Unsearchable Riches

A Bimonthly Magazine
For God and His
Word

VOLUME LXX

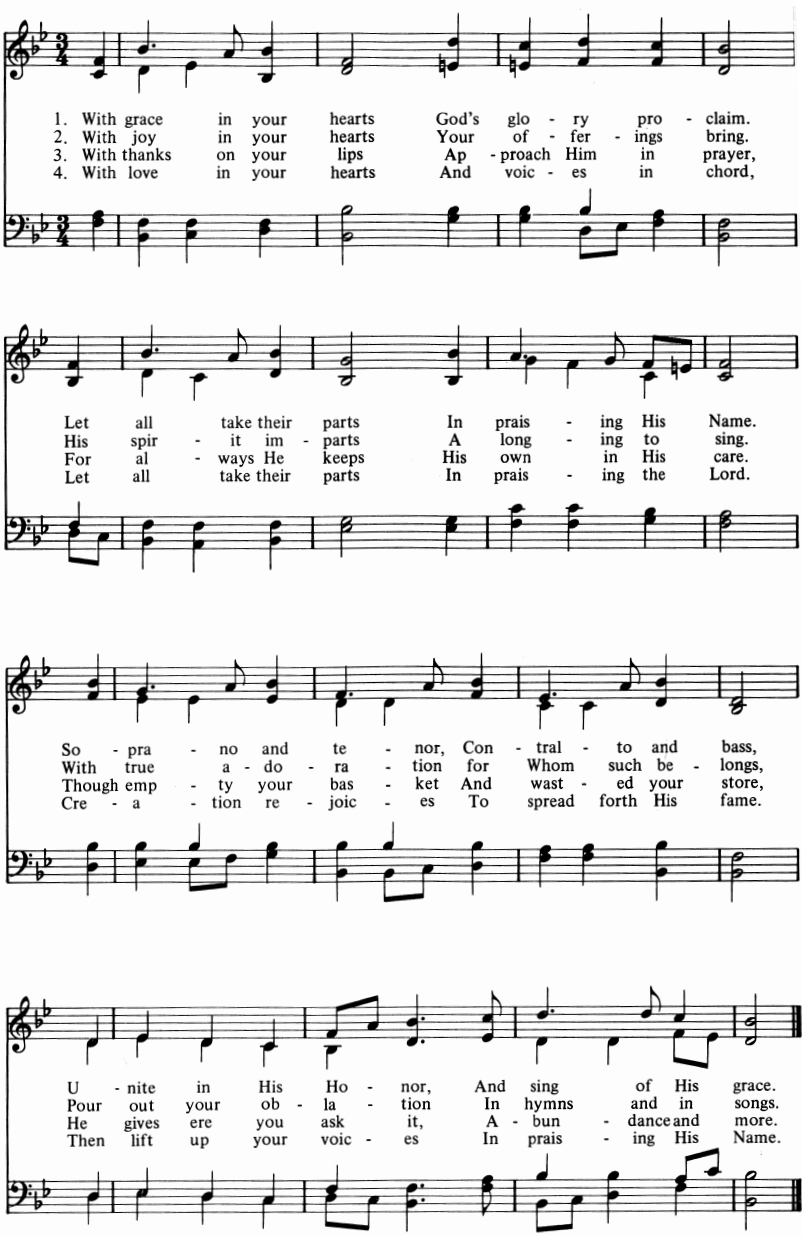
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WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS

JOHN H. ESSEX

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 1979
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY

EDITORIAL

THE BEGINNING of a new year is a time of planning, review and thanksgiving. The staff of Concordant Publishing is thankful to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ for the support, both moral and monetary, from you, our readers. We also thank the Father for the measure of faith which He has granted us. "I know that good is coming to me—that good is always coming; though few have at all times the simplicity and the courage to believe it" (George MacDonald, 1858).

Last year we began the *Questions and Answers* feature, which has been popular. The questions are those often asked by our readers; the answers are extracted from the writings of the late A. E. Knoch. Also, with the July issue, we began the *Scripture Class Studies*, based on the lesson notes of the late Arthur Lamb.

Our plans for this year's *Unsearchable Riches* includes a series by Alan Reid entitled, *The Hebrew Scriptures in Paul's Epistles*. Dean Hough intends to share the results of his studies in *To God be the Glory*. A short series by John Essex, *The Grandeur of God's Purpose*, is in the offing. We also plan to reprint A. E. Knoch's *Studies in Colossians*.

It would be worthwhile to spend some time studying the "Specimen of the Concordant Philological Concordance" on pages 14 and 15 of this issue. Try to envision the kinds of questions that could be answered if a complete concordance such as this were available.

Probably the most frequent question we receive about the Concordant Version is, "When is the Old Testament going to be ready?" It is hard to say. There is a tremendous amount of work that remains to be done before a complete *Concordant Version of the Old Testament* (CVOT) can be finished. It took A. E. K. nearly 20 of his best years to compile the NT. Considering that the OT is about four times the size of the NT, you can see what a mammoth undertaking the CVOT project is.

Genesis was first published 22 years ago. *Isaiah* was printed in 1962. These were the only two portions published under A. E. Knoch's personal direction. After A. E. K. died in 1965, *Daniel* (1968) and *Ezekiel* (1977) were published. The *Minor Prophets* volume is being readied for printing now. E. H. Clayton (of England) typed up about half of the OT in a "tentative version;" A. E. K. penciled in a sublinear tentative translation beneath his transcription of the Hebrew text for the remaining books. So at least half of the OT was left, at the time of A. E. K.'s death, in a form not readily publishable. In addition, he had not had the time to recheck and correct most of this tentative version; neither did he leave explicit written instructions as to how the work was to proceed. We are taking what steps we can, under the circumstances, to hasten the work on the CVOT. However, such a task cannot be rushed.

With the past reviewed, the future explored and thanksgiving rendered where due, we welcome your comments on any of the matters discussed here. We also solicit your prayers for guidance in our work, and enjoin you to remember "the simplicity and the courage" which trusts God's goodness.

James D. Thompson.

HIS GRANDEST GLORIES

CHRIST and His highest honors come before us in Colossians, even as the *saints* and their celestial blessings are the theme of Ephesians. There the transcendent truths of the present secret administration were set forth as they affect the believers among the nations, who become peers of an election out of Israel in spiritual, supernal dignities. Here these tremendous truths are a halo on the brow of *Christ.* His glories as the Messiah of Israel on the earth are magnified to universal dimensions. *All* is created in Him in the beginning, and *all* is reconciled in Him at the consummation (1:16-20).

Colossians and Ephesians are very similar, for they teach the same truth, though from different standpoints. To fully appreciate and enjoy these epistles, which are two of the most precious portions of God's revelation for us in this secret administration, it is necessary that we clearly grasp the distinctive view presented in each. Even as Philippians can only be understood in the light of *service,* so Colossians can only be clear to those who see that it deals with *Christ's* relation to the present, even as Ephesians was especially concerned with the place of the *saints,* especially the Uncircumcision.

In reference to the body of Christ the two epistles are complementary. In Ephesians the emphasis is on the *members* of the body, while Colossians presses *Christ's headship* over the ecclesia. Ephesians

elaborates the relation of the members to God and to one another, as well as to Christ Himself. Colossians is largely confined to our connection with Him alone.

In Ephesians, the bulk of the epistle is concerned with an orderly and positive presentation of the truth. Colossians, however, devotes the corresponding space to the correction of departures from it.

Ephesians is general, with no local allusions. Colossians is concerned with a special situation, and a particular ecclesia.

In Ephesians the previous disabilities of the nations *in flesh*, alienated, guests, without prospects, far off (Eph.2:11-13) are used to form a contrast to their present *spiritual* privileges as fellow-citizens, members of God's family, with a part in the temple (Eph.2:19,20). In Colossians this contrast is replaced by comparing Christ's limited glories in Israel, *in flesh*, with His vast *spiritual* glories among the nations and in the entire universe. This contrast is not directly expressed, as in Ephesians, but is evident in the figures of the kingdom (1:13), and the startling announcement that He is *among the nations* (1:27) whereas He would not leave the land during His ministry to Israel, before His crucifixion.

In Ephesians the body of Christ is the complement of the universe (Eph.1:23). In Colossians (2:10) we are complete in Him. There the ecclesia is the final factor in bringing all under the headship of Christ. On the earth His headship is exercised through His apostles and the holy nation. These are, figuratively speaking, His "filling" on earth, who share His spiritual might and majesty, and so are, officially, a part of Him. The ecclesia which is His body has the same function in His celestial dominions. These two, earth and heaven, constitute the universe, so that no more "filling" is

needed to administer all creation. Hence we are the final "filling," the *plêrōma,* or complement (Col.1:19), that which fully fills, so that no more is needed. The administration of the universe is amply provided for, both on earth and in the heavens.

In Colossians Christ is a double Complement (2:9,10). He is all that God needs, and all that we need, to be complete. God needs a visible and tangible expression suited to the capacities of His creatures, and Christ fulfills this fully by means of the body in which He came to do His will (Heb.10:5).

We, also, find our Complement in Him. All the rites and ceremonies pertaining to the flesh, such as circumcision and baptism, which were deemed essential to a standing before God, are now found in His death, His burial, and His rousing. What *He has done, not* what *we do,* fully equips us for the divine presence. In Ephesians, *we* are the complement of all, but in Colossians *He* is our Complement.

In time, our choice is carried back to before the disruption (Eph.1:4). Christ is carried back to creation, for He is the Firstborn (Col.1:15). Our blessings are among the celestials (Eph.1:3). *All* was created in and through and for Him (Col.1:16). We are joint-members of the body (Eph.3:6). He is Head of the body (Col.1:18). We are His complement, as He *completes* the universe (Eph.1:23). He uses the entire complement to *reconcile* the universe to God (1:20). In Ephesians the secret consists of the *joint*-enjoyment of the allotment among the celestials, the *joint*-membership in the body, and *joint*-participation in the promises by the *saints* among the nations. In Colossians the same truth is expressed by putting *Christ among* the nations, instead of in Israel, to whom He has hitherto been confined (1:27).

The secret of Christ, that He is to head up the entire universe (Eph.1:10) had been partially made known to the prophets of old, though not in its fullness, "as it was now revealed" (Eph.3:5). That part of this secret which they made known, His messiahship to Israel, is used as a background in this epistle. His future kingdom in the new earth is used to figure His present spiritual dominion, "the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col.1:13). His future presence in Israel, constituting them the ruling nation, finds its parallel in His present spiritual presence among the nations, constituting them His complement for the future administration of His celestial realms (Col.1:27; Eph.1:21-23).

"YOUR FAITH" AND "ACCORDING-TO YE FAITH"

Colossians is by no means a repetition of Ephesians. Even those paragraphs which seem to be parallel have minute variations which, when sympathetically examined, will show how exquisitely the separate details harmonize with the special subject of the whole. Thus, in Colossians, we read of "*your* faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints" (Col.1:4), which is very simple and readily understood. Why then, in Ephesians, should we find "the *according-to ye* faith, and the [faith] for all the saints" (Eph.1:15)? The Authorized Version renders both "your," but the Revisers, who were keen in such matters, changed it to "which is *among you.*" One of the best German versions reads "*in* you." Another has "*with* you," but puts "*concerning* you" in the margin, as the real translation. Luther has "*with* you."

Before examining the evidence, let us remind ourselves that Ephesians is devoted to setting forth precisely what this marginal reading suggests, that is,

the special faith which concerns us in this administration as distinct from the truth for other times, and, besides, it seems to have no special bearing on any particular group of saints (as the Ephesians), unless this passage is so interpreted. If all the saints in Christ Jesus are before us, and the apostle refers to that body of faith which is especially theirs, then this peculiar wording, "the *according-to ye* faith" is not only fitting but necessary to express his thought. But, if he is simply referring to the faith exercised by the special group whom he addresses, then the simple "*your* faith," as in Colossians, is appropriate. One phrase fits Ephesians, the other Colossians.

But how should THE according-to YOU *(tên kath humas)* be translated? That it should not be rendered simply "your," as in the Authorized Version, seems beyond question, first, because this is the regular rendering of the simple genitive pronoun OF-YE *(humōn)*, which occurs ever so often, and concerning which there is never any difference of opinion. Consequently the *accusative* pronoun, with the connective DOWN (*according-to* with the accusative), a combination which occurs but seldom, should at least be translated otherwise in order to preserve the distinction. In order to help us to arrive at a clear conception of the nature of this special phrase in Greek we present a number of passages in which this same combination is found, grouped according to the nature of the context, which helps to determine the translation into English.

THE according-to YE or ME

Ac 24:22 [Felix] shall investigate *your affairs.*
Ep 6:21 may be acquainted with *my affairs,*
Ph 1:12 *my affairs* have rather come.
Co 4: 7 All *my affairs* shall be made known.

This group seems to sustain the idea that it does not refer to possessions so much as to things pertaining to the person in question. Felix would investigate the circumstances leading to Paul's arrest and the charges against him. The saints would wish to be informed of Paul's case at court. Paul's faith would hardly be included in the reports, as this is contained in the letters themselves.

THE *according-to* [SOMETHING]

1Ti 6: 3 teaching *in accord with* devoutness
Ti 1: 1 truth which *accords with* devoutness
He 11: 7 righteousness which *accords with* faith

In these passages *harmonious relation* is expressed plainly by the connective which we are considering. Teaching and truth cannot possess devoutness but they should never conflict with it. Righteousness cannot have faith, but it can be in accord with it. From these passages we may see clearly that mere possession is not in view when this connective is used.

THE *according-to* YE [SOMETHING]

Ac 17:28 some poets *of yours* also have declared
18:15 questions concerning . . . a law *of yours,*
Ep 1:15 this faith *of yours*

Here we have the closest parallels to our text. Certain Greek poets sustained a relation to Paul's hearers, and the law was related to the Jews as this faith was related to those who received Paul's epistle. The law reference is especially helpful, for we are well acquainted with the relation of the law to the Jews. It applied particularly to them and to no others, which seems to be the special point of the passage, for Gallio would not judge according to a law not pertaining to his jurisdiction.

The question of idiomatic translation alone remains. The phrase "of yours," is a peculiar English idiom, in

which two signs of the genitive (*of* and *-s*) are added to a word already genitive (your), giving it, not only emphasis, but a vague kind of relativity. This seems to serve very well in connection with the law, as most readers are more or less clear that it was exclusively for the Jews. It would also serve in Ephesians if it were as well known that *the* faith which it reveals relates exclusively to the saints today. Would "this faith of yours" convey the same impression as "this law of yours"? It is questionable, but it may be wise to use it to secure uniformity.

The expression "according-to" does not always comply with the demands of English idiom, as these examples abundantly show. Hence it is necessary at times to use substitutes, as "suited to" (1 Cor.12:31), "savor of," "corresponding to," "relate to," as was done in this passage (Eph.1:15). In view of the following sentence, "and that for all the saints," however, which should make its meaning clear, we are considering the rendering "of yours," which will be uniform with the two other occurrences, and avoid the use of the word "relates" in this single passage. Then it will read, "Therefore, *I* also, on hearing of this faith *of yours* . . . and that for all the saints . . . ."

In passing, let us note that the phrase "on hearing" is not intended as a mark of *time*. A participle is a tenseless verbal adjective. Hence we use *on* to make it *indefinite*. The very highest authorities and Greek scholars, as well as one version, give the participle a "present" force, but this is utterly untenable, although English idiom compels the addition of the present verb in many passages. Here is where a sublinear should help. The CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT has all these verbs in lightface because they are not in the Greek. "On hearing" or "when

hearing" show the basis of Paul's thanksgiving and prayer.

Hence the idiomatic "*on* hearing" shows this best. The point is that he could not thank or pray as he did until first he had heard. In Colossians he heard of their faith and love. In Ephesians the faith was revealed to him apart from any particular group of saints, and leads to petitions which apply to all the saints of this administration.

It remains to add a few words as to the Greek text in this passage. We do not, as a rule, countenance the many omissions in the text used by the Revisers, merely because a word is not found in Vaticanus. Here most manuscripts add the words "the love" in the following sentence, thus: "your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints" (AV). But the most ancient, the three used in compiling the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT, did not have these words. They were added by a later editor in Sinaiticus. On many occasions the additions of this editor are of great value. But in Ephesians he seems to be recording the attempts of early expositors to make this epistle understandable after its message was lost. So that his addition of "the love" in this place lacks the weight which his notations usually have.

The thought that we have a special faith is so foreign to theology that this passage has caused much perplexity to translators. The Revisers have added the words *ye shew*, thus: "the faith which is among you, and which [ye shew] toward all the saints." But how can we show faith to the saints? If this is the individual faith of the believer rather than that which they believe, then this should be rendered *into* or *in*. But how could they have faith *in* the saints? The passage can hardly be understood or translated so long as the

faith exercised by each one is in view. But once we see that this rare and peculiar expression is used to indicate the things to be believed by them alone, as the law was to be obeyed by Israel alone, and in each case was in accord with their peculiar place in God's purpose, all is clear.

With this beginning of Paul's prayer the following petitions, for a spirit of wisdom and revelation, possess much more point. He prays, in fact, that they may be enabled to comprehend what he writes to them in this epistle. That this is most appropriate is evidenced by the fact that, even if it was understood by its first recipients, there is very little to show that it has ever been apprehended since by any considerable number of believers. It has seldom been accorded its proper place by teachers of the Word. The apostasy from Paul started in his lifetime and has continued ever since.

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

MISSIONS

Typhoon Kading struck central Luzon in the Philippines October 26-27, leaving myriads homeless. Resulting floods destroyed the rice crop, which is the staple food of this region. Pastor Teofilo Donal, a Concordant missionary living there, reports that none of the Concordant brethren were among the killed or injured. However, there is much physical distress. The roof of Pastor Donal's home was blown off. "Despite the rainy and stormy weather of the past month, I was able to do my duties in the Lord's work . . . . I beg you and other saints to remember us in prayer."

Despite great illness during the last few months, Dr. Raju of Rajahmundry, S. India has been carrying on his regular Bible studies and gospel tours, as well as doing translations of our materials. He is feeling better now.

T. D. Iype, also in South India, reported a cyclone that hit the coast there during the week of our Thanksgiving Day.

In Preparation

A SPECIMEN OF THE PROPOSED CONCORDANT PHILOLOGICAL CONCORDANCE

The *Companion to the Concordant Version of the Sacred Scriptures, A Comprehensive Lexicon and Concordance,* was published in 1931. This Lexical Concordance included "etymological analysis and idiomatic meanings of every Greek Word used in Divine Revelation" and "a complete concordance of every important grammatical form."

In the new concordance, as in the Lexical Concordance, the words will be associated within word families, but their order is patterned after *The Greek Elements.* The references are now in book order (Matthew to Revelation), and full context is given for each occurrence. Each Greek word is identified with the number assigned in Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance* (to help those unfamiliar with Greek).

A grammatical analysis is given for each reference by using parsing numbers. These numbers refer to the headings where the grammar is depicted in a concise manner with single letter abbreviations for each grammatical element.

For example, at 1C 7:14 (for "°**hallowed**©") the number 6.3 appears. In the heading along with 6.3, is the parsing abbreviation °**P**i3***R*** and the Greek form ἡγιασται. (Because of a difference in terminology, both *concordant* and *traditional* terms are identified in this parsing abbreviation.)

°**P**	= *state*-Present	}	*concordant*
(**boldface**)	= middle voice		
i	= indicative mood		
3	= third person		
(lightface)	= singular		
R	= Perfect tense	}	*traditional*
(***bold italic***)	= passive voice		

The goal is to bring before the reader a full presentation of verbal information about the inspired Word of God.

Ray Embry

hallow:

[s]Pi3***R***	6.3	ἡγιασται	[f]Am3***A***[1]	29.3	ἁγιασθητω
[a]Pi1P	10.1	ἁγιαζω	[s]Pn-n***R***	44[1]	ἡγιασμενον
[a]Pi3P	10.3	ἁγιαζει	[s]Pn-m***R***	44[4]	ἡγιασμενοι
[a]Pi3***P***	11.3	ἁγιαζεται	[s]Pn-f***R***	44[5]	ἡγιασμενη
[f]Ai3A[1]	18.3	ἡγιασεν	[s]Pd-x***R***	44[12]	ἡγιασμενοις
[f]Ai2***A***[1]	20.2	ἡγιασθητε	[a]Pn-nP	45[1]	ἁγιαζον
[f]Ai3***A***[1]	20.3	ἡγιασθη	[a]Pn-mP	45[3]	ἁγιαζων
[f]As3A[1]	21.3	ἁγιασῃ	[a]Pn-m***P***	46[4]	ἁγιαζομενοι
[f]Ao3A[1]	24.3	ἁγιασαι	[a]Pa-m***P***	46[18]	ἁγιαζομενους
[f]Am2A[1]	27.2	ἁγιασον	[f]An-mA[1]	47[3]	ἁγιασας
[f]Am2A[1]	27.2	ἁγιασατε			

Mt 6: 9 [I]**hallowed be Thy [W]name. Thy [W]kingdom come.** 29.3
23:17 **the gold, or the temple [W]that hallows the gold?** 47[3]
:19 **altar [W]that is hallowing the** approach **present?** 45[1]
Lu 11: 2 [I]**hallowed be Thy [W]name! Thy [W]kingdom come.** 29.3
Jn 10:36 **Him Whom the Father hallows and dispatches** 18.3
17:17 **Hallow them [f]by Thy [W]truth. Thy [W]word is truth.** 27.2
:19 **And for their sakes I [W]am hallowing Myself,** 10.1
:19 **they [W]also may be [°]hallowed[°] [f]by the truth.** 44[4]
Ac 20:32 **allotment among all [W]who [I]have been hallowed[°].** 44[12]
26:18 **[I]have been hallowed[°] by faith [W]that is [to]in Me.'** 44[12]
Ro 15:16 **received, having been hallowed[°] [f]by holy spirit.** 44[5]
1Co 1: 2 **[W]which [I]is in Corinth, [°]hallowed[°] in Christ Jesus,** 44[12]
6:11 **but you are bathed[°] off, but you are hallowed,** 20.2
7:14 **unbelieving [W]husband is [°]hallowed[°] [f]by the wife,** 6.3
:14 **unbelieving [W]wife is [°]hallowed[°] [f]by the brother,** 6.3
Ep 5:26 **He should be hallowing it, [W]cleansing it in the bath** 21.3
1Th 5:23 **may the God of [W]peace [s]Himself be hallowing you** 24.3
1Ti 4: 5 **it is [I]hallowed[°] through the word of God and** 11.3
2Ti 2:21 **a utensil [to]for honor, [°]hallowed[°], and useful** 44[1]
He 2:11 **For [bs]both He [W]Who is hallowing and** 45[3]
:11 **[W]those who are being hallowed[°] are all [°] of One,** 46[4]
9:13 **is hallowing to[d] the cleanness of the flesh,** 10.3
10:10 **[f]By which will we are [°]hallowed[°] through the** 44[4]
:14 **perfected [to]to a [W]finality [W]those who are [I]hallowed[°].** 46[18]
:29 **blood of the covenant [f]by which he is hallowed** 20.3
13:12 **be hallowing the people through [W]His own blood,** 21.3
1P 3:15 **yet hallow the Lord Christ in your [W]hearts,** 27.2
Re 22:11 **and let the holy one be [I]hallowed still.** 29.3

THE SECRET OF THE EVANGEL

When we read in the Old Testament how God led the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness and destroyed their enemies as well as offenders and rebels among His people, we may wonder why He does not do this today. Even when the Lord was here on earth and during the times of the apostles there were miracles and swift executions of judgment from the hand of God. We may often wonder why God does not seem to do anything about the wickedness of our day. Why do His people often suffer for their faithfulness, and why does He allow His truth to be covered up?

It is one aspect of the evangel which has become covered up which answers these questions. This is the conciliation which tells us that "God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them" (2 Cor.5:19). It is God's declaration of peace. "For Christ, then are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ's sake, 'Be conciliated to God!' " (2 Cor.5:20).

The Greek word for *ambassador* appears only in one other passage, and there it is translated "conducting an embassy." In Ephesians 6:18-20 Paul requests vigilance in prayer "that to me expression may be granted, in the opening of my mouth with boldness, to make known the secret of the evangel, for which I am

conducting an embassy in a chain, that in it I should be speaking boldly, as I must speak." In Jeremiah's day it took boldness to speak of coming affliction and wrath. In our day it takes boldness to speak of this peace which God has established.

The secret of the evangel is opposed by the "spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials" (Eph.6:12). They do not want us to think of God in this way. They prefer that we look upon God with dread, as the angry Avenger of all wrong. Peace is one of God's greatest accomplishments through the blood of the cross, and it is one of the greatest spiritual blessings which the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, has blessed us with (Eph.1:3).

HUSHED IN TIMES EONIAN

This glorious secret was kept hidden in the times which are past (Rom.16:25), but now it has been made known through Paul's ministry. Nevertheless, it remains hidden to most people. The conciliation has been established, but very few have actually received it. Even believers may doubt God's achievement and strive to make their own peace with Him. When we worry and fret and hate and despair we are forgetting the secret of the evangel, and we are showing that we do not really believe God when He says He is not reckoning our offenses against us. The way of peace is to be "glorying . . . in God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we now obtained the conciliation" (Rom.5:11).

It is a great privilege for us to be living in this era in spite of its evil, for the secret of the evangel has been made known, and the blessings of the conciliation are available to comfort us and give us peace. This was not possible in Old Testament times.

With the ministry of Paul to all nations, God's special association with Israel came to a close, and the secret of the evangel was made known. Paul writes that this "casting away" of Israel made possible "the conciliation of the world" (Rom.11:15). Yet in the future Israel will become "My people" once again, and for a time the conciliation will be withdrawn as the events described in the book of Revelation take place. In the light of this we can say with Paul, "Lo! Now is a most acceptable era! Lo! Now is a day of salvation!" (2 Cor.6:2).

CLASS PROJECTS

1. How can we explain the apparent "silence of God" in the present era when there is so much evil and enmity against Him?
2. Who do we represent as ambassadors? What is the policy which we are to present to the world?
3. Look up all the occurrences of the words *conciliate* and *conciliation* (pages 56 and 57 of the KEYWORD CONCORDANCE). Which passage is not dealing with the conciliation God has established?
4. Discuss the meaning of *conciliation* and its relation to *reconciliation.*
5. Suggest some contrasts between the ministries of Jeremiah and Paul.

A.C. Lamb

The series of Scripture Class Studies now appearing in the magazine are available in leaflet form.

BOOK SERVICE

We maintain a small stock of Bibles and reference works which we sell at our cost, as a service to our readers. These include such works as *Young's Literal Translation* and *Englishman's Greek Concordance.* Write us for further details.

"ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED BY GOD"

IN THE COURSE of His long and powerful reply to the Jewish critics who sought to kill Him because He had raised a man to soundness on the sabbath, the Lord Jesus declared: "Search the Scriptures, for in them you are supposing you have life eonian, *and those are they which are testifying concerning Me . . .*" (John 5:39,40). Later, after His suffering and subsequent rousing, He interpreted, first of all to Cleopas and his companion, on the road to Emmaus, and then again to them both when they were gathered with the eleven disciples and others in a room in Jerusalem, ". . . in all the Scriptures . . . in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms . . ." that which concerned Himself (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46). By these words the Lord set His irrevocable, inviolable and imperishable seal for all time upon the inspiration, veracity and infallibility of the Hebrew Scriptures. We treasure the precious testimony of "the *Word*" to His Word.

The subject of our meditation, however, is not "Christ in the Scriptures," nor "The Fulfillment of the Prophetic Scriptures in the Coming, the Suffering, the Death, the Entombment and Rousing of Christ." These are, of course, transcendent themes indeed, for Christ is *the* Subject of the Scriptures. He pervades them throughout. The law and the prophets and the psalms point forward always to Him. Nevertheless, our subject is directly concerned with the Hebrew Scriptures—the Hebrew Scriptures as we find excerpts from them quoted in the writings of the apostle Paul.

As we seek to follow this theme, we do so prayerfully with a desire for God's glory, and in the full realization that those portions of the Hebrew Scriptures which are quoted in the Greek Scriptures carry enduringly the authentication of the Lord Jesus Christ's witness to them. These quotations, which are not selected haphazardly nor used at random, but as required by holy spirit, carry the full weight and value of their initial inspiration. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness, that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act" (2 Tim.3:16,17).

The apostle Paul quotes passages from the Hebrew Scriptures on some one hundred and twenty occasions, and these are to be found in seven of his thirteen epistles and personal letters: of these quotations, over seventy are included in the epistle to the Romans. Those portions of the Hebrew Scriptures selected for inclusion in Paul's writings are introduced in a variety of ways. From among the numerous introductions employed, the following will serve as examples: "according as it is written," "even as it is written," "God is saying," "He is saying," "the Scripture is saying," "in the law it is written" and "it was (or has been) declared." Many quoted passages are not prefaced by any formula.

Sometimes a phrase or passage is quoted exactly (or more or less so), while, at other times, an excerpt is suitably (and of course, inspiredly) altered as the new context in which it appears may require. In a few instances, the same passage is quoted in two epistles.

In addition, Paul alludes in his writings to characters, events and circumstances mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, using such references to illustrate

or develop a truth which he wishes to expound. An example of this is the reference to Elijah and the seven thousand men who do not bow the knee to the image of Baal in Romans 11:1-6. Paul parallels this incident in Israel's history with the analogy of the "remnant according to the choice of grace" in this current era.

In this study, we will be concerned with selected passages taken from the Hebrew Scriptures and set firmly, by holy spirit, in new contexts within the Pauline writings. These are used by Paul, the inspired penman and the beloved apostle of the nations, to lead into and develop the truths which are so uniquely associated with his ministry.

"NOW THE JUST ONE BY FAITH SHALL BE LIVING"

The first passage quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures, which we discover in Paul's writings (that is, in the order of their presentation in most versions) is: "Now the just one by faith shall be living" (Rom.1:17). The phrase is an excerpt from Habakkuk 2:4, which reads as follows in the King James Version: "Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith." The tentative Concordant Version rendering of the verse is: "Behold! Presumptuous is his soul, it is not upright in him. Yet the just one by his faith shall live."

THE HABAKKUK CONTEXT

The prophet Habakkuk was concerned with the period of the Assyrian aggression, for he ministered at the time of the peak of the Assyrian ascendancy. The scroll bearing his name is in two parts: (1) a "burden" or "load" (1:2-2:20), and (2) a "prayer" (3:1-19). The "burden" or "load" section really opens with a prayer, for the prophet is crying out to Ieue over "devastation

and violence," concerning which Ieue does not *seem* to be "hearkening" and from which He does not *appear* to be "saving." More seriously still, "the law is *torpid*" (CV) or "*slacked*" (AV) and, therefore, cannot be effective in the face of such dire conditions. As a result "the wicked one is compassing about the righteous one; therefore tortuous judgment is faring forth" (Hab.1:4 CV).

In His reply, Ieue does not really lighten the prophet's "load." Rather He adds to it, for He makes Habakkuk aware that He will be "raising the Chaldeans, the bitter and hasty nation . . . dreadful and fearful . . . ." Habakkuk speaks again to Ieue (commencing 1:12), "Art Thou not from aforetime, Ieue? My Alue, my Holy One, *Thou* shalt not die . . ." (1:12-2:1). And it is in Ieue's second reply (2:2-2:20) that we find the well-known declaration: "Yet the just one by his faith shall live."

HABAKKUK'S PERPLEXITY—IEUE'S PROFERRED SOLUTION

What, then, was the situation in which the prophet found himself and which, by reason of its seriousness, had called forth from Ieue the statement: "Yet the just one by his faith shall live"? Very simply, and for our present purpose, it was this: Habakkuk stood at a critical juncture in Ieue's dealings with His people and, of course, with other nations also. He had witnessed the rising tide of Assyrian power and the culmination of Assyrian aggression, and was acutely aware of the many evils which existed in the distressing aftermath of Assyrian conquest. The prophet longed for the rectification of these evils.

Hostilities involving Ieue's people were not, however, to cease with the rout of the Assyrian hordes before the gates of Jerusalem, during the reign of

Judah's king, Hezekiah (*cf* 2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37). Ieue apprized Habakkuk of a *future* menace: "For behold Me raising against you the masterful Chaldeans, the bitter and hasty nation, going the widths of the earth to tenant tabernacles not his own. Dreadful and fearful is he! His judgment and his dignity is faring forth from himself" (Hab.1:6,7 CV).

The Assyrians—"the club of Ieue's anger" (Isaiah 10:5)—had removed the idolatrous and thoroughly apostate tribes of the northern kingdom from Ieue's hand and had dispersed them widely, thus terminating their rebellion against the House of David. The Chaldeans, at an *appointed time* (Hab.2:3), would deal similarly with the increasingly idolatrous and apostate people of Judah and Jerusalem, as we learn from other prophetic Scriptures. In fact, both the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel reveal that *Judah* had exceeded her "sister" *Samaria* in wickedness (Jer.3:6-11; Ezek.16:51,52). The apostasy of God's chosen people had reached frightening proportions.

Apostasy was rampant. The law was sluggish and rendered ineffectual by default. How *could* Habakkuk and the faithful remnant, deprived of the divine ritual and the usual way of approach to God, but deeply concerned "to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly before God" (Mic.6:8), surmount such distressing and apparently hopeless conditions?

There was only one way revealed by Ieue to His anxious prophet. The resolution of the perplexing problems pressing so heavily upon Habakkuk lay solely in "the pathway of faith"—the exercise of a full and enduring obedience to the exhortation implicit in the precious words of Ieue to him:

"Yet the just one *by his faith* shall live."

Although denied the support of the legislation and

the customary means of the divine service, life could still be lived before God *in faith.*

THE HABAKKUK QUOTATION IN ROMANS

The Habakkuk quotation appears in two of Paul's epistles; in Romans (1:17) and in the epistle to the ecclesias of Galatia (3:11). It is also included by the writer of the Hebrews (10:38), where it is followed (in chapter eleven) by the crowning definition of "faith" and by God's testimony to His "vast cloud of witnesses." Let us, then, give some thought to Ieue's words of hope to Habakkuk, His faithful prophet, as we find them within their new contexts.

In the epistle to the Romans, we discover the words in a superb setting. "For not ashamed am I of the evangel, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing—to the Jew first, and to the Greek as well. For a righteousness which is of God is being revealed in it, *out of faith for faith,* according as it is written: 'Now the just one *by faith* shall be living' " (Rom.1:16,17).

In these two verses, we are at the very heart of the evangel of God, which concerns His Son (Rom.1:1-3). This is the evangel for which Paul was severed (Rom.1;1), with which he was entrusted (1 Tim.1:11), of which he was appointed herald and apostle (2 Tim.1:11), and which he recieved through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal.1:12); the evangel which he thrice called "my evangel" (Rom.2:16, 16:25 and 2 Tim.2:8). Paul's apostleship, which he received through Jesus Christ and God, the Father (Gal.1:1), he obtained "*for faith-obedience* among all the nations" (Rom.1:5).

It is of more than passing interest to note the three occurrences of *for* in these two verses: "*For* . . . not

ashamed am I of the evangel, *for* it is God's power for salvation . . . *for* a righteousness of God is being revealed in it out of faith for faith . . . ." The evangel is God's *power* for salvation because of the fact that God's *righteousness* is being revealed in it *out of faith* (i.e., out of Christ's faith) *for faith* (i.e., *for* or *into* the faith of the believer).*

Now the fundamental truth is that God's righteousness which is revealed in the evangel comes out of, or through, the faith of Jesus Christ into the faith of the believer. This justification (as mentioned again by the apostle in Romans 3:21-23, Galatians 2:15,16 and Philippians 3:9), is said to be "*according* as it is written, 'Now the just one by faith shall be living.' " The two statements (Paul's and Habakkuk's) are not, in a sense, strictly parallel, but they are *in accord* and fully comparable, for a common principle, that of *faith in God,* underlies both. There is, therefore, a firm area of agreement.

The inclusion of the Habakkuk quotation within the context of a concise but most explicit definition of the evangel concerning God's Son, contributes its valuable testimony to the vital character of *faith* which is so essential a factor of the evangel. Further, the quotation in this setting stresses the fact that faith was not a new feature in God's dealings with humanity. Instead, it actually antedated the evangel heralded by the apostle Paul. Faith was of proven worth, for it was the stimulating, vitalizing power which invigorated those

*A fourth "for": "*For* God's indignation is being revealed from heaven on all the irreverence and injustice of men . . ." continues the sequence, links two sections of the epistle (1:14-17 with 1:18-3:20), and introduces the statement, and section, which bring into the light the deep need of humanity for the evangel of God and, also, for the righteousness of God.

fearing God in their walk with God, long, long before the giving of the law through Moses, and its subsequent functioning.

THE HABAKKUK QUOTATION IN GALATIANS

The second occurrence in Paul's writings, of this phrase from the scroll of the prophet Habakkuk is in the letter to the Galatians (3:11), as earlier indicated. There we find it (in the company of the terms "law" and "being justified") in a small section (verses 10 to 14) concerned with the curse of the law. This is set within a much wider context (3:1 to 5:12) which deals very fully with, and answers the question asked twice by Paul: "Did you get the spirit by works of the law or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal.3:2 and 5). This is a crucial issue, and consideration of it leads into the core and substance of the evangel heralded by the apostle Paul—justification by faith.

The question is answered twice within the same context (3:1 to 5:12). The first of the two answers includes the quotation from Habakkuk: "For whoever are of works of law are under a curse, for it is written that, Accursed is everyone who is not remaining in all things written in the scroll of the law to do them. Now that *in* law no one is being justified with God is evident, for the just one by faith shall be living. Now the law is not of faith, but who does them 'shall be living in them' " (Gal.3:10-12). The second is as follows: "Exempted from Christ were you who are being justified *in* law. You fall out of grace. For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness by faith" (Gal.5:4,5).

It will be seen at once that the words "*in* law" (a rendering so helpfully preserved for us in the Concordant Version) are common to both passages. "*In*

law," that is, in or during a *state* of law, "no one is being justified *with God.*" This is a clear and positive statement of a fact fundamental to the evangel heralded by Paul, so much so that he declared that it "is evident." It is not possible for anyone to be justified *with God* in conditions wherein law-observance is incumbent.

In the second instance ("Exempted from Christ were you, who are being justified *in* law"), the apostle assumes, momentarily, the possibility of "being justified *in* law," in a *state* or under *conditions* in which law obtained. If this could be (and it cannot be), then the logical and unbearable conclusion would simply be *exemption from Christ.* There can be *no* intrinsic value in a "justification" which does not find its pure source in the gratuitous grace of God (Rom.3:24), or which would leave us without Christ, in Whose precious blood we are justified and Who is our *Life* (Rom.5:9; Col.3:4).

HABAKKUK AND PAUL

The prophet Habakkuk was Ieue's spokesman in distressing times. No less oppressive were the years of the labors of the apostle Paul in the evangel of God concerning His Son. Saul, who was also Paul, was God's "choice instrument" to bear God's name "before both the nations and kings, besides the sons of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Paul's ministry was unique, but one which involved for him much suffering for the sake of God's name. The eleventh chapter of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians reveals to us something of the nature and extent of that suffering.

Separated as they were by several centuries, with inevitable changes, the ministries of the prophet Habakkuk and the apostle Paul differed considerably

in character. Nevertheless, there was a feature, a significant feature, common to both ministries. Each of these servants of God sustained his witness without recourse to the law given by God to His people Israel, through Moses ("the legislation and the divine service" Rom.9:4), although for different reasons.

Habakkuk cries out that "the law is torpid" (1:4). The reason for this during the period of Habakkuk's ministry has already been mentioned. Apostasy, idolatry and corruption were rife. The law, if it functioned at all, did so only sluggishly and inadequately. It no longer curbed the flesh. Along with the associated divine service, the law had, in Habakkuk's time, reached a state of ineffectiveness as the means of acceptable approach *to* God and of living *before* God. The law was, indeed, "infirm through the flesh" (Rom.8:3). Well might Habakkuk have voiced his apprehension in the words of the question asked of Bildad by Job, "Truly, I know it is so, yet how is a mortal being just with Al?" (Job 9:2). Had he done so, Ieue's response would still have been: ". . . the just one by his faith shall live . . . ."

When we move forward into the era of Paul's apostleship and heralding and examine his writings carefully, it becomes evident to us that conditions "*in* law" (in a *state* of law) have no part in his unique and faithful ministry. This was not because the law given through Moses had lapsed, as it had done in Habakkuk's time. Indeed, the Jews continued to observe the law, despite the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ had told them, "Lo! left is *your* house to you desolate" (Matt.23:38).

Believing Jewish leaders had, in fact, told the apostle Paul that "many tens of thousands there are among the Jews who have believed, and *all* are inherently

zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20). In so far as *observance* of the law was concerned, it had not lapsed, but, through that observance, many of the law's adherents sought to establish their *own* righteousness, being ignorant of the righteousness of God and not subject to it (Rom.10:3).

In the ministry of the apostle Paul, *the law is set aside* and awaits that future eon when Ieue will instill His law within a redeemed people, and will write it on compliant hearts (Jer.31:33). In this administration of God's grace, "*Christ* is the consummation of law *for righteousness* to everyone who is believing" (Rom.10:4). The "law of *faith*" (Rom.3:27) supersedes the Mosaic law and customs, while the "righteousness which is of the law" gives place to "the righteousness *of faith.*" The believer in this present administration is "not under law, but under grace" (Rom.6:14,15).

"*Now* the just one *by faith* shall be living."

LIVING IN FAITH THAT IS OF THE SON OF GOD

Having considered the circumstances which called forth from Ieue the words of His wise counsel to the prophet Habakkuk and noted the contexts within which we find the words quoted by the apostle Paul in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, we shall now compare the words recorded by Habakkuk and Paul respectively, and note a difference. In Habakkuk's scroll we read (2:4): "Yet the just one by *his* faith shall live." In the two Pauline letters mentioned, the quotation is as follows: "Now the just one *by faith* shall be living."

The difference is obvious, but let us not imagine that Paul has misquoted Ieue's words to Habakkuk. Few, if any, would be more thoroughly conversant with the Hebrew Scriptures than was Paul. Rather, we

have here an instance of an inspired adjustment in the quotation of a scripture to accord with the changed conditions and needs of a new administration. While fully retaining and ratifying the divine principle of faith in God enshrined within the words of Ieue's message to His prophet, the slight variation in the statement as it is quoted in Romans and Galatians, brings that principle into full accord with the requirements of the truth being revealed through the apostle Paul, in and for this administration of grace. "It is of *faith* that it may accord with *grace*" (Rom.4:16). It is *in grace* we are being justified gratuitously through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3;24). We are also justified *by faith* and *in His blood* (Rom.5:1,9). Our justification assuredly rests securely upon impregnable foundations.

The wondrous truth of justification by faith is not, of course, in view in the scroll of the prophet Habakkuk. It is the exercise of the faith, in God, of "the just one" in times of crisis or trial, such as were then being experienced, which is before us. A warm love for the law of God and a realization of the just requirement of the law would inculcate, within the hearts of at least a remnant in Israel before the law "slacked," a zeal for and a faith in God. Those possessing such a faith could rightly be considered "just," a term which is applied to many in the Scriptures.

This, then, was the faith commended by Ieue to the prophet Habakkuk and his compatriots of the faithful remnant, who were "just" before God in relation to His law which had so tragically lapsed. It was the sincere faith of "the just one" which would enable the faithful to live before God, although denied the means of divine service. They had before them, as a wonderful expectation and powerful incentive for faith, Ieue's

promise: ". . . filled shall be the earth with the knowledge of Ieue's glory, as the waters are covering the sea floor" (Hab.2:14).

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews has recorded the inspired definition of faith: "Now faith is an assumption of what is being expected, a conviction concerning matters which are not being observed" (11:1). That definition is comprehensive and applies equally to the "his faith" of Habakkuk and to the faith which, in this era, we seek to exercise in God and in His Word. Faith does not vary in essence, but in that which is to be believed.

The comparison of the words in Habakkuk with the words as quoted by the apostle Paul, raises in our minds the question: Habakkuk was encouraged to live by *his* faith, but do *we*, in this administration of the grace of God, live by *our* faith, a faith solely of our own and finding its source within ourselves? The question presses the more insistently when we bring to mind the contexts in which the Habakkuk quotation appears in the epistles to the Roman and Galatian saints, and when we consider the truths developed in these letters (especially in Romans) concerning faith-obedience and subjection to the righteousness of God. These truths, which are of such outstanding value and significance, and the mature revelations of Paul's prison letters, call for faith of a character which cannot find its origin within ourselves. However, let the Scriptures answer the question and clarify matters for us.

"For I am saying," writes the apostle Paul, "through the grace which is given to me, to everyone who is among you . . . be of a sane disposition, *as God parts to each the measure of faith*" (Rom.12:3). In his epistle "to all the saints who are also believers in

Christ Jesus," Paul declares: "For in grace, through *faith*, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting" (Eph.2:8,9). So vital is *faith* in connection with the evangel, that God offers us (as with an oblation) and presents us with *the faith* to believe Him, to believe His Word and to believe the evangel. No faith, presumed to originate within, and of ourselves, could believe all that is compassed by such truths as, for example, "the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom.3:24, Eph.1;14), and that of our completeness in Christ (Col.2:10). The surpassing wonder of the truths for this present era require the faith that God gives us to believe them, and also that "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him," for which we are enjoined to pray (Eph.1:17).

God's righteousness comes to us and justifies us *out of* (Rom.1:17), *by* (Gal.2:16) and *through* (Rom.3:22, Gal.2:16 and Phil.3:9) the *faith of Christ Jesus.*

Truly, indeed, we live by faith, but let us hear the testimony of the apostle Paul as he gives it in the following verse from his epistle to the Galatians:

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

The faith in which we live is God's oblation. In faith-obedience we are subject to the righteousness of God.

Alan Reid

We welcome the new readers of *Unsearchable Riches* to our growing list of subscribers. Your comments and questions about our work are always appreciated.

GOD'S POWER FOR SALVATION

WHEN our Lord was here on the earth, in the flesh, there was a religious party among the Jews called the Sadducees. They ridiculed the idea of a resurrection and most everything that was "supernatural." At one time a group of them came to Jesus and tried to trap Him with an "academic" question about a woman who was married and widowed successively to seven brothers before she also died. The question was: "In the resurrection . . . of which of the seven will she be the wife?" (Matt.22:28).

We should note the Lord's reply (verse 29) very carefully. He did not answer the question directly but said, "You are deceived, not being acquainted with the scriptures, *nor yet with the power of God.*" After this He told them that there was to be no marrying at all in the resurrection. However, our main interest here is that the Lord focused attention on the basic error of the Sadducees. Their mistake in denying resurrection stemmed from their failure to apprehend the power of God.

This same error lies at many of our own misconceptions about God. We may acknowledge God as the Creator of the universe, but we tend to lack the assurance that He is able to bring this work to a successful completion. We have only a limited appreciation of His power. Of course, as believers we rejoice in His power of resurrection, but do our views come up to those the Lord had in mind in Matthew

22? Is the power of God finally to end as a display of judgment of the wicked and a salvaging effort to bring the few into happiness? Like the Sadducees we need to become acquainted with the power of God.

The *power of God* is referred to three times in the book of Romans where we have the evangel presented to us in its basic form. In reverse order these are: (1) God's power in individuals' lives as discussed in Romans 9; (2) God's power in creation, referred to in Romans 1:20; (3) God's power for salvation, introduced in Romans 1:16. Let us consider each of these presentations of the power of God.*

THE POWER OF GOD'S WILL

Many today have the impression that they are "the masters of their fate." This was not the view of the ancient people, not even of the wise among the Greeks or the Romans. It was not the view of the Hebrew Scriptures, nor the view of the Lord, nor even that of the Sadducees. Paul writes concerning Moses and the children of Israel, ". . . it is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful" (Rom.9:16). And then, with Pharaoh in view, the apostle adds, "Consequently, then, to whom He will, He is merciful, yet whom He will, He is hardening" (9:18).

The most amazing declaration here is that God roused up Pharaoh so that He should be displaying His *power* against the background of Pharaoh's stubbornness, in making His *powerful* doings known (verses 17 and 22). God's will is all-powerful. What He wills He will perform. But in the past, as still today, this often involves suffering for some as well as blessing for others; it involves indignation as well as glory.

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*See also our booklet, "The Power of God," by John H. Essex.

It is important that we acknowledge the power of God's will. God is able to choose individuals for certain purposes and direct their lives, and He does, in fact, do this, both for "vessels of mercy" and "vessels of indignation." Yet, seeing this *we do not yet know the power of God.* We are only like the Sadducees who acknowledged death but refused to acknowledge resurrection.

The power of God, as it really is, goes far beyond the exercise of mercy and indignation. These are steps along the way, but they are not the consummation toward which the power of God is directed. Believers sometimes are impatient with unbelievers who reject God because they are confused by His exercise of power. But do we ourselves understand the purpose for God's powerful operations?

It is generally understood that Paul answers the question of Romans 9:19 by dismissing it as something we ought not to discuss. He asks of God, "Why . . . is He . . . blaming? for who has withstood His intention?" This is a good question and directly concerns God's use of His power in carrying out His will. But the fact is that the following verses (9:20-24) do not really answer the question, but rather they make it more striking. We will not protest God's right to use His power to carry out His will. In fact, we can be glad that He does. But the question remains, Why does He do it, and, Is this indeed God's will, that some become acquainted with God's power in indignation, and others in mercy?

It is a serious error to let the argument of Romans 9 end with Romans 9. The chapter is part of a unified section ending with chapter 11, and the whole must be related to the evangel of God which Paul has presented in the early sections of Romans. The im-

mediate answer to Romans 9:19 is Romans 11:32. Why are some people "vessels of indignation" and others are "vessels of mercy?" Why is God's power used this way? It is because "God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all." God's power is directed to the commendation of His love (Rom.5:8) and "life's justifying" (Rom.5:18). "Now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also" (Rom.8:30).

Therefore, if we are going to appreciate the power of God's will we must also come to appreciate His power for salvation. Indeed, the overall expression of God's will is the salvation of all mankind (1 Tim.2:4).

GOD'S IMPERCEPTIBLE POWER

We do not see God's power, but we can see its effects. These are shown in the creation (Rom.1:20), but here again the evidence is not altogether what we might expect. It is quite confusing because so much of creation is destructive and painful.

The biologist who studies the activities of living things in taking in food and releasing energy has divided this process (which he calls "metabolism") into two categories. He calls the process of the building-up of the body substance "anabolism." And the process of the breaking-down of the body substance for the release of energy he calls "catabolism." There must be both anabolism and catabolism in order for there to be metabolism, that is, in order for living things to grow and function. There must be both a constructive and a destructive phase in order for the living creature to live at all.

Such a pattern follows through all of creation. And it is a picture of what God is doing also. As a matter of fact, the word "catabolism" (which is from the Greek

language where it literally meant "down-casting") is used in the Scriptures and translated in the Concordant Version by the English word "disruption." God's power is used for breaking-down as well as for building-up!

Nevertheless, there is a difference between this pattern as shown in creation and as it is carried on in God's eonian purpose. The pattern is cyclic in creation but culminative in God's overall operation. Spring, summer, autumn and winter come around every year. But the eons will consummate in full and complete glory.

POWER FOR SALVATION

It is in Romans 1:16 where we find the power of God presented in its fullness. "For not ashamed am I of the evangel, for it is God's power *for salvation* to everyone who is believing . . . ." The evangel is a unique and glorious vehicle for displaying the power of God. "Salvation" implies that there is something to be saved from, something disruptive and destructive, something that is catabolic and even cataclysmic. This is death itself and its venomous sting which is sin (1 Cor.15:56). Yet here God's power for good emerges fully and finally triumphant. When this powerful operation of salvation is completed there will be no more cycles of disruption and mercy. There will be only life and glory.

We might take Paul's words on another subject in Ephesians 5:32, as translated in the King James Version, and describe the subject of the power of God as "a great mystery." The great mystery is, Why does God's power have a negative side, and why does the negative side so often get the upper hand? Taking the same phrase from the Concordant Version, we might

say that the "great mystery" is answered by the "great secret." The great secret here is the evangel that tells us that the negative is only temporary and lasts only as long as it is needed in order to serve as a contrast to the positive blessings God has for us. God's power, in the end, is directed to complete deliverance from the negative into that which is victorious and glorious.

This is not "metabolism" with its cycles of destruction and construction. The power of God is for salvation, an achievement, the attainment of a goal, a powerful and triumphant deliverance out of the former situation. Paul describes it again in Romans 8:20,21 "For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation that the creation itself also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God."

This is the power of God in truth. God has commended His power to us even as He has commended His love, in the death of His Son on our behalf, and in His resurrection and exaltation. When we think of God's power we must not restrict it to creation or to His strange dealings with humanity, but we must think of His power as it is channeled through His Son for salvation. This is our powerful God. To Him be the glory! D.H.H.

A chart giving "A Genealogy of the Authorized English New Testament" is available from the office for 75 cents apiece (includes postage). It is printed on stiff golden colored, parchment textured paper, is approximately 8 x 14 inches in size, and is suitable for framing. It not only gives the names and interrelationships of the major English versions preceding the King James Version, but contains such information as the dates of the various editions and the texts used as the basis for translation.

GOD'S GRACE AND OUR BEHAVIOR

Since we are justified in grace, why must we stand before the dais of God?

Our relationship to God and that to our fellow men should be kept entirely distinct in our minds when considering the dais. There is nothing between us and God to require such a session, but there is much between us and our fellows that needs to be settled by the illumination of that day. We grope in comparative darkness in regard to each other, and misjudge one another. Not only must our false and fleeting doctrines face the fire, but our good and bad or evil practices, as regards our fellows, must be *requited.* Many a matter have I left in the hands of Christ to be dealt with in the light of that day (2 Cor.5:10).

We have been justified before God by the work of Christ, but we are not justified among men by our own works. One was settled long ago and is everlasting. The other cannot be determined until our course is run and we are presented at the dais. We are to judge nothing before the time because the spring of human actions and its complexities are hid from us and are beyond our adjudication. Besides, no judge is competent to sit on a bench where he himself is brought to trial. Let us not *judge* now, but wait for the day of *requital,* when all will be rewarded in the light of perfect knowledge, and without the least danger of sin or mistake.

Who is more insistent than Paul that we are justified

gratuitously by God's grace? Yet, when it comes to the dais, although he is conscious of nothing against himself, he insists that he is *not justified* by this (1 Cor.4:4). Such a contrast should show us the great difference between what is ours before God because of what Christ has done, and what is ours in relation to those with whom we come into contact by reason of our own actions. Moreover, if *Paul* did not justify himself, how can anyone else think of such a thing? We are all too prone to think we are right, and to demand that others acknowledge this publicly. We are not satisfied with the righteousness we have from God, but we want one of our own to flaunt before men, especially if our conscience is clear. A clear conscience is no criterion today.

Self-righteousness in view of our fellows is due to our ignorance of the flesh and to darkness as to our mortal state. Our condition is such that even a man like Paul prefers not to press the matter, but to leave it to the illumination of the dais, when we shall be immortal and free from infirmity and failure. The probabilities are that the most righteous act we have ever achieved was tinged with self and sin. By all means let us *not* seek to justify ourselves or demand that others recognize our righteous acts or character. Let us postpone all this until the gloom of our dying state gives place to the glory of eternal life, when all will be manifest, and self will have no cover under which to hide.

Is there any grace in the dais?

Superficially, the dais of Christ seems to be a "judgment seat," as our popular version calls it. But if we probe beneath the surface we will find even its most forbidding aspects suffused with favor to

ourselves and to our fellows. Everyone who will be presented there will be a chosen favorite of God and will be treated accordingly. Not only will his sins be absent, having been transmuted into God's righteousness through the infinite virtue of the blood of Christ, but he will be reconciled through His death. God, in Chirst, will not be there as a *Judge* to condemn us for our sins and offenses against Him, but as a faithful Friend, to reward us for our service and suffering, to adjust our relationship to our fellow saints, and to prepare us for our future glorious service by removing every impediment and hindrance.

The very losses we may sustain for faulty service or failure in conduct will be essentially gracious, for their effects will prepare us for the future. Even their remembrance might mar the bliss of the far-flung eons that follow, unless all were finally satisfactorily settled. Just as we burn up the rubbish that accumulates and threatens to become an eyesore, so the fire will consume only that which has no place in final perfection.

One of the most gracious aspects of the dais is its influence on our present service and conduct. If all realized that much that we do will be made a bonfire in that day, it would radically revolutionize "Christian" service. If we only remind ourselves that the race is not to the swift, unless they observe the rules, we would be more concerned to heed the Scriptures, and not walk disorderly. Even if we attain the highest honors among men for the passing period of our earthly life, what is that if it puts us in the lowest place in the coming eons? This is a very mean motive, but the grace of it lies in the fact that the very same selfish desire to have the preeminence, when viewed in the light of the dais, will cure us of it now, when we need such help.

How does grace affect our attitude toward those who misjudge us or deny us our rights?

The evangel of grace heralded by Paul, not only differs from that of the Circumcision in doctrine, but radically departs from it in practice. Like the priests of old and like all engaged in the service of the temple, Peter and the eleven had a *right* to be supported by the saints. Paul also had this *right*, but it was *wrong* for him to *use* it in making known the evangel of transcendent *grace*. Instead, the greatest of all the apostles, through whom more spiritual wealth was distributed than through any other, refused to claim his rights, and worked with his hands to supply his needs. This is the deportment which accords with the doctrines of grace. Without this spirit back of it, the truth will soon become lifeless and sterile, formal and corrupt.

The demand for and insistence on our rights is a prolific cause of friction and contention. God recognized it in the service of the Circumcision, but He has no pleasure in it now, for it is out of line with His operations and the spirit of grace in the evangel. Seldom, indeed, do others agree with us in what we consider to be our rights.

This does not necessarily imply that an evangelist must earn all his bread by working. Paul often received gifts, yet these also were the *unforced fruits* of the evangel, which are in accord with the present grace. But he did not claim them as a *right*. *He* should *have had enough* of these to free him from manual toil, if anyone could claim that right. And if he had received enough, no doubt he would have given all his time and strength to the evangel. This should be the case wherever it is practicable, and does not detract

from the spirit of grace, which is the outstanding and essential characteristic of the present administration.

Let us learn this precious lesson. God's grace is not exhausted in effecting our salvation. He continues to be gracious in using us in His service. And the measure in which this is true of us is, humanly speaking, the amount of grace which is found in our service. The grace should not only be heard in our preaching, but seen in our practice. It is only when we realize that we have no more rights than the crucified criminals who suffered at His side that we are eager to renounce every claim for ourselves and seek to seize every opportunity to serve others with the same grace with which God has blessed us. And then we will not even claim the credit for our grace, but ascribe to God alone the power and the impulses which have enabled us to will and to work in accord with His delight.

A.E.K.

JOURNEY IN SOUTHEASTERN U.S.A.

My trip to three southern States in mid-December was very encouraging and a real blessing from the Lord. Visiting first in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, I was much impressed by the enthusiastic interest in God's Word at the Victory Bible Fellowship. Under the direction of Bro. Randy Bonacorso, this large group of young believers has recently taken a stand in favor of the truth of universal reconciliation.

From there I travelled to Wagener, South Carolina, where I presented a series of six messages on the subject of "The Work and Faith of Christ." Again the warm hospitality and keen interest was uplifting. This group at the Pauline Church of Christ was established many years ago by Bro. Adlai Loudy and continues to be active and strong in the faith under the leadership of Pastor Randall Grandy.

Before returning to California I had a brief visit with Brother and Sister Earl Brown of Largo, Florida. Bro. Brown teaches Bible classes in their home, and it is good to see this pattern of Philemon 2 continuing in many places.

D.H.H.

An **Asaphic Psalm**

79 **Alueim! the nations come into Thine allotment!**
They defile `Thy holy temple!
They *pl*make **`Jerusalem into rubbish heaps,**
2 **They give `the carcasses of Thy servants as food**
to flyers of the heavens.
The flesh of Thy kindly ones to animals of the earth.
3 **They shed their blood as water around Jerusalem,**
And there is no entombing.
4 **We become a reproach to our neighbors,**
A derision and a scoffing to those around us.
5 **Till** *wt*when, Ieue? Wilt Thou be angry permanently?
Is Thy jealousy consuming as a fire?
6 **Pour out Thy fury >on the nations**
who do not know Thee,
And on kingdoms which in Thy name do not call.
7 **For** 7they*cs* **devour `Jacob,**
And his homestead they desolate,
8 **O do not remember the depravities**
of former generations >against us.
Hastily Thy compassions will forestall us,
For we are impoverished exceedingly.
9 **Help us, Alueim of our salvation,**
*on*in **speaking of the glory of Thy name,**
And, 7Ieue0**, rescue us, and make a propitiatory shelter**
over our sins on account of Thy name.
10 **Why are the nations saying, Where is their Alueim?**
He will be known among the nations >before our eyes,
The vengeance of the blood of Thy servants
`which is shed.
11 **The groaning of the bound one is coming before Thee.**
*as*According **to the greatness of Thine arm,**
reserve the sons of death,

12 And restore to our neighbors sevenfold to their bosom,
Their reproach, with which they reproached Thee,
^{S}Ieue^{ph}.
13 And we, Thy people and the flock of Thy pasture,
We will acclaim $^{>}$ Thee for the eon,
For generation $^{+}$after generation
we are rehearsing Thy praise.
$^{>}$ Permanent
To Elations A Testimony

NOTES FOR PSALM 79

The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple is lamented in this psalm. It is a complement to Psalm 74. These disasters drew forth the anguished questions of verses 5 and 10—especially the poignant, "Till when?" (*cf* Psa.74:10).

The Israelites, as a nation, shared in punishment and blessing alike, just as was set forth in their covenant with God (Ex.20:5; *cf* Lev.26, Deut.28). The psalmist apparently does not consider himself guilty of depravity, though he implores Jehovah (Ieue) to grant favor to the nation, and avenge them of the violence suffered at the hands of their neighbors.

The *sevenfold* retribution of verse 12 was not necessarily an extremely harsh punishment by ancient standards. Cain was to be avenged *sevenfold* for harm done to him (Gen.4:15); it was customary for a convicted thief to have to pay back *sevenfold* (Prov.6:21).

Jeremiah 10:25 is almost exactly the same as verses 6,7. In verse 7, "they" is supplied from the LXX, Syriac and other Hebrew manuscripts, where the MT has "he;" in Jeremiah it also reads "they."

James D. Thompson

An **Asaphic Psalm**

80 **Shepherd of Israel, ᶜgive ear!**
Thou, leading Joseph as a flock,
Dwelling ⁷over⁰ the cherubim, shine!
2 **Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,**
Rouse Thy mastery and ᵍ⁰come to our salvation!
3 **Alueim, restore us!**
And light ᶜup Thy face, and we shall be saved!
4 **Ieue, Alueim of hosts,**
Till when dost Thou smolder
ⁱat the prayer of Thy people?
5 **Thou feedest them the bread of tears,**
And Thou art ᶜgiving them a third ephah
ⁱof tears to drink.
6 **Thou art ᵖⁱmaking us a quarrel to our neighbors;**
And our enemies, they are deriding us
>among themselves.
7 **Alueim of hosts, restore us!**
And light ᶜup Thy face, and we shall be saved!
⁷Interlude⁰
8 **Thou art causing a vine from Egypt to journey;**
Thou art driving the nations out and art planting it.
9 **Thou makest a surface before it,**
And art rooting its roots,
And it is filling the land.
10 **The mountains are covered by its shadow,**
And its boughs by the cedars of Al.
11 **It is sending its harvest branches unto the sea,**
And to the stream its layer plants.
12 **Why didst Thou breach its stone dikes**
So ⁺that all passing by the way nip it?
13 **The swine from the wildwood is gorging on it,**
And the mammal of the field is grazing on it.
14 **Alueim of hosts, return, pray!**
Look from the heavens and see, and note this vine,

15 **And the sprig which Thy right hand planted,**
And *on* **the son** *z***of humanity**^{cs}
whom **Thou makest resolute for Thyself.**
16 It is **burned** *t***with fire, grubbed up;**
*t***At the rebuke of Thy countenance they are perishing.**
17 **Thy hand is** *b***coming on the man at Thy right,**
*z***And**^{0} **on the son of humanity**
whom **Thou makest resolute for Thyself.**
18 **And we shall not turn away from Thee.**
Thou wilt preserve us alive,
and in Thy name will we call.
19 **Ieue, Alueim of hosts, restore us!**
Light *c***up Thy face, and we shall be saved!**
> **Permanent On the Wine Trough**

NOTES FOR PSALM 80

The superscription in the Septuagint (LXX) for Psalm 80 contains the phrase, "A psalm over the Assyrian." This may indicate that the LXX translators regarded "the swine from the wildwood" (verse 13) as a symbol of Assyria. The northern kingdom of Israel is emphasized here by the use of the names Joseph (verse 1) and "Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh" (verse 2). There are several reasons why Benjamin is listed with Ephraim and Manasseh. These three tribes were descended from Rachel, hence are naturally counted together. Also, Benjamin bordered the northern kingdom to the south. According to 1 Kings 11:13,32,36, Jehovah told Solomon that after his death only *one* tribe (Judah) would remain under his successors. So, in one way of counting, Benjamin would be among the "Ten Tribes," with Levi (the priestly tribe) being left uncounted.

The bread of tears (verse 5) is a touching figure of speech. The sorrow is so great that their only nourishment comes from the tears streaming down their faces.

Verses 8-16 liken Joseph (Israel) to a vine. The Lord had transplanted it, but the wild beasts (the nations) ruined it. Verses 10 and 11 are descriptive of its boundaries: *mountains* indicate the south, *cedars* the north, *sea* the west, and *stream* the east.

In verse 15 there is a word play on the name "Benjamin," which literally means "son of right-hand."

James D. Thompson

AUTHORS OF PSALMS

The two psalms in this issue have the superscription, "An Asaphic Psalm." The Hebrew reads, literally, "psalm TO-Asaph." There are twelve of these in all. There are seventy-three psalms likewise marked "Davidic," and two "Solomonic." The Hebrew prefix with the concordant standard "TO-" is ambiguous. It usually means "*to*" or "*for*," but is also used as a possessive marker ("*of*" or "—'*s*." A.E.K. and E.H.C. decided to translate it in these psalm titles with the suffix "—*ic*." This suffix generally indicates a meaning such as "*associated with*" or "*in the manner of*." This may indicate that when a psalm is marked "Asaphic," for instance, that this may not necessarily be the actual author of that work. Psalm 79:1 speaks of the desecration of the temple and the destruction of Jerusalem, which would be highly unlikely topics for Asaph himself to sing about. David appointed Asaph over the temple music (*cf* 1 Chr.16:4,5; 2 Chr.5:12). The temple was not sacked until long after Asaph's time, and Psalm 79 does not bear the marks of prophecy ("And it shall become in the latter days . . ."). The most likely explanation is that "Asaphic" refers to a certain style of psalm, originating with Asaph. Though the contents of the first two books of the Psalms (1-72) are called "The Prayers of David son of Jesse" (Psa.72:19), "Solomonic" and "Asaphic" psalms also occur there. "Asaphic" and "of David" cannot both refer to direct authorship at the same time. J.D.T.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1979
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY

EDITORIAL

WE have long recognized that the word "church" (or "ecclesia") does not refer to buildings but rather to a group of people *called out* by God. The literal meaning of the word "ecclesia" in Greek is OUT-CALLED, and it is used often in Paul's writings to describe the believers who are called out of the ways of the world to become members of the body of Christ. It is an organism rather than an organization, and it is an achievement of God, not of man.

We have also recognized that fellowship is not a legalistic matter dependent on belonging to an organization. The Greek word translated "fellowship" means COMMON-BEING, and it refers to our association with one another because we have something in common. This also is God's achievement, for He has graced us with a communion not of our own making.

Yet, as discussed further in our Questions and Answers section in this issue, we still have difficulty in appreciating these accomplishments of God and in adjusting our attitudes and practices accordingly. We still have a tendency to boast about *our achievements* in assembling as "God's true church" and having fellowship only with those who hold "the truth" and practice "the right principles" in "the scriptural way." Recently a brother asked, "Don't you think that among all the church groups there must be one that is the true church?" It seems reasonable to our minds that God would preserve one of these groups as the genuine and faithful upholder of the truth.

One of our common failings is our inability to rid

ourselves of our self-centered attitude and disposition. The book of Philippians is a great corrective on this matter. There we are encouraged to form attitudes of mutuality and leniency and adopt the disposition of Christ (2:1-18; 4;1-9). Paul himself sets the pattern when he writes of forfeiting his fleshly privileges and rights in order to know Christ "and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings" (2:4-14). "Whoever, then, are mature, may be disposed to this" (verse 15).

Maturity centers on God and His achievements. The mature concept of the church is the recognition that it is *God's* out-calling. We are all in the church who are called into the faith. This transcends man's organizational boundaries and differences in teaching and practice; it encompasses all who believe that Christ is their Saviour and Lord. Not one of man's organizations is God's true church.

Fellowship also is based on a spiritual union which we all have because of God's grace. What we have in common is not a system of beliefs but a Saviour, not a human director but Christ as the Head of the body. We may need to avoid those who make dissensions and snares (Rom.16:17), but that must not suggest that we no longer have anything in common with them. We will not join with them in their divisive practices and false teachings, but we will keep the unity of the spirit and continue to recognize our oneness with them in the body of Christ.

These are difficult patterns for us to follow because they clash with our pride; they do not accord with the disposition of our flesh. But the more we concentrate on fellowship as God's achievement the easier it will be for us to adopt this disposition of mutuality and understanding. D.H.H.

COLOSSIANS AND EPHESIANS

COLOSSIANS is the complement of the doctrinal section of Ephesians. Two mysteries dominate both. Ephesians elaborates the present Secret Economy, which concerns the *members* of the body of Christ: Colossians dwells upon the secret of Christ, Who is the *Head* of that body. Ephesians, however, *teaches* the truth, while Colossians *corrects* departure from it.

THE LITERARY STRUCTURE

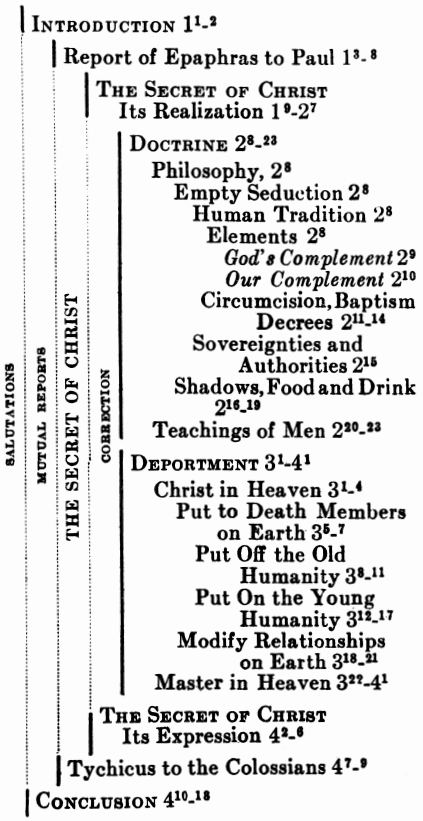
A grasp of the controlling theme of an epistle greatly aids in its apprehension. The same is true of its parts. When we are sure of the subject of any section its interpretation is safer and more satisfactory. And when we can get a view of the whole epistle at a glance, showing the symmetrical relation of its parts, our dull minds are relieved, and our eyes are opened to the special subject of each section, and its relation to the whole, or, perhaps a similar section in the corresponding member, and its contrasts as well as its likenesses. A casual reading of Colossians will hardly discover the symmetry of its structure, or the exquisite relation of its parts, so we reprint the structure for those who may not have seen it before.

Within the salutations, and the mutual reports, one at each end, we find the body of the epistle, which deals with the *secret of Christ*, that great revelation concerning Him which had been hitherto withheld or only partially made known, but is now necessary, since the saints have a place among the celestials. Twice is this secret the subject, once in reference to its

realization by us, and, near the end, in connection with its expression to others. Between these two come correction in doctrine and in deportment. Perhaps we might come closer to the facts if we further characterized these as *warning* in reference to teaching, and *exhortation* as to walk.

FRAMEWORK OF COLOSSIANS

Repeated Reversion



THE SECRET OF CHRIST IN EPHESIANS

It will be seen from this that the controlling theme is the secret of Christ, just as the framework of Ephesians shows that it is concerned with the secret of this administration. Before entering upon our studies in Colossians it may be well to see what Ephesians has already revealed on this theme, for it is there that we read of the secret of Christ for the first time, and there we have clear indications, not only of its contents, but also of its relation to the present administration of God's grace. It were well if we had these two secrets distinct in our minds before we enter into Colossians.

The first intimation of the secret of Christ in the Ephesian epistle is found in that marvelous opening effusion in which God's blessedness is the keynote of a symphony of blessings for us, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavishes on us, in all wisdom and prudence, making known to us the *secret of His will* . . . to head up *all* in the Christ—in the heavens as well as on the earth. Hitherto the headship of Christ had been confined to the earth. His heavenly headship had been kept secret. But now that an election out of the earth is to share His celestial glories, these must be made known. This, then, is the essence of the secret of Christ—*His universal headship*. Not only is He to have the throne of David, and be King of kings upon the earth, but He will reign throughout the starry spheres, including all creation.

Once more, at the end of the first chapter of Ephesians, when praying that we may perceive the transcendent greatness of the power which operates on our behalf, we are reminded of the mighty strength which roused Christ from among the dead and seated Him at God's right hand among the celestials, up over

every sovereignty and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is future: and subjects *all* under His feet. This is the Ephesian aspect.

Here we have still further light. The throne of David is still vacant. The Son of Mankind has not yet taken His seat as earth's Suzerain. He was rejected on earth, but He was acclaimed in the heavens. There He already has the highest place, at the right hand of the throne of God, though all may not yet respond (1 Pet.3:22). All varieties of heavenly government are subordinate to His sway. There is no name above that of the despised Nazarene. From the accursed cross, beneath the lowest dregs of earth, He has ascended to the highest heights of heaven. Even now He has this place in heaven, and in the eons to come He will include the earth in His universal sway. That Messiah should be Head in heaven even before He took earth's sovereignty was part of the secret hitherto unknown.

Such is the side of the secret of Christ which is set forth in Ephesians. As we shall see, much more is revealed in Colossians, because Ephesians treats of it only insofar as it makes contact with the main theme, which is another secret. This is why, when the apostle comes to make a categorical statement of the three items which characterize the present administration, he prefaces it with a brief allusion to the secret of Christ (Eph.3:3,4). Referring to the passages we have just been considering, he says, "as I write before, in brief, by which you who are reading are able to apprehend my understanding in the secret of Christ, which in other generations is not made known to the sons of humanity as it was now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets."

That these words refer to the secret of Christ, in

contrast to the secret administration which is defined in the following words, is clear from the phrase "in brief." The secret administration had been set forth *at length.* Almost all of the preceding chapters was devoted to its details. Hence it was by no means brief. But the two allusions to the secret of Chirst (1:10, 20-22) were very short, and gave only that side of this secret which was in point. So, likewise, "as it was now revealed" fits the secret of Christ, for the prophets had spoken of His earthly headship. But it cannot apply to the secret administration, as that was absolutely unknown. No apostle or prophet could have had any inkling of it.

Such is the sum of our knowledge of this secret before we come to Colossians. It was concerned almost wholly with the future. It was limited largely to His relations to the ecclesia which is His body. He will be Head of all. The holy nation will rule the earth in His name. The ecclesia which is His body will be His administrator in celestial spheres. Thus the whole universe will find their Head in Him.

Colossians reveals the secret of Christ in all its fullness. It is not briefly set forth, in relation to the special faith which is ours in Christ, but fully revealed, in relation to all creation, on earth as well as among the celestials, including the nations, as well as Israel, the celestial hosts as well as the members of His body. He is not only Israel's Messiah and the Saviour of the nations, but the Head of the entire universe and the Reconciler of all.

In Him dwells the Complement of the Deity. At the beginning all is created through Him, and at the consummation all is reconciled through the blood of His cross. And in the eons of the eons He will be the supreme and only Head of all.

O that God would enlarge the hearts of His holy ones to make room for the Christ of Colossians! Some of our hearts, alas, are so shrunk, that we welcome Him only as our own personal Saviour. Even this overflows its narrow confines. May His spirit expand it, by His grace, to give Him His place as Israel's Redeemer, as the Saviour of all mankind, as the Head of all creation, and the Reconciler of all who are estranged from God! Only such a Christ can satisfy the heart of God. Only such a Christ should satisfy our own hungry hearts. A.E.K.

"ASSEMBLY" OR "ECCLESIA"?

The CONCORDANT VERSION uses the word *ecclesia* rather than "church" for the Greek εκκλησια. The word "church" has acquired a meaning quite foreign to that which the etymology of this word demands. Any company OUT-CALLED, as the sublinear has it, is an ecclesia. As the word "assembly" does not suggest the principal point of an *out*-called company, and is well suited to translate another word, it is not a good substitute for "church." So we were forced to find a new term, uncontaminated, yet not unfamiliar, with which to clothe this idea. "Ecclesia" from its associations with "ecclesiastic" etc., was chosen with the hope that it would never be applied to a building, or restricted to a particular company, but applied to any assembly or group of believers consisting of members *called out* of a larger number.

A.E.K.

SEVERANCE FROM JERUSALEM

WHEN SAUL STOLE AWAY from Damascus under cover of the night, he probably passed that part of the road, outside the city, where a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, had flashed about him almost three years before. Ever since that day "the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" had enlightened the eyes of his heart (2 Cor.4:6; Eph.1:18). Although he was humiliated by the outcome of his first evangelistic campaign and was lonely in the darkness of the night, he went his way with this divine light shining in his heart.

During his journey to Jerusalem he may have availed himself of the guest chambers which were attached to Jewish synagogues; there he may have heralded that Jesus is the Son of God, whenever there was an opportunity to do so.

THE SCHOOLS OF HILLEL AND SHAMMAI

In the holy city Saul was going to meet companions of his former life, fellow students with whom he had listened to Gamaliel's liberal interpretations of the law. (This teacher and his predecessor Hillel had modified some of the customs by which the daily life

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NOTE: This article is part of a series which began in volume LXIX, page 7 (January 1978).

of the Jews was regulated in accordance with the written or the oral law.) In later years, however, Saul had not followed Gamaliel's moderate policy toward the twelve (*cf* Acts 5:34-39), but was widely influenced by the followers of a rival rabbinical school (founded by Shammai) who were trained in the strictest interpretation of the hereditary law (*cf* Acts 22:3). Thus Saul had become "exceedingly more zealous for the traditions" of the fathers while he progressed in the furtherance of Judaism "above many contemporaries" (Gal.1:14).

A PAINFUL REMEMBRANCE

Outside of the holy city there was the spot where Saul had seen the body of Stephen lying crushed under the stones (*cf* Acts 7:58). And before approaching the Damascus Gate, Saul would pass by the hillock Golgotha and the garden with the tomb where the body of Jesus had lain after the crucifixion (*cf* John 19:41,42). When Saul entered Jerusalem, these spots would bring his former behavior to a painful remembrance. Many years later he wrote, "Grateful am I to Him . . . I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy seeing that . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, foremost of whom am I. But therefore was I shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian" (1 Tim.1:12-16).

YOU ALL THAT ARE IN CHRIST

Why did Saul go back to Jerusalem? In the first chapter of Galatians he makes it clear that he was taught the evangel through a revelation of Jesus Christ and that he had received his apostleship from the

Lord. At no time did he seek confirmation of his commission by the twelve; but he was eager to round out by firsthand witnesses what he had heard before, "that Christ died for our sins . . . that he was entombed and that he has been roused the third day" (1 Cor.15:3,4).

Furthermore Saul fervently desired to have fellowship with those who came to be *in Christ* before him (*cf* Rom.16:7). During his years as a savage persecutor of believers, when Saul had "compelled them to blaspheme" the name of Jesus (Acts 26:11), he certainly was often baffled by their behavior in Christ and their clear testimony, i.e. that they were called into God's eonian glory in Christ. Now he wanted to be accepted by them and greet them with their own words, "Peace to you all that are in Christ" (*cf* 1 Peter 3:16; 5:10,14), for they were all members of God's family. It would take years however until Saul would realize in greater measure the force and fullness of what it means to be in Christ.

BARNABAS

In Damascus the Lord had prepared the circumstances for Saul so that Ananias (a pious man, in high regard with all the Jews) could vouch for him and introduce him to the local believers. In Jerusalem it was Barnabas (a Levite, a native Cyprian, a good man and full of holy spirit and faith, *cf* Acts 4:36; 11:24) who led Saul to the apostles.

Luke reports these details: "Now, on coming along to Jerusalem, he [Saul] tried to join the disciples; and all feared him, not believing that he is a disciple. Yet Barnabas, getting hold of him, led him to the apostles and relates to them how he became acquainted with the Lord on the road, and that He speaks to him, and

how, in Damascus, he speaks boldly in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:26,27).

That Saul's own efforts had met with suspicion and fear when he tried to contact believers in Jerusalem, is understandable. They remembered him as the one who had "devastated the ecclesia, going into the homes, dragging out both men and women . . . breathing out threatening and murder against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 8:3; 9:1). Only someone with the prestige of Barnabas was able to assure them of the genuineness of Saul's conversion.

Luke's statement "he led him to *the apostles*" is to be understood as a generalizing plural. It does not necessarily mean that Barnabas introduced Saul to each one of the twelve; some of them may not even have been in town. And it seems that at this introduction Barnabas did almost all of the talking when he related to them that Saul had seen the Lord on the road outside of Damascus and had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus in that city.

We are not told why Barnabas acted as Saul's sponsor; he had presumably met him years before in one of the Hellenistic synagogues and was convinced of the integrity of his character. Once the disciples were reassured of Saul's sincerity, "he was with them going in and out in Jerusalem." It seems however that he did not become acquainted with anyone outside the apostolic group, except with James. For fifteen days Saul stayed with Cephas who was probably a guest in the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.

CEPHAS

Simon's Hebrew surname "Cephas" occurs mainly in Paul's writings (1 Corinthians and Galatians) when he wants to emphasize the Hebrew personality of the

man Simon rather than his official apostleship. The editor of the Sinaiticus manuscript who tried to conform the text to the best ancient evidence, added *Petron* (Peter) in the margin of Galatians 1:18. Actually the meaning is the same (*cf* John 1:42). The surname "Cephas" however seems to fit the situation better when Saul first met him and was his guest for a fortnight, and they exchanged personal experiences.

Among many other episodes (which were outstanding in the oral tradition of the local ecclesia) Cephas may have told Saul of the day when he had said to the Lord, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." And the Lord had answered, "Flesh and blood does not reveal it to you, but My Father Who is in the heavens" (Matt.16:16,17). And Saul may have used a similar phrase when he told Cephas that it was God Himself Who revealed His Son to him and that he did not immediately submit this to flesh and blood (*cf* Gal.1:16).

When Saul became acquainted with James, the latter may have reported that he too (like Cephas) had seen the Lord after His resurrection. These individual appearances (which the three had experienced) and the acceptance of additional factual data by Saul (which he learned from Cephas mostly) apparently helped them to disregard any differences in other respects. Presumably it was highly important to them that they were agreed in the proclamation of the basic facts which we find mentioned in the introductory verses of 1 Corinthians 15. Even as early as during those days in Jerusalem Saul may have summed up the situation by saying, "Then, whether I or they, thus we are heralding and thus you believe" (*cf* 1 Cor.15:11). From then on Saul would be able to add more details concerning the Lord's life and death when heralding

Jesus as the Son of God and deducing from Old Testament proof texts that He is indeed the Christ.

THE HELLENISTS

Saul felt that he ought to take up the ministry which Stephen had laid down at his execution, and that he should appeal to his former associates who once had followed him when he persecuted the believers in Jerusalem and elsewhere a few years before. Therefore he started speaking and discussing in the very synagogues where Stephen had incurred the wrath of the Hellenists. Though Saul was "speaking boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 9:29) their hearts were not pricked by compunction; their leaders rather "took in hand to assassinate him."

It is conceivable that Saul did not immediately follow the advice of the brethren who urged him to leave Jerusalem right away. Another apparition of the risen Lord was necessary to convince Saul that there was no alternative but to obey. In his own words: "Now it occurred, at my returning to Jerusalem and while I am praying in the sanctuary, I come to be in an ecstasy and to perceive Him saying to me, 'Hurry, and come quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not be assenting to your testimony concerning Me.' And I said, 'Lord, they are versed in the fact that I was jailing and lashing those at the synagogues who are believing on Thee. And when the blood of Stephen, Thy witness, was shed, I myself also was standing by, endorsing it, as well as guarding the garments of those who are assassinating him.' And He said to me, 'Go! For I shall be delegating you afar to the nations' " (Acts 22:17-21).

Now Saul was willing to leave Jerusalem, and "the brethren led him down to Caesarea, and they send

him away to Tarsus" (Acts 9:30). The Lord had given him an opportunity to relate his story to Cephas, to become acquainted with James (*cf* Gal.1:18,19), to recognize the unsurmountable antagonism of the companions of his former life to whom he had become a traitor to the true cause (as they saw it), i.e. the defense of the ancestral faith. And for the third time the Lord had stated that he was to bring the evangel to the nations (Acts 26:17; 9:15; 22:21).

SYRIA AND CILICIA

Syria was the region north and east of Palestine, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and from Arabia to the Taurus mountains. There was easy access to Cilicia through the Syrian Gates (a mountain pass) from Syria. During the first century eastern Cilicia (with Tarsus) was part of the Roman province "Syria-Cilicia" with Antioch as its capital.

Saul's own report on his activities during the years following his brief stay in Jerusalem is found in Galatians 1:21-24, "Thereupon I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Yet I was unknown by face to the ecclesias of Judea which are in Christ. Yet only they were hearing that 'he who once was persecuting us, now is evangelizing the faith which once he ravaged.' And they glorified God in me." H.H.R.

(To be continued)

RALPH E. CHRISTENSEN

Brother Christensen died suddenly on November 19, 1978 at the age of 75. He had worked long and hard from boyhood on a dairy farm near Hillsboro, Oregon. In recent years he had been able to give more time to reading and studying the Scriptures which were increasingly a source of joy and comfort to him.

An **Asaphic** [7]**Psalm**[0]

81 **Jubilate to Alueim, our Strength!**
Shout to the Alueim of Jacob!
2 **Lift up a melody and** [g]**bring forth the tambourine,**
the pleasant harp with the zither.
3 **Blow the trumpet in the new moon,**
In the full moon for the day of our celebrations.
4 **For it is a statute for Israel,**
[7]**And**[s] **a judgment for the Alueim of Jacob.**
5 **He** [pi]**made it a testimony in Joseph,**
[i]**At his faring forth** [7]**from**[0] **the land of Egypt.**
I am hearing a lip I do not know.
6 **I** [c]**take his shoulderblade away from the burden;**
His palms are passing from the pannier.
7 **In distress you called, and I am liberating you;**
I am answering you in the concealment of thunder;
I am testing you [on]**at the waters of Meribah.**

Interlude

8 **Hear, My people,** [+]**when I am testifying among you;**
Israel, if you will hearken to Me,
9 **An alien al shall not** [b]**come among you,**
And you shall not worship [>] **a foreign al.**
10 **I am Ieue, your Alueim,**
Who [c]**brought you up from the land of Egypt;**
Widen your mouth, and I will fill it.
11 [+]**Yet My people do not hearken to My voice,**
And Israel does not comply [i]**with Me.**

12 +**Then I am** letting **them go,**
in control of their own **heart;**
They are going in their own **counsels.**
13 **O that My people** were **hearkening to Me,**
Israel were going in My ways!
14 **Soon I** would **cause their enemies** to **submit,**
And on their foes would **I reverse My hand.**
15 **Haters of Ieue are dissimulating to Him,**
+**Yet their season is coming to be for** an **eon.**
16 **And** ?**I**? **will feed them from** the **fat of** the **wheat,**
And with **honey from** the **rock will I satisfy** ?**them**^{cs}.

NOTES FOR PSALM 81

Jubilate! Shout! Lift up a melody with tambourine, harp and zither! This festive psalm was written for either the Passover or the Feast of Tabernacles, both of which were occasions of exuberant exultation for Israel. Verses 5 and 10 contain references to the deliverance from Egypt, but verse 3 could be taken as a reference to the month of Tishri. It was during that month that the time of new moon as well as the full moon were special feast days—the Feast of Trumpets and the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, respectively (Lev.23:23-25,33-35). It was during this time that every seventh year the book of Deuteronomy was to be read aloud "before all Israel" (Deut.31:10-13). Verses 8-10 of this psalm seem to contain echoes from that book.

Psalm 81 naturally divides into two sections. The first ten verses are God's call for Israel to praise Him and hearken to Him. The last six verses relate their refusal of him, and the consequences. The consequences are spelled out in verse 12: "Then I am

letting them go, in control of their own heart; They are going in their own counsels." The result of this policy is demonstrated by the events recorded in the book of Judges. There it was written that: "In those days there was no king in Israel; each man was doing what was upright in his own eyes" (Judg.21:25; 17:6). A bloodthirsty anarchy was the outcome of this state of affairs.

There is an interesting textual question in verse 5. The Hebrew text reads "against the land of Egypt," or more literally, "on land-of Egypt." The Septuagint, on the other hand, has "from the land of Egypt." The significance of the difference in preposition is that of point of view. The way the Hebrew reads, this is a reference to God's going out to fight Egypt. The LXX reading would refer to Israel's exodus from that land. The historical period is the same in each case, but the viewpoint differs.

James D. Thompson

ARTHUR H. ROGERS

Pastor Arthur H. Rogers of Riverside, California, was put to repose on January 1 after a long illness. He had just passed his 81st birthday. He was a brother of good cheer, and his ministry was of glad tidings. Yet as must be in this life, his joy in the Lord was tested with much opposition and sorrow. He believed in universal reconciliation before he found where it was taught in God's Word, but when an acquaintance gave him a copy of "All in All" to refute, his delight and assurance in this victory became so great that he immediately sought out Brother Knoch in Los Angeles. They had many happy visits together, and Brother Rogers would often look back to those occasions with great pleasure. They did not agree on every point, but their fellowship was mutually profitable. So also was the fellowship of Brother Roger's faith profitable to all who knew him.

An **Asaphic Psalm**

82 **Alueim** is **stationed in** the **congregation of Al;**
Within the **alueim is He judging.**
2 **Till when will you judge** with **iniquity,**
And be lifting up the **faces of** the **wicked?**
Interlude
3 **Judge** the **poor and** the **orphan;**
Justify the **humble and** the **destitute;**
4 **Deliver** the **poor and needy;**
From the **hand of** the **wicked rescue** them.
5 **(They** do **not know, and they are not understanding.**
In darkness are they walking;
All the **foundations of** the **earth are slipping.)**
6 **I´ say, alueim** are **you,**
and sons of the **Supreme** are **all of you.**
7 **Surely,** as a **human, you are dying,**
And as one of the chiefs are you falling.
8 **Rise, Alueim! Judge the earth,**
For you´ will allot among all the nations!

NOTES FOR PSALM 82

Psalm 82 is an important one, because Jesus pointed to it in a dispute with the Jews concerning His relationship with His Father. They were about to stone Him for blasphemy; then He answered: "Is it

not written in your law, that 'I say you are gods'? If He said those were gods to whom the word of God came . . . are you saying . . . that 'You are blaspheming,' seeing that I said, 'Son of God am I'?"

The scene of Psalm 82 opens with God stationed in His congregation amidst the "gods" (alueim). Regarding these "gods," A. E. Knoch demonstrated that this term refers here to rulers in Israel. "They were just what this psalm implies, men in Israel, called judges in the A.V. (but "God" in Ex.21:6, 22:8, 22:9 in the R.S.V.) who passed [judgment] upon the subjection of servants and social transgressions . . . [they] must have included the kings and all those to whom the people of Israel were subject" (*U.R.* 45:74, 1954). They are here indicted for their unjust judgment. Their proper role is to aid the orphaned and destitute, not to rule in favor of the cruel and wicked.

One phrase may need some explanation. When it is said in verse 2 that they lifted up the faces of the wicked, it means that their judgment was partial to those sinners. In ancient practice, a petitioner prostrated himself with face to the ground before a ruler (*cf* Gen.42:6); if the ruler wished to show favor, he had him get up—lift his face.

Though these men were called "alueim" and "sons of the Supreme" (verse 6), they were mortal (verse 7). The psalmist closes his poem with a call for God to sit in judgment of the earth Himself. James D. Thompson

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Our work on the twelve smaller prophetic books of the Old Testament, Hosea through Malachi, is nearly complete. We anticipate, God willing, to have these in print later this Spring. Reservations may be sent to us ($1.00 each) for immediate shipment as soon as this book is published.

A Song An Asaphic Psalm

83 Alueim! let there be no silence for Thee!
O do not be deaf nor be quiet, Al!
2 For behold! Thine enemies are clamoring,
And those hating Thee lift up the head.
3 [on]Against Thy people are they [c]holding crafty deliberation,
And are counseling among themselves
[on]against Thy secluded ones.
4 They say, Go, and we will suppress them from being a nation,
And the name of Israel shall not be remembered further.
5 For they consult heartily together.
[on]Against Thee they will contract a covenant.
6 The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
Moab and the Hagarenes,
7 Gebal and Ammon and Amalek,
Philistia with the dwellers of Tyre;
8 Moreover, Asshur is obligated with them;
They become an arm to the sons of Lot.

Interlude

9 Do to them as to the Midianites, as to Sisera,
As to Jabin [t]at the watercourses of Kishon.
10 They were exterminated at Endor;
They became manure for the ground.
11 Set them, their patrons, as Oreb, and as Zeeb,
And, as Zebah and as Zalmunna, all their sovereigns,
12 Who say, We will tenant for ourselves
[t]the oases of Alueim.

[13] **My Alueim, set them as** a **tumbleweed,**
As straw before the **wind,**
[14] **As fire will consume** the **wildwood,**
And as a **blaze will set aflame** the **mountains.**
[15] **So Thou wilt pursue them** [t]**with Thy tempest,**
And [t]**with Thy sweeping** whirlwind
wilt Thou fluster them.
[16] **Fill their faces** with **dishonor,**
[+]**that they shall seek Thy name, Ieue.**
[17] **They shall be flustered and ashamed**
[7]**for**[0] the **futures of** the **future.**
And they shall be abashed and shall perish.
[18] **And they shall know that Thou—**
Thy name, Ieue, is **Thine alone—**
Art **Supreme over all the earth.**

[>] **Permanent** **On the Wine Trough**

NOTES FOR PSALM 83

The historical event which gave rise to the 83rd Psalm was probably that recorded in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30. There the Moabites and Ammonites (descendants of Lot) came against king Jehoshaphat. This is the last of the twelve Asaphic psalms, and it is noteworthy that an Asaphite was directly involved in this campaign with Jehoshaphat (2 Chron.20:14).

The major theme of this song is the destruction of the enemies of Israel. The purpose behind this devastation is summarized in the last verse: that they may know that He alone is Supreme.

There may be prophetic significance in the enumeration of the peoples and kings in verses 6-11. Ten peoples are mentioned, and seven rulers

(counting Midian). The ten nations were those conspiring against Israel at that time. The verses regarding seven rulers are historical allusions to the book of Judges. Sisera was the leader of Jabin's (king of Canaan) army; both were despatched by Israel under the leadership of Deborah and Barak (Judg.4-5). The Midianites were undone under Gideon's direction (Judg.6-7). Oreb, Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna were Midianite rulers (7:25, 8:5). Endor is near Megiddo (Armageddon, in the New Testament). This may to some extent prefigure the seven heads and ten horns of Revelation 17. James D. Thompson

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CEBUANO TRANSLATIONS

As previously announced (*Unsearchable Riches*, July 1978), Brother Antonio M. Oblenda of the southern Philippines has been translating and publishing several of our publications into the Cebuano dialect. He is continuing this project, including now "The Place of Humanity in God's Purpose" by John H. Essex and THE GOSPEL OF OUR SALVATION by Adlai Loudy.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION

A group of our Canadian brethren have formed an association which, since January 2, 1978, is registered by Revenue Canada-Taxation as a charity, under the name of Concordant Scripture Concern. It purposes to support the work of the Concordant Publishing Concern and distribute our literature as well as assist the missionaries associated with our work. Donations are tax-deductible for Canadian citizens.

The secretary of the Concordant Scripture Concern is Ewald Degen, 246 Seven Persons Drive, South Ridge, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1B 2E1. Brother Degen has also agreed to serve as our agent for Canada. He will maintain a stock of our literature as well as collect subscriptions for *Unsearchable Riches* from those Canadian readers who prefer not to make money exchanges to US dollars.

TWO "PROVERBS"

THE PARABLE given in Ezekiel 17 is called a "proverb" which presents a "problem" concerning Jerusalem and the policies of Zedekiah, the last of David's line to reign (until the coming Kingdom). In chapter 18 there is a short proverb which reveals the thinking of the people of Jerusalem in that day. These two proverbs are connected. They both deal with the question: Does God have a goal in view?

The extended "proverb" in chapter 17 is divided into two sections (verses 3-10 and 22-24). In verses 11-21 we have the interpretation of the first section. The "great vulture" of verse 3 is Nebuchadnezzar, the "king of Babylon" (verse 12). The "top" or head of the cedar (verse 4) is the king and chiefs of Judah in Jerusalem (verse 12) who had made a covenant with Babylon and then had broken it by turning to Egypt, the second "great vulture" (verses 7 and 15). The "problem" is "Will it [this political policy] prosper?" We know from 2 Kings 25:1-12 that it did not.

However, there is a further and better solution given to the problem. It is not the captivity and humiliation coming on Zedekiah and those with him that really solves the problem. That only compounded it. Rather the solution is given in verses 22-24. The Lord Himself will establish the throne of David and the Kingdom of Israel for the blessing of themselves and all nations, to the glory of Ieue. This is described in Ezekiel 36:21-38.

Chapter 18 brings us back to Ezekiel's own day and opens with a proverb which the people of Jerusalem were quoting (verse 2). They were twisting the threat of Exodus 20:5 by making it mean that they will not suffer from their own sins, but instead the retribution would be visited on a later generation. They were saying, "Prolonged shall be the days [as they are now]. And perished has every vision [of doom]" (Ezek.12:22); and "The fathers were eating an unripe grape, and the teeth of the sons are blunted."

Yet the Lord answers that "The soul that is sinning, it shall die." It is true that He had been patient and had delayed the time of trouble on many occasions, but it would no longer be postponed. Verses 5-17 trace through three generations, and it becomes clear that in Ezekiel's day each generation would be judged according to their own actions.

We are apt to think that this would be the best policy for all generations. But the truth is that *no* generation is righteous. Even the challenge of verses 30-32 is not an evangel. Whereas chapter 17 ended with Jehovah's promise of a new convenant which *He* will set up, chapter 18 ends with a challenge to Israel to set it up *themselves.* "Make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit." But that is impossible!

The challenge is an ironic one; it is a preparation for the glorious promises of chapter 36. But here in chapter 18 the promise is held back, and perhaps the reason is that the peoples' proverbs suggested that God's ways were *irregular* (verses 25,29). As a verb, the word *regular* is *regulate* (compare its use in Proverbs 21:2, "Ieue regulates the hearts"). The people were challenging Ieue about His ways; therefore He challenges them back to establish the righteous walk and the righteous rule themselves. This prepares

them to receive the good news from the Lord that *He* will eventually give them a new heart and a new spirit (36:26).

How fortunate we are to begin with good news. For Israel it is long delayed. For us, the first message we hear is "Christ died for our sins . . . entombed . . . and roused" (1 Cor.15:3,4). God's ways are regular. He is regulating all things to the glorious goal when He will become All in all.

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

(17:3) **rising to** the **mountain** replaces the Masoretic reading "which to-him the-embroidery" meaning perhaps: **which had embroidery**. (17:4,22) **top**=HEAD. (17:7) for **bends** the Hebrew has **starves**, but the word is understood to mean **bend** since the spelling is very similar for the two terms; **another**=ONE. (17:9) **ere** replaces the Hebrew **prey**, the phrase meaning perhaps: **all**, a **prey of its sprouting, will be drying**; the word **arm** is incorrectly marked as an insertion from the Septuagint; the word is in the Hebrew, hence the $^{7}\cdots{}^{0}$ should be removed. (17:10) **verily**=DRY. (17:12) **Babylon**=In-disintegration; **Jerusalem**=Tenancy-of-welfare. (17:15) **Egypt**=Narrows. (17:17) **vast**=MANY. (18:9,13,17,19,21,28) **verily**=LIVE. (18:11) **any**=ALL. (18:13) the second **verily**=DIE. (18:14) for **fearing** the Masoretic Text has **seeing**. (18:17) for **iniquity** the MT has **humble**. (18:23) **really**=DELIGHT. The other variant readings indicated in these chapters are insertions from the manuscripts and translations indicated, and do not replace readings in the MT.

Suggested cross-references for these chapters are as follows: (17:2) Judg.14:12-19; 1 Kings 10:1. (17:3) Jer.22:23. (17:18) 2 Kings 10:15; Ezra 10:19. (17:20) Ezek.12:13; 32:3. (17:21) Ezek.12:14. (18:2) Jer.31:29,30. (18:6) Lev.18:19,20; 20:10-18. (18:7) Lev.25:14. (18:8) Ex.22:25; Lev.19:15,35. (18:9) Lev.18:5. (18:20) Deut.24:16.

D.H.H.

The bound volume of *Unsearchable Riches* issues for 1978 is now in stock ($3.00). A set of 50 volumes covering the years 1929 through 1978 is now priced at $100.00.

WHO KNEW THE MIND OF THE LORD?
PART ONE

IN THE EPISTLES to the Roman and Corinthian ecclesias, the apostle Paul quotes, with some frequency, from the Scroll of the prophet Isaiah. As the second example of the apostle's use of excerpts from the Hebrew Scriptures, we have chosen for our present consideration a verse from Isaiah which appears both in Romans and 1 Corinthians. This is Isaiah 40:13, and it is rendered as follows in the Concordant Version:

> "Who regulates the spirit of Ieue,
> And which man is informing Him of His counsel?"

We will give some thought to the verse, first of all as it is in its original context and, in future articles, as we find it in its new settings in Romans (11:34) and 1 Corinthians (2:16).

THE ISAIAH CONTEXT—THE NATIONS' IDOLS

Examination of "The Skeleton Index of Isaiah" (published with the *Concordant Version of Isaiah*) will reveal that verse thirteen of the fortieth chapter is among the opening verses of a small sub-section formed by verses 12 to 31 inclusive and assigned the title "The Nations' Idols": and that this sub-section is contained within the much wider context of 40:12 to 66:24. This wider context, of which the dominant

theme is *Promise*, is the last of the eight main sections which, together, form the Scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

When Ieue intervened in the somewhat protracted deliberations of Job and his associates and, from the midst of the tempest's turbulence, answered Job, He asked him a question, simple at first hearing yet profound in its implications: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare if thou hast understanding" (Job 38:4). The question was not answered for the simple and sufficient reason that Job was not there.

Included in the small sub-section of Isaiah ("The Nations' Idols") are several questions of similar character and candor. Most of them are really arresting statements which affirm the greatness, power, glory and majesty of the Supreme, but are framed interrogatively for the sake of greater emphasis. While calling for general attention (and how much these truths require to be faced, considered and recognized by *all* in these days of widespread disregard of God, reluctance to acknowledge *His* supremacy and the deplorable apathy towards matters spiritual), these questions have also specific direction, for they form the basis of a challenge to the fashioners of "carvings" for idol worship. "Then to whom will you liken Al? And what likeness will you arrange for Him?" (verse 18). The challenge is repeated (verse 25), and the identity of the Challenger left in no doubt: " '. . . to whom will you liken *Me* and whose equal will *I* be?' saying is *the Holy One.*"

How persistent the nations have been throughout the course of this present wicked eon in their efforts to make visible and tangible "the Invisible," Who is spirit and intangible! The offensiveness to God of this age-long preoccupation of humans with idolatry is

powerfully expressed by the apostle Paul in his letter to the Romans (1:23): ". . . and they change the *glory* of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an *image* of corruptible human beings and flying creatures and quadrupeds and reptiles." God is jealous of His glory, and He will not give it to another, nor His praises to carvings (Isa.42:8; 48:11). "To whom will you liken Me?" is the challenging question addressed to the producers of idols. The answer to that question was supplied by the apostle Paul in his address to the proud Athenian philosophers of his day: ". . . we ought not to be inferring that the Divine is like gold, or silver, or stone, a sculpture of art and human sentiment" (Acts 17:29).

THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has provided for Himself the Image He desires, and that Image is His beloved Son, "the Son of His love . . . Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature" (Col.1:14,15). In *Him* is His Father unveiled (Matt.11:27), and it is with *Him* the Father shares His glory (John 13:31,32).

The idols of human devising, fashioned by human hands for worship by human beings, can bear *no* comparison with the Image of the invisible God, Who is the Inaugurator of Life (Acts 3:15), the Living One (Rev.1:18) and a vivifying Spirit (1 Cor.15:45). He is the incomparable One, Who in *all* may be becoming *first* (Col.1:18), and Who, revealed in His glory as *the power and wisdom of God* (1 Cor.1:24), is the absolute antithesis of the utter impotence of the lifeless idols of the nations, and of the base folly of their contrivers.

Idols, the products of human hands and ingenuity, cannot reveal *God*. They cannot provide a *Saviour*.

They cannot give *life*. Neither can they (nor those who make them and become like their products in the forming of them) answer the question: "Who regulates the spirit of Ieue, and which man informed Him of His counsel?" The idols of silver and gold speak not, see not, hear not, feel not, neither can they breathe nor walk (Psa.115:4-8; 135:15-18).

It is our blessed privilege to "rely on the *living God*, Who is the *Saviour* of *all* mankind, especially of believers" (1 Tim.4:10).

The questions in 40:12 have specific reference to Ieue's activities in the creation of the heavens and the earth. They reveal the greatness of His power in His primal achievement. The twofold question of verse thirteen, however, directs our thoughts into that timelessness *before* creation, *before* the eons, when God was *All* in Himself and, therefore, solitary: when He formulated His counsel, His counsel "that shall be confirmed" (Isa.46:10), later to be called "the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:11), in accord with which He is operating *all*. There was no one *then* to regulate His spirit; none to advise Him.

THE DISOBEDIENCE OF THE CHOSEN NATION

If the widespread possession and worship of idols by the nations was an abomination in the sight of Ieue the Alueim of Israel (and most assuredly it was), how much more abhorrent and grievous to Him must have been the wanton abandon of Israel to the obscenities of idolatry, against which, through His servants, He had so frequently and solemnly warned His people. The first two of the ten "words" of the Law given by Ieue to Israel expressly forbade the possession of other gods and the making of images or likenesses by His people. They were not to bow down to these, nor were

they to make a covenant with nations who did (*cf* Ex. 23:32,33). But disobedient Israel broke the covenant which Ieue made with the nation, and His people came to learn, by bitter experience, the "many evils and troubles" which Moses foretold would fall upon them if they turned to other gods (*cf* Deut.28:63-67, 31:16-21; Psa.106:34-39).

In spite of the commandments, in spite of the warnings given by Moses and in the face of the pleadings in the successive ministries of faithful prophets, notable among whom was Isaiah who conveyed Ieue's moving message to His wayward sons—"I spread out My hands all the day to a stubborn and contentious people" (Isa.65:2, *cf* Rom.10:21)—the chosen nation (except for a faithful remnant) persisted in its depravities. This rebellious and defiling course (*cf* Ezek.20:30), led ultimately to the removal of the people from the land into which Ieue had brought them after their wilderness journeying, which followed their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

The ten tribes of Israel, forming the northern kingdom, which had seceded from the royal House of David, were the first to be taken and scattered. This removal was carried out for Ieue by Assyria, the nation preserved by Ieue in the days of the prophet Jonah for that specific purpose. But the Assyrians, haughty and cruel and the "club of Ieue's anger," exceeding the charge divinely assigned to them, attempted (some eight years afterwards) to destroy also the southern kingdom, Judah, and the holy city, Jerusalem. In the onslaught against the city, Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, was foiled and his hosts ignominiously crushed by the intervention of the messenger of Ieue (*cf*

2 Kings 19 and Isaiah 37). In the immutable purpose, born of His counsel, God had in view *another* king, and *another* nation by which He would remove from the land and discipline "treacherous Judah," the sister of "backsliding Israel."

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON—"MY SERVANT"

The king, predetermined by God and held in His purpose until the time appointed, was Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, "the head that is gold" (Dan.2:38), called by Ieue, "My servant" (Jer.25:9; 27:6). The nation was to be the "masterful Chaldeans, bitter and hasty" (Hab.1:6).

Although Nebuchadnezzar is not named in the Scroll of Isaiah, the prophet does record the *first* reference to the *actual location* of Judah's servitude. Concerning the matter, he states:

> "And saying is Isaiah to Hezekiah, 'Hear the word of Ieue of hosts, "Behold the days are coming," averring is Ieue, "when all that is in your house, and that your forefathers treasured unto this day, shall be carried away. It shall come to *Babylon*. And not a thing shall be left," says Ieue' " (Isa.39:5,6).

The "word of Ieue of hosts" to king Hezekiah concerning the future deportation of Judah to Babylon, was conveyed to him following (and as a result of) the visit of "elders" sent to Jerusalem by the son of Baladan, king of Babylon. Hezekiah received the "word" at a critical period of his life and reign. His grievous illness (from which, in the mercy of Ieue, he recovered) had befallen him at the time of the Assyrian assault on Jerusalem. Although mention is made to him in Ieue's "word" of "your *sons*" (Isa.39:7), *at that time Hezekiah had no sons,* and thus the matter of the succession to the throne of David was a paramount and serious issue. The deliverance of

Jerusalem and its inhabitants from the Assyrian invader, the recovery of the king from his illness and the addition of fifteen years to his life, resolved the problem of the succession, but the prediction concerning the deportation of Judah to Babylon (still a future matter—"the days are coming") was not withdrawn.

When Ieue purposed to remove the people of Judah from their land because, in the words recorded by Jeremiah, "they forsake the covenant of Ieue their Alueim, and they are worshipping other alueim and serving them" (Jer.22:9), He also determined the actual *duration* of their servitude. This was to be for a period of seventy years (Jer.25:11; Dan.9:2; Zech. 1:12), and, at the fulfillment of these years of exile, Ieue would again visit His people (Jer.29:10). He was not unmindful of His promise.

CYRUS, KING OF PERSIA—"MY SHEPHERD"

In exactly the same way that God had, beforehand, fixed upon Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, His servant, to be the captor and discipliner of the people of Judah and Jerusalem, so, too, had he set apart beforehand, in His purpose, their liberator. The liberator to be of Ieue's people was Cyrus, king of Persia—Ieue Alueim's "*shepherd*" and "*anointed*"—whose name was revealed by Isaiah in his scroll many years *before* the deportation of the sons of Judah commenced and, therefore, many, many years before the *birth* of Cyrus. Concerning this Persian king, Isaiah writes: "Saying as to Cyrus, 'My shepherd,' And 'All My desire he will perform.' Saying as to Jerusalem, 'It shall be built,' And the temple, 'It shall be founded' " (44:28). "Thus says Ieue Alueim to His anointed, To Cyrus, whose right hand I hold fast . . ." (45:1). "On account of My servant Jacob, And Israel,

My chosen, I am calling to you by your name. I am titling you, yet you do not know Me . . ." (45:4). "I, I made the earth, And I created humanity on it, I, My hands stretched out the heavens, And all their host I instruct. I, I rouse him [Cyrus] in righteousness, And all his ways am I straightening. He shall build My city, And My deportation he will let go, Not for a price, And not for a bribe, says Ieue of hosts" (45:12,13).

There is *never* any element of chance in the ways of our God and Father. These great issues being considered were all determined beforehand in the counsel of God's will (as, of course, *all* is determined), and they came to pass precisely at the times appointed, in complete accord with God's intention. Concerning their predetermining, we would remind ourselves of the question before us: "Who regulates the spirit of Ieue, and which man is informing Him of His counsel?." The *only* answer will come readily to the spiritual mind.

Regarding the respective roles filled by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and the Persian king, Cyrus, in the ways of of Ieue, neither monarch was given a choice in the matter of the part which Ieue had selected for, and assigned to each. Nor could they have been consulted since matters concerning the intention of God to remove the people of Judah to Babylon, and ultimately bring them back to their land, were *revealed before* both kings were born. The apostle Paul expressed such a position in another context (Rom.9:11) in a manner which has a certain relevance here: "For, not as yet being born, nor putting into practice anything good or bad, that the purpose of God may be remaining *as a choice,* not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling . . . ." Alan Reid

(To be Continued)

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

How can there be unity among believers when they disagree over important teachings of the Scriptures?

God has made a unity. It is a spiritual unity. We should make it our business to *preserve* it. In the opening exhortation, after that most marvelous manifestation of divine grace contained in the earlier chapters of the epistle to the Ephesians, we are entreated by the prisoner of the Lord, to walk worthy of the calling with which we are called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, being diligent to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (Eph.3:1-3).

Most "movements" are marked by the opposite of this. The discovery, perhaps, of fresh truth leads to exaltation and pride, impatience with error, a lack of bearing with one another, and a diligence in forming a new, man-made unity in the bonds of doctrine. Every such "unity" is a fresh *division*. Even the attempts to form a unity which will not shut out any of God's saints have all failed, and, however sincere their purpose, they have all degenerated into another schism. A number of bodies which we have today began with the laudable desire of affording a common ground upon which all saints could fellowship with one another.

The moment man *makes* a unity he *breaks* the one which God has made. *We are not called upon to make*

a unity; we are exhorted to keep the one already made. There is not the least excuse for forming a fresh unity; there is every reason why we should acknowledge the unity of the spirit and refuse all others which infringe upon it. Doctrines, however they may attract those like-minded, must never be allowed to mar this unity. Peace is the true bond which binds us together, not a common creed.

Why is it so difficult to keep this unity of the spirit?

Practical unity is dependent on the tie of peace, and this, in turn, depends on loving tolerance, on patience, meekness and humility (Eph.4:1-3). These are the rare virtues of which there is such a lack. It is pride which creates discord and disunity. Most of us have so much of it that, if we were not restrained by a deep conviction that our crucifixion in Christ shows what we are in ourselves, and our exaltation by God what His grace has made us, we would assert ourselves and make unity an impossibility. Without grace no vital unity is possible. Where this is lacking it soon disappears.

The whole spirit of the times is against unity. Everywhere freedom, independence and self-determination are held up as the greatest of goals for humanity. There is a revolt against authority. Children no longer need to be subject to parents, nor wives to their husbands, nor slaves to their masters, nor the younger to the elder, nor the citizen to the authorities, nor the saints to one another, nor the ecclesia to Christ. One would suppose that, at the consummation, all are to become all in themselves, self-centered, self-sufficient, independent, free, instead of being utterly *subject* to God (1 Cor.15:27,28). That such a spirit leads to discord and strife is evident all

about us. But it should not lead us astray. We should not strive to be independent of one another. Rather, we should seek to stem this tide by practicing the opposite. Let us not insist on our rights but rather forego them when this will serve the saints. It may be humiliating, but that is just what we should covet. Let us remember that our Lord was vested with all authority, yet He chose the path of bitterest humiliation and shame.

Where there has been division and discord, let us freely confess it, even if we imagine that we have had no hand in it. Let us remember Daniel. We would say that he, of all Israel, was innocent of the national transgressions. But he thought otherwise, hence he was personally humbled by them. He knew himself as vitally one with his people (Dan.9:3-20). We are far more closely joined to one another, so it ill becomes us to point at others. No matter who is to blame for schisms among believers, we must share the shame. Notwithstanding all the divisions into which the church has been rent, the believers in them are vitally and essentially one. The acts of each member of the body affect all and involve all. No one could claim to be as free of the offenses of the church as Daniel was of the sins of Israel. Let us not even be proud of our own unsectarianism, lest it should prove to be the opposite, but ashamed of the divisions in the body to which we belong, that we may be in the path of peace and unity. A.E.K.

NEW PRINTING

We have a new printing of A. P. Adams' booklet, "The True Basis of Redemption" (50¢). Other recent reprints are "God's Perfect Plan" (10¢); "Living Together with Christ" (5¢) and "Love's Goal" (1¢).

THE GLORY OF THE HAPPY GOD

We read in 1 Timothy 1:11 that Paul was entrusted with the evangel of the glory of the happy God. This was a message of salvation in grace apart from works of law (Eph.2:8,9). Paul's first letter to Timothy shows that this evangel applies to Paul himself (especially as Saul on the road to Damascus), to believers and even to all mankind.

SAUL OF TARSUS

Before he was called in grace, Paul, who was then called Saul, was a great enemy of the Lord. According to the law he should have been destroyed, but God did the very reverse and called him to Himself, entrusting him with an evangel of transcendent grace and glory. "Grateful am I to Him Who invigorates me, Christ Jesus, our Lord, for He deems me faithful, assigning me a service, I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy . . . the grace of our Lord overwhelms . . ." (1 Tim.1:12-14). God is the happy God because of His most gracious dealing with Saul.

THOSE ABOUT TO BE BELIEVING

But this grace is for others as well. We see this as the passage in 1 Timothy continues: "But therefore was I

shown mercy, that in me, the foremost [sinner], Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian" (verse 16). The pattern of mercy and grace shown to Paul is the pattern which can be seen as each of us are called into the family of faith.

Yet, as we have seen in a previous study, the message of grace also involves the word of the cross. Not only does God give us grace while we are still sinners, and this given on the basis of the cross of Christ, but also our present service is made useful, to God's glory, only by the way of humiliation and struggle. The more we appreciate God's grace the more we experience the cross.

When Paul was given transcendent revelations and heard "ineffable declarations" he was given "a splinter in the flesh" which the Lord did not remove from him despite his prayers (2 Cor.12:1-8). The Lord's reason was "Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in infirmity is being perfected." We ought to listen to and heed Paul's response very carefully. "With the greatest relish, then, will I rather be glorying in my infirmities, that the power of Christ should be tabernacling over me. Wherefore I delight in infirmities, in outrages, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for, whenever I may be weak, then I am powerful" (2 Cor.12:9,10).

This also is the evangel of the glory of the happy God, not only that He saves us through the apparent failure and obvious shame of the cross, but that He continually saves us in service and gives us strength through infirmity and need. We are saved in grace, and this is not out of ourselves (Eph.2:8). In the same way we are His achievement in any good work we may perform (verse 10).

THE SAVIOUR OF ALL

But the evangel of the glory of the happy God has an even wider application. There was grace for Saul; there is grace for each one of us; but there is grace enough for all. Again we read in 1 Timothy that God "wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth" (2:4), and "that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers" (4:10). All mankind is in need of this grace. Therefore, we read that Christ Jesus gave Himself a correspondent Ransom for all" (2:6). The good news of the happy God is that the cross was not a defeat, but rather it was such a great victory that its blessed results will eventually reach to all.

Our God is a happy God. In Ephesians 1:10,11 we learn of the secret of His will, and this accords with His *delight.* It gives Him happiness, joy and delight to purpose and bring about "an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ." Such an evangel is certainly for the laud of His glory!

CLASS PROJECTS

1. Look up the word "happy" in the *Keyword Concordance* and make an outline of its occurrences in Romans, 1 Timothy and Titus.
2. What is the relationship of the cross to our position in Christ and to our walk in the Lord?
3. List examples where God has brought victory out of apparent defeat.
4. What do we learn about God's will in 1 Timothy 2:4 and Ephesians 1:9-11?
5. List the various teachings which Paul called "faithful sayings."

A. C. Lamb

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS is not simply a righteousness which sets matters in order after they have gone wrong; it is a righteousness involved with everything God does. As God, He must purpose and perform in accord with His nature. His grace and love must be just no less than His judgments.

The righteousness of God is His righteousness in creation, in the events of the eons, and in the completing of His purpose. The tendency to apply this attribute only to God's acts of judgment has left us with the impression that there is a conflict between righteousness and grace. In one case (it is suggested) God displays His justice by seeing that man gets what he deserves; in the other case God displays His love and grace by [unjustly?] delivering His favored ones from their just deserts.

Even when the sacrifice of Christ is recognized as the basis for God's grace to the believer there is still a tendency, conscious or unconscious, to separate this from God's righteousness. This is because the common teaching is that, while Christ died for all, only a few will actually be saved. If the benefits of the cross are not eventually enjoyed by all, and if the benefits given to the believer are an end in themselves rather than a means for blessing to others and glory to God, then God's righteousness is still in question.

The truth is that both God's grace and His judgments are means to an end, and both are in accord with His righteousness. There are many means which God uses to achieve His goal, and even though they may not appear right to us at times, they all *are* right. But what is the evidence that this is so? We believe that God is righteous, but how can we be certain that not only His judgments but all His operations as well are right and for good?

THE CRY OF JOB

Whether or not God is right in all that He does is a critical issue in the Scriptures. It is clearly a central theme in Job, which may well be one of the oldest books of God's Word. Knowing his trials did not originate in his own failings, and refusing to attribute them to Satan, Job was driven to question God, Himself.

"To my Judge will I supplicate . . . Who with horror is hurting me and increases my injuries gratuitously" (Job 9:15,17). "I will say to Alue, Thou must not condemn me; cause me to know for what reason Thou art contending with me" (10:2).

The answer which God provided was fully in accord with Job's hope. It was the assurance that God was directing all things, both great and small. This revelation is what Job sought, and once it was given to him he ceased his complaints and repented in humiliation. Nevertheless, for all that, he was not given any proof of a righteous *basis* for that which God was doing.

This is where we are able to go beyond Job. Now, in the current era, we have not only been given the assurance that God operates all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11), but we may also

perceive with the eyes of our heart, in faith, that there is a righteous basis for all things. God is operating all righteously, and this can be verified by the evidence of the evangel that Christ died for our sins and was roused the third day (1 Cor.15:3,4).

Of course, we can see this evidence only by faith. Only the believer can appreciate it and reap its benefits of assurance and victory. But believing that Christ did, in fact, die for our sins and was roused because of our justifying, we have received something that Job could not have. We not only know that God is doing all things, but also we know that He is bringing all things to a righteous consummation by channeling all through the cross.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS REVEALED

To the apostle Paul first were given revelations which penetrated into the depths of God, making known His righteousness as never before seen. Especially in Romans we come upon this subject in a new and startling measure.

First of all we learn that the righteousness of God is the principal revelation of the evangel: "for in it God's righteousness is being revealed" (1:17). Secondly, we are told that man's unrighteousness commends God's righteousness (3:5) by way of contrast. Then the thought of 1:17 is continued and developed in 3:21-28. (This is perhaps the most important discussion of this subject in all the Word of God, and we will need to give careful attention to it.) Finally, in the section dealing with Israel Paul indirectly presents the truth that Christ Himself is the Personification of and the Key to the righteousness of God (10:3,4; *cf* 1 Cor. 1:30).

Yet everywhere in Romans, and throughout Paul's

epistles, he is drawing our attention to the tremendous value of this truth. God does all things righteously because He is righteous in every aspect of His being. And the evidence for this is the cross of Christ.

Romans was written against a background of uncertainty and unease. The apostle was on his way, for the last time, to Jerusalem (Rom.15:25), "bound in spirit . . . not being aware what I will meet with in it, more than that the holy spirit, city by city, certifies to me, saying that bonds and afflictions are remaining for me" (Acts 20:22,23). Then, too, he was heavily burdened with a deep concern for Israel. "The truth I am telling in Christ, I am not lying . . . that my sorrow is great, and unintermittent pain is in my heart . . . for my brethren, my relatives according to the flesh . . ." (Rom.9:1-3). This forms part of the background for these transcendent revelations concerning the righteousness of God.

VEXING QUESTIONS

Job longed for assurance that God was in charge, and he was provided with this assurance. We also can accept the fact that since God is operating all things, all that happens is right. We can even accept such "hard" teachings as are given in the early portions of Romans 3 and in chapters 9 through 11. Man's failures make God's faithfulness stand out all that more clearly, and man's unrighteousness commends God's righteousness (Rom.3:3-5). God is merciful to whom He wills, "yet whom He will He is hardening" (Rom.9:18). Like Job we can find some satisfaction and relief just in knowing that it is God Who does this. But can we be entirely satisfied to leave the subject there?

Paul was not. He boldly brings up further questions

which seem to lurk behind all the revelations of God's way in Job, and behind His dealings with the patriarchs and the nation of Israel. "Yet if the truth of God superabounds in my lie, for His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner . . . ?" (Rom.3:7). Indeed, God is right in what He does, but what of these things which happen to us? God declares, "Jacob I love, yet Esau I hate." "What, then, shall we be declaring? Not that there is injustice with God?" (Rom.9:13,14). There is no unrighteousness in God, but both Jacob and Esau suffered, and indeed in the end, Jacob even more than Esau.

Tradition tells us that these torturing questions of Romans 3 and 9 are answered with a dismissal. "May it not be coming to that!" (Rom.3:6; 9:14). "O man! who are you, to be sure, who are answering again to God? That which is molded will not protest to the molder, 'Why do you make me thus?' " (9:20). But these are only extensions of the dilemma; they prolong rather than solve the problem. The real answer comes in the evangel which displays the righteousness of God. Therefore the reply to Romans 3:5-8 is verses 21-28, and the reply to 9:14-19 is in 11:32-36.

THE EVANGEL

Somehow we have overlooked the importance of the revelation of the righteousness *of* God in the evangel. We have come to think that Romans 3;21 is speaking of a righteousness *from* God for us. Indeed there is a reckoning of God's righteousness to us, but the primary issue here is the display of God's own righteousness. Can it be seen even where man suffers, and even where God chooses among us for different purposes, and where God receives glory even through man's unrighteousness and failures? We are brought

to face this very troubling question in Romans, just as Job was brought to face deep problems.

If it is important that we do face up to these questions, it is doubly important that we be prepared to listen to God's answer. "Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest . . . ." The faith of Jesus Christ has made it possible for us to see the righteousness of God! All is out of God, and through Him and for Him, and it is all channeled through the accomplishment of Christ on Golgotha's tree! God is righteous as Creator, Placer and Disposer since He is bringing about a righteous and glorious end for all, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus.

Note that the evangel does not begin with a revelation of God's favor to us who believe, but it begins instead with a *revelation of the righteousness of God.* The second point of the evengel, likewise, is not concerned directly with us, but with Christ: "yet a righteousness of God *through Jesus Christ's faith* . . . ." Here we have more than assurance that God is righteous. The words have been translated into deeds. Therefore, we can see that God is righteous. Through His Son, God has performed an action which becomes a channel for the justification of all He has done and does, as well as for the justification of all His creatures. Once we can accept the message that the faith of Jesus Christ, His death on our behalf, opens the way to full justification and glorification for all, we can see the righteousness of God.

Hence (we learn as the third point of the evangel), it is "for all" (verse 22). How tragic that scribes and scholars who could find no value in the distinctive phrases "for all" and "on all," have tended to eliminate the second from the text. This has allowed men to corrupt the evangel right at its beginning.

They have changed "a righteousness of God" into "a righteousness from God," and "Jesus Christ's faith" into "faith in Jesus Christ," and "for all, and on all who are believing" into "for all who believe." God's righteousness is *for* all! It is *on* all who are believing! It is marked out for everyone; it presently has been applied to us who are believing.

The faith of Christ is the channel through which this highest and fullest manifestation of God's righteousness is achieved. A further witness to this fact is given in Romans 3:23 and 24. There are no punctuation marks or paragraph distinctions in the Greek manuscripts of this text, and verse 24 begins a phrase which needs to be connected with verses 23 and 27 to give a full thought. We could read this passage this way: ". . . for there is no distinction, for *all* sinned and are wanting of the glory of God, *being justified gratuitously* in His grace, *through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus* . . . . Where then is boasting?"

Not only the grammatical considerations, however, but more importantly the flow of the thought here leads us to this conclusion. There is a distinction between those who believe and those who do not believe. The believer has God's righteousness reckoned to him. But there is no distinction in the fact that we all are sinners, and also that our justification must be gratuitous and come by way of the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus. And it will come that way for all.

PASSING OVER OF PENALTIES

There was a time when God passed over the penalties of the sins of Israel. This "occurred before in the forbearance of God" (Rom.3:25). Was that right?

Not in itself, but if it was indeed based on the faith of Jesus Christ, then God was right in using this means to picture the work of Christ as a sacrifice for sin and a preparation for Israel for their place in the coming Kingdom. The basis of the Passover was the blood of Christ. All that God has done and does has this same solid foundation.

God's righteousness is now on display, so that all can see it in faith. How thankful we should be to live in this "current era." We tend to look only with our eyes of flesh and see our trials and struggles and frustrations. But God's righteousness is *on display* for the eyes of faith to see (Rom.3:26). Do we think that Paul lived in "the good old days"? The Roman empire was not all that pleasant! The problems and pressures of life were not any less than we experience. In fact, as we previously observed, they were very severe for Paul as he wrote this epistle to the Romans.

May we receive the favor of believing what Christ has done, and of putting our faith in Him Who is our Deliverance and Righteousness, so that we can gaze more exactly on that display of God's righteousness which is there in the evangel. From the beginning this righteousness has been operating. It was operating when God passed over the sins of the nation of Israel. It was operating when Paul travelled to Jerusalem and went into prison. It is operating now when we are sick or troubled in mind or body. It will continue to operate until at last God becomes All in all. Nothing can keep God's righteousness from finishing its intended course, for it is settled firmly on the work and faith of Christ. May we more and more be giving glory to God for His great righteousness.

D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 1979
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY

EDITORIAL

God is, in the words of one modern theologian, the "most real reality in the heart of things" (Hans Küng, 1974). Those of us who believe in God trust that ultimate reality is rational, self-conscious and benevolent. Furthermore, the Scriptures tell us that God is "the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of his will" (Eph.1:11), and that He loves His creation to the greatest extent (John 3:16; Rom.8:15-23). We believe that we can have fellowship with this Reality through our praises, thanksgiving and petitions.

There is much food for thought in the previous paragraph, and much to bring us comfort, for this same great God "is working all together for the good of those who are loving God" (Rom.8:28). It is a joy to meditate on these things, and to be "growing in the realization of God" (Col.1:10).

However, a word of caution is in order. We cannot think *about* God in the same way that we can think *about* a tree or a milk shake or a fellow descendent of Adam. We can think about a tree as a total happening—see it, touch it, consider its beginning and end. We can chemically analyze a milk shake and we can discourse face to face with a human being. We can do none of these with God. Our thoughts about God can never encompass Him as He is. This is so because our thoughts are derived from His Thought. Something derived is less than its source. The human

mind can think about a tree and ponder its relationships to other trees and the rest of the known material universe. But God is the source of *relationship* itself, as well as the rational consciousness by which a human can perceive it. Our derivative minds require axioms (unexamined assumptions) in order to function. We cannot go beyond the ultimate Axiom. Reason fails to fathom such a thing. Faith takes over. In our walk according to spirit we should be ever growing into a greater realization of Him; but He is so much more than we apprehend or imagine that there is no room for pride. With this cautionary note, let us explore a bit further.

The Scriptures reveal God in a way that mere reason and observation never could. They show us Christ Jesus, the only authentic Image of God, Who emptied Himself and became flesh to tabernacle among us for a season. Through this Image we learn and believe something of God's love for us, sullied though we are.

Christ is also the Word, the *Logos* (John 1:1-3). He is the only authentic Expression of God. While the theologians may describe God as "Wholly Other," the Scriptures assure us that we do have a genuine Image and Expression of God in Christ. "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:8); "all that I hear from My Father I make known to you" (John 15:15). On believing the evangel we receive God's Spirit, and Christ begins to live in us—we become oriented toward Reality. We begin to perceive, in our dull way, His love, of which our human loves are but an analogy.

The next time you seek fellowship with Him in prayer, remember that He is *more* than our little systems of theology can ever define or prove. Think big. Yet He is still bigger. James D. Thompson

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS
(Colossians 1:1,2)

PAUL—what a wealth of grace and overwhelming glory fills our hearts at the very mention of his name! He was the erstwhile enemy of Christ and rabid persecutor of His people, who hunted them down even in distant Damascus. In an instant the glory of Christ stops him in his mad career, and wins his heart, henceforth to worship and work for Him alone. Can grace ever gain a more splendid trophy than Saul of Tarsus, the chief of sinners, yet supreme among the saints? But how much greater was the grace that still awaited him! From glory to glory God led him on, until he reaches the highest honor ever accorded a mortal, for he is the vessel chosen to fill up God's Word and to reveal God's latest secrets, the fruit of His highest thoughts and His deepest love.

Paul presents himself in this epistle as an apostle, for he has been commissioned, and has authority to write and set forth the truths and reveal the secrets which it contains. Apostles are in the foundation (Eph.2:20). These were needed to form a solid substratum for God's operations among mankind. Paul appears alone as apostle in his salutations, especially in those in which his authority is necessary to certify to his words. Yet he sometimes associates others with him, in other capacities. In Colossians, as in second Corinthians, "brother" Timothy joins in the salutation. He is not seen as an apostle, but simply as a brother in the faith.

"Christ Jesus" and "Jesus Christ"—what a vast difference between these two titles, though one is merely a transposition of the other! Jesus Christ is the humble, despised, rejected, crucified Messiah. His glories wait until the future, at the time of His return to earth. At present He has no place down here. But Christ Jesus! Already He is highest in the heavens. Seated at the right hand of God, there is no dignity to equal His. All might and power, all sovereignty and authority among the celestials is centered in Him. There He is not humbled, but honored! There He is not despised, but praised! There He is not rejected, but acclaimed! There He is not crucified, but glorified! We hail Him, not only as the coming King upon the earth, but as the present Head of all celestial might and majesty! Hail! Christ Jesus!

THROUGH THE WILL OF GOD

The will of God is the positive pole of the divine intention. God is carrying out His great purpose of revealing His heart by means of two contrary currents during the eons. The mutual reaction of these upon each other accomplish His purpose. One current coincides with His will. The other goes counter to it. One movement is headed by Christ. The other is led on by Satan. Saul of Tarsus, before he met the Lord, was fulfilling the divine intention, for he was preparing the black background on which alone the highlights of God's grace could be displayed. But he was going counter to God's will. After his call, Ananias said to him, "the God of our fathers selects you to know His *will*" (Acts 22:14).

A true apostle must come through the will of God and conform to that will in his words and works. Thus all is traced back to the divine volition. The source of

all is found in God's love and its determination to win a response through its activity on our behalf. God wants our love, hence wishes us to know His will. The apostle's first prayer opens with this petition: That you may be filled with the realization of His will (1:9). This is a root which bears much fruit. Without it our walk will lack those qualities which are dear to God's heart. Wisdom and understanding, as well as a fruitful walk, must grow out of an apprehension of God's will.

TO THE BRETHREN IN COLOSSE

The epistle is addressed, in the first place, to Colosse. Yet it was also sent to Laodicea, and, indeed, is especially meant for all who had not seen Paul's face in the flesh (4:16; 2:1). Like its companion epistles, Ephesians and Philippians, the very mode of communication is in accord with its contents. Flesh has no place. Paul is bound (4:18). He could not go to Colosse in order to tell them these transcendent truths by word of mouth, but is compelled to have his words committed to writing, so that they will be seen rather than heard, and not only can be transported vast distances, far beyond the reach of his voice, but may be imperishably preserved for the future. And so they have come to us.

The recipients of this epistle are distinguished by two tokens—holiness and faith. On God's side they were saints, hallowed by contact with Him. On the human side they had believed in Christ. The title here may be Christ Jesus, as in Alexandrinus, to accord with Ephesians. As the apostle has connected his apostleship with this title, this must be the same in shortened form. This epistle was not sent to all saints without discrimination. In those days there were still some of the Circumcision, as we shall see, to whom

Paul was not sent, whose faith did not lay hold of Christ as at present exalted, but who looked forward to His future rule upon the earth. The faith of the Colossians is expressly said to be in Christ Jesus (1:4).

Faithfulness and trust are the accompaniments of belief. In the Original there are no distinct terms for them. By the figure of association the Greek uses *believing* for *faithful* throughout. Thus, in this very epistle, Paul refers to Tychicus as "a beloved brother and *believing* servant" (4:7). Because belief produces fidelity it is used for it in a figure. English itself has this figure, though it is faded. What is *faithful* if not full of faith, or belief? Yet it has come to mean *trustworthy, dependable,* and the word *believing* is reserved for its literal sense. As we have seen, we must use *faithful* with service, yet when this is not clearly in view it may be better to use *believing.* In connection with *brethren,* believing is probably better, inasmuch as this epistle is not especially devoted to service.

THE INVOCATION

The invocations in Paul's three prison epistles are identical. Just as the body of each epistle commences with blessing or thanking, so the first wish of the apostle's heart for his readers is *grace.* Divine favor lavished upon those who deserve God's indignation will yet be the most precious gem in the crown of His glory. His creatures will be awed by His infinite might. They will be amazed by the wonders of His works. They will marvel at His wisdom. Their hearts will swell with thankfulness for His kindness. Far more precious will be the praise and worship which His mercy will call forth. Yet the highest adoration and the deepest affection will come to Him from those who realize the depths of their deserts and the cor-

responding heights to which His grace has exalted them.

We should make more of His grace. Not only should it warm our own hearts at all times, but it should pervade our walk and our service. Oh, how great a transformation would it work in the heralding of the evangel, if it were presented in its purity and power! Grace that Saul encountered on the Damascus road. Grace that Paul received to serve the saints. Grace that enabled him to suffer for Christ's sake. Let us not confine it to the past, to our call, when we first believed. This invocation is not for unbelievers, but for us. Our salvation is not only *by* but *to* or *in* grace (Eph.2:5). Not only did it begin with grace, but it continues so, and will finish with the greatest display of all, when our bodies will be transfigured and glorified.

First grace, then peace. First justification, then reconciliation. Were God not gracious, what could there be but indignation and enmity? But now that His favor hovers over us as a benediction, we may have peace with Him, peace in our spirits, peace with our fellow-saints and the world, yea, we may enter into the peace *of* God, and enjoy some measure of the calm with which He is filled, Who knows the end from the beginning, and Whose great aim is to overcome all enmity with love, and clasp His whole creation to His heart in the bonds of perfect and perpetual peace.

These blessings can come from one source alone—from God, Who now looks upon us as His children, and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between us, our Saviour and Lord. We are no longer merely creatures of the great Creator. We have entered the circle of His family and now are children of an affectionate Father. He will be gracious to us and give us peace, through the work of our Lord, Jesus

Christ. Indeed, He is our Peace, for He not only reconciles us to God through the blood of His cross, but removes the barriers between the saints, and makes the despised Uncircumcision one with the privileged Circumcision.

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

BRUCE AND IRENE PHILLIPS

Bruce Phillips, 74, of Guildford, Western Australia, was put to repose on April 3rd after hospitalization for bone cancer. His wife, Irene, passed away three weeks earlier, also after hospitalization for cancer. Born in the sheep and wheat farming districts of Western Australia, Brother Phillips became a qualified fitter and turner and spent the latter forty years of his life with his wife and family of two sons and two daughters in the suburban area of the capital city of Perth. Irene Phillips was the only daughter of one of the many British immigrants who came to Australia during the gold rush days at the end of the last century. Irene was a quiet and loving wife and mother who devoted herself completely to her family. Bruce served diligently as the agent for the Concordant Publishing Concern for the western side of Australia. All of his non-working time was devoted to distribution of Scriptural materials, Bible studies and correspondence with other believers throughout the world. A private family funeral laid the couple to rest in a hometown grave with words of comfort from the Scriptures being read by two local pastors with family connections.

Les Phillips

BERNARD F. HESS

An enthusiastic student of God's Word who rejoiced greatly in the "untraceable riches of Christ," Brother Hess of Escondido, California, was put to repose on February 2. There is no better consolation for us and for his family and friends than "the word of the Lord" which Paul shared in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. "And thus shall we always be together with the Lord."

THE LOVE OF GOD

IN Romans the themes of the power of God and the righteousness of God are introduced at the very beginning. The relationship each holds to the evangel is set forth immediately in 1:16,17. But love, which is the attribute of God most intimately associated with the good news, is not mentioned until Romans 5:5. Nevertheless, there it is treated as though it has been under consideration all along! Paul tells us that expectation is not mortifying; it does not let us down, "*seeing that* the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us."

Expectation is dependable and edifying because it rests on love. We expect good things because God loves us. Now, if we can say that expectation is settled in love so also are testedness, endurance and afflictions. So also are grace, faith and peace as mentioned in Romans 5:1,2. Love is the great foundation of all our blessings. But it is also the great foundation of the character of God. He is all powerful and perfectly righteous because He is love (*cf* 1 John 4:8,16).

THE EVANGEL AND GOD'S LOVE

In our search for God as God, we have already given attention to His power and righteousness, and we have found that these are most clearly seen in the faithful obedience of Christ even to the death of the cross. The evangel that He died for our sins, was entombed and has been roused is the key to any realization of the true character of our God and Father.

Yet if God's power for salvation and His righteousness in all His operations are found in this evangel, how much more is His love. Both the apostles John and Paul see that the work and faith of Christ is the very essence of God's love. Hence we read, "For thus* God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son, that everyone who is believing in Him should not be perishing, but may be having life eonian" (John 3:16). And Paul writes, ". . . God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes" (Rom.5:8).

While both John and Paul use the verb and noun for love over one hundred times each, they use it of God with great care. We understand that the Greek words *agapê* and *agapaō* were not widely used in secular speech. This helps free the terms for a special association with God's gift of His Son on our behalf. It helps bring in a unique connotation of selfless, persevering and effective compassion. God's love is not selfish (*cf* 1 Cor.13:5) in that He gives His Son for our good. It is a persevering love in that nothing, not even our own fears and failures can separate us from it (Rom.8:35-39; *cf* 1 Cor.13:8). It is effective in that it brings nothing but blessings, all of which are certain (*cf* Eph.1:5; 2:4-7).

GRACE AND LOVE

We first get a glimpse of this love in the grace of God. The apparent assumption that the subject of love has already been introduced, which we see in Romans 5:5 may well be based on Romans 3:24. There we were

*The word "thus" indicates "in this manner," pointing to the character of God's love.

told that gratuitous justification is settled in the grace of God. Grace is not love, but it is the great doorway to the love of God in this day in which we live.

This grace of God gets rid of man's boasting. It removes a major barrier to the display of love. Before we can appreciate the love of God we need to appreciate the dependence of man—our great need for God's favor. The fact that man is helpless to achieve righteousness and save himself from condemnation and death has been true all along from the days of Adam, through the giving of the law to Israel, to our own era. But it has particular significance now. We have reached a stage of self-confidence in which the cover-up of our failures is unprecedented.

Until we realize our need of grace and accept God's gift of His Son we will remain unprepared to know of His love. Strange as it may seem at first, it is the experience of failure and humiliation which paves the way for the enjoyment of the love of God. Most of our stress today stems from our desire to succeed and get ahead of the other fellow. Even humanitarian goals, no matter how beneficial they may appear, are often, at their core, a seeking for honor or self-satisfaction. This is not to say that selfishness which benefits others is no better than selfishness which harms others. It is surely better, but it is still selfishness, and ironically brings little happiness to the self. But most serious of all, it keeps us from knowing and appreciating and manifesting in our own lives that which we need most desperately: the love of God.

God's love is not self-seeking. The love which He commends to us is a love which sacrifices for the benefit of others. In order for us to grasp this love our conceit and pride must be dealt with. And that is where the grace of God comes in.

WALKING IN LOVE

Once we see the love of God and appreciate its character of selflessness and heartfelt concern we are ready for it to work in us. We are guided in Ephesians 5:1,2 to become "imitators of God, as beloved children," to "be walking in love, according as Christ also loves you, and gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor."

We note first of all that the walk in love which accords with the love of Christ is a walk which imitates God. In the love of Christ we see the love of God. As the Image of God, all that Christ does perfectly reflects the character of His God and Father. Secondly, we see that this pattern of love is the same as we have in John 3:16 and Romans 5:8. It is a sacrifice of self for the benefit of others.

Does that sound like a particularly happy way of life? It certainly does not conform to the usual guideline for "the good life" which we hear so much about today. Nevertheless it is worth considering that for all the books and advice on how to be successful, healthy and beautiful, people are apparently more despondent and restless than ever. And that is often true of believers as well as unbelievers! Yet for the believer this need not be.

Certainly a major reason for this uneasiness and unhappiness is that we have not come to appreciate the love of God so that it may work in us. The operation of God's love within is a continuous process. Ephesians 5:1 speaks of our need to be *becoming* imitators of God. Paul prays that our love may be superabounding more and more in realization and all sensibility (Phil.1:9,10). The more we grasp the love of God the more we will be walking in love, "filled with the fruit

of righteousness that is through Jesus Christ for the glory and laud of God" (Phil.1:11).

This is the real successful life—not one which brings us glory, but one which appreciates God's love to the extent that it works in us. Such selfless love for the good of others is the achievement of God in the believer. It is "for the glory and laud of God."

ROOTED AND GROUNDED IN LOVE

The good news of God's "vast love with which He loves us" (Eph.2:4) is the firm foundation of our faith. We are rooted and grounded in this love (Eph.3:17). We are settled in God's love which stems from the gift of His Son on our behalf. And every day of our lives this love is "poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us" (Rom.5:5).

Having begun with love our prayer is that we might continue with love—to "be strong to grasp . . . what is the breadth and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ as well which transcends knowledge—" (Eph.3:18,19). Many years ago Brother A. E. Knoch wrote in reference to this prayer in Ephesians, "It is evident, and experience has confirmed the fact, that the greatest power is required, not for service, but to enable us to realize and appreciate the marvelous revelation of God's grace and love which is ours in Christ Jesus. May God exercise our hearts to this end!" So also the hymn writer spoke of our desire to know the love of Christ that we might be strengthened in joy and peace:

> It passeth knowledge, that dear love of Thine,
> Lord Jesus, Saviour—yet this mind of mine
> Would of Thy love, in all its breadth and length,
> Its height and depth, and its untiring strength,
> Know more and more.

We need this power for the realization of God's grace and love, and we need it very much. Our distresses, disappointments, restlessness and loneliness underscore this need. To know the love of God and then to enjoy and manifest the love of God is the way of success—God's success in us, that we should be completed for the entire complement of God.

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

D.H.H.

(To be continued)

BOOKLETS IN SHORT SUPPLY

The supply of several of our booklets and pamphlets listed in our 1979 Catalogue is nearly depleted. Because of the high publishing cost and the press of our other work we will not be able to reprint these for some time. Hence we may not be able to fill every order completely even though it is made from an up-to-date order blank.

Another consideration is the mailing cost. Whenever we do reprint the smaller pamphlets we will probably enlarge them or combine two or three of them together so that they will be at least 24 pages in length. Any publication this size or larger is classified as a book and can be mailed at a reduced rate.

SCRIPTURE CLASS STUDIES

The five lessons on the evangel for today which appeared in recent issues of this magazine under the heading *Scripture Class Studies* are now available as a set (25¢). These brief studies include a section of "Class Projects" and are based on notes by our late brother, Arthur Charles Lamb. We did not have room in the present issue to include a further installment in this series, but we do plan to have similar articles in future issues.

WHO KNEW THE MIND OF THE LORD?
PART TWO

THE Isaiah verse (40:13) which is the basis of our meditation, is quoted by the apostle Paul in Romans 11:34, where we find it in a superb setting:

> O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways!
>
> For, who knew the mind of the Lord?
> Or, who became His adviser?
>
> or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!

Into the exquisite texture of the very precious truths of these verses—truths concerning, on the one hand, the depth of the riches, the wisdom and knowledge of God, and His inscrutable judgments and untraceable ways, and, on the other, *God* the source and ultimate goal of *all*—the beloved apostle has woven, with the deft hand of inspiration, the strong threads which bind these matchless truths together in a perfect tapestry. The wonder of this calls forth from the apostle Paul (the former calumniator, persecutor and outrager) the wholly spontaneous and unqualified ascription of praise to God—"*To Him* be the *glory* for the *eons!* Amen!"

The strong strands which so firmly unite these thrilling truths are the words which Paul brings forward from Isaiah—"For who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser?"—words which form questions of such penetrating power that, in view of their implications, our only fitting response must be expressed in terms akin to the sentiments of the Psalmist as he viewed God's glory in the heavens: "What is a mortal that Thou art mindful of him? And a son of humanity that Thou art noting him?" (Psa. 8:4).

Who *can* know the *mind* which is the repository of absolute wisdom and knowledge of which are born the inscrutable judgments of God, and from which flow, through the eons, His untraceable ways? Who *can* advise the Supreme, Who, out of Himself brought forth "*the all*" and did not diminish Himself? Who *can* teach the Omniscient *knowledge,* or inform Him the way of understanding? The absolute—the unfathomable—knowledge of our God *is not acquired;* it is of *His own inherent glory!*

THE CASTING AWAY OF ISRAEL

The ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters of Romans together form a parenthesis in the course of the main theme of the epistle, which is God's power for salvation. God's saving power resides in His evangel concerning His Son, because, in the evangel, His *righteousness* is revealed. Both Jew and Greek stood, and still stand in the deepest need of God's righteousness, for *all* are under sin (Rom.3:9) and "all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23). Salvation comes to be revealed as *justification.*

In the three chapters mentioned, Paul has digressed

to explain God's dealings with Israel concerning her position ensuing from her failure to encounter the righteousness for which she sought. Seeking to establish her *own* righteousness by her *own* works, she was not subjected to the righteousness of God (Rom.10:1-4). Pursuing a law of righteousness, the chosen people failed to grasp the righteousness which is *out of faith* (Rom.9:30-33). Only a "remnant according to the choice of grace" realized the transcendent truth that "Christ is the consummation of the law *for righteousness* to everyone who is believing" (Rom.10:4).

Thus, in the eleventh chapter of Romans, we find that Israel—stubborn, calloused, not subject to the righteousness of God (all combining to constitute "their offense"—Rom.11:11,12) and repudiating Christ as the consummation of the law as the means to righteousness in this administration—is *cast away.* The removal of Israel from the land in the times of the prophets, and the ensuing exile of her people, placed Israel in circumstances similar to those in which the nation found itself during the era of Paul's ministry. Scripture describes these circumstances in a way fully applicable to the national experiences in both periods: "their casting away."

The reasons for the "casting away" were, of course, quite different. In the former period, the chosen people were removed because of their idolatry and related abominable practices. In the latter period, although by then cured of idolatry, they were cast away for their pharisaical self-righteousness which had taken its place. The Lord Jesus Christ came to His own, "and those who are His own accepted Him not" (John 1:11). *Self*-righteousness was blind before *Him* Who enacted *the righteousness of God.*

THE RESCUER OUT OF ZION

When we read through that section of the Hebrew Scriptures usually called "The Latter Prophets," we cannot fail to notice that the many passages which record the severity of God's dealings with His ancient people are never far removed from those which tell us of His gracious kindness and tender compassion for them. The warnings (and sometimes the actual record) of their removal from the land and dispersal among the nations, are interspersed with predictions of future deliverance and restoration. As we have seen, even Judah's deliverer was named beforehand.

In the three chapters of Romans dealing with Israel's later position, we find references of a similar character in the record of the apostle Paul's concern and solicitude for his brethren according to the flesh. One example out of several is his sorrow and pain of heart for "his brethren . . . who are Israelites" (9:1-5). However, he is able also to write of "the delight of my heart and my petition to God for their sake is for salvation" (10:1), for he is aware that "their casting away" *is not permanent.* It will be reversed. The apostle can write, therefore, with confidence: "For if their *casting away* is the conciliation of the world, what will the *taking back* be if not life from among the dead?" (11:15).

The callousness which had come upon Israel was partial and only "*until* the complement of the nations may be entering" (11:25). This will be when those whom God chooses in Christ before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4) have been called into faith, through the evangel, in this administration of grace, thus completing the ecclesia which is Christ's body and His complement (Eph.1:23). Romans 11:25 contains a two-fold secret—the secret of the *duration* of

Israel's callousness, linked to the infinitely precious secret of the *complement* out of the nations. Let us thank our God and Father for this revelation of a wonderful secret.

We saw earlier how God had determined beforehand, and made known prior to his birth, that Cyrus, king of Persia, would be the liberator of the people of Judah from their Babylonian servitude. Ieue Alueim called Cyrus by his name. He "titled" him although he did not know Him (Isa.45:4). The apostle Paul was aware that the final deliverance of God's people, cast away, persecuted and weary of their wanderings, would be accomplished by a greater than Cyrus. This would be by the Rescuer Who would arrive out of Zion, the ideal Shepherd and God's Anointed, the One Who had empowered Cyrus (*His* "shepherd" and "anointed") in the role of an earlier deliverer, for which He had chosen him.

To make known the truth of this Rescuer, Paul has quoted a well known passage from Isaiah (59:20,21), which, although it had an earlier, modified application, really looked forward to its complete fulfillment in the coming in glory of Israel's Messiah and to the blessings of the New Covenant:

> "Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer.
> He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob.
> And this is My covenant with them
> Whenever I should be eliminating their sins"
> Romans 11:26,27.

When the complement of the nations will have been completed and "snatched away . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thess.4:17), and when the Rescuer out of Zion will arrive, then "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom.11:26).

"ALL MY COUNSEL SHALL BE CONFIRMED"

May I repeat (for the sake of emphasis) the earlier statement that there is *never* any element of chance in the ways of our God and Father. God is *God,* and in the moving forward of His ways during the eons, He is never overtaken by unforeseen contingencies: He is never at any time beset by recurring crises, as is the common experience of humans. He determined *all* beforehand in His counselling with Himself, and He is operating *all* in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). The word of Al, the Supreme, given through His spokesman, Isaiah: "Telling from the beginning, the hereafter, and from aforetime, what has not yet been done, saying, 'All My counsel shall be confirmed, and all My desire will I do' . . ." (Isa.46:10), expresses a truth which was wholly borne out in the events in which kings Nebuchadnezzar and Cyrus were so deeply involved.

God's "counsel shall be confirmed" also in the future restoration and salvation of Israel. The God Who wounds is the God Who will heal (Deut.32:39). The God Who can estrange is the God Who will draw *all* back to Himself and into the warm embrace of His vast love. In God's counselling, no one could regulate His spirit and no one could know His mind; no one could advise Him and no one could inform Him of His counsel. It was not possible for Him to be influenced by anyone, or by any extrinsic force, for *all,* then, existed within Himself.

Out of the depth of His riches, out of His wisdom and knowledge—all modulated by His vast love and His righteousness—God's counsel was formed. Then He brought forth out of Himself, the Son of His love, the Firstborn of *every* creature, in Whom, throughout the eons, *all* has its cohesion and Who is the Image of

the invisible God (Col.1:13-17). Having acquiesced in His Father's counsel, the Father then put *all into the Son*, that *all* being *in* Him, should be *through* Him and, at the consummation of the eons, return to and be *for* His Father. Then, at the consummation of the eons, God's counsel will be finally and fully confirmed, and the purpose of the eons will be realized. *God will be all in all.* He will have achieved all His desire. Thus, in that heartfelt ascription of praise, the beloved apostle of the nations can exclaim: ". . . seeing that *out* of Him and *through* Him and *for* Him is *all:* to *Him* be the glory for the eons! Amen!"

To this transcendent truth, to this paean, let us add our "Amen!" also.

Alan Reid

(To be continued)

RICHMOND BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

The annual Bible Fellowship in Richmond, Virginia, is scheduled this year for June 15-17. The meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn North, 5221 Brook Road, Richmond VA 23227. Our British agent, Frank Orton, will be among the several speakers bringing messages from the Scriptures during this three-day gathering. We urge our readers in that area to attend as many of these meetings as possible. For further information write to Mrs. Mary R. Farley, 2805 Jeffers Drive, Richmond VA 23235.

BALDWIN SUMMER FELLOWSHIP

This year's theme for the annual conference in Baldwin, Michigan, will be "God's Purpose of the Eons." The meetings begin the evening of July 31 and will continue through August 4. It is always helpful to send in your reservations early for this popular occasion when brethren from many portions of the United States and Canada share together spiritual blessings from God's Word. Write to Grace and Truth Chapel, Box 84, Baldwin MI 49304.

For the sons of Korah A Psalm

84 [wt]How endearing Thy tabernacles are, Ieue of hosts!
2 My soul is longing and [mr]even exhausted
for the courts of Ieue.
My heart and my flesh are jubilating to the living Al!
3 [mr]Even a bird finds a home,
And a swallow > her nest,
in which she sets her broods—
`Thine altars, Ieue of hosts, my King and my Alueim.
4 Happy are the dwellers of Thy house!
They still shall praise Thee!
Interlude
5 Happy is the human who >has his strength in Thee!
Highways are in their heart.
6 Passing in the vale of the aspen,
They will set it [f] a spring;
Moreover, the former rain will muffle it with blessings.
7 They will go from rampart to rampart;
Each is appearing to Alueim in Zion.
8 Ieue, Alueim of hosts, hear my prayer!
[c]Give ear, Alueim of Jacob!
Interlude
9 Our Shield, see, O Alueim!
And look at the face of Thine Anointed.
10 For better is a day in Thy courts
[f]than a thousand;
I choose to sweep in the house of my Alueim,
Rather [f]than to abide in the tents of wickedness.
11 For sun and shield is Ieue Alueim;
Grace and glory will Ieue give.

He is not withholding good >from those **going**
in flawlessness.
[12] **Ieue of hosts,**
Happy is the **human trusting in Thee!**
> Permanent

NOTES FOR PSALM 84

The intense desire of the psalmist for access to the temple causes him to break forth with words of love: God's tabernacles are so endearing to him that he pines in their absence. He thinks of those who dwell there, the priests offering divine service, as well as the birds nesting in the eaves.

Verses 5-7 speak of pilgrims on the way to Zion. Verse 7 is somewhat difficult. The LXX has "valley of lamentation," while the Latin Vulgate rendered the phrase "valley of tears." The Hebrew word translated *aspen* here is a plant that grows only in arid places. The thought seems to be that the pilgrims will turn the arid land into a spring, and the Lord will bless it with rain. We could paraphrase the thought in these verses by saying: Those whose strength is in God have the pilgrim's attitude within: on their journey trials are turned into joy.

This psalm is a favorite to many believers because it is so easily applied to our walk of faith. The imagery of an exile longing for the temple courts readily translates into our spiritual yearnings and daily disappointments. "Happy is the human trusting in Thee!"

James D. Thompson

For the sons of Korah A Psalm

85 Thou dost accept, Ieue, Thy land;
Thou dost reverse the captivity of Jacob.
2 Thou dost bear the depravity of Thy people;
Thou dost cover all their sin.
Interlude
3 Thou dost gather up all Thy rage;
Thou dost turn back from the heat of Thine anger.
4 Turn us back, Alueim of our salvation!
And annul Thy vexation with us.
5 Wilt Thou be angry 'with us for the eon?
Art Thou protracting Thine anger to generation
+after generation?
6 Wilt Thou not turn us back?
Wilt Thou "preserve us alive
+That Thy people may rejoice in Thee?
7 Show us, Ieue, Thy kindness,
And Thy salvation wilt Thou give to us.
8 I will hear what the Al, Ieue, will speak,
For He will speak peace to His people,
and to His kindly ones:
+Yet let them not return to stupidity.
9 Yea, His salvation is near to those who fear Him,
To tabernacle the glory in our land.
10 Kindness and truth encounter;
Righteousness and peace kiss.
11 Truth will sprout from the earth,
And righteousness gazes from the heavens.

[12] **Moreover, Ieue is giving the good,**
And our land is giving its crop.
[13] **Righteousness will go before Him,**
And [pl]**make His footfalls into a way.**

NOTES FOR PSALM 85

In his commentary, George Williams divided this psalm into three stanzas: Precedent (verses 1-3), Prayer (4-7) and Promise (8-13). The precedent is set by Ieue (Jehovah) in His dealings with Israel. This is the way He treated Israel in the past, and it is expected that He would do the same in the present distress. The result of this remembrance is prayer, not some useless reverie.

Though His people are currently estranged from Him through their own stupidity, the Lord is urged to turn back His anger from them. The words *reverse, turn back* and *return* are prominent in this petition. After making his prayer, he prepares himself for the answer (verse 8).

The latter portion of the psalm contains the answer—the promise. The Lord's "salvation is near to those who fear Him" (verse 9). Verses 10 and 11 are a famous piece of allegory, describing the ultimate fulfillment of the psalmist's pleas in a highly picturesque manner. There will come a time of perfect concord; heaven and earth will enjoy unbroken harmony. When He shall walk in the land, righteousness shall go before and follow after Him. His Way shall be the true Way to follow.

James D. Thompson

A Prayer Davidic

86 Stretch out, Ieue, Thine ear!
Answer me! For humble and needy am I.
2 Keep my soul, for kindly am I.
Save Thy servant, O Thou, my Alueim,
who is trusting >in Thee.
3 Be gracious to me, ^{M}Ieue^{s},
For to Thee am I calling all the day.
4 Rejoice the soul of Thy servant,
For to Thee, ^{S}Ieue^{ph}, am I lifting my soul.
5 For Thou, ^{S}Ieue^{ph}, art good and pardoning,
And of much kindness to all calling on Thee.
6 ^{c}Give ear, Ieue, to my prayer,
And attend ^{t}to the sound of my supplications.
7 In the day of my distress will I call Thee,
For Thou wilt answer me.
8 There are none just as Thou art, among the alueim,
^{S}Ieue^{ph}.
And there is nothing as Thy doings!
9 All nations, which Thou hast made,
shall come and worship before Thee, ^{S}Ieue^{ph},
And they shall glorify > Thy name.
10 For great art Thou, and a Doer of marvels;
Thou art Alueim >by Thyself alone.
11 Direct me, Ieue, in Thy way;
I will go in Thy truth.
Unite my heart to fear Thy name.

12 I will acclaim Thee, ^{s}Ieue^{ph}, my Alueim,
^{t}with all my heart,
And I will glorify Thy name for the eon.
13 For Thy kindness is great over me,
And Thou hast rescued my soul from the nether unseen.
14 Alueim, the arrogant rise ^{on}against me!
And the congregation of the terrifiers seek my soul,
And do not place Thee in front of them!
15 And Thou, ^{s}Ieue^{ph}, art an Al, compassionate
and gracious,
Slow to anger, and of much kindness and truth.
16 Countenance me, and be gracious to me,
Give Thy strength to Thy servant,
And save > the son of Thy maidservant.
17 Make a sign for good to be with me,
And those hating me are seeing,
And they are ashamed.
For Thou, Ieue, dost help me and comfort me.

NOTES FOR PSALM 86

Lonely and persecuted, David cried out to His God with this supplication: Stretch out Your ears and answer me! He needed salvation from arrogant oppressors who sought to slay him. He appealed to his own faithfulness, for he was humble, needy and kindly. Making futher pleas for favor and joy, he asserted his trust that Ieue (Jehovah) is "good and pardoning, and of much kindness to all calling" on Him (verse 5).

Verse 8 begins with an allusion to Exodus 15:11: "Who is as Thou among the alim [elim, "gods"], Ieue; Who is as Thou, ennobled in holiness?" (*cf* Psa.89:8). Unlike the so-called *alueim* (elohim) of the nations, Ieue truly answers prayer; He alone is Alueim (verse 10). The first part of verse 9 is quoted in the song of the Lambkin in Revelation 15:14.

The latter portion of the psalm (verses 11-17) is a prayer for guidance with further requests for deliverance. He asked the Lord to *unite* his heart so that he could indeed pray and praise with all his heart. Singleness of heart is enjoined on us by Paul in Colossians: "And in everything, whatsoever you may be doing, in word or in act, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him . . . . Slaves, obey in all things . . . with *singleness of heart*, fearing the Lord" (3:17,22; *cf* Eph.6:5, 1 Cor.10:31 and Acts 2:46).

Six times (verses 4,5,8,9,12,15) we have adopted the reading "Ieue" according to the Sopherim. The Sopherim were pre-Masoretic editors of the Hebrew text. They altered the text to read "my Lord" in 134 passages, probably because of an extreme reverence for the Divine Name. James D. Thompson

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A NEW BOOK

Our friend, William W. Bentley, Jr., of La Jolla, California, has written a book entitled THE SIMPLE STORY OF THE UNIVERSE. The title is a fitting one for this overview of God's plan of the ages. Certain events of history, as well as of the future, have been selected and described in a series of short scenes. This book should be especially enlightening to those unacquainted with our own publications and may well help prepare the way for the more detailed studies of such books as Adlai Loudy's GOD'S EONIAN PURPOSE and A. E. Knoch's ALL IN ALL. Attractively printed and bound, this volume of 77 pages is available from us at $5.95 each.

PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING

What is the purpose for prayer?

God's grand goal is to be Everything in every one of His creatures (1 Cor.15:28). In order to accomplish this there must be intercommunication between them. God speaks to men in His *Word.* Men speak to Him in *praise* and *prayer.* Very few listen attentively to what He has to say, but He hears every syllable that they utter. Yes, He listens even to the inarticulate groanings of their hearts. This is even the case when they address themselves to Him, although they do not know Him and do it only as a form, and speak of, and to, themselves. How, then, should He not hear our petitions, who are acquainted with Him and His Anointed?

The object of prayer is not to dictate to God what He shall do, or to get Him to alter some detail of His plan to conform with our wishes. Sober reflection would soon convince us that this would lead to confusion unutterably worse than we already have in the world. One saint wants this, another that, and if both pray for their own way, one, at least, must be refused, or, more likely, both. But if both close their prayers with "not my will, but Thine be done," they will be heard, they will be blessed, God will be glorified, *and they will gain in the realization of His will by their fellowship with Him.* This will usually humble them

or confirm them in His ways, in view of their future work in making God known to the rest of His creatures. But the main gain will be God's, Who will be more to them through this experience than before. His great purpose to draw all to Himself is greatly advanced through such fellowship with the saints.

What are the patterns for prayer today?

First of all there are the "inarticulate groanings" mentioned in Romans 8:26,27. We are often ignorant as to what is best, for the future is hid from us, and we are not aware just what God has in view, so that we may conform to His will. For the life we live is far too intricate to be fully comprehended. Then we need only to lift our *hearts* to God in spirit, like music without words, to find ourselves in tune with His spirit, and rest in His peace, for He *does* know what we need, and will assure us that all is well, even when it appears to be unutterably ill. If we prefer, we may use words, such as "Gracious God, if it please Thee—!" Nothing more is needed. No definite request is necessary. This comes up unbidden, in the midst of affairs, whenever the load on the heart needs to be lightened.

But also we have the privilege of praying the prayers as set forth in Paul's epistles. Perhaps the most important example of prayer for us in this administration is the petition for *a spirit of wisdom and revelation*. Paul prayed that we should have it, and God puts this desire into the hearts of those of His saints to whom He wishes to reveal Himself through a knowledge of the secrets which underlie the present administration (Eph.1:17). These are all clearly set forth in Paul's epistles, yet have been so smothered by tradition that very few of the saints have more than an

inkling that there are some inexplicable "mysteries" which may be revealed to us in heaven. And this is quite right, if we are not graciously given the spirit of revelation in order to apprehend them beforehand.

First God awakens in us a *wish* to know what these mysteries conceal. When this wish is directed to Him it becomes a prayer, even though it be too vague for utterance. The spirit of revelation is the spirit of God which reveals Him and which inspired Paul to record the revelation of the various secrets of which the truth for the present is largely composed, for these unfold the fullest and highest revelation of the Deity. The spirit that is imparted to us, in order that we should understand it, is that same spirit that wrote the record. It is a special installment of that life-giving spirit which all the saints possess in limited measure as an earnest. It will reveal these things to all when they are vivified. Now it is the portion of those who are led to ask for it, in order to know God fully.

What is the place of thanksgiving in our prayers?

Thankfulness for favors *received,* for prayers *answered,* for benefits *enjoyed,* should arise from every grateful heart. But this falls far short of our privileges for today. Prayer should be *accompanied* by thanksgiving, *before* the answer comes, along *with* the petition. That is the faith that honors God! Let us be grateful that He will *not* blindly obey our behests. Let us give thanks that He will do only what is for His glory, which alone is our good. If we realize only a little of our own folly and feebleness we will be overwhelmingly grateful for every apparent failure to get what we want, for there can be no doubt that it would have been bad for us and against the glory of God. We are instinctively appreciative of receiving

what we want, but let us thank Him in advance for sending only that which accords with His intention.

Thanksgiving is not based on a thing or a theory, but on *life, experience, action* and *rejoicing.* Like the vivifying revelation which God has given us, the very form in which it is expressed conforms to its vital message. As it is such a brief and beautiful example of the divine mode of expression, we will set forth the literary structure of Philippians 4:4. Read *down* the left side and *up* the right. The center only calls attention to the theme of each line, which is repeated in reverse.

[READ DOWN]		[READ UP]
Be rejoicing.....	[what]	.....be rejoicing!
in the Lord.....	[who]	.....I will declare,
always!.....	[when]	.....Again,

Joy is the beginning and end of God's eonian operations. In anticipation, the morning stars sang together at the start, and at the close all creation will exult in the consummation. If the cosmos has such glorious boundaries, why should not we microcosms have a similar experience? I have been told that every atom is a miniature of the material world. Let us rejoice in remembrance of God's choice of us and His call and the salvation He has provided, and the place we have in His Christ. Let us enjoy the prospect of the glory that lies before us, for we surely will exult when the fulfillment comes. So shall our thanksgiving be the link between the joy of anticipation and the rejoicing of realization. And therefore it should always accompany prayer, not as a delayed and non-essential afterthought, but as the leading feature. Every petition should commence with thanks or worship.

The second point of importance in this sentence is *Who.* We may rejoice briefly in many things and in a multiplicity of persons. But the chief source of genuine joy for us will center about two, One the Source and the other the Channel of our greatest and most lasting blessings. Only in God and His Christ is the spring perennial of perfect and eternal bliss, and only through the apostle of the nations comes the transcendent grace to us, the least deserving of all God's creatures. It is to Paul's declarations that we must turn if we wish to enjoy fully the special and supernal blessings in store for us among the celestials.

But the bliss here bestowed is not alone that which comes through a realization of our *place* in *Christ,* but that which is connected with our *service* in the *Lord.* It is comparatively easy to be happy in Him, but may seem beyond us to rejoice in the performance of His work, for then we come into contact, if not collision, with our fellows. Then we are likely to have ample cause for sadness and sorrow and despair, due to the persecutions and misunderstandings, not only from the world, but from our fellow saints, as well as the fiery arrows of spirit adversaries. Here is where most of His people fail. As they do not believe God creates evil, they cannot well rejoice when it jolts them, for they think it must come from the devil, and is contrary to God's intention. It is only when we see that God uses evil as well as good, for His eonian operations, that we can rejoice in very much that befalls us in this life.

Finally, we should have no difficulty in fixing upon the proper season for rejoicing. Israel concentrated most of its joy upon the harvest festival of tabernacles, beginning on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. For seven days they were to rejoice (Lev.23:40). Yet at

some other times they were to afflict their souls (32). They were to be cut off from among their people if they did not afflict their souls on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev.23:27-32). So must it be under that immature, enigmatic administration. What a contrast with us! When are we charged to afflict our souls? *Never!* When shall we set aside a time to rejoice? Holidays? Sundays? Birthdays? Anniversaries? *Why not?* But these, numerous as they may be in some lands, are far from enough. We should rejoice *always! Again and again!*

A.E.K.

ACTS 17:26

The message of Paul is based upon the *unity* of mankind, for which he goes back to Adam as the common progenitor of all, whereas the Circumcision apostles stressed the *division* of the race, due to the severance of Abraham and Israel. Paul says, all nations are one: Peter says there is only one chosen nation. Were this essential difference understood by all it would call for radical revision of much theology, even that of evangelical Christians, many of whom emphasize the Circumcision writings and neutralize Paul by them, even when they do consider him. Indeed, there are movements which are based upon the idea that the saints are actually Israelites and receive their blessings through their relation to *physical* Israel and will enjoy them *in the flesh* on the earth. This is contrary to the great fundamentals of Paul's evangel for today, for it bases blessing on the flesh and makes a division in the race.

The oneness of humanity is fundamental to the evangel of today. There is the same glad tidings for all unbelievers, and the same glorious truth for all saints of every color, race and nation. In many matters there is a barrier between them, but in relation to God they are one, and as regards each other they are heralded the same evangel, and believers are all members of the joint body. Indeed, the very phrase, *joint body* is the fairest fruit of the unity of mankind, for the nation (Hebrew: *body*) of Israel is no longer severed from all the other nations, in the ecclesia which is His body.

A.E.K.

INTRODUCTORY SCENES

THAT GOD has a purpose is evident from Paul's words in Ephesians 1, verse 11, ". . . according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will," and in Ephesians 3:11, ". . . in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

The ultimate aim of God's purpose is that He might be All in all (1 Cor.15:28), and this objective must always be kept in mind whenever His purpose is being considered. There is, of course, a climax of grandeur in the consummation—in that final scene when all is achieved—but it is our submission that there is a grandeur running all through God's purpose, and that this grandeur is not confined to those scenes where tens of thousands and thousands of thousands are acclaiming Him, but is also to be found in many other places where events are less spectacular. There is, for instance, a grandeur of purpose to be found in Eden, in Bethlehem, at Golgotha, and on the road to Damascus.

In this short series of studies, we can only hope to cover a few of the scenes in the unfolding of God's great design. We shall not attempt to bring forth anything new, since all God's purpose was conceived and planned before any part of it was put into operation, but rather, through a succession of mental pictures, endeavor to portray to you, to make more

vivid in your minds, the inherent grandeur contained in all our Father's wonderful operations.

Let us, then, open our book, and commence our story at the beginning.

SCENE ONE

Our beginning scene is one of Spirit–Spirit existing in unique majesty. That Spirit is God. The apostle John declares that "God is spirit" (literally, spirit the God—John 4:24). There is none beside Him.

Brother Adlai Loudy, in his book, GOD'S EONIAN PURPOSE, describes this first scene as follows:

> Come, my friends, and go with me
> Away back to eternity!
> Go back beyond the days of youth
> Where everything that was, was truth.
>
> Go back until within the past
> You fail to find the place, at last,
> Where "the beginning" you can see
> Of the immense eternity.
>
> Go back until there's not a trace
> Of anything but God and space:
> God all around—below, above,
> Unlimited in power and love.
>
> Away back there, removed from sight,
> Where everything that was, was right.
> Away back there, removed from sin,
> Is where our story will begin.

Can you imagine this scene? God alone, abiding in glorious grandeur. Spirit, with nothing but Himself in which to dwell; Light, with nothing outside Himself on which to shine; Love, but with nothing, nothing whatever, to lavish itself upon.

Somewhere back there, when God was all in Himself, His wonderful purpose was conceived. The

same apostle (John), who tells us that God (is) Spirit, also reveals that "God is Light" (1 John 1:5) and "God is Love" (1 John 4:8). These last two are figurative expressions, but full of meaning. Light, to be of value, requires something on which to shine, and love cannot express itself unless there is something, or someone to be loved. And so as we turn the page, we reach

SCENE TWO

The scene changes, and we find that out of Himself (for all is out of Him, Rom.11:36), God creates another glorious Being, Whom John (in the Unveiling) declares to be "God's Creative Original" (Rev.3:14), but Whom Paul designates as "The Son of His love" (Col.1:13).

What a wealth of meaning this latter phrase contains! We cannot pretend to be able to plumb its depths. The One so described, Who later became known as the Lord Jesus Christ, is, in fact, God's Complement—that which makes God complete. That is to say, He bears the same kind of relationship to God as the first woman bears to the first man, only on a far, far grander scale. Just as Woman (Eve's original name—see Gen.2:23) was taken from man, and presented to man, Adam, as his complement, so Christ was created out of the Father, and God gave Himself the most wonderful gift of all eternity when He presented Himself with this One, Who could, and would, respond to His love to the uttermost.

From this point, we may perceive that God's purpose from beginning to end is so designed as to be concentrated in this "Son of His love." And further, (and this is a tremendous and sublime thought!) the achievement of His purpose is made to depend upon this one factor, that Christ *would reciprocate* God's

love in every circumstance, and to the very utmost. Everything depends on that!

This One, God's Complement, thus becomes the channel for all God's subsequent operations. In every phase, God's purpose is worked out through this "Son of His love." In Colossians again we read that all is created "in Him," "through Him" and "for Him" (Col.1:16,17). Into this Original Creation of God, were placed, not only the seeds of all subsequent creation (John 1:3), but with them the love of God for the whole universe, for through this One every drop of God's love for His creatures has been poured. Christ is the channel through which this love reaches the rest. In very truth, He is the *Way* to the Father.

How wonderful it is that God's purpose was conceived in love! The fact that it is all centered in the Son of His love also ensures that it will be executed in love and find its consummation in love!

And at this time, when God created the Son of His love, He also made provision for Him (Christ) to have a complement, the ecclesia, which was to be His body, as intimately connected with Him as Woman was with Adam. For the ecclesia was chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4), and was given the gift of grace in Christ Jesus before times eonian (2 Tim.1:9). And also before times eonian, a promise of life was made to creation; this promise, too, was made in Christ Jesus, and (advancing our study considerably) Paul's apostleship was later to be in accord with this promise (2 Tim.1:1; Titus 1:2). For Paul's evangel is essentially one of life, with all that is necessary for the full enjoyment of it, namely, justification, peace toward God, and vivification for all.

So much, then, was involved in the creation of the Son of God's love. He is the Image of the invisible

God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created (Col.1:15). He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him (v.17).

SCENE THREE

But now the scene changes again, and we find creation proceeding. "Created by the Alueim were the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1).

Have you ever considered the incongruity of this statement? It is like saying, "Created by the Alueim were the Atlantic Ocean and a raindrop." The heavens are so infinitely vast; the earth, by comparison, so incredibly minute. Our globe is as a speck of dust in the expanses of creation. And yet, on this mere speck, God decided to enact many of the main events in the working out of His purpose for the universe. How honored this earth is!

In God's creation of the heavens is included all those spirit beings, whose number is nowhere given, but only hinted at as being exceedingly great.

That the heavens were created before the earth is evident from the statements in Job 38:4-7. "Whereat were you when I founded the earth? . . . When jubilate together the stars of the morning, and shouting are all the sons of the Alueim?" There were beings existing outside of the earth when the earth was founded.

But why was the earth created at all? The celestial beings, who watched it develop, might have wondered. But we can now see it as the stage upon which a great drama was to be enacted—a drama which would even involve the death of the Son of God's love. But this is anticipating our study again, so we shall not pursue the matter now, but rather note certain other peculiar things which came into being.

For instance, in Genesis 1:2, we have the first mention of darkness. There was no darkness in either of our first two scenes. Isaiah tells us that darkness had to be created, and that God was responsible for its creation. In the same text (Isa.45:7) we learn that God also created evil. Evil is not inherent in God any more than darkness is; both had to be created. And if it is God Who creates evil, He must be responsible for the one who practices the most evil, namely, the Adversary. Yes, God's purpose required there to be a ruiner to harm (Isa.54:16), a serpent to decieve (Job 26:13).

It was, in fact, necessary for the Adversary to be greater and more powerful than any other created being in God's universe with the exception of the Son of God's love. No lesser being could hope to challenge the headship of the Lord Jesus, for any such would inevitably be challenged in turn by others; no lesser being could hope to deceive hosts of messengers and draw them away from God; no lesser being could sustain an unremitting opposition to God throughout the period covered by the eons.

Mention of the eons reminds us that, at the very commencement of His creative acts, God made them through Christ Jesus (Heb.1:2). The eons have both a beginning and an end, so that God's purpose might be enclosed within them, instead of being left loose in the boundlessness of eternity, thus ensuring that He will be able to bring it eventually to finality. That is why we speak of "God's Eonian Purpose" instead of "God's Eternal Purpose." The Scriptures call it "the purpose of the eons" (Eph.3:11). Though its results will last for eternity, God's purpose itself will come to an end in the consummation.

John H. Essex

(To be Continued)

A DIRGE FOR THE PRINCES

THE allegorical poem of Ezekiel 19, called a dirge, completes the section dealing with "events" in Israel, which began with chapter 14. It is a dramatic and tragic song concerning the last rulers of David's line in Jerusalem before the final deportation to Babylon. The prophet is not condemning these kings so much as weeping over their failure which reflects the failure of the entire nation.

As poetry, the feelings expressed here are perhaps more important than the literal meaning behind every figure of speech. However, a comparison with the events described in 2 Kings 23-25 and 2 Chronicles 36 should be helpful in appreciating this dirge. For Ezekiel 19:3,4 compare 2 Kings 23:31-34 concerning Jehoahaz. For Ezekiel 19:5-9 compare 2 Kings 24:8-16 concerning Jehoiachin. And for Ezekiel 19:11-14 all these chapters in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles are relevant, but especially those sections concerned with Zedekiah.

The only textual emendation we have made in Ezekiel 19 is the phrase "he is smashing their citadels" in verse 7. This conjecture is based on very slight alterations of the Masoretic Text which has the strange reading "he is knowing his widows."

D.H.H.

YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES

RISE AND GO! Luke reports these words as actually spoken to four men, Philip on the Gaza road, Saul on the Damascus road, Ananias in the city of Damascus, and Peter on the housetop in Joppa. They were given different commissions, and they did what they were told to do. For the members of the Jerusalem ecclesia (the *multitude* of those who believe, Acts 4:32) it was the great persecution which had prompted them to rise and go into the districts of Judea and Samaria (8:1), even as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch in Syria (11:19).

THE LIMITS OF THE LAND

We have often wondered how the twelve understood the last part of their risen Lord's commission, just before His ascension. He referred to Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria by name, but He did not mention Galilee. However the Lord added the Greek term

heōs eschatou tês gês
TILL OF-LAST OF-THE LAND

When Paul and Barnabas used these same words while addressing a predominantly *Greek* audience in Pisidian Antioch, they definitely intended to say, "as far as the limits of the *earth,*" for they quoted from Isaiah 49:6 (I give you also for a light of the nations, to become My salvation unto the ends of the earth).

The CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT has "as far as the limits of the ˡearth" in both places (Acts 1:8; 13:47). The prefixed superior letter ˡ (our symbol for LAND) should remind us of the fact that the Greek word *gê* has been given the standard LAND, with *earth* as the only variant. In the English language as well, the term LAND has various connotations, such as the solid surface of the earth, or the land where we live; in each case, LAND is a limited portion of the earth, as defined by the context. In most of the occurrences, the context seemingly makes it clear whether *gê* should be rendered land or earth. This is also true of its Hebrew equivalent, *artz*, which may mean either of the two.

We may take it for granted that for a Galilean fisher *gê* would be the *land* of Galilee, or of Judah, or the *land* of Israel, as the case may be, even when the descriptive attribute was missing.* A cosmopolitan, however, like Paul apparently never used *gê* in this restrictive sense in his writings. Hence, in the Pauline letters, *gê* is always rendered *earth* in the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT as well as in other versions.

BEGINNING FROM JERUSALEM

In the closing chapter of his first account, Luke quotes the risen Lord as saying (24:45-49):

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* *cf* 1 Kings 9:11; Matt.2:6,20; 24:30.
The term "Galilee [or: circuit] of the nations" (Matt.4:15; Isa.9:1) is a thought-rhyme in harmony with the preceding lines. The armies of Israel's enemies in the east used to invade the holy land from the north, between the mountain ranges of Lebanon, attacking the *land of Naphtali* first, and then the *land of Zebulon*. Hence this whole northern area was called *circuit of the nations;* it was slighted by the rest of the tribes, especially Judah, and was considered the most backward in all Israel. The Lord honored Nazareth in Zebulon and Capernaum in Naphtali with His presence.

"Thus it is written, and thus must the Christ be suffering and rise from among the dead the third day, and there is to be heralded in His name repentance for the pardon of sins, to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Now you shall be witnesses of these things. And lo! I am delegating the promise of My Father on you. Now you be seated in the city of Jerusalem till you should be putting on power from on high."

This statement is more explicit than the summary which Luke gives us in the introductory paragraph of his second report. The teaching which the chosen apostles received during the forty days was about "that which concerns the kingdom of God. And being foregathered, He charges them not to be departing from Jerusalem, but to be remaining about for the promise of the Father" (*cf* Acts 1:3,4; 2:33; John 14:26; 15:26).

The statement in Luke 24:47,48 emphasized that repentance is to be heralded to *all the nations,* beginning from Jerusalem, and that the disciples shall be witnesses of these things. This does not necessarily mean that they themselves ought to go out to all the nations. This is also true of the last words of the Lord, just before His ascension: "you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in entire Judea and Samaria, and as far as the limits of the 'earth."

It is conceivable that the apostles had discussed among themselves the details of the Lord's earthly career, what He had said and done and that at the very beginning He had "led them about the whole of Galilee . . . heralding the evangel of the kingdom . . . and forth came the tidings of Him into the whole of Syria . . . and there follow Him vast throngs from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and the other side of the Jordan" (Matt.4:23-25).

With this background in mind, it is also conceivable that for the eleven Galilean disciples the probable connotation at the time of the Lord's ascension (Acts 1:8,9) might have been that He just meant "Galilee" when He added the term "as far as the limits of the 'earth."

THE GREAT PERSECUTION

Since the Jews were not beholden to the Samaritans (*cf* John 4:9; KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, page 255), none of the seven attested men (Acts 6:3-5) would probably ever have gone out to evangelize them, had it not been for the great persecution (8:1). The twelve remained in the holy city; they suffered no harm since they were under divine protection for the duration of the Lord's last commission (1:8).

During the great persecution, the members of the Jerusalem ecclesia were all dispersed, not only among the districts of Judea, but also to Samaria where Philip heralded Christ in the capital, later followed by Peter and John who evangelized many villages of the Samaritans (8:1-25). This was in accord with the main part of the Lord's commission. "And you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in entire Judea and Samaria . . ." (1:8).

PHILIP AND PETER

Philip was one of the seven attested men whom the twelve had put in charge of the daily distribution of food among the needy widows of the Jerusalem ecclesia. These men were full of the spirit and of wisdom (6:3) and had grasped the fact that the present status of being a *believer* is all that counts; hence they did not look down on Hellenist Jews who had to a large extent renounced ancient Jewish traditions when they had lived abroad under the influence of Greek

culture and customs. For Philip "the daily dispensation" (6:1) was a preparatory course which widened his heart for the realization of the divine truth that there is no partiality with God. Hence he was willing to serve Hellenists as well as Hebrews, and to evangelize Samaritans as well as proselytes of righteousness (foreigners who were identified with the Jewish people by undergoing circumcision and observing Jewish ceremonial ritualism, at least to a certain extent).

Philip's evangelistic campaign met with conspicuous success in Samaria "where the throngs with one accord heeded the things being said by Philip" (8:6). When a messenger of the Lord told him to go into the wilderness of the Gaza road, he obeyed and found an Ethiopian eunuch reading Isaiah 53:7,8, but not understanding the meaning of these verses. This man was returning from Jerusalem where he had gone to worship, being a proselyte of righteousness and evidently a seeker for the truth. Luke reports that "Philip . . . beginning from this scripture, evangelizes Jesus to him" (8:35).

The twelve too were slowly realizing the truth that there is no partiality with God, at least (as they saw it) with regard to Samaritans and proselytes of righteousness. When they heard "that Samaria had received the word of God" (8:14), they dispatched "to them Peter and John who, descending, pray concerning them, so that they may be obtaining holy spirit." In due time the twelve may also have learned that Philip had met an Ethiopian eunuch (who was already converted to Judaism) and had baptized him.

However, after Cornelius (a proselyte of the gate, who had not undergone circumcision) had been baptized together with the members of his household,

Peter had to defend his action before the other apostles until they finally acquiesced in the fact that the Gentiles also receive the word of God. Peter concluded his defense with the words, "If then God gives them the equal gratuity as to us also, when believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was *I*—able to forbid God?" Then those present were quiet and glorified God, saying, "Consequently, to the nations also God gives repentance unto life" (11:1,17,18).

THE FOREIGNER WHO IS NOT OF THY PEOPLE

We do not know whether the apostles ever remembered Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple:

"Moreover as to the foreigner who is not of Thy people Israel, but comes from a land afar on account of Thy name (for they will hear of Thy great name and Thy steadfast hand and Thy outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this house, then do Thou hearken from the heavens, the site of Thy dwelling, and do according to all that the foreigner is calling to Thee, so that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name to fear Thee as Thy people Israel do, and know that Thy name is called over this house which I have built" (1 Kings 8:41-43).

The foreigner from Ethiopia had come to worship in Jerusalem, and God did hearken from the heavens and answered his prayers on the Gaza road. Another foreigner, the Roman centurion of Caesarea, "devout and fearing God with his entire house, doing many alms to the [Jewish] people and beseeching God continually" was told by His messenger, "your prayers and your alms ascended as a *memorial* in front of God" (Acts 10:2,4). And Cornelius was blessed abundantly since the full time had come (*cf* Gal.4:4).

This reminds us of the Roman centurion of Capernaum who had built a visible memorial, a synagogue for the Jewish people whom he loved and who intervened on his behalf. When Jesus healed his slave, He emphasized, "Not even in Israel did I find so much faith" (Luke 7:9). In this case too, Solomon's prayer was answered: "Do according to all that the foreigner is calling to Thee."

THE ECCLESIA MULTIPLIED

During the years (which are covered by Acts 8:1-11:24) there was a gradual realization of the fact that God gave repentance for life eonian to believing Jews and proselytes alike. For the apostles in Jerusalem, Israel was still the only channel of blessing they knew. And they were mainly concerned with the edification of "the ecclesia down the whole of Judea and Galilee and Samaria." During those years the ecclesia multiplied, "going on in the fear of the Lord and the consolation of the holy spirit" (9:31).

Even when it must have appeared to the twelve that the Lord's last commission (as they understood it) was completed, they did not go beyond the limits of the land. However (according to Acts 11:22,23) "they delegate Barnabas to Antioch [in Syria], who, coming along and perceiving the grace of God, rejoiced and entreated all with purpose of heart to be remaining in the Lord." H.H.R.

(To be continued)

We had hoped that we would have the *Concordant Version of the "Minor Prophets"* in print by this time, but this publication is still unfinished. We apologize for the many delays. These twelve prophecies will be bound as one book of approximately 144 pages ($1.00).

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 1979
BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY

EDITORIAL

THIS SEVENTIETH YEAR of the publication of *Unsearchable Riches* provides us with an appropriate occasion to review and consider the work and mission of the magazine. Recently, we have received advertisements from enterprising companies wanting to sell us certificates, stickers and plaques commemorating our anniversary. But this is not at all what we are interested in; we do not want to commend ourselves. In fact, in reflecting on our efforts we are reminded of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:11-13: "For other foundation can no one lay beside that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone is building on this foundation gold and silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, each one's work will become apparent, for the day will make it evident." The judgment of the value of our efforts is the Lord's.

The magazine has always presented what the editors and contributors believed to be the truth. Yet we confess that it is not difficult for the reader to go over past issues and find clearly contradictory statements. The truth does not change, but admittedly our understanding of what is so may go through adjustment. Nevertheless, we continue to stress certain subjects which have been neglected by others, such as God's purpose of the eons (see the series on *The Grandeur of God's Purpose*) and the evangel of grace brought out in Paul's ministry (see the series entitled *The Word of God and of the Lord*). We believe that these in-

separable themes of the grace and glory of God require special attention.

However, even as we pledge to continue this testimony to God's grace and glory we want to emphasize the fact that the magazine is a human effort, and what we write must not be taken as a substitute for the Scriptures themselves. We repeat the "heartfelt prayer" of Brother A. E. Knoch, that our studies "never be taken for more than what they are intended to be—suggestive thoughts which lead to and not from the Sacred Text."

Our primary desire is to direct the reader to the truth of God's Word. When we draw out and arrange the teachings of the Scriptures into our articles we are not suggesting that our expressions are somehow superior in power and effectiveness to the Scriptures. Like Brother Knoch, we would rather our words "would vanish than that they should stand between anyone and the living oracles." We urge our readers not to rest on what we say but to test all with what God has said. "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

The truth is needed by us all—not only so that we might know and believe what God has revealed, but also so that we might enjoy the benefits of power and joy which the truth provides. Truth is practical as well as authoritative. It is essential for growth in understanding, for peace of mind and happiness of heart, and for a worthy walk. Therefore, we are giving thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for enabling us to continue this work. Yet we are also praying that He will use the magazine for His glory and not our own. May what we say aid the reader in leading him into the Word, and may this lead to a greater grasp of the truth for a greater display of love in our lives.

D.H.H.

JEWS IN THE DISPERSION

IN THE COURSE of three centuries God prepared the arena in the world of antiquity for bringing the evangel to the nations around the Mediterranean. The sea routes were safe, piracy was abolished, Greek was the universal language, hundreds of thousands of Jews lived in the dispersion. Though persecuted at times, they often enjoyed special privileges because they proved to have a stabilizing influence on the unruly indigenous population of the area where they were settled.

The monopoly of local and regional pagan deities and their priests was more and more eroded by competing cults from other lands. Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (*cf* Acts 17:18) promoted independent thinking which had begun well before Aristotle died in 322 B.C., a year later than his most famous pupil, Alexander the Great.

THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE COPPER KINGDOM

The "golden" government of Nebuchadnezzar was followed by the "silver" rule of the Medo-Persian empire which was inferior in strength to the "copper" kingdom (Dan.2:39) of Alexander the Great.

After his death some of his leading generals divided

his Graeco-Macedonian empire among themselves. Two of them are of special interest: Ptolemy founded the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt with Cyrenaica in the west where the main city was Cyrene (on the northern coast of Africa, opposite Greece). And Seleucus Nicator was the founder of the Seleucid dynasty in Syria; he ruled over the eastern part of the former Medo-Persian empire which Alexander had conquered.

Even after Alexander's death, the Greek cities which he had founded everywhere continued to thrive, and his successors encouraged more Jews to settle in Cyrenaica, Egypt, Syria and elsewhere; e.g. 2,000 Jewish families from the Mesopotamian and Babylonian regions were moved into Lydia and Phrygia (*cf* Acts 2:10; 16:6; 18:23) in Asia Minor in order to secure the loyalty of these provinces to the Seleucid dynasty.

In Alexandria (Egypt's capital in those days) more than one fifth of the population was Jewish, and in Cyrene about a fourth. Men from the latter city are repeatedly mentioned in Acts (2:10; 6:9; 11:20; 13:1). Alexandria became the center of world literature with a public library of 700,000 scrolls. Here (as the legend goes) seventy rabbis translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, hence the Word of God became widely known as the Septuagint (LXX). Copies became available in every major city of the former Graeco-Macedonian empire; they were read not only by Jews living in the dispersion, but also by converts from paganism to Judaism and by other God-fearing men and women who were in some way attached to the Jewish worship and way of life. Greek was the international language in the world of antiquity "when the full time came" and God sent His Son (Gal.4;4).

ANTIOCH

Seleucus founded about sixteen Asiatic cities which he called "Antiocheia" (Antiochus was the name of his father and of his successors). Luke in Acts mentions Pisidian Antioch (in the Phrygian region of Galatia) and Syrian Antioch, about 300 miles north of Jerusalem where the mountain ranges of Lebanon meet those of Taurus.

The latter Antioch had a mixed population from the very beginning: Syrians, Greeks, Macedonians and Jewish veteran soldiers who had fought in Seleucus' armies. The number of Jews here increased greatly over the centuries, and when Antioch became the capital of the Roman province of Syria, they comprised about one seventh of the total population of the town and its suburbs. The imperial legate had his residence in Antioch, but otherwise it was a free city with its own municipal government.

Jewish prestige suffered badly in a pogrom (about A.D. 40) when many Antiochene Jews were slain. About the same time Alexandrian synagogues were desecrated by the setting up of imperial statues or images, Jewish homes and businesses were looted, and thirty-eight Jewish elders were publicly scourged during the Roman emperor's birthday celebrations in Alexandria. It was the elder Herod Agrippa who in those days succeeded in persuading the emperor (Gaius, also called Caligula, A.D. 37-41) not to promote the setting up (in Judea) of sacrificial altars in his honor, and to desist from desecrating the temple by his imperial statue. Such an act might have provoked a general uprising of the Jews such as occurred two centuries before.*

*About thirty years after the Ptolemaic dynasty had ceded

When the riots in Syrian Antioch had died down, the local Jews kept a low profile. They would not dare to abuse Hebrew or Hellenist believers lest they further antagonize the pagan population against Jewry and Jewish sects.

THE MOST PROFLIGATE CITY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

In Syrian Antioch which was the third largest city in those days (after Rome and Alexandria) there were many competing cults and mystery religions of the Orient mingled with Greek and Roman paganism. Nearby Daphne, the celebrated sanctuary of Artemis and Apollo, contributed to the proverbial notoriety of the Antiochenes when its park became the hotbed of every kind of vice and depravity.

The German historian Mommsen summarized the situation as follows: "In no city of antiquity was the enjoyment of life so much the main thing, and its duties so incidental, as in 'Antioch-upon-Daphne,' as the city is significantly called."

The cosmopolitan population thrived on the labors of tens of thousands of slaves who kept the commercial center of the eastern Mediterranean going. Export trade was facilitated by easy access for caravans approaching from the East and by maritime communications with the West. Antioch's seaport Seleucia (*cf* Acts 13:4) was only twenty miles away. The city had its schools for rhetoric, philosophy and medicine, public thermal baths, a vast central avenue with several lanes and a regular system of street lighting.

Palestine to the Seleucid rule, Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the temple by erecting a statue to Olympian Zeus (*cf* vol.LXVIII, p.116,117, May 1977). The surname ***Epiphanes*** implied that the personality of Zeus was ***manifest*** in him.

GOD OVERRULES
THE AFFLICTION OF MEN

"Those indeed, then, who were dispersed from the affliction which was occurring over Stephen, passed through as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch [in Syria], speaking the word to no one except to Jews only. Now some of them were the Cyprian men and Cyrenians, who, coming into Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, evangelizing to them the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them. Besides, a vast number who believe turn back to the Lord" (Acts 11:19-21).

Here the narrative goes back to the time when the Jerusalem believers were dispersed during the affliction brought upon them by their fellow Jews, especially by Saul who was "breathing out threatening and murder" against them. God however overruled this affliction for the furtherance of the evangel, and the refugees proclaimed it in the districts of Judea and Samaria (*cf* Acts 8:1-6). Going north, some of the disciples of the Lord (9:1) passed through Galilee, through cities like Tyre, Sarepta and Sidon* in Phoenicia, through the whole of Syria as far north as Antioch, and to the island of Cyprus, where they spoke the word of the Lord to Hebrew Jews only. Some Hellenist refugees, however, being of Cyprian and Cyrenian origin, evangelized the Lord Jesus to *Hellenist* Jews in Antioch.

"Later (14:27) when Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch, they informed the brethren that God opens to the *nations* (such as the Greeks) a door of faith. If the refugees from Jerusalem had ever spoken to

*Once "a vast multitude" from this area had come to see the Lord (Mark 3:8; *cf* Matt.15:21; Mark 7:31; Luke 4:26).

Greeks in Antioch, this would not have been any news to them. In verse 20 [of Acts 11], there is almost equal weight of manuscript evidence for either reading, *Hellenists*, or *Greeks*" (*Concordant Commentary; cf* p.196 for additional information on this matter).

NUCLEI OF ECCLESIAS

The Jerusalem brethren had led Saul down into Caesarea seaport and had sent him away to Tarsus (Acts 9:30). Then probably more than half a decade of years went by until Barnabas made the short journey from Syrian Antioch to Tarsus "to *hunt* Saul" (11:25). The Greek word *anazêteō*, UP-SEEK, means to search for a missing person (*cf* Luke 2:44) and is often used in this sense in secular writings. Saul may have been hard to find since he had been evangelizing the faith in some regions of the province Syria-Cilicia during these years when Tarsus was his home base (*cf* Gal.1:21-23). It is conceivable that Saul had spoken the word of the Lord mainly to Hebrew and Hellenist Jews as well as to proselytes of righteousness and those of the gate. Believers out of these four groups would have formed the nucleus of each of the ecclesias in these regions.

It was only several years later, at the outset of his second missionary journey that Paul came again "through Syria and Cilicia, establishing the ecclesias" and informed them about the message from James which was addressed to *those out of the nations* (Acts 15:23,41). Since he started this journey from Antioch going northward and then westward, he must have visited the same regions in the northwestern part of Syria-Cilicia which he mentions in Galatians 1:21-23 as his field of activity after the departure from Jerusalem up to the time when Barnabas hunted him in Tarsus and brought him to Syrian Antioch.

Over the years, a vast number had been added to the nucleus of the Antioch ecclesia; "and the hand of the Lord was with them" (Acts 11:21). When Barnabas joined them, he perceived among them "the grace of God, rejoiced and entreated all with purpose of heart to be remaining in the Lord; for he was a good man and full of holy spirit and faith. And a considerable throng was added to the Lord" (11:23,24).

Barnabas knew that Christ Himself had spoken to Saul on the Damascus road and had given him a special commission which concurred with the Lord's words to the eleven, "There is to be heralded in His name repentance for the pardon of sins, *to all the nations*, beginning in Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47). Saul was probably unknown by face to the majority of the members of the Antioch ecclesia; but they would have heard of him, and Barnabas may have considered the possibility that, in due time, Saul would go out to the nations under the sponsorship of a metropolitan ecclesia like Antioch. For a whole year, the two of them were teachers of a considerable throng of believers; and it was in Antioch first, that "the disciples are styled 'Christians' " (Acts 11:25).

A DERISIVE NICKNAME

The term "Christians" occurs only three times in the New Testament and is used by non-Christians in Acts 11:26 and 26:28, but never by Paul. Peter advised in his first letter (4:15), not to be ashamed if one is *accused* of being a Christian. The Greek word *Christianoi* was coined after its Latin equivalent *Christiani*, meaning the servants or slaves of Christ's house, just as *Caesariani* is the Latin translation of the Greek term, *hoi ek tês Kaisaros oikias*, "those of Caesar's house" (Phil.4;22).

The frivolous citizens of Antioch were notorious not only for their scurrility but also for their coining of derisive nicknames. Hence we may take it for granted that the name "Christians" was understood to be a term of contempt when Roman Gentiles left the worship of the synagogue and became followers of a certain *Christos* (Christ). This divine title was possibly ridiculed or confused with *Chrêstos*, a very common name given to slaves, meaning USE[ful]. Some manuscripts, including the uncorrected Sinaiticus, have the reading *Chrêstianous* in Acts 11:26.

The twelve had delegated Barnabas to watch the development of the ecclesia in Syrian Antioch. Obviously they felt that heralding the word of the Lord to all the nations was not their responsibility. They had heralded repentance for the pardon of sins in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the whole land of Israel, but *only to the circumcision*. Peter was just as prejudiced as the other apostles, and he went to see Cornelius only after he had realized that God Himself had cleansed this uncircumcised Roman centurion. However there is no evidence that this precedent was followed by an attempt to reach other God-fearing Gentiles who resided within the limits of the land.

The twelve and their followers were most of them full of zeal for the law and the ritual; they would never take the initiative and herald the word of the Lord to Gentiles, not even to Jews in the dispersion. Hence Jerusalem had to give place to Syrian Antioch where God had prepared the circumstances for the development of a cosmopolitan ecclesia around a mostly Hellenist nucleus. From here Saul would go out to the Jews in the dispersion among the nations and evangelize the word of the Lord to all whoever were set for eonian life. H.H.R.

EONIAN LIFE

Does not the word "eonian" in such passages as John 6:40,47 have the sense of "eternal" or "everlasting"?

Eternal is best applied only to that which had no beginning and will have no end. No one but God has eternal life. Everlasting, on the other hand, should be used only of that which continues without intermission endlessly. Not a single one of the Lord's personal followers is alive today. None of them received "everlasting" life. They are dead. If everlasting life permits of interruption by death now, why not in the resurrection also? All of these expressions denote definite periods of time, measured by eons, or ages. Eonian life begins in the next eon.

Now it is evident that the Lord had no thought of a life lasting for ever. Then, how could He be *raising* anyone in the last day? This life (John 6:40) was to be bestowed in resurrection. There could be no resurrection apart from a previous death. In short, our Lord spoke in such a way that we are sure that eonian life (so-called "everlasting life") does not commence until He calls His own from the grave.

As this eonian aspect of life has a definite beginning, it also has an end. But as the end does not come until death is abolished, it changes from "eonian" life into actual never-ending life. This never-ending life coming at the consummation will be the portion of all. It is not the special privilege of the believer. The

peculiar kind of life (eonian life) promised to faith begins at Christ's presence, when those who are His will be vivified, and continues through the last two eons, embracing the millennium and the succeeding eon in the new earth, until the eons end, and the last enemy, death, is abolished. Hence the life itself received in vivification is in effect "everlasting," though never so called in the Word of God.

What are your thoughts regarding the suggestion that "eonian life" refers to a quality of life?

A favorite definition of "eternal" or eonian life is found in our Lord's prayer in the third verse of the seventeenth of John: "Now it is eonian life that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ." The deduction is that it consists in knowing God, and that it is not a question of *time* or duration, but of simply a *kind* of life.

The question whether eonian life is quantitative or qualitative, whether it is life *for* the eons, or the life *of* the eons, would not arise if we understood *what* eons were intended. The reference is to *the* eons, certain specific eons, not to eons in general. Everyone has life in the eon in which they exist, altogether apart from faith. It is evident that eonian life refers to the life which comes to the saints at the presence of Christ. It lasts for the last two eons.

We have a parallel case in the millennium. Literally, "millennium" means simply a thousand years. We are living in the second millennium after Christ. But we are not living in *the* millennium. Nor does the term suggest simply a long period of time. It is rich with quality. It is redolent with peace and plenty, and approaches perfection.

Eonian life, then, is life *for* the eons and the life *of* the eons, one of which will include the millennium. It is life and fellowship with Christ during the period of His public administration of the universe, resulting in its final reconciliation. Hence it is not only life for a definite time but life of a definite character. In contrast to past eons it will be a life of power and joy and accomplishment of God's will. It is in contrast with life after the eons, for then there will be no reigning, no process of reconciling, for government and enmity will have passed away.

What assurance do we have that our life will be endless?

The true endlessness of the believer's life is not connected with the eons. If eonian life were endless, then sin and estrangement would also be endless. The believer's life is endless not because it is eonian, but because it is deathless, immortal (1 Cor.15:54). Here again we see the transcendent nature of Paul's teaching. Nowhere else is there clear teaching as to the endlessness of the believer's life. Indeed it is implied in such expressions as "the resurrection of life," and "quickening" or vivification. But the horizon of all who came before Paul was bounded by the eons and corresponded to their limitation in space to the earth. Paul received heavenly revelations and spoke of God's purpose "before times eonian" (2 Tim.1:9), and the consummation when God is "All in all" (1 Cor.15:28).

Incorruptibility and immortality are the great truths which more than mend the breach left by the expulsion of the imprecise expression "eternal life." One who has a life beyond death and corruption need have no fear as to the future. And both are necessary. Life is not always a boon. There will come a time when men

will desire to die but will be unable to effect their wish. To live on in our present corruptible bodies would be ten thousand times worse than death.

Who can picture the pitiable condition of a man whose vital forces begin to fail at fifty, leave him infirm at a hundred and senile at two hundred, still living on in utter weakness and decadence, vile and loathsome, but unable to die? We do not want such immortality! We want incorruption first and immortality afterward.

A.E.K.

DR. REUEL T. RAMQUIST

Bro. Ramquist and his wife Rosemary ("Rose"), lost their lives June fifteenth, 1979, in an automobile accident in Montana, where they were traveling.

The Ramquist family had been associated with Concordant teaching since early in this century. Reuel's mother and grandmother had learned of universal reconciliation from their Swedish translation of the Bible. Every Sunday morning, when Reuel was a young boy, he traveled with the two ladies by street car from Alki Point to the University Baptist Church (at least a forty-five minute trip today, by auto). There they attended a class taught by Dr. George A. Barrett. Dr. Barrett led the Concordant Ecclesia, and was, for many years, the representative for Concordant literature in the Seattle area.

Dr. Ramquist was a medical doctor. His Medical Clinic was located in the Kirkland area. Because of the distance involved and other circumstances, he did not attend the Seattle Ecclesia on a regular basis, but for several summers Reuel and Rose graciously held a conference and picnic, for the Seattle group, in their lovely home.

Dr. Ramquist had a deep love for God and His Word, and sought diligently for a closer walk with his Lord. The subject of special interest to him was "Sonship"—the intimate, personal relationship which a believer may have with Jesus Christ. His series of messages on this subject appeared in this magazine in 1973 (volume LXIV).

Good night, dear brother and sister, until we meet on that glorious resurrection morn.

SCENES OF DISRUPTION

SCENE FOUR

THE orderliness of creation has been superseded by disruption and chaos; light has given way to darkness; positive creation seems to have surrendered to purposeless desolation. What has happened? What is the reason for this?

There can be no doubt that the devastation described in Genesis 1:2 was the outcome of a previous rebellion among God's celestial creations against His authority, which He had vested in the Son of His love. It can be taken as an axiom that Satan will always attack God's purpose wherever he sees it revealed. The morning stars and sons of God may have sung in jubilation when they saw the foundations of the earth being laid, but there seems little doubt that many of the celestial beings, deceived by the Adversary, would have gloated with unholy triumph when they saw the chaos wrought in the earth as a result of the disruption which brought the first eon to an end.

Let us be quite clear upon one point. The disruption was not forced upon God, but was an essential and planned feature of His purpose. God does not leave it to the Adversary to determine the means by which each eon shall come to an end, nor the moment when this shall occur. He Himself brought about the judgment of Noah's day long after the decadence of

the second eon had been started by Adam's transgression; He will bring about the judgments at the close of the present eon and the judgment of the great white throne at the end of the next. Times and eras are ever within His own jurisdiction (Acts 1:7).

The darkness which had covered the whole scene of Genesis 1:2 began to be dispelled when the Spirit of God vibrated above the waters of the submerged chaos. Darkness is the evidence of alienation from God, and the partial reappearance of light signified the first step towards the reestablishment of communion with God. Let us note that it was God Who took this step; creation was powerless to effect it. Darkness was, however, not completely dispelled, but was allowed to alternate with light, crossing the stage (this earth) every twenty-four hours, so that creation should be continually reminded of its existence. It would be felt again, in a most intense form, at the crucifixion of God's Son, so much so that Christ would cry out to His Father from a sense of abandonment.

With the partial return of light, God was able to create a being with whom He could walk and talk, a being in His own image and according to His own likeness. In doing this, God in effect gave notice to the celestials that His purpose would from then on be conducted through humanity.

SCENE FIVE

Now a much more restricted scene greets our eyes. We are in a garden, in which God has placed His most recent creation, man. There is, as we have just indicated, a grandeur in man's creation which is not shared by other beings, either spirit (angelic) or fleshly (animal). For man (humanity) was created in the image and likeness of his Creator.

In Colossians 1:15, and also in 2 Corinthians 4:4, Christ is portrayed as the Image of God. No other being in the celestial realms is so described. There is something very wonderful indeed in the fact that humanity was created in the image of the Alueim. Anticipating our study again, this was in order that Christ Himself, God's true Image, might eventually appear in the likeness of humanity without losing His likeness to God, and that ultimately all might be made subject to Him as the Head of the new humanity (Heb.2:8).

Man was made some bit inferior to heavenly messengers, but wreathed with glory and honor (Psa. 8:5; Heb.2:7). But how man has abused that glory and that honor! For into this garden scene of Eden, sin found an entry through the first man's disobedience, and subsequently swept like a plague through all his descendants, so that Paul, thousands of years later, could only sum up the position by saying that "all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23).

It is interesting to note that the deception in the Garden of Eden was accomplished through one of the creatures, a serpent, over which Adam had been given dominion. If man could not control one of the lower animals, how could God possibly bring about the subjection of all to humanity? Truly Satan had attacked God's purposes on a vital issue, but could not inflict a mortal wound. Though Adam might die as a result of his disobedience, and though a second Man, the last Adam, might also die because of His obedience, God will still make all to be subject to Christ as the Head of the new humanity.

God formed man of the soil of the ground, and by so doing, and, at the same time, creating him in His own image and likeness, God clearly showed His intention

of developing His purpose through humanity and on this earth—this speck of dust in the universe. From now on, the heavens recede into the background. Later on, we shall find that they return in full measure into the picture. Actually, of course, they are always there, and every now and then some of their inhabitants come into the scene, as, for instance, at the birth of the Lord; but, by and large, they become watchers—witnesses of God's purpose being enacted upon this earth. Some of them (and particularly the Adversary himself) try to interfere with God's arrangements; but such interference is always limited and subject to God's overriding control, as was evidenced in the case of Job.

We are specially emphasizing this, because we want you to notice in this and the next three scenes, a continuous contraction of God's purpose—a greater and greater concentration until it is eventually focused upon one thing, a dying Man on a cross. After that, it will widen out again until it embraces the whole of what was originally conceived in the creation of the heavens and the earth.

John H. Essex

(To be continued)

The Richmond Bible Fellowship held a conference over the weekend of June 15-17. The speakers were Frank Orton (Bramcote, England), Fred Belcher (Richmond VA), Jim Coram (Delaware OH), Micheal Wark (Troy WV), and Jim Thompson (Canyon Country CA). Besides the uplifting and educational messages that were given, the in-between hours were filled with treasured fellowship.

The annual Baldwin Summer Fellowship will be held from July 31 to August 4 at the Grace and Truth Chapel, Box 84, Baldwin MI 49304.

THE CONCLUSION OF COLOSSIANS

THE conclusion of Colossians (4:10-18)* consists of greetings whose range corresponds to that of the epistle as well as Paul's special greetings and directions. The greetings of the group from the Circumcision come first. Christ's headship over the earth is a part of the secret of Christ, revealed to them first, hence it is in keeping with this epistle to bring in three who are associated with Him in this phase of the Kingdom. The transition from the heralding of His earthly Kingdom to the present is an interesting yet intricate subject. Perhaps there are a few indications here which may help us to understand the place of the believing Circumcisionists when the nation becomes calloused (Rom.11:25) and the heart of the people is made stout (Acts 28:27).

At first glance there seems to be no particular reason for bringing in the characters here presented. Yet one cannot help being struck with their diversity. First we have Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus, who are definitely said to be of the Circumcision. Then there is Epaphras, fully of the nations, and Luke, who sup-

*This series follows the "Framework of Colossians" as shown on page 52 of the March, 1979, *Unsearchable Riches*. The present article matches the preceding one on Colossians 1:1,2, and will be followed by a study of 1:3-8 and 4:7-9.

posedly was closely associated with the Circumcision before the secret of Christ's heavenly headship was made known. May not these be representative of the classes to which they belong? What is said of them is worth the closest attention. And what is *not* said of them, but of the others, is equally striking.

THE CIRCUMCISIONISTS

Aristarchus, Mark, and Jesus Justus are said to be *ek peritomês*, OUT OF-Circumcision. Does this mean that they had come out from the Circumcision, as Paul had, or were *still of* the Circumcision? The English might easily suggest the former. This can best be settled by studying the same expression elsewhere. The following passages will show that it clearly denotes those who are still *of* the Circumcision. This is very striking in view of the injunction of the apostle in this very epistle to strip off the old humanity and to put on the young, wherein there is no circumcision (3:9-11). It seems that we must take these Circumcisionists as such.

ek peritomês, OUT OF-Circumcision

Acts 10:45 the believers *of* the *Circumcision* . . . with Peter
11: 2 those *of* the *Circumcision* doubted [Peter]
Rom. 4:12 not to those *of* the *Circumcision* only
Gal. 2:12 fearing those *of* the *Circumcision*
Titus 1:10 especially those *of* the *Circumcision*

The Circumcisionists connected with Peter had certainly not come *out* of the Circumcision, but were insistent on the rite, not only for themselves, but for the nations also. Their charge against Peter was, "You entered to men having uncircumcision, and you ate with them!" So that there is a strong presumption that here, in this universal epistle, we have a group of men

representative of the Kingdom. And, indeed, does not the apostle actually connect them with the Kingdom, using the very terms with which the book of Acts describes this ministry (Acts 28:31)?

The more we consider these three Circumcisionists, who are honored with a place in this epistle, the more we are impressed with the fact that they were not taken at random, but specially chosen to represent the Circumcision as a whole, that is, the believers among them, for whom the epistle to the Hebrews was especially written. The mention of Barnabas suggests the gradual introduction and exemplification of the truth through him and Paul and Timothy and Titus and Onesimus.

ARISTARCHUS

Aristarchus, if indeed it is the same man, was a Macedonian of Thessalonica (Acts 27:2; 20:4; 19:29). But, as this is mentioned expressly elsewhere, and not brought in here, we should leave it out of consideration. There could easily be several men of the same name. The point to press is his Greek name and its meaning. He must have belonged to the dispersion. His name signifies "best-chief," a title well suited to the Circumcision among the nations, for, in the Kingdom, they will rule among them. But, alas, he is in prision! He is a captive! Politically, he has no authority whatever. Is not this a realistic picture of the kingdom at present, politically?

MARK

Mark brings before us quite a different picture. His name is not Greek, but Roman. He is especially related to Barnabas, the Levite. He does not represent the place of the Circumcision *over* the nations, but as *serving* the nations. In this they failed utterly. They

opposed Peter as well as Paul in every attempt to bring salvation to the aliens. Mark, indeed, was not so bad as that. He left Jerusalem and went with Barnabas and Saul to Syrian Antioch, and started with them on their first missionary journey. Yet "John," as Mark is called, left them at Perga of Pamphylia and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). Paul and Barnabas had been chosen by the *spirit* (Acts 13:2), while Mark had been chosen because he was related to Barnabas in the *flesh*. He is representative of the Circumcision in their failure to *serve* the nations.

It would appear that he was not very welcome in Colosse, and would not have been received by them without special directions from the apostle. Surely we can understand this sentiment among the ecclesias which had received the truth of the present secret administration through Paul. Mark would have much to give concerning the life of Christ in the past and His glories in the future, but evidently did not go along with Paul, either literally or figuratively, while they went on to maturity. There is a strong inclination, in such a case, to break off all fellowship, just as there is a tendency to cut all connection between this administration and the past on the part of those who first begin to grasp its glories. But let us remember that, in the secret of Christ, the terrestrial as well as the celestial is needed, and they have Him as their common Head.

Let us then, in spirit, receive Mark, that is, accept his ministry, as we may by using his account of our Lord's life, if indeed the tradition is correct that he wrote it. But let us note at the same time that the Circumcision, who should have been the teachers of the nations, were not welcome in the early ecclesias, and almost lost their place of service.

In Mark we see the Circumcision serving us. Although they belong to a different administration and have another destiny, we cannot get along without their help. *Paul's epistles need all the other writings as a background.* Do they not give us the details of God's dealings with the earth and Israel? Without these even the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus could not be fully apprehended. This aspect corresponds closely to the figure of the olive tree, in which the wild boughs are partakers of the root and fatness of the tree. As a light-producer, Israel continues to function, through the oracles committed to them, although it comes through the nations who temporarily displace them in the olive tree.

JESUS, TERMED JUSTUS

The third in the group of the Circumcisionists has a purely Jewish name; indeed, it is the name above every name, the personal name of their Messiah. Probably "Jesus" was deemed too sacred to be commonly used, so he was given another, and called Justus. The name Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, Jehovah the Saviour. This is the name by which Israel will be saved, for Jehovah alone can save them. But, alas! even believers in Israel did not trust wholly in Him, but in the law and their physical rights as members of the chosen nation. And what better name for this than the Latin Justus, from *jus*, law, right, justice? Therefore salvation was taken from the nation and is heralded to the nations (Acts 28:28). They must learn God's righteousness now, before they experience His salvation.

These only of Paul's fellow workers for the Kingdom of God became a solace to Paul. Many others of Paul's fellow workers were far more than a comfort to him, so

we must restrict this to the Circumcision and the Kingdom. No doubt there were many of the Circumcision who had heralded the Kingdom, but nearly all seemed to oppose Paul and his ministry, and were a menace to the ecclesias among the nations, with their insistence on law-keeping and religious rites. How much there may lie behind that word "solace"! The Jews had done much to distort the evangel of Christ, and caused Paul much misery. But these three seem to have been of a different spirit, so that he could cooperate with them in those things which they had in common.

I take this as a little foretaste of the time to come when the terrestrial and celestial will be in fullest harmony under their mutual Head. For the present, however, I take it that this delightful miniature portrays to us the fortunes of the Circumcision in the present administration. Politically they are captives, not rulers. The Kingdom cannot be heralded. In service their testimony is to be received. But they have lost their salvation. And is not this the exact counterpart of what we have at the close of Acts?

EPAPHRAS

Epaphras is in striking contrast to the Circumcision. He was a Colossian, hence of the Uncircumcision, and is called a *slave* of Christ Jesus. Though without any physical advantages, how high is his spiritual stature! He is called a faithful dispenser of Christ (1:7). Through him it was that the Colossians had heard the evangel, and now that he cannot serve them by his presence, he agonizes in prayer during his absence. Note the subject matter of his petitions. This shows how fully he was in line with God's thoughts and desires at the time. He wished them to stand *mature*

and *fully assured* in *all* the will of God (4:12). It is for this that the gifts are given (Eph.4:11-14). Evangelists, pastors, and teachers should lead the believers from minority to maturity. Paul himself had prayed that they be filled with a realization of God's will (Col.1:9).

Epaphras is a model for those whose hearts have been turned to the service of the saints. He did not *say* his prayers. How much of our praying is mere talk! Possibly he could not even put his petitions into words. To him it was a struggle, a contending. And he was in misery concerning those on whom his heart was set. It seems strange, at first, that he should be miserable. But those who have been in a similar position will not fail to understand and sympathize with him, especially in these days of declension and apostasy. It is heartbreaking to hear that those who once reveled in God's grace have been led aside and give place to human merit. It is bitter to hear of pride, dissension, division, where once the peace of God presided. Perhaps Epaphras had no such experiences, yet even in those days it meant much misery to bear a company of believers upon one's heart.

LUKE AND DEMAS

We are so accustomed to the idea that Luke is the writer of the account which bears his name, as well as the Acts, that we are tempted to connect these with him at all times. But it is a fact that the Scriptures themselves do not mention his name in that connection. Hence we will not bring this in here. He was the most constant of all Paul's friends, for he remained when all others had left (2 Tim.4:11). No doubt, as a physician, he was helpful to Paul and others, for he seems to have been beloved as such. This is in contrast to the Circumcision evangel, and shows that it is no

longer in force. It includes miraculous healing for the body, so that there was no place for a physician.

Demas is in direct contrast to Luke, for he abandoned Paul out of love for the current eon (2 Tim.4:9). Perhaps his name means *popular,* as *dêmos* is *populace.* May he not represent that vast company of believers who are so concerned not to go contrary to the good opinion of this eon that they cannot remain with Paul's teaching, if indeed they have ever known it? All the province of Asia seems to have turned away from him during his imprisonment. Conformity to the times will surely separate from Paul. The whole history of Christendom shows that this became chronic, and only occasionally has there been a return to some of his teaching. And when a little is recovered it is soon abandoned once again. Let us all take this to heart. The danger of abandoning Paul is always present, and is usually popular, and we should guard against it.

LAODICEA

Because of the character of the message sent to the ecclesia in Laodicea (Rev.3:14) in the day of the Lord, the name has become a synonym for apostasy. But this should not be applied to the ecclesia of Paul's day. Nothing is said to indicate a low spiritual condition at that time. It seems to be brought in here in order to show the general character of this epistle. It could be read to them as well as to the Colossians.

Of the Laodicean letter from Paul we have no hint elsewhere in the Scriptures, so that some have supposed that it was lost. But there are good grounds for the opinion that the epistle to the Ephesians is in view, for that, according to the best readings, has no definite address, and must have been put before *all*

the saints in Christ Jesus, either by sending a copy direct, as to Laodicea, or by loaning, as in Colosse. As we have already seen, the epistles are complementary, and both are needed in order to bring believers to maturity.

ARCHIPPUS

Paul calls Archippus a fellow soldier when writing to Philemon (2). But here he appears in the character of servant. He seems to have undertaken some special service, but was lax in carrying it out. Hence the gentle admonition of the apostle, which many of us may well take to ourselves. Has the Lord laid any special task on our heart? Sometimes it comes with irresistible force. There is an unshakable conviction that a certain work must be done and we must do it. It may be accompanied with a painful and humiliating consciousness of our own unfitness and inadequacy, and a foreboding of suffering and scorn, but it is evidently of the Lord, and such things characterize His service. But they dishearten and discourage. There is a continual temptation to leave the task undone, and escape the consequences. Nothing that we do is as well done as we would wish, so the only relief seems to be to drop it all. Perhaps it was so with Archippus. May the Lord give each one of us grace to fulfill the service which He has assigned to us!

THE SELF-WRITTEN SALUTATION

To this day some of the writing in the orient is done by professional scribes. While waiting in the post office of Smyrna, not so very far from Colosse, I saw a scribe write a letter for a woman, which she dictated. There is no doubt that Paul could write, for he makes a point of doing so at the close of some of his epistles, in order to certify to their genuineness (2 Thess.3:17,18),

for it seems that some had produced forgeries. Possibly he penned the whole of Galatians (Gal.6:11). It has been suggested that an eye infirmity made it difficult for him to write small enough. Be that as it may, Colossians has Paul's sign manual to show that it is genuine.

But he does not close with his signature. His heart is too full to refrain from a few more outbursts. And so he unburdens himself by adding "Remember my bonds! Grace be with you!" Great was his desire for sympathy in his sufferings, and that these should be understood in their relation to the truth. Paul's bonds are not merely an incident in his personal career. They became the standing symbol of God's relation to the world and of the place of the flesh in God's present work of grace, in contrast to the Kingdom that is to come. Spiritual blessings among the celestials are ours, coupled with *no* special physical blessings among the terrestrials. And, as we thankfully accept Paul's wish that grace be with us, let us remember that it was with him in a superlative degree even in his imprisonment. Grace now, but glory in the future!

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

PRAYER

God grant me the vision, by faith to see
That what Thou hast purposed is best for me;
Help me to quell by Spirit-led prayer
Each rebel thought, each anxious care,
That by Thy grace my life may be
Attuned in harmony to Thee.

Elizabeth H. Maloy

THE WILL OF GOD

THE power, righteousness and love of God are all full and perfect. These three divine attributes are especially emphasized in the evangel as presented in Romans, but they can be traced in all that God does and is. In this study of the will of God we should be able to see that God's power, righteousness and love are all intimately involved. The power of God makes it clear that He is able to carry out His will. The righteousness of God insures that His will leads to a perfect and just goal. The love of God assures us that His will is ultimately good and glorious.

Before Paul prayed that we might grow in the realization of God (Col.1:10) he had prayed that we might be filled full with a realization of His will (verse 9). This is necessary for "being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy" (verse 11). To realize the will of God leads to growth in realization of God, and this in turn endues us with power. What, then, does Paul mean by being filled full with a realization of God's will?

REALIZATION

The Scriptures contain many passages on the subject of God's will. Although having a *knowledge* of these matters is not the same as being filled full with a *realization* of God's will, nevertheless we need to become acquainted with what they are. Each matter

which is identified in God's Word as being the will of God needs to be considered in its own context. Some passages are concerned primarily with what we might call God's will in process. These, such as God's will for Pharaoh (Rom.9:18) are not complete expressions of His will. They deal only with stages in God's will which are necessary steps to a goal. Other passages deal with God's will for the believer.* These, too, are expressions of God's will in process, but they also speak of the goal. When we learn that "this is the will of God: your holiness" (1 Thess.4:3) we must understand that this passage refers to a goal as well as a process toward that goal. Finally, some passages deal fully with the goal of God's will. 1 Timothy 2:4 and Ephesians 1:9,10 are good examples. But even these do not ignore the way in which God's will affects us right now. God's will for all mankind encourages us in prayer, and God's will to head up all in the Christ strengthens us in upholding the headship of Christ. These varied presentations of God's will (and there are others as well) should be kept distinct, and yet there is a unifying factor running through them all.

This unifying factor is that the will of God always reflects the character of God. This is what we need to recognize. To be filled full with the realization of God's will requires that we become acquainted with both *what* He wills and *how* He wills.

JESUS IN GETHSEMANE

Times of crisis may well be the most important occasions in our lives. Here we often face a real struggle

*A. E. Knoch referred to this use of the term as God's "revealed" will. See his article, "God's Will and Intention," in *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.18, p.181, and THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD, p.199.

concerning the will of God, a struggle which is not merely academic, but which we experience to the depth of our being. In the form of humanity, our Lord Himself faced the crisis of crises in the garden called Gethsemane, the night before He was crucified. He knew what was ahead for Him, and He struggled in prayer, saying, "Father, if it is Thy intention, carry aside this cup from Me. However, not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42; *cf* Matt.26:42; Mark 14:36).

There are two requests in this prayer, the request that the agony and sorrow of the cross might be avoided, and the request that God's will be done. The first is an expression of the struggle; the second is the solution to the struggle. The will of God is a positive and purifying factor. Above all other considerations the Lord wanted God's will to be done.

We also, in our own crises, need to come to our Father in prayer, and we need to speak of His will. The request that God's will be done is not some sort of pious resignation. It is a real testing of the things of consequence (Phil.1:10). It comforts and endues us with power. Indeed, it is significant that as soon as the Lord prayed that God's will be done "a messenger from heaven was seen by Him, strengthening Him" (Luke 22:43). We will always be strengthened when we view a problem or struggle in the light of God's will. If it is His will then we also know it is right and victorious, and that it stems from His heart of love. This leads to acceptance, not resignation, and to a peace which satisfies.

The Lord's plea that God's will be done is a recognition that God's will leads to the best of all possible ends. It is likewise a recognition that the suffering is only a temporary phase of God's will and is

not the end. Such confidence in the goodness and the righteousness of God's will is a marvelous example for us all. May we, too, be learning to trust God and His will more and more.

PHARAOH IN EGYPT

The message concerning Pharaoh was, "to whom He will, He is merciful, yet to whom He will, He is hardening" (Rom.9:18). Again, the will of God involves something negative, but again this is only a temporary matter. It does not provide a complete picture of God's will in the matter. Yet here, unlike the Lord in Gethsemane, Pharaoh knew nothing at all about God's will, let alone having any realization of it. Someday this will be revealed to him, but in the meantime we need to come into some realization of this operation of God's will in the life of Pharaoh.

Some of us might say that this expression of God's will displays only the righteousness of God. Pharaoh deserved it. Others might feel that it really was not fair, but that at least this displayed the power of God, as indeed Paul affirms in verse 17. But if God is revealed as a God of power and righteousness in Romans 1 and 3, and a God of love in Romans 5 and 8, then He must be a God of power, righteousness and love in Romans 9. The hardening of Pharaoh is for the display of God's power, but it also involves God's righteousness and love, as we see in Romans 11:32. "For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all."

We cannot fully comprehend all these operations of God's will, but we need to be praying that we might be filled full with a greater and greater realization. There cannot be any diminishing of any of God's attributes in any of His operations.

SALVATION OF ALL

A different problem meets us in 1 Timothy 2:4. Here, as in Romans 9, some have failed to see the threefold character of God's will, for they have claimed that it is only the *wish* of God's heart (His love) that is being expressed. They feel He is unable, lacking the power, to save all mankind, or that to do so would not be right!

Why should we allow God complete power to carry out the judgments which He wills but deny Him mercy and love in those operations, and then allow Him to feel the fullest of love in His plan of salvation but deny Him the power to carry it out? We may be thankful that God's will is not affected by man's restrictions. It is settled in Christ, and it will be performed.

Perhaps no portion of Scripture provides greater insight into the goal of God's will than the first chapter of Ephesians. Here our attention is directed consecutively to the delight of God's will (verse 5), the secret of God's will (verse 9) and the counsel of God's will (verse 11). The first of these concerns God's purpose for the believers. The second outlines His purpose for all who are estranged from Him, both those in the heavens and those on the earth. The third concerns all that happens during all of time.

These are vast themes, but they help us realize the will of God more and more. It takes the vastest of loves to will such operations and goals (*cf* Eph.2:4); it takes transcendently great power to carry out such a will (*cf* Eph.1:19). Yet our God of wisdom and grace is able to complete all that He has willed. To Him be the glory!

GOD'S WILL IN CHRIST JESUS

A passage in 1 Thessalonians (5:18) is very helpful

toward a deeper realization of God's will. There we are told to be giving thanks in everything, "for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." God's will is centered in Christ Jesus. It is very much involved with the evangel. Ultimately, the achievement of God's will rests on the cross of Christ and is carried out in accord with the power, righteousness and love of God, manifested through the death and resurrection of Christ.

It is true that we do not give God thanks in everything. But this does not mean that God's will in Christ Jesus can be frustrated. The full results of the cross have not yet been achieved. Even for ourselves, who have the firstfruit of the spirit (Rom.8:23), there is much lack. We find that we have a continuing need to pray for a realization of God's will that we be giving thanks in everything. The more that we recognize that giving thanks in everything is a fruit of the cross, that it is a goal which God has set for us and which He will accomplish through the Lord Jesus Christ, the more we will be endued with power to give thanks for everything.

Similarly, when we read earlier in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 that God wills our holiness, we should have complete confidence that this will is going to be achieved. It is the recognition that this is God's will for us, and the assurance that it will come about, that strengthens us right now in holiness. The realization of God's will for us operates in us with power so that we can even now be making progress.

Let us seek to know God's will, not only what it is, but how it operates as well, so that we may accept it and enjoy it and be strengthened and encouraged by it. God's will is always for good. D.H.H.

(To be continued)

For the sons of Korah A Psalm A Song

87 His foundation is in the holy mountain ranges.
2 **Ieue is loving the gateways of Zion**
More ′**than all the tabernacles of Jacob.**
3 **Glorious** things are **spoken in you, city of the Alueim!**
Interlude
4 **I am mentioning Rahab and Babylon**
to those **knowing Me,**
Behold! Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia:
This one **was born there.**
5 +**Yet** >**of Zion it is being said,**
Each and every **one was born in her.**
And He´ is establishing her supreme.
6 **Ieue shall recount in the list of the peoples:**
This one **was born there.**
Interlude
7 **And the singers as the fluters will say:**
All my springs are in you.

A Song A Psalm For the sons of Korah
> Permanent on Concerning fluting for response

NOTES FOR PSALM 87

Though brief and somewhat enigmatic, Psalm 87 contains some remarkable teaching. It may have been composed during King Hezekiah's time after Sen-

nacherib's army was destroyed near Jerusalem (2 Chron.32:20-23), which would fit verse 4. However, it has been suggested that it was written in David's time on the occasion of his bringing the Ark to Zion (2 Sam.6:12-15, *cf* verse 2). In any case, this psalm speaks of the relationship of the nations to Zion.

Glorious things are spoken in you, O city of the true God! What sort of things? The answer to this question is given in the remaining verses. Rahab is a figurative name for Egypt. (Rahab apparently was the name of a legendary sea-monster [see Job 26:12,13 ASV]; since Egypt definitely acted "as the monsters of the sea" [Ezek.32:2], this identification of the land with the legend seemed natural.) Jehovah will mention Egypt and Babylon, the two major world powers, to His intimates. Why? Because even of them it shall be said: This one was born in Zion. Every single one who comes to know the true God will be counted as having been born in Zion. That is the one habitation on earth which He is establishing as supreme—and Supreme is one of His titles.

The Septuagint supplies the word "mother" to the first part of verse 5. Adding this word into the Hebrew would make the verse read, "Yet of Zion, Mother is being said;" or, as the *New English Bible* renders this line, "and Zion shall be called a mother." Perhaps Paul had the Septuagint of this verse in mind when he wrote, "Yet the Jerusalem above is free, who is the mother of us all" (Gal.4:26).

There are several references in the Scriptures to the keeping of a list (as in verse 6) of those who please God (e.g., Ex.32:32; Psa.56:8, 69:28; Isa.4:3; Dan.12:1; Mal.3:16; Luke 10:20; Phil.4:3; Rev.3:5, 13:8). It is significant here that in relation to this list, peoples other than Israel are mentioned. "For not that which

is apparent is the Jew ... but that which is hidden is the Jew" (Rom.2:28,29).

"All my springs are in you." Isaiah prophesied that "in that day" Israel would "bail water with elation from the springs of salvation" (12:3). The springs, a matter of life and death in arid Palestine, were a symbol of spiritual refreshment. This symbol was also used in the New Testament (e.g., John 7:37,38; Rev.22:17).

In the Masoretic Text, Psalm 88 has a double superscription. We have assigned the first part to the end of Psalm 87, after J. W. Thirtle, *The Titles of the Psalms* (1916).

James D. Thompson

BROADMINDED BELIEVERS

Let us widen our horizons, get rid of the assumption that "we *have* the truth" and have it all nicely buttoned up. Let us break down the barriers of selfishness which cramp our hearts, acknowledge our lack of wisdom and apply our minds afresh to the things of God's Word (p.69).

It is fatally easy for true believers to form a non-sectarian sect, and to adopt an unscriptural attitude of superiority towards those who do not enjoy the advantages of the light which has been given to us. We should "follow righteousness with all them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (p.70,71).

From *It is Written* by Cecil J. Blay

THE MINOR PROPHETS

The *Concordant Version of the Minor Prophets* is now at the printers, and should be available about the end of July. These twelve prophecies will be bound as one book of approximately 144 pages ($1.00).

Intellectual For Heman the Ezrahite

88 Ieue, Alueim of my salvation,
By day I cry, in the night in front of Thee.
2 Let my prayer [b]come before Thee;
Stretch out Thine ear to my [7]supplication[0].
3 For my soul is surfeited [t]with evils,
And my [=]life attains to the unseen.
4 I am reckoned with those descending into the crypt;
I become as a master who is no subjector,
5 Among the death-doomed, free,
Just as the wounded, lying in the tomb,
Whom Thou rememberest no[t] further,
And they[´] are severed from Thy hand.
6 Thou dost set me in the nether crypt,
In darkness, in the swamps;
7 Thy fury supports itself on me,
And with all Thy breakers dost Thou humiliate me.
Interlude
8 Thou dost cause my acquaintances to be far from me.
Thou dost set me to be abhorrent to them.
I am shut up, and am not going forth.
9 My eye pines from humiliation.
I call Thee, Ieue, in every day,
I spread out to Thee my palms.
10 Wilt Thou do a marvel for the death-doomed?
If the Rephaim are rising, will they acclaim Thee?
Interlude

11 Is Thy kindness being rehearsed in the tomb?
Thy faithfulness in destruction?
12 Are Thy marvels known in darkness?
And Thy righteousness in the land of oblivion?
13 +Yet I´ implore > Thee, Ieue,
And in the morning my prayer shall forestall Thee.
14 Why, Ieue, art Thou casting off my soul?
Why art Thou concealing Thy face from me?
15 I was humble and expiring from my youth,
I bear Thy dread; I am distracted.
16 Over me passes Thy heat,
The fright of Thee effaces me.
17 They surround me as water all the day.
They encompass ^{on} me together.
18 Thou dost ^{c}put lover and associate far from me;
My acquaintances are darkness.

NOTES FOR PSALM 88

The above is a song of a suffering soul. It has no glimmer of hope. All that the psalmist foresaw was death and decay, but he prayed continually. He was abhorrent to his friends, who avoided him. He asked the reason for all this, but ended the psalm in darkness—for *darkness* is the last word of verse 18.

This psalm reeks with figures of death. The singer felt that his life was about to attain to the unseen (verse 3); he would be reckoned along with those entering the crypt (verse 4), and be set loose among the death-doomed, lying in the tomb (verse 5). Other key words are darkness, swamps, nether crypt, destruction and land of oblivion. In this morbid frame of mind, he saw only affliction and living death when he looked back on his life (verse 15). While these

words may not be instructive of our expectation in Christ, they do contain teaching about the other side of the coin: death.

In verse 5, he said that God no longer remembers the dead, and that they are severed from His hands. This is not to say that the dead are "out of sight, out of mind" in any absolute way, for no one can escape His spirit by going to the unseen (Psa.139:8), which lies open before Him (Prov.15:11). But from the point of view of the present life, those who descend into the depths of death are out of His hand, "for there is no remembrance of Thee in death; in the unseen, who is acclaiming Thee?" (Psa.6:5).

The unseen (or *Sheol*, the Hebrew counterpart to the Greek *Hades*) is mentioned only in verse 3, but verses 11 and 12 contain two further descriptions in parallel thought-rhymes. These are "destruction" and "the land of oblivion." "Destruction" is *Abaddon*. This is not the simple word "destruction" in Hebrew (which has another form), but is a more abstract noun. It is paired with *Sheol* (unseen) in Proverbs 15:11. In Revelation 9:11, the name of the king over the locusts from the submerged chaos (abyss) is *Abaddon*. Though *Sheol* was figuratively viewed as under the earth (Amos 9:2; Num.16:30,33; Ezek.31:17), it is "the land of oblivion" and "destruction."

James D. Thompson

A week of Evangelistic Services is planned by the Pauline Church of Christ, Fairview, South Carolina. Dean Hough will be the speaker. For further information write to Pastor Randall W. Grandy, Route 1, Box 285, Wagener SC 29164.

The third annual "weekend, residential conference" will be held August 31 through September 2 at the St. John's Theological College, in Bramcote, England. For further details write to Joyce Orton, 58 Moor Lane, Bramcote, Nottingham, England.

WHO KNEW THE MIND OF THE LORD?
PART THREE

THE SECOND OCCURRENCE, in the writings of the apostle Paul, of the quotation from Isaiah 40:13 is to be found within verses 14 to 16 of the second chapter of 1 Corinthians:

> Now the soulish man is not receiving those things which are of the spirit of God, for they are stupidity to him, and he is not able to know them, seeing that they are spiritually examined. Now he who is spiritual is, indeed, examining all, yet he is being examined by no one.
>
> For who knew the mind of the Lord?
> Who will be deducing from Him?
>
> Yet we have the mind of Christ.

As will be seen by reference to the "Framework" of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, given in the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY (page 248), this passage falls within that section of the epistle (1:10-3:23) in which the leading theme is the wisdom of God.

THE WISDOM OF GOD

God is the "only and wise God" (Rom.16:26; 1 Tim.1:17). His wisdom is not derived, but is of His own inherent glory. God's wisdom, although revealed in this eon, is "not *of* this eon," but, in His wisdom,

was "concealed in a secret . . . which God designates beforehand, *before* the eons, for our glory . . . ."

In His wisdom, the Father counseled to place His wisdom in His beloved Son, creation's Firstborn, Who, recognizing the wisdom of His Father's counsel, and of His Father's will formulated in His counseling, acquiesced in *all* that His Father's will would require of Him throughout the eons. Of the Son, the Scriptures testify: "Then said I, 'Lo! I am arriving—In the summary of the scroll it is written concerning Me—To do Thy will, O God' " (Heb.10:7; *cf* Psa.40:7,8).

This mention of the obedience of Christ leads us forward in thought to the cross of Christ, the summit of His obedience, and, at this point in our meditation, to a question concerning it. Was the cross of God's Anointed determined *in His wisdom,* when He counseled with Himself ere He brought forth His Firstborn? Most assuredly it was. The cross was, indeed, purposed *in* the wisdom of God, and, not only so, the cross *is God's wisdom.* It is God's wisdom for the reason that, when humans, moved by hate and directed by "the wisdom of the world," crucified the Lord of glory, the Christ of God, "in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed" (Col.2:3), they united the *wisdom* of God and the *power* of God with an accursed stake.

The cross of Christ is the focal point of the eons and of God's "purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Eph.3:11). God's love and His righteousness, His grace and His power, all center in the cross of His Beloved, Whose precious blood, shed on "His cross," is the effective and only basis for the reconciliation of *all* (Col.1:20). By God's wisdom in the cross, His intention to be All in all (inherent in the purpose of the eons) will be fully realized.

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

The phrase, "the word of the cross," occurs in only one instance in the Scriptures: "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." This is a solemn statement, for, according to the response evoked by "the word of the cross," humans find themselves placed in one of two companies. "The word of the cross" (most assuredly the Word of God, as the Word of God and with its sharpness and power: *cf* Heb.4:12) penetrates to the parting between the *soulish* and the *spiritual* in humanity, bringing to light the reaction (the sentiments and thoughts) of *soulish* and *spiritual* hearts to the deeply spiritual truth so faithfully heralded by the apostle Paul—Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

"The word of the cross" (in preference to "the preaching of the cross" as in the Authorized Version) is explained for us in a most helpful way in the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY (page 249), in the note on the verse above-mentioned:

> "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 . . . . 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 the divine folly.

"The word of the cross" is, really, what the cross itself is saying to us of Christ's death upon it, emphasizing the *manner* of His death. The cross is voiceless, yet not silent, but (like the heavens and their atmosphere, day after day uttering truth: Psa.19:1,2) it is unceasingly declaring that the death, to which humans subjected the Inaugurator of life, was the

death accorded to the vile, criminal and outcast elements of society. It was a death thoroughly disreputable and odious and, in the measure of the agony endured, totally inhuman.

Such was the death, the death of the cross, suffered by our Saviour in giving Himself for our sins. Of it, the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews records (12:2): ". . . looking off to the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith, Jesus, Who, for the joy lying before Him, *endures* a cross, *despising the shame.*" It is of more than passing interest to note that the STANDARD for "shame," given in the sublinear of the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT, is "VILENESS."

From the pinnacle of His fame and glory as the One inherently in the form of God, and Who is God's wisdom, Christ's emptying and humbling of Himself brought Him, in His obedience, "*even* to the death of the cross" (Phil.2:5-8). Humiliated in several ways by men, bearing the curse of God and abandoned by Him, can we ever know the abyss of sorrow, suffering and shame experienced by our Saviour? No we cannot, but the simple, though powerfully expressive word "*even,*" compasses it all and enables us to sense something of the awful depths.

Let us listen attentively to what "the word of the cross" (or as the phrase is more simply expressed: "we are heralding Christ crucified") is saying to us, for it is the fullest expression of God's wisdom. May the truth of its message reach and hold our hearts, for, writes the apostle Paul: ". . . to us who are being saved it is the *power of God.*" It is God's power for us because He Who is the *wisdom* of God, and Who fully realized that His cross was God's *wisdom,* is also the *power* of God (1 Cor.1:24). Of a truth indeed it is: "For even if He was crucified out of *weakness,* nevertheless He is

living *by the power of God.* For we also are weak together with Him, but we shall be living together with Him by the power of God . . ." (2 Cor.13:4). Through God's wisdom in the cross, we are, of God, *in* Christ Jesus, Who *is* God's wisdom, and "Who became to *us* wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance . . ." (1 Cor.1:30).

A SECRET DESIGNATED BEFOREHAND FOR OUR GLORY

The cross of Christ, in which God centered His wisdom, was not an afterthought in "the mind of the Lord," brought about by, and necessary to correct, some unforeseen deviation from the planned course of His ways during the eons. God's wisdom precludes any such contingency.* The cross of Christ, and God's secret wisdom concerning it, were matters integral to God's intention. The apostle Paul, therefore, can write with assurance: ". . . but we are speaking God's wisdom in a secret, which has been concealed, *which God designates beforehand, before the eons, for our glory.*" This secret finds its source in God's pre-eonian counsel, the counsel of *His* will, in accord with which He is operating all (Eph.1;11). The joyous truth is that this secret was specified beforehand "for *our glory,*" for the glory of *believers.*

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*Certainly, we are told by the writer of the Hebrews' epistle, "By faith we are apprehending the eons to *adjust* to a declaration of God . . ." (Heb.11:3). This expresses the Circumcision believers' understanding and realization of the position ensuing from the rejection by Israel of the nation's Messiah, Who came to His own but was not accepted by His own (John 1:11). What would appear to the disappointed faithful as an "adjustment," had its definite place in God's intention. The precious, ransoming blood of Christ, "as of a flawless and unspotted lamb," was, indeed, "foreknown before the disruption of the world . . ." (1 Pet.1:19,20).

There are many reasons why the secret of God's wisdom in the cross of Christ is "for our glory." Paramount among them is, and all other reasons are dependent upon, the truth that our Saviour was "roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father" (Rom.6:4). Were that not so, there could be no cause for glory among believers. We can only contemplate the cross of Christ and His sufferings because we *know* that "He is living by the power of God" (2 Cor.13:4), and is seated at His Father's right hand among the celestials (Eph.1:20).

Another reason, one of great moment, is that when the Lord Jesus Christ was roused from among the dead, He rose as the Firstfruit of those who are reposing (1 Cor.15:20,23), and also the Firstfruit of the "one *new humanity*" (Eph.2:15; 4:24; Col.3:10). Paul writes concerning the believers that "our *old humanity* was crucified together with Him" (Rom.6:6), but not only the "old humanity" of the saints was thus involved, for Christ took *all that constituted the "old humanity" to the cross.* Christ has been roused from among the dead; through Him—"through a Man"—comes the resurrection of the dead, and in Him shall all be vivified (1 Cor.15:20-22). But there is *no* resurrection for the old humanity.

The following extract from the article "New birth—New Creation" by E. H. Clayton*, deals briefly, and most helpfully with the subject of the word of the cross and its effect upon the old and the new creations and the old and the new humanities:

> Nor does it (i.e. "Justification") attain to the deeper meaning of the word of the cross; that divides between the

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* *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.35, p.175. A reprint is available from our office.

> old creation and the new creation; also between the old and the new humanities. The cross obliterates all the features of the old humanity. Through the cross, the old humanity was crucified with Christ. The cross sets aside circumcision and removes the barrier with the uncircumcision. Sin's flesh and all its connections are gone, having been crucified at the cross. A new humanity, which accords with God, is thus a possibility, and it finds its basis . . . in the word of the cross, which applies the crucifixion to humanity. The old humanity and all its features are no more—they are crucified and rendered inert.

God's secret wisdom in the cross is the foundation upon which the other secrets, revealed to Paul and recorded in his epistles, firmly rest. These secrets, drawn by God's spirit out of "the depths of God," constitute the greater part of "whatever God makes ready for those who are loving Him," and *God reveals* them to us through His spirit (1 Cor.2:9,10). One of these secrets, the Secret of Christ (the heading up of all in Christ: Eph.1:10), in its *initial* aspect, that of Christ among the nations, is declared to be "the expectation of *glory*" (Col.1:26,27).

God's wisdom in a secret, designated before the eons, is not only fraught with blessing, but for our glory! It is little wonder that Paul exclaims: "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."

Alan Reid

(To be continued)

The Concordant Scripture Research of Delaware, Ohio has taken up the Concordant Tape Ministry. Cassette messages are ready on a purchase or loan basis. A monthly tape service is also available. For further information contact James R. Coram, 5561 Howard Rd., Delaware OH 43051.

PROPHECY AND HISTORY

IT is a widespread idea that prophetic writings are predictive. Ignorance lies at the basis of this mistaken and misleading idea. Under the title "Prophets" the Scriptures draw together the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets. These books are arranged in two distinct groups. The first, the Former Prophets, embraces Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. The second, the Latter Prophets, comprises Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets.

The aim of prophecy is to reveal the cause and meaning and goal of the movement of humanity rather than predict specific events. The prophets of each period focus on some outstanding fact of an eventful era—Sennacherib's invasion, the fall of Jerusalem to the Chaldeans, the return from Babylon. These facts are no more divine than others. They are simply extraordinary events which, from their form or the circumstances of their occurrence, make the divine presence and purpose more manifest than is the case with the ordinary routine course of events. God works His will in history not apart from men, but through men and in partnership with them; and the work is no less divine on that account. We need not fear development, or natural agencies, when we know that the divine purpose underlies them all, and that they are really nothing but the form of divine working.

Thus we see the deep significance of the divine supremacy emphasized by the prophets. It recalls God from the infinite distance in space and time to which sense thought has banished Him, and where theology has lost Him, and makes Him the omnipresent power by which all things exist and on which all things continually depend. It is something to know that history, despite its sinister aspects, is after all God's work; we are not standing helpless in a world set adrift by an enemy, but are in a personal world, a moral world, where character is being wrought out and God's purpose is being realized. In such a world it is permitted to us to see a vision of God's finished work, and devote ourselves to the service of the highest and best, in the sure faith that the whole universe will enter into His rest and move in unison with His will.

Vladimir Gelesnoff

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES for SEPTEMBER 1979
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY

EDITORIAL

WHAT is the translator to do in this passage? To a question like this, your answer will probably be: "Let him translate concordantly!" Romans 16:26 offers a good example that this is being done, even in spite of traditional reasonings against it (*cf* p.236). In this passage, our three codices (Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus) agree in the reading *tou aiōniou theou* (of the eonian God).

One of the passages where these three textual witnesses do not quite agree, is Colossians 4:8 (*cf* p.210). When, in the fourth century A.D., one of the scribes of Sinaiticus copied this line from a master copy (which was based on intermediate copies from Paul's letter), he wrote accurately *humōn* (you) in 4:8. This was soon altered to *hêmōn* (us), but was later corrected back to *humōn* by an editor who obviously conformed it to the best ancient textual evidence he had.

These two examples serve to show that, as far as the New Testament Greek text is concerned, we are on sure ground. Hence we praise the Lord that we are privileged to enjoy the pure Word of God, precisely as He has been pleased to *preserve* it for us. This is indeed something very special and rare and unique, for so much secular literature just as old as the Bible

has been lost, and we know of its former existence only from sparse records or textual fragments.

The three most ancient manuscripts (fairly complete) of scriptural texts, Vaticanus (B), Sinaiticus (*s*), and Alexandrinus (A) contain not only the Greek text of the New Testament, but also a Greek translation (Septuagint LXX) of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, B and A being almost complete, with a number of fragments of *s*.

Not all Old Testament quotations in the Pauline epistles and elsewhere in the New Testament are from the LXX which was probably compiled about the third century B.C. as a collection of independent translations which in the course of time underwent standardization, up to the first century A.D. The LXX was occasionally corrected by the Hebrew (which may or may not have been the same wording as that from which the LXX was originally translated).

In 1 Corinthians 15:54 Paul quotes Isaiah 25:8 in a form verbally identical with another translation of the Hebrew Old Testament (later revised by Theodotion). Stephen, in his speech before the Sanhedrin, quoted from the same source. Several more fresh Greek translations made their appearance about the second century.

For a restoration of the Hebrew text, the LXX is of value when its readings are confirmed by such other texts as the Samaritan, Syriac, Qumran, or (in the poetic sections) by a thought-rhyme.* We have to bear

*The LXX may also serve to confirm conjectures when the Hebrew text shows apparent transcriptional errors due to various causes, such as the omission or transposition of letters within a word, or the substitution of a letter by another one of similar appearance or sound.

in mind that the master copies which were used by the scribes of B, *s*, and A, are separated from the original LXX translation manuscripts by five centuries or more.

On the other hand definite efforts were made to safeguard the Hebrew text from accidental and deliberate alterations, especially in the following centuries. It took Jewish scribes hundreds of years to achieve unanimity about Hebrew pronunciation. They finally indicated it by means of accents and vowel signs as we have them in the Masoretic text of the early Middle Ages. But far more than a thousand years lies between their first efforts and the time when Hebrew was still a living language, spoken by the people and not only by scholars. Hence nobody knows for sure what the pronunciation of Hebrew was before the Babylonian exile, or even in Moses' day.

IEUE, THE INCOMMUNICABLE NAME

As to our most recent publication of Old Testament parts (the Minor Prophets), we do regret that the spelling of Ieue was not yet changed to Yehweh or Yahweh, lest the incommunicable divine Name remain unpronounceable. This matter had been brought to our attention even before we started typesetting the text of the Minor Prophets many months ago. In the meantime quite a few of our friends have urged us to increase the readability of future parts of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament. We will take to heart what Brother A. E. Knoch said in his Preface to Genesis (p.8):

"We seek to serve ordinary people, and present the facts in such a form as they can *easily understand.*"

The distinctive divine titles (Alueim, Alue and Al) should not be effaced by translating them with God

(and possibly God' and God' for the sake of differentiation) as has been suggested. There are other more readily recognizable equivalents which are easy to pronounce, even though they are not widely known: Elohim, Eloah, El.* By using them we will avoid the reproach that the discernible feature of our Old Testament Version parts is not so much the concordant method of translation but rather the unpronounceable divine Name and the unfamiliar divine titles.

WE LAY NO STRESS ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE DIVINE NAME

Three years prior to the publication of Genesis, A. E. Knoch had written: "*Ieue* should be pronounced *Yehweh*. We lay no stress on this, only we have often been asked by those who do. Scholarship was behind the *Yahweh* pronunciation, but now the earliest manuscripts, the Dead Sea scrolls, clearly prove that the pointing, which gave it this pronunciation, was not inspired" (vol.XLV, p.255).

PRONUNCIATION ADAPTED TO THE GREEK TONGUE

When dealing with this subject in volume XXXVII, p.36-37, A. E. Knoch went into some of the details of the Greek pronunciation of Hebrew names. We will quote just a few lines: "If we wish to know God's pleasure as to the pronunciation of Bible names in English, we should copy the example of our Lord and His apostles. They adapted the pronunciation to the

*Some Bible translators have indicated these distinctions outside the text. We propose to discuss them in the Introduction (as has been done heretofore). In addition we will refer to these explanations in footnotes under the Version text wherever it is appropriate. The same applies to the use of Yahweh.

Greek tongue. They did not say *Ieushuo*, but *Iêsous*, the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew. This has been incorporated into the inspired record, and shows that God does not value uniformity in *sound*, but in *sense*. *Ieushuo* is a contraction of *Ieue-ishuo* in which He unites His Name with His office as Saviour. If we insist on saying *Ieushuo*, or even the English *Joshua*, it might not be understood who is meant.

"So also Alueim, DISPOSER, is changed to *Theos*, PLACER. As our Lord Himself did not use the Hebrew, nor a Greek pronunciation of it, but an *equivalent* term, that is what we should do."

TRANSLATING, NOT TRANSLITERATING

Some of our friends would prefer *Jehovah* to *Yehweh* or *Yahweh*. In 1934 A. E. Knoch would have agreed with them. He wrote in volume XXV, p.116-117: "In assimilating foreign words we always anglicize them, so we need not apologize for using Jehovah. It is not Hebrew; *Ieue* is correct in that tongue. But we are translating, not transliterating. Otherwise all other names should be corrected also. James must be *Yakōbos*, Peter *Petros*. This is impractical and unprofitable. Though the husk of these names is *somewhat altered* by English, *the content remains the same*. The slight change in sound does not affect the sense, and this alone is vital."

Today, however, the name *Yahweh* is more acceptable than it was half a century ago, and our use of it should satisfy even those of our friends who would insist on Jehovah. In the future when you will read the divine titles in the more familiar form of Elohim etc., please remember A.E.K.'s words that the content of them remains the same, even if the spelling is somewhat altered. H.H.R.

Intellectual For Ethan the Ezrahite

89 Of the kindnesses of Ieue will I sing [7]for[cs] the eon,
I shall [c]make known Thy faithfulness [i]with my mouth
for generation [+]after generation.
2 For I say, Eonian kindness shall be built
[7]in[0] the heavens;
Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness in them.
3 I contracted a covenant [>]with My chosen;
I swore to David, My servant:
4 Till the eon shall I establish your seed,
And I will build your throne
for generation [+]after generation.
Interlude
5 And the heavens are acclaiming Thy [7]marvels[cs], Ieue!
Indeed, Thy faithfulness in the assembly of the saints.
6 For [a]who in the sky shall be estimated [>]with Ieue?
[7]And who[0] is like to Ieue among the sons of the alim?
7 An Al greatly terrifying in the deliberation of saints,
And feared over all those round about Him.
8 Ieue, Alueim of hosts,
Who is just as Thou art, a safeguarded Ie?
And Thy faithfulness is round about Thee.
9 Thou art ruling in the swell of the sea.
In the lift of its billows, Thou´ art causing them
to laud Thee.
10 Thou´ dost crush Rahab as one wounded,
And with the arm of Thy strength
dost Thou disperse Thine enemies.
11 Thine are the heavens, indeed Thine is the earth.
The habitance and its fullness, Thou´ dost found them.
12 The north and the [7]sea[0], Thou´ dost create them.
Tabor and Hermon are jubilating in Thy Name.

13 Thine is the arm with mastery.
Thy hand is strong, Thy right hand is exalted.
14 Righteousness and judgment are the basis
of Thy throne.
Kindness and truth are forestalling Thy face.
15 Happy are the people knowing the shouting!
Ieue, in the light of Thy face are they going.
16 In Thy Name they shall exult all the day,
And in Thy righteousness they shall be exalted.
17 For the beauty of their strength art Thou,
And in Thine acceptance our horn shall be exalted.
18 For our shield is >of Ieue,
And our king is >of the Holy One of Israel.
19 Then Thou speakest to Thy kindly ones in a vision,
And Thou art saying, I poise help on a master,
I exalt one chosen from the people;
20 I found David, My servant,
'With My holy oil I anointed him
21 With whom My hand shall be established.
Indeed, My arm shall make him resolute.
22 The enemy shall not lure ' him,
And the son of iniquity shall not humble him.
23 And I will pound his foes from his face,
And his haters shall I strike.
24 +Yet My faithfulness and My kindness are with him,
And in My Name his horn shall be exalted.
25 + I place his hand in the sea,
And his right hand in the streams.
26 He´ shall call to Me, My Father art Thou,
My Al and the Rock of my salvation.
27 Indeed, I´ am ᵍmaking him the firstborn,
Supreme >of the kings of the earth.
28 For the eon will I keep my kindness >with him,
And My covenant is faithful >with him.
29 + I set his seed for futurity
And his throne as the days of the heavens.
30 If his sons shall forsake My law,
And shall not go in My judgments,

31 If they shall violate My statutes,
And shall not keep My instructions,
32 +Then I will visit their transgression ⁱwith a club,
And their depravity ⁱwith contagion.
33 +Yet I shall not annul My kindness from with him,
Nor shall I be false in My faithfulness.
34 I shall not violate My covenant,
And I shall not alter what comes forth from My lips.
35 Once have I sworn in My holiness:
I shall assuredly not lie to David!
36 His seed shall come to be for the eon,
And his throne as the sun in front of Me.
37 As the moon it shall be established ⁷for^cs the eon,
And a witness in the sky that is faithful.

Interlude

38 +Yet Thou´ dost cast off and shalt reject!
Thou art enraged with Thine anointed.
39 Thou dost disown the covenant of Thy servant.
Thou dost violate his insignia to the earth.
40 Thou dost breach all his stone dikes;
Thou dost place his fortresses for cracking.
41 All passing on the way rob him;
He becomes a reproach to his neighbors.
42 Thou dost exalt the right hand of his foes;
Thou hast caused all his enemies to rejoice.
43 Indeed, Thou art reversing the sharpness of his sword,
And Thou dost not raise him in the battle.
44 Thou hast ᶜmade him cease from his luster,
And his throne hast Thou toppled to the earth.
45 Thou hast shortened the days of his =adolescence;
Thou hast muffled him over with shame.

Interlude

46 Till what, Ieue? Wilt Thou conceal Thyself
permanently?
Is Thy fury consuming just as a fire?
47 Remember ʷᵗhow transient I am.
ᵒⁿFor what futility hast Thou created
all the sons of humanity?

48 [a]**What master is living and not seeing death?**
Shall his soul escape from the hand of the unseen?
Interlude
49 **Where are Thy former kindnesses, [M]Ieue[s]?**
Thou hast sworn to David in Thy faithfulness.
50 **Remember, [M]Ieue[s], the reproach of Thy servant.**
I bear in my bosom the [?]confounding[?] of many peoples,
51 **With which Thine enemies reproach, Ieue,**
With which they reproach the heels of Thine anointed.
52 **Blessed be Ieue for the eon!**

Amen and Amen!

NOTES FOR PSALM 89

Psalm 89 is a commentary on the contradiction between the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7:4-17 and the circumstances surrounding Israel at that later time. It begins with praises and the quotation of the Davidic covenant (verses 1-4), which is followed by exultation in the grandeur of the glory of God (5-18). The next section (19-37) recounts the promises made to David and his descendants. This portion has also been interpreted as pertaining to the coming Messiah, both by the New Testament and by early rabbinical commentaries. In contrast to this is the king's current humiliation (38-45)—his throne toppled and his luster severely stained through military defeat. The psalmist deplores this state of affairs in the last two short stanzas (46-51), asking the Lord to remember His faithfulness. The Lord's "faithfulness" is an important theme here, as indicated by its seven occurrences (1,2,5,8,24,33,49). The last verse is not actually part of the psalm itself, but is the conclusion to the third book of the psalter (Psalms 73-89).

In verses 5-7 the "assembly of the saints" of Israel seems to parallel the messengers in the heavens, "the sons of the alim" (or, "elim"). For previous comments on the phrase "the sons of the alim," see the commentary on Psalm 29 in Vol. LXVI, page 117.

Rahab, a sea-monster's name applied to Egypt, brings to mind Israel's deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Tabor (verse 12) was the small mount where Deborah and Barak gathered the forces of Zebulon and Naphtali against Sisera and his army. Hermon was a majestic snow-covered mountain which was the northeastern border of the conquests under Joshua.

"The shouting" in verse 15 is a festive clamor as in 1 Samuel 4:5. But the cause for shouting here is the Name—God's revelation of Himself to His people.

There are allusions to this psalm in the New Testament relating the messianic portion to Jesus. Verse 20 is actually quoted in Acts 13:22. In Revelation 1:5, the titles "Faithful Witness" and "Suzerain of the kings of the earth" may refer to verses 37 and 27, respectively. The question of the crowd in John 12:34 apparently contains an allusion to the first part of verse 36. In John's account they said: "We hear out of the law that the Christ is remaining for the eon." The word "law" here would have to refer to the entirety of the Old Testament.

After thirty-seven verses of praise comes an outpouring of grief-stricken complaint. It almost seemed as if the covenant were forgotten, hence the reminder of verse 49: "Where are Thy former kindnesses? Thou hast sworn to David in Thy faithfulness." The question remained unanswered in the context of this psalm. It points toward Israel's need for the true Servant, His own Anointed One, to draw all men unto Himself.

J.D.T.

MUTUAL REPORTS

(Colossians 1:3-8—4:7-9)

No PHYSICAL contact united Paul with the Colossians. They had never seen him, nor he them. Nevertheless, there was a deep mutual concern, so that each was informed of the other through intermediaries. Paul learned about the Colossians through Epaphras, who had them on his heart (1:7). The Colossians were informed of Paul's affairs through Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9), who were with Paul in Rome. This is in delightful harmony with the truth of this era, in which the physical has no place, yet there should be mutual concern and loving consideration.

Ephesians ascribes blessedness to God for His blessings. Philippians opens with thanksgiving for the contribution to the evangel. Colossians begins with thankfulness to God for their faith and love. In the first the blessedness lies in God alone, and depends only upon His own gracious operations, apart from their effect on the recipients, for, at the time, these wonderful revelations were unknown, so could not have borne fruit. Philippians goes back to their service under a former administration. So also in Colossians. That which they had heard *before* had produced faith in Christ Jesus and love toward all others who were hallowed by the same belief.

Thanksgiving and prayer go together (Phil.4:6). Especially at this juncture in the apostle's ministry we

can understand how great would be his desire that these unknown believers, whose faith had been exemplified by their love to their fellow saints, should share "the expectation which is reserved" for them "in the heavens," of which they had indeed heard, yet which was just then being fully revealed. Does not the same spirit of prayer well up within us when we hear of a company of believers? Do we not wish that we could share with them these glorious gratuities of grace? Do not our hearts yearn to bring them these blessings? No words may form on our lips, but, in spirit, we pray as Paul prayed for the Colossians.

Now are remaining, faith, expectation, love (1 Cor.13:13). These three graces greet us at the very threshold of Colossians (1:4,5): faith in Christ Jesus, love for all the saints, a heavenly expectation. Though one of the supreme triad of epistles, there are no wonder-working gifts, no "tongues," no healing for the body. These are left behind in the era of minority. From the very first we are in the atmosphere of maturity. The three abiding graces form the only fit entrance into the present administration. Where they are found there are open hearts ready for the highest and best that God has to bestow.

Their faith was fixed on Christ Jesus, our ascended and glorified Lord, in His celestial exaltation. The importance of this can be realized only in the light of the subsequent revelation of their celestial destiny. The heralding of "Jesus Christ," the rejected and returning Messiah, has glories all its own, but it is not a fit basis for a celestial allotment. Moreover our faith is of a more exalted, a more blessed kind. The Circumcision have a vast amount of tangible evidence to build upon. The powers and signs wrought by Christ and His apostles produced a faith which too often did not

stand the test. How do we know that our allotment is in heaven? We have no evidence at all outside the bare Word of God. To such faith alone comes God's highest revelation.

The love of the Colossians was true to its noble nature in that it included *all* of the saints. It was not called forth by their good qualities or worthiness, but rested solely on a mutual relationship to God. We may well be fond of those of the saints whom we know and whose virtues call forth our appreciation. But it is our privilege to imitate God in that deeper and finer affection which flows out to those also who do not deserve to be loved in themselves, who, indeed, sometimes repel rather than attract. God finds the springs of love in His own heart, so that it flows forth to all His saints, in Christ. If He lavishes His love upon them, why should not we follow His example?

Paul prays for the Colossians because of the expectation which is reserved for them in the heavens. In a similar strain he had prayed in Ephesians for a spirit of wisdom and revelation that they might perceive the expectation of His calling (Eph.1:17,18). Like Ephesians, also, the scene of blessing is not left on earth but is immediately transferred to heaven (Eph.1:3). Philippians puts us in a heavenly realm (Phil.3:20). So these three ranking epistles unite in raising us above the terrestrial to our place supreme among the celestials. They are alone in this, although hints were not lacking in Paul's previous epistles.

As a notable example of the many vital contrasts between Colossians and Ephesians, note the way in which their common expectation is put before us. In Colossians (1:5) the matter is very simply presented: "the expectation . . . which you hear before" (YE-BEFORE-HEAR, *proêkousate*). In Ephesians (1:12),

however, it is not *hearing before,* but *expecting.* Were this all, then we would have simply "you expect before" (YE-BEFORE-EXPECT). Instead it is the plural form of HAVING-BEFORE-EXPECTED, not a *verb,* but a *participle,* not a *fact,* but a *state:* ". . . we should be for the laud of His glory, who are *pre-expectant* in the Christ." As the Greek word does not function as a verb, the BEFORE does not tell us *when* the expecting occurs. Being a verbal *adjective,* it tells us what *kind* of expecting it is. The thought in the mind of the writer of Ephesians is most uncommon, hence it has found expression in a word and form very seldom found. The *time* is *present,* a state in which those who received the epistle were when they received it. A past action is only implied and is not in point.

This is practically settled for us when we see that this state is *in Christ.* It refers to the future coming of *Christ* before He is expected by Israel as inducing a present state. We are now pre-expectant, since we wait for Christ to come *before* His advent to Israel.

Ephesians is concerned with all the saints who had received Paul's special ministry, and he coins this term in order to describe them, for it most accurately summarizes what he had taught the Thessalonians (1 Thess.4:15) and Corinthians (1 Cor.15). It is to these that he submits his latest revelations.

THE WORD OF TRUTH OF THE EVANGEL

The so-called "genitive" case in Greek is one of the trials of the translator and interpreter, especially when it is doubled, as in "the word of truth of the evangel" (Col.1:5). As the English possessive covers part of the ground it is often possible to use it, especially when the article is lacking. For example, we may say "the Word of God" or "God's Word" without any

appreciable difference in sense. In fact it usually amounts to little more than an emphatic adjective, as in the eleventh verse of this chapter, "the might of His glory," which denotes that might which is associated with His glory, so, at the same time, is His glorious might.

Some phrases do not create any serious difficulty in English, as, for instance, "the word of truth," because we have become accustomed to them. Yet it is a question whether many really grasp their significance. What is "the word of truth"? If we change to the possessive, "truth's word" it may be somewhat clearer. If we use an adjective, "the true word" the sense is much more definite, yet it insists that the word *is* true, while "the word of truth" refers to the word *as* truth.

Perhaps this can be seen better in the phrase "the truth of the evangel." This means the same as "the evangel's truth." Here we have not that part of the evangel which is true (while other parts may be false), but the evangel *as* truth. Hence it must be the true evangel. A special case which has received much consideration is the phrase "the administration of the secret" (Eph.3:9). Even if we substitute the possessive, and read "secret's administration" the English still persists in suggesting the *action* of administer*ing* the secret, while the Greek refers to the administration (not *of*) but pertaining to or characterized by the secret. We have sought to avoid this by rendering "secret administration," but it may be wiser to translate as usual, and leave the explanation to the interpretation.

It is when there are *two* genitives that the question arises, how to make them intelligible to the English reader. The connective "of" is far too vague to give

any definite idea of the relationship of the words to each other. If we could say "the word *dealing with* the truth *pertaining to* the evangel," this might help, yet it would involve much interpretation on the part of the translator. "The true expression of the evangel" seems to be the nearest clear-cut idiomatic rendering we can find, yet it may be wiser to follow the Greek idiom and leave the explanation to the interpreters.

In Ephesians we read that the saints of the Uncircumcision, on hearing "the word of truth, the evangel of your salvation" were sealed with the holy spirit (Eph.1:13). Colossians is corrective, so there is a special emphasis on the *truth*, in contrast to what is false. Not only did they hear "the word of *truth* of the evangel," but through it they realized the grace of God in *truth* (1:6). As we will see when we come to the doctrinal portion of the epistle, philosophy and tradition threatened to rob them of the truth. But they had heard the true evangel and received the true grace of God from Epaphras. They had commenced well.

As a dear old brother expressed it many years ago, most of the Lord's saints are born in a fog. They listen to a "gospel," consisting of some truth mixed with much error. The mere fact that God graciously saved them under it, gives this gospel a strong hold on them, and sanctifies its false elements along with the true. From the very beginning they are under a handicap, so that any great degree of truth is unattainable. How thankful should we be if, in our case, God has called us through an evangel which approximates the word of truth! How grateful should all those be who were brought to the knowledge of God where grace was dispensed in truth!

None of us may have listened to an Epaphras, or anyone who could compare with him as a faithful dis-

penser of Christ. That was a vital and a vigorous evangel! In the entire world it was growing and bearing fruit, not only in Colosse. In Christendom today it has almost degenerated into a religion or a philosophy, so that its vitality is largely gone, and its grace has vanished. But in those days it came to the nations with a freshness and pristine power which has seldom, if ever, been equaled since. Alas, how few of the most advanced believers have "realized the grace of God in truth"!

As Epaphras is related to Paul in service, he calls him his beloved *fellow slave.* In reference to the Colossians he is not their slave, but their *servant,* and so a *dispenser* of Christ to them. Perhaps his special characteristic lies in the fact that he was not satisfied to merely bring Christ to men for salvation, but he struggled in prayer that they might stand *mature* and *fully assured* in all the will of God (4:12). He it is who reports to Paul, and who makes evident to him their love in spirit. Doubtless this epistle is based on his report, and is also an answer to Epaphras' prayers for the Colossians.

TYCHICUS REPORTS TO THE COLOSSIANS

In the complementary part of the epistle (4:7-9), a report goes from Paul to the Colossians, borne by two who are with him. Not much is said of these concerns in this epistle, as they belong in the sphere of service, and so are found in Philippians. However necessary it may have been for Paul to know about the Colossians, it was far more needful that they should know and understand the significance of the events which have befallen him as the prisoner of the Lord. Can we imagine with what tension the ecclesias established by Paul or on his teaching would watch the course of

events which threatened to put an end to his career and, perhaps, utterly wipe out his testimony in the earth?

To the human eye the course of the apostle seemed to indicate the end of his career. It would leave the believers among the nations in a position of great perplexity. The contrary was the result. Paul's imprisonment led to the spread of the evangel, both by himself among the guard, and by others who were emboldened by his example. The status of the believers among the nations was fully cleared up by the revelation of the two secrets—that of Christ in Colossians, and of the new administration in Ephesians. The apostle explains much of this himself to the Philippians. He leaves it to others to do this to the Colossians and those who received the Ephesian epistle (Eph.6:21,22).

Tychicus, the fortunate, seems to have been the principal agent of the apostle in this matter. If Ephesians was a circular letter, he may have gone among the ecclesias in order to assure the believers that God was using the apparent evil in order to promote the evangel, and, at the same time was using the occasion in order to divulge His latest and highest revelation, the supernal destiny of the nations, together with the lavish grace which characterizes the new administration which follows on the setting aside of Israel until the complement of the nations has come in.

In Ephesians Tychicus seems to be commissioned for the one purpose of making known *Paul's* concerns to others (6:21,22), but in Colossians he not only makes known all of Paul's affairs, but also that they may know what concerns *them* (4:8). The word *you* (that which concerns *you*) is found in the uncorrected

Sinaiticus. Alexandrinus, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus corrected read *us*, but Sinaiticus was changed back again by the latest editor. The tendency, we submit, would be to make Colossians and Ephesians the same, hence *us* is not as probable as *you*. In fact, until we take into account the contents of the two epistles the reading we have used seems out of line with the context.

In Ephesians we have a full account of "that which concerns *you*" (the saints), hence Tychicus had no need to make these known to those who received that epistle. But Colossians does not contain the things that concern them so much as the things that concern Christ. The Colossians, as well as all believers of this secret administration, need to know what concerns *them*, especially what had been made known just at this juncture. This revelation was soon lost, and is almost unknown today. Hence it seems trite, if not foolish, for Tychicus to inform the Colossians of their own affairs. Only as we realize the great change which had taken place in their status, can we see how vital it was for him to tell them of these things, as well as to explain the career of Paul.

What a consolation it must have been to the Colossians to get the report of Tychicus! From dark forebodings their hearts are filled with joy unutterable and full of glory. Behind the dismal clouds of distressing circumstance God's brightest sun is shining with beams of almost unbearable brilliance. Paul's imprisonment, though the end of earth's physical expectations for a time, is but the beginning of a celestial, spiritual administration which will far excel all that God has previously revealed. And *they*, they are chosen to fill the highest place in God's purpose of love.

With Tychicus goes Onesimus, a typical specimen of the grace now being disclosed to the nations. Just as he was an unprofitable, runaway slave who was returned to his master by Paul during his imprisonment, so the nations are fleeing far from God, yet are being brought back to Him through Paul's gracious evangel. We would recommend the reading of Paul's letter to Philemon in this connection. How clearly does grace shine in every line! From the lowest in the social scale on earth, Onesimus is graced with the highest honors in the heavens. He shares with Tychicus the privilege of conveying to Colosse, his own home, the report which will bring so much joy and blessing.

Would that the believers today were more concerned about Paul and his imprisonment, with all that is involved! So important does he deem it that he cannot close the epistle until he has written with his own hand, *Remember my bonds!* Yet let us not only recall his chains but the whole crisis through which he passed, for it was all symptomatic and expressive of the grandest truths and greatest revelations ever made to mortal man. Let us take the report as sent to ourselves, and let us seek to enter into their joy, and return thanks to our God for the grandeur of His grace. A.E.K.

(To be continued)

STUDIES IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

As we work on the preparation of the complete Concordant Version of the Old Testament we hope to publish articles dealing with the current translation problems on this project. At present we will discontinue the publication of the Psalms with Notes but hope to carry on the series on Ezekiel and the reprint of Bro. Gelesnoff's notes on the Minor Prophets.

SCENE SIX

By the creation of humanity in God's image, His purpose is made to converge onto this earth and mankind. In this scene, it is further contracted to one land and one nation. For we now see Abraham, called out of his homeland of Chaldea, established in a land given him by God, and the recipient of the promise of a seed in which all families of the earth would be blessed.

The land of promise (though considerably larger than modern Palestine or Israel) is really a very small part indeed of the earth's surface. Yet to the nation, which was descended from Abraham through Jacob, was shown God's favor. "But you do I know of all the families of the ground," He told them through the prophet Amos (3:2). With them He made a covenant, and to them He gave His law. With them He established His priesthood; for them He appointed judges and chose kings. To them He committed His oracles and sent His prophets.

By giving them His law, with all its attendant detail, God seemingly constricted His purpose still further, for He bound Himself, as a matter of supreme honor, to remain true to that code which He had established. Whatever He might do in the future regarding His chosen people, He could not nullify or abrogate the law which He made at Sinai, for that set the standard of His justice. Henceforth, He must not only be just,

but be seen to be just by that standard. And the One Who was to come as a Saviour must of necessity be able to demonstrate His ability to keep that perfect law; otherwise He would be no better than the rest.

Again, God's purpose was further confined within the bounds set by His prophets, who, one after another, made prognostications which God, in honor, was bound to fulfill. How often do we read, "that that may be fulfilled which was declared by the Lord through the prophet" (or words of similar intent)! Of course, the prophets never spoke their own words, but those that were inspired by God's Spirit (2 Pet.1:21). God was continually setting Himself limits within which His intentions must be contained. A supreme grandeur lies in this, for it shows that in every way God is master of His purpose.

Yes, God seemingly made His purpose as hard as possible. A virgin was to conceive, and bear a Son. This Son was to be born in a particular place, for Micah prophesied that the future Ruler should come out of Bethlehem (Mic.5:2). To achieve this, God influenced the mightiest man in the world at that time, the Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, and caused him to pass a decree that all the world which he ruled should be registered. It was in response to this decree that Joseph and Mary were induced to make the very trying journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem at a time when Mary was about to bring forth her first-born Son. And it was this same decree that filled the inn with similar travelers, who, being able to move more quickly, could get there first.

John H. Essex

(To be continued)

WHO KNEW THE MIND OF THE LORD?
PART FOUR

"For who knew the mind of the Lord? Who will be deducing from Him?" (1 Cor.2:16). In the light of the revelation through the apostle Paul—"That which is of God no one knows, except the spirit of God" (1 Cor.2:11)—there can only be one answer to both questions: "No one." Human beings, possessed as they are of the spirit of humanity, cannot of themselves, intuitively or by any process of deduction, know "the mind of the Lord." This is the *absolute* position, and it would have remained so were it not for the fact that God has graciously revealed His mind "by many portions and many modes," granting His spirit to permit of understanding. To His chosen people, "in the last of these days," God spoke "in a Son." Some heard the words spoken, and believed. Further, God provided humanity with His Word.

Ignorance of "that which is of God"—ignorance of "the mind of the Lord"—has been a marked feature of the human mind throughout the course of two eons. In the Ephesian epistle, the apostle Paul enjoins: "By no means are you still to be walking according as those of the nations also are walking, in *the vanity of their mind*, their comprehension being darkened, being estranged from the life of God because of *the ignorance that is in them* . . ." (Eph.4:17,18).

But the "chief men of this eon" who compassed the assassination of the Lord Jesus Christ could not know "the mind of the Lord." Nevertheless, the wisdom of God moved forward (and still moves forward) amidst the ways of human ignorance, but unimpeded by it, to fulfill the Divine intention. Let us listen to the apostle Peter concerning this: "I am aware that *in ignorance* you commit it, even as your chiefs also. Yet what God announces before through the mouth of all the prophets—the suffering of His Christ—*He thus fulfills*" (Acts 3:17,18); and also hear Paul: "For those dwelling in Jerusalem and their chiefs, *being ignorant* of Him and the voices of the prophets which are read on every sabbath, *fulfill them* in judging Him. And, finding not one cause of death, they request Pilate to have Him despatched" (Acts 13:27,28).

The apostle Paul himself, of course, knew, experientially and to his shame, the folly of activity *in ignorance*. Concerning his "behavior in Judaism," his persecution of the ecclesia of God, he writes: "But I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it *being ignorant*, in unbelief" (1 Tim.1:13). During the course of his second missionary journey, Paul was able to announce to the Athenian philosophers (by whom, in spite of their ignorant devotions, any suggestion that *they* were involved in such times would, doubtless, have been instantly repudiated), that God was "condoning the *times of ignorance*" (Acts 17:23,30).

As already indicated, God has graciously provided humanity with His Word. Do we value the treasure that He has entrusted to us? Gradually, part by part, over centuries, as holy men of God were "carried on by holy spirit" (2 Pet.1:21), the Scriptures were produced. It was granted to Paul *to complete* the Word of God (Col.1:15), not in the time sense (for

other parts of the Greek Scriptures were compiled after Paul had completed his epistles and personal letters), but as to the universal compass of the truths revealed, for his writings embrace the celestials in God's eonian purpose, in the ministry of the ecclesia (the body of Christ) and in the ultimate reconciliation of all through Christ (Col.1:20). To Paul was granted also the grace "to bring the evangel of *the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations*" (Eph.3:8), the glad news of Christ's *universal* glories.

The revelation by God to the apostle Paul of the truth concealed from the eons in the *secret of Christ* (Eph.3:4; Col.4:3) is the truth which enabled Paul to complete the word of God. The secret is also called "the secret of the God and Father of Christ" (Col.2:2) and "the secret of His will" (Eph.1:9), and it is clearly defined in Ephesians 1:10: ". . . to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up *all* in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on earth . . . ." As alluded to earlier, in the section headed "A secret designated beforehand for our glory," the *initial*—the present—aspect of the secret of Christ is "Christ among you [the nations], the expectation of glory" (Col.1:21-29). The secret of Christ is distinct from the secret administration of the grace of God (Eph.3:1-3,6,7), but both are in the closest accord. An understanding of the secret administration depends on a clear grasp of the truth of the secret of Christ.

God has, indeed, in His loving kindness, provided and preserved His Word for His creatures, and it is widely available in a world in which strenuous efforts have been made and still are being made to discredit it, yet millions possess it and many love it. However, we humans, although we possess the Scriptures, can

not automatically know "that which is of God," even though His Word is a revelation of Himself and of His ways. We all require, and must have, the interpretative spirit of God if we are to be led into and perceive "those things which are of God."

Might we consider for a moment the human reaction to matters spiritual, as we find this given in the small section of the first Corinthian epistle (1:10-3:23). Of the nine occurrences of the words "stupid" and "stupidity" in that section, a simple structure of the references indicates that the first, fourth and seventh are found in contexts which deal with the human response to "the word of the cross."

To those who are perishing, "the word of the cross" (undeniably a truth which is "of the spirit of God") is *stupidity* (1:18); "The heralding of Christ crucified" ("the word of the cross" expressed in a different form), is a *snare* to Jews, and, to the nations, *stupidity* (1:23,24). To the soulish man, motivated as he is by "the spirit of the world," "those things which are of the spirit of God" are *stupidity* (2:14). The *soulish* man is not receiving, and is *not able to know* the treasures of truth from the mind of the Lord.

But thanks be to our God and Father, this darkness of mind does not envelop all. All hearts are not stubbornly closed, for the Lord has opened up many hearts to Himself (just as He opened Lydia's—Acts 16:14), and made them the homes and temples of His holy spirit, and of the spirit of His Son. The "spirit's *law of life* in Christ Jesus" operates within the heart of each saint (Rom.8:2).

Thus it is God's *delight* "through the stupidity of the heralding, *to save* those who *are believing*." The heralding of "Christ crucified," which is to so many stupidity (in Greek, "stupid" is *mōron*), is to those who

are being *called,* "the *power* and the *wisdom* of God." Then to those *called,* and *believing* the evangel concerning God's Son, the crucified and risen Christ, and *saved* by the power of that evangel and by the grace of God, God will reveal, through His spirit, that which He has so graciously given to us, which is defined as "whatever He makes ready for those who are loving Him" (1 Cor.2:11-13). Without the indispensable leading of God's spirit—the spirit of truth—we would remain in ignorance of "that which is of God."

Understanding of the Scriptures may not come to us quickly nor easily. It certainly cannot be forced. We must not be discouraged if our perception of spiritual matters develops only slowly. If we love God and love His Word, we will soon come to realize that His Word becomes precious to us and holds us in the power of its truth. God speaks to us as we read His Word, and perception will come in the measure that it pleases Him to give it.

If the reader will bear with a very simple, personal reminiscence, the following is offered in the hope that it may be of some help, as it has been to myself. A brother beloved said to me several years ago that when he found difficulty with a matter in the Scriptures, he opened them before God, and, in prayer to God, sought His enlightenment on the point of truth which was eluding him.

The foregoing gives evidence of a very humble disposition and indicates the correct attitude of the believer towards God and His Word. At the same time, it is also a recognition of the truth that "that which is of God *no one knows, except* the spirit of God." We rely completely upon God's spirit for our understanding of that which is of "the mind of the Lord." So great are the glories revealed in the Scrip-

tures for us, that there is the pressing and constant need for us *all* to pray Paul's prayer: ". . . making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you *a spirit of wisdom* and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, *for you to perceive* . . ." (Eph.1:16-18). May we so be praying!

WHO WILL BE DEDUCING FROM HIM?

By the use of the word "deducing" (Greek: *sumbibazō*) in 1 Corinthians 2:16, the apostle Paul has moved away from the area of thought around the terms "counselor" and "adviser" in the Isaiah and Romans' verses respectively (LXX and other texts: *sumboulos*).

The thought underlying the words "deducing from Him" is that of an endeavor to *obtain* understanding of "the mind of the Lord" by some process of mental effort. To "counsel" or "advise" (as in the original and Romans' contexts), implies *giving:* the suggesting, offering or giving of a recommendation on a course of action with a view to assisting or influencing another.

In view of this change of term, the question arises, Has the apostle misquoted the verse? We must at once, and firmly discount that idea! Paul could not enjoin: "Have a pattern of *sound words* which you hear from me . . ." and then be careless in the transcription of a quotation.

The quotation has its inspired place within a context (1:10-3:23) in which the main subject is the *secret* wisdom of God in the cross of Christ, bound up in which is the truth, "the word of the cross." Further, we are left in *no* doubt as to the esoteric character of "that which is of God." The things which are of the

spirit of God can only be perceived by revelation—God reveals them through His spirit.

It was of "the mind of Christ" when He could say (and state a divine principle in doing so): "I am acclaiming Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for Thou *hidest* these things from the wise and intelligent and Thou dost *reveal* them to minors" (Matt.11:25).

Our God and Father requires no counsel or advice, nor (except when He chooses to reveal His thoughts) can His mind be known. In these circumstances, none is able to "be deducing from Him." None can "put two and two together" (see the KEYWORD CONCORDANCE under 'unite' and 'deduce,' page 315) and reach a correct conclusion as to what is in the mind of the Lord. The employment of the changed term is not arbitrary but is inspired, and is in wonderful accord with the truths which form the setting for this quotation from the scroll of Isaiah.

THE MIND OF CHRIST

The truth announced following the quotation of the Isaiah verse—"Yet *we have* the mind of Christ" (1Cor.2:15,16)—must surely rank, along with others of like wonder—such as "that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor.5:21), "for His achievement are we" (Eph.2:10), and "you are complete in Him" (Col.2:10)—as an astounding revelation of the manifold grace of God in His Beloved for the believer.

As we seek to consider the truth that *we have* the mind of Christ—that believers *possess* the mind of Christ—it will be of assistance to us if we distinguish between the *mind* of Christ (*nous:* "the means of thought") and the *disposition* of Christ (*phroneō:* "to

be disposed, inclined or biased towards"). The mind of Christ is distinct from His disposition, yet is in total accord with it; the two are *never* at variance, but are always in complete harmony. The *disposition* of Christ was revealed in the fullest measure in His emptying of Himself of the form of God, His taking the form of a slave, His humbling of Himself and in His obedience to the death of the cross (Phil.2:5-8).

The mind of Christ is unique, for it has the character and capacity to receive "those things which are of the spirit of God." This is in complete contrast to "the soulish man" who cannot receive and is not able to know that which is of God's spirit. The mind of Christ is the mind of *the* One in Whom God has "concealed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col.2:3). It is, therefore, *the* mind capable of perceiving the *wisdom* of the counsel of His Father's will, which He counseled within Himself before He brought forth His Firstborn.

Not only did God's beloved Son possess, in His own mind, the wisdom to perceive the wisdom of His Father's counsel, but the mind of Christ *concurred in all* that His Father had determined, except, of course, the secrets which God had concealed (in "the depths of God") to await the future time of their revelation to the apostle Paul.

The counsel of God's will (in which Christ fully concurred) involved the placing, *in* Christ, of "the all" (creation) which the Father had brought forth from Himself *subsequent to* the bringing forth of the Son of His love. In the ensuing process of "the all" coming to be *through* Christ, God's creative Original (Rev.3:14; *cf* John 1:3; Rom.11:33-36; 1 Cor.8:5-7; Col.1:16,17), the Adversary (the counterworker), inveterately opposed to the Headship of Christ, had to be brought

into being. This took place in the first eon, followed in the same eon by the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4). In the third eon, Christ was crucified.

All that the eons will hold in the long course from their beginning to their consummation, the wisdom of Christ and the mind of Christ are fully competent to contain. *All* has its cohesion in Him (Col.1:17) and all will be carried forward by Him for the glory of His God and Father.

The obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ "even to the death of the cross," displayed the inviolable concord of the mind and disposition of Christ, revealing, also, the absolute trustworthiness of His primal acquiescence in *all* of His Father's counsel. That acquiescence was no transitory assent, but its lasting worth is proved by His obedience in all things.

When we consider the singular and sterling quality of "the mind of Christ," it is not easy for us to realize that we, believers, aware of the instability and fickleness of the human mind, *have* the mind of Christ. Nevertheless, it is a clear statement of Scripture, so, when our understanding falters and would give place to incredulity, let us quickly remind ourselves that God has given to us, as His approach present (Eph.2:8), the *faith to believe His Word.* Just as "Christ is made unto us wisdom from God, besides righteousness, holiness and deliverance" (1 Cor.1:30), and we seek to realize the truth of this and to live in the power of these possessions, so God has given us also "the mind of Christ" that we may continually exercise our minds in recognition of the wisdom of His ways.

The possession of "the mind of Christ" will enable the believer to see that as the Saviour's *delight* lay in His *obedience* to His Father, so, in like manner,

should we, the "beloved by God, called saints," who "*have* the mind of Christ," find *our* joy in *obedience* to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How, then, can *our* minds be brought into harmony with the mind *of Christ* which has been given to us? The following entreaties from the pen of the beloved apostle Paul contain for us the guidance that we need (Rom.12:1,2; Eph.4:20-24):

> 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 mature.

> Now you did not thus learn Christ, since, surely, Him you hear, and by Him were taught (according as the truth is in Jesus), to put off from you, as regards your former behavior, the old humanity which is corrupting in accord with its seductive desires, yet *to be rejuvenated in the spirit of your mind,* and to put on the new humanity . . . .

May we be complying and know the peace of the concord of our minds with the mind of Christ.

Alan Reid

(To be continued)

FLOODS IN JAMAICA

Pastor James Hemmings of the Bible Truth Church of God in Kingston, Jamaica reports of severe flooding in his country leaving thousands homeless. "I am appealing to you and any agency you know who can help us with food and clothing or money to assist some of our brethren and others who are now destitute through this natural disaster." Besides the human suffering, some of their church buildings have been severely damaged. "Many nations and agencies are helping our country in our great need; but many of our people who are really needy are not getting much of the things which were intended for them . . . . Please publish this report for us so that if there are any of your readers who can help, they may be able to do so."

THE FRUIT OF GRACE

How can grace deal with the failures of our flesh?

A marvelous passage in Galatians sets forth the pattern. It reads as follows: With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ (Gal.2:20). Notice that this reads somewhat differently from the A.V. It is a beautiful example of emphasis. *Christ* has the emphatic position. It begins with Christ and ends with Christ. We are given the least emphatic place, together with a negative. The very form of this passage teaches us the truth which it sets forth.

Later, the apostle shows the practical side: Now those of Christ Jesus *crucify* the flesh together with its passions and lusts (Gal.5:24). Notice that! God is demonstrating what men amount to in the flesh, so, at the very beginning of the truth for the Uncircumcision, Paul shows the foundation of it, the crucifixion of the flesh. Then again, in Galatians 6:12, "Whoever are wanting to put on a fair face in the flesh, these are compelling you to circumcise, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ Jesus." Ever so many of the Lord's people are included in this category. Where are those who do not try to put on a fair face in the flesh? Religion is largely an attempt to make something out of the flesh. But Paul says: "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" (Gal.6:14). You see, it is not the *death* of Christ merely, for salvation, but the *cross* of Christ for humiliation. So few make the distinction, but there is a tremendous difference. It is the *shameful* death. *The end of the flesh is in view here.* All the attempts to be spiritual Israel, to associate ourselves with the physical features of the evangel of the Circumcision, all that is in connection with the flesh and is finished in our case. Alas, how few indeed see the truth that we have been crucified with Christ.

Much good teaching concerning grace has failed to be fruitful because those who heard did not realize their need of it. They cannot consider themselves so utterly degraded, so grace is wasted on them. My prayer is that God may in some way or another make the reader of these lines realize the death to which God has put them by crucifixion. Then it will not be difficult to reveal His grace to them, and for us to revel in its power.

If we, being complete in Christ, appear guiltless before God and no act on our part can separate us from that love, what incentive is there to induce one to resist the temptations of immorality?

This question always arises upon the reception of the conciliation. Indeed, immediately after the apostle sets forth this transcendent truth in the fifth of Romans, he asks and answers two questions, which put the same difficulty before us.

The first (Rom.6:1) is: "What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing?" The second (v.15) is: "Should we be sinning, seeing that we are not under law but

under grace?" The first question is answered by setting forth the truth of our death with Christ and our life toward God. It ends with the significant statement that "Sin shall not be lording it over you, for you are not under law, but under grace." "Thou shalt" and "thou shalt not" has been tried, but law has utterly failed to emancipate man from Sin. On the contrary, law brings bondage to Sin. But grace gives perfect liberty. Yet liberty is not license. It is true that, if we persist in sin, grace will increase. But it is also true that 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. It was fitting, and in accord with His purpose, that we should sin while being estranged and enemies, for this provided for a display of His favor, but now that we know Him, no such fitness exists, and sin would reflect upon His character. To persist in sin, while inviting more grace, is contrary to the tendency and teaching of that grace.

But then, without *persisting* in sin, *may* we sin, seeing we are not under law but under grace? Here again the fact that sin cannot but call for grace is not denied. It would be an immense relief to many of God's dear saints if they could only realize this emancipating truth. But they are afraid that it will lead to looseness and sin. On the contrary, 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 would become, in practice at least, that which we once were, of which we are now ashamed. We would act as Sin's slaves when we are God's slaves. The rations of Sin are death and distance from God—

which we cannot bear. We might be tempted to think that God gives eonian life as *wages* to those who serve Him. Not so. It is given to us as a free gift, altogether apart from our conduct. But does not this very fact, coupled with all His favors in the past and present, appeal to us most potently so that we voluntarily leave the service of Sin for the service of God?

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 should be and are far more manageable in the liberty of grace than under the lash of the law.

A.E.K.

JOSEPH C. FALDER

As we go to press, we learn of the sudden death on July 30th of our brother Falder, at the age of 65. He leaves his wife Ida and three daughters, to whom we extend our sympathy.

Bro. Falder was an indefatigable advocate of the precious truths we hold, and acted as one of our agents for Australia. He also founded "The Unity of the Spirit Ministry," and helped make our work known by sending out mailings to Christian bookstores throughout Australia. He was also an ardent evangelist.

In short, Bro. Falder was so anxious to make known the work of our Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary, and the fact that it was effective for all mankind, that he tended to drive himself beyond his strength at times, even perhaps to the point of impairing his health.

Our dear brother will be missed, not only by the local saints with whom he met, but also by the many brethren all over the world with whom he corresponded regularly.

Surely it cannot be long before we shall all be united once again at His glorious appearing. Good night, dear brother, until that blessed morning dawns.

E.O.K.

HOSEA*

HOSEA's opening discourse is a dark picture of apostasy encircled in a golden frame of promise. A far-reaching crisis intervenes between promise and consummation. It is declared with unmistakable definiteness, that Israel will first be dissolved in the crucible of judgment, and then, redeemed therefrom, fulfill its true destiny. Instead of perfecting the then present legal system, he announces inflexibly its approaching end, which after long denationalization will be followed by a regeneration, the making of a new covenant.

The message of Hosea unfolds itself according to a singularly consistent and methodic arrangement which contrasts strangely with the picturesque abruptness of his style. It divides into three sections. The moral connection between the parts is clear. The opening (1:2-3:5) and closing (13:9-14:8) sections are founded on the two leading images under which Hosea conceives the relation between Jehovah and Israel. The first, under the image of marriage in its legal and primal aspects, sets forth the status of Israel under law and under promise. The dissolution of the

*These notes by Vladimir Gelesnoff were excerpted from his series on the Minor Prophets in the *U.R.*, Vols.11,12 (1919-1921). The quotations have been brought up to date with the CV of the Minor Prophets (1979).

legal bond is followed by a long period of denationalization. The primal bond, being indissoluble, is the basis of Israel's hope, the pledge of its future blessing and restoration. The concluding section presents the same set of facts under the figure of sonship in its double aspect. First, we see the infantile stage: Israel, chafing under the restraints of guardianship, kicks off the traces, and goes astray. Then we see maturity: Israel, renouncing childish pranks and youthful follies, yields intelligent, voluntary obedience to God. Both sections move in the family circle and merge their pathos in producing one connected realistic picture: an unhappy family experience with a happy ending.

The intervening section (4:1-13:8) reviews the chain of providential dealings flowing from the privileged relationship. Hosea's conception of Israel's failure comes down to one fundamental principle: attempt to divorce responsibility from privilege. By repudiating the former and claiming the latter Israel stultified itself with a sense of self-security, while indolence, loose morals, formalism and spiritual conceit sapped its very vitals. Jehovah could neither brook the evil nor blot out the evildoer forever. Neither holiness nor love could be satisfied by such procedure. "How shall I dispense to you, Ephraim? Shall I award you, Israel? How shall I dispense to you as Admah? Shall I make you as Zeboim? My heart is turned in Me; My comfortings fervid together. I will not execute the heat of My anger; I will not return to ruin Ephraim, for the Al am I, and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not enter into the city" (11:8,9). God's love and holiness can forgive and forget, for it is free from all passion even in its wrath. The tracing of the correctives designed to purge Israel from evil and restore it

to conjugal fidelity and filial devotion is marked throughout by intense animation. The argument sways to and fro between two opposites—of inflexible justice which will bleed Israel to death, and conquering love which, in spite of all, finds a way of mercy. Hosea always, behind judgment, discloses a prospect of redemption. The whole concludes with an appeal to the wise to consider God's ways with His people.

Israel's backsliding is presented under the emblem of the adulterous wife: "Go, take to you a wife of prostitutions and children of prostitutions, for the land is verily committing prostitution rather than following Ieue" (1:2). It is important to note that the wife is not (as generally interpreted) the nation as such. The mother and her children are consistently distinguished. The children are urged to contend with their mother for her shameful conduct (2:2). They are deprived of compassion for their mother's misdeeds (2;4,5). They face the threat, "I will still your mother" (4:1-5). The two represent the constituent elements in the system described as "land." The children symbolize the people of Northern Israel. The power which welded Northern Israel into a nation, which molded its character, and directed its course as a body politic—that power is the mother. The wife of whoredom is the religio-political system represented by the kings and the priesthood. The system set up by Jeroboam, from first to last, held Israel with an unshaken grip.

The children of the adulterous wife symbolize successive stages of divorce from God. Their names remind the people of the coming misery and doom. They indicate the steps in the process of repudiation; loss of independence, withdrawal of compassion,

deposal from the position as God's especial people. The first child was named *Jezreel* (1:4,5). It spells the doom of the then ruling dynasty of Jehu, due to the excesses committed by him at Jezreel (2 Kings 9,10). The second child received the name *Uncompassioned* (Loruhamah) to indicate that the divine attitude of protective benevolence, hitherto enjoyed by the sinful nation, was henceforward to be altered into one of active hostility (1:6). When God's compassion is withdrawn the state of repudiation quickly ensues. Thus Hosea is instructed about his third child as follows: "Call his name *Lo-ammi* (Not-my-people), for you are not My people, and I am not your I Am Becoming" (1:9). For the sake of clearness, let one thing be firmly borne in mind—the limitation of this decree of repudiation to Northern Israel. It is explicitly affirmed (1:7) that God's compassion will be continued toward Judah, who is to be delivered from the power of Assyria, to which Israel succumbs.

Despite the putting away, the Abrahamic promise of a countless posterity stands fast (Gen.22:17-28:14). As it was promised to the progenitor of the nation that in his seed all nations shall be blessed, this people cannot always remain a witness to the divine curse. As it now bears the stamp of estrangement from God, so shall it unmistakably bear the stamp of divine approval. One by one the successive steps in the process of repudiation are reversed and undone until the symbols of judgment become the signs and tokens of salvation.

In the central section of Hosea, the impending doom fills the foreground, the promise of salvation forms merely the bright fringe of the judgment cloud then ascending. The names of the prophet's children indicated the successive disasters that were to overtake

the Northern Kingdom and wipe it out of existence, without specifying in what way, or by what means, the disasters would be brought about. The successive blows to which Ephraim succumbed are the focal points of the central section. The long-drawn-out process of uprooting Israel is here traced from inception to completion.

The distinctive feature of Hosea is the presentation of God's relationship to Israel under the emblem of human ties. The representation varies to suit the special character of each discourse. The opening address applies the idea of wedlock to the relation between God and Ephraim; it presents in the Divine Being the burning love of the husband for the wife of his youth who has turned unfaithful. In the next discourse God appears as an outraged ruler, swaying in alternate moods, between tender reminiscences of Israel's youth and His own loving mercies, and outbursts of righteous indignation against an ungrateful people. At the close God is represented as an offended parent who yearns tenderly over his wayward child. The closing scene lacks the intense animation of antecedent sections. In the earlier discourses, where apostasy and judgment are in progress, excitement reaches its height. Now the trial of Ephraim is closed, and the high pitch of excitement and animation incident to action give place to sedate composure and calm reflection.

Hosea is one with the other prophets in the aim and nature of his prophecy, but differs from them in his mode of viewing and stating things. The characteristic confidence of the prophets, that God will at last turn everything to the good of His people, after they have drunk the cup of woe to the dregs, appears in Hosea in still more triumphant form. Hosea is the impassioned

herald of God's love for His fallen people. True, he deals mainly in rebuke. He is obliged to expose the moral corruption, vice and godlessness of his generation. Terrible disaster must soon overtake the Northern Kingdom and its rulers. Judah also, as he clearly perceives, will be involved in it. This insight into the underlying causes of apostasy is joined with the prospect of compassion just as deep. Thus, after stern rebuke, the most glorious promise bursts forth without any introduction. Despite all appearances to the contrary, he knows that God will do good to His people at the end, and verify His promises.

Vladimir Gelesnoff

SUMMER MEETINGS

The glory of eonian things, the peace in knowing God has a purpose during all the eons, and the grace of our place in this purpose were among the many subjects discussed and enjoyed during the Baldwin (Michigan) Fellowship for 1979. At the Pauline Church of Christ near Wagener, South Carolina, the theme of our walk in spirit focused the attention on right conduct, quiet minds and faithfulness to God's Word, bearing the fruit of the spirit in our lives.

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THE EONIAN GOD

IT is to God's glory that everything He reveals about Himself is of practical value to us. As we get to know Him better we become better people. The more we grasp of His love, the more we are walking in love; the more we appreciate of His righteousness and power, the more we participate in them and bring glory to His Name.

The same holds true regarding God's relationship to time. We want to know God better, but He often seems so distant from us. And if He presents Himself as outside of time, then He seems more removed from us than ever. If time is foreign to God, then can He really appreciate what time means to us? With all due respect to the concepts that God is eternal and that He inhabits eternity, we nevertheless question that these are scriptural revelations. While it is inconceivable that there could be a beginning (let alone an end!) to God, this concept of eternity itself is beyond our grasp and is of little practical value.

ROMANS 16:26

In the closing words of Paul's epistle to the Romans, the apostle praises "the eonian God." Most English translations of this passage refer to "the eternal God."* The arguments in favor of "eternal" or

*Besides the *Concordant Literal New Testament,* other exceptions to this pattern are Scarlett's translation ("the æonian God"), *Young's Literal Translation* ("the age-during God"), and Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible* ("the age-abiding God").

"everlasting" are certainly attractive. Who would want to lessen an attribute of God? It is true that many who defend the traditional rendering and charge us with denying the eternity of God, themselves put limits on such qualities of God as His love or His righteousness. But that cannot excuse us for putting limits on God's existence, if indeed that is what we are doing by rendering the Greek word *aiōnios* by the English word *eonian*, including this reference in Romans 16:26.

But what is the translator to do in this passage? The word *aiōnios* appears in the immediately preceding verse as an expression of time. What was hushed in times eonian is now manifested. If something was hushed in eternal times or times without beginning or end, it could never become manifested. If we are to be consistent and still render Romans 11:25 in a sensible way, then we must use *eonian* or *age-lasting* in verse 26.

Strangely perhaps, this is a happy solution. Yet it is not so strange after all. If it is true that Paul is speaking of the eonian God, then this translation is bound to be more helpful to us than the rendering, "the eternal God." The truth of God is always positive and edifying.

The adjective "eonian" does not limit the existence of God. It does not deny that He is without beginning or end. It simply is not dealing with the matter of the time extension (or time-exclusion) of God's existence. Rather it is speaking of His *involvement* in the ages. Were we to speak of the God Who is operating right now, in this present moment of time, we are not saying He was not God an hour or year or eon ago. He is the present God, but also the past and future God. So when we speak of the eonian God we are attuning our

minds and hearts to His operations in eonian times. He is the Subjector and Placer through all the eons.

Since, however, we are really unable to grasp infinity either of space or time, we may be satisfied that Scripture does not deal with such concepts. Instead it presents a series of eons or indefinitely long time periods, and tells us that God is God throughout them all.

DEVELOPMENT OF REVELATION

In the Old Testament this teaching of the eons is not developed as clearly as in the New Testament. The word translated "eon" in fact belongs to the Hebrew family of words to which we assign the standard, OBSCURE. Something traced back to the distant, hazy past was "from the eon" (Gen.6:4; Psa.93:2), and the indefinitely extended future could be spoken of as *to* or *for* the eon (e.g. Gen.3:22) with special reference to Israel's future kingdom (e.g. Psa.89:28).

But with the cross of Christ, which is the very focal point of the eonian times, the whole presentation of the eons is made more clear. The eonian times began with the work of Christ in view (Eph.3:11; 2 Tim.1:9), and the sacrifice of Christ was the essential work for their conclusion (Heb.9:26). Therefore, the whole matter of the eons, and what God is doing in them, becomes more prominent in the New Testament than in previous Scriptures.

This is especially so in Paul's writings which enter into the depths of God (1 Cor.2:10). Romans and Ephesians uniquely take us into secrets and revelations concerning God's eonian operations which display God's glory in ways never before appreciated or even guessed at. As the death and resurrection of Christ is made known, the pattern of the eons can be

perceived more clearly, as well as God's glory in planning and operating these eons.

A BASIS FOR OUR WALK

The recognition of God as the eonian God may be more valuable for us than we realize. As with all Scripture, it is beneficial for teaching, correction and discipline in righteousness (2 Tim.3:16,17).

It is not without significance that two of Paul's greatest outpourings of praise to God in His relation to the eons are followed immediately with practical matters for everyday life. These passages are in Romans and Ephesians and are certainly highlights of the apostle's writings. It should be instructive to read these apart from the chapter and paragraph divisions which have been introduced into the texts. In Romans 11:36 and 12:1 we have this development of thought: ". . . seeing that out of [God] and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! I am entreating you, then, brethren, by the pities of God, to present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God . . . ." In Ephesians 3:21 and 4:1 we read: ". . . to [God] be glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eons of the eons! Amen! I am entreating you, then, I the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called . . . ."

In both cases glory is ascribed to God for the eons, followed by an entreaty to worthy walk. The entreaty clearly is based on what preceded, as is shown by the use of the word "then" (Greek: *oun*).

Now while the practical sections are built on all the preceding teachings in Romans 1-11 and Ephesians 1-3, the immediate connection in both passages is with the glories of God developed through the eons and

manifested especially in the eons ahead. Our walk is predicated on the glories of God developed in eonian times.

Likewise "the injunction of the eonian God" in Romans 16:26 is joined with the "faith-obedience" which is for all the nations. This secret which had been hushed in times eonian but is now revealed was developed in Romans 5 and 11. There we learn that "being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son" (5:10) and that the "casting away" of Israel is accompanied by "the conciliation of the world" (11:15). This access in peace to God by believers, this position of conciliation before God, is a part of God's purpose of the eons. It is built on the work of God in Christ (2 Cor.5:18,19). And it is a change or adjustment in the previous pattern of eonian times as is suggested in Hebrews 11:2.

A BASIS FOR OUR PEACE

All of this is related to the fact that God is the eonian God. We need to see that all developments *in* time and all developments *of* time itself are under the direction of the eonian God and are related to His purpose of the eons which He has placed in Christ Jesus our Lord. This strengthens us in peace and patience.

In 1 Timothy 1:13-16 the apostle Paul recounted how the changes or adjustments of the times affected his own life: "I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief. Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, foremost of whom am I. But therefore was I shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ

should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian."

We may say that this pattern shown in Paul's experience has become a pattern for the times since then. What an adjustment of the eons! No longer are God's people called on the basis of their attitude and works. Enemies and sinners and the most undeserving are called in these times; mercy and grace are showered upon us, based solely on Christ Jesus' saving work.

This is the message of 1 Timothy 1:13-16, but notice what follows: "Now to the King of the eons, the incorruptible, invisible, only, and wise God, be honor and glory for the eons of the eons! Amen!"

We are not directed here to God as outside of time, ruling as the King eternal, but rather to God Who is ruling the eons, directing them by way of the cross to a glorious consummation. The changes in the eons are all part of His purpose and are part of the process to the end He has in view. This is a precious source of assurance and peace for us all.

The movement of time and the many changes that come about through the ages often disturb us. Yet our God is the eonian God. It is all in His hands. Let us lift up our hearts in praise to Him, for as we do we will find ourselves adjusting and adapting our own behavior to that of the eonian God, the King of the eons. Our logical divine service becomes patterned after the love and mercy of God displayed in these times. It is a joy to know Him as the eonian God Who is operating in us with power. And we also say, "to the only, and wise God, through Christ Jesus, be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!"

D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 1979
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY

EDITORIAL

AT THE TIME when the original books and epistles of the New Testament were written, there were several Hebrew texts of the Old Testament in circulation. About the year 100 A.D. they were collated to produce one authoritative text which was guarded through the following centuries by Jewish scholars, the Masoretes. It was the Jewish family Ben Asher (from the second half of the eighth through the middle of the tenth century) which was leading in the masoretic efforts to complete the standardization, vocalization and accentuation of the Hebrew text.

When A. E. Knoch, in the early twenties, began his search for a closer equivalent of the original Hebrew text, he started out with Ginsburg's Masoretic Edition which had been published by the Trinitarian Bible Society in 1894. This text was a collation of 75 old Hebrew manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; it was only for the *Pentateuch* that Ginsburg had a copy of the Ben Asher Text of the *ninth century.* He had also used 19 printed Hebrew Bibles, concluding with the 1525 Masoretic text of Jacob ben Hayyim which provided the basis for his collation, just as in his revised edition which was printed by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1926.

In Germany, the Stuttgart Bible Society had published Rudolf Kittel's Biblia Hebraica in 1909 which was closer to Jacob ben Hayyim's text than

Ginsburg's editions. It was on the advice of Paul Kahle that Kittel decided to use the Leningrad Codex for the forthcoming 3rd edition (1937). The Leningrad manuscript of the Old Testament Masoretic text had been written in 1008 A.D., only a few decades after the death of the great Aaron ben Asher himself.

It seems that copies of the Ben Asher Text soon came to the centers of Jewish learning in Spain where scholars multiplied it with great care. One such copy of a copy is the three volumes of OR 2626-28 in the British Museum in London which Norman H. Snaith used (together with other sources) in order to produce an equivalent to the true Ben Asher Text. The British Bible Society printed the new collation by Snaith in 1958.

Both Kittel and Kahle had hoped to use Ben Asher's master text, the Aleppo Codex, dating from the first half of the tenth century. However the synagogue authorities in Aleppo who owned it did not permit them to photograph it. Hence Kittel and Kahle had based their collation on the Leningrad Codex.

Ben Asher's Master Codex was feared lost in 1948 when Arab rioters burned and pillaged the old synagogue in Aleppo, Syria. But the major part of the manuscript was rescued and has since been partly evaluated by a committee in Jerusalem which is concerned with the "Hebrew University Bible Project." Recently a facsimile edition was published by Magnes Press (Jerusalem, 1976), as well as a sample edition with the printed text of one third of The Book of Isaiah. It will probably take another twenty years before all of the Old Testament (based on the Aleppo Codex, with added footnotes containing the most complete compilation of variant readings ever assembled) may be published.

The "Hebrew Old Testament Text Project" of the United Bible Societies began its work in 1969. It has benefited considerably from the publications of the Jerusalem committee and has so far published three volumes of preliminary and interim reports of decisions taken on specific passages (Stuttgart, 1973-77).

For his work on the Hebrew text, A. E. Knoch used the results of textual research as far as it was available in his day. His edition of Genesis had profited from Ginsburg's Pentateuch manuscript of the ninth century which was a true Ben Asher Text; in addition, A.E.K. had evaluated Ginsburg's marginal notations and the collection of readings by Davidson (*cf* Introduction to Genesis, Omissions in Both Texts, p.16).

For the preparation of the Concordant Version of Isaiah A. E. Knoch's Hebrew text was compared with the fourth edition of Biblia Hebraica and with facsimiles of the Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls of Isaiah which may be about one thousand years older than the Aleppo Codex. The Concordant Version has noted the more significant variants (out of about 1375) between Qumran and the traditional Masoretic Hebrew text. The most important one of these variations may well be the second line in 45:7.

> Former of light and Creator of darkness,
> Maker of *good* and Creator of evil.

At present we are working on the preparation of the Concordant Version of Deuteronomy. For this book and for the remaining unpublished parts (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers) of the Pentateuch, the evaluation results concerning the Aleppo Codex will be of little avail since most of the Pentateuch is missing, also part

of 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Minor Prophets, Chronicles and Psalms, as well as practically all of Song of Songs, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah.

In addition to A. E. Knoch's typewritten Hebrew text with his English sublinear and tentative translation, we are also scanning the Hebrew text, the footnotes and the marginal notations (the Masorah) of the revised 1977 edition of *B*iblia *H*ebraica [Stuttgartensia]. The Leningrad Codex on which this *BHS* is based, is considered to have been an attempt to adapt this manuscript to the Ben Asher Master Codex, especially as far as the masoretic marginal notations are concerned. Otherwise the two codices do not seem to differ so much in the wording of the Hebrew text, but rather in the layout of sections and in matters of spelling and accentuation.

The evaluation of the Aleppo Codex (by the committees of the Hebrew University and by the United Bible Societies) will probably lead to a clearing up of some apparent transcriptional errors in a number of single words. In a similar manner, the Qumran Manuscript had been especially helpful in smoothing out some of the thought rhymes in Isaiah, so that *the divine message* became somewhat clearer in a few instances though it was *not basically changed.* This is exactly what we expect as the result of our work on the preparation of the Complete Concordant Version of the Old Testament. So let us praise the Lord that He has preserved *His living and life-giving Word* throughout the past millennia. For "all Scripture is *inspired by God,* and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness, that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act" (2 Tim.3:16,17).

H.H.R.

THE SECRET OF CHRIST

(Colossians 1:9-17)

CREATION and reconciliation are the scenes of the supremacy of God's Son. The secret of Christ comprises the *creation* of all *in* Him at the commencement, and the *reconciliation* of all *through* Him at the consummation. We will leave the latter for a later meditation. But let us approach the theme as the apostle does, through a prayer that the saints will realize what it involves for them, and that they give thanks for their part in His preeminence.

This prayer of the apostle is far more needed today than ever before. In the midst of billions of sermons, and millions of books and magazines devoted to theology, how little insight is there into the will of God as revealed in His latest revelation! How small is the appreciation of His wisdom, how feeble the understanding of His purpose! And, as a result, the conduct of believers is lacking in fruit and power, and there is a want of endurance and joy and thanksgiving for the blessings which are not realized or appreciated. Therefore it is our privilege to emulate the apostle and pray for ourselves and for our fellow saints that the eyes of our hearts may be opened to see, and that it may lead to pleasing and thanking God.

THE REALIZATION OF HIS WILL

In the first of Ephesians we read of the *delight* of His will, the *secret* of His will, and the *counsel* of His

will (Eph.1:5,9,11). It is His delight to make us sons through Christ. Love has given us the highest and nearest place. It is the secret of His will to head up all in heaven as well as upon earth in Christ. The counsel of His will is that we should be for the laud of His glory. Let us not degrade the apostle's petition to a mere request for individual guidance in each step of our career. If we know His will concerning Christ and ourselves, that will shine upon our path and remove the need of being led like a blind man, every step of our way.

Guidance should not be a matter dependent on external circumstances or inward impulses, but of wisdom and spiritual understanding. The lack of these has left the saints to the mercy of the forces of evil. Many who imagine that the holy spirit has given them a special and definite revelation are the dupes of evil spirits. They do that which is contrary to the will of God because they are not acquainted with it. They imagine that the Scriptures are not sufficient and need to be supplemented by direct revelations of His will as occasion arises, forgetting that, *in the Scriptures,* the man of God is fitted out for every good act (2 Tim.3:17).

Let us pray, then, that the saints may be *filled* with a realization of His will in *all* wisdom and spiritual understanding, for only thus can we walk worthily of the Lord for *all* pleasing, and bear fruit in *every* good work. Here it is not merely a matter of pleasing God or of doing good—we all may do that in some measure even in our ignorance—but of putting quality and flavor into our actions such as will delight God's heart. May our actions never appear to help Him in His infirmity! Let them rather reveal Him and His power. Too much of Christian activity seems to be lending

God a hand as if He needed it, and is thus offensive to the Deity. Only a realization of His will can save us from this false attitude toward God and enable us to walk worthily, so as to please Him in all.

THE REALIZATION OF GOD

That God may be All in all is the universal goal. All of His operations during the eons are directed to this end. The latest revelations of His will are especially adapted to display the excellences of the divine wisdom and love, so that all who realize His will will appreciate Him in the measure in which they understand it. As this is unfolded to our hearts we should grow in our appreciation of God, and thus approach the final goal ahead of others of His creatures. May God become All in us in increasing measure as we contemplate the secret of Christ, and see His hand and head and heart engaged in drawing His creatures to Himself through sin and salvation.

ENDUED WITH ALL POWER

Power we often associate with great physical manifestations, such as the powers of the coming eon (Heb.6:5), which will bring health, strength, and blessing to the earth and its inhabitants. But we are endued with power for a different purpose. Although it is in accord with the power of His glory, it is not evident in a lightning-like appearance, or irresistible strength. It is not manifest in the conquest and removal of evil, but in *endurance and patience with joy.* The weakness about us is in accord with God's purpose, so it is not to be removed but endured. Let us do it with joy. Though the time seems protracted, there is power, not only for patience, but for joyful expectation.

THE SAINTS' ALLOTMENT

Along with the joy which His power imparts in the midst of trial and distress, our hearts should overflow with thanksgiving for the lot which has fallen to us. From dupes of darkness we have become saints in light. We were deceived by the Adversary like all the rest, groping in the gloom of this world's illumination. Out of the darkness we came, in it we existed, and into it we expected to go. Death to us was a leap in the dark. But now all is light! All is out of, and through, and to God. We know whence we came, and whither we are bound. We know that every moment of our lives is in His loving care. Light has come into our lives! God does not leave His saints in the dark. Their allotment is in the light. They are sons of the light and sons of the day. They are not of the night nor of the darkness (1 Thess.5:5).

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

God is light. The powers opposed to Him are darkness (Eph.6:12). We all were once under the authority of darkness, that great spiritual dominion which holds sway over the whole world. Mankind at large is groping in the dark. Men know not whence they come nor whither they go, nor why they are so busy running around in circles. But it will not be thus always. When this wicked eon ends, and the Adversary who is deceiving the nations is in the abyss, the sun will rise, and darkness, and its forces, will not again hold sway over mankind. For this world darkness is at an end when the kingdom comes. Then the knowledge of God will cover the earth as the waters cover the floor of the sea.

In our individual experience we have already passed out of this dark eon into the next. We have already

been rescued out of the authority of darkness and transported into the kingdom. Not, indeed, in fact, but in figure. The earthly kingdom has not yet come. The Adversary is not yet bound. But, thanks be to our Father, we are no longer subject to his will, nor are we victims of his deception. Our allegiance has been transferred to Another Who is our spiritual Suzerain. So that, in the spirit sphere, the kingdom has already come for us, minus all its physical manifestations. We are in a spiritual kingdom whose Sovereign is the same as the Messiah Who will one day reign over the nations of the earth. But in this kingdom He bears another title, to comport with its spiritual character. He is the Son—the Son of God's love.

Every title of our Lord reflects a glory all its own. As Christ, He will be the King, the Priest, and the Prophet of the coming eon. Yet even there, as the Son of David, He will have a special glory, confined to the chosen nation. As Son of Mankind, He will rule over the whole race which sprang from Adam. In all of these capacities He will be over the political powers on the earth. Not so the present spiritual kingdom. It does not conflict with man's rule. Indeed, we are obliged to be subject to the authorities, as well as to pray for them. Therefore His title in the present kingdom is not Christ. Neither is He the Son of any man, as David or Adam, but of God. God is a Spirit, and His Son is such in spirit, not in flesh.

In anticipation of the coming kingdom of God upon the earth, when the race shall be freed from the thralldom of its spiritual despotism, the saints, and they alone, are rescued from the realm of darkness, and transported to a different allegiance, that of God's Son. To complete the picture, our sins are pardoned, and we have deliverance, as will be the case in the new

earth. Let us not confuse this with other figures, such as justification, or acquittal. That belongs in the court room, and has to do with our relationship to the judgment, which will take place before the new creation. Now it is a question of entrance into a kingdom, and, as it is a figurative kingdom, we can enter it only by means of a figurative pardon.

Much has been made of the figurative terms in Paul's epistles, such as the covenants and the festivals, in order to show that he was writing only for Jews. Yet there is probably no passage so surely and conclusively "Jewish" as this reference to the kingdom and the pardon of sins, both of which, taken literally, are entirely foreign to Pauline teaching. According to this method of interpretation, this passage should prove clearly that Colossians is a Jewish epistle, not intended for the present administration of God's grace. Yet, as a matter of fact, it, and Ephesians, are utterly devoted to the exposition of the present interval of God's grace. May this example help to show how unwarranted it is to make any of Paul's writings "Jewish" because of his figurative use of "Jewish" things.

Once we realize that much of the blessing which is predicted on the page of prophecy comes to us, in spirit, long before it is fulfilled in fact, such allusions should rather prove the opposite. For example, there is now a new creation. Is it not a marvelous method of transferring to our minds great spiritual realities which otherwise would be most difficult to express? I suppose no one takes this literally, so why take the kingdom, or the covenants so? In *figure,* we have these things now. In no way could we be led to understand our own blessings better than by illustrating them from Israel's history, by drawing pictures from the pages of prophecy.

So little are the saints familiar with figures of speech that this passage has been the cause of embarrassment to those who saw clearly the vast difference between justification and pardon. No doubt many have been hindered from enjoying the grand grace of justification simply because, in this passage, we are said to have the pardon of sins. Again, the present is so often called "the kingdom," in a vague way confusing it with the future literal reign of Messiah, that one is tempted to avoid further confusion by saying little or nothing about it. But it is a glorious truth, and worthy of our most earnest consideration, that, in spirit, the saints already partake of some of the blessings of the future kingdoms, even though its physical wonders are by no means with us yet.

Yes, we are in the kingdom—the kingdom of the Son of His *love.* Quite a different matter from being a gentile under the iron club of Messiah's rule in the thousand years. Then righteousness will reign, and the nations will be kept at a distance from the God of Israel. They will not even be sons of the kingdom, but subjects, and subordinate. The Sovereign in our kingdom has a title of surpassing dignity and preciousness. "Christ" is official, and fits the functions which He fills during the eons, but not after they have passed away. The "Son" is personal, and describes His dignity in relation to God, even after the eons have come to an end. And the Son of God's love sets Him forth in the supremacy of His nearness and dearness to the Deity, the Peerless One, the Beloved Son. We are in the new creation.

IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

God wishes to be known and loved. This is the motive behind creation and reconciliation. Being in-

visible and unapproachable, He has made an Image of Himself, and a Complement through Whom He can come into contact with His creation. These mediatorial glories belong to His Beloved Son, and make Him preeminent in all things, for they reach from the very beginning to the consummation, and make Him first in both creation and reconciliation.

To be known, God must be seen. He must be brought within the range of creature sensation. As this is impossible with essential Deity, Who is Spirit, it can only be accomplished by means of a Mediator, an Image which portrays in visible form the invisible essence of the Supreme. This was God's "Creative Original," the beginning, or origin, of all creation, for all else was included in Him. This makes Him the "firstborn" of all creation, not only first in time, but first in dignity and honor, and of itself entitles Him, not only to be the Sovereign of the saints in this administration, but to head up all things, both in the heavens and on the earth, as He will, in the complement of the eras, before the close of the eons.

Earthly rulers base their right to rule either on hereditary claims, or on their own accomplishments. Our Sovereign has a double right to reign. His is the oldest title in the universe, long antedating Adam, and He has entered the lists against the powers of evil and won the fight on Golgotha. Both diadem and wreath are His. His ancient rights entitle Him to universal sovereignty, and He will yet subject all beneath His feet. And, when all was lost, He brought it back to God, and thus has earned its heartfelt homage. In this universal reign of the Son of God we have the blessed privilege of being among the first to own His sway, and will be among the highest in His world-embracing sovereignty.

CREATION IN THE SON OF HIS LOVE

The wonders of these words are well worthy of our admiring contemplation. Creation and love! How seldom are they brought together! We often hear of God's love in connection with redemption, but creation is usually associated with His power or His wisdom, but never with His affection. Few passages of Scripture delve as deeply as this into the origin of things, yet it is in thorough harmony with those basic truths that all is out of God (Rom.11:36) and God is love (1 John 4:8). The philosopher seeks in vain for the *why* of all things. Why is there a creation at all? Here is the answer. *God's love demands response.* Creation is not an end in itself. Although it displays God's wisdom and power, its underlying purpose goes far deeper, for it was created in love.

Had this simple yet profound truth ever penetrated into the hearts of the teachers of God's people, how revolutionary would have been its effect! True, with their lips they have preached the glad message "God so loved the *world,*" yet they have been even more zealous to confine His love to those who believe, since they could hardly reconcile eternal torment or annihilation with the operations of love. May He broaden our hearts and widen our understanding! All that God does is done in love. Creation as well as redemption and reconciliation have their roots in the divine affection. And for this very reason it is that all are lost and all will be saved, some indeed by faith, during the eons, yet others by sight, through judgment, all through the deliverance wrought by Him in Whom they were originally created.

We may well suppose that creatures of another sphere, who know little of humanity, would not find it

easy to understand that all mankind was once in Adam. To us it is so commonplace that we fail to realize the marvel of it. Science has made futile endeavors to prove that man, as well as other creatures, gradually evolves into forms quite different from their progenitors, but without any practical success. They have not succeeded in robbing us of the wonder that in each single seed are almost infinite potentialities. These examples should aid us to understand, or at least to believe where we cannot apprehend, that simple yet sublime statement that all was created in the Son of God's love.

The secret of Christ is not confined to earth, and the scope of this epistle is by no means limited to the ecclesia which is His body. We alone were *chosen* in Christ before the disruption, yet even before that, *all* was *created* in the Son, not only that on earth, but in the heavens as well. The august grandeur of this thought will overwhelm all those who have given some attention to the celestial spheres, or even gazed upon the starry host. Here are marvels, and magnitudes, and measures which make the mind faint with solemn awe. Creation on earth, with all its many marvels, sinks into insignificance, when compared with the celestial realms. Had it not been hallowed by His presence and His sacrifice, we would think it mean beside the mighty majesty of the heavenly hosts. Yet all the creatures in the heavens were created in Him.

We should not think of creation here as so much material, or dead matter. Life itself and living creatures—those which can refuse or respond to the love of God—are before us in this connection. As they are viewed here as beneath His sway, we read of their various governmental forms, thrones or dominions,

sovereignties or authorities. The very fact that, in the heavens as well as on earth, in the invisible as well as the visible creation such rule exists, is proof positive of the presence of sin. Government is a restraint which will not be needed when the eons are past. It will become inoperative at the consummation. Now it speaks of insubjection and the need of reconciliation. The presence of rule in the invisible, celestial realms shows that the creatures which were created in Him will also be reconciled through Him and thus fulfill the object of their creation.

ALL THROUGH AND FOR

Since all ruling powers were once in Him, it is not at all strange that all rule should return to Him in the last eon. This is in line with the further truth that all is *through* Him and *for* Him. Creation was not an independent act, without any relation to subsequent developments. On the contrary, it was logically the result of God's purpose, which could not be fulfilled until the far future. Creation is, indeed, the prelude to reconciliation. The Son, in Whom it was effected, had far more in view, and it was only a preparation for the tragedy of the eons, and these, in turn, only the means for effecting the glorious consummation—God All in every one of His creatures.

So, not only was all *in* Him, but, at the same time it was also *through* Him and *for* Him. Without it He could not have accomplished His further work. Due to this relation of all parts of creation to Him it is held together by Him. Whatever differences and distances there may be between the various parts, such as between earth and the heavens, in Him they are welded into one, and, as we shall see, will be united under His headship in the last eon.

Such is the preeminence of the Image of God as the Firstborn of creation. From the beginning all rule is His and all owe Him subjection. The authority of darkness is a usurper, and deserves no subjection at our hands. In being transported into the kingdom of the Son of His love we return to the only rightful Suzerain. His realm will one day spread to every corner of the universe and bring every creature to His feet. All shall be subject to Him. We have the privilege of being among the first to yield to His beneficent sway.

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

BESSIE SWANSON

We do not have details, but received a formal notice of the death of our sister in the Lord, Bessie Swanson of Duluth, Minnesota. A subscriber to this magazine since 1940, she took special interest in our missionaries, and, for many years, sent a substantial sum every month for the mission work.

For some time, our sister spent her winters here in Southern California. She was a special friend of Gertrude Yoder of Hemet, California. Sister Yoder also helped out here at the office at times, hence we had the privilege of a personal acquaintance with Sister Swanson. Our correspondence indicates that she was about 93 years old.

When we look about us at events in the world, and compare them with prophecies of the time of the end in the Scriptures, we can be certain that it cannot be long before we shall hear that long-awaited trumpet blast, which will unite us once again with all those dear saints who are sleeping, including Sister Swanson. What a glorious expectation!

E.O.K.

The notes on Joel (p. 257) by Vladimir Gelesnoff were excerpted from his series on the Minor Prophets in *U.R.*, Vols.11,12 (1919-1921). The quotations have been brought up to date with the CV of the Minor Prophets (1979).

JOEL

IT WOULD be difficult to conceive of two literary works more widely apart than Hosea and Joel. In style, in form, in temperament, they are utterly unlike. And yet underneath the stylistic and morphological differences there is real unity of purpose and community of interests. Both prophets contemplate one set of events; they dwell on one common subject—the Assyrian campaigns against the holy land. They differ only in regard to viewpoint. Hosea views the Assyrian campaigns mainly in their relation to the Northern kingdom. His occasional side-glances at Judah merely indicate that the sister kingdom of the South would not wholly escape the devastating scourge. Joel first surveys the entire field at a glance and then narrows the field of his vision to the Assyrian operations against Judah. Hosea and Joel complement one another and furnish the "inside" history of the movement.

The title sets forth the official character of the document. "The word of Ieue, which comes to Joel, son of Pethuel" (1:1). Since the prophets were God's representatives at court, the term *davar* ("word") in the inscriptions of prophetic writings carries the force of *decree*—a divine decree promulgating the fate of the nation. Then follows a statement of object and purpose (1:2-4). A succession of devastating incursions, extending over a period of four generations, is

the course mapped out for Judah by the Most High. Suceeding sections follow the unfolding movement and watch the widening circle of effects.

The opening scene unfolds a sorry spectacle. Judah is overrun by an invading army. The land is ravaged and stripped bare of everything in sight. The various classes of society lament to one another over the destruction special to each. The avalanche of ruin rolls onward like a tidal wave. As consternation spreads, caste feelings vanish; the sense of common danger obliterates conventional distinctions and welds the various social factions into one vast assembly of suppliants (1:5-20).

The supplications are in vain. The work of destruction goes on unimpeded. The mystic foe advances to the climax. This is brought out in a series of passages in which impressions of the well equipped and highly effective military organization of the advancing foe alternate with realistic flashes of the terrible devastation which follows in his wake. The horrors of the invasion aggravated by scorching heat, seismic convulsion and atmospheric disturbances, produce a suffering beyond all human endurance (2:1-11).

But it is a law of Providence to make the worst serve the interests of the best. Man's extremity is God's opportunity. Accordingly, when judgment attains its zenith the voice of prophecy proclaims Jehovah's gracious character, and tells that the situation is by no means hopeless. This very hour of thick gloom and dire necessity is the precursor of a rich blessing. God will reveal His grace and turn the tide of adversity, provided the people's assembly is honestly resolved to amend its life and purpose rather than engage in a mechanical performance of futile rites. Motions of repentance stir among the people, and culminate in a

unanimous prayer for deliverance, led by the priests (2:12-17).

The turning point is conveyed by a single phrase of direct statement. "Then Ieue will be jealous for His land, and He will spare His people." Then is brought out the removal of the mystic host, called the "northern army," which is cut in two: the van is hurled into the Dead Sea, and the rear into the Mediterranean. The destruction of the invader is followed by the restoration of all that had been destroyed and by the bestowal of a rich harvest blessing (2:18-27).

At this point there is a hiatus. The prophecy leaves silently the field of history for the regions of the far-off "beyond." The scene unfolding before our eyes is the spiritualization of Israel and preparation for conflict with the hostile nations. The temporal, earthly blessings are accompanied by a fullness of spiritual blessing. The Divine Spirit will be poured out upon "all flesh." The extent of the phrase is determined by what precedes and especially by "*your* sons and *your* daughters." Consequently, all the inhabitants of the land (not of the earth) are meant. The promise is therefore strictly limited to Israel; the stress lies on universality within the nation. Then everyone in Israel without exception will be filled with the Spirit of God. Thus, what Moses thought a scarcely attainable ideal (Num.11:29) will be actually seen: the entire people will be prophets. All its members will stand in as immediate a relation to the Lord as the prophets, so that no mediation will be necessary for them. It will be a nation not merely serving as God's priests, but also testifying to Him as prophets—a holy people grown to maturity (2:28-3:8).

The next stage unfolds the advance of the nations

and the hosts of God for the conflict in "the vale of decision." A divine summons is issued to the nations. An unusual martial enthusiasm, the work of a higher power, now seizes on the heathen world. Everything fit for war is set in motion. Not merely are the valiant veterans roused for the decisive blow, even peaceful rustics are seized by battle-rage, and beat the implements of their livelihood into deadly weapons. Even the feeble and cowardly gather themselves together, take courage, and play the man.

The seer beholds this wildly raging sea of armed humanity approaching the limits of the holy land on every side. The Lord utters the fateful command to His hosts: "Send forth the sickle!" The machinery of judgment is set in motion. Meanwhile the throng becomes greater and greater in the valley. The heaven above grows dark. Jehovah's thunder-voice is heard out of Zion. Now the tempest of judgment bursts on the nations. But it is veiled in gloom from the gaze of the seer. There is no use in seeing or describing the horrors of such a scene. God Himself draws over it the veil of night (3:9-16).

In the final scene darkness has rolled away and discloses a glorified Zion. The terrible day of doom became a mere storm clearing the air. Now every fount of blessing streams more richly than ever before. The land enjoys exuberant wealth of agricultural products, an exuberance which is assured by an abundance of water vouchsafed. All the dried up rivulets in the broken country of Judah stream with water. The outer aspect of the land will then fully correspond to its spiritual condition. Zion then shall have become in very deed what it has been in promise and in name but never in fact—the dwelling place of God (3:17-21).

Vladimir Gelesnoff

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ECCLESIA

LUKE'S REPORT on the famine-relief visit of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:30 and 12:25) is interrupted by the narrative dealing with the persecution under "Herod the King" (12:1-23). Luke followed the normal practice of ancient historians; he reported from one source of information (possibly in Antioch) until he came to a convenient stopping point (11:30). Then he continued from other sources (in Jerusalem and Caesarea, 12:1-24) until he found it suitable to pick up his first source again (in verse 25).

"The great famine . . . about to be on the whole inhabited earth" was predicted by Agabus, a prophet who had come to Syrian Antioch from Jerusalem. Luke adds in 11:28 that this famine "occurred under Claudius." We know from secular sources that successive droughts and bad harvests were prevalent at various times under his reign (A.D. 41-54), though it seems that not all provinces of the Roman empire suffered from a simultaneous famine condition.

"Through the spirit" Agabus warned the Antioch ecclesia of the impending famine, and he may have emphasized that it was going to hit Palestine within a few weeks. "Now according as any of the disciples thrived, each of them designated something to send to the brethren dwelling in Judea, for dispensing; which they do also, dispatching to the elders through the hand of Barnabas and Saul" (11:29,30). It seems that

they made contact only with the elders and that Saul remained "unknown by face to the ecclesias of Judea" (*cf* Gal.1:22).

We may add that their famine-relief journey was in accordance with the spiritual attitude of the members of the Antioch ecclesia (13:1) who had passed the *testing of the genuineness of their love* so as to support the starving fellow-believers in Judea. Antioch's example was later followed by other ecclesias which also displayed their love to the Lord and to the brethren, a love which *superabounded to the riches of their generosity.* This term is used many years later to describe the attitude of the poverty-stricken ecclesias in Macedonia which (in the midst of extreme affliction and after having been deterred from contributing by Paul) had *entreated for the privilege* of "the grace and the fellowship of the service of the saints" (*cf* 1 Cor.16:1-3; 2 Cor.8:2,4,8).

AT THAT SEASON

During the elder Herod Agrippa's three years as king of Judea,* a worse calamity than that of famine fell on the Jerusalem ecclesia. Herod the king (as Luke calls him) "assassinated James, the brother of John, with the sword. Now perceiving that it is pleasing to the Jews, he proceeded to apprehend Peter also" (Acts 12:2,3).

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*Emperor Gaius (grand-nephew and successor of Tiberius Caesar) had made him king of the territories formerly held by tetrarch Herod Antipas, Philip and Lysanias (*cf* Luke 3:1). After Gaius's assassination, his uncle Claudius became emperor and transferred Judea from Roman provincial administration to the rule of the elder Herod Agrippa. The latter had grown up in Rome in close contact with the imperial family; he and Claudius were of the same age and had known each other from boyhood.

The term "now at that season" (12:1) is the chronological link between this persecution and the year of the famine-relief program. Hence we may take it for granted that in due time Barnabas and Saul learned of the events which are narrated in Acts 12.

Barnabas may have told Saul that James had been one of *the intimate group of three* who had been with the Lord from the beginning of His earthly career. It had been Simon Peter and his mates James and John (Luke 5:10) who were privileged to hear their Lord calling the dead girl back to life (*cf* Mark 5:37,41), and to witness His glorification, dimmed though it was so as not to hurt their eyes. However they missed the real meaning of the vision (Matt.17:9), namely His exodus which would be followed by His actual glorification (Luke 9:31,32). At that time their eyes "were heavy with sleep," just as they were drowsing when their Lord took the three of them aside with Himself in Gethsemane (Mark 14:33,40).

The death of James (a son of Zebedee) broke the ranks of the twelve; his brother John apparently did not take an active part in the leadership at that time. And Peter, after his miraculous deliverance from the king's jail, went underground, or, as Luke puts it, "he went to a different place" (12:17). Before his departure from Jerusalem, he bade the believers who were assembled in the home of Mary (a relative of Barnabas), "Report these things to James and the brethren" (12:17), although this James had never been commissioned by the Lord and had not believed in Him during His lifetime (John 7:5).

We may be sure that Barnabas and Saul, during their stay in Judea, were informed of the shifting of power in the Jerusalem ecclesia, from the hands of the chosen apostles, especially Peter's, into the hands of

James, the Lord's brother. The two delegates from Antioch certainly perceived that the twelve who had enjoyed God's protection during the great persecution (8:1) were no longer sustained by this divine power, and that Peter made no effort after the death of James to fill the vacancy with someone qualified such as Matthias was, or Joseph Justus, called Bar-Sabbas (*cf* Acts 1:21-26). It is conceivable that this turn of events, in the perspicacity of the minds of the two observers, Barnabas and Saul, added greatly to their understanding that Jerusalem was not fit to serve as a home base from whence missionaries to the nations could be sent forward.

THE WORD OF GOD GROWS

The persecution obviously died down after the miserable end of the elder Herod Agrippa (A.D. 44). From there on the Roman province of Judea (which included Samaria and Galilee) was again administered by procurators, directly appointed by the emperor (as had been the case after Archelaus, a son of Herod the Great, was banished by Caesar Augustus in A.D. 6; *cf* Matt.2:22; Luke 2:1).

Luke reports in 12:24 that "the word of God grows and was multiplied," and this in spite of the obvious apostasy of the majority of the Jews who were pleased when one of the apostles of the Messiah was put to death.

As to verse 25, Luke may have intended to say, "Now Barnabas and Saul return, having completed the dispensing for Jerusalem . . ." (*tên eis Ierousalêm plêrōsantes diakonian*°). It does not seem likely that

°"The manuscripts vary greatly as to whether they return *out of*, or *from*, or *into* Jerusalem, or *into* Antioch" (Concordant Commentary, p.198).

Saul went into the holy city at that time, for in Galatians 2:1-3 he states that he did not visit Jerusalem for fourteen years after his return from Damascus and that not only Barnabas but Titus too was with him at that time. The latter, an uncircumcised Greek, was obviously one of the delegates from the Antiochene ecclesia who went with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (Acts 15:2), after the two of them had returned from their first missionary journey to Cyprus and southern Galatia.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ECCLESIA

In Syrian Antioch, Barnabas and Saul served as teachers of "a considerable throng" for "a whole year" together with other prophets and teachers among whom Barnabas ranked first while Saul took the last place (Acts 11:26; 13:1,2). Such an inferior station, subordinate to other teachers, would not have satisfied us, if we were ambitious to bring the evangel only to such places where Christ had not yet been named.

As far as we know, Saul was the only one who had received a special commission from Christ in His celestial glory; both his background and his outlook differed considerably from that of the four other prophets and teachers. They reflected the doctrinal viewpoint of the brethren in Jerusalem. However, since the five whose names are given in 13:1, were supposed "to accord with the [Antiochene] ecclesia, such as it was" (*kata tên ousan ecclêsian*), they had, first of all, to be in accord with each other.

Antioch in Syria was probably the only ecclesia, founded by others, where Saul stayed at least a year,*

*The time spent in Syrian Antioch was interrupted by the famine-relief visit to Judea.

teaching in accord with others who had been there before him. If at that time he showed signs of becoming a promising independent leader, we may be sure that he was not disposed to faction or vainglory (*cf* Phil.2:3). Saul would rather make an effort to look out for the interests of the others, with humility deeming them superior to, and more important than, himself. If he had not practiced this attitude early in his career, he would not have asked the Philippians many years later, and us as well, to imitate him in showing this disposition, "which is in Christ Jesus also" (*cf* Phil.2:1-5; 3:17).

It may well be that Saul learned in those days to accommodate himself to the others so as not to create a gap between the mature and the immature. We have no way of knowing how far he outstripped the others in the race toward the goal, how few were able to follow him, or how many were lagging behind. We do know, however, that *we* are at times inclined to urge the laggards to mend their pace, to catch up with those who are ahead of them. But the Scriptures offer no exhortation to the immature to hurry, but rather to the mature to accommodate themselves to them. In what we outstrip others, there is to be a mutual disposition (*cf* Phil.2:2; 3:16) to observe the same elementary rule: with mutual love striving toward the goal. Behind us is ourselves and our shame, ahead is Christ and His celestial glory. H.H.R.

(To be continued)

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RESPONSE TO ISRAEL'S DEFIANCE

WHEN the elders of Israel came to Ezekiel to inquire of Jehovah (chapter 20) they precipitated a response they could not have expected. The Lord refused them and addressed the prophet, speaking of Israel's history of defiance and rebellion. When He brought them out of Egypt it was because of the honor of His name, and it was in spite of their stubbornness (verses 5-9). Again, in the wilderness, Jehovah acted "on account of My name" and preserved the nation even though they defied Him (verses 10-22).

He gave them His statutes and His judgments (verse 11); He gave them His sabbaths and became their Hallower (verse 12). Yet they profaned all His gifts. Then He even let them suffer the logical results of their independence as seen in verses 23-26, a passage very similar in tone to Romans 1:18-32. Since they refused the divine statutes, Jehovah gave them other statutes that were not good (verse 25), in effect "giving them over" to their own devices to the "retribution which must be."

What more could He have done? He had given them the covenants and promises as well as the discipline of judgments. Yet the house of Israel seemed to be corrupt beyond help. They approached Jehovah only for deliverance from their troubles and showed that, for their part, they would continue in their ways, becoming as the nations and honoring their gods

(verses 27-32). There seemed to be nothing left but indignation from the Lord (33-36).

This might have been the end of it all. But it was not. The most surprising response to Israel's defiance shown in this chapter is that given in verses 37-44. The covenants and threats, the promises and judgments all fail. But hidden in the heart of God is a reserve of mercy. Once again in Ezekiel we are given a glimpse of the "new covenant" which is not a covenant at all because there is only one side to the agreement. Although He passes Israel under His club, yet the Lord, and He alone, will bring them into "the bonds of the covenant" (verse 37).

Hence Jehovah Himself will bring Israel to His holy mountain (verse 40). He will not deal with them according to their evil ways, but according to a covenant in which He accomplishes all, to the glory of His name (verse 44). This good news for Israel is to be expanded upon in chapter 36. But the nation even today has not come into the enjoyment of its blessings. They were not ready for it in Ezekiel's day nor even when the Lord Himself came to them in the flesh. In Paul's day too, they were tripping (Rom.11:11), and he also pointed to the future for their deliverance. Yet it must come, for it is the word of the Lord.

MARGINAL NOTES

Most of the textual changes in this chapter represent additions from the sources indicated, such as the word **month** in verse 1, from the Septuagint. There are three changes, however, which replace readings in the Masoretic text: the LXX reading **their** in verse 21 replaces the Hebrew **the**, and the LXX **My** in verse 37 also replaces **the**. In verse 39 we use the LXX word **expel** in place of the Hebrew **serve**. Also of interest, the name **Bamah** in verse 29 means **fane height** as found earlier in the verse and is also a play on the words **what** and **coming** which also appear in the verse.

D.H.H.

"GLORY TO GOD"

SCENE SEVEN

The scene now is one of light, shining at a time when one normally expects darkness. Shepherds, watching over their flocks in the fields by night, suddenly find themselves in the presence of a messenger of the Lord and engulfed in the marvelous light of the glory of God, shining about them. Notice that this messenger does not speak to them from heaven as is so often depicted on Christmas cards, but is actually standing by them, and they are surrounded, enveloped by God's glory as he speaks.

"Fear not, for lo! I am bringing you an evangel of great joy, which will be for the entire people, for today was brought forth to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this is the sign to you: you will be finding a Babe, swaddled and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12).

You will be finding . . . a great Potentate? No. A Prince? No. A Prophet? No. A man? No, not even a man, but just a Babe! Do you realize that at this point the whole purpose of God is concentrated into a tiny, newborn Baby, helpless apart from its mother?

Yes, and in spite of the words of Micah (5:2) concerning Bethlehem, there was no place prepared, no place found except a manger for this wonderful birth. A virgin had conceived, and a Child had been born, a Son had been given; the words of the prophets had

been fulfilled; the true Light had come to the people walking in darkness, yet its first flicker was seen in a manger and among the lower animals.

The shepherds, ere they hastened to the place which was described by the messenger, were suddenly surrounded by a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and ascribing to Him glory for this new development of His purpose. What a grand scene this must have been—a host of heavenly messengers singing "Glory to God," yet cannot we also see a grandeur of purpose in the humbleness of the cradle and all the other attendant circumstances connected with our Lord's birth?

"Today" said the solitary messenger to the shepherds, "was brought forth to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord." It needed only one heavenly messenger to make this tremendous announcement of an event which fulfilled the predictions of the prophets concerning the coming of a Messiah, but it needed a multitude of the heavenly host to give the measure of glory to God that this proclamation demanded.

The announcement of a Saviour, though made primarily to the nation of Israel, was the joyful news that the whole world was waiting for, had the world but known it. But, alas, the world lay in darkness, and there were very few, like Simeon and Hannah and the shepherds, whose hearts were opened to receive and welcome the newborn Child, even though He was, in reality, the Son of God. There was, however, among the celestials a multitude of the heavenly host who suddenly sprang into a chorus of exultation. Were they just heavenly onlookers, jubilant simply because they were the bearers of good news to the inhabitants of earth? Or did they perceive a cause for personal rejoic-

ing in the releasing of the glad tidings concerning the birth of this little Child? Undoubtedly the coming of this Saviour will ultimately bring blessings to the celestials as well as to humanity.

But for the moment the promise is to earth—"on earth peace, among men, delight!" What wonderful words of hope and comfort to a race which has been groping its uncertain way through darkness and sin for a very long time. But the vast majority of earth's inhabitants are still unaware of the true significance of this event which occurred nearly two thousand years ago.

"Glory to God!" the angels sang,
Announcing thus a Royal birth.
Through heaven the proclamation rang,
And found an echo in the earth.
The shepherds, trembling from the shout
That hailed the advent of Messiah,
Exulted with a joy devout
To hear that grand celestial choir.

"Glory to God!" The shades of night
Lay deep upon the favored Land,
And those who saw the newborn Light
Were but a tiny, lowly band;
For earth lay buried deep in sin—
So deep that to its lasting shame
No room within the humblest inn
Could be reserved for Him Who came.

"Glory to God!" The world once more
Sleeps on, unmindful of its Hope.
Its watchers see the Star before,
But millions still in darkness grope.
And often though the angels sing
In hearing hearts their words of joy,
When will earth see its Saviour King
In Bethlehem's uncradled Boy?

Truly the Son of God's love emptied Himself when He came to earth, as Paul tells us in Philippians 2:7. He divested Himself of all the greatness that He had, and became as nothing. But now He was to go still further, and humble Himself even unto death.

SCENE EIGHT

In this next picture, instead of it being light when one normally expects darkness, it has become dark when one normally expects it to be light. For it is dark at noon day.

The Babe of our last scene has become a Man hanging on a cross, surrounded by a darkness which signifies separation from God. Who can measure the anguish in our Lord's mind of those three terrible hours of darkness, when He, the One without sin, took upon Himself the sins of the many? And, more than that, when He was made to be Sin, that Sin itself should be crucified—disposed of forever. It was because of this that God turned away from Him. He had never turned away from any sin-offering made in the past; there is no record in the Hebrew scriptures of it ever becoming dark on the day of propitiation. But this was something very different, the Sacrifice of all sacrifices, the Offering of all offerings, for it dealt with Sin to a finality. The Firstborn of every creature was made to be Sin so that every creature in the universe (including Satan) is brought within the scope of the effects of the Offering.

When the light returned, our Lord's anguish was reflected in the cry, "My God! My God! Why didst Thou forsake Me?" God forsake the Son of His love? Yes, God's purpose demanded even this. And do not let us forget that it cost God Himself a very, very great deal to subject the Son of His love to such a severe

trial. To brand Him with the stigma of a transgressor was a terrible thing to do, only justified in the light of its glorious outcome. To make Him, Who knew no sin, to be the personification of Sin itself, as the sign of the serpent on the pole had intimated (John 3:14), would have been a deed to outrage the feelings of God Himself, had He not been able to see the end from the beginning, and the universal blessings that would ultimately flow from His action. In all the circumstances surrounding the cross, it is God Who most commends His love to us, but the love of Christ also shines forth in all its splendor. It was evidenced in the garden of Gethsemene, when, faced with the reality of what was before Him, He said to the Father, "Abba, Father, all is possible to Thee. Have this cup carried aside from Me. But not what I will, but what Thou!" (Mark 14:36).

The cross is the crux of God's purpose. Here it finds its greatest concentration. The heavens, the earth, the land of promise, even the city, are all too big for God to use in this display of His love. He requires only one square yard, or even less; just room enough to erect a stake in the ground, pointing to heaven. And on this stake was suspended the One through Whom all else came into being. And even the life of this One, through Whom all else had received life, was about to be extinguished!

God's purpose for the universe, His plans for the salvation and reconciliation of all, focused upon one lone form hanging upon a stake. Surely, to the discerning eye, this is a moment of supreme grandeur in His purpose. Who but God could have conceived such a complete solution to the problem of sin, and who but Christ could ever have been effective in accomplishing it?

"Glory to God!" From Bethlehem
The scene moves on to Calvary,
Where men took counsel to condemn
The One Who came to set them free;
For on the cross the Saviour died—
The sinless One to bear their sins.
Now roused, ascended, glorified,
Through Him the work of peace begins.

SCENE NINE

No doubt the hosts of heaven, whose representatives manifested themselves at the time of the Lord's birth, would be watching and marveling at what appeared to be the extinction of all expectation at the crucifixion, though their presence is not indicated. But in this next scene, two of their number, clothed in light, are seen at an empty tomb, and they greet those bringing spices with the astounding words, "Why are you seeking the living with the dead? He is not here, but was roused. Be reminded how He speaks to you, being still in Galilee, saying that 'The Son of Mankind must be given up into the hands of men, sinners, and be crucified, and the third day rise' " (Luke 24:6-8). In this way, the Lord's resurrection was first proclaimed.

In our previous scenes, God's purpose has seemingly been steadily contracting, but from this point it begins equally steadily to expand. Paul, in his Colossian letter, describes Christ as being "Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first" (Col.1:18). In Corinthians, he says, "Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing . . . . For even as in Adam all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified" (1 Cor.15:20-22). *First*born, *First*fruit; these terms indicate more to follow.

In Romans (4:25), Paul tells us that Christ was "given up because of our offenses, and was roused because of our justifying." The just award, though *ours* now, is eventually "for *all mankind* for life's justifying" (Rom.5:18). God's purpose is already expanding again to cover all mankind. In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul tells us that God "wills that *all mankind* be saved and come into a realization of the truth," and in 1 Timothy 4:9, he asserts that "we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of *all mankind.*"

But let us look again at 1 Corinthians 15, and read the passage from verse 20 to 28, and note what comes about as a direct consequence of Christ's rousing. (In the Concordant Version, these verses are enclosed in parentheses, showing that they are all to be taken together.)

"Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. For He must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy being abolished is death. For He subjects all under His feet. Now whenever He may be saying that all is subject, it is evident that it is outside of Him Who subjects all to Him. 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."

This wonderful passage begins with the rousing of Christ and ends with the consummation of God's purpose. From it we see that, once Christ has been roused, the consummation can be proclaimed, for nothing can possibly hinder it. The momentous events of two-and-a-half eons are telescoped into these nine verses. How they will come about will be shown in the remaining scenes of our study.

"Glory to God!" for He has willed
All tongues to praise their Sovereign Lord,
And when His purpose is fulfilled
The universe will sing in chord.
From lowest rank to highest place
The whole creation will proclaim,
Unto the utmost bounds of space,
The greatness of its Saviour's Name.

John H. Essex

(To be continued)

LINA BLAETTLER-SCHENKEL

September 12th, 1979, marked the passing of our dear sister Blaettler, at the age of 95, in Switzerland. In spite of poor health which had plagued our sister for many years, she remained cheerful and rejoicing in the Lord always.

My wife Alberta and I shall never forget her warm hospitality and the precious fellowship we were privileged to have when, for several days in 1964, we visited Lina and her husband, who survives her. At that time, Bro. Blaettler was the representative of the Concern for Germany and Switzerland, and was ably assisted in this demanding task by his wife, who took care of the accounting and other related chores.

Serving the Lord was a joy to our dear sister, and without doubt her reward will be great in that day. E.O.K.

The next article in the series, "The Hebrew Scriptures in Paul's Epistles," by Bro. Alan Reid, arrived too late to be included in this issue. We will resume the series in the coming volume.

THE WISDOM OF GOD

ONCE when Jesus exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees He was also pressed by "a certain one of those learned in the law" who was outraged by the Lord's judgments against his associates. The Lord's response was to show that the lawyer also would suffer the woes coming on the scribes and Pharisees (Luke 11:37-52). All these leaders of Israel and their forefathers had been guilty of opposing the very revelations of God to which their lives supposedly had been dedicated.

In exposing the wickedness of these men, the Lord made a surprising statement: "Therefore, also, God's Wisdom said, 'I shall be dispatching to them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will be killing and banishing,' that the blood of all the prophets which is shed from the disruption of the world may be exacted from this generation . . ." (verses 49,50). Here is a definite contrast between the wisdom of God and the learning of men. The Pharisees and lawyers showed a certain cleverness in getting around the truth for their own advantage, yet appearing to honor God. While they built the tombs for the prophets, they had actually endorsed their murders (verses 47,48). They accommodated the law to whatever was politically and socially comfortable.

In contrast to this, the wisdom of God was to send prophets and apostles who would be persecuted and killed. God's wisdom was to be on the losing side! But in the end the losing side turns out to be the side of victory, not only for God but for all mankind as well!

This is not the only passage in the Scriptures where the wisdom of God is specifically associated with suffering and woe. In fact, where God's wisdom is mentioned we may almost always be certain that the passage also deals with the great mysteries of darkness and sorrow. In Romans 11:33 the depths of God's wisdom are associated with the blindness and failures of Israel. In 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:10 God's secret wisdom is associated with the humiliation of the cross of Christ. In Ephesians 3:10 the multifarious wisdom of God is associated with His choice of the least worthy of humanity to make known His greatest glories. Weakness and humiliation are the companions of the wisdom of God.

It is not that God is trying to show that He can do something in the most difficult and unlikely way. It is not merely to display His capabilities in accepting the challenge of the impossible. That is not His wisdom. Rather God's wisdom is that whatever He does is done in the only, truly effective and meaningful way in order to achieve the highest, best and most righteous of goals.

BLINDNESS ON ISRAEL

Paul's deep sorrow and distress over the blindness coming on Israel, recounted in Romans 9,10 and 11, is turned into praise with the realization that "God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all" (11:32). This, in turn, leads to the exultation of 11:33-36, beginning, "O, the depth of the

riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God!"

God's wisdom does involve distress, both for Himself and for His creatures, but this is only temporary and is the necessary means to a glorious end. With the evangel concerning the faith of Jesus Christ, we now have a more complete view of the wisdom of God than ever before. His wisdom which sent prophets and apostles to stubborn people who would reject and even kill them (including most especially the crucifixion of His Son) looked beyond these sufferings and the judgments involved to permanent results of good and glory. In His wisdom God had prepared blessing for the martyred prophets by means of the cruel death of His Son, and glory for Christ in resurrection, Who will some day come as the Rescuer out of Zion, and all Israel will be saved (Rom.11:25-27).

But what of the hypocritical Pharisees and lawyers? They were from the portion of Israel who were most firmly locked up in stubbornness (of whom was Saul of Tarsus). God's wisdom was also involved with them. The Rescuer will turn away irreverence from Jacob and eliminate their sins. Eventually the lawyers, too, will be emptied of their pride and be shown mercy. And because of their hypocrisy and its resulting judgment this mercy will be all the greater.

It is difficult for us to face the implications of this wisdom. Like Job's friends we would rush in and try to conform God's activities to what we think they should be. God, in His wisdom, locks man up in stubbornness so that He can show His mercy. But how rich and deep is the process! We cannot begin to fathom the wisdom that was behind all these failures and woes in Israel's history. All we can say is "to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!"

MULTIFARIOUS WISDOM

It is in God's purpose to make known His wisdom, power and love to the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials. But this wisdom is not only the way in which He deals with Israel, taking them through times of stubbornness and rebellion, persecutions and sufferings, indignation and alienation, to the enjoyment of mercy and blessing. He also desires to display "the transcendent riches of His grace" (Eph.2:7). His wisdom is rich and deep and also multifarious (3:10).

Perhaps even more than Israel, we who are chosen to have a part in this display are undeserving and incapable. Once again God's wisdom uses the weak and unworthy to accomplish the greatest of good. Paul was "less than the least" (3:8), and we "were, in our nature children of indignation" (2:3).

A. E. Knoch observed, "[God's multifarious wisdom] copes with problems which had never arisen before, which seemed insoluble and unforeseen . . . . Then . . . He opens His hidden heavenly purpose and reveals the celestial destiny of Christ's body. What seemed to be an insurmountable problem was transformed into a carefully prepared program. Humanly speaking, Israel's continued rejection of Jehovah, and of the incarnate Christ, and of the testimony of God's spirit, utterly wrecked His revealed plan of blessing, not only for them, but for the other nations also. From the viewpoint of the divine wisdom all this was a part of His intention, and prepared the scene for the present grace. Indeed, such *depths and heights of grace* as we now know would be impossible to reveal apart from the very failure which seemed to deny it any place" (*Unsearchable Riches,* vol. 63, pages 285,286).

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

It was not in the stirring setting of Mars' Hill nor in the careful and learned deliberations of the synagogue that Paul unfolded the wisdom of God as it relates to the cross of Christ. It was rather in the homely letter of 1 Corinthians in the context of everyday human problems and weaknesses. Some of the richest thoughts from the apostle's pen, such as chapters 13 and 15, are here in the midst of comments regarding schisms, lawsuits and the turmoil of human relationships.

The word of the cross itself is full of mystery and wonder. If it seems incongruous that God's wisdom sent prophets to people who would persecute and kill them and reserved a time of severe indignation for a particular generation of these stubborn people, what are we to say of His wisdom in sending His Son to die in weakness and humiliation for the sake of God's enemies? Yet this is the very heart of the wisdom of God. Mercy can only be profitably shown to the stubborn, but it cannot be shown at all without a righteous basis. So also grace can only be effectively granted to those who are undeserving, but it cannot be given at all without a solid and true foundation. Therefore, in His wisdom God purposed the cross.

E. H. Clayton once wrote, "God's wisdom only becomes apparent to those who become aware that, in their flesh, they do not possess any ability for salvation. Also, that they cannot produce any efficiency in the flesh to that end. At once do we see that those who have thus realized God's wisdom . . . do not pretend to achieve the least detail toward their salvation. They know that, in themselves, the effect of God's wisdom, in the cross, is operative. They were crucified together with Christ. In this fact God's

wisdom is applied to them, for gone is their old humanity, left on the cross. God's spirit dips them into the death of Christ, and, with Him, to the tomb they go. As He was raised therefrom, so they are roused. They live and walk in newness of life. This has come to be achieved in them by God's wisdom which He placed around the cross."*

God's wisdom, the cross of Christ, makes us see things differently. The crucial point no longer is a matter of who is right but a matter of humble joy in realizing what God has done for us all, even those of our brethren who are speaking error. After all, who am I that I should have a clearer view of God's grace and purpose than my brother? "For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh; not many powerful, not many noble, but the stupid of the world God chooses . . . and the weak . . . and the ignoble and the contemptible of the world God chooses, and that which is not, that He should be discarding that which is, so that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight" (1 Cor.1:26-29).

This, therefore, is the wisdom of God, that glory and blessing is achieved through the humiliation and suffering of the cross. And so throughout Paul's first letter to the Corinthians we are shown how this pattern may apply to our thoughts and actions. It is the cure for our failures of the flesh, our fears and pride and jealousies. How deep and multifarious this wisdom is! May we be growing in realization and appreciation of the wisdom of God, to the glory of His Name.

D.H.H.

(To be continued)

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*Quoted from a pamphlet, "The Cross and Wisdom," available from our office.

THESE ARE THE WORDS

DEUTERONOMY

1 These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel in Transjordan in the wilderness, in the Arabah before Suph between Paran and ^{bt} **Tophel,** $^{+}$ **Laban,** $^{+}$ **Hazeroth and Di-Zahab.** ^{2} **It is eleven days' journey from Mount Horeb by way of Mount Seir unto Kadesh-barnea.**

^{3} $^{+}$ **It** ^{l}**came to be in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month,** ^{t}**on day one** $^{>}$**of the month, that Moses spoke to** ^{7}**all**^{s} **the sons of Israel according to all** ^{w}**that Yahweh instructed** $^{`}$**him concerning them,** $^{4}$ **after his smiting** $^{`}$**Sihon, king of the Amorites, (who was dwelling in Heshbon), and** $^{`}$**Og, king of** $^{'}$**Bashan, (who was dwelling in Ashtaroth) in Edrei.** $^{5}$ **In Transjordan in the land of Moab, Moses was disposed to elucidate** $^{`}$**this** $^{'}$**law,** $^{>}$ **saying:** ^{6} **Yahweh our Elohim spoke to us** ^{t}**at Mount Horeb** $^{>}$ **saying, Many days** $^{>}$**have you dwelt in** $^{'}$**this mountain.** ^{7} **Face about and take your journey and enter the hill-country of the Amorite and** $^{>}$ **all his neighbors in the Arabah, in the hill-country,** $^{+}$ **in the lowland,** $^{+}$ **in the Negev and in the sea haven, the land of the Caananite and** $^{'}$**Lebanon unto the great** $^{'}$**stream, the stream Euphrates.** ^{8} **See! I** ^{6}**set** $^{`}$**the land before you. Enter and tenant** $^{`}$**the land which Yahweh swore to your forefathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, to give to them and to their seed after them.**

^{9} $^{+}$ **I** $^{l\,8a}$**spoke to you in** $^{'}$**that era** $^{>}$ **saying: I am not** ^{l}**able to bear** $^{`}$**you** $^{>}$ **alone.** ^{10} **Yahweh your Elohim has increased**

`you, and behold you today, as the stars of the heavens for multitude. [11] May Yahweh Elohim of your forefathers add [on]to you a thousand times as many as you are, and bless `you just as He spoke to you. [12] How should I bear your encumbrance [>] alone, and your load, and your contention? [13] Grant yourselves [mt]men wise and understanding, and known to your tribes, and I shall place them [t]as your heads. [14] And you [l]answered `me and [l]said: The word which you speak is good to do. [15] And I [l]took `the heads of your tribes, [mt]men wise and known, and I [lg]put `them as heads over you, chiefs of thousands, [+] chiefs of hundreds, [+] chiefs of fifties, [+] chiefs of tens and as superintendents for your tribes. [16] And I [l]instructed `your judges in `that era [>] saying: You are to hear between your brethren, and judge justly between a man and [bt] his brother [+]or [bt] his sojourner. [17] You shall not recognize faces in judgment. You shall hear [as] the small as the great. You shall not shrink from the face of man, because the judgment, it is Elohim's. And the matter which is too [l]hard [r]for you, you shall [c]bring near to me and I will hear it. [18] [+]Thus I [l]instructed `you in `that era `in all the things which you should do.

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES
Concordant Version

WE HAVE begun the mammoth project of preparing the complete Concordant Version of the Old Testament for publication as it will appear in one volume. We hope our readers will join us in prayer concerning this task. The first portion to be published is the five books of Moses, including a revision of *Genesis*. The scheduled order of preparation (but not necessarily publication) of the remaining books is as follows: Joshua through 2 Kings (excluding Ruth), the

festival scrolls (Song of Solomon, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther) then the Psalms followed by Proverbs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, Ezekiel, Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah, and finally the Minor Prophets, revised.

The major advantage of the Concordant Version is the "concordance" of its vocabulary and grammar. By concordance is meant translating in a way that is harmonious, or "concordant," with the distinctions in the wording and grammar of the Original. This is accomplished primarily through the avoidance of cross-wiring in the vocabulary. Each word in the Original is assigned the word or set of words needed to translate it into acceptable English. This word or set of words is then not used in the translation of any other Hebrew word (except in those occasional instances where words are used interchangeably in the Original text). These words are then printed in boldface type. Lightface type is used in the version for additional English words necessary to make readable English. Furthermore, a system of superior type symbols and italic letters are incorporated to provide the student with even more information about the wording or grammar of the Original when the English idiom renders consistent translation impractical.

NEW FEATURES

There will be several changes in format from our previously published portions of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, as can be seen in the sample from Deuteronomy printed above. Probably the most notable one is the rendering of the divine Name and Titles. The normal spelling "Yahweh" has been adopted, rather than our previous "Ieue." The latter had the advantage of only using four letters as in

the Hebrew, but had the disadvantage of being difficult to pronounce. "Yahweh" is the generally accepted spelling and is sufficiently accurate for the purposes of an idiomatic version. At first, A. E. Knoch had planned to use "Jehovah." In his own words, "In assimilating foreign words we always anglicize them, so we need not apologize for using 'Jehovah' . . . It is not Hebrew . . . But we are translating, not transliterating" (Vol.25, page 116). We are now using a spelling that is closer to the original language than "Jehovah," but it is also familiar to most Bible students today.

A. E. Knoch had decided to transliterate the divine Titles rather than give them English translations. We are continuing this policy, but will be using the more familiar spellings, which are "El," "Eloah" and "Elohim."

Those who are familiar with our published translations of *Genesis*, *Isaiah*, *Daniel* and *Ezekiel* should find the reading easier in this selection from Deuteronomy. While an effort will be made to preserve the Hebrew word order when it signals a special emphasis in the Original, and when that order does not put an undue strain on the English idiom, regular Hebrew sentences will be translated into the matching normal English word order. In other words, we are making the Version more readable, yet without sacrificing concordance. We are also dropping the archaic pronouns "Thee" and "Thou" with their attendant verb endings.

This book of the words of Moses is our first "trial run" toward the complete Concordant Version of the Old Testament. The first few books should be among the hardest for us, but it is hoped that things will go more smoothly as the project progresses.

DEUTERONOMY

In the Hebrew manuscripts this book is called "These are the Words," titling the book by its first words. The title generally used today comes from the Septuagint translation of chapter 17 verse 18: "And when he shall be seated in his sovereignty, then he shall write for himself this second-law [*deuteronomion*] into a book by the priests of the Levites." These early Greek translators apparently misunderstood the Hebrew as meaning "a second law" rather than "a duplicate of this law."

The book does indeed consist of a series of addresses by Moses to the Israelites just prior to their entry into the Promised Land. The setting is given as being in a certain location in Transjordan (Across-the-Jordan) in the Arabah (GORGE)—just on the eastern border of Palestine. His first address includes 1:6-4:40; in this first section (1:6-18) are given recollections of the time at Mount Horeb.

The extent of the land mentioned in verse 7 goes far beyond the borders of the land ever possessed by Israel, but it does reflect the promise given to Abraham, "from the stream of Egypt as far as the great stream, the stream Euphrates" (Gen.15:18). The remainder of this portion of the discourse is concerned with the establishment of a system of chiefs so that Moses would not have to bear the responsibility of arbitrating all disputes among so huge a population.

The primary feature of this book is the covenant between Yahweh and the nation of Israel. Much of the structure of the book reflects the legal format of that time for covenants between a king and his vassal nation (see Vol.69, p.251). The keystone of the law is the "Ten Words" of Deuteronomy 5, commonly known as the Ten Commandments. J.D.T.

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