anything, even though they themselves had received so much.

After sin has been forgiven or pardoned, it is quite possible that the pardon may be withdrawn. But it is not so when the offender is dealt with in accord with God's grace. I would not say that in Romans we have the *riches* of His grace, but we do have His superexceeding grace, and that deals with sin in a very different way.

Let us read a little in the sixth chapter of this epistle, a part of the Scriptures that, as far as I know, is unknown to many, so far as their experience is concerned. "What, then, shall we declare? That we should be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing?" Now if this says anything, it says that, if this ten thousand talent debtor had sinned, his

pardon would have been extended. But it was not so. He was on probation. God has nothing like that today. Where sin increases, *grace will superexceed*. That is a very dangerous thing to say, I am told. But God has said it, so it is not nearly so dangerous as to reject it.

The saints have done such things to some of us that we are tempted to wish that they get what is coming to them. But we cannot do that, for now grace is what is coming to them!

If anybody tells me, "If you believe this you will go on in sin," I cannot accept that. We who *died* to sin, how shall we be continuing in it (Rom.6:3)? That throws a new light upon the matter, which is according to grace. When I am dead I do not care. I am not worrying about what will be done to me. Here is something, that the Circumcision knew nothing about, neither do those who appropriate their evangel. It was not true of them. God was still dealing with the Circumcision in order to show the futility of the flesh. Would a dead man get up from the grave and keep on sinning? Now there is no possibility of walking in newness of life unless we realize by faith that sin has been settled by Christ, and that we do not have to do anything about it. His death is all that God demands, and it should satisfy us also.

NOT UNDER LAW

Our sins ought not to trouble us any longer. My attention has been called to an explanation which seeks to keep us in the bondage of the law. We are told, "The expression, 'not under law, but under grace,' is sometimes used as an alibi for not keeping its precepts. The actual thought is, not under the condemnation of the law, but enjoying the favor of God's forgiveness." Let us turn up some of the passages that refer to being under law, and see if this statement is true. Take 1 Corinthians 9:20. Here Paul is speaking. "And

I became . . . to those under law, as under law, *not being myself under law*." It does not sound quite as if Paul understood the matter so. Then in Galatians 3:23, "Now before the coming of faith we were garrisoned under law, being locked up together for the faith about to be revealed. So that the law became our escort to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. Now, at the coming of faith, *we are no longer under an escort*."

I do not use the word "command" in the Concordant Version. It gives a harsh tone to that whole economy which I think is quite deceptive. God is giving *instruction* rather than commanding. The "ten *words*" are not "ten commandments," but they are the instructions of God, telling the Israelites how to act in order to be blessed. God showed what men ought to do, or at least what the nation of Israel as His chosen people ought to do. He did not give the law to anyone else.

We cannot fulfill the law because we are not under the law. Alas! Some of the Lord's people actually refuse grace and demand to have a part in their own salvation by observing a law which was given in order to convict of sin!

The only way to get out from under the law, if you are a Jew, is to die. To die with Christ is not only to get out from under law, but to be raised in Him. Then you are beyond the jurisdiction of the law.

It is well nigh impossible for us to keep even the laws of our own land, as they keep changing and multiplying faster than we can keep up with them. How do you know whether or not you are observing all of them? Even a lawyer couldn't be sure of that, there are so many. As to God's law, short and clear as it is, we know it was far beyond the possibility of being kept. Probably there were very few Israelites who came so near keeping the law as Moses. In transmitting this law, Moses says again and again that he acted according to the instructions given to him, and, just

as often, that the people rebelled against God. Nevertheless Moses himself was put to death for disobedience. He died while still vigorous because he was typical of this law that can kill, but not give life.

What is said in the tenth of Hebrews is so foreign to what we have today that we ought to be able to see at a glance that it refers to those in the Acts—the ten thousand talent debtor class—who would not let the other nations receive the grace of God. These are the ones spoken of in the tenth of Hebrews, and the whole thing applies to them alone. It cannot apply to us, because, being in Christ and having died with Him, there is absolutely no possibility that He should ever go back on us or that we should ever lose what we have. Here we have grace. As Paul says (Rom.6:15), "Should we be sinning, seeing that we are not under law, but under grace?" Anyone who has experienced the grace of God in truth has the best possible incentive to keep away from sin. If you know anyone who glories in grace (they are very scarce) you will find that such a one sins the least.

The grace of God is in *contrast* to the law. The truth for the present time begins where Israel *leaves off*. They have forgiveness of a sort. They have this and they have that, yet there is a continual failure, because it all depends upon their flesh. And it *should* be failure, because it is God's intention that man should learn what is in him by this means.

Many people today are terribly distressed about the condition of the world. Unless you know something of the truth of God, you ought to be driven to insanity by it. The way things are going in the world today, if we do not know what God intends by it, it should drive us to distraction. Thank God He is going to use it, and it is fulfilling His intention. And it is as it was with Israel. All the failures of Israel were absolutely necessary in order that we and the whole universe should know what is in the flesh.

God cannot be All in all in the consummation until we learn that. But, thank God, by His grace some of us have already learned a little of it.

If this ten thousand talent debtor been given the grace we received, he would never have seen his forgiveness revoked, no matter what he did. For, and this is the important fact, if he had really known the grace of God, he never would have treated his fellow slave in such a way.

If the Jews, during the period of the Acts, had had even a small inkling of divine grace, they never would have opposed the nations. They never would have opposed Peter for going in to see Cornelius. They never would have opposed Paul for going out to the other nations. They did not know the grace of God. If they had known it, they would have acted differently.

And so it is today. The power of the grace of God is the basis for conduct that pleases Him. He does not expect anything of the flesh.

Now that He has dealt with sin by means of death, even Jewish believers are beyond law. We are not concerned with the tenth of Hebrews except, as a part of God's revelation, it helps us to see the failure of even those who had received so much from God as Israel. Much care and many gifts God had given them. In spite of all their sin He brought them back to the land. After all of that He sent them His Messiah. And, when He came, they committed the greatest sin that was possible for any nation to commit.

They had been educated to accept Christ. If any nation should accept Him, *they* should have done so. They had the Scriptures, which made very clear Who He was. So it was that they became God's greatest debtors of all nations.

Now things are very different. The nations today never occupied any position like that. We had no claims on God, no land, no right to rule, and God has dealt with us on an entirely different ground, and that is on the ground of

grace, on the ground that follows the revelation He gave Israel, on the ground of failure, the failure of the flesh. And so long as we know that God has condemned the flesh to death and that we have died with Christ, we should no longer be concerned with ourselves, but with God and the transcendent riches of His grace, which He has lavished on those who have no claims on Him whatever, but rather deserved the opposite.

Law demands *justice*, not *grace*. For mortal man, justice means *death*, but grace gives *life*. May God grant that all who read these lines may not be enslaved by a law which is not theirs, but revel in the secret riches of grace, which God has reserved for faith among the *nations*, while Israel is not His people!

A. E. Knoch

THE POWER OF GRACE

Grace woos with far more effect than the fear of the law's penalties. To please God is a much more potent incentive for those who know Him than all the thunders of Sinai.

A true appreciation of the grace by which we are established, of liberty from the law, will give a joyous power over sin which the law never could impart. Grace liberates. Yet if we should voluntarily slave for Sin we should become in practice at least, that which we once were, of which we are now ashamed.

Eonian life is given to us as a free gift, altogether apart from our conduct (Rom.6:23). Does not this *very fact,* coupled with all His favors in the past and present, appeal to us most potently?

Our morality, or lack of it, does not affect our relationship with God. Grace knows no barriers whatever, either in our past, present, or future. On the other hand, however, our morals are far more tractable in the liberty of grace than under the lash of the law.

WE ARE UNDER GRACE

ROMANS begins with an apostle severed from his religious and ethnic connections in order to bring God's WELL-MESSAGE to sinners of all nations and peoples, a message of *grace, apart from works of law.* This evangel has been the focus of the letter from the beginning, and Paul does not leave it behind when he comes to chapter six and begins to direct special attention to the current lives of those who are believing this evangel.

In fact, Romans six develops from one of the most startling summations of the evangel ever given, the words of Romans 5:20 that "where sin increases, grace superexceeds"! What God has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ, justifies from every increase of sin, past, present and future. This achievement will ultimately embrace all mankind as Romans 5:18,19 makes clear, but Paul speaks now of those who are believing, who have already obtained, in spirit, the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness. No sin can be charged against us, for we died to sin, having been baptized in spirit into Christ's death. This is a matter of grace. It superexceeds in its saving power over every sin that we commit in the flesh.

This highly unconventional teaching (all of grace) is still very much in the foreground in Romans six, and necessarily so. The faithful work of Christ in dying for sinners is God's powerful means for complete deliverance from sin in the future, yet also, where it is being believed, it is God's means for joy and peace and all the fruit of the spirit in the present, in accord with the earnest of the spirit (*cf* Rom.1:16; Gal.5:22,23; Eph.1:13,14).

Paul is now concerned especially with our current "living." How shall we who have died to Sin be living? The answer is that we are to keep our focus on God's grace which superexceeds sin with justification from sin. We are to declare it, get to know it, be believing it, and be perceiving it (Rom.6:2-10). Finally, in summing up all these activities of faith, our apostle and brother exhorts us to be taking account of all God has given us in identifying us with the death of Christ and positioning us in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Rom.6:11). It is on the basis of this exhortation that we are led to the exhortations of verses 12 and 13.

"THEN" AND "FOR"

The imperatives of Romans 6:12,13 are thus joined to verse 11 by the connective "then" (with the sense of "therefore"). They are also joined to verse 14 by the double use of the connective "for" (with the sense of "because"). Thus they are enclosed within the great exhortation to take account of God's favors to us in Christ Jesus and the unqualified and fundamental declaration that we are not under law, but under grace:

Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Then:

1. *Let not Sin be reigning in your mortal body, for you to be obeying its lusts.*
2. *Nor yet be presenting your members, as implements of injustice [unrighteousness], to Sin,*
3. *but present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as implements of righteousness to God.*

For:

Sin shall not be lording it over you, **for** *you are not under law, but under grace.*

It is, with the evangel of God's grace in view, that the apostle now exhorts us with the words of Romans 6:12,13. Verses 11 and 14 establish the context of Paul's imperatives. We are not to go forward with Paul without God's word of grace to us. For this is what invigorates us with spiritual strength and endurance with joy in our current lives.

LET NOT

In order to convey Paul's meaning more clearly, the negative word "not" might better be placed in association with the reigning of Sin rather than suggesting the imperative is concerned with what the believer is not to do; thus: Let Sin not be reigning . . . ." By using what is called a "third person imperative," the apostle is concerned with what Sin is not to do rather than what we must not allow to happen. We are to let it happen, as it surely will when we are taking account of God's grace.

It is because of our taking account of God's grace to us in identifying us with the death of Christ and viewing us as we are in Christ Jesus, our Lord, that Sin steps aside from its reigning, even now while we live in mortal bodies. We are to let this happen as we are holding fast to this word of grace. By this means the reigning of Sin is halted, as it often is in times of great crisis when our full attention has to be given to the matter at hand. When we are obeying (UNDER-HEARing), that is, submitting our hearing under the message of God's grace, we are not listening to the lusts of our flesh. As Paul will put it in Romans 6:16-18, we cannot position ourselves under two masters at one time. When we are obeying, that is, submitting our hearing under the teaching of grace, we are not listening to Sin. The message that we died and are justified from Sin, so that sin is not reckoned to us, is effective against the reign of Sin, as we are attending to what it says "from the heart" (Rom.6:17). We may think grace gives encourage-

ment to Sin's reign. But in taking account of the grace that superexceeds over our sin, we are instilled with a growing appreciation of God which operates against Sin's tyranny. The evangel is not congenial to Sin.

PRESENTING

Paul continues this exposition of the power of the evangel in the believer's life, by the two exhortations of Romans 6:13: (1) Do not "be presenting your members, as implements of unrighteousness, to Sin." (2) "But [rather,] present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as implements of righteousness to God."

The Greek verb translated *presenting* is composed of the elements, BESIDE-STAND. It is sometimes used in the Septuagint Version for the Hebrew verb meaning *to station,* as in Exodus 19:17. Here, in view of the fact that they were sinners, the people of Israel were about to be pointed to righteousness by means of the law. Hence, as instructed, they "*stationed* themselves at the nether [literally, the *under*] part of the mountain." They presented themselves at the foot of the mountain in order to be placed under the law. In Deuteronomy 4:11, in recounting this incident, Moses used the verb "stand" instead of *station:* "Then you approached and *stood* below [literally, *under*] the mountain."

These passages may well have been in Paul's mind when he used the verb *present* in our text. As at Sinai, the concern in Romans six is the human situation in which we station ourselves and our members under the rule of Sin. But in contrast to Exodus 19, this concern is dealt with, not by stationing ourselves under law, but under grace. Paul directs us not to be stationing ourselves at the foot of the mountain where law is heard and Sin becomes offense and increases inordinately, but rather we are to present ourselves before God as we are in Christ Jesus, our Lord,

under the mammoth and superexceeding grace of God. Paul exhorts us to come before God with this in view, for this is where God has stationed us.

These imperatives are thus a matter of the *heart* (*cf* v.17), or *mind* (*cf* Rom.12:2). We do not stand before God under the terrifying sounds and sights of His presence at Sinai. The Israelites discerned the thunderclaps and the mountain smoking, and their reaction was to rove about and stand afar in fear (Ex.20:18-20). Yet we are stationed before God Who conciliates us to Himself. We may be having peace toward God through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access, by faith, into this *grace* in which we *stand* (Rom.5:2).

PRESENTATION OF OUR MEMBERS

As we are in flesh, as descendants of Adam, ever dying, cell by cell and inch by inch, our bodily members simply reflect our fleshly constitution (we are constituted sinners). Hence we are part of that human race described in Romans 3:10-18 by means of scriptural citations:

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.**

But, as believers, we have obtained "the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness" (Rom. 5:17), announced in the evangel. This invigorates us with spiritual strength even now as we continue to live in these mortal bodies. So Paul exhorted Timothy (2 Tim.2:1):

You, then, child of mine,
Be **invigorated** *by the* **grace** *which is in Christ Jesus.*

It is in view of the evangel proclaimed in the first eight chapters of Romans and affirmed by example as a manifestation of God's righteousness in chapters nine through eleven, that Paul soon will write (Rom.12:1,2):

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.*

Like the vibrating spirit in Genesis 1:2, the spiritual power of God vibrates in the message of grace. Thus stationing ourselves under the evangel our *minds* are renewed. We are *trained* by God's saving grace (Titus 2:11,12), and by this means our throats, our tongues, our lips, our mouths will more and more become crammed with words of joy and peace, reflecting the spirit of the evangel. So also the evangel steadies our feet in the way of peace, and our hands in being occupied with what is good (*cf* Eph.4:28; 1 Thess.4:11,12).

As for our eyes (in contrast to the sad state of Romans 3:18), the *perceiving* of the position of Christ in His life of living to God as it reveals what our life with Him shall be brings the fear of God to its highest and truest sense of awe, joined with that spirit of sonship in which we are crying, "Abba, Father!" (Rom.8:15). Later Paul will pray for the realization of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,

the Father of glory, the *eyes of our heart* having been *enlightened* by the expanding message of faith which we are given (Eph.1:15-18).

All Paul's entreaties in the final chapters of Romans are built on the faith which we are believing. "Now may the God of expectation be filling you with all joy and peace *in believing,* for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the *power of holy spirit*" (Rom.15:13).

PRESENTATION AS IF ALIVE

We do not station ourselves before God as sinners who have tried our best to live new lives. But we present ourselves to Him with the results of Christ's death and resurrection in view. We come before Him as if we were already roused from among the dead into newness of life (which we shall surely be in resurrection). We station ourselves before God with its certainty held firmly in our hearts.

THE EVANGEL OF ROMANS 6:14

The imperatives of Romans 6:12,13 are not built only on the evangel of verses 3-11; they are also solidly supported by the summation of this message of grace given in verse 14. Here again Paul sets the evangel before us as it speaks of the future and of the past: (1) Sin shall not be lording it over us, and (2) God has placed us under His grace.

The "for" that opens Romans 6:14 points to the reason Paul can effectively direct us to position ourselves before God as if alive from among the dead, with our members as implements of righteousness. It is because we shall be that way. And we shall be that way because it is a matter of grace, not of law. It rests on what Christ has done in dying for our sins, and on God's grace in identifying us already with the death of His Son, not on what we do.

We shall be walking in newness of life through the glory of the Father. We shall be of the resurrection. Our body of

Sin shall be nullified. We shall by no means still be slaving for Sin. We shall be living together with Christ. *Sin shall not be lording it over us.*

NOT UNDER LAW

Through one man sin entered into the world, and through that sin the dying process which could not be reversed by human effort and which leads downward to the state of death entered also into the world and has passed through from parent to child and generation to generation into all mankind, "on which all sinned" (Rom.5:12). All mankind live with mortal bodies, and thus all sin and are wanting of the glory of God (Rom.3:23).

Can nothing be done about this? Does God have a way of deliverance from mortality and sin?

Many years after this great evil began, God chose one nation of sinners, and gave them a detailed law directing them in the path of righteousness. It was not given right away after Adam sinned, but it "came in by the way." It was not given as a means of deliverance from sin; it came in by the way *that the offense should be increasing* (Rom.5:20). It was not a way of salvation from mortality and sin.

The ten words ("commandments") of Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 contain nine "you-shall-nots." Romans 6:14 contains one negative, but it is not a "you shall not" but rather a "you are not." It is a settled matter, and so also is the positive matter that we are under grace.

BUT UNDER GRACE

In the present context *grace* is a one-word expression of the evangel of God concerning His Son. By this term, the evangel appears before us as a message of divine favor, all of God, and not of ourselves. It is the message that manifests God's righteousness by means of the faith of Jesus Christ, apart from works of law (Rom.3:21,22). There is

no room for human boasting (Rom.3:27). Grace declares that we are justified gratuitously, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). For us who are not working, but are believing on Him Who rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead, this grace is expanded in that God reckons righteousness to us already (Rom.4:4,5,24). Furthermore, this evangel announces that being justified, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:1,2). It is for sinners, who have not and cannot, by works of law, become anything else than being sinners, that Christ died (Rom.5:8). He died to put an end to what we are in the flesh—sinners. Law said Israel had to stop being sinners, and become righteous. Grace says God has put sinners to death in the death of Christ. Now as believers, we come to know that we have been baptized into Christ's death and shall be living together with Him in resurrection, no longer dying but living to God (Rom.6:2-11). All of this is packed into the word *grace* in Romans 6:14.

It is altogether a matter of invigorating JOY! We are not under law, but under grace which superexceeds every increase of sin. Law was the word of God set over Israel. Grace is the word of God which He has set over us. We are stationed under its declarations of death to Sin and life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

This is a message that affects our living in a way that law could never do. Telling us what God has done, rather than what we must do, grace comes with spiritual power against the reign of Sin. It goes beyond the revelation of God's righteousness in His just judgments, for it manifests His righteousness in justifying sinners through the faith of Jesus Christ. It illuminates God's love in His work of conciliation through the death of His Son, rather than calling

on us to maintain the standards of divine service required under law in order to avoid His indignation. In this there is invisible power for our lives.

We are under grace continually, in our current living. When God viewed Israel, He saw them as they were in the flesh, sometimes upright, but often dishonoring to Him. When He looked at David, for example, in choosing him for kingship, He saw His heart which was directed toward Him. This also was the case when David came to the battlefield where Goliath mocked Israel's God, and Yahweh delivered Israel from the Philistines through David. Yet when God looked again and saw how David, the king of Israel, yet a man of flesh, lusted in his heart for Bathsheba, and arranged for the death of Uriah, his sin became the cause of many sorrows and afflictions, affecting not only David, but the nation as well.

Yet with us God sees us dead to Sin and living to Him, as we are in Christ. He always sees us where He has placed us: *under His Grace.* Consequently, Paul, in exhorting us to be presenting ourselves to God, is exhorting us to be stationing ourselves in mind and in heart before God with the evangel of God's superexceeding grace in view. In this exercise of faith is God's power for salvation.

GRACE IN OUR LIVES

We are finding that in guiding us in our daily living, Paul exhorts us to keep close to the evangel he was commissioned to bring to us. We are to *declare* it, *not be ignorant* of it, but rather get to *know* it, *be believing* it, *perceiving* what it says about Christ, *taking account* of its every revelation and *stationing* ourselves in mind and heart under its powerful message of grace. Now we are ready to go forward into verses 15 through 18 and consider the theme of *obeying* the teaching of grace, that is, listening attentively and submissively to its words of joy and peace. D.H.H.

PERCEIVING THE GRACE OF GOD

Question:

I know what many of the *blessings* of the evangel are (e.g., forgiveness, justification, conciliation, eonian life, immortality, incorruptibility, vivification), but I am not so clear concerning the *nature* of the evangel, that is, what it is and what it entails. Everyone says that we are saved "by grace"—or at least no one cares to say that we are *not* saved by grace—but as it turns out, what it means to be saved by grace, is variously defined.

Even among those affirming the final salvation of all, even as among those affirming eternal torment, grace is understood differently by some than by others. Most claim that one must meet some type of requirement in order to be saved, while a few claim that there is no requirement to be met. Some say that good works are required for life in the coming ages, yet others say that only faith in Christ is required. Still others claim that one's possession of eonian life turns on just one thing: one's willingness (according to one's own free will) to be *non-resistant* to the workings of the Holy Spirit.

In contrast to these various conditional views, some such as yourself teach that those who will enjoy eonian life are simply those whom God has chosen to receive it, according to His Own grace and purpose.

I am familiar with many of the arguments made by the advocates of these various positions; yet at least I am not fully confident just which of these teachings is correct. Can you help me see what the truth is concerning the evangel? I want to know what the evan-

gel *is*, which will make evident to me what the *nature* of the evangel is. I want to know what salvation "by grace" *actually* means and entails. I know that Christ died for my sins, and that this is good news having to do with my salvation. But does Christ's sacrifice for my sins secure and ensure my salvation, or does it just secure and ensure the possibility of my salvation?

Answer:

YOU have framed the question well; and that is a good start. May we now consider it carefully, and, especially, answer it correctly and faithfully.

It is upon "*hearing* the word of truth, the evangel of [our] salvation," and upon *believing* it also ("in Whom on believing also"), that "[we] are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured) for the laud of [Christ's] glory!" (Eph.1:13,14).

In speaking of our initial "hearing"—to be sure, with "ears to hear"—and "*believing*" of the evangel of our salvation, we have in view the time when we first believe, as ones who now (1) *rely*[1] upon the evangel of our salvation's testimony as true, and so (2) are *convinced* (i.e., persuaded) that its testimony, in fact, is true, therefore *assume* it as well (i.e., take it to ourselves as our own).

Especially as concerns the evangel, every man who is

1. "Now faith is an *assumption* of what is being *expected*, a *conviction* concerning matters which are not being observed" (Heb.11:1). The Greek *elpizō*, as here, is sometimes translated "expect" in reference to something in the future. It is also, however, sometimes translated "rely," as in the testimony, ". . . we *rely* on the living God . . ." (1 Tim. 4:10; *cp* 2 Cor.1:10; Rom.15:12). Futurity (as in "expect") is incidental to *elpizō*, hence is not inherent to its essential meaning, which is "rely." More fundamentally then, we may understand faith as "an assumption of what is being *relied upon* [as true], a conviction concerning matters which are not being observed."

truly wise of heart concerning it, is one in whom Yahweh has *put* wisdom and understanding (*cp* Ex.36:1; *cf* Col.2:2; 2 Tim.2:7). If we would have wisdom and understanding, then, this must be given to us from heaven, for "a man can not get anything if it should not be given him out of heaven" (John 3:27).

Still, wisdom and understanding come to us in measure, and that, in installments; gradually, not suddenly, all at once. To be sure, where one enjoys wisdom and understanding, God has given these self-same endowments. And, where one seeks for wisdom and understanding, one does so solely by God's grace. Even so, the means of grace through which we gain wisdom and understanding is our own actions and efforts in which we labor unto this end, in order to *acquire* them:

5 **Acquire wisdom; acquire understanding;**
Do not [l]forget, and do not [l]turn aside
from the **sayings of my mouth;**
6 **Do not [l]forsake her,**[2] **and she shall guard you;**
Love her, and she shall preserve you.
7 The **beginning of wisdom** is: **Acquire wisdom,**
And [i]with all your acquisition, acquire understanding;
8 **Highly regard her, and she shall raise you up;**
She shall [m]bring you glory [t]as you [l]embrace her;
9 **She shall [g]bestow** a **wreath of grace [x]on your head;**
A **crown of beauty shall she award** to **you.**

(Proverbs 4:5-9)

"Wisdom" is "the faculty which makes the highest and best application of knowledge."[3] To "understand," is to "make out the meaning";[4] hence, "understanding" is that enlightened intelligence which one enjoys when one has, in

2. "her": i.e., wisdom.

3. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, entry "wisdom," p.329.

4. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, entry "understand," p.314.

fact, made out the meaning of something. Through proper analysis of both the meaning (i.e., essential significance) and function of each of the words comprised in a clause or sentence, which together serve to form and convey a specific idea, we may know what that specific idea is.

This may be termed a clause's or sentence's "base-meaning," in contradistinction to its "sense-meaning," which is to say its "interpretative meaning." While establishing even the base-meaning of a statement is often a formidable undertaking, one requiring substantial reading comprehension skills, as a rule, further establishing *the sense in which* that statement should be understood (which is to say, its "interpretative meaning) is an even much more formidable undertaking.

For example, in the words of the evangel, "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor.15:3), the base-meaning thereof is that "the Anointed One died ["died" meaning the cessation of life] for [i.e., 'for the sake of," or "on behalf of"] our sins [i.e., our mistakes, our failings of the ideal]."

From the clause, "Christ died . . ." together with the knowledge that to "die" means to "cease to live," we may determine that when Christ died, He ceased to live, which is the base-meaning of this statement. Still, simply believing that Christ actually died, does not answer the further question of the interpretative meaning here, which is: In what sense did He die? or, In what way is it possible to die (i.e., to cease to live)? Specifically, did Christ die categorically or only bodily?

Further, to claim that it is, or is not, possible to die only corporeally while still remaining alive incorporeally, is a claim concerning the metaphysics[5] of death: Is it or is it not possible for one to die corporeally only (hence, in this

5. Metaphysics is the investigation of the nature of reality, seeking to determine what exists.

sense, to die), while still continuing to live, though only incorporeally? The answer to this question can only be discovered through an accurate knowledge of the metaphysics of death, specifically of human death.

The evangel, however, is simply that Christ died for our sins: that in being put to death (hence, in somehow ceasing to live), Christ did so for our sins.

A knowledge of *how* it was that, until the third day, Christ ceased to live, or of what it is for anyone to cease to live, is knowledge altogether distinct from a knowledge of the evangel itself. It is true that one may not *understand* the evangel fully or altogether correctly if one does not understand the true metaphysics both of life and of death. Nevertheless, one who *believes* that Christ *died* for our sins (who therefore has a *verbal* understanding of this declaration), *believes the evangel*—let his *metaphysical* understanding of death be what it will.

DISCRIMINATION OF SENSE

Before addressing your question specifically as to the nature of the evangel, I have first spoken somewhat of the more general matters of hearing and believing, of acquiring wisdom and understanding, even as of noting base-meaning while distinguishing it from interpretative meaning, that is, of the *sense* in which we should *understand* a statement to be so. These considerations which I have rehearsed briefly above, are directly relevant to your question; and, they are directly relevant as well to every other scripture-related question.

Our need is for eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart with which to believe. We are in desperate need of wisdom and understanding, for without these our quest for truth is hopeless. We have vital need as well to be intelligent in our faith, which critically includes discriminating between what is said, and the sense in which what is said

is to be understood, in light of an entire array of considerations relevant to whatever subject it may be that is at hand.

Let us, then, be praying unintermittingly, requesting, that the God our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giv*ing* us a spirit of wisdom and revelation, the eyes of our heart having been enlightened, for us to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength (*cf* Eph.1:17-19).

A CORRESPONDENT RANSOM FOR ALL

Now to your question: What is the *nature* of the evangel? Keep in mind in approaching this question that the evangel, in essence, is just one thing; it is that, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures." More fully stated, even as the apostle Paul declares: "Now I am making known to you, brethren, *the evangel* which I bring to you, which also you accepted, in which also you stand, through which also you are saved, if you are retaining what I said in bringing the evangel to you, outside and except you believe feignedly. For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, *that Christ died for our sins* according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor.15:1-4).

The good news is that since Christ died for our sins, *our sins have been died for!* Indeed, ". . . We are observing Jesus . . . in the *grace* of God . . . tasting death for the sake of *everyone*" (Heb.2:9). ". . . Christ Jesus . . . is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all . . ." (1 Tim. 2:5,6). "God . . . wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth" (1 Tim.2:4), and, "is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:11).

Hence, "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers. These things be charging and teaching" (1 Tim.4:9-11). "For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation . . . . The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet . . . . Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all" (1 Cor.15:22-28).

"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; *cp* Heb.2:9); and, ". . . *one who dies has been justified from Sin*" (Rom.6:7; *cp* vss.18,22; John 1:29).

"The evangel of [our] salvation" (Eph.1:13), which is the evangel that "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor.15:3), is "the evangel of the *grace* of God": even as Paul declares, ". . . the dispensation which I got from the Lord Jesus, to certify *the evangel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24). "But not as the offense, thus also the *grace.* For if, by the offense of the one, the many 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" (Rom.5:18).

THE SAVING GRACE OF GOD

To answer your question, then, What is the *nature* of the evangel? the answer is, as the passages above make evident, that the evangel is an evangel of *grace,* and, of a grace which *saves:* it is the evangel of "the *saving grace* of God"

(Titus 2:11). "Now *if it is in grace, it is no longer out of works,* else the grace is coming to be no longer grace . . ." (Rom.11:6a; *cp* Rom.4:4; Luke 6:32-35). Hence any claim that salvation depends upon some type of human contribution (such as good works, assent to faith, or non-resistance to the operations of God's spirit), is necessarily mistaken, being contrary to the nature of grace.

Further, it is not a question of the nature of man's will. That is, whether it is or is not the case that man possesses such a freedom of will as is popularly supposed, is simply irrelevant. This is because in the matter of our salvation in Christ, we are not called upon to fulfill requirements. Instead, we are saved by genuine, gratuitous grace, not by some sort of "grace," falsely so-called, that is perfectly indistinguishable from a reward.

The evangel of our salvation, is not an evangel which merely offers to save, but which actually achieves salvation, in the *grace* of God. Therefore, Christ's sacrifice for our sins actually secures and ensures our salvation; it does not merely secure and ensure the possibility of our salvation.

If any "gospel teaching" today either affirms or entails it being the case that salvation is granted only on the condition of some type of human obedience, especially some type of ultimately flesh-dependent human obedience, any such teaching is false, for it denies that salvation is truly a gracious gift, not something granted as a reward or compensation, on a *quid pro quo* (i.e., "this for that") basis.

Alternatively, if any gospel teaching claims that the blessing of the gospel is truly a gracious gift, but that the gracious gift consists not in actually achieving salvation on behalf of the sinner, but only in making salvation possible while leaving its outcome uncertain, that teaching is false as well.

This is because such a concept is synergistic in nature (i.e., co-operation based), and in the end, is not even synergistic, but autosoteric in nature (i.e., ultimately dependent

upon the human self alone). According to that conception, when God has done all that He will do, and will do no more, and yet man still remains unsaved, it is necessarily man alone who makes all the difference between success and failure. In that case, for all eternity, man would be able to boast that when God's work was completed and yet he himself, the sinner, was still lost, it was then that he himself independently pitched in and did whatever was necessary in order for "salvation" to be realized.

". . . The word of *the truth of the evangel* . . . is bearing fruit and growing . . . from the day on which you hear and realized *the grace of God in truth,* according as you learned it from . . . a faithful dispenser of Christ . . ." (Col.1:4-7).

It is vital that we know what "the grace of God in truth" is not only in the sense of the particular blessings of which it consists according to "the truth of the evangel," but first of all and more especially, what the expression "the *grace* of God," in itself, in truth, actually signifies.

That is, what does it mean for something to be a matter of the "grace," or "favor" of God, in contrast to something that is a matter of the reward, wage, or compensation of God? "Now to the *worker,* the *wage* is *not* reckoned as a *favor* [i.e., as a *gracious* gift], but as a *debt*" (Rom.4:4). A favor or gracious gift, then, is not something that is due us because of something we have done, but is simply an act performed or provision made granted out of kindness and love in order to bring us joy, *irrespective of what we have done or not done, whether good or bad.* This is what grace is; and most importantly, this is what the grace of God is.

In the interests, then, of your perceiving for yourself and gaining an assurance in the grace of God in truth as set forth in the evangel of your salvation, I would commit you *"to God and to the word of His grace,* which is able to edify and give the enjoyment of an allotment among all who have been hallowed" (Acts 20:32). J.R.C.

INDEX TO VOLUME 103

Christ's Death and the Believers' Reckoning 123
Concordant Studies 65, 99
Different Evangels, The 5
Faith of Abraham, The 21
Faith in the Supreme 29
God's Purpose for Humanity 127
Glorious Gospel of God's Grace 5, 13, 21, 29, 39
He Died, He Died—He is Living, He is Living 51
Human Destiny 127, 147
Israel Under the Law 161
Justification by Faith 13
Notes on Romans 123
Paul to the Romans 51, 115
Perceiving the Grace of God 183
Questions and Answers 183
Rich Man and Lazarus, The 85
Secret of the Resurrection, The 85
Taking Account of Grace 115
Untenable Texts 65
Walk of Abraham, The 39
We are Under Grace 173
Word of the Cross, The 99

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Title of publication: *Unsearchable Riches.* 2. Date of filing: September 1, 2012. 3. Frequency of issue: every three months. 4. Location of the known office of publication: 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387. 5. Location of headquarters or general business offices of the publisher: 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387. 6. Publisher: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387. 7. Editor: James R. Coram, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387. 8. Owner: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387. 9. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: none. 10. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months. 11. Extent and nature of circulation: Total number of copies printed: 1814. Total paid circulation: (all through mail) 581 [foreign: 159 additional]. Total for office use: 1074. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (signed) *James R. Coram,* Business Manager.