Unsearchable Riches

A Bimonthly Magazine
For God and His
Word

VOLUME LXXI

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FOR NAUGHT?

What storm of thought from age to age
To set on edge the mind of sage
Piled to the heights—fear, hatred, woe,
From man kept back—his way to know!
Harsh cutting off of cherished goal
Hedged in by sin—distress of soul
For Naught?

O God of love, in heav'n above: O Sovereign of creation,
In grace I stand, too great to scan, at Thine own invitation
Blessed in Thy Son; with Him I'm one; the object of Thy favor;
It's all of grace; no merit trace; of Him, O God, I savor!
Then shall our God display His grace to all celestial creatures,
And members we, through Him shall be to hosts above, the teachers,
And all shall know on earth below, the love of God the Father;
All hearts to Him shall gladly bow, and we shall want no other!

W. H. Breckenridg

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 1980
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY-ONE

EDITORIALS

DURING the first two and one half years of the publication of *Unsearchable Riches* the following description of the magazine's purpose appeared on the cover of each issue: "A Bi-Monthly Magazine in the Interests of a Rightly Divided Word of God." This was changed in April 1912, to read: "A Bi-Monthly Magazine in the Interest of Exegesis," which, in turn, was dropped in 1924. Four years ago we brought over to the cover another phrase which had been used on the title page of each volume since October 1911: "A Bi-Monthly Magazine for God and His Word."

It is as though the first editors, Vladimir Gelesnoff and A. E. Knoch, were feeling their way as to the mission of the magazine. The early editorials pondered over various directions to be taken, and some of the thoughts expressed had to be adjusted as further insight into the Scriptures was gained. Those must have been exciting times: a new magazine with fresh ideas and with much freedom from the restrictions of tradition and ecclesiastical organization.

At first there was special emphasis given to a theme which was just then receiving a great deal of attention: "a rightly divided Word." This area of investigation, of course, dealt with distinctions between such scriptural subjects as law and grace, an earthly calling and a celestial calling, and temporary judgments and the consummation.

It was in connection with this latter distinction that the editors began to stress the very helpful advice:

"Distinguish the means from the end." It may also have been that at this time they began to realize that Paul's instruction in 2 Timothy 2:15 was also concerned with a means to an end and was not an end in itself. It suggested too narrow a purpose for the magazine, and so it was replaced by a broader statement ("in the interest of exegesis"). But even this was not fully satisfactory. Even exegesis, the analyzing of the text of Scripture, was a means to an end. The purpose of the magazine was to encourage thought and investigation into God's Word to the glory of God. And this was finally expressed with the simple and striking expression: "for God and His Word."

This statement of our purpose should be associated with Philippians 1:10, ". . . testing the things of consequence," and 3:9-16, ". . . to know Him . . . toward the goal am I pursuing . . ." as well as with Paul's prayer in Colossians 1:10, ". . . growing in the realization of God." All believers, whether or not they agree with the articles which have appeared in this magazine, need to keep their eyes on the goal. However much we appreciate the wisdom of "correctly cutting the word of truth" or using a pattern of sound words, we need also to see the danger of making these and other helpful guidelines for study an end in themselves, so that we cut ourselves off from others as somehow superior to them. Our aim should always be to become acquainted with God's Word, to get to know Christ, and to grow in the realization of God and His will. Hopefully we can continually capture the excitement and freshness of this purpose, not only in the magazine, but in our lives as well. In every sense "the untraceable riches of Christ" should direct our thoughts, our words and our lives to become more and more "for God and His Word." D.H.H.

As reflected by the listing of names on our title page, Dean Hough is now serving as general editor of the magazine, but editorials will appear from time to time by any or all of the other four editors. Many long hours of work are put in each week by Herman Rocke and Jim Thompson on the Hebrew translation project, and we plan to publish findings from their research as the work progresses. In addition we will include reports from Ray Embry on his work with the Concordant Philological Concordance of the Greek New Testament Scriptures. The advice and assistance of our Editor Emeritus, Ernest Knoch, continues to be very valuable to the work. We are thanking God for each one's contribution.

"THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE, which *graces* us in the Beloved: in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of *His grace*, which He lavishes on us." These precious words from the first chapter of Ephesians outline the message which is the major theme of our periodical, also for this year.

Divine *grace* is stressed in all of Paul's letters where the Greek equivalent (*charis*) occurs about 100 times, thus leading up to the revelation concerning the administration of the secret which had been concealed from the eons in God, namely the administration of the *grace of God* (*cf* Eph.3:2,3a,9). Paul's companion Luke uses the word "grace" a dozen times in Acts, but in his first account only with reference to the Lord's mother, Mary, and the Boy Jesus (Luke 1:30;2:40,52).*

**charis* (listed under the keyword *grace* in our Concordance, p.132) is occasionally translated by other variants, such as *favor*, *thanks*, etc.

While Matthew and Mark never speak of divine grace, John mentions it in his account: "And the Word became flesh and tabernacles among us, and we gaze at His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten from the Father, full of *grace and truth*" (John 1:14). "For of that which fills Him [or: out of His complement] we all obtained, and *grace for grace*. For the law through Moses was given; *grace and truth* came through Jesus Christ. God no one has ever seen . . . He unfolds Him" (John 1:16-18).

The other occurrences of the word "grace," especially in Hebrews and in Peter's letters, may be attributed to Pauline influence. We are reminded of Peter's words at the Jerusalem conference: "Through the *grace* of the Lord Jesus we are believing, to be saved in a manner even as they" (Acts 15:11). In his two rather short epistles Peter speaks of grace a dozen times, while John never uses it in his first letter, and just once in his second: "With us will be *grace*, mercy, peace from God, the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in *truth* and love."

Why is the word "grace" absent in the remainder of John's account, from chapter 2 to 21? Some expositors have suggested that John the Baptist is quoted throughout John 1:15-18, since "grace" is not a typical Johannine word. We do not share this view and have therefore ascribed only verse 15 to the Baptist. It is true that he was qualified to make the prophetic statement in John 1:29, "Lo! the Lamb of God Which is taking away the sin of the world!" However, it is hard to imagine that the Baptist would ever have had doubts about the Messiahship of the Lord (*cf* Matt.11:3) if he himself had indeed obtained grace for grace out of His complement.

While working on the preparation of the Con-

cordant Version of Deuteronomy we occasionally check on parallel passages in other books of the Pentateuch. What Moses experienced on Mount Horeb (as reported in Deut.9:9-10:4) is better understood against the background provided by the detailed narrative in chapters 33 and 34 of Exodus. The assumption that words and phrases from the dialogue between the Deity and Moses were on John's mind when he wrote verses 14 and 16 through 18 is not new. There are the terms "gaze at His glory . . . the law through Moses was given . . . God no one has ever seen," and there is the repeated reference to divine grace in this context (John 1:14,16-18), all of which easily brings to mind Moses' request, "Show me, I pray, Your glory!" and the divine answer, "You cannot see My face, for no human shall see Me and live" (Ex.33:18,20).

In 33:12 Moses repeats the divine assurance, "You find grace in My eyes," and continues to plead, "If I find grace in Your eyes, I pray, make known to me Your way, that I may know You, that I may be finding grace in Your eyes." Moses' request for an additional divine favor is perhaps reflected by the Johannine "grace for grace."

The term "grace and truth" reminds us of the words in Exodus 34:6,7 when the divine attributes are emphasized in the theophany: "Compassionate and *gracious,* slow to anger, and with much kindness *and truth,* preserving kindness to thousands [or: to the thousandth generation], bearing with depravity and transgression and sin; yet He is not [immediately] making innocent [in order to] make innocent, [but] visiting the depravity of the fathers on the sons and on the sons' sons, on the third and fourth [generation]."

Almost half a century ago, A. E. Knoch pointed out

that this passage is one of the highest and fullest statements concerning Yahweh that we have in the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament.

"That the depravity of a father is visited on his descendants is evident to all. But no son is condemned for his father's sins. Yet each one inherits the depravity of his ancestors. Adam's depravity did not die with him. Each parent transmits his failings to several succeeding generations. This is in line with the previous statement that Yahweh is not [immediately] making them innocent. These are remarkable statements to be incorporated into the name of Yahweh. At first sight they seem in conflict with His compassion and kindness. Why does He not immediately make men innocent? Why does He shut them up to depravity? Because it is only in this condition that He can be gracious and compassionate and bear with their depravity and trespass and sin. If He is to be a Saviour they must be sinners.

"The point that has been lost in all this is its temporary term. This is definitely stated in the phrase we have been studying.* If He is not making [immediately] innocent, it is to make innocent: He has a goal set before him, which is the revelation of Himself, as here set forth. We have seen how necessary it is that there should be sinners to give exercise to His grace. But all this is of no avail unless the compassion *is* exercised and the sinners *are* saved. We have a hint that this condition of affairs is limited to the thousandth generation, a time which corresponds with the course of the eons. During the eonian times Yahweh will see that there are sinners to receive His *grace.*" H.H.R.

*THAT WILL BY NO MEANS CLEAR THE GUILTY [a glaring example of a misleading discordant translation], volume XXII, p.153-156.

THE SECRET OF CHRIST
(Colossians 1:18-20)

FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD

CREATION alone cannot reveal the heart of God. It must be supplemented by reconciliation. He Who is the Image of God must become His Complement. The Firstborn of creation must become the Firstborn from among the dead. As such our relation to Him is nearer and dearer. We are not only subjects in a spiritual kingdom, but we also belong to a spiritual body of which He is the Head. God's grace and love must be revealed against the dark background of human hate.

The Head of the body is this Sovereign, in Whom all rule had its origin, and into Whose kingdom we have been transported. Our relation to Him as saints is not based on His power in creation, but on His victory over death. He is the First to emerge a Conqueror from its dark shades, and thus He heads a new creation, a new race of mankind, which is not only given life, but immortality and incorruptibility, beyond the reach of death. This death-defying vitality will be granted to all in Adam in due course, but at present He alone possesses it. This gives Him the exalted dignity of Firstborn from among the dead. Some of this high honor He will share with us at His presence, for then His saints also will be vivified, while the balance of mankind must wait until the consummation.

UNIVERSAL DIGNITIES

The supremacy of God's Son depends on the *universality* or *totality* of His many dignities. How extraordinary is the emphasis laid on this vital fact in this short passage! Within the compass of five verses we read no less than *eight* times that the given glory is all-inclusive. He is the firstborn of *every* creature. *All* is created in Him, and *all* is created through and for Him. He is before *all*. *All* has its cohesion in Him. In *all* He is becoming first. The *entire* complement dwells in Him. He reconciles *all* through the blood of His cross (Col.1:15-20). And on two occasions this is amplified and defined as all that is in the heavens or on the earth. It is said to include both visible and invisible. What more could be said to impress us with the universal scope of the Son's activities?

THAT IN ALL
HE
MAY BE
BECOMING FIRST

These precious words are the chief ornament of the room in which I write. They are now in large blue letters in a golden frame. Long years ago I chose them as my motto, and decided to display them in a prominent place in my abode. When erecting a new house I evolved a plan so that they would become a permanent part of the building. Above the broad entrance into the drawing room was a board with a beautiful grain. On this I outlined these words in old English lettering and varnished them before the wood was stained, so that they stood out plainly when all was done. But, alas! When the home was sold, almost the first act of the new owner was to remove all traces of my cherished motto!

Here we have a gem of purest ray serene, fit for the diadem of universal majesty! He was first in time and He must become first in all else. How many of mankind have striven for supremacy! Some have drenched the ground with blood in order to attain the highest place for themselves among the rulers of the earth. Many more in other walks of life have sought to reach the top, above their less fortunate fellows. These all exalted themselves, finding a futile and a fleeting eminence. How marvelous the contrast! He Who never sought His own advancement but only God's glory, Who abased Himself beneath all, He will become first in all.

Let us be very jealous for His glory, and allow no one else to filch it from Him. Let us be very zealous for His supremacy, and accord it to no other name but His. And let us guard each glory as we would a treasure trove. And, since His crowning glories as Complement of the Deity and Reconciler of all are so often denied to Him, let us make these the special theme of our meditation, and, if need be, let us maintain them and defend them to the last. In Him, the Firstborn from the dead, through the blood of His cross, God is completely equipped to consummate the purpose of love, and bring every enemy back to His bosom, not only saved, but reconciled.

THE ENTIRE COMPLEMENT

It is quite possible to imagine that God would delegate the honor of creation to one mediator and that of reconciliation to another. God needs both to carry out His purpose, so that each, in his measure, would contribute to the fulfillment of His plans. Then the honor of being God's complement would be shared by them. To put it figuratively, one would

receive a place at His right hand, the other at His left. Indeed, some have taught that God's complement consisted of a whole series of beings, independent of His Son, to whom He delegated creation. Not so! The *entire* complement, *all* that is needed by God in order to fulfill His will in connection with His creatures, finds its fit residence in His Son.

In Him the complement *delights* to dwell. It is not alone that He has the ability, the fitness, the competence to cope with all that is involved in this most marvelous function in the universe. All this He has, and far more. At His baptism, when the heavens were opened to Him, the voice declared, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I *delight*" (Matt.3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22). So again, when He was transformed on the high mountain, a voice came out of the cloud and testified to the delight of the Father in His Beloved (Matt.17:5; Mark 9:7). Peter reminds us of this in his epistle, and tells us that it brought Him honor and glory from God the Father (2 Pet.1:17). Long before, Isaiah records the same fact (Matt.12:18; Isa.42:1): "My Beloved, in Whom My soul delights."

Is it not striking that this recognition of the Son is one of the very few statements directly spoken by the Deity in the later Scriptures? This should give it the prominence which is its due in our hearts. What a contrast to His testimony concerning the rest of mankind! When the Lord stooped down to see how they are, He found nothing in which to *delight*. Not one was even just or kind (Rom.3:10-18; LXX Psa.14:2,3). Certainly there has never been one among Adam's descendants, apart from His grace, in whom He could find pleasure. In none of them could the complement find any place whatever.

The complement (*plêrōma*) is here personified

(Col.1:19). It is represented as seeking a suitable dwelling place from which to carry out the purposes of God. In Him it has found a delightful abode, for He is not merely a means of bringing back creation to what it was, but of bringing it on to fulfill its purpose. All too many of us imagine that we would be satisfied with a universe brought back to its pristine perfection, a world without sin, a sorrow-free existence. No such result would satisfy the heart of God. That would never justify the travail of the eons. That would never win the admiring approval of the universe. That would be vanity, a feeding on wind, a reaping of less than was sown, a losing venture.

And such would creation be, had it not been begun in the Son of His *love,* and should it not be finished by the same One through the blood of His cross. Love cannot be revealed without a background. Every blessing imaginable poured into the lap of a sinless creature is merely a matter of course, which evokes no thankful feelings, and provokes no response of love. I feel certain that Adam never thought of thanking his Maker for his superb health and strength. Yet I am profoundly grateful for the very little vigor needed to pen these lines. And when we, who have suffered much from illness and weakness, once attain our body of glory, how deep and lasting will be our thankful love to Him for all His superabundant grace!

In this passage nothing is said directly of the entrance and course of evil and sin, because this is no part of the work of the Son. But the introduction of estrangement is clearly implied by His death and His cross and the necessity of the reconciliation of all. It is no glory or honor to destroy God's work. This must, indeed, be done, but woe to him who does it! His course must be down and not up. The glory of the Son lies in

this, that He undoes the work of the Adversary. Great as were His glories in creation, now that all have been estranged by sin He gains far greater glory by His suffering for all, so that all will be saved and reconciled, and so attain the original object of their creation.

God pity us if we see our salvation from our own side only! The object of all is God, rather than His creatures. And the glory of God demands the exaltation of His Son. These are the chief considerations in the reconciliation of all. If a single one of those whom He created in love should fail to find the final goal which His love has set, then it is *His* wisdom and power which are brought into question, and *His* love which is open to doubt. Likewise, if one who was created in the Son of God's love should fail to be reconciled by the blood of His cross, would that not drag the Son down from the high place which God has given Him? Let us not darken the splendor of His achievement by our own dismal unbelief.

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

UNITED GATHERING

The weekend United Gathering at St. John's College in Bramcote, England (August 31-September 3) was "the best ever" according to many of the brethren. The personal fellowship was rewarding, and the messages from Jim Thompson, Jan de Jong, Andrew MacLarty, Jim Poole, Ken Hutton and John Essex were instructive and spiritually profitable. On Friday and Saturday the Ortons presented slides of their trip to the States; a "breaking of bread" was held on Sunday morning.

An error crept into the November magazine which should be corrected. The statement in the ninth line from the bottom on page 249 should read "God is Spirit." Please remove the "a."

RIGHTS AND WRONGS

How can we tell who is right in a dispute?

The only possible way to determine right from wrong is to acknowledge first of all the place and purpose of God. None of our rights can rest on injustice to Him. We cannot have any clear idea of the nature of the great white throne judgment unless we know what will accrue to God by means of it. Perhaps the most terrible misconception of its function has come from the unscriptural and abominable teaching that all who are judged will be tormented forever in the lake of fire which follows it. In that case it is utterly futile and harmful, and so sheer injustice to God, for He will lose all and gain nothing as a reward for His vast expenditure of creative power and provision. The injustices that men have practiced toward men—and how great is the sum of them!—not all of them together would amount to so unspeakable an injustice as that men's acts should not be righted in their relation toward the *Deity*, so that *He* may reap the harvest of His work.

What is right? Man has no standard by which to determine this except the feeble flicker of conscience and the monitions of nature. We will probably discover, some day, that most of our rights were wrongs, and even that which seemed altogether right contained an admixture of wrong. This is difficult to discuss unless we take a concrete example. The best is property rights. You have a certificate of title to a piece of land. You can trace its ownership back until

someone took it "by right of discovery" perhaps. But what right is that? The land was created by God, and belongs to Him until He gives a valid title, which He will never do because you cannot pay for it, and it is not for sale. Property rights! They will never be right until they revert into the hands of the only rightful Owner and Creator. With this background it would be easy to quiet all the titles in the world in an instant, and, at the same time *give God His rights*, and His creatures theirs. In this way God will become the universal Owner. All their rights will be found only in Him. So He will become their All.

Who has the right to the land of Palestine?

I have studied the problem of Jewish-Arab relations in the Holy Land a long time, and at close range, and I am quite sure that, judging by our human standards of right and wrong, there is no solution possible that does not wrong one side or both. But it *will* be solved in the future in perfect justice, not by recognizing the spurious claims of either party, but by giving God His prior and unimpeachable rights. He will not give the land outright to either one. In this they are both wrong. He will not allot it to the Arabs, so they must be wrong. He will not allot it to the unbelieving Jews, so they are also wrong. *All are wrong!* All are usurpers. They are squatters without the least chance of securing a right or title to the land. Moreover, they rob Jehovah of His rent. They ought to give a tenth of its produce to support His worship. He will take away the land from all of them and allot it to the saints in Israel in that day, who will restore it to its proper function, which is the manifestation of God's goodness and glory, and the maintenance of divine service in His dwelling place. A.E.K.

THE SECRET OF MARRIAGE
(Part One)

How GREATLY GOD blesses His saints in providing them with the Scriptures, and implanting it in their hearts. It is "God-breathed" throughout, and because of this *God speaks to us* when we read His Word. We sometimes speak of "the silence of God," but really God is only silent to the extent in which the reading and contemplation of His Word—that priceless treasure which is "living and operative" (Heb.4:12), and which is "truth" (John 17:17)—is neglected. Let us give thought for a moment to that future era when men "will seek the word of Yahweh, and shall not find it" (Amos 8:11,12), and then, from our hearts, thank our God and Father that He has not withheld His Word from us, but has entrusted it to us. May we be holding it in our hearts always!

In addition to the truth that "*All* scripture is inspired by God [God-breathed] and is *beneficial for teaching* . . ." (2 Tim.3:16), we have a further, complementary revelation: "For whatever was *written before,* was written for *this teaching of ours,* that through the endurance and consolation of the scriptures we may have expectation" (Rom.15:4). *No part* of God's Word should be neglected, but, should we do this, then it is to our own personal loss.

Further, this statement in Romans stresses the relevance of any excerpt from the Hebrew Scriptures which is quoted in the Greek Scriptures. All such quotations in the Greek Scriptures fall within the compass of "whatever was written before."

As we come now to consider one of these quotations may our God and Father give us receptive hearts and, by His spirit, apply its truth to our hearts, so that we may be learning of *Him:*

> "Therefore a man shall forsake his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they two become one flesh" (Gen.2:24).

This verse was quoted by the Lord Jesus in his reply to the Pharisees' question, "Is it allowed one to dismiss his wife for every cause?" It is included in the records of that incident given by Matthew (19:3-12) and Mark (10:2-12). There is also a *phrase* cited by the apostle Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (6:16), but he brings the *full verse* forward in the Ephesian letter, where, in verse 31 of chapter 5, we find it within the context of "The body in the Lord—Christ the Head" (Eph.5:21-6:9), as shown in the Framework of Ephesians on page 288 of the Concordant Commentary. Following the quotation, Paul adds, "This secret is great: yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia . . . ."

PAUL'S SOLICITUDE FOR THE ECCLESIA

One of the most poignantly revealing passages of several such passages in the writings of the apostle Paul is found in 2 Corinthians 11:21-28. Compelled by the arrogance and fleshly activities of some unnamed persons in Corinth who sought, in Paul's absence from the city, to undermine his authority and teaching, the apostle determined to expose the baseness of his

detractors' boasting, by "boasting" himself. This must have been a course of action distasteful to Paul (to say the least), and he followed it reluctantly, for his *only* boast was in the cross of his beloved Lord. It was, nevertheless, a most necessary response for the sake of the truth of the evangel.

This "boasting" on Paul's part consisted simply in the hesitant inclusion in the epistle of a concise record of the sufferings he had, till then, endured *as a servant of Christ* (2 Cor.11:23). As we know, further afflictions awaited him. This "boasting," unlike that of his Corinthian critics, was truly in that which was of his *weakness* (v.30). Paul bore in his body "the brand marks of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal.6:17), the lasting and irrefutable evidence of his many distresses. Later he wrote: "I am now rejoicing in my *sufferings* for you, and am filling up in my flesh, in His stead, the deficiencies of *the afflictions of Christ*, for His body, which is the ecclesia of which I became a dispenser" (Col.1:24,25).

Throughout his ministry, Paul experienced in full measure the truth implicit in the Lord's words concerning him: ". . . for I shall be intimating to him *how much he must be suffering* for My name's sake" (Acts 9:13-16). In closing the résumé of his sufferings, the beloved apostle of the nations moved away from the physical aspect of the afflictions, to touch upon the deeper matters of the heart, and he wrote, ". . . apart from what is outside, that which is coming upon me *daily*, the solicitude for all the ecclesias" (2 Cor. 11:28).

In our natural abhorrence of, and preoccupation with, the thought of the bodily pain so mercilessly inflicted, and an equally understandable shrinking from the realization of the severe hardships caused by long

exposure to the elements, we, perhaps, tend to overlook the *inward* stress of mind, heart and spirit so constantly borne by Paul as a consequence of his "*solicitude for all the ecclesias.*" We are given a remarkable insight into Paul's capacity for caring when we read of his deep feeling for his Israelite brethren according to the flesh, who had not found Christ to be the consummation of the law for righteousness: ". . . my sorrow is *great,* and unintermittent *pain is in my heart* . . . for my brethren . . ." (Rom.9:2,3). There can be no doubt, surely, that Paul's *daily* concern for *all* the ecclesias would find its exercise, on their behalf, in a like intensity. Paul's solicitude for the welfare and spiritual state of the saints weighed heavily upon him at all times, and we can be certain that his anxiety for them could not have been in any measure lessened, but rather increased by the factional strife which so quickly beset and endangered the unity of the early ecclesias.

In a note on 1 Corinthians 11:18 in the Concordant Commentary (page 258), A. E. Knoch defines a condition which has weakened the witness of "the Christian Church" in the past and saps its vitality in the present: "The sin of schism and sectarianism seems to be the most incurable affliction of the church." These words express a distressing truth which, for us, would be well-nigh unbearable were it not that we know that God's glory can, *and will,* bring the ecclesia, sorely rent though it now is by schisms, forward into the wondrous realization of its absolute and unbreakable unity in Christ, and of its primal, unmarred singleness in which it existed when God chose its members in Christ before the disruption of the world. Christ *will* present to Himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle (Eph.5:27).

THE "ONE BODY IN CHRIST"

God has not left His saints in any uncertainty concerning the truth of the *oneness* of the "*one body in Christ,*" for it is very clearly and fully revealed in the Pauline writings. The following verses from the "Transitional Epistles" give a lucid and positive presentation of the truth relating to the "one body," as it developed in the early period of Paul's ministry:

"For even as, in one body, we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, thus we, who are many, are *one body in Christ,* yet individually members of one another" (Rom.12:4,5).

"For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, thus also is the Christ. For in *one spirit* also we all are baptized *into one body,* whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and *all* are made to imbibe *one spirit*" (1 Cor.12:12,13).

". . . but *God blends the body together,* giving to that which is deficient more exceeding honor, that there may be *no schism in the body* . . ." (1 Cor.12:24,25).

"Now you are the body of Christ, and members of a part, whom also God, indeed, placed in the ecclesia . . ." (1 Cor.12:27).

"For whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ, in Whom there is no Jew nor Greek, there is no slave nor yet free, there is no male and female, for *you are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Gal.3:27,28).

It is evident that the emphasis in these verses (and in their respective contexts) is upon the *members* of the body and their several functions and relationships. But we must not lose sight of the salient fact that, although the functions differ, there is a sustained unity throughout. All the members are within *one body.*

When the subject is examined in the "Perfection

(Prison) Epistles," it will be found that the first-mentioned of the seven features which comprise the unity of the spirit, is "*one body*" (Eph.4:4). Those in Christ Jesus form a *single* organism, and of this, *Christ is the Head* (Eph.4:15, 5:23; Col.1:18). Out of Him Who is the Head, "the *entire body,* being supplied and united through the assimilation and ligaments, is growing in the growth of God" (Col.2:19; see also Eph.4:15,16).

In these scriptures, God reveals to His saints that there is a *supply* provided for the growth and upbuilding of the body. The supply is the *truth*—the truth of the evangel of God's grace and the glory resulting therefrom, as embraced in the full ministry of the apostle Paul. The supply flows from a single Source, Christ, and it is for *each* individual member of "the entire body." In order to be nourished by the supply provided, the members of the body of Christ must be *holding* Him Who is the *Head* (Col.2:19).

The one body is further defined for us as "the ecclesia which is His body, the complement by which all in all is being completed" (Eph.1:22,23). Concerning this body, God had concealed, in Himself and from the eons, a *secret,* and this secret (and the administration of God's grace related to it), God revealed to the apostle Paul. This secret was that the one body in Christ, already being formed and composed of believers of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision (all of whom had been called into faith through the evangel of the grace of God—Paul's evangel) was, in spirit, a *joint body,* in which all the members were to share equally, in spirit, the enjoyment of a *joint* allotment, and were, in spirit, to be *joint* partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel which Paul dispensed (Eph.3:1-3 and 6-13).

"THE ENMITY IN HIS FLESH"

From the coming into being of the one body in Christ (i.e., from the initial calling out, through the evangel, of those whom God "chooses in Christ before the disruption of the world"), the members forming it were believers of the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision, as already indicated. It could not be otherwise, for, although Paul was a "herald and an apostle and teacher *of the nations*" (2 Tim.1:11), the evangel he heralded was "God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing—*to the Jew first* . . ." (Rom.1:16). The apostle was bound by this requirement. The "prerogative" at that time lay unquestionably with the Jew (Rom.3:1). The covenants (including the covenant of circumcision), the legislation, the divine service and the promises all belonged to Israel and bound them to the Lord in a unique relationship.

This being so, the question presses itself upon us: Could this Circumcision (Jewish) precedence, and the consequent inferiority of the Uncircumcision (the nations) co-exist, with friction, in "*one* body," even though *all* its members were baptized in *one* spirit and were, individually, members of one another?

Conscious as we are of the hostility which has for so long separated these two great divisions of humanity, the conclusion must inevitably be that continuing co-existence was impossible *in the flesh*. But there is no problem, however intractable to man, beyond the wisdom and power of God to resolve. As is the case with *all* issues arising out of the features of the old humanity, that stemming from the Circumcision/Uncircumcision cleavage has been disposed of *by the cross* in a singularly wonderful way, as described for us

in Ephesians 2:13-18, which is quoted as follows in framework form:

Yet now, in Christ Jesus, you, who once are far off, are become *near* by the *blood of Christ.*

For *He* is our *peace,* Who makes *both one,*

and razes the central wall of the *barrier* (the *enmity* in *His flesh*), nullifying the law of precepts in decrees,

that He should be creating the *two, in Himself,* into *one new humanity, making peace;* and should be reconciling *both in one body to God, through the cross,*

killing the *enmity in it.*

And, coming, He brings the evangel of *peace* to you,—those afar, and *peace* to those near,

For through Him we *both* have had the *access, in one spirit,* to the *Father.*

In reading through these verses, it is at once apparent that *Christ* is the power and His cross the instrument of this reconciliation. The "enmity in His flesh" was the natural consequence of the fact that the Lord Jesus was by birth a Jew, for Whom His parents had fulfilled the strict requirement of the hereditary Covenant of Circumcision. He was, therefore, *of the Circumcision.* He Himself said, "I was not commissioned except for the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt.15:24). The apostle Paul wrote of Him: ". . . Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises" (Rom.15:8).

The analogy drawn between "the enmity in His flesh" and "the central wall of the barrier" (the balustrade or partition before the Temple in Jerusalem beyond which the passage of aliens into the sacred precincts of the House of God was forbidden on pain of death for trespass), throws into vivid relief the animosity which characterized the relations between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision generally. It

served to maintain the open rupture between the factions.

Because of the breaking down, through the cross, of the barrier of the enmity in the flesh of Christ, and the shedding on the cross of the blood of Christ (the basis of all reconciliation), the "far-off" ones (the believers out of the nations) have been brought from their alienation and hopelessness, into the nearness to God enjoyed by those already near. Together, the Circumcision and Uncircumcision believers, members of the ecclesia which is the body of Christ, share the inestimable privilege of "the access, in one spirit, to the Father." *In Himself*, freed completely as He was, through His cross, of the enmity in His flesh and Himself the Firstfruit of the new humanity, Christ creates the believers of the Circumcision *and* Uncircumcision "*into one new humanity*" (Eph.2:15).

The offensive central wall of the barrier and the enmity it generated were, in spirit, removed by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Little did the Jewish religious leaders of His day realize that, in crucifying the Lord of glory, they were obliterating *all* of that in which they boasted. *How true* (and in a way beyond their *main* intention) were the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, uttered on His cross: "Father, forgive them, *for they are not aware what they are doing*" (Luke 23:34).

The cross of our beloved Saviour has disposed of *all* that characterized the old humanity. *None* of its divisive features persists in the new, the young humanity, for in it "there is *no* Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but all and in all is Christ" (Col.3:11). With Christ as the Reconciler of Circumcision and Uncircumcision *into one body* through the cross, there

is now *no possible barrier* to prevent the "one body in Christ" from being the *joint body* that the Administration of God's secret grace reveals it to be.

"SCHISMS INHERING AMONG YOU" (1 Cor.11:18)

Of a truth, God has not left His saints in any uncertainty as to the truth of the *oneness* of the one body in Christ. From Paul's earliest references to the fact that there is in existence a body of believers in which God blends the members together all the way through to the revelation of the *secret* of the nations' *joint* participation in a *joint* body in spirit, *the body is one body*. It should, therefore, cause sincere regret on the part of *all* of God's saints, that the wonderful truth of this oneness has been marred and obscured by the schisms which have rent the ecclesia during the long course of its existence, and still rend it today.

Sectarianism is of the flesh (1 Cor.3:1-4) and is invidious, for the saints are not "of" anyone. They are *in Christ,* Who is *all* we need. The apostle Paul leads us to his citing of the Genesis verse (2:24) with a reference to Christ and the ecclesia, and follows the quotation with a remarkable statement, as follows: ". . . according as Christ also the ecclesia, for we are *members of His body.* For this 'a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.' This *secret is great:* yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia" (Eph.5:30-32). When we come to consider these passages, as God may be willing and, in His grace, enables us, and to see sectarianism in the powerful and revealing light of the "great secret," surely we will endeavor, by God's grace, to keep with even greater earnestness "the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace" (Eph.4:3).

Alan Reid

SEVERED FOR SERVICE AMONG THE NATIONS

MANY LONG YEARS had passed since the Lord's words to Saul in the Jerusalem sanctuary: "I shall be delegating you *afar* to the nations" (Acts 22:21). Saul had been "evangelizing the faith" in the dual province of Syria-Cilicia (*cf* Gal.1:21,23) when Tarsus was his home base, and he probably concentrated his efforts on the *neighboring regions* where he spoke to all those coming into the synagogues, Hebrew and Hellenist Jews, Gentiles converted to Judaism and others with a looser attachment to the synagogues whom Luke calls reverent, devout and God-fearing men or women. Believers out of these four groups would probably have formed the nuclei of those ecclesias which the apostle established when he started out for his second missionary journey.

Syrian Antioch was not very far from Tarsus either. In the Syrian capital, Barnabas and Saul had been teaching "a considerable throng" for a whole year (Acts 11:25). This time of training in spiritual teamwork ended when the holy Spirit said, "Sever, by all means, to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). With these words they were delegated *afar to the nations.*

"The severance of Barnabas and Saul by the Spirit is the prelude to an entirely new departure in the book

of Acts. The commission entrusted to the twelve apostles has been attempted and their testimony rejected. They went to the limits of the land of Israel. Beyond this they did not venture. Jerusalem, in Judea, now gives place to Antioch, outside the land. The message now goes to the dispersion among the nations and to the proselytes and even to the nations themselves, and continues until it becomes manifest that the Jews outside the land refuse the Messiah, even as those in the land have done. This ministry is carried on by an entirely new set of apostles. The twelve have no part in it. Saul, or Paul as he is now called, takes the place of Peter in this new apostolic group.

"The choice of Barnabas and Saul *by the Spirit* is in marked contrast with the choice of James, the brother of our Lord, *by the flesh.* He leads the apostasy of the pentecostal believers, who insisted on circumcision and law-keeping. He was the author of the decrees, which were concerned only with the flesh. This new departure takes us in the opposite direction. Saul was chosen by the Spirit and led by the Spirit until, at length, in his epistles, he gives the flesh no place at all" (Concordant Commentary, page 198).

CYPRUS

A paved Roman road ran between Antioch and its seaport Seleucia, about seventeen miles away. We may take it for granted that a delegation from the Antioch ecclesia accompanied them to the piers "whence they were given over to the grace of God" (*cf* Acts 14:25). If the day were clear, Barnabas and Saul would soon see the island of Cyprus in the southwest horizon after their ship had left the harbor. It is conceivable that the vessel took the shortest route to Salamis on the

east coast of the island since Luke does not report any navigational details. Hence most expositors assume early March as the time of crossing over, just before the westerly winds prevail in spring and summer when the ships had to crawl along the Cilician coastline and then cross the open sea to a northern port of the island.

Cyprus was famous for its rich copper mines (*cyprum* being the Latin word for copper) and the profligate processions from New Paphos to the old town of Paphos with its temple of the goddess Paphian, the perverted oriental form of the idolatrous worship of the Greek Aphrodite. Even three hundred years later, the church father Athanasius called this cult the "deification of lust."

FROM SALAMIS TO PAPHOS

"They, indeed, then, being sent out by the holy Spirit, came down into Seleucia. Besides, from thence they sail away to Cyrpus. And coming to be in Salamis, they announced *the word of God* in the synagogues of the Jews. Now they had John also as deputy. Now, passing through the whole island up to paphos..." (Acts 13:4-6.)

After the dispersion following the murder of Stephen (Acts 7:59-8:1) some Cyprians had returned to their island and had brought the message of the Messiah to their local synagogues, "speaking the word *to no one except to Jews only*" (11:19). This is in contrast to the approach of other "Cyprian men and Cyrenians, who, coming into Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists also, evangelizing to them the Lord Jesus" (11:20).

Salamis was the commercial center of the eastern half of Cyprus. Many Jews had settled there and they had several synagogues where Barnabas, a native

Cyprian, and Saul spoke to them of the Lord Jesus. They may have spent a few weeks in Salamis before going to the western part of Cyprus, apparently not on the shortest route. Luke's words (passing through the *whole* island) seem to indicate that they addressed audiences in other synagogues as well when they travelled westwards. Saul may have used the same approach as in later days whenever he entered a synagogue outside the Holy Land, such as in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-3), "where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Now, as was Paul's custom, he entered to them, and on three sabbaths he argued with them from the Scriptures, opening up and placing before them that the Christ must suffer and rise from among the dead, and that 'This One is the Christ—the Jesus Whom I am announcing to you.'"

Barnabas may have stressed other aspects of the message which he had learned from the twelve, such as how Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, how He was entombed and roused the third day, and that he was seen after the resurrection by the twelve and many others.

THE DOOR OF FAITH GRADUALLY OPENED

Luke does not report how their message was received in the synagogues. But in general, the response must have been very encouraging, so that a few years later Barnabas went back to Cyprus to see how those were faring to whom they had announced the word of the Lord (*cf* Acts 15:36,39b). While the Jewish refugees who had come to Cyprus after the great persecution of the Jerusalem ecclesia had spoken the word of the Lord to their fellow Jews only, Barnabas and Saul addressed also the reverent proselytes who came to worship in the synagogues. It was in

those days when God was about to open to the nations a door of faith (*cf* Acts 14:27). The first ones to whom this favor was bestowed were apparently the regular non-Jewish visitors of the synagogues who were just loosely attached to the Jewish way of life and had not become converts to Judaism.

The next step was to demonstrate that God's favor is also for those outside the synagogues since He is not the God of the Jews only, but of the nations also, since God is One (Rom.3:30).* H.H.R.

(To be continued)

*Our Editorial in the July issue 1977 deals with the story of the first high-ranking Roman official who received the gift of faith from God without setting his foot into a synagogue. Luke reports his case in detail because it is typical for the fact that God is now "tendering faith to all" (Acts 13:6-12; *cf* 17:31).

MISSION REPORTS

On behalf of the Jamaican brethren we wish to thank all our readers who sent aid to them because of the severe flood damage as reported in last September's magazine. This has been conveyed on to Bro. James Hemmings there, who writes that the money was used for repairs and general relief, and for one special need: aid to a fellow missionary who was very sick.

Although our general missionary fund has been lower than usual, Bro. Antonio Oblenda from the Philippines writes that he and his co-worker, Bro. Oguimas, have been able to carry on their teaching activites. Some printing activity, however, has been put aside for the time being. Bro. Teofilo Donal from the northern islands has also continued his labors both in journeys and in his local area.

From India Bro. Raju has sent us a report of special prayer meetings in recent months. Political unrest, inflation, long dry spells followed by heavy, incessant rains are especially troubling for both him and Bro. Iype. Let us be remembering all our missionaries in prayer.

AMOS

AMOS, like Hosea, belongs to the northern kingdom, at least doing his work there. A native Judean of Tekoa (1:1), he was called from his herd, by the Lord's direct command, under the strong, prosperous rule of Jeroboam II, to expose the evils of the land, glossed over with glittering tinsel, and to announce the approaching dissolution of the kingdom. Destruction like a storm-cloud makes the round of the surrounding nations to descend most heavily on Samaria; and only through its last fringe does there appear a ray of hope, in whose light a happy future opens.

Two distinctive features of Amos claim special notice. One is the prominence of the Davidic covenant. He insists on the truth that the promise to David cannot fall to the ground. He emphasizes that the promise vouchsafed to this house can as little be abrogated by the sin of the nation and its rulers as those given to the patriarchs.

The second distinctive feature of this prophecy is its emphasis on the moral principle underlying the national apostasy. Ephraim ignores elementary morality in proud reliance on its position as Jehovah's peculiar people. Their election by God, construed as a license to licentiousness, breeds a sense of false security. The message of Amos is that its divine election does not secure the sinful nation against the consequence of evil-doing; but on the contrary the

privileged relation calls for stricter discipline. The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility. "Now to everyone to whom much was given, from him much will be sought" (Luke 12:48).

The structural arrangement of the subject matter is very simple. The coming judgment on Israel is presented in a series of stages making a logical sequence.

TITLE: The times of the prophet, 1:1

SUMMARY: The passing of Samaria, 1:1

1. Samaria among the doomed nations, 1:3-2:16
2. Apostasy ripe for judgment, 3:1-6:14
3. Vision of judgment, 7:1-9:15

First, a series of nations are denounced and threatened in paragraphs compounded of rhythmical formulae expressing the sin and the doom and recitals setting forth actual offenses and details of punishment (1:2-2:16). Every one of these nations is threatened with the destruction of its capital, ruin and exile. The historical situation needs no further defining than the recognition on the political horizon of Assyria as a rising world-power trampling down the nations. The surprising feature of these tidings is the inclusion of Judah and Israel among the doomed nations. This whole section has an introductory character. It serves the evident purpose of bringing out the truth that every nation is judged according to its attitude toward God. The other nations are mentioned before Israel to impress the fact that if even those peoples who had only sinned indirectly against Jehovah were visited with sore punishment, those to whom God revealed Himself would be visited still more sorely for their apostasy. It is with this design that Judah is mentioned along with Israel, in fact before it. The intention was

to impress upon the ten tribes the truth that not even possession of such prerogatives as the temple and the throne of David could avert the consequences of wrong-doing.

Next the national corruption is shown to be ripe for judgment (chapters 3-6). The whole of Ephraim is in a state of rebellion. Civil and ecclesiastical authorities are openly antagonistic to God, while the masses, absorbed in empty ritual and selfish pursuits, ignore divine warnings. As soon as the first note of judgment has been sounded, the prophet breaks off to work out, in a progression of pictorial sentences, the hostile attitude which Jehovah has assumed in consequence of the nation's apostasy. The contents of chapter 3:6-8 are not to be reduced to the general thought, Who that has received a message can fail to prophesy? Their intent is to set forth the hostility of Jehovah to Ephraim. The lion which roars when it has the prey before it is Jehovah (*cf* Hosea 5:14). A lion is certain of his capture when the prey has approached so near that it cannot possibly escape. God not only has before Him a nation that is ripe for judgment; He has it in His power. God, however, does not cause evil to come unannounced. As an alarm is sounded to arouse the inhabitants of a city to a sense of danger, so prophecy is sent to warn of impending disaster. Whatever calamities burst upon the nation come from God, are sent by Him. But He does not carry out His intention without first making it known to the nation through the prophets.

The actual dissolution of the kingdom is traced from inception to consummation in an elaborate emblem vision (7:1-9:10). This grand finale develops the idea of impending destruction announced in the doom-tidings of the first two chapters. It takes to the imag-

ination the form of seven symbolic pictures passing one into the other like dissolving views. We have here a vivid pictorial digest of the long struggle of Israel with Assyria. In the first two scenes judgment is only potential, not reaching the point of actual operation. The Fire and the Locusts (7:1-6) represent stages of judgment threatening, yet restrained in its course. Assyria has become a menace to Israel's safety. It is granted authority to act, yet is not at present seen in action.

As the next vision appears there is a commencement of movement in this panorama of judgment. This third scene marks the transition point from the potential to the actual. The emblem of the Plumbline (7:7-9) indicates the exact point at which Assyria's attitude changed from inherent antipathy to active hostility. Here is the crucial point, the fateful moment in Ephraim's career. Jehovah applies the plumbline to ascertain how far misalignment has endangered the stability of the national structure symbolized by the bowing wall.

At this point, just where judgment has advanced to a point from which there is no retreat, we get the interrupting episode of open conflict between Amos and Amaziah the priest of Bethel (7:10-17). The historic incident appears at this point both because in the oral ministry it took place where this particular emblem of judgment was spoken, and because this is its logical connection with the theme. This antogonism on the part of civil and ecclesiastical authority toward prophecy brings out the fact that the sin which inspired the revolt of the ten tribes has advanced beyond all hope of recovery.

When the vision reopens corruption has performed its deadly work. The emblem of Summer Fruit shows

the nation ripe for judgment, ready for the eager eater (8:1-3). With this fourth vision there is a warning of the horrors of material and spiritual famine to which the nation is abandoned.

In the next emblem of the smiting of the capitals the work of destruction is in full swing. The command goes forth to the advancing nations, "Smite the sphere-like capital, and the thresholds will quake; clip them at the head, all of them!" The imagery of the bowing wall has developed to actual pulling down (9:1-7).

The emblem of the Ethiopians presents judgment consummated (9:7-10). It is a reversal of the exodus: every vestige of privilege, every token of special favor is withdrawn. Israel is on a par with the other nations.

Still the judgment is not hopeless. It is only a sifting; no true grain shall perish. It has brought to an end Israel's status under law, but has not invalidated the original promise. Accordingly the final vision is of restored Israel in full possession of the blessings conferred by the Abrahamic and Davidic promises (9:11-15).

Vladimir Gelesnoff

AMOS

The notes on Amos 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).

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Brother Frank Schildmeyer, 27 Huntriss Road, Karrinyup, Western Australia 6018, has agreed to serve as our agent there in place of our late brother, Bruce Phillips.

STEPHEN AND PAUL

SCENE TEN

OUR next picture is a miniature, in the sense that it is centered around two individuals, but it is a very important one, for it portrays an incident which had tremendous consequences. One of the two people mainly concerned is standing before a hostile crowd of his own countrymen. His name is Stephen, and he has just delivered a stirring address, in which he has outlined the history of his people down the centuries, beginning with the promises made to their fathers, upon which all their expectations as a nation were based. But his address has not been a flattering one. He has not hesitated to show how succeeding generations turned away from God, for example, in disowning Moses as their leader, in their sacrifices to a calf made by hands, and in their worship of the gods of heathen nations; and he has just concluded by telling his hearers that they are no better than their predecessors, for they have just murdered that greater Prophet Whom Moses had spoken of.

This accusation, true though it was, angered the listeners very much, but while they were still contemplating what to do, there was a remarkable development. For we read in Acts 7, verses 55 and 56, that Stephen, "possessing the fullness of faith and holy spirit" and "looking intently into heaven . . . perceived the glory of God, and Jesus, standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Lo! I am beholding the

heavens opened up, and the Son of Mankind standing at the right hand of God.' "

What Stephen saw was the sign promised by Jesus to indicate His second coming to set up His kingdom: "the Son of Mankind in heaven" (Matt.24:30). When this sign is seen by "all the tribes of the land," the Lord will be about to come. What Stephen saw was a preview of this sign, with the Lord *standing*, as though *ready to come*. But the representatives of the nation were neither ready nor willing to receive Him. On the contrary, they pressed their ears so that they should hear no more, and to their part in the murder of Jesus they rushed to add the murder of His messenger.

On the cross, Jesus had prayed concerning those who were assassinating Him, "Father, forgive them, for they are not aware what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). The Lord's prayer was answered, for the kingdom was, in effect, re-offered through the twelve apostles, beginning with Peter's statement on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38,39). With the murder of Stephen, the leaders of the Jews showed their contempt for this offer. The hope of the kingdom gradually receded, and a door of salvation opened to the nations (Acts 28:23-28).

Stephen's prayer was different from that of the Lord. Whereas Jesus had asked for His murderers to be forgiven, Stephen asked that the sin should not even be charged against them. Both of these prayers were in accord with the purpose of God at the time they were uttered.

Stephen is described as being filled with five things (the only person in scripture so described, though others may have possessed all of these graces), namely, holy spirit, wisdom, faith, grace and power (Acts 6:3,5,8). In Acts 7:55, it is again stressed that he

possessed "the fullness of faith and holy spirit" when he saw the vision of the Lord standing at the right hand of God. A man so inspired by God's spirit must have thoughts in accord with God's purpose at that time, and, although Stephen would not be aware of the fact, *his prayer opened the era of absolute grace.* Saul of Tarsus, the second man in our picture, stood by, endorsing the murder of Stephen. He was the principal and most rabid of the persecutors of the disciples of Jesus; he was truly the foremost of sinners; yet he was the first to receive such grace, for he was never charged with his offenses. Quite the contrary, in fact, as we shall see in our next scene.

SCENE ELEVEN

A road stretches out before us through the land of promise, and in the distance, beyond the frontier, rise the roofs and towers of a foreign city, Damascus, ancient capital of Syria.

Down this roadway to Damascus strode a persecuting band, and their hearts were full of murder as they journeyed through the Land; till before them rose the city, with its pinnacles so fair, but their leader felt no pity for the Lord's disciples there.

Now, the roadway to Damascus is a symbol of God's grace, for 'twas there the chief of sinners met his Saviour face to face. Worthy of God's indignation, he was smitten from above, yet there lay no condemnation in that blinding shaft of love.

Saul of Tarsus, later to become Paul, the slave and apostle of Christ Jesus, was indeed a choice instrument of God, to further His purpose in a way previously undreamed of. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul mentions this service, and reveals that he, who formerly was "a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager"

was "shown mercy" that in him, "the foremost of sinners, 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).

Paul, the first apostle of the *risen Lord,* as distinct from the apostles from the *Lord on earth,* Peter, John and the rest of the Twelve, becomes a pattern for future believers, in that he was saved *entirely in grace.* With his own experience behind him, he began to proclaim an evangel, which, unlike all that had been preached before, relied entirely upon *God's power* for salvation, and had *grace* as its basis and *faith* as its means of operation. As he wrote later in his career, "In grace are you saved, through faith, and this is not out of you, it is God's approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting. For His achievement are we . . ." (Eph.2:8-10).

Paul was the one appointed "to complete the Word of God" (Col.1:25). God has no further secrets to reveal concerning His purpose beyond those made known to His beloved apostle to the nations, and all that the universe needs to know concerning the basic truths of justification and reconciliation, as well as all that it needs to know to grow into a full realization of God, are contained within His completed Word.

SCENE TWELVE

"The Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first. Thereupon we, the living, who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord" (1 Thess.4:16-18).

In these words to the Thessalonians, Paul describes the next great event in God's purpose, the meeting of the Lord with that ecclesia which is His body, His complement. Those who are to meet the Lord on this supreme occasion, are to be changed in a moment, in the twinkle of an eye, thus throwing off mortality and corruption for immortality and incorruption. In fact, they are to be given a body conformed to His body of glory, as indeed befits that which is His complement. How wonderful! How transcendently transcendent!

This shout of command, which the Lord will give, does far more than raise us to this transcendence. It is the signal that sets in motion the further operations of God's purpose—operations that include the heavens as well as the earth. For through His complement, the ecclesia which is His body, Christ continues that great work, begun at the cross, of reconciling all in the universe to God.

The removal of the ecclesia from the earth allows three important unveilings to take place.

First, there is the unveiling of the Man of Lawlessness (2 Thess.2:1-12, note particularly verses 7 and 8). His period of manifestation will be infamous and progressively violent, but mercifully brief, for it will be followed by the second unveiling, that of the Lord Jesus Christ, described in detail in the Book of the Unveiling (Revelation). The Lord Jesus will despatch the Man of Lawlessness "with the spirit of His mouth and will discard [him] by the advent of His presence." The third unveiling is that of the ecclesia, the sons of God, for which even the whole of creation is waiting (Rom.8:18-22).

John H. Essex

(To be continued)

THE HEBREW MAN

No LESS than five Hebrew words could be translated as "man." They are all used in similar contexts, and are to some extent synonymous. However, each one also has its own particular shades of meaning. In this article each of these terms will be examined; the words in **boldface type** are the ones used in the *Concordant Version of the Old Testament.* After the transcription of each Hebrew word, the page and entry number from Wigram's *Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance* as well as the word number from the Hebrew dictionary in *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* are given for those who wish to study these words further.

The most general of these words is *adam* (Wigram's 17.3; Strong's 120,121) which corresponds in many ways to the Greek word *anthrōpos.* It is a collective noun refering to all **humanity**. It also refers to a single **human**, whether male or female, though it does occasionally single out a male, in which case it is rendered **ʰman**. The ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, usually translated this word with *anthrōpos.* It is also used as a proper name, for the first human, **Adam**. Because of this name, and because of the similarity of it with the word for "ground" (*adamah*), the word **human** in Hebrew would bring to mind a remembrance of man's origin. **Human** has no plural in the Hebrew, but the

plural is expressed by the phrase "sons of humanity."

Two of these words are related: *ish* (60.2; 376) and *enosh* (136.6; 582). They share the plural *anashim*. (There is a plural form for *ish*, but it occurs only a few times in the later writings; it is a regularization of an otherwise irregular form.) Since the feminine form meaning **woman** *(ishah)* has the plural *nashim*, it may be that *ish* is a form derived from *enosh*. *Ish* is rendered **man**, and signifies a man as opposed to a woman. For this reason, in certain contexts it is rendered **husband**. Since it also is used of the male of the species in the animal kingdom, it is translated **sire** (as opposed to **dam**).

The word *enosh*, **mortal**, reminded the Hebrew speaker of man's constitutional frailty:

> **As for a mortal, his days are as grass,**
> **As a blossom of the field, so he is blossoming.**
> (Psalm 103:15)

Man is also rendered **any**, **each**, and **one** in contexts referring to an unspecified individual. The Septuagint generally translated *ish* with *anêr* (**man** in the *C.L.N.T.*), but very often with *anthrōpos* (**human**); this latter word was also used most of the time for the Hebrew *enosh*.

A fourth Hebrew term for man is *methim* (779.13; 4962) meaning **adult-males**, or simply **[ad]men**. It is always plural in the Hebrew Scriptures. It does not have any clear etymological relationship with any other Hebrew word, except for the two names Methuselah and Methusael. The similarity between it and the Hebrew word for "die" (*muth*) has been pointed out, but other considerations make any close relationship unlikely.

The last word to be considered here is *geber* (292.1; 1397), which has been assigned the standard meaning

master in the Concordant Version. For the most part it appears in the poetical passages of Scripture as a synonym for **man**. Its literal sense is that of a man of mastery, a warrior as opposed to women, children or non-combatant males.

In the Concordant Version (not yet completed) each of these Hebrew words is given a distinctive translation: **human, man, mortal, master, adult-males**. Even when their synonymous usage in the Original, or the constraints of English idiom, make it desirable to translate more than one of these as "man," an indication is given by means of superior italic letters as to which word it is: **man**, ^{h}**man**, ^{ad}**man**. In this way the student of the Scriptures can use the information in articles such as this more readily.

While these words can be said to be synonyms, each of them has a nuance of its own. **Human**, or ^{h}**man**, calls to mind the first Adam formed from the soil of the ground. **Mortal** is clear enough—a reminder of our status as dying creatures. In contrast, **master** evokes thoughts of the might and accomplishment of man, while ^{ad}**men** carries with it the flavor of masculine society. And then there is the less shaded term, mere **man**. A version which translates all of these terms as "man" is not to be condemned on that account since they are to some extent synonyms. At the same time it should be clear that a Concordant Version is a most valuable tool to the Bible student who does not have a command of the biblical Hebrew and Greek.

J.D.T.

The book, *God's Rules for Scriptural Interpretation*, by Bro. Charles J. Peart is available from us or from Scripture Study Ecclesia, 27765 Table Meadow Road, Auburn CA 95603, for $5.50.

FAITHFUL IS GOD

COMPLETE CONFIDENCE in the faithful benevolence of God is a great gift. We should be like the Psalmist who recounted the Lord's kindness in the morning and His faithfulness in the nights (Psa.92:2). Each day has its own evil, but it can be a real help to us to begin the day with anticipation for the good God will achieve, and then at night to review all His faithfulness in the midst of the day's difficulties. We do not expect to escape from sorrows, but we may be enjoying the assurance of His faithfulness at all times.

When Paul wrote 2 Corinthians he recalled afflictions and burdens "so that we were despairing of life also" (2 Cor.1:6-8). But he found that this struggle was actually an aid to increase his confidence in God (verses 9-11). If the evangel he brought spoke of a future rescue from death, so also it created an inner conviction of the faithfulness of God in all circumstances. The God Who can bring such a great victory of life out of death will grant us victory continuously in the lesser dangers and sorrows of this eon.

This entrenched assurance is reflected in Paul's words later on in this chapter: "Now God is faithful, for our word toward you is not 'Yes' and 'No,' for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, Who is being heralded among you through us—through me and Silvanus and Timothy—became not 'Yes' and 'No,' but in Him has

become 'Yes.' For whatever promises are of God, are in Him 'Yes.' Wherefore through Him also is the 'Amen' to God, for glory, through us. Now He Who is confirming us together with you in Christ, and anoints us, is God, Who also seals us and is giving the earnest of the spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor.1:18-22).

Note that Paul's word was not concerned simply with the assurance of future rescue but was itself a source of present assurance of present deliverance. This word is accompanied by "the earnest of the spirit in our hearts." We understand that the "Amen" to God is an expression of God's faithfulness* to His promises of future deliverance. But we also need to see that it is an expression of His continuous faithfulness.

THE PROMISES OF GOD

Not all the promises of God have their fulfillment in the future. Yet we might almost get that idea judging from the large amount of literature being produced today on the subject of "prophecy." What value is a full and accurate view of coming events, their order of occurrence and characteristics, if this view does not create in us the joy and peace which is the disposition of Christ? Paul has more to say about present salvation from the lusts of the flesh, from distress of the mind and from the vanity of pride, than he does about the details of our future deliverance. It is good to know all we can about things to come, but such an awareness should be accompanied by an assurance in the faithfulness of God. Whatever He is doing is right and for good. This makes His faithfulness important to us right now.

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*"Amen" means "faithful."

Even in the epistles to the Thessalonians where details of future events are given, the stress is on knowing God and His grace to us. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is given to console us by showing us God's purpose for those who have died. Its main intent is to focus attention on God and His achievement. It is for the assurance that *God* will lead forth those who have been put to repose (4:14); *God* does not appoint us to indignation (5:9). "Wherefore, console one another and edify one the other . . . . Faithful is He Who is calling you, Who will be doing it also" (5:11,24).

So also in 2 Thessalonians, the famous passage in chapter 2 concerning the apostasy and the man of lawlessness is given so that "you be not quickly shaken from your mind, nor yet alarmed." How can we avoid this fear? Once again the answer is to look at the kind of God we have. "Now we ought to be thanking God always concerning you, brethren, beloved by the Lord, seeing that God prefers you from the beginning for salvation, in holiness of the spirit and faith in the truth, into which He also calls us through our evangel, for the procuring of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess.2:13,14). And again Paul reminds us, "Yet faithful is the Lord, Who will be establishing you and guarding you from the wicked one" (3:3). Having confidence in God regarding what He will do in the future gives us consolation and peace today.

The simplest of believers can have this confidence; the most learned of believers can lack it; the fact is that all of us, simple and learned, could use more of it. Peter encouraged those who were suffering to "commit their souls to a faithful Creator in the doing of good" (1 Pet.4:19). Paul reminded those undergoing trial, "Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are able, but, together

with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable you to undergo it" (1 Cor.10:13).

What we must remember about current and future events is that they are in the hands of our faithful and benevolent God. The great value of accepting this fact is that it creates a confidence within us, "the earnest of the spirit," which aids us continually in the presence of current events. Apart from this assurance all seems chaos and vanity. Therefore, we give God thanks and praise for His faithfulness, and we affirm with joy Paul's words, "Faithful is God, through Whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1 Cor.1:9). D.H.H.

GEORGE E. ECCLESTON

Brother George E. Eccleston of South Kingstown, Rhode Island died last October 29 at the age of 86. He had been the teacher of a Bible class in his area several years ago, heralding the truth of God's eonian purpose.

MISS M. WILKINSON

One of the earliest subscribers to *Unsearchable Riches* in New Zealand, Miss Wilkinson greatly valued the truths of universal reconciliation and justification. She has now been put to repose awaiting the resurrection when our Lord descends with a shout.

CECIL BEAL

Bro. Beal was one of the early saints associated with our work in the Southern California area. He attended the meetings in Los Angeles for many years, and, being a carpenter by trade, he did some of the construction work on the house, office, and warehouse here at Canyon Country. He died on September 24, 1979. We do not know his exact age, though he was in his eighties, but that is not important. The important thing is that we shall meet him again in that glorious day when we shall all be in the presence of our blessed Lord, and pain and suffering shall be no more.

E.O.K.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1980
BEING the SECOND NUMBER of VOLUME SEVENTY-ONE

EDITORIAL

IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES of the Old Testament, salvation is of Yahweh. This was the divine Name which His own people could invoke for help. Hence "Yahweh" occurs so often in the Psalms (about 700 times in all, especially in the first and the fifth books of the psalter with over 500 occurrences, i.e. in Psalms 1-41 and 107-150).

David's longing was toward Yahweh, when he sang:

Yahweh is my Light and my Salvation; whom shall I fear?
Yahweh is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
Your face, Yahweh, shall I seek.
You must not abandon me and You must not forsake me.
Be expectant toward Yahweh (27:1,9,14).

It was probably a copy of the book of Deuteronomy* which prompted king David to compose the following lines:

The *law* of Yahweh is flawless, restoring the soul.
The *testimony* of Yahweh is faithful, making wise the simple.

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*"It will come to be when he [the king] sits on the throne of his kingdom that he will write for himself a duplicate of this law on a scroll from the one before the levitical priests. And it will be with him and he will read in it all the days of his life that he may learn to *fear* Yahweh his Elohim, to observe all the words of this *law* and these *statutes* to do them, that his heart by no means exalt above his brethren and that he by no means withdraw from the *instruction* to the right or the left, that he may prolong his days on the throne of his kingdom, he and his sons within Israel" (Deut.17:18-20).

The Septuagint (LXX) reads "this Deuteronomy" (*to deuteronomion touto*) for "duplicate of this law."

The *precepts* of Yahweh are upright, rejoicing the heart.
The *instruction* of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The *fear* of Yahweh is clean, standing for the future.
The *judgments* of Yahweh are true, righteous are they altogether (19:7-9).

There were many situations in David's life when the name of Yahweh had more significance for him than His titles. Moses, too, very often addressed his Elohim as "Yahweh," as the text of Deuteronomy shows, or of Exodus for that matter where we read in 33:11 that Yahweh spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his associate (friend, *philon*, in LXX). Other nations had gods or elohim of their own. But the name of Yahweh had a very special meaning for His people Israel. Hence Moses told them: "Yahweh your Elohim, He is the Elohim of elohim [God of gods] and the Lord of lords, the El [Deity], great, masterful and fearful" (Deut.10:17).

Moses may have pondered over the reports on Abraham's life who felt free to say, "my Lord Yahweh" (Gen.15:2,8); and when Abraham had returned from Egypt, he called on the *name of Yahweh* (13:4). We may take it for granted that the deep *significance* of the sacred name was quite transparent to him and was always in his heart and mind. Whenever he invoked His name, he may have thought, Yahweh comes to be with me at present as He came to be with me in the past: in Mesopotamia (Acts 7:2), Charan, Shechem, at the altar between Bethel and Ai, even in Egypt, then again at the place between Bethel and Ai as well as among the oaks of Mamre (Gen.12:1,6-8,17; 13:4,18).

For Abraham the name of Yahweh certainly included all the titles which He had given to Himself: Yahweh El Supreme, Owner of heavens and earth,

your Shield, your exceedingly increased Hire, El Shaddai or El-Who-Suffices (Gen.14:22; 15:1,7; 17:1). In Abraham's greatest agony, his faith was triumphant and he was able to answer to his son Isaac: "Elohim *shall see* (*yireh*) for Himself as to the flockling for the ascent offering" (22:8). When the divine probing of Abraham's faith came to an end, he named the place "*Yahweh-yireh,*" that is: Yahweh shall see [to it]. Abraham was now quite confident that in the future Yahweh shall come to be with him all the days of his life and that He shall certainly come in due time to fulfill the promises of the covenant (17:2-14).

James summed up the essence of the patriarch's faith in his epistle (2:23): "Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness, and he was called *friend of God.*"

As we have seen, Moses too attained a solitary dignity as a friend of Yahweh. "By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the fury of the king, for he [Moses] is staunch as seeing the Invisible" (Heb.11:27). Forty years later (Acts 7:30) in the wilderness of mount Sinai, in the flame of a thorn-bush fire, he heard the voice of Yahweh, ordering him: "You will bring forth My people, the sons of Israel, from Egypt." But Moses hesitated: "When I say to them, the Elohim of your forefathers sends me to you, they will say to me: What [about] His name" (Ex.3:10,13). The people had of course heard the name of Yahweh when the stories of Abraham were told and were handed down from generation to generation; but the sacred name could not have the same significance for them as it had had for the patriarch.

The divine answer to Moses' question was: "I shall come to be [with them always], just as I am coming to be [with them now]." The Hebrew language, succinct

as it is, has here (in Ex.3:14) only three words: *eh-yeh asher eh-yeh;* the twice repeated verb may be translated *I shall become* or: *I am becoming.* (For idiomatic reasons, we often use the variant "come to be" for "become.") We want to emphasize at this juncture that *eh-yeh* is a prefix-conjugation form of the verb *hah-yah* (*aeie* and *eie* without vowel pointing); this verb is no static copula in the sense of "to be" or "to exist," but rather means: to become, to come to pass, to come to be. The Hebrew verb *hah-wah* belongs to the same word family.

More than a century ago, B. Davidson suggested in his Analytical Lexicon that *Yahweh* was a combination of two different forms of *hah-wah,* thus expressing the elements of future and past in the name. He saw here a parallel to a twice repeated form of *hah-yah* in Exodus 3:14.

In his article "The Incommunicable Name" (volume XXV, 1934) A. E. Knoch explained his triple-timed interpretation of the name *Yahweh.* It was mainly based on Revelation 1:4,8 where its full significance is given: "*Who is and Who was and Who is coming.*" He saw the most succinct Hebrew equivalent of this phrase in the three time elements (past, present, future) contained in "Yahweh" for which he coined the abbreviated translation *Will-being-was,* to be used in the margins of the Concordant Versions of Genesis and Isaiah (*cf* volume XLV, p.244). In 1934 he had used *hah-wah* as a starting point, later he saw the three time elements in *hah-yah* (to become), but he found it impractical to use the full translation: *Shall-become-becoming-became.*

The brilliant Jewish scholar Martin Buber (who had been engaged in translating the Hebrew Bible into German) published his thoughts about translational

problems in 1936. He too had come to the conclusion that *hah-yah* means: to become, to occur, to take place. Buber quoted from a centuries-old Midrash where Jewish rabbis had pointed out that the sacred name comprises past, present, and future, and that the divine statement in Exodus 3:14 means: "I am the One Who was, is, and will be, exercising rule and providence over the universe, I will be with them in all their distress: both this distress and in the future always when they call to me."* Buber (who died in 1965 at the age of 87 in Jerusalem) had suggested that the sacred name was possibly pronounced as a three-syllable word: *Yeh-heh-weh.*

When A. E. Knoch published several articles on "The Divine Name and Titles" in 1954, he did so "with considerable hesitancy" and "would rather have waited until the Hebrew Concordant Version had been published." He went on to say: "The mere thought of *Being,* or *Existing,* will not serve for the Name of names. That is why the thought of time pervades it. Time naturally divides into past, present, and future, in the minds of created beings. These are basic concepts in the revelation of the Deity. His purpose is enacted in stages" (Vol.45, pp.241,243,244).

Turning back again to the book of Deuteronomy, we find a solemn warning in 5:11, not to use the Name without a proper cause or even frivolously: "You shall not take up the name of Yahweh your Elohim for futility!" So as not to misuse the Name, the Jews later went to the extreme of not uttering it at all. Often they used the Hebrew equivalent of *Lord* in place of it.

We find the title "living Elohim" (Deut.5:26) again

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*Martin Buber, *Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung* (Berlin: Schocken Verlag, 1936) pp.190-191.

in the New Testament as "living God" (Matt.16:16; Heb.3:12; 10:31; Rev.7:2) where it serves as a substitute for "Yahweh Elohim."

The law demanded (Deut.6:13): "Yahweh your Elohim shall you fear . . . and by His name shall you swear." When the chief priest interrogated our Lord Jesus before the Sanhedrin and was putting Him on oath, he should have said to Him: "I exorcise you by Yahweh Elohim." In order to avoid the use of the incommunicable Name, he said: I exorcise you by the living God."

H.H.R.

THINGS THAT HAPPEN do not happen apart from God. Paul endured much suffering so that others might "be happening upon salvation which is in Christ Jesus" (2Tim.2:10). Yet these are "the chosen" of God, for it is *God* "Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian" (2 Tim.1:9). Even that which "happens by a coincidence" (*cf* Luke 10:31) is actually part of the pattern which God has established.

It "happens" that the present issue gives special consideration to the meaning of the Divine Name and Titles and to the operations of God which these Designations describe. It "happens" also that a study by Brother Alan Reid on "The Secret of Marriage" appears on the month of my own marriage to Gisela Goerzen Beechey of Edmonton, Alberta. May it be that many readers of this issue will also find that it "happens" to contain timely thoughts of real spiritual value.

D.H.H.

THE RECONCILIATION OF ALL
(Colossians 1:20)

THE TWO paramount points in universal history are the creation and the resurrection of the Son of God. Through His death and vivification He will yet more than restore the lost creation to the Father. The cross, which speaks of His estrangement from God, is the basis on which reconciliation is built. The benefits it brings are not confined to earth or mankind, but include the celestial realms as well.

WHAT ARE "THINGS"?

The neuter gender, in English, is used only for *things* as a rule, not for persons. In Greek, however, the so-called "neuter" seems to be much wider in its scope, and to include, rather than exclude, the genders, so it is actually "indefinite" in sense. In this passage (Col.1:16-20) it is of considerable importance to be clear on this point. The Revised Version introduces the word "things" ten times, not because it is in the Greek, but to show that the gender is neuter. They speak of all *things* created, *things* visible and *things* invisible, *things* created, before all *things*, all *things* consist, in all *things* . . . preeminence, reconcile all *things*, *things* on earth, *things* in the heavens.

I feel sure that anyone who reads the passage with this in view, and especially if the word *things* is emphasized, will feel that something is amiss. The

more the passage is studied the more it seems evident that *not things*, but persons are intended. These "things" are *in* the heavens and *on* the earth, hence they cannot refer to the material creation as a whole. They are detailed as thrones or dominions or sovereignties or authorities, which, indeed, are forms of government, and so "things," but very evidently stand for those who are subject to them. And how can *things* be reconciled? Were the Colossians (1:21) among these *things?* The introduction of this word, it seems to us, though warranted by the grammars, has thrown a veil over the whole passage and made it unintelligible to some extent.

One cannot help but admire the consistency of the Revisers in this particular, when, in Galatians 3:22, they translate: "Howbeit the scripture hath shut up all *things* under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." In John 6:37 they yielded to the context. Instead of following their usual rule and translating, "Every*thing* (*pan*) . . ." they compromise with, "All *that which* the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." These two passages should suffice to show that *things* is an unfortunate rendering of this Greek form in some cases, and that it may be used of both genders, or without reference to any gender.

PEACE THROUGH THE CROSS

Enmity has come in through the entrance of death and sin. All of mankind, without exception, are estranged from God. It is more than likely that this discord has affected the whole creation, in varying degrees. To make peace between God and His unfriendly creatures is the greatest of all achievements.

In this world of strife and contention the role of peacemaker is a difficult and discouraging one. For the most trivial causes enmity arises between man and man, section and section, country and country. Not long since a large part of the world was involved in a bloody war, and no stable peace has resulted from all of the strenuous endeavors to put an end to war. We talk of peace, yet there is unrest and misunderstanding almost everywhere, and the din of arms has never fully ceased.

By pride comes contention. Notwithstanding the shameful record of mankind since the dawn of history, men are proud of what they are and what they have accomplished and what they possess. Evil has been given them to humble them, they fail often and suffer much, the world is getting worse in almost every way, except material comfort, man's inhumanity to man cries to high heaven for redress, and man's offensive attitude to the Deity is unpardonable, and yet man is haughty and stubborn and implacable. He refuses the overtures of peace which come to him in the evangel and is hastening on to the era of God's indignation, when man's doings will be destroyed, his power broken, and his pride leveled with the dust.

But even after a thousand years of peace his heart remains the same. Satan, loosed out of his jail, will find the same enmity, the same readiness to rise against God and His people as before. The experience of good does not bring permanent peace. It is through evil that peace must come. Though Christ Himself, the Prince of Peace, has ruled man for a millennium, that has not tuned his heart in unison with God. He does not make peace by His power or by His glorious government. Peace comes to the nations in this way in the eons of the eons, but heart peace with God comes

only through His sufferings and shameful, ignominious death.

The cross, the inglorious, the disgraceful, the infamous, the opprobrious, the outrageous stake, the most disreputable death that man can devise, where weakness and shame combine to dishonor the High and Holy Son of God—here is where peace was made for all who are estranged, where the world was conciliated to God. With this as a basis, the Son will reconcile all God's enemies with him when the eons have run their course. In the cross we see the utter worthlessness of man as well as the supreme exhibition of the love of God. Reconciliation is effected by the revelation of God's love in the deepest display of human hate.

The cross, like a lightning flash, reveals the heart of man. He Who hung upon it was the Touchstone by which all things may be tested. When He appeared among His people humanity manifested itself as it really is. He should have been welcomed and honored and adored. By the condemnation of the only One Who deserved to live, mankind has condemned itself, and sealed its own death warrant. By the shameful crucifixion of the Lord of glory men made it manifest that they, not He, deserve the death detestable. O that we all may learn what we really are in the light of the cross! This will burn out all our pride and prepare the way for peace. And thus it is that reconciliation comes. The cross will abase all into the dust, and humble their hearts before the Deity, and prepare them for the revelation of His love.

But if the cross only revealed what is in man it could not reconcile the race but would rather destroy it. Thanks be to God that it also reveals what is in God! It is the fullest revelation of His love. In it He seemed to

side with man. Instead of rescuing His Beloved from their hate, He sends fire from above into His bones. He makes Him to be sin, Who knew no sin. He forsakes Him instead of the ones who deserved His displeasure.

The divine alchemy which transformed the Victim of human hate into the Sacrifice for their sins is almost too wonderful for human apprehension.

THE BLOOD OF THE CROSS

The cross was the supreme crisis in universal history, an event unique, unparalleled in the annals of time. Nothing has ever occurred which has such a profound effect upon the world. It will transform an alienated universe into adoring worshipers. It is a permanent, an abiding power which will never lose its potency. Today the cross avails to conciliate the world, and to reconcile those who receive the conciliation. But this will by no means exhaust its power. It will be the basis of all blessing in the eons to come, and will bring immortality and peace to all at the consummation. Death cannot stop its course, for Christ arose, the Firstborn, and all for whom He died (and He died for all!) will share His life when death is abolished.

The blood of *Christ* is a most expressive figure of the permanent power of His sufferings. The soul, sensation, feeling (not the life) of the flesh is in the blood. In the days of old this was sprinkled in the holy of holies once a year on the day of propitiation, and for a twelve-month period preserved the potency of the sacrifice. So it is with the suffering of Christ. Thank God it is past, but its potency is permanent. It avails today, and will never lose its power. The blood remains, as it were, within the holiest in heaven, to witness to His offering.

But the blood of His *cross*—this goes far deeper still. Only here do we have this notable expression. It is not a mere literary variant, but a deliberate endeavor to distinguish between the death of God's Son and the *manner* of it. This is done because here we have not merely the salvation or the justification of all, but the *reconciliation* of the universe. It is not a question of sin so much as of offense and enmity. In fact this passage is concerned with salvation only insofar as it is included in reconciliation. *Peace* is made by the blood of His cross. The blood is a reminder of its permanence.

This blood does not merely remind us of His death and suffering, but of the *shame* and *enmity* of *man*, and the *darkness* and *distance* from *God* endured by Him because of the *crucifixion*. Stoning would have brought death, but would have avoided much of the suffering and the curse of the Deity which rested upon the One Who was hanged upon a tree. The marvelous truth that all will be reconciled to God is based, not only on the suffering and death of Christ, but especially on the abject abasement involved in the manner of His death, coupled with the curse which it drew down from above.

The cry of the august Sufferer, "My God, My God, why didst *Thou* forsake Me?" finds its answer in the *cross*. With any other form of death God would not have forsaken Him. He would rather have turned against His murderers. It would have increased the distance and estrangement between God and His creatures. It would have made enmity, not peace. But because He voluntarily placed Himself beneath the curse of God for the sake of His enemies, the result was reconciliation.

But let us note that the cross is brought in here

parenthetically. It is the basis of reconciliation, indeed, but by no means includes all that He will do in order to bring back the universe to God. On this basis He will carry on all of His future work of ruling and judging, of rousing and vivifying the dead. All of His coming acts will have this grand goal in view, and we will have our share in His work of reconciling God's creatures among the celestials, for we are His complement. As living exemplifications of the power of the cross, we will have our part in the final and effectual peace propaganda. For this reason we read here of the *blood* of the cross, for its abiding power will be the means at our disposal in bringing about perpetual peace.

One of the most helpful contrasts between Ephesians and Colossians is on the subject of peace. In Colossians, as we have seen, it is universal in its scope, including not only earth's sinners, but His enemies in the heavens as well. But in Ephesians it is limited to believers, and has to do with the enmity between the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision (Eph.2:11-18). This estrangement inhered in their flesh, and in the physical relation of Christ to the Circumcision. It found expression in the central wall in the sanctuary, which kept the Uncircumcision at a distance from God's dwelling place, and in the decrees issued by the apostles from Jerusalem. That fruit of peace was a new humanity, so that both the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision have access, in one spirit, to the Father. Though based upon the cross, there is nothing there for those outside the household of faith.

The peace of Ephesians, in accord with the secret of the epistle, will continue during this administration of grace, but will retire in the following economies, when Israel once more comes to the front on the basis of

physical preeminence. But the peace in Colossians, in accord with the secret of Christ, will not only continue throughout the eons, but will embrace all at the consummation. In Ephesians it is limited in both time and scope. It applies only to the Circumcision and Uncircumcision in this present era. But in Colossians it is extended to include those in the heavens as well as those on the earth. All are embraced by it, so that no enmity remains in God's universe.

To even list all of the passages which have been brought forward to blot out the great truth of the reconciliaiton of all would lead us too far afield at this time. They have been fully considered and discussed in separate essays. Correct concordant renderings automatically dispose of them, and, at the same time, confirm the great truth that God will become All in all at the consummation (1 Cor.15:28).

May God graciously give us faith to believe it! May our love for His Beloved constrain us to receive it! May mistaken translations of other passages not bar our way into this holy of holies, beyond the veil of His eonian dealings with His creatures! May not the false philosophical terms "everlasting" and "eternal," or "eternity," blind our eyes to the eons, the scene of the Sons's glories, their commencement in love, and their consummation in reconciliation! Here we stand on the summit of divine revelation. Here we can see all else below us, and see its place in God's purpose. May we not take some lower stand and deny this glorious consummation because it is hid from our gaze by the fogs of lower levels! A.E.K.

(To be continued)

The preceding article is included as a chapter in the book *All in All* ($3.00).

FROM PAPHOS TO PERGA

TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD: this had been the desire of proconsul Sergius Paul, an intelligent man (Acts 13:7). We may be sure that it was God Who put this yearning into his heart, and so he summoned Barnabas and Saul. It is conceivable that Sergius Paul had been advised of the presence in Paphos of two Jewish guest speakers who were expounding a new approach to the highest Deity when they appeared before synagogue audiences.

We learn from Luke's detailed report that the proconsul received the gift of faith from God without ever setting his foot into a synagogue and without first becoming a proselyte of Judaism. Apparently he was the first high-ranking Roman official who came to know that the Word of God and of the Lord was no strictly Jewish affair, and that He was not the God of the Jews only, but of the nations also (*cf* Rom.3:29).

Probably John Mark (Acts 12:25; 13:5) was unable to fully understand this new principle now governing God's dealings with non-Jews. Before Paphos, Judaism had been the only channel of blessing for Gentiles. Even the believers in Samaria could not receive the spirit except through Peter and John (Acts 8:14-17), thus recognizing the authority of the pentecostal ecclesia in Jerusalem.

John Mark was undoubtedly no strict circumcisionist, or he would not have joined Barnabas and Saul in the first place. And he certainly was aware of the fact that many proselytes had become believers. But so far he had never witnessed the conversion of a Gentile who had no bonds to Judaism at all, and would never have. From now on, membership in the local synagogue was no longer obligatory as the only guarantee of fully sharing the Jewish expectation.

We may take it for granted that all these points and related problems were discussed among Paul, Barnabas and John Mark, when they left the island of Cyprus on a northbound ship for the short trip to the mainland of Asia Minor. Possibly the boat brought them right to the city of Perga up the river Cestrus which was navigable in those days. Perga's sea harbor was called Attalia; if they landed there, they would have gone by land up to the city which had a river harbor of its own. But Luke does not give us any details here; as a matter of fact, he states in the briefest possible form: "Now setting out from Paphos, those about Paul came to Perga of Pamphylia. Yet John, departing from them, returns to Jerusalem. Now they, passing through from Perga, came along into Antioch, Pisidia" (Acts 13:13,14).

DEUTERONOMY 20:8

Expositors have offered various explanations why Luke, after the Paphos episode, is silent on the details pertaining to Perga. He does not mention why Paul decided to traverse Pamphylia without bringing the evangel to this coastal province, as a natural continuation of the work he had done in Cyprus, and in earlier years in Cilicia which borders Pamphylia in the east. If Paul had some reason to postpone the

evangelization of the provincial capital of Perga till a later stage of their journey (Acts 14:24,25), Barnabas apparently acquiesced. But John Mark presumably disapproved of the planning and declined to participate in a venture wherein his cousin Barnabas was no longer the leader, a venture into a mountainous countryside which was notorious for its marauding indigenous population. It may be that John Mark was afraid to face dangers of robbers and dangers in the wilderness (*cf* 2 Cor.11:26). Since Luke is silent on these points, it is conceivable that Paul did not want any permanent record of the reasons for his immediate journey to Pisidian Antioch, nor for John Mark's departure to the sheltered life of his mother's house in Jerusalem (*cf* Acts 12:12).

When Joseph, the Cyprian Levite, was surnamed "Barnabas" by the apostles, Luke explained the meaning in Acts 4:36. But he failed to do so when Joseph's cousin was surnamed "Mark" (Latin: *Marcus*, Greek: *Markos*). Why did they call a devout Levite by a Roman name? Is it possible that they had the Hebrew word *mrk* in mind which was probably pronounced *morek*? This Hebrew noun occurs only in Leviticus 26:36 and means "timidity" (I will bring timidity into their hearts . . . and they flee). This reminds us of the provision which the law had made for the softhearted who were afraid to go into the battle: "Any man who is fearful and *tender of heart* shall go and return to his house so that he shall not melt the heart of his brethren as his own heart" (Deut.20:8; the Hebrew words for timidity and tender belong to the same word family).

In a statement on Mark's character, A. E. Knoch made the following comment: "Were there not good reasons for his timidity? He had no such background

as Paul. He never was a rabid persecutor of the saints, nor had he received a commission direct from the glorified Lord. Mark may have been a pampered Levite, as he was related to Barnabas. But, conclusively, he was *not* sent by the *holy spirit.* Barnabas and Saul were *severed* for this service, but Mark was not. For a timid soul, he was probably badly shocked by the combined call of a heathen proconsul and the curse of a Jewish prophet, even if false. But it was as 'John' [Hebr. *Yochanan,* Yahweh-is-gracious] that he departed from them, for the fog and darkness which fell on the false prophet showed clearly that Israel, of which he was a part, was not being shown grace at that time" (Vol.48, p.290). Grace had departed from the apostate *nation* of Israel. From now on, God will be gracious to *individual* Gentiles and Jews alike.

IN A SUBSERVIENT CAPACITY

We have seen that Barnabas and Paul had John with them as deputy (Acts 13:5). It is interesting to note that the literal meaning of *hup-êretês* (the Greek word for deputy) is UNDER-ROWER. This word picture is taken from the ancient galleys which were propelled with oars by the *rowers, under* the strict supervision of the taskmaster. The three occurrences of the verb *hup-êreteō* (Acts 13:36; 20:34; 24:23) are rendered *subserve* in the *Concordant Literal New Testament.* Hence the noun denotes a person in a *subservient* capacity; we call him "deputy" in all twenty occurrences of our Version. When we look up these contexts, we find that they are indeed subservient persons with limited functions and more or less closely bound by instructions from their superiors.

This definition applies also to the eyewitnesses of the Lord's earthly career who were able to testify to

the facts which they had perceived, and to the words which they had heard. They were "eyewitnesses and deputies of the word" from whom Luke gathered much of the information for his first report (*cf* Luke 1:2). The Lord had never talked to His disciples about things which they could not yet understand (*cf* John 16:12). Since their knowledge was not complete, their functions as "deputies" were necessarily limited; and we might add that they were closely bound by the last instructions of their Lord in Acts 1:8.

Paul received his directions from Christ in His celestial glory when he was appointed "a deputy and a witness" and was delegated to go afar to the nations (Acts 22:21; 26:16). Step by step, Paul's limited functions were widened as he made progress in spiritual understanding; he advanced from the proclamation of the word of the cross to the revelation of celestial secrets until he was qualified to complete the word of God (Col.1:25). When he called himself a deputy of Christ and administrator of God's secrets (1 Cor.4:1), he had been *faithful* in the performance of his duties, slaving for the Lord with all humility (Acts 20:19). Thus Paul always remained in the position of a deputy in the strict usage of the word, i.e. a deputy in a *sub*servient capacity, serving *under* (not: for) his celestial Lord in accordance with the instructions received from Him over the years.

From the little we know about John Mark (*cf* Acts 15:38) we do get the impression that he was a deputy who was not fully *sub*servient; he was willing to serve for the Lord, as he saw fit, but not under Paul. It seems that timid Mark was willing to row in the Lord's galley, but he may not have liked the role of a mere UNDER-ROWER, subject to directions given by taskmaster Paul.

COMING WITH PAUL TO THE WORK

Like John Mark, most of us are willing to serve for the Lord; some are even willing to be subservient with limited functions as humble imitators of Paul. But very few can stand the humiliation of being more or less ignored or perhaps disfellowshipped, or any kind of humiliation whatsoever. Coming with Paul to the work demands a *sub*servient deputy, in accordance with the work rules laid down in his epistles. As A. E. Knoch once said (Vol.29, p.17), "The tide is against the truth. The desire for fellowship, for a living, for popularity, for gain and for fame, and many other motives not only discourage a teacher in standing for the truth, but tend to turn him against it. Those who stand firm, must count on apostasy and opposition." This was Paul's experience throughout his career as a deputy and administrator of God's secrets. Even if our own functions are much more limited than were Paul's, we all may say with him (Gal.2:20):

With CHRIST
have I been crucified,
yet I am living;
no longer I,
but living in me is
CHRIST.

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

A PUBLICATION IN BRAILLE

Through the kindness of our friend, Bob Kneen, of Los Angeles, we now have the book, *Death, Resurrection, Immortality,* by J. E. Kirk, available for loan to the blind, in Braille. If you have blind friends or acquaintances who might be interested we encourage you to contact us about this publication.

THE TEN WORDS

5 [+] **Moses** [l]**called to all Israel and** [l]**said to them: Hear, Israel,** [`]**the statutes and** [`]**the judgments which I am speaking in your ears today, and learn** [`]**them and observe to do them.** [2] **Yahweh our Elohim contracted a covenant with us** [f]**at Mount Horeb.** [3] **Not** [`]**with our forefathers did Yahweh contract** [``]**this** [`]**covenant,** [t]**but** [`]**with us, we, these here today, all of us who are alive.** [4] **Face** [t]**to face Yahweh spoke with you** [f]**at the mount from the midst of the fire** [5] **(I was standing between Yahweh and** [bt] **you in** [`]**that season, to tell** [>] **you** [`]**the word of Yahweh, for you were fearful** [f]**because of the presence of the fire and did not ascend into the mountain),** [>] **saying:**

[6] **I am Yahweh your Elohim Who** [c]**brought you forth from the land of Egypt, from the house** [`]**of servants.**

[7] **There shall** [b]**be no**[t] **other elohim for you** [on]**in preference to Me.**

[8] **You shall not make for yourself a carving** [S+]**nor**[nc] **any representation of** [w]**that in the heavens above** [+]**or** [w]**that** [l]**on the earth** [f] **beneath,** [+]**or** [w]**that in the water** [f] **beneath** [>] **the earth.** [9] **You shall not bow down to them nor be** [c]**made to serve them, for I, Yahweh your Elohim, am a jealous El, visiting the depravity of the fathers on the sons and on the third and on the fourth generation** [>]**of those hating Me,** [10] [+]**yet doing kindness to thousands** [>]**of those loving Me and** [>] **observing** [7]**My**[ns] **instructions.**

[11] **You shall not take up** [`]**the name of Yahweh your Elohim for futility, for Yahweh will not** [m]**hold innocent** [`]**him who takes up** [`]**His name for futility.**

12 You are to observe `the sabbath day to hallow it, just as Yahweh your Elohim instructed you. 13 Six days shall you serve and do all your work, 14 +yet the seventh day is a sabbath to Yahweh your Elohim. You shall not do any work 7in it^{nc}, you, + your son +or your daughter, + your servant +or your maidservant, + your bull, + your ass +or any beast of yours +or your sojourner who is within your gates, that your servant and your maidservant may lrest as you do. 15 +Then you will remember that you became a servant in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your Elohim cbrought you forth from there lwith a steadfast hand and lwith an outstretched arm. Therefore Yahweh your Elohim instructed you to do thus on `the sabbath day.

16 Glorify `your father and `your mother, just as Yahweh your Elohim instructed you, that your days may be lprolonged and that it may be lwell >with you on the ground which Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you.

17 You shall not murder.

18 Neither shall you commit adultery.

19 Neither shall you steal.

20 Neither shall you answer lagainst your associate with Mfalses testimony.

21 Neither shall you covet the wife of your associate. Neither shall you lust after the house of your associate, his field, + his servant +or his maidservant, + his bull, + his ass +or anything which is your associate's.

COMMENTARY

THE TEN WORDS (Deut.4:13; 10:4), commonly called the Ten Commandments, or the Decalog (Greek *deka* 'ten' + *logos* 'word'), were more than mere legislation. These were the words spoken directly by Yahweh to the assembled Israelites at Mount Horeb. They formed a summary of the covenant between Israel and

Yahweh. Yahweh chose Israel out of all the nations of the world, not because of great numbers (7:7), but because of His love and faithfulness (7:8).

The principle behind the Ten Words was further distilled in the words of Deuteronomy 6:45: "Hear, Israel! Yahweh our Elohim is one Yahweh. And you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your intensity." The corollary is found in Leviticus 19:18: ". . . you will love your associate as yourself." Although these commands are not required of us today *as law*, the underlying principle of love will bind itself to us (2 Cor.5;14). They instruct us in truth and illustrate that love. The Law was written for our admonition (1 Cor.10:11), and is beneficial for teaching, exposure, correction and discipline in righteousness (2 Tim.3:16).

LOVE YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM

The first command is completely exclusive. Divine service is to be given to One only. The immediate basis for this, in terms of the covenant, is that of the deliverance from Egypt. He alone took them from bondage; He alone deserved their loyalty. All others were proven false. The second command is similar, but it is unique among all the ancient religions. At that time, the worship of representational images was taken for granted as proper and right, but Israel was forbidden that activity. Though Yahweh works in the world, He is transcendent above the world, so no material image is fully adequate as a representation of Him. "We are aware that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God except One" (1 Cor.8:4).

The third commandment reveals the intimacy of the

covenant, for they were allowed to use His name. Since taking up the name implies invoking the power and honor of the one named, this could not be done lightly. "Let everyone who is naming the name of the Lord withdraw from injustice" (2 Tim.2:19).

THE SABBATH

The Sabbath command was probably also unique to Israel. It was a day set aside for special cognizance of Who their Sovereign was. This covenant was not with an earthly ruler, but with the Creator of the universe. The stated reason for the Sabbath is modified slightly in Deuteronomy 5:15 from Exodus 20:11 in keeping with the theme of the book of Deuteronomy. Exodus gives the seventh day rest of Elohim after the six days of creation as the reason for the observance of the Sabbath, whereas Deuteronomy gives the deliverance from Egypt as the matter of remembrance. The exodus from Egypt was, in a way, the creation of the nation of Israel. That day was a forceful reminder of their total dependence on God. "He who is disposed to the day, is disposed to it to the Lord . . . . For not one of us is living to himself, and not one is dying to himself. For both, if we should be living, to the Lord are we living, and if we should be dying, to the Lord are we dying" (Rom.14:6-8).

GLORIFY PARENTS

The command traditionally rendered "Honour thy father and thy mother" (KJV) is literally (in the Hebrew) "*Glorify* your father and your mother." It entails more than courtesy and obedience—it means giving them a good name and reputation. This is the reverse side of part of the second commandment, where the heavy responsibility of the parent is

demonstrated. The depravity of the fathers would have its effect on the succeeding generations. The fifth commandment also illustrates the importance placed on the preservation of the family structure for the covenant community of Israel. "Children obey your parents, in the Lord, for this is just. 'Honor your father and mother' (which is the first precept with a promise), that it may be becoming well with you, and you should be a long time on the earth" (Eph.6:1-3).

LOVE YOUR ASSOCIATE

Murder, specifically, is the subject of the sixth commandment, and not the taking of human life in general. Capital punishment (17:2-7) and warfare (chapter 20) are not the issue here. This commandment follows the fifth because it is integrally related to the promise of a long life in the land (*cf* 4:40). In Jesus' commentary on the faulty interpretation of this law, He extended it to cover anger (Matt.5:21,22).

Adultery carried with it severe penalties because it was a flagrant violation of the *covenant* of marriage. Jesus also commented on this law in His "sermon on the Mount" (Matt.5:27-30).

In the context of the Ten Commandments as a whole the specific intention of the eighth commandment is possibly manstealing—kidnapping (*cf* Deut.24:7). The first four commandments deal with the relationship of the nation to God; the latter six deal with the individual relationships within the nation. Possessions, as such, are covered in the last command. However, theft of possessions was probably considered to be a secondary aspect of this command. "Let him who steals by no means still be stealing: yet rather let him be toiling, working with his hands at what is good,

that he may have to share with one who has need" (Eph.4:28).

Several Hebrew manuscripts read *false* witness in verse 20, in line with Exodus 20:16, whereas the Masoretic Text has *futile* witness. The general meaning of the passage remains the same in either case. This crime is another form of unfaithfulness to the community, and bears some relation to the third commandment. Even if the "false testimony" did not result in capital punishment or loss of freedom or goods, it would still be a crime against the victim's good name. "Wherefore, putting off the false, let each be speaking the truth with his associate, for we are members of one another" (Eph.4:25).

COVETOUSNESS

The crowning commandment differs from the rest in that it deals strictly with an attitude. As such, it does not lend itself well to jurisprudence, but it is a fitting summary to the spirit of the previous four commands. The motivation behind murder, adultery, kidnapping, theft or false testimony, in otherwise sane people, is excessive self-interest. This command forbids illicit desire for another person's earthly goods. It was this precept that the Apostle Paul found to be the clincher for him: "Sin, getting an incentive through the precept, produces in me all manner of coveting . . . . But Sin, that it may be appearing Sin, is producing death to me through good, that Sin may become an inordinate sinner through the precept. For we are aware that the law is spiritual, yet I am fleshly, having been disposed of under Sin" (Rom.7:8,13,14). This command goes beyond listing specific do's and don't's, but enters into the very heart of the matter—the human heart apart from God. J.D.T.

THE TITLE "GOD"

THE English word "God" is used in the *Concordant Literal New Testament* for the Greek word *Theos*. In Hebrew there were three associated terms which most English translations render as "God," but which we now give as *El, Eloah* and *Elohim*. The meanings of these Hebrew terms were discussed by A. E. Knoch in volume 45 of *Unsearchable Riches** in his series, "The Divine Names and Titles." There he stressed the important point that these designations should be associated with God's *activities* rather than only with His position as the Supreme. The Hebrew terms speak of the Subjector (or Disposer), and the Greek term speaks of the Placer. So also the English word "God" should become associated in our minds with His divine activity. As we grow in the faith the word "God" itself should become more meaningful and significant to us. The word should more and more convey a sense of the Supreme Subjector, Placer, Saviour and Reconciler.

IN THE BEGINNING

When Paul spoke to the pagan Athenians who were groping to find God, he began with the truth that God "makes the world and all that is in it" (Acts 17:24). This is the most basic revelation concerning God. In fact, the Sacred Scriptures themselves begin with this message (Genesis 1 and 2). God is the Creator. He

*Brother Knoch used the spellings, *Al, Alue* and *Alueim*.

brings things into existence and makes them as they are; He places them in their place and subjects them in an orderly way for good (*cf* Gen.1:31; Isa.45:18).

Again in Athens Paul announced that God is "the Lord inherent of heaven and earth" and that He is not "attended by human hands, as if requiring anything" (Acts 17:24,25). These are foundational matters concerning God. They are what we can learn about God from the very beginning of this world. This is where the eons begin, with the God of action and ability as well as of mastery.

These elementary (not necessarily simple) revelations point first of all to God's activities and then to His position as Lord over all. We must never separate His position from His work. His Lordship is treated as a matter of deeds and abilities and not status only. He is the Lord Who *gives* and *makes*.

This view of God was revealed from the beginning and can be grasped by the unbeliever as well as by the believer. In fact it should be the basic message we share with the unsaved: God is the One Who made us all, and He is still active in our lives.

But we as believers, in the present era, have the special privilege of viewing God from the standpoint of His work at the cross. The death and resurrection of Christ enables us who believe to know God better than ever before possible and to appreciate His divine titles more fully than even the greatest of the patriarchs or prophets of old. This is because the cross of Christ has given us a view of the consummation of all of God's activities.

THE CONSUMMATION

Even the Hebrew terms for "God" are best understood in light of the consummation. Brother Knoch wrote, "While meditating on this title, it struck us that

the principal title at the beginning and throughout the eons should be in accord with His accomplishment at their consummation. Then He will be known as the One Who has *subjected* all (1 Cor.15:27). In order to *subject* His stubborn creatures He would be their Disposer, indeed. But, since the Scriptures expressly employ the stem *subject* at the end, this expression is even better adapted to convey the meaning of this title than Disposer" (Vol.45, p.68).

It is not until the consummation when God becomes All in all that His titles can be clearly and fully appreciated. But we, in a sense, have been taken ahead of time to the consummation. The manifestation of Christ through His sacrifice, which we see with the eyes of faith, is vitally connected with the conclusion of the eons according to Hebrews 9:26 where we read, ". . . yet now, once, at the conclusion of the eons, for the repudiation of sin through His sacrifice, is He manifest." Paul describes us who believe this evangel as those "to whom the consummations of the eons have attained" (1 Cor.10:11). The goals toward which God is leading the universe have, in a spiritual way, come ahead of time to us. And one of these goals is the manifestation of Himself to His creatures.

Isaiah 45 and other Old Testament passages are rich in revealing to us the meaning of the title "God." But no portion of God's Word is so rich in this respect as Paul's epistles. This is because these writings are based on the cross and focus on the *purpose* of God's activities, the *goals* to which they run. The title "God" means the One Who "is working all together for good" (Rom.8:28); it means the One Whose purpose is "to head up all in the Christ" (Eph.1:10), and through Christ "to reconcile all to Him (making peace through

the blood of His cross)" (Col.1:20). These are aspects of meaning in His title which everyone will appreciate at the consummation, but which we may appreciate now by faith.

RELIANCE ON GOD

What do we think of when we see the word "God"? Do we envision a kindly old man who does his best? Or perhaps we see a stern and unyielding determiner of our fate? Or do we rather think of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who, in all His placings and work of subjection, is bringing the whole universe into the joy and peace of justification and reconciliation?

God is the One to be relied upon. The term, God, speaks of power, ability and activity toward a glorious consummation. When Paul wrote, "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome . . . that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers" (1 Tim.4:9,10), he was, in effect, reminding us of the meaning of the title "God." He is the One Who has the authority to save all, the ability to save all, the will to save all, and Who is actually doing the work of saving all through the faith of Jesus Christ.

Whatever level of appreciation we have of God it should always expand. It must never turn downward. Knowing God as God means to make progress in glorifying Him for His power, divinity and actions. The truth about God is always upward. Continually and increasingly the Designation, God, should become associated in our minds and hearts with His great works. The meaning of His title is a faithful revelation, and it is a welcome one. It will always strengthen us in reliance on Him and give us peace. D.H.H.

FUTURE SCENES

SCENE THIRTEEN

This scene is one of great happiness. People are going about their business undisturbed. There seems to be an air of prosperity and calm. One does not hear of any wars taking place, or of any massive acts of violence. No one seems to be afraid.

There is much traffic between the leading cities of the world and Jerusalem, which has become the world capital, and all nations send their representatives there. The law goes forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Yes, following His own unveiling, Christ has set up His kingdom, and He is ruling from His capital city. Israel has taken up the kingly and priestly roles allotted to her at Sinai, and officiates with Christ in this dual capacity. For Christ is a kingly Priest according to the order of Melchizedek. This Priest does not accept sacrifices for sin, for sin has been dealt with once and to a finality at Golgotha. But He accepts offerings from the people, as did Melchizedek from Abram, and He blesses the people accordingly with kingly blessings.

Christ is a King of Peace, and His rule is a righteous one; the first completely righteous rule in history. Yet it is not a soft rule. He rules with a rod of iron—an iron

club (CV)—and evildoers must swiftly toe the line. And this is where the weakness lies, not in the rule itself and certainly not in Christ, but in the inherent soulish nature of the old humanity, which, though technically destroyed at the cross, still remains with mankind until they come to accept the deliverance provided by the cross and become a new creation in Christ. This they will not do during the millennial era, for as soon as the rule is lifted and Satan is released for a time, he is able to enlist vast numbers of earth's inhabitants in a final rebellion.

This is described for us in Revelation 20:7-9, "And whenever the thousand years should be finished, Satan will be loosed out of his jail. And he will be coming out to deceive all the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to be mobilizing them for battle, their number being as the sand of the sea. And they went up over the breadth of the earth, and surround the citadel of the saints and the beloved city. And fire descended from God out of heaven and devoured them."

How strange, in view of that scripture, that so many believers should look upon the Millennium as the final eon, ushering in eternal happiness!

SCENE FOURTEEN

"And I perceived a great white throne, and Him Who is sitting upon it, from Whose face heaven and earth fled, and no place was found for them. And I perceived the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne. And scrolls were opened. And another scroll was opened which is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged by that which is written in the scrolls in accord with their acts. And the sea gives up the dead in it, and death and the unseen give up

the dead in them. And they were condemned, each in accord with their acts. And death and the unseen were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death—the lake of fire. And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev.20:11-15).

The judgment before the great white throne takes place at the end of the thousand years. This is the time when the majority of the dead are raised, those who are not of the former resurrection (Rev.20:5,6). Let us note that "acts" form the basis of this judgment; grace has no part in it. It is a judgment on merits, and the immediate results are not favorable to those being judged. It is a fundamental truth that "the just by faith shall be living" (Hab.2:4; Rom.1:17; Gal.3:11; Heb.10:38), but these being judged here have neither the righteousness nor the faith to qualify them for life. Hence they go into the second death, which is neither endless annihilation nor eternal torment, but a means of purification to enable them to be vivified at the conclusion of the eons. The lake of fire is obviously a symbolic expression, for death and the unseen are both cast into it.

Those of the former resurrection are not in any way involved in this judgment, for their future was decided a full thousand years earlier, and on them the second death has no jurisdiction. And certainly believers in this day of grace, who form the ecclesia which is the body of Christ, will not be involved, for they will have been caught up to meet the Lord and will be together with Him, as we saw earlier. We now pick up their position again.

Back in Scene Twelve we said that, through the ecclesia which is His body, Christ continues that great work begun at the cross, of reconciling all to God.

SCENE FIFTEEN

Our last picture but one shows the reconciliation of all accomplished, the whole universe being made subject to Christ, and headed up into Him. It is again the apostle Paul who widens the scope of God's operations to include the heavens as well as the earth.

In Ephesians 1, Christ is shown at God's right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, subjecting all under His feet. We would emphasize that the heavens have to be subjected to Christ, and that, insofar as a continent is greater than a grain of sand, so this is an infinitely greater work than subjection on earth. The subjecting work is done by God (1 Cor.15:27), but the reconciling work, which accompanies the subjecting, is done through Christ and the ecclesia (Eph.1:23).

Let no one imagine that all in the heavens are already at peace with God. There are sovereignties there, and authorities and powers and lordships, which aim at usurping His power and authority. These are "the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials" with which we are called upon to wrestle (Eph.6:12). God has provided the Sovereign of the celestials, just as He has provided the King of the earth. In each case, it is the Son of His love (Col.1:18). He is Sovereign, and anyone choosing another is rejecting God. God made this principle plain to Samuel when Israel first asked for a king (1 Sam.8:7).

It is because of all this insubjection among the celestials that there has to be new heavens as well as a new earth. The Lord has said, "For, behold Me creating new heavens and a new earth, And the former shall not be remembered, nor shall they come upon the heart" (Isa.65:17). Peter saw the present heavens

"passing by with a booming noise" and "the elements . . . dissolved by combustion" but was hoping for "new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness is dwelling" (2 Pet.3:10-13). Again, John in vision, "perceived a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth pass away" (Rev.21:1). What do you think of a God Who makes everything afresh, so that there shall be no trace of any of the sins and sorrows and mistakes of the past, no disturbing memories to mar the happiness of the future?

But the unruly inhabitants of the heavens have to be made subject to Christ, that all may be headed up in Him, both that in the heavens and that on the earth (Eph.1:10); that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean (Phil.2:10); that all may be reconciled to God, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:20). Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians all tell of the same great work among the celestials, as well as among humanity, in which it is the lot of the ecclesia to have a glorious part. Do you realize the grandeur of your allotment in Christ? Do you realize that it is through the ecclesia, which is His body, His complement, that He is able to complete the All in all? (Eph.1:23)? Do you realize that it is in the ecclesia, as well as in Christ Jesus, that God is to find glory "for all the generations of the eon of the eons" (Eph.3:21)?

The gift of grace, given to the ecclesia in Christ Jesus before the eons began (2 Tim.1:9), finds its full expression in the ministry of the ecclesia throughout the eons of the eons, when its members display the grace of God in all its fullness (Eph.2:7). The basis of this display is the grace which the ecclesia itself has

received at the hands of God. This is shown to us in Ephesians 2:1-10. Twice the apostle declares that "in grace are you saved," and this is not out of us; it is entirely of God. It is because of this that we are in a position to display the "transcendent riches of God's grace" in a way that otherwise would be quite impossible. *This is the essential factor behind the ministry of the ecclesia.* God graces *Christ* with a Name which is above every name because He is worthy to receive the honor; He graces *the ecclesia* with a salvation and an allotment of which, individually, all its members were quite unworthy.

In the ministry of Christ and His ecclesia, *humanity,* too, finds its highest and noblest expression, and the reason for its being created in the image of the Alueim is demonstrated. For Christ, having come to be in the likeness of humanity (Phil.2:7), and being found in fashion as a human, becomes with resurrection the First of a new humanity; and the ecclesia, as His complement, also becomes part of the new humanity. The attainment of the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ is coupled with mature manhood in Ephesians 4:13,14; and we only reach this state by putting off the old humanity with its malpractices, and putting on "the new, which, in accord with God, is being created in righteousness and benignity of the truth" (v.24).

SCENE SIXTEEN

Our last scene of all is sometimes termed "The Great Abdication." For when all are gathered together in Christ—when all in the universe are subjected to Him—when every creature acknowledges His sovereignty and acclaims Him as Lord—when all hail the power of Jesus' name and even angels prostrate

fall—then, what happens? Christ steps down, and hands over all to God, His Father, that God may be All in all.

Can you imagine any lesser potentate being willing to hand over so much? But surely the grandeur of God's purpose lies essentially in the supreme confidence which the Father has in the Son of His love. God can invest all in Christ in the full knowledge that all will be handed back to Him; God can exalt Christ to the very hightest pinnacle in the universe in the absolute certainty that His Son will never seek to usurp the Father's position.

And so we read, in 1 Corinthians 15:24, "Thereafter [comes] the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father." This occurs when all other sovereignties and authorities and powers have been nullified—brought to naught—and when the last enemy, death itself, has been destroyed. When all is subjected to Christ, then "the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him [God], Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all" (v.28).

All in all! None of God's creatures outside the scope of His indwelling; nothing outside of God Himself dwelling in any of His creatures!

Thus God's purpose, once intensely contracted and concentrated, so that it was all brought to focus in one Man suspended from a pole as a malefactor, now expands again to take in the utmost limits of creation. Truly God's thoughts and ways are not ours, but infinitely more lofty; and how grand His purpose is, in its conception, in its outworking, and in its glorious fulfillment! In every stage it serves to glorify the One Whose purpose is being accomplished.

John H. Essex

OBADIAH

THE CONTENTS of Obadiah, the briefest of the prophetic books, are readily summarized. A calamity falling upon Judah has been aggravated by the participation of her neighbor foe, Edom. Judah is comforted in the thought of a future in which Edom will be subjugated and ruled by commissioners from mount Zion.

Obadiah beholds, in the first place (1-9), the destruction of Edom, to whose execution the nations are summoned by an ambassador. Its pride is humbled, its riches plundered, its wisdom baffled, its defenses utterly broken. Thus the hate it showed toward Judah in its day of misfortune, when Edom took active part in the desecration of Jerusalem, is avenged (10-14). But from verse 15 the seer's gaze expands into a view of a catastrophe that will involve all nations. A day of retribution draws nigh for all the foes of Israel. It is a day of requital for the indignities committed on Zion. As they have drunk there to excess, disregarding the sanctity of the place, so in the same place they shall drink to excess until they lose their senses. This is a well understood euphemism for the bloody end awaiting them.

In contrast with this destruction of the nations an escaped community stands on mount Zion as a positive result of this day of reckoning. Zion figures as the

center of the divine kingdom, impregnable, because defended by God. No vengeful foe, no unclean foot shall again tread it. The divine sway will extend itself over the possessions belonging by right and promise to Israel. These are the possessions mentioned in verses 18-20, which were but partially ruled by David and Solomon.

Then, when the old divine energy revives in every part of Judah, the subjugation of Edom comes. The survivors of Ephraim aid Judah in the work of conquest. The expansion of David's kingdom will start from Zion, extend first over the ancestral possessions of Canaan, and then also beyond the limits of the promised land, where hostile peoples, who have no part in the kingdom, are wiped out.

Expositors have suggested a contradiction between verse 1 and verse 18, all nations being summoned there against Edom, here Jacob and Joseph appearing as avengers. The alleged contradiction is purely imaginary. It roots itself, first, in failure to perceive that a mobile, vivid account necessarily unifies the outstanding features of an event; and, second, in utter disregard of the situation as a whole. Edom is not the originator of the calamity that has overtaken Judah, but a participant abetting the instigator. The defeat of the leading nation lays Edom open to attack, and Judah, flushed with success, takes advantage of the situation to reassert the old time suzerainty and subdue Edom to its sway.

The work of subjugation is carried on by stages:—(1) The Negeb, or south of Judah, conquers the adjacent mountains of Edom; (2) The Shephelo, or lowlands of Judah, conquers the adjacent territory of Philistia; (3) Together they regain the territory of Ephraim and Samaria; (4) Benjamin occupies Gilead,

viz., the east-Jordan territory generally; (5) The captive host of Israel conquers the Canaanite country as far as Zaraphath; (6) Finally, the captives of Jerusalem in Shephared conquer the cities of the south. Thus the Davidic kingdom rounds itself on every side, even those in exile contributing to bring the alien territory into subjection to Him. God so ordered the events that every evil inflicted on His people proves a stepping stone in restoring His rule. What form this rule will take is hinted in verse 21. The phraseology reminds us of the era of the judges, who with divine energy freed the land from oppression, thereby proving themselves God's organs, further judicial authority being given them on that account. They established their seat in Zion. For there is the center of the divine rule, whence Edom also is judged.

Vladimir Gelesnoff

FELLOWSHIP REPORTS

This past November gatherings for fellowship and study of the Scriptures were held in Ohio and Florida. On the 10th and 11th meetings were held in the home of Herb and Barbara Dirks near Medina, Ohio. Ray VanDyke (Grand Rapids, Michigan) and Jim Coram (Delaware, Ohio) were the speakers. Their topics included a survey of the book of Acts, justification, the eonian times and the power of the evangel for salvation in the walk of the believer.

On November 23-25 meetings were held in Melbourne, Florida at the Holiday Inn West. The speakers were R. Clay Kent (Palm Bay, Florida), John Braucht (St. Petersburg), Jim Coram and B. A. Baker (Grand Rapids). The theme of the fellowship was "The Five Eons." It was encouraging to all who took part in these meetings to witness the confidence in "the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers" (1 Tim.4:10). "Now thanks be to God for His indescribable gratuity" (2 Cor.9:15).

THE SECRET OF MARRIAGE

(Part Two)

IN THE EPISTLE to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul refers, at varying length, to four secrets: (1) the secret of the Christ (Eph.3:4,5), which is also called the secret of God's will (Eph.1:9,10), the secret (Col.1:26) and the secret of the God and Father of Christ (Col.2:2); (2) the administration of God's secret grace (Eph.3:1-3, 6-13); (3) the secret relating to the oneness in flesh of husband and wife (Eph.5:31,32; *cf* Gen.2:24), concerning which Paul exclaims, "This secret is great;" and (4) the secret of the evangel (Eph.6:18-20; Rom.5:10,11; 16:25-27; 2 Cor.5:18-21). It is with the third of these secrets that we concern ourselves at present.

The Genesis verse cited by the apostle Paul (Eph.5:31), and his somewhat abrupt but highly significant comment upon it, "This secret is great," occur within the framework of the Ephesian letter in the section "The body—in the Lord—the Head" (Eph.5:21-6:9), which parallels the earlier section "The body—in Christ—its members" (Eph.1:20-2:10) (*Concordant Commentary*, p.288). The "body of Christ" is, therefore, before us in both of these sections in differing relationships, but the fact of "the body" is not the secret which Paul declares to be "great," although that secret concerns, and concerns vitally, the body of Christ, the ecclesia.

"THIS SECRET IS GREAT"

"*This* secret" is quite specific and can only refer to the truth made known in the words from Genesis 2:24, quoted in Ephesians 5:31 concerning the oneness in flesh of man and wife. However, the truth of that oneness was not presented in its original context as a secret, nor did the Lord Jesus invest the fact with any thought of secrecy when He quoted the verse (prefaced by the words "Did you not read that . . .") to His Pharisee questioners (Matt.19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9).

When all the references to the other three secrets mentioned in Ephesians are examined, it will be found that each has been *concealed:* (1) the secret of the Christ—concealed from the eons and from the generations (Col.1:26; see also Eph.3:5); (2) the administration of God's secret grace—concealed from the eons in God (Eph.3:9); (4) the secret of the evangel (the conciliation), hushed in times eonian (Rom.16:25). All three secrets were subsequently revealed, made known and made manifest, during the period of the Pauline ministry, but there is no mention of concealment or of subsequent revelation relative to the "great secret" of Ephesians 5:31,32.

In view of the absence of any prior mention of secrecy surrounding the fact of the oneness in flesh of man and wife, the question may be asked, Why does Paul refer to this oneness as "this *secret*"? Not only so, but he affirms its *greatness,* although none of the other three secrets mentioned in the Ephesian letter (and all of them are secrets of the highest order) is so described. Of the eight secrets noted in the Pauline writings, only the secret of marriage and the secret of devoutness (1 Tim.3:16) are said to be "great."

It may well be that the passage of thousands of years of widespread, almost total human ignorance of, indifference to or disregard for the vital truth of the oneness in flesh of man and wife, have virtually rendered that truth a secret. Certainly, the scriptural record of the lives of several notable characters, who served their generations amidst the ways of God, yet were apparently oblivious of the truth we are considering, would tend to support that suggestion. Consider also the circumstances of the interchange between the Pharisees and the Lord Jesus, alluded to above and recorded by Matthew and Mark. It is evident, is it not, that the Pharisees were completely unaware of the truth quoted to them by the Lord from their Scriptures? Witness, too, the instance of Paul's quotation, in part, from the Genesis verse to the Corinthian saints, "For, He is averring, the two will be one flesh" (1 Cor.6:16). The depraved conditions which called forth the apostle's corrective in this instance, are valid testimony to the Corinthians' unawareness of the "great secret" enshrined in the words of the Genesis quotation.

The current eon (1 Tim.6:17), this present wicked eon (Gal.1:4), has contained within its long course, "the times of ignorance," ignorance of God, of His ways and of His Word (Acts 17:30). God, in His inscrutable wisdom, ". . . in bygone generations, leaves all the nations to go their ways . . ." (Acts 14:16), and this ignorance was inevitable. While God, also in His inscrutable wisdom, condoned these "times of ignorance," nevertheless ignorance of God's Word effectively and automatically conceals its truth. When awareness of the Scriptures dawns upon human minds, frequently there is widespread indifference, active, bitter and sustained hostility towards them and

culpable neglect of them, compounding the darkness of ignorance. The light of the truth of the Scriptures comes under a bushel, but God "leaves Himself *not* without a testimony . . ." (Acts 14:17). His truth is indestructible and it *cannot* remain concealed from those to whom he wishes to reveal it.*

However, although ignorance, indifference, hostility and neglect have, undoubtedly, been factors in the concealing of the truth of Genesis 2:24 (and of all truth at various times), the effect of their influences cannot really be said to provide the complete answer to the question, Why does Paul refer to the truth of the oneness in flesh of husband and wife as "this *secret*"? We must seek further for an answer.

"BRIDE OF THE LAMBKIN"

Before proceeding with our inquiry, we mention here that there is *no* reference, direct or implied, in any of Paul's writings, to the bride of the Lambkin (Rev.19:7) or the bride, the wife of the Lambkin (Rev.21:9). That precious relationship is one of the glories awaiting the faithful of Israel, a subject which has been thoroughly and lucidly dealt with in the pages of this magazine in past years. Let us note, too, that the Scriptures contain *no* reference to "the Bride of Christ." The fact of the "oneness" of the marriage bond, which figures the unbreakable unity of Christ with His body, is the dominant thought in our Genesis verse. The strong analogy should not be carried beyond that limit.

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*With the severance of the apostle Paul (the appointed herald, apostle and teacher of the nations) to the evangel of God concerning His Son, God no longer left the nations "to go their own way." The truth of the evangel was being made known.

We who are blessed by God with *every spiritual blessing* among the celestials, in Christ (Eph.1:3), and are, in spirit, joint enjoyers of a celestial allotment (Eph.3:6), must *not* filch from Israel's saints the joy of their future destiny. We have no need to do that!

THE JOINT BODY IN THE LORD—HUSBANDS AND WIVES

It is Christ's intention "that He should be presenting to Himself a *glorious ecclesia,* not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless" (Eph.5:27). The saints are enjoined in the present to "become blameless, artless, children of God, *flawless* in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse . . ." (Phil.2:15). Being reconciled by His body of flesh, through His death, we will be presented "*holy and flawless and unimpeachable* in His sight . . ." (Col.1:22), for the absolute position is that God has chosen us in Christ before the disruption of the world, "*to be holy and flawless in His sight*" (Eph.1:4).

The subject of the section in the framework of the Ephesian epistle (5:21-6:9) which forms the setting of the Genesis 2:24 quotation (please see the January 1980 number of *Unsearchable Riches,* page 18), is the joint-body, of which Christ is the Head, viewed as being *in the Lord.* With our thoughts thus directed, the issue before us in that section is *deportment* or conduct, in the ecclesia, as enjoined between husbands and wives, children and parents, slaves and their masters, and it is, of course, with the first of these three groupings that we are concerned. On the occasions when our standing "*in Christ*" is being reviewed, the physical distinctions which must be taken into account "*in the Lord,*" vanish. "For whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ, in

Whom there is . . . no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.3:27,28).

Earlier in Ephesians, the attention of the saints is focussed upon their *walk in general.* We should be *walking in good works* which God has made ready beforehand for us (2:10). Paul entreats us that we should be *walking worthily of our calling* (4:1), and to be *walking in love* also, as beloved children (5:1). Further, the apostle wisely counsels, "Be observing accurately, then, brethren, *how you are walking,*" so that wisdom may characterize our progress in the pathway of faith in these wicked days (5:15,16).

However, in this section of the epistle our attention is given more specific direction: (1) to a particular group within the ecclesia (wives and husbands), and (2) to the relationship to be sustained between them. These relationships are fully defined in Ephesians chapter 5, verses 22 to 30, those pertaining to and required of *wives* (subjection to and fear towards their husbands) in verses 22-24, and those enjoined of *husbands* (to love their wives as Christ loves the ecclesia) in verses 25-30. The necessity for *individual* compliance is stressed in verse 33, "Moreover, you also *individually, each* be loving his own wife thus, as himself, yet that the wife may be fearing the husband."

The requirements of these relationships, outlined in the verses mentioned, are not burdensome. They are laid by the wise and loving hand of our God and Father upon believing husbands and wives, partners whom He has joined together in that oneness of flesh which figures the inseparable and precious unity which, in Christ, exists between Christ and the ecclesia which is His body and His complement, and of which He is the glorious Head.

The requirements have this unity in view and are designed to produce, in believing husbands and wives, in the present, the *conduct* fully agreeable to that unity and to their joint membership of the "glorious ecclesia . . . holy and flawless," which Christ *will* present to Himself. These simple directives from our heavenly Father, conveyed so clearly to us by the apostle Paul, are not a prescription for bondage as some infer. God has constantly the well-being of His saints at heart, and so, on the contrary, compliance with this wise counsel will lead into peace and into the realization of a spirit of freedom, the freedom we have in Christ Jesus, for which the saints were called. Further, and vitally, compliance will bear the precious fruit of the ideal relationship between husband and wife (and of husband and wife, jointly, towards and with God), that is, the deportment which will anticipate, in the day by day walk in faith, *the holiness and flawlessness of the glorious ecclesia* and the harmony of its indissoluble unity with Christ.

A wife who is loved by her husband as her husband loves his own body, nurturing and cherishing his own flesh, and according as Christ also *loves the ecclesia,* should not find that her subjection to her husband is in the least irksome, even although that subjection (so frowned upon and resisted in the modern mind) is "in everything." Nor should a husband find difficulty in loving his wife who, by her subjection to him, has acknowledged that he is her head. The concern of the husband must *always* be whether he is acknowledging that *Christ is his Head* (1 Cor.11:3) and Head of the ecclesia (Eph.5:23), in the way that his wife, by her compliant subjection to her husband, has acknowledged that he is *her* head?

Furthermore, as the love of a believing husband for

his wife should accord with *Christ's love for the ecclesia,* the husband will be anxious at all times to examine the genuineness of his affection for his wife, in the clear, revealing light of the purity, selflessness, devotion and constancy of the love of Christ. It *is* a revealing light, for Christ's love was tried and its sterling worth proved in the crucible of His suffering for us.

In the injunction, "Husbands be loving your wives according as Christ also loves the ecclesia and gives Himself up for its sake, that He should be hallowing it . . ." we have the highest, the ideal, the divine standard revealed to us. The feeble flicker of our affection can *never* attain the radiance of the glory of the love of Christ for His ecclesia, His body, but we *can* by earnest endeavor fan the flicker of our love into brightness and maintain it. With a brighter flame, betokening a warmer love towards God and to His beloved Son, we will be the better able to comply with the injunction, "Husbands be loving your wives as Christ also loves the ecclesia." Remember, too, that as beloved children, we are 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" (Eph.5:1,2). Alan Reid

(To be continued)

WILMA NIEMEYER

Only 17 years old, our sister in the Lord Wilma Niemeyer of Brantford, Ontario died December 3 after a long illness. Her faith in Christ and expectation of His glorious manifestation was strong, and she was a great encouragement to all who knew her. Brother Raymond Van Dyke of Grand Rapids, Michigan spoke at her funeral. We extend our sympathy and love to her parents, Fred and Helen Niemeyer.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 1980
BEING the THIRD NUMBER of VOLUME SEVENTY-ONE

EDITORIAL

"Consequently, then, brethren, stand firm, and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, whether through word or our epistle" (2 Thess.2:15).

Paul is our teacher too. Although he did not teach us directly and personally as he did the Thessalonians we have the advantage of his thirteen letters which serve "to complete the word of God" (Col.1:25) for us. Paul was "appointed a herald and an apostle . . . a teacher of the nations in knowledge and truth" (1 Tim.2:7).

We look to others as our teachers as well, but not in the same way. The writings of Brother A. E. Knoch, for example, which have appeared through the years in this magazine, have been very beneficial in uncovering some long neglected teachings. But only as these help bring to light the traditions taught by the "appointed teacher" can they be truly edifying. We must take care to subject all that is taught by later teachers to that which was taught by our apostle.

Admittedly it is easier to understand the teachings of contemporary writers than the traditions laid down by Paul. It is difficult to trace out the thoughts from informal letters written in a foreign tongue over nineteen hundred years ago under varied circumstances. They were obviously never intended as

systematic presentations of truth, and yet they do contain that teaching "in all wisdom" for "presenting every man mature in Christ Jesus" (Col.1:28). And the more we look into them, and the more we restrict our thinking to their thoughts, the more we are edified.

It is important that we all keep this in mind. What we publish in this magazine is not an attempt to lay down new traditions for others to stand on. We make every effort to see that what we print reflects the traditions handed down in the Word of God and helps clarify them for our minds so that they will be more effective in our lives. What we want most of all is that the articles help the reader appreciate what is written in the Scriptures. In urging our readers to join us in this endeavor we cannot improve on Paul's own request, "Furthermore, pray, brethren, concerning us, that the word of the Lord may race and be glorified" (2 Thess.3:1). D.H.H.

Love is lonely when it is alone, with no object upon which to lavish its affection, or to reciprocate in kind. How many of mankind have felt the longing for a kindred spirit to rejoice with them in joy, and to sympathize with them in sorrow! The brightest pages of history are those which portray the unselfish sacrifice and the severe suffering endured for love's sweet sake. The earliest and greatest event in the history of the universe had its roots in the Deity's desire for love responsive (*cf* Rom.5:8; 1 Pet.1:19,20; John 17:24). And the last and culminating consummation will see the realization of this longing, when God has transformed the enmity of His creatures into deepest filial affection. A.E.K.

CHRIST AMONG THE NATIONS

(Colossians 1:21-2:7)

IN ITS REALIZATION the secret of Christ varies according to the administration in which it operates. In this economy it anticipates in spirit, what will take physical form on the earth in the last two eons. We already have the kingdom and the new creation, for which the world still waits. By a similar figure of speech, we already have the presence of Christ, which will make those future eras so glorious. But all is in spirit, and in expectation. Yet the conciliation may be received and enjoyed by all who believe.

Having given the broad outlines of the secret of Christ in its timeless, universal aspect, we now have a paragraph devoted to this secret as it especially applies to us in this present administration. The Colossians had not only been lost, and were now saved; they had not only been sinners, and were now justified; but they had been *estranged* and *enemies*, and were now *reconciled*. Here we can see the close relation of the secret of the evangel to that of Christ. Both go deeper than sin and deal with offense. They go beneath the outward act to the inward motive. They deal not merely with failure, but with enmity.

ENEMIES IN COMPREHENSION

Even one whose outward behavior and treatment of his fellows is beyond reproach may be a bitter enemy

of God in his heart. Indeed, it is quite possible to be charitable and philanthropic with a mind that defies and decries the Deity. The attitude of the heart is far more vital than external conduct in our relationship to God, especially with reference to ultimate reconciliation. That is why the Colossians are first characterized as estranged and enemies in their comprehension. Thinking precedes and prepares for conduct, and our thoughts concerning God must be corrected before our walk can be brought into harmony with Him.

Wicked acts arise from this spiritual friction with the Deity just as sinful deeds do from the lack of vital connection with Him. Men may not be conscious that the enmity in their comprehension is against God, for they have no personal acquaintance with Him. Rather it expresses itself in their dissatisfaction with their fate, or with the providence of God. For their good they are not thankful, and for their evil they blame Him, Who, they feel, might have hindered it. Is it not striking that an "act of God" in legal parlance, is a calamity for which He alone can be made responsible? His daily goodness, His continual kindness, are matters of course. Man, out of tune with His Creator, does not only fail or fall short, his mind becomes actively opposed to Him, and his acts wicked.

I have not the impression that the Colossians were especially wicked in the usual sense of that word, as, for instance, the Corinthians, but that their state was rather that of the average one who is reconciled to God. The consummation will not consist in all of God's creatures being at peace with *each other.* That is only one result of their reconciliation to God. Sin, offense, and wickedness should not be judged and measured by the relations between man and man, but between

man and God. It will be found in the judging that many who entirely escaped the condemnation of a human judge because they never seriously infringed upon the laws of society will be found among the most wicked in God's sight because they were at enmity with Him.

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

HOLY AND FLAWLESS AND UNIMPEACHABLE

When we, like the Colossians, are reconciled to God, it reverses our relationship to Him, to man, and to our acts. We were unholy, not fit to come near God's dwelling place, shut out from His presence and blessing. Now we are holy, fit to approach into the very light of the shekinah, loaded with spiritual blessings. We were full of flaws, sinful, lacking in everything, weak, worthless and withering away. Now we are flawless in Him, without defect or imperfection, waiting for the glory. Once we dreaded the very thought of a judgment, but now we are unimpeachable, beyond the imputation of aught to which objection could be made. All of this is implied

and included in our reconciliation. All of this is necessary to perfect peace.

GROUNDED AND SETTLED

But few of those who believe ever become grounded and settled in the vital verities of our faith. How seldom do we see a saint get beyond the forgiveness of sins to actual justification, as set forth in the early chapters of Romans! Yet far rarer are those who enjoy the peace of the fifth chapter, and accept the conciliation offered to God's enemies! Many of the saints still lack the peace which is theirs, and fail to fully enter into the conciliation. Such will find it difficult to go on into the great secrets of the later epistles. Paul takes it for granted that the Colossians are grounded and settled in the evangel they have heard.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE EVANGEL

The Colossians once enjoyed the grace of reconciliation, yet the apostle is not absolutely certain that they have persisted in it. Does this not suggest the possibility that this great truth would be lost as time went on? Does it not explain how it is that so few still hold to this today? We can hardly say that they have been *removed* from the expectation of the evangel, for they have never known it. Yet, if those who once had it could be removed from it in those early fervent days, how little can we hope for many to find it in these times of declension and unbelief! Few have ever heard of the expectation of the evangel, as related to the secret of Christ. May we, who have heard, be given grace to *persist, grounded* and *settled!*

The complete restoration of peace to which the evangel gives rise is not confined to the breasts of believers. It embraces all, the creatures above as well

as below mankind. When man became the enemy of God he dragged down the lower creation with him. It has become subject to vanity in expectation of being freed from the slavery of corruption when the sons of God are unveiled (Rom.8:19-22). The creation on earth will have its part in the glorious future! What a relief from the narrow outlook of a "personal" salvation, with a few favored companions, while all the rest of creation is left to its fate, is this grand and glorious reconciliation which embraces *all* that is now out of harmony with God!

But this is a future expectation. We are far from its realization yet. The task for the present is to make it known, to herald it abroad. It is to this that Paul applied himself. It is quite possible that he and others completed the heralding to the creation according to the closing words of Mark's account. It will be our special privilege to herald this evangel to the hosts of heaven when we are glorified. But now our special task is to dispense it on earth, among men, especially among the saints. Our future ministry will be carried out in power and glory. Our present work is often associated with infirmity and suffering. That will be crowned with ultimate success. Now we may count on comparative failure. So it was with our Lord and so will it be with us. This is not our day. That is still to come.

THE DEFICIENCIES OF HIS AFFLICTIONS

When Christ was on earth He suffered much from the very ones who should have been His most loyal supporters in establishing the kingdom. Not only the chief priests and the scribes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, but even His own disciples and apostles were the cause of much real distress. And this was par-

ticularly true in regard to those revelations which go beyond the confines of their narrow hearts. After He had ascended Peter also had difficulties with his Jewish colleagues, who sought to monopolize God's favor and shut out the despised gentiles. But Paul had far more to bear in this direction than Peter, for he widened the area of blessing to reach all mankind.

Now that the evangel of the reconciliation of all is being heralded, it is accompanied by the same sufferings and further afflictions. The time is coming when we will herald this blessed evangel among the celestials, but then there will be no suffering. Its dispensing among men, in Christendom, especially among zealous adherents of narrow-hearted orthodoxy has been and always will be followed by persecution and affliction. And it is most fitting that it should be so, for this will be a vast advantage in its future heralding, as it contrasts God's heart with that of His creatures, even when they have tasted of His grace. Let us, like Paul, rejoice in any sufferings we may be privileged to enjoy in dispensing this grace.

Strange as the thought may be to some of us, there can be little doubt that, if Christ were now among us, as He was among His own in Israel, He would suffer at the hands of His own saints. These the apostle calls the deficiencies of His afflictions, which He would bear for the sake of His body, the ecclesia, were He actually in their midst. These fell to the lot of Paul, and fall upon all who occupy a similar position. Let us not think of Paul's imprisonment as his only suffering at this time. There were those who sought to rouse affliction for his bonds (Phil.1:17). He had a great struggle for the sake of the Colossians themselves (2:1). It must have pained him much to hear of the ritual and philosophy which was threatening to

despoil them of the truth of their completeness in Him (2:8-10).

TO COMPLETE THE WORD OF GOD

The secret of Christ is the capstone of divine revelation. Until it was made known the Word was fragmentary. It was confined mostly to one nation or to one race upon the earth. The rest of the universe seemed to be outside the range of Christ's sacrifice and activities. It is only when He receives His place as the Head of *all* and the Reconciler of *all*, and especially as the Head of the body, through which the celestial realms will be administered and reconciled, that the plan and purpose of God is seen in its completeness. The record in the Scriptures concerning man and the earth, as administered through the holy nation, though it occupies the bulk of God's Book, deals with only a small segment of creation. But Paul embraces all within the scope of his unfoldings. Hence he rounds out or completes the Word of God.

CHRIST IN OR AMONG

The blessed truths that we are *in* Christ, and that Christ is *in* us were freely made known by the apostle Paul in his early epistles, especially in the eighth chapter of Romans, which deals with those who are in Christ Jesus (Rom.8:1) and who have Christ in them (10). In Paul's vigorous and vital expostulation against the Judaizers he emphasizes the presence of the living Christ within him. He cries, "With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living—no longer I, but living in me is Christ" (Gal.2:20). It is the vital power of the indwelling Christ that enables us to walk worthily. But this is never presented as a secret. This cannot be the truth brought before us in Colossians.

The connective *en* in Greek denotes *in* with the singular, but may also stand for *among* with the plural. It has been so rendered over a hundred times in the Authorized Version. In this passage it is of the highest importance that we decide whether the secret is "Christ *in* you" (individually) or "Christ *among* you" (the nations). Seeing that "Christ *in* you" was well known before, and deals with the individual believer's experience rather than the secret of Christ, it is not likely that it is brought up here as a secret. Christ *among* the nations, however, is a new thought, a secret hitherto, and fully in line with the figure of the kingdom in the preceding context, and a vital part of the secret of Christ, which is the subject of this part of the epistle.

CHRIST AMONG THE NATIONS

Christ in flesh, when on earth, confined Himself to one nation, Israel. His presence brought with it the glorious prospect of the kingdom as promised in the prophets. Those who received Him and acknowledged Him as their Messiah were filled with high hopes. Some of them wished to secure for themselves the best places in the coming glory. The question in their hearts was, *When?* "Art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). From His very infancy the saints, like Simeon, looked upon Him, not only as the Salvation of the nation, but as "the Glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:30-32). He was, indeed, Christ *among* them, the expectation of glory.

In considering this secret we must keep in mind the scope of Christ's kingdom as set forth in the earlier part of this chapter. It is universal, and embraces all thrones and dominions and sovereignties and authorities, invisible as well as visible, celestial as well

as terrestrial (16). This is the secret "as it was now revealed" (Eph.3:5). To administer the kingdom on earth Messiah will use the nation to which He is united by physical ties. The hundred forty-four thousand will rule among the peoples. The apostles will adjudicate the tribes. But in the heavens Christ will use His spiritual relatives, the saints who are joined to Him among the nations. They have the glorious expectation of having an even more exalted position in His celestial realms.

Before His ascension He never went among the other nations. In a very real sense, His presence in Israel demanded the degradation of Rome from her place as the leading nation on the earth. Even if He had gone among the various nations of that day, it could not have been a token of their glory in the future, but of their subjugation to the favored people. They can only be subordinate in the coming kingdom, on the earth. In flesh, Christ is of the seed of David, and the nations have no part in Him. It is only in spirit, in His celestial domains, that there is any prospect for the saints in the nations. They cannot have a seat at His right or His left in Jerusalem, but far higher honors are open to them in the empyrean.

"Christ among you, a glorious expectation" is that aspect of the secret of Christ which is the counterpart of the secret in Ephesians. It is the secret of Christ as far as it applies to the present administration and to the nations. It gives believers among the nations the same relation to the celestial kingdom as believers in Israel had to the earthly rule. It gives them an expectation comparable to the kingdom, the longed-for millennium, for which every faithful heart in Israel yearned, yet with a grace and glory as far above it as heaven is high above the earth, and with a kingdom so

much greater and grander that our earthborn faculties and expressions fail to function in view of their appalling immensity and majesty.

PRESENT EVERY MAN MATURE

Is not Christ, as proclaimed among the more faithful in Christendom, far smaller than He is here revealed? With commendable zeal He is set forth as their *personal* Saviour, and the end of all things seems to have been reached in delivering them from the effects of their sins. We can only be thankful for this much, for even this is often obscured in the churches of Christendom. But such selfish happiness is not permanently satisfying, especially when associated with the realization that millions, if not most of God's creatures, are suffering, or as orthodoxy insists, always will suffer. There is something repulsive about happiness which is not affected by the woes around it, which is callous to the agonies of others.

Many have wondered how the saints could be happy in glory when a glance over the parapets of heaven would reveal the tormented in hell. But this sound instinct has been stifled by an appeal to credulity. We are assured that the Scriptures so teach and God will make our hearts impervious to the pains of others. How horrible is this thought! What a spurious heaven is that which consists of self-gratification and a lack of all feeling for the fate of fellow mortals! To be delivered from such false notions of God's salvation is itself a cause for much thankfulness. Our choice by God is not an end in itself. We were selected, not to be blessed so much as to be blessers. And in making others happy is the only true and abiding happiness.

How blessed is the place of Abraham and his seed!

For in them shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And such is the secret of our future bliss. As members of Christ's body we will bring blessing to all the creatures of the empyrean. Through us He will rule the celestial hosts, and through us they will be brought into living contact with the grace and love of God. Our happiness will not be enjoyed in spite of contact with the hopeless horrors of a medieval hell, but because we will be the channel of blessing to the countless creatures who come within scope of Christ's celestial rule. Therein is true and abiding happiness, in bringing to the creatures of God's hand the precious gifts of His heart.

So long as we are cramped and confined by a selfish longing for mere physical well-being in the future—and most of us would be unutterably thankful for that—our hearts will be closed to the sublimity of the glory which awaits us. It is not a question of restoring a single soul to happiness, or even of saving a multitude of sinners from their fate, but of reconciling a whole universe to God, of bringing bliss not only to innumerable creatures throughout the infinitudes of stellar space, but of satisfying the heart of God by means of a universal response to His love, so that He may take His true place in every heart He has created.

Christ among the nations as the pledge of our future glory, leading to the exaltation of Christ as the Head of all in the heavens as well as on the earth, and to the ultimate reconciliation of all at the consummation because the entire complement delights to dwell in Him—such is the supreme revelation brought by Paul, which leads us out of the partial and immature conceptions of His plans into a mature and complete grasp of His full purpose. In Ephesians maturity consists in finding *our* all in Christ, but in Colossians it

demands that we see in Christ all that *God* needs to carry out His eonian purpose.

Here is perhaps the highest sphere of service today—admonishing and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we should present every man mature in Christ Jesus (1:28). This Paul does in the body of the epistle as we shall see. Even in his day it was not an easy task, for he speaks of it as *toiling* and *struggling,* as though progress were not only laborious but against heavy opposition. If this was so in his day, how much more now! Maturity has been branded as a crime by Christendom, and even zealous defenders of the Bible toil and struggle *against* the truths for which Paul once contended.

Few, indeed, are there among the saints who do not need to be *admonished* because of teaching or practice which conflicts with maturity. And all of us need to be *taught* the great truths concerning Christ which are unfolded in this epistle. Because these are unknown or denied, maturity has practically vanished. Is it not worth severe toil and a tremendous struggle to recover these treasures of wisdom and knowledge and to set them before the saints? O that God, in these last days, would raise up men like Paul, themselves mature, and powerfully impressed with their privilege of proclaiming the secret of Christ, the complement of God!

True riches, untold wealth, lie in the assurance which comes from an understanding which leads to a realization of this secret, which His God and Father has revealed concerning Christ, in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed (2:2,3). It consoles the heart as well as satisfies the head. It is the end of all philosophy, and the apex of all love. The whence, the why and the whither of all things is unfolded in this all-embracing "mystery."

But the saints have been beguiled and despoiled of this vast spiritual treasure by the persuasive words of men. The rites of religion and the reasonings of philosophy have effectually robbed them of this wonderful wealth. Though the words still stare at us in the Bible, faith fails to see them, because it is blinded by false flares of human tradition. There is need, not only of a positive setting forth of the truth, as has already been done, but of a negative admonition, such as follows. This was called for in Paul's day, and was more needed and less heeded as the apostasy from Paul proceeded.

The same Christ Who met us at the beginning of our new life should accompany us all the way. He is all we needed for salvation, and He is more than sufficient for our walk. We should be rooted in Him alone, and not seek sustenance or support in aught else. We should be built up in Him only, and not seek edification in any other "means of grace." And may it be the lot of every reader of these lines to find a firm foundation for his faith in the secret now at length revealed, while his heart overflows with thankfulness for all that Christ is to him, and to the saints, to the whole creation, and to God. A.E.K.

(To be continued)

MICHIGAN FELLOWSHIPS

The Baldwin Summer Fellowship is scheduled for July 29 through August 2 this year with the theme taken from Ephesians 1:4, "God Chooses us in Christ." Contact Grace and Truth Chapel, Box 84, Baldwin MI 49304 for further information.

One day meetings are also scheduled this summer in Michigan, as follows: May 31 in Grand Rapids; June 28 in Muskegon; August 16 in Almont; and September 27 in Grand Rapids.

A STATUTE FOREVER

(Leviticus 23)

SOME believers have wondered whether the sabbath and the annual festivals of the Bible are to be observed by Christians, since each one was appointed by the Lord "as a statute forever" (Lev.23:14,21,31,41). It is argued that the death of Christ for us fulfilled the typical ritual washings and sacrifices (Heb.9:6-10), but that the sabbaths (among other things) are not included in this fulfillment in the same way. In effect, then, there is a division made between the "carnal" and "ritualistic" law of Moses and the "spiritual" and "everlasting" law of God.

To determine whether such a distinction is made in the book of Leviticus itself, a complete concordance of the phrase "a statute forever" in Leviticus is given below. The Hebrew phrase thus rendered in the KJV is *choq olam*, which is translated "eonian statute" in the tentative concordant version. It could well be paraphrased as "a perpetual rule." Along with the concordance listing a key phrase from the context is given. Where the key phrase is from a different verse than that of the occurrence of "eonian statute" the verse number appears in parentheses.

3:17 you shall not eat any fat or blood
6:18 of the fire offerings of Yahweh
6:22 the approach present of Aaron (20)
7:34 their peace offering

7:36 the fire offerings of Yahweh (35)
10: 9 do not drink wine . . . when you come into the tent
10:15 as a wave offering before Yahweh
16:29 you shall humble your souls
16:31 you shall humble your souls
16:34 to make a propitiatory shelter over the sons of Israel
17: 7 no longer sacrifice . . . to hairy satyrs
23:14 wave the sheaf . . . an ascent offering . . . an approach present . . . a fire offering . . . present approach (12-14)
23:21 you will call a meeting on this very day
23:31 you shall do no work at all
23:41 you shall celebrate it . . . seven days
24: 3 he shall arrange the lamps before Yahweh
24: 9 of the fire offerings of Yahweh

Of the seventeen occurrences of *choq olam* in Leviticus, nine occurrences deal with the various offerings, five occurrences concern the annual festivals, two refer to fasting on the day of atonement (Yom Kippur), and one concerns abstinence from alcoholic beverages when entering the holy precinct. From this brief survey it is plain that from the viewpoint of Leviticus, the various offerings were ever as much "a statute forever" as the feast days. To make a radical distinction between the observance of these days and their attendant offerings and rituals on the basis of this phrase is clearly arbitrary.

DAYS, MONTHS, SEASONS, YEARS

The elaborate system of festivals in the Torah emphasized the number seven. There were seven festivals in the year with seven sabbath days. Most of them were in the seventh month of the year. Every seventh year was a sabbatical year, and the year following seven sabbatical years (forty-nine) was the jubilee year. The three festival seasons divided the year into four non-festival seasons, three and four making seven "seasons" in the year. So there was

careful scrutiny paid to days, months, seasons and years (Gal.4:10).

From the viewpoint of the New Testament, strict observance of the divine service surrounding the Jerusalem temple is irrelevant to those who believe in Jesus. Christ gave Himself up for us (Gal.2:20; Eph.5:25) once for all (Heb.9:12) as "an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor" (Eph.5:2, *cf* Lev.1:9;3:16). The sacrifices and offerings are superfluous—they have been fulfilled in Christ Jesus Whom they foreshadowed. The other rituals of the covenant are in the same relationship to us. The apostle Paul told the Galatians that he feared lest he had labored in vain when they wished to return to the "infirm and poor elements" of ritual observance, specifically mentioning the scrutiny of days, months, seasons and years (Gal.4:9,10). Our divine service is now: "to present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God . . . and not to be configured to this eon, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom.12:2). Our "ritual clean and undefiled is this: to be visiting the bereaved and widowed in their affliction, to be keeping oneself unspotted from the world" (Jas.1:27). It is not that these are literally divine service or ritual, but they are the result of our faith in the blood of Jesus. We have nothing literally corresponding to the covenanted laws of Yahweh for Israel. We have so much more: "With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ" (Gal.2:20).

J.D.T.

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PAUL IN PISIDIAN ANTIOCH

THREE GREAT PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS were observed in Israel during the course of a year. We have a summary statement on this part of the divine legislation in Deuteronomy Sixteen which deals with passover and unleavened bread (verses 1-8), weeks (or Pentecost, 9-12) and booths (or tabernacles, 13-15). As indicated in verses 11 and 14, all in Israel were to rejoice in the celebration "in the place where Yahweh your Elohim shall choose to tabernacle His name . . . you, your son and your daughter, your servant, your maidservant and the Levite, the sojourner [resident alien], the orphan and the widow who are in your gates." Since not all of them would be able to undertake such a pilgrimage for various reasons, the minimum requirement of the law is stated in verse 16: "Three times in the year all your males shall appear before Yahweh your Elohim in the place which He shall choose, at the celebration of unleavened cakes [or bread], at the celebration of weeks and at the celebration of booths."

However in Paul's day when so many Jews lived outside the holy land, they could pay only occasional visits to the sanctuary in Jerusalem; yet great efforts were made to attend at least one of the three festivals, such as Paul did according to Acts 20:16. At Pentecost when Peter gave his first public address, there were

Jewish visitors in Jerusalem, practically from every known nation under the heaven, both Jews and proselytes (Acts 2:5-10). Probably some were converts from paganism to Judaism; males would have undergone circumcision and a ceremonial bath, in addition to the offering of a special sacrifice in the sanctuary; for female proselytes only the self-baptism and the sacrifice were required in order to be accepted as full members of the religious community of Israel. This explains why more women than men would take the final step and become proselytes of righteousness as they were called at a later date.

THE DAY OF THE SABBATHS

The synagogue had become an invariable feature of Jewish life especially in the dispersion wherever at least ten Jews were able to congregate in one locality to form a synagogue. The service centered around the consecutive reading of the Law, followed by a lesson from the prophets which would fit the context of the lesson from the Pentateuch. It was on *the day of the sabbaths* when the Lord Jesus entered the Nazareth synagogue and rose to read the second lesson, the introductory lines of Isaiah 61; then He sat down and expounded this passage of Scripture (Luke 4:16-20).

As this was probably in summer, it may have been the blowing of trumpets on the first day of the seventh month (shouting and blasting of bugles, Numbers 29:1), or the day of atonement (propitiatory shelters, Lev.23:26) on the tenth day of the same month.

On only two other occasions do we read of *the day of the sabbaths* when the yearly sabbath of one of the festivals fell on a weekly sabbath. This was the case when Paul addressed the synagogue audience in Pisidian Antioch and when he joined the women's

prayer meeting outside the city of Philippi. The memorable event on the Antioch double sabbath was the first intimation of justification on the ground of faith, while Philippi in Macedonia was Paul's starting point for bringing the word of God and of the Lord to Europe (Acts 16:13).

THE INTERVENING SABBATH*

Paul's address in the Antioch synagogue had met with an extraordinary response so that many of the audience wanted to hear him again as soon as possible. Normally they would have to wait for another week until the next weekly sabbath. However there was an earlier opportunity for a synagogue service on the *intervening sabbath* which was an annual holiday that came *before* the next weekly sabbath.

In Acts 13:14 we read that Paul and Barnabas entered the synagogue on the day of the sabbaths. This annual festival sabbath (which happened to fall on a weekly sabbath) was followed by another annual festival sabbath before the week was over, namely the intervening (or: between) sabbath (Acts 13:42). This may give us a clue as to the time (in the Jewish calendar) when so great interest had been aroused among the synagogue audience that the people did not wish to wait a full week before hearing Paul again.

According to Leviticus 23:26-35 there was an annual "sabbath of cessation" on the tenth of the seventh month (Tishri: Sept./Oct.) which is generally known as the day of atonement (or: propitiatory shelters). This annual festival sabbath is followed by another one, only five days later, on the fifteenth of

*This paragraph on the intervening sabbath has been adapted from a more detailed study of the subject in volume 55, p.201-210.

the seventh month when the celebration of tabernacles (booths or ingathering) began. No servile work was to be done on either day.

THE TENTH OF TISHRI

Here we may have a key to the spiritual connection of the statements in Acts 13:14,42 with the great festivals in Israel. The tenth of the month of Tishri was the very day when the chief priest in Jerusalem was offering up sacrifices for his own sins and for all the sins of the sons of Israel (Lev.16:16,33,34; Heb.7:27). It was on this very day that Paul announced a Saviour, Jesus, through Whom there is a "pardon of sins, and from all from which you could not be justified in the law of Moses; in this One everyone who is *believing* is being *justified*" (Acts 13:23,39).

The logical conclusion (which may have dawned on some of the synagogue audience) has been drawn by the writer of Hebrews with words like these: "For Christ entered not into holy places made by hands . . . . Nor yet is it that He may be offering Himself often, even as the chief priest is entering into the holies of holies year by year [while] Christ is being offered *once* . . . for salvation through faith" (9:24-28).

"And every chief priest, indeed, stands ministering day by day, and offering the same sacrifices, which never can take sins from about us. Yet this One, when offering *one* sacrifice for sins . . . has perfected to a finality those who are hallowed" (10:11-14).

THE FIFTEENTH OF TISHRI

The fifteenth of the seventh month was the festival of ingathering ("after you have gathered the yield of the land," Lev.23:39). On that day "almost the entire

city [of Pisidian Antioch] was gathered to hear the word of the Lord" (Acts 13:44). This was indeed an "ingathering" of all those "whoever were set for life eonian" (Acts 13:48), just as Paul's message on the previous sabbath had been in keeping with the day of atonement (or propitiatory shelters).

The following excerpts from the chapters 16 and 23 of Leviticus provide a concordant translation of the divine legislation pertaining to the celebration of the tenth and the fifteenth of the month of Tishri.

"[Aaron] will make a propitiatory shelter over the holy place because of the uncleannesses of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions, for all their sins" (16:16).

"And he will make a propitiatory shelter over the holy sanctuary, and over the tent of appointment and over the altar shall he make a propitiatory shelter. Also over the priests and over all the people of the assembly shall he make a propitiatory shelter. This you will come to have for an eonian statute: to make a propitiatory shelter over the sons of Israel because of all their sins, once a year" (16:33,34).

"Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: But on the tenth of this seventh month, it is the day of propitiatory shelters. You shall come to have a holy meeting when you humble your souls and bring a fire offering near to Yahweh. You shall do no work at all on this very day, for it is the day of propitiatory shelters so as to make a propitiatory shelter over you before Yahweh your Elohim. For every soul who does not humble himself on this very day, shall be cut off from his people. And every soul who is doing work on this very day, I will destroy that soul from among his people. You shall do no work at all. It is an eonian statute for your generations in all your dwellings. It is a sabbath of

cessation for you when you will humble your souls" (23:26-32).

"And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, From the fifteenth day of this seventh month is the celebration of booths for seven days to Yahweh. On the first day is a holy meeting; you shall do no servile work at all" (23:33-35).

HE IS LORD ALSO OF THE SABBATHS

We remember the word of our Lord (Mark 2:27) that "the sabbath came because of mankind, and not mankind because of the sabbath, so that the Son of Mankind is Lord also of the sabbath." The sons of Israel had received the divine command, "You are to remember the sabbath day to hallow it!" And the divine summons was repeated in a similar form, "You are to observe the sabbath day to hallow it, just as Yahweh your Elohim instructed you" (Ex.20:8; Deut.5:12). In Exodus the reference is made to the statement in Genesis 2:3 that God had blessed the seventh day and hallowed it. Man was not only given the dominion over the animal world and the produce of the entire earth (1:26,29), but was also entitled to the privilege of enjoying the sabbath day. In Deuteronomy the sons of Israel were reminded of their time of slavery in Egypt and that Yahweh Elohim brought them out from there with a steadfast hand and with an outstretched arm (Deut.5:15). Hence the deliverance from former bondage could be remembered with thanksgiving on every celebration of a sabbath day.

But there was the danger that the underlying meaning of the sabbath would be forgotten in the weekly routine repetition. Hence seven annual sabbaths were added to interrupt the monotony of life and to

emphasize the importance of the sabbath and to remind the sons of Israel of all that God had done for them.

God was not tired, when He first instituted the sabbath (Gen.2:2). He did not rest, but He ceased or stopped from what He had been doing at the time. We today, as members of the body of Christ, have to stop in our occupation with daily routine ever so often and remind ourselves with thanksgiving of all that God has done for us. And so we pray that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, that we may be thinking His thoughts, that we may be governed by His motives and that our hearts may be widened by His understanding.

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

LIGHT

The earth lay buried in the depths of night,
Though night was not yet named. Upon its face
Black darkness moved, and from the realms of space
No sun or moon poured forth its radiance bright.
Then issued the decree "Let there be light!"
And at these words the mists of blackness sped.
Thus Light increased, while fast the darkness fled
In full submission to that unseen Might.

And so with us. When countless troubles fall
Upon our heads, and round us evils crowd,
We seem enveloped by a dismal pall,
And cannot of ourselves pierce through the cloud.
But look to Him, Who first caused Light to shine,
And through the gloom we catch the gleam Divine.

J.H.E.

THE FATHER

DEITY is active, and His activity is distinctly in view with the great designation, *God.* He is the Subjector, the Disposer, the Placer, the Saviour, the Justifier, the Reconciler. But even greater than His activity is His Being. What He *is* stands behind what He *does.* It is the basis of all His activity as God.

The very essence of God's Being is love. This lies at the foundation, at what Paul calls "the depths of God" (1 Cor.2:10). And when the apostle wrote of these depths in Ephesians he described this love as "vast" (Eph.2:4).

In harmony with the vast love of God is His designation, *Father.* Even as love is the basis and fulfillment of the work of subjection so His place as Father is the foundation and completion of His manifestation as Deity. When God's love is in view so also is His Fatherhood. Hence we read in Ephesians 1:2 that He is "our Father," in 1:3 and 3:14 that He is the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and in 1:17 that He is "the Father of glory" (or "glorious Father"). In fullest truth He is "*the* Father" (Eph.2:18; see also 5:20 and 6:23).

The writings of John which also focus attention on the love of God refer to God often as Father. Especially do we find Jesus referring to God as "My Father." The Lord's vision for the future was, "In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in

Me, and I in you. He who has My precepts and is keeping them, he it is who is loving Me. Now he who is loving Me will be loved by My Father . . ." (John 14:20,21).

OUR FATHER

In His wisdom and power God has made us and placed us where we are. He has provided us with our needs and above all with deliverance in Christ Jesus. We are blessed in Christ with justification, conciliation and expectation of glory. But if this were all, we could never actually know God. The evangel is more than a message of salvation; it is also a message of revelation. God's will is that all be saved *and come into a realization of the truth* (1 Tim.2:4). The whole purpose behind our experience of sorrow, failure and frustration, and of the cross of Christ which gives deliverance, is that we might know the heart of God. He is more than the sum of His power, wisdom and righteousness. He is more than Creator, Sustainer and Saviour. We are getting to know Him as our Father.

This is a term of relationship but also of the feelings which accompany that relationship. As believers we are coming to feel these feelings since we have received "the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, 'Abba, Father!' " (Rom.8:15). To get to know God as our Father is our peace and confidence. It is a comforting experience.

This conviction of our Father's concern and constant provision for us is part of what it means to have the spirit of sonship. In Romans 8:21 Paul called it "the glorious freedom of the children of God." We know that there is nothing to be afraid of because God is our Father. Nor are we burdened with the turmoil of will and flesh described in Romans 7. "Now seeing

that you are sons, God delegates the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba, Father!' " (Gal.4:6).

The trouble often is that we do not savor this relationship. We may acknowledge that God is our Father without actually enjoying it. We may address Him as Father in our prayers without having the son's confidence and peace in the relationship. The spirit of sonship is for those who are truly believing that God is our Father.

THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

In all things Christ is becoming first, Who is Firstborn of every creature (Col.1:15,18), and His consciousness of God as Father is what we all will share some day. The Lord's prayer in John 17 is an expression of this intense awareness and appreciation. Throughout this plea He addressed God as Father (1,5,11,21,24,25). When He testified, "I manifest Thy name" (6) and prayed, "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name" (11), He referred to this designation, "Father." And to know this Name is to know God's love. "Just Father . . . these know that Thou dost commission Me. And I make known to them Thy name, and I shall make it known, that the love with which Thou lovest Me may be in them, and I in them" (17:25,26).

Several times when referring to God as "Father" Paul speaks of Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.15:6; 2 Cor.1:3; Eph.1:3; Col.1:3). This expression points, first of all, to one of God's highest glories. He is the Father of our Saviour, Anointed Head and Lord. Secondly, the expression speaks of one of Christ's greatest glories. In a unique and prior way the Lord Jesus Christ is Son to the Father. Yet again, as a third application, this ex-

pression points to a glory conveyed to us. If God is the Father of Christ and we have been identified with Christ and are "in Him," then we enjoy the same privileged and happy relationship to the Father as Christ Himself possesses. The fact that God is our Father is made infinitely more precious to us by the fact that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of all the glories of Christ listed in Colossians 1:13-20 surely the greatest is that He is called the *Son* of God's love. Of all the glories of God listed in Ephesians 1:3-14, for which Paul and all the saints bless Him, surely the greatest is that He is called the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ. All that Christ is and all that He achieves is sourced in His blessed God and Father. Our word *eulogy* is from the Greek word for *blessing.* It means to speak well of, and this eulogy for the living God is the highest we can speak of Him. These words of laud and praise are in reference to God's purpose from before the disruption of the world until the complement of the eras of time. In it all God is manifesting what it means to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE FATHER OF GLORY

The prayer of Ephesians 1:15-23 is for the believers' enlightenment. It concerns Christ and the ecclesia. Yet it also concerns God as the Father and His universe. The expectation and allotment and power centered in Christ have in view His headship over all and the completion of "the all in all."

When we pray this prayer for "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him," we are praying for a realization of "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Father of glory.*" This goes beyond understanding the way God blesses us with justification and

peace and expectation. It is a prayer for the apprehension of the glories of the Father.

The expectation, the allotment and the power mentioned here are truly matters previously hidden in the depths of God. In order for us to grasp them we need this special prayer for enlightenment. The Father of glory is bringing about a great victory that will bring blessing to all. He Himself will become All in everybody.

The Father has always had this in view, for it is the deepest yearning of His nature to express His love. He is the glorious Father and the Father of glory. The very term *Father* speaks of glory. There can be no doubt that glory is to be there at the consummation since God is the Father.

With this in view we can appreciate more fully Paul's comments in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5. The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of pities and God of all consolation is greatly to be blessed. His heart is always directed toward His children, and His hand is continually working for their good. May we be enjoying this assurance continually.

The term *Father* is the greatest of all Deity's designations. Other terms such as Judge and Saviour will be put aside, like the spiritual gifts such as faith and expectation. They are no longer needed when all are saved and all judgment is completed. But like the gift of love the term *Father* will always remain. At first the Scriptures have little to say about the Father, but once He is fully made known to the universe this glorious designation will surely become the most frequently used. Then, the whole universe will join in the pattern of Romans 15:6, "with one mouth . . . glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

D.H.H.

JONAH

THE BOOK OF JONAH belongs to a transition period. His mission to Nineveh inaugurated a new departure in God's dealings with Israel and the nations. It heralds the advent of change. Jonah was to be the prophet of the new order as he had been of the old. He was to be God's representative at the court of Nineveh as he had been at the court of Samaria. We gather from 2 Kings 14:25 that Jonah had been the prophet of Ephraim's restoration. He foretold the success of Jeroboam's arms over the Syrians and the restoration of the kingdom to its original power. He had been the apostle of national glory, the guiding genius in the rehabilitation of the country. Jonah, the foreteller of royal triumphs and inspirer of royal counsels, was to play the leading part in the enactment of the sad episode in human history which gave over to savages in thought and in action the leadership of the Semitic race, and took it away from the Hebrews.

He was to sever all former associations and go to Nineveh, the capital of a hostile nation which menaced the stability of his country, and there perform a mission which he knew would be the first step in the elevation of a rival whose task was to reduce the glorious and powerful kingdom of Israel to an insignificant Assyrian province. Such a mission offended his patriotic feeling; it wounded his national pride. Besides, it involved the loss of social advantage; it

ruined his temporal prospects; it broke up the sacred ties of home and country.

The spirit of the times was characterized by bigotry and extreme narrowness. Israel believed in the limitation of divine care to her own work and her own border. She looked upon herself as the only child of the human family on whom the Father could gaze with favor. Thus Jonah's new commission was, in the eyes of his contemporaries, a social and religious heresy. It was something which, if disclosed, would ostracize him. It would shake his prophetic glory; it would expose him to the charge of inconsistency; it would class him as a pervert, a traitor, a renegade.

A mode of escape was suggested to him by the very law of God. Did not the national covenants limit the *visible* tokens of God's presence to the holy land? If he could leave every association behind him, if he could toss aside every vestige of Israel, if he could plunge into the very heart of heathendom, would not he interpose a barrier between himself and the Voice Whose call was at once so imperative and so persistent!

So Jonah goes down to Joppa and embarks on a ship bound for Tarshish which is now called Gibraltar. He chose the ship bound for the extreme west—the point most remote from Samaria and Nineveh. He is seeking to forget his former environment; he is endeavoring to drown a Voice by the inpouring of new associations—associations novel and unfamiliar. He launches himself into another world.

But something now happens—something which immeasurably enlarges Jonah's conception of God's providential dealings. That revelation comes to him through the very element through which he was seeking to prevent it—the heathen world.

A furious storm breaks forth. That storm gives rise

to a combination of circumstances which prove to demonstrate that all the forces of nature are ministers of His pleasure. More than this: Jonah perceives that the divine will is not bound by conventional fetters—its designs are carried out as effectively through heathen practices as through the sacred rites of Mosaism. He presides over the lots cast by the heathen sailors as much as over those cast into the bag of the high priest at Jerusalem. The one proves as effective an instrument as the other. He is the Disposer of them both.

And the heathen sailors—how susceptible to divine influence they show themselves! These men without law, untutored in the word of God, actuated by mere natural instincts, living in rough surroundings, show more concern for the safety of God's truant prophet than God's prophet has shown in their welfare. They do all they can to save him. At the risk of their life they make a desparate effort to take him ashore, even after his delinquency became known. How quickly they turn to Jehovah; how earnestly they call upon His name; how eagerly they offer Him presents; how submissively they bow to His decree! Their readiness to serve Jehovah stands out in strange contrast with Jonah's reluctance to obey His voice. It is a mute rebuke to Jonah's pretension, a standing refutation of Jewish claims to superiority.

Jonah is deeply touched. The logic of the situation breaks upon him with irresistible, overwhelming force. He experiences a sudden transformation. He wants to reciprocate their magnanimity—to make amends for his misdeeds. By his flight he has endangered their lives. By the sacrifice of himself he will secure their ransom. He will purchase their well-being by an immersion in the waves—an immersion at his own re-

quest. The request marks his spiritual expansion—the recognition by his Jewish nature of the common need of man.

Here closes the first scene in the life of Jonah. When the second scene opens we are in a new atmosphere, spiritually as well as geographically. Jonah has learned a great truth—that God is no respector of persons, that the Spirit of God broods over the heathen world and works out His will among the nations as effectively as in Israel. Accordingly, he betakes himself to Nineveh. He stands in her streets and proclaims her danger. He calls her citizens to repentance. He warns them to flee from the wrath to come.

Jonah's proclamation has been, "Forty days more and Nineveh shall be overturned!" It has been entirely effective. A wave of spiritual awakening has swept over the city. All classes have been startled out of the even tenor of their ways, from the king to the beggar. A fast is proclaimed in the hope of averting the wrath of Heaven. A royal proclamation calls upon all ranks of society to amend their ways and resolve to lead for the future a better life to receive the mercy of God.

But this moral awakening was essentially heathen. It wore a heathen garb. The fast was a purely Assyrian fast. It had no resemblance whatever to Israel's fasts. Jonah has learned that God desired the salvation of Nineveh from an impending doom. But he thinks that Nineveh's deliverance must be accomplished through the established forms of Jewish worship. Surely Nineveh cannot hope to escape destruction while she *remains* heathen. It must proclaim allegiance to Moses. Surely God will not regard a mere natural religion! He will not accept as an offering the fruits grown on heathen soil. If God pardons Nineveh at all,

it must be for Moses' sake, not because Nineveh has heard the voice of secular conscience.

But forty days pass, and destruction comes not. Jonah is indignant. He complains of God's compassion. He finds fault with the ways of Providence. He needs a second revelation. The first stage of his deliverance had been accomplished by the storm. From that storm he had emerged enlarged—emancipated from racial pride. There remains one more barrier between him and freedom—he has to be freed from *religious* pride. He has yet to learn that there is one common ground of acceptance with God. He needs deliverance from formalism. He needs to be ushered into the presence of a God without fences, without barriers, without limits.

That second revelation comes to Jonah through the medium of the gourd. The first revelation had been characterized by an imposing display of grandeur. But this second revelation is marked by quietude and simplicity. It manifests itself in a trifling incident, in trite, commonplace experience. We pass from the sublime to the simple. We make a transition from the environment where man feels his insignificance to the environment where man realizes his superiority.

While Jonah was waiting to see the fate of the city, a plant of the desert had grown and spread its protective foliage over his booth. One day the heat was particularly oppressive, but on reaching the spot he finds the gourd is gone; it has faded in the past night; it has been smitten by a worm. Jonah is in a rage. This is the last straw. Everything has conspired to irritate him, to ruffle his feelings. Everything has turned out in bitter disappointment—even this little bit of a desert plant. He feels unable to survive the disappointment. He prays for death.

All at once Jonah hears a voice. "And I, shall not I commiserate over Nineveh, the great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand human beings who do not know their right from their left, and many beasts?" (4:11).

There is no mistaking the grand aim of this book. Its lesson is spelled in letters of fire. Though there be many tongues in the flesh, there is one language of the spirit. There are innumerable creeds, but one common craving of the heart. Weary mortals, creatures of habit and environment, may gaze each on a different star, but through them all, men shall see one golden light. God is the God of all things. He quickens all things. He has a desire for the work of His hands. He claims all prayers as prayers to Him. The unspoken cry of the infant, even the inarticulate cry of the cattle, has to Him the import of prayer. Thus ends the story of Jonah. As we close the book there lingers with us the vision of a great city with its imperial splendor, its toil-worn multitudes, its swarms of neglected children, its multitude of weary cattle, and God's mercy brooding over all!

Vladimir Gelesnoff

BOOK SERVICE

We maintain a small stock of Bible translations and aids such as concordances and lexicons which we sell at cost. Write to us for a free list of these items.

RECENT REPRINTS

The article entitled "The More Excellent Way" has been added to another study by A. E. Knoch, entitled "Love Transcendent." This booklet is priced at 25¢.

GOD IS FOR US

"If God is for us, who is against us?" (Romans 8:31)

THIS is a rhetorical question. Paul is not expressing a doubt, but a challenge. He has no doubt whatever that God is for us, but he puts the main proposition in the subjunctive—"*if* God is for us"—so that he can put forth the question: "Who is against us?" If God is for us, and *He is for us,* who *can* be against us? God is the One Who is operating all according to the counsel of His will. Who can withstand His intention? The observation in the *Concordant Commentary* on this passage is very apt. "Nothing can compare with the sublime consciousness of a place in God's heart. If *He* is for us, even those who *would* be against us work our weal. No one *can* be against us."

TWO SUBLIME TRUTHS

This passage of scripture comes in the middle of a section (verses 28-39) which begins with an *awareness* by the apostle of a sublime truth, namely, that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving Him, and his *persuasion* of an equally sublime truth, that nothing in the whole universe will ever be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Between these two powerful and unchallengeable facts lies this important question: "If God is for us, who is against us?"

"*If God is for us.*" This is one of those expressions in which every word is full of meaning. We can put the weight of emphasis on each word in turn, and as we develop our thoughts on the matter, we shall be switching our emphasis from word to word. For example, sometimes we shall be stressing the fact that *God,* (i.e. the Supreme One) is for us; sometimes we shall be pointing out that God is *for* us, and not just with us or near us, but is actively supporting us; and sometimes we shall be discussing the fact that God is for *us,* and not for all and sundry at the present time in this special way.

THE BACKGROUND

"*God is for us.*" For the moment, we are taking the expression out of its subjunctive form, and treating it as a positive fact.

The expression is set against a background of universal vanity, or nothingness. Read Romans 8:18-25 noting particularly verses 20 to 22, which state, "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. For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now."

"*We are aware.*" This awareness of the groaning and travailing of creation is in sharp contrast to the awareness of verse 28, where God is seen to be working all together for the good of those who are loving Him. The whole creation has been made subject to a condition in which it can do nothing of itself to secure its own future, and in this state it can only groan. It has not come to be in this condition voluntarily—it has

no wish to be like this—but has been brought into this state because of God Who is subjecting it. God requires all creation to know that, without Him and apart from Him, it is meaningless and impotent. In several places Paul declares that "all is of God," and all creation must be brought to realize this. That is why it is first subjected to vanity—to demonstrate to itself its own ineffectiveness. It is against this background of universal impotence that we become aware that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving Him; in other words, that God is for us.

We are by nature part of that universal creation, and were once "children of indignation, even as the rest," as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:4, yet we have been separated from that general throng by a "deliverance which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom.3:24). In Him we are being regarded no longer as soulish and sinful, but as spiritual and righteous. "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!" (2 Cor.5:17).

Thus against this background of universal impotence and groaning we become aware that in some special way "God is for us." This great truth is also set against a background of our own individual impotence and personal groaning, for we are so infirm in ourselves, and at times so surrounded by difficult and trying circumstances, that we just do not know what we ought to be praying for. We find this situation brought to our attention in Romans 8:26,27, where it clearly states that, because of our infirmity, "what we should be praying for, to accord with what must be, we are not aware, but the spirit itself is pleading for us with inarticulate groanings. Now He Who is searching the hearts is aware what is the disposition of the spirit,

for in accord with God is it pleading for the saints." Notice how our *un*awareness in verse 26 contrasts with God's awareness in verse 27, and our own awareness in verse 28.

We are not God. We cannot see the end from the beginning except insofar as it is revealed to us by God's spirit and through His Word. While we know (because God's Word says so) that all will eventually be reconciled to Him, and that He will be All in all, our limited perceptions often fail to inform us of what is going to happen tomorrow; therefore, in any particular set of circumstances, we cannot always be sure what is God's immediate will for us, and, for the same reason, we cannot always be sure what we should pray for. In such conditions, His spirit comes to our aid, though it may be with inarticulate groanings. (In passing, notice the three usages of the word "groaning" in this chapter, and compare with the two occurrences in 2 Corinthians 5:2 and 4. In each case, it indicates a cramping of spirit and a desire to be freed from restraint.) But in these or any other circumstances that may arise, we are aware that God is working all together for our good. Always, God is for us!

ALL IS OF GOD

The wonderful thing about these verses in Romans (8:28-39) is that we have to do nothing except to love God, to become recipients of the blessings they contain. God Himself foreknew us. He designated us beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son. He calls us, He justifies us and He will most assuredly glorify us.

He did not choose us because of any merit within ourselves. He did not call us because we were worthy of the call, nor does He justify us because of any

righteousness of our own. He does all these things because of the vast love with which He loves us (Eph.2:4). In grace are we saved, through faith, and this salvation is not out of us—it is not of any works of ours, lest we should boast before God. We cannot boast before Him, but we can rejoice in all that He does for us.

Yes, indeed, God is for us in a very real sense. Against all the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Adversary, God is actively working on our behalf, and everything is channelled into an avenue of blessing. He, Who foreknew us in the first place, and designated us beforehand for the place of a son for Himself, will not be satisfied until He has finally glorified us. None of His foreknown and predesignated sons will be lost on the way.

We live in perilous and troublous times, yet nothing of these will be allowed to affect the issue, for they were also foreknown by God, and were foretold by His apostle in 2 Timothy, chapter 3. But no afflictions or distresses, no failures or disasters, no trials or tribulations, can ever thwart Him in His purpose, or separate us from Him. Nothing can ever shatter His love for us, or weaken His resolve to act for us. Remember what Paul suffered, what dangers he faced, what privations he endured (2 Cor.11:23-33), and yet it was Paul who wrote these verses in Romans 8 with such conviction.

God is for us. He has been for us for a very long time; not just since the day we were called, or the day we were born, but a long time before that. He is working all together for the good of those who love Him, those whom He *foreknew*. When were we foreknown of God?

We read in Ephesians 1:4 that we were chosen in

Christ before the disruption of the world, and we know that the disruption occurred before ever humanity was created. The disruption is that event which plunged the universe into chaos. The effects on this earth were that it became a chaos and vacant, and darkness covered the desolation. But the ecclesia, which is Christ's body, was clearly foreknown before that. Can we go back earlier than this? Indeed we can! Paul tells us, in 2 Timothy 1:9, that God "saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus *before times eonian.*"

BEFORE THE EONS

"*Before times eonian!*" Yes, God knew us then and was even then acting for us! He was giving us, in Christ Jesus, the grace which was to be the hallmark of our evangel throughout the eons to come.

God's purpose is described as "the purpose of the eons" (Eph.3:11). That is to say, it is a purpose that is tied to the eons and is contained within them. It does not extend beyond them, either before or after. Though it was conceived before the eons and its results will be enjoyed after the eons are consummated, its actual outworking takes place during the eons themselves. So that, when we speak of something as "before times eonian" or "before the eons began," we are talking of that which was in existence before God began to put His purpose into operation. And right back there, we were foreknown of God, and, in a figurative sense, were in existence in Christ when that grace was given to us in Him. And from that moment God was for us!

How could we be in Christ long before we were

born, or even before humanity itself was in existence? In exactly the same way as woman was in humanity from the moment that Adam was created. We read in Genesis 1:27 that "creating is the Alueim humanity in His image. In the image of the Alueim He creates it. Male and female He creates them." Yet the woman does not appear as a separate being until the end of Genesis 2.

It is in Genesis 1:28 that the two, male and female, are blessed, and this is referred to in Genesis 5:1,2, where we read, "This is the scroll of the genealogical annals of Adam: In the day the Alueim created Adam, in the likeness of the Alueim He made him. Male and female created He them. And blessing them is He, and calling their name Adam *in the day they are created.*"

It is quite clear from these scriptures that God had the place of the woman in mind from the moment that Adam was created, and had made provision in His purpose for her to appear as a separate individual later. In just the same way, God had the ecclesia in mind from the moment that Christ came into being as God's Creative Original (Rev.3:14), the Firstborn of every creature (Col.1:15); and before God put any part of His purpose into operation He had made provision within it for the ecclesia, at some stage, to have an existence of its own as the complement of Christ, just as woman has an existence of her own as the complement of man. And just as Adam, through his complement, begins to fulfill the intention of God that humanity should increase and fill the earth, so Christ, through His complement, the ecclesia which is His body, is even now beginning the great work of reconciling the universe to God (*cf* Eph.1:23; 3:10,11; Col.1:20).

PREDESIGNATED—NOT PREDESTINATED

These considerations bring us to our next point. Not only were we foreknown of God before He put His purpose into operation, but our place in that purpose was predetermined and our appointment to that position was made. In Romans 8:29, we read, ". . . whom He foreknew, He designates beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren." In Ephesians 1:5,6, ". . . in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved." And again, in Ephesians 1:11,12, ". . . in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ."

Christ Jesus is the Son of God—the Son of His love—and the only stature befitting that which is the complement of Christ is that of a son. That is why sonship is stressed in this chapter (8) of the Roman epistle. Verse 14 reads, "For whoever are being led by God's spirit, these are sons of God. For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying 'Abba, Father'."

O, what a privilege it is to be able to call God by this name—the name which Jesus Himself used in that intimate conversation with His Father on that solemn occasion in the garden of Gethsemane. God is truly for us!

In this passage, Romans 8:29, we must insist on the use of the term "pre*designate*" (or "designate

beforehand") rather than "pre*destinate*," as the King James Version renders the Greek *pro-orizō* (before-seeize). Because of the King James rendering, many believers think of this word as referring to some future existence in which we are to find ourselves, often a somewhat vague location in the universe which is the general conception of heaven. Is this what this Greek word is indicating? Or is it not rather directing our minds towards the wisdom of God?

In another scriptural mention of predesignation (1 Cor.2:6-8), we find that the term is clearly connected with the wisdom of God, for there we read of "a wisdom not of this eon, neither of the chief men of this eon, who are being discarded, but we are speaking God's wisdom in a secret, which has been concealed, which God designates before the eons for our glory, which not one of the chief men of this eon knows, for if they know, they would not crucify the Lord of glory."

Like the secret mentioned in this passage, our predesignation also dates from before the eons. God's purpose, from beginning to end, was conceived before any part of it was put into operation, and the place of the ecclesia in God's purpose was thus foreordained. We were designated beforehand for a place of sonship; we were designed beforehand in such a way as to make us conformable to the image of God's Son. We were *designated* beforehand for a definite role in God's purpose rather than *destined* beforehand for an undefined future in some mystic place called heaven. There is no suggestion in scripture that we go to heaven for a *rest* after our labors on earth; on the contrary, our work will undoubtedly increase after we have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Our prime ministry is "among the celestials" (Eph.2:6,7;

3:10,11). It is for this that we are even now being blessed "with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ" (Eph.1:3).

It is through the medium of many generations of women, as man's complement, that humanity has spread all over the face of the earth, thus fulfilling God's intention as expressed in Genesis 1:28. Likewise, it is through many members of the ecclesia, as Christ's complement, and acting in the power of Christ, that all creation will be reconciled to God. It is in Christ that the power resides. He is the Head over all, directing all. Yet it is "in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus" that God is to receive glory "throughout all the generations of the eon of the eons. Amen!" (Eph.3:21).

CHRIST AS FIRSTBORN

Christ, too, receives glory through the ecclesia, for as a result of our predesignation He becomes "Firstborn among many brethren."

There are five different aspects of Christ's relationship to others in which He is described as Firstborn. They are as follows.

1. *Christ's relationship to God.* "My Son art Thou; I, today, have begotten Thee . . . . Now whenever He may again be leading the Firstborn into the inhabited earth . . ." (Heb.1:5,6). Christ is the Firstborn of God.

2. *Christ's relationship to Creation.* He is "the Firstborn of every creature" (Col.1:15). Hence "all has its cohesion in Him" (v.17).

3. *Christ's relationship to humanity.* He is the Firstborn son of Miriam (Mary) (Luke 2:7). Spiritually, He is the Firstborn Son of humanity, hence the title, "Son of Mankind."

4. *Christ's relationship to the dead.* He is the

"Firstborn from among the dead" (Col.1:18). This title is all-embracing, like that in verse 16, "Firstborn of every creature." It leads to the position "that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell." It ensures the resurrection and ultimate vivification of all.

5. *Christ's relationship to the ecclesia.* He is the "Firstborn among many brethren," the Firstborn in the field of conciliation and family unity.

God is welding the universe into His own complete family—"after Whom every kindred in the heavens and on earth are being named" (Eph.3:15). We are the firstfruits of that family (Rom.8:23); we have an expectancy prior to, and in advance of, the rest (Eph.1:12). But all creation is "awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God" (Rom.8:18). Our message to the universe is in line with that condition to which we have been designated, namely, our sonship. It is ever and essentially one of conciliation. As Paul puts it, "We are beseeching, 'For Christ's sake, be conciliated to God!' " We are saying, in effect, "God is for us! Believe Him, and He will be for you, too."

John H. Essex

(To be continued)

MISSIONS

Terrorism and political unrest seem to be increasing in all parts of the world today. It is instructive to see how our missionaries are reacting to the troubles in their respective lands. Brother Oblenda from Ozamis City, Philippines, writes of visiting victims of bombing attacks in his own city and comments, "Although the whip is biting and sore, behind the stripes is God's unbounded love." May God give us all grace to see His love behind all things.

DISAGREEMENTS AND DISPUTES

What should be our attitude toward disagreements among believers?

Let us not deceive ourselves with the idea that, because all is of God, all our actions are pleasing to Him. Let us not excuse the confusion and division among the saints, as if it were commendable on the part of each one to differ from all others. If all disagree it does not show that all are right, but that all are wrong. Let us not be proud when we differ from others, but *ashamed.* These things are not intended to puff us up, but to *humble* us. Of all mankind we should be the most concordant and agreeable.

Should we not fight for the truth?

Truth does not need the support of vituperation and reviling. Indeed, the reviler should be shunned by the saints (1 Cor.5:11). They are *not* to shun the one who is reviled.

We are often prone to go to two extremes. For example, some insist on the "freedom" of the human will, and that God must, perforce, submit to it. Others discard the will of man altogether. Both *reason from* the Scriptures, instead of *believing all* the passages and harmonizing them. May we lovingly implore all to consider and believe *all* that is written (Luke 24:25)? A fragment of truth may be most misleading, because it rests on Scripture. Let us strive to acknowledge every atom of truth in *both* extremes of a dispute. "Now a slave of the Lord must not be fighting, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with evil, with meekness training those who are antagonizing" (2 Tim.2:24,25).

A.E.K.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 1980
BEING the FOURTH NUMBER of VOLUME SEVENTY-ONE

EDITORIAL

"ANYONE who has spent a good part of a lifetime on the Greek text and sees the superhuman perfection of the vocabulary and the diction of the grammar of the Greek [N. T.] Scriptures, and then does the same work in Hebrew, which is an entirely different kind of language, realizes that a translation from Hebrew into Greek would be largely human. Only one point should show that: *The Hebrew has no tenses.* The verb does not say whether it is past, present, or future" (vol.37, p.35).

In the above statement, Brother A. E. Knoch is referring to the Septuagint (LXX, the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew text) which is not fully satisfactory. We use it mainly in order to confirm conjectures or other readings as we have pointed out in more detail in volume 70, page 194.

Likewise our own translation from Hebrew into English has its shortcomings too, and certainly falls short of perfection even though we are painstakingly observing the three concordant principles: Each Hebrew word should have an exclusive English equivalent (whenever our idiomatic usage allows), and each English standard should be assigned to represent just one Hebrew word family.

The third concordant principle applies to the

translation of Hebrew *verb forms*. Since each has an essential force of its own, this should be reflected by a more distinctive translation than most versions provide. As emphasized in A. E. Knoch's "Revision of the Hebrew Grammar" (1957), any English equivalents for Hebrew verb forms *must agree with the tenor of the context.*

COMPLETE, INCOMPLETE, CONTINUOUS

In a general sense the Hebrew verb regards an occurrence only from the point of complete, incomplete or continuous state. Complete (for the suffix conjugation) means, the verb form indicates that a fact or condition is certain, finished or general, even standard or permanent. Incomplete (for the prefix conjugation) means, the verb form describes an act or condition as partial, frequent, progressive or developing. Hence the incomplete verb form denotes that there may be interruptions or repetitions in the process, while none of this applies to the complete form.

The participle is used for the continuous state which is in progress, but generally not subject to interruptions.

Brother A. E. Knoch suggested a slight vertical stroke (ˈ) for the incomplete form when the use of "shall" or ". . . ing" does not seem to agree with the tenor of the context. The following examples are taken from the first chapter of Exodus.

+ **These** are the **names of** the **sons of Israel** ˈ**coming** to[d] **Egypt** `**with Jacob; they came,** each **man** +**with his household.**

The participle ˈ**coming** describes the continuous, uninterrupted aspect of the emigration to Egypt. The complete form **they came** indicates that the emigration was a finished fact.

In a sublinear translation, verse 5 would read about as follows: "And becoming is every soul forthing thigh of Jacob seventy soul. And Joseph becomes in Egypt." Even when we use the variant "come [to] be" for "become" and add lightface letters and words, the translation may still not be easily understood:

And coming are all the souls going forth from the thigh of Jacob to be seventy souls. And Joseph comes to be in Egypt.

The first sentence of verse 5 would seem to refer to a process going on *after the arrival* in Egypt, while the statement about Joseph might be considered as a new fact (which is introduced at this point in time), at least by an uninformed reader who is not acquainted with the historical sequence of events in the concluding chapters of Genesis. We have to admit that the above translation of verse 5 does not fully agree with the tenor of the context.

EXODUS 1:5

[+] **All the souls having gone forth from the thigh of Jacob had [l]become seventy souls. [+]As to Joseph, he [b]was already in Egypt.**

Note well that this cannot be a final statement about Jacob's descendants; it has to be *partial* since the verb form, had [l]**become**, is *incomplete*. The total number of Jacob's children and grandchildren was seventy at the time of their arrival in Egypt. This agrees with the statement in Deuteronomy 10:22 which reads: **[t]With seventy souls your forefathers descended to[d] Egypt.**

We will mention in footnotes (for Ex.1:5 and Deut.10:22) that the LXX reads "seventy-five," which may have been the final total as given in Stephen's address in Acts 7:14 (*cf Concordant Commentary,*

page 187, concerning the differences in the numbers between the Hebrew and Septuagint texts of Genesis 46:26,27).

Joseph's sojourn in Egypt had been a *permanent* fact without any interruptions for many years, ever since he was about seventeen (*cf* Gen.37:2). Probably the best way for indicating the *complete* verb form in Exodus 1:5 would be to use our symbol ^{b} for **become**. The Hebrew order of words generally begins the sentence with the verb. Here is a rare case where it starts with the subject and thus puts the emphasis on "Joseph." In order to bring this point out in the usual English word order, we say: $^{+}$**As to Joseph, he** ^{b}**was** already **in Egypt.**

EXODUS 1:6

The sublinear of verse 6 begins with the incomplete form: "And dying is Joseph." We know from the concluding chapters of Genesis that he was not dying right after the events described in Exodus 1:1-5. Even Jacob survived the famine by seventeen years and Joseph died at the age of 103 and saw Ephraim's sons to the third generation. Hence the *incomplete* verb form in verse 6 describes a *progressive* condition with interruptions. In readable English, it is probably best indicated by the slight vertical stroke:

$^{+}$**Then Joseph** ˈ**died, and all his brothers, and all** ˈ**that** ˈ**generation.**

Thus our English equivalents for the verb forms would agree with the tenor of the context of this narrative, while the various forms of the Hebrew verb (complete, incomplete, continuous) are recognizable. Now thanks be to God for the indescribable gratuity of His precious Word!

H.H.R.

MANIFESTING THE SECRET OF CHRIST

(Colossians 4:2-6)

TWO CLOSELY RELATED SECRETS filled the heart of the apostle in his imprisonment, besides the secret concerning this administration. The secret of the *evangel* (Eph.6:19) and the secret of *Christ* (Col.4:3) were both pressing for utterance, so he especially urges the saints to pray for him that he may be able to make them known. He is not merely bound with metal chains. He is also "bound" to act by divine spiritual forces. As the literal Greek has it, he speaks, "as it is *binding*" for him to speak.

O that there were men today who knew these secrets, and not only could but would reveal them to the saints! O that all believers would unite in these prayers, no longer for the apostle Paul, but for pastors and teachers and evangelists everywhere! Is it not all too true that these secrets have been almost lost? Where are they made known? And do we not see the wisdom of God in this, that Paul, in urging believers to pray for him, has left a *permanent exhortation*, a prayer which we all should pray, and which should awaken in our hearts a desire to enjoy these precious secrets ourselves and to make them known to others? What other truths in God's Word are so burdened with prayer for their utterance? Does this not intimate that these truths are as desirable as rare?

The bulk of Paul's epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians is largely composed of *his* prayers for the saints, that *they* may realize the grace and truth which he reveals to them. But at the close of each epistle we have

these two gems, each perfect in its own setting, in which *believers* are exhorted to pray for *him* that he may be able to make this message known. It is a delight to study these brief requests and especially to compare them with each other. Their messages are very similar. The chief difference lies in the secret to be expressed or manifested. In Ephesians it is the secret of the *evangel,* which is barely mentioned in the body of the epistle. In Colossians, however, it is the message of the epistle itself which is pressing for expression.

PERSEVERING IN PRAYER

It is the precious privilege of all who are His to be concerned with everything which pertains to God and His purpose in both creation and reconciliation. And this includes everything, since all is serving His grand design. Our prayers may include all, in heaven as well as on earth, but, of course, may concentrate on the world about us, and especially on the believers, and on those who are actively engaged in carrying out God's purpose in making Him known.

Most of us have heard many prayers concerning many things. We ourselves, perhaps, have prayed much and often. But, as we look back upon them, are we not reminded of the words of the apostle, that we are not aware what we should pray for (Rom.8:26)? Have not most of our petitions been out of line with God's will? Do we not feel more and more that we desire to leave all details in God's hands because of our own ignorance of what should be? Yet, on the other hand, the definite instructions and exhortations which are given us, especially in the perfection epistles, as to the scope and subject of our prayers, are almost totally ignored. Should we hear them in public they would appear strange and mark the petitioner as peculiar, as, indeed, he would be.

WATCHING WITH THANKSGIVING

Perhaps most of us are inclined to wait until our prayers are answered to our satisfaction before we add our thanks. But that is because we have not fully found our *All* in God. We should learn to be especially thankful when matters do *not* turn out according to our wishes, for this is evidence enough that we were in the wrong, and harm would have resulted if our will had been carried out. *We should thank as we watch.* It is not our duty, in prayer, to instruct God what to do, or how or when to do it, but to recognize our utter incapacity to dictate these details, and to rejoice that they are in His skillful hands, so that we may *thankfully acquiesce* in every particular, even if it is contrary to our own will.

These two secrets, that of the evangel, which involves the conciliation of the nations during the period of Israel's callousness, and that of Christ, which results in the reconciliation of all at the consummation, are very closely related in their present expression. Peace is the keynote of both. Even as conciliation is a precursor of reconciliation, so Christ's present attitude toward the nations may be looked upon as an anticipation of His attitude toward all in the last eon, when the secret of Christ will be fully unfolded. The secret of the evangel is, in part, but one aspect of the secret of Christ in its present expression. Therefore, in Ephesians, the apostle wishes us to pray for one, yet, in Colossians, for the other.

As we have seen, the secret of Christ is best set forth today by the expression "Christ among you, the expectation of glory" (1:27). Christ did not leave the land of Israel when He came in flesh. He was never among the nations. His presence in Israel was the assurance of future glory for all who received Him, which will be fulfilled in the thousand years, on the earth. His figurative presence

now, among the nations, is also the assurance of future glory, for all who believe, among the celestials. At the same time it involves the setting aside of the enmity which existed in the days of His presence, and this is the conciliation.

MAKING IT MANIFEST

The secret of Christ must be manifested. Why not simply tell it out to eager crowds and herald it forth in overflowing halls? Why not let the daily press put it on the front page, with gigantic headlines, in colored ink? Or at least the religious press should give it the publicity it deserves. Pamphlets and books could be written and exhibited everywhere. It seems quite simple. But Paul did not urge the saints in his day to use every avenue of publicity, but to pray to God to *open a door.* The fact is that all doors are shut and locked against the entrance of this truth. No human effort is able to open them. We are entirely cast upon God for the manifestation of the secret of Christ. There is more need for prayer now than ever before that God will open doors for its manifestation.

WALKING IN WISDOM

"In wisdom be walking toward those outside" (Col.4:5). These words follow immediately upon the reference to the secret of Christ. In Ephesians (5:15) we have a similar exhortation, but nothing is said of those outside. This is another of those delicate touches which distinguish the two epistles, for the secret of Christ brings us into much closer relation to unbelievers, by creation and reconciliation, in which they share, than the secret of Ephesians, in which they have no part. And how is it possible to walk in wisdom toward our fellow believers or toward the world without a grasp of the great secrets which affect each so vitally? These alone will

revolutionize the attitude of our hearts toward them and enable us to act in accord with God's purpose for them.

It is wisdom to deal with men in accord with God's will and purpose concerning them. If we imagine that those outside are doomed to destruction or eternal torment, it is practically impossible to avoid a hardening of the heart in regard to them, which will lead us to think and act contrary to the basic truths of their creation and reconciliation in love. Thinking of them as so much waste in God's operations in turn reflects upon His wisdom and love. These false conceptions of God's creation and goal, outside the Son of His love, make a wise walk toward those outside well-nigh impossible. But when we see the place of everyone in God's plans, it will soften our hearts and steady our heads, and we will be enabled to recognize His handiwork in the most worthless and most antagonistic of His creatures.

Looked at apart from God's purpose, the present era, like those before it, is vanity, and a feeding on wind. There is much talk of evolution and there is much real revolution, but the world as a whole seems to be slipping down into an abyss instead of climbing up into a paradise. Of what use is all the work and woe with which we are surrounded? We know that God will yet make excellent use of it. Man's day will reveal man's failure and futility. This is of no value in itself, but of surpassing worth in humbling man and in bringing him to accept and appreciate God's grace. In this way this wicked era will be reclaimed in due time. Yet divine wisdom will anticipate, and use the background of human incapacity and hate in order to display the fullness of God's competency and love.

Not only are we to deal graciously among ourselves (Eph.4:32), but our conduct with those outside should also be governed by this precious quality. Once we

know that even they were created in love and will be reconciled by the blood of Christ's cross, we will recognize in their present state only a temporary estrangement from God, in which evil and sin play a painful yet salutary part. Far from harsh condemnation, we will sympathize with them in their condition, and speak and act in faith, knowing that they will yet fulfill the object of their creation, when God becomes All in them. What if they are the vessels of God's indignation now? In due time He will use them for His glory. *We,* the vessels of His grace, have no more right to His favor than those without. May this thought humble us before them.

Our Lord called His disciples the salt of the earth (Matt.5:13). They alone could stay its corruption. Perhaps nowhere is the rottenness of the world more evident than in its utterances. Not only should our speech with them be gracious, but free from the decadent foulness which characterizes much of human intercourse. More than that, it should be a seasoning and a preservative, counteracting the decay all around us. And what is more effective for this than an exultant knowledge of God's grand goal, when all that is corruptible will have given place to that which is incorruptible and glorious?

A heart overflowing with expectation in the future which is in store for all of God's creatures is the best preparation for meeting and answering the questions of those outside. Apart from this knowledge the world has many queries to which even the saint cannot give a satisfactory reply, such as, "Why does God allow such terrible things to occur?"

We should never be at a loss to answer the questions of the godless in regard to God's present operations and His prospective goal. This is seen fully only in the secret of Christ, which it is our privilege and duty to manifest. So that, unlike Ephesian truth, which is only for the believers

and can only be grasped by these under circumstances which are all too rare in these days, the secret of Christ should have a powerful influence on our walk and talk with those outside the family of faith. In measure it should be manifested by our conduct in the world as well as by our witness to fellow believers. May each one of us pray this prayer and seek to fulfill it in our own words and work!

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

THE SCOPE OF RECONCILIATION

One of the first reasons given for rejecting the reconciliation of all when we began to make it known was that the word "all" in Colossians 1:20 refers to *things*, not to persons; to creation, not to creatures. So it is in the popular versions, especially in the Revised, which is exceptionally particular on such points. Yet stranger still is the fact that this is according to current scholarship, which confounds the neuter forms of the Greek with the English neuter gender. To what this leads may be seen in Galatians 3:22, where the Revisers changed the Authorized Version "the scripture hath concluded *all* under sin" to "the scripture hath shut up *all things* under sin." And this is "that the promise . . . might be given them that believe."

The mere fact that there is no estrangement between "things" and God, and therefore there can be no reconciliation, should suffice to show how groundless it is. In fact, the argument from "things" has little weight with intelligent searchers for truth,

for, if we confine the preeminence of God's Son to His relation to the insensate matter of the universe, as, indeed, we must if *ta panta* is limited to *things,* the whole passage becomes absurd and intolerable. When it becomes evident, in the next paragraph (Col.1:21,22), that the Colossians themselves were among these "things," few will care to limit the glories of the Son to the physical material of the universe.

Indeed, what other form than the neuter could be used in this passage? Creation and reconciliation in Him were not confined to males or females, for, at his creation, even Adam was both, and this distinction would not apply to the creatures in the heavens. The universality of this passage cannot be confined to earthly conditions. In order to include all it *must* be expressed in terms that apply to all.

Christ is not merely the Creator of the dust beneath your feet, but He is *your* Creator! He is not the Reconciler of the soulless stone on which you stand, but He is *your* Reconciler! The simple fact that He appears here as the *Son* should show that He has to do with *spirit* and with *life.* He is not the Firstborn of dead substance but of living creatures.

Another bolt which has been used in order to keep the door from opening to allow the secret of Christ to enter is the plea that Colossians is concerned only with the church which is Christ's body, hence reconciliation can refer only to them. It is well to keep each statement in God's Word well within the scope of its context. But where, in all the sacred scrolls, is the range of the context any greater than in this passage? "Every creature" cannot be confined to the church which is Christ's body. "All in the heavens and on the earth" is as wide a scope as can well be imagined.

A.E.K.

TURNING TO THE NATIONS

"NOW ON THE COMING SABBATH almost the entire city was gathered to hear *the word of the Lord.* Yet the Jews, perceiving the throngs, are filled with jealousy, and they contradicted the things spoken by Paul, blaspheming. Being bold, both Paul and Barnabas say, 'To you first was it necessary that *the word of God* be spoken. Yet, since in fact you are thrusting it away, and are judging yourselves not worthy of eonian life, lo! we are turning to the nations. For thus the Lord has directed us: I have appointed Thee for a light of the nations; for Thee to be for salvation as far as the limits of the earth' " (Acts 13:44-47).

Reverent proselytes in Pisidian Antioch who were converted to Judaism and had become members of the Jewish community, shared the full Jewish expectation: They were looking forward to the future when Messiah would come in all His glory and restore the Kingdom to Israel. Only then the chosen race, the royal priesthood, the holy nation would become a channel of blessing to the other nations, for salvation as far as the limits of the earth.

However other regular non-Jewish visitors of the synagogue would have to wait for the appointed time when the "light of the nations" would come to them for salvation through the channel of the holy nation. But now Paul had told them of a Saviour, Jesus, Whom the Jews of Jerusalem and their chiefs had killed, Who was roused from the dead and seen by

those who are now His witnesses, through Whom there is "the pardon of sins, and from all from which you could not be justified in the law of Moses, in this One everyone who is *believing* is being *justified*" (Acts 13:23,27,28,31,39).

THE DOOR OF FAITH

With the proclamation of justification by faith Paul had offered free access to God for Jews and non-Jews alike, and with no strings attached! The door of the synagogue with all its requirements for full membership had been replaced by the *door of faith* which God opened to the nations (*cf* Acts 14:27). This would mean that there was no longer any incentive for those reverent "outsiders" (the proselytes of the gate) to support the Jewish community and eventually become converts to Judaism. In the long run, God-fearing Greeks would prefer the Pauline ecclesia to the synagogue, and this would attract other Gentiles who had never shown any interest in the Jewish way of worship.

Such may have been the reasonings of the synagogue authorities when, on the next sabbath, almost all the Gentiles of the city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. When many of them believed and were willing to *remain in the grace of God,* the jealous Jews openly opposed Paul and Barnabas, just as Bar-Jesus had done in Paphos when he tried to pervert the proconsul from the faith (Acts 13:8,43,45,48).

This situation in Pisidian Antioch, in the Phrygian region of the Galatian province, provides a typical example of the motives for Jewish behavior and of their reasonings. Like the ten thousand talent debtor (Matt.18:23-35) they did not want to share their pardon with the Gentiles and refused to extend this

blessing to them. Hence they forfeited their own blessing.

THE PARDON OF SINS

Paul's synagogue address on the day of the sabbaths had been in harmony with the kingdom proclamation of the twelve, who had promised the pardon of sins and had testified to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord, Who is the Son of *David* (the fruit of his loin, Acts 2:30). Paul too had offered pardon through the One Who was roused from the dead and Who is the Son of *God* (Acts 13:33).

But the pardon of sins is not necessarily permanent; it will be revoked in case of unworthy behavior, for instance if "one should not be pardoning his brother" as once the Lord had pointed out (Matt. 18:35). When Jews became believers, they still tried to keep the law of Moses as Paul had seen time and again during the past years. These believers were actually seeking justification through law keeping. Hence Paul had announced a wider range of justification which covered their infractions of the law wheresoever they failed in keeping it (from all from which you could not be justified in the law of Moses. In this One everyone who is believing is being justified).

Here we have a gradual transition from the kingdom pardon proclamation of the twelve, even though far short of the gratuitous form of justification as we have it in Romans.

Yet the grace of God which was so eagerly accepted by the Antiochene Gentiles, was despised by the Jews. When on the next sabbath they saw almost the entire city gathered to hear the word of the Lord, they were jealous and "contradicted the things spoken by Paul, blaspheming." The two apostles, Paul and Barnabas,

answered them that the word of God had to be spoken to them first, and added, "Yet since in fact you are thrusting it away and are judging yourselves not worthy of eonian life, lo! *we are turning to the nations* [in this city]." These memorable words are affirmed by the Pauline phrase "to the Jew first, and to the Greek" (Rom.1:16; 2:10) which describes the apostle's teaching practice in those years.

PAUL'S MESSAGE FOR THE GENTILES

"It would be of greatest interest to us to know what Paul preached to the Gentiles on this occasion, but there is no record of his words. The reason doubtless is that he went beyond the kingdom proclamation [which is essentially the topic of Acts] and announced, for the first time, the grand foundation on which God's favor to the nations is based, the teaching of justification. His previous proclamation was hampered by the fact that his hearers were under the law. Now he is able to set it forth fully and freely as he does in his epistle to the Romans, for his [Gentile] audience is not seeking any justification under law. He announces a divine righteousness, apart from the law" (*Concordant Commentary*, page 200).

"Now on hearing this, the nations rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and they believe, whoever were set for life eonian" (Acts 13:48).

THE GROUND AND THE SOURCE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

"God's own righteousness, which He shares with the sinner, His own peace, which He imparts to the believer, and His own indomitable will, which forms the immovable basis for all blessing, are the bulk and burden of this [Roman] epistle. As justification is com-

monly degraded to a mere pardon, or forgiveness, and conciliation is unknown, and God's sovereignty is denied, there is *need to urge* God's beloved saints to give the great truths of this epistle the place in their *hearts and lives* which they deserve" (*Concordant Commentary,* page 229).

Since all of us may need some urging so as to ponder these highlights in Romans from time to time, it will be for the enlightenment of the eyes of our hearts when we propose to give here a kind of "Believer's Digest," a collection of statements published at various times in our magazine: they deal with the ground and the source of our justification by faith.

THE FAITH OF JESUS CHRIST

Justification is the first and fundamental fact of salvation, fundamental also to the whole Pauline revelation. Paul alone preaches justification by faith. We are delivered not only from condemnation which was impending, but we are also delivered from any doubt as to God's righteousness.

The manifestation of divine righteousness was made possible by the faith of Jesus Christ. Our faith in God is rooted in His faith, a faith brought to its supreme and complete expression at the cross. Christ believed that God would save Him out of that unique death under the curse of the law and from that sin which He was made on our behalf. That salvation is completed and made manifest by the fact of His risen life. His faith that God would save Him out of death, made Him the Inaugurator of salvation (Heb. 2:10; 5:7).

TO ACCOUNT RIGHTEOUS

Justification is the precise antithesis of condemnation. It does not cause righteousness, nor is it a

regenerative power. It does not mean that though you were wrong you were pardoned. Neither in classic nor sacred Greek literature has an example been cited where the verb *to justify* means to make righteous. It is always *to account righteous.* This is a theme for a volume and not for brief, disconnected notes such as these.

GOD IS JUSTIFYING THE IRREVERENT

Righteousness is reckoned to us who are believing. Neither God nor man is deceived as to the character of the one who is justified. It is the character of the Justifier and His Gift that counts. He maintains that He is justifying the irreverent (Rom.4:5). Nothing is said of any transfer to us of Christ's merits so as to make us meritorious. God reckons a believer in Christ to be what he is not, and to be what Christ is.

It is noteworthy that the exclusion of boasting should be mentioned as the first consequence of jsutification by faith. For, like the Jew, all religious men are inveterate boasters, and even true believers mar their testimony and influence when they boast a superior knowledge and spirituality (*cf* Rom.2:17-20; 3:27). Human pride, so offensive to God, vanishes in the presence of grace that justifies sinners as those who are still personally irreverent and unjust.

JUSTIFIED BY GRACE, BY BLOOD, BY FAITH

In Romans we are taught to be justified by grace (3:24), justified by blood (5:9), justified by faith (3:28). The grace of God, made possible to sinners through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, is the source of our justification. And grace is the principle on which God justifies sinners in whom He can find no righteousness whatever.

The ground, or the efficient cause, of our justification is the blood of Christ; and blood in the Mosaic institutions meant: death applied. It was not merely the death of the passover lamb that sheltered Israel in Egypt but the blood, and that only when applied to the doorposts of their houses. Only believers are justified by blood.

Justification is by faith because this is the only principle of blessing that is consistent with grace. *God's grace is the source of justification, Christ's blood is the ground, faith is the means by which it is received. By faith we have met God as Saviour at the cross of Christ.*

"Now God is able to lavish all grace on you, that, having all contentment in everything always, you may be superabounding in every good work . . . superabounding also through much thanksgiving . . . because of the transcendent grace of God on you. Now thanks be to God for His indescribable gratuity" (2 Cor.9:8,12,14,15). H.H.R.

(To be continued)

BACK ISSUES

It has been our practice to print extra copies of the magazine each issue in order to have them on hand for those who wish back numbers. However, because this takes up a great deal of needed space in our warehouse we have been offering sets of these back issues at very low prices. Your response has been good to these special offers, and we are glad to know the magazine is getting distributed. But each year the number of back issues in a set decreases as our stock is depleted. At present there are about 200 issues per set, and the special price for U.S.A. readers is $10.00, and for readers in other countries it is $20.00. If you are interested in these sets of back issues we urge you to order them now.

THE SWORD

MUCH of God's Word treats only of the temporary and often narrow concerns of the people being addressed. This is especially true of the Old Testament where even those prophetic sections dealing with future events view them as they relate to the then current situations of Israel. This is not to say that a wider scope of God's purposes behind events is ignored completely, but the long sections of Scripture describing failures and judgments, wars and the wrath of God may tend to obscure the briefer flashes of insight into God's glorious goals. We have already noticed some of these brief views of glory in Ezekiel, especially in chapter 1, and have often referred to the grand description of the new covenant in chapter 36. Yet we have also followed the descriptions of the departure of glory from the temple in Jerusalem. The bulk of Ezekiel is concerned with conditions and events occurring in the absence of this glory.

When attention focuses on the distresses accompanying human failure and divine indignation we are apt to forget the glory entirely. Yet if we are to appreciate these middle chapters of Ezekiel we must remain conscious of the promises of glory. In fact, for us today there is an additional provision to help us keep these matters in perspective. Because of the evangel based on the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ we can know more fully what God has in view. We understand that God's purpose is to head up all in Christ, and that He is working out all in accord with

the counsel of His will (Eph.1:9-11). This awareness (*cf* Rom.8:28) needs to be taken along with us when we consider any passage of God's Word.

Ezekiel 21 is one of those chapters with a narrow and restricted outlook. It is concerned with Yahweh's judgments on Jerusalem and its "prince" (Zedekiah), and also on the Ammonites. These judgments are means to an end, but that end is not much in view. (It is briefly hinted at in verse 27 where we have the promise of One Who will reign and judge on David's throne, but even that is not a final end. Christ's reign is only *until* all enemies are subjected.)

Perhaps the key word in this chapter is "sword." In verses 1-5 the Lord declares He will bring forth His sword from its scabbard. Then Ezekiel sighs in great bitterness over it, but it will continue until Yahweh gives rest to His fury (6-17). This is followed by a description of the coming of "the sword of the king of Babylon" (18-32) which attacks along two lines: first of all with a siege against Jerusalem and its prince (20-27) and then with devastation on the Ammonites (28-32; *cf* chapter 25).

The details may not always be clear to us, but the horror of these events is certain. It is on both the righteous and the wicked (verse 4; *cf* 20:47,48). We can appreciate our own rescue from any such affliction (1 Thess.1:10; 5:9), but we must also feel greatly distressed that the Lord will ever bring this on anyone, no matter how wicked they are.

For this reason alone we need to remember the revelations of God's ways and purposes which Paul has given us in his epistles, such as Romans 11:32-36, Philippians 2:9-11 and Colossians 1:20. Not wrath but reconciliation is the final end—the consummation of all these activities.

TEXTUAL NOTES

Instead of **your waist** in verse 6 the Hebrew uses the plural **waists**. The word **on** in both verses 14 and 29 is **to** in the Hebrew. The conjecture **trembling**, supported by the LXX, replaces the Hebrew, **chambering**, in verse 14. At the end of verse 15 and the beginning of 16 the Hebrew reads: **Muffled for slaughter!** Make yourself **one!** But the Hebrew word for **burnished** is similar to that for **muffled**, and the word **sharpen** belongs to the same family as the word **one**. These terms are both used several times in verses 9-12. While the conjecture **sharpen** may not be so well supported, the conjecture **burnished** seems to be appropriate to the context.

At the end of verse 19 the Hebrew text has the word **create** (already used earlier in the line) which we have changed to **in head** (as supported by the LXX) and have connected with the word **way** at the beginning of verse 20. The use of the LXX reading, devices for **casting** stones, in verse 22 is probably unnecessary since the Hebrew, **butting rams**, also refers to instruments used in warfare. In the same verse we chose the LXX reading, **shrieking**, over the Hebrew, **murder**, because of the parallism in the next line. Also the two words use the same letters in Hebrew and could easily be confused. D.H.H

CANADIAN BIBLE CONFERENCE

The annual Bible conference in Alberta, Canada, is scheduled for October 10-13 in the Faith Tabernacle, 5007 21st Avenue NW, Calgary, Alberta. The theme for these meetings is to be: "Walk Worthily of the Calling." For further information write to Mr. Ewald Degen, 246 Seven Persons Drive, South Ridge, Medicine Hat, Alberta T1B-2E1, Canada.

CALLED OF GOD

"*Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also*" (Romans 8:30).

There is no doubt that each one of us is called, just as surely as Paul was called on the way to Damascus. Our calling may not have been so sudden or so dramatic as was Paul's. Indeed, we may not be able to say precisely when it took place, but called we certainly have been.

Let us remind ourselves of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 1:26-31: "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 stupidity of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the wise, and the weakness of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the strong, and the ignoble and the contemptible things 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. Yet you, of Him, are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance, that, according as it is written, He who is boasting, in the Lord let him be boasting."

The calling of Romans 8:30 ("Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also") immediately connects the passage with verse 28. Indeed, all the verses to the end of the chapter are addressed to those

who are called according to God's purpose. It is made quite clear that only those are called whom God foreknew and designated beforehand. Thus the calling is entirely of God, not of us. In this, too, God is for us, for He has arranged for all our deficiencies to be made up in Christ.

Let none of us then be dubious about our calling because of our own unworthiness or ineptitude. God has not chosen us because of our abilities, but because of what He can make of us in Christ. Sufficient for us is His grace, for His power is being perfected in our infirmities (*cf* 2 Cor.12:9).

In Ephesians 4:1, we are entreated to walk worthily of the calling with which we were called, but again, this does not suggest any reason for boastfulness in ourselves. On the contrary, the criteria for walking worthily of our calling is that we should be displaying all humility and meekness, with patience, and should be bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace. And the fruit of the spirit, which we should be endeavoring to cultivate, finds no room for self-confidence in its makeup. Rather its components are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control (Gal.5:22).

JUSTIFICATION

"*And whom He calls, these He also justifies.*" If ever we need a passage to show that God is for us, it is this! For in ourselves we are totally unworthy of justification. Yet God is not justifying the righteous (for if there were any, they would already be just), but is justifying the irreverent (Rom.4:5). "Not one is just, not even one" (Rom.3:10). In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul describes Jesus as "the One not knowing sin."

We mortals are prone to frailties and misdeeds, but God does not justify these. Rather, He justifies us in spite of our inadequacies.

The plain fact is that our failures and misdeeds are not allowed to affect our justification, for this does not depend upon *our* righteousness but upon *God's*. In the evangel as proclaimed by Paul, "a righteousness of God is manifest"—a righteousness of God "apart from law," but "through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God. Being justified gratuitously" (that is, without a cause apart from God) "in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom.3:21-24).

The basis of our justification is God's own righteousness; therefore no one can challenge the truth or the value of our justification. If God declares us to be just, who can indict us? This is the question put in Romans 8:33. "Who will be indicting God's chosen ones? God, the Justifier?" If God will not bring any indictment against us, who else can? He is the Judge Supreme, and He declares us righteous. "If God is for us, who is against us?"

In Romans 5:1,2, we read, "Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God." From this we see that the access by faith into this grace in which we stand, is a present experience, realized as a result of our justification, but the glory of God is still an expectation, though even now we may be glorying in the expectation of it.

In the first verse of Romans 8, Paul writes, "Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to

those in Christ Jesus. Not according to flesh are they walking, but according to spirit."

When Paul wrote this, he had already written his two letters to the Corinthians (written before Romans, though appearing in our Bibles after Romans), and in one of these he had said, "For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died" (2 Cor.5:14). What the apostle is saying is, that the love of Christ is pressing this fact upon us, that if He died for us, then that means that we, in our soulish natures, died with Him. There is no future for the soulish within us, but we can live to Him in a spiritual sense, as the next verse shows. "And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes."

Following this, Paul comes to a very startling conclusion when he says, "So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer."

A NEW CREATION

But if we do not know anybody according to flesh, how are we to know them? Paul goes on to explain that a great change has taken place. This change is not apparent to the world, not apparent to ordinary humanity, but only to those in Christ. But to them it should be indeed a reality. "So that," says Paul, "if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new! Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ."

Now we again remind you that Paul had written this

before he wrote his letter to the Romans. Therefore, when he wrote in Romans 8, "Nothing consequently, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" he had in mind the fact that "if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation."

There can never be anything to mar the new creation, begun in Christ, the Firstborn from among the dead. There can be no faults in the new humanity, begun in Christ as its Head. All faults and failures, misdeeds and offenses, are regarded by God as being attached to the old soulish humanity, and are treated by Him as having already been finally crucified along with Christ. That is why we can consider ourselves to be dead to offenses and sins, yet living in a newness of life. Though we have yet to account, at the dais of Christ, for things done in the flesh, they are no longer condemnatory to us.

"Who will be indicting God's chosen ones? God, the Justifier? Who is the Condemner? Christ Jesus, the One dying, yet rather being roused, Who is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes?" If the Supreme Judge and the Chief Advocate are both on our side, and constantly operating on our behalf, who can prevail against us? If God and Christ are both for us, whom or what need we fear? If the Creator Himself, together with the One through Whom all creation has come into being, are both for us, what creature has any right to indict us or any power to condemn us?

THE LOVE OF GOD

Then, in Romans 8:35, the apostle moves on to speak of the love of God, and he asks another challenging question, which is really a follow-up from the earlier ones. "What shall be separating us from the

love of God in Christ Jesus?" If God is for us, what indeed shall, or can, be separating us from His love in Christ Jesus?

Seven conditions are listed which are the lot of mankind in general—affliction, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger and sword. Will any of these separate us from God's love?

No, for they are accounted for in Scripture. They are not tokens of God's displeasure. In the Psalms, it had been recorded, "On Thy account we are being put to death the whole day, we are reckoned as sheep for slaughter." We must not regard these things as something unusual, something from which we as believers ought to be exempt. Rather we should recognize that in all these we are more than conquering through Him Who loves us, for we should be able to view them in the light of what Paul has already told us in Romans 5:3, "Yet not only so, but we may be glorying also in afflictions, having perceived that affliction is producing endurance, yet endurance testedness, yet testedness expectation. Now expectation is not mortifying, seeing that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us." Yes, afflictions and the like have their place in our spiritual development, and, recognizing this, we may see them in a different light from our contemporaries.

Even when Paul widens the field of antagonism to include the whole universe, he is still persuaded that nothing—"neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (vss. 38,39). None of these things can affect our standing with God, for we

were chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world, and nothing that has occurred since the disruption, nor anything that may occur in the future, whether of death or of life, whether in heaven or in earth—nothing can separate us from God's love, since God is ever for us!

"*If God is for us, who is against us? Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?*" In the gift of His Son, God has given us His dearest and best. He did not spare His Son anything, nor did He spare Himself anything in giving His Son. In Christ He gave His all, since all has its cohesion in Him. Will He not then be graciously granting us all—us, who are chosen in the Son of His love?

"*What, then, shall we declare to these things?*" What, indeed, can we declare? Except to repeat continually, God is for us!

GLORIFICATION

Finally we read, "*whom He justifies, these He also glorifies.*" The glorification is future, but it is just as certain as the foreknowledge, the predesignation, the calling and the justifying. There can be no question of any of us not attaining to the glory that is prepared for us. If any of us were to fall by the wayside, and not attain to that ultimate glory, then to that extent God's foreknowledge would be proved to be at fault. No, we shall all attain to the glory because all the stages of our spiritual experience are entirely of God, and at all stages He is for us, and is working all together for good to us.

And what is the glory that is before us?

In Philippians 3:20, Paul describes it as a glory of

being like our Lord and Saviour, in an environment which is far higher than the earth, for he says that "our realm is *inherent* in the heavens," that is, it belongs to the heavens, and has always belonged to the heavens; we are only here on loan, as it were. Compare Cephas, "being inherently a Jew" (Gal.2:14), and the cripple "being inherently lame from his mother's womb" (Acts 3:2). Neither of these had ever been otherwise than as described, and the same applies to the realm of the ecclesia.

As the complement of Christ, we have to be like Him. And we are to share His glory, for we are to appear together with Him. We have this in Colossians 3:14, "If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life is hid together with Christ in God. Whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory."

In this glory, we are to be presented to our God and Father, in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and all the saints (1 Thess.3:13). Then shall we know, as we have never fully known before, that God has been for us all the time.

"The momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory" (2 Cor.4:17). Notice the contrasting terms here, and how the scales are heavily tipped on the side of the glory. In the one scale, momentary, lightness, affliction; in the other, eonian, burden, glory, with the words "transcendently transcendent" added for good measure! We tend to think of our present affliction being heavy, but it is the glory to come that is heavy; whatever we have to endure now,

however tiresome, is by comparison momentary and light. In verse 18 of the eighth chapter of Romans which we have been studying, Paul tells us that he is "reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory that is about to be revealed for us." They certainly do not, not by a long, long way.

The greatness of the glory that will be ours lies in the fact that God will make full use of us for His glory. He is to find "glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!" (Eph.3:21). Note that the ecclesia is placed first in the passage, not to suggest that the ecclesia is superior to its Head, but simply to emphasize the fact that God is to find glory in the ecclesia as well as in Christ. O what a wonderful thought this is! God's purpose requiring the ecclesia for its completion! And God requiring the ecclesia to complete His glory! And in His glory, we shall find our glory. He will be for us, and we shall ever be for Him! J. H. Essex

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ADDRESS TO THE ALMIGHTY

Eternal Ruler of the Infinite,
How can we sinners truly worship Thee?
Thou, Who hast made all things in earth and sea,
And strewn the stars which stud the vault of night,
Art Spirit, pure and far beyond our sight—
So pure, that from Thy presence sin must flee;
And yet, without Thee, nothing else can be,
For Thou, Immortal God, art Life and Light.

Great Sovereign of the universal scheme,
The praises of Thy subjects Thou wilt hear
Ascending to Thy throne in heaven above.
Dread Deity, Omniscient, Supreme,
How can we worship Thee untouched by fear?
Through Christ, a *Father* answers, "I am *Love*." J.H.E.

THE BODY OF HIS GLORY

". . . we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory . . ." (Phil.3:20,21).

Now we have bodies altogether unworthy of our heavenly destiny—weak, mortal, corruptible, earth-bound, humiliating. These we cannot take to our celestial home as they are, so He will transfigure them, as He alone can do, Who has the ability to bring the whole universe beneath His beneficent sway.

After His resurrection our Lord appeared on earth among His disciples in a body with remarkable powers. At will it became invisible. Nothing could hinder its progress. It could enter within closed doors, notwithstanding that it was a real body with flesh and bones, not a spirit. It could be handled. He could eat a meal. This, we take it, is the kind of body which will be the portion of the Circumcision saints. John, the beloved, says, "we are aware that, if He should be manifested, we shall be like Him, seeing that we shall see Him according as He is" (1 John 3:2). Are not the appearances of our Lord to the Circumcision during the forty days a sample of what they shall be in the future kingdom? But this was not "the body of His glory."

Paul met our Lord with the body of His glory. Too bright was this for a mortal, earthly creature. His eyes could not bear such brilliance; it blinded him. This should show us how much more glorious it was than that which He showed on earth before His ascension. There we read of no light. Now He is more blazing than the noonday sun. Is not this a token of the glory which will be ours when we are transfigured? A.E.K.

MICAH

MICAH, according to the heading, was at work contemporaneously with Hosea, Joel and Amos. These three prophets have pictured the Assyrian expeditions against the holy land. We have learned from them that Samaria would fall in the conflict; that Judah would carry on the struggle; and that eventually Assyrian ascendency comes to an end before Jerusalem's walls. These prophets are conscious of the complete superiority and future of the Davidic house in conflict with this world power; they see the Davidic kingdom rehabilitated in its pristine glory. They affirm that the path to the exalting and glorifying of Judah lay right through the scourge of Assyrian domination.

The history of nations, as read by students, is a story of slow movements and mighty upheavals. Long periods, marked by the slow decay of once useful institutions through failure to adjust themselves to changing conditions, are upheaved by revolutionary shocks. The old order is swept away in outbreaks of violence, and, out of the bloody cataclysm, emerges a new order, more pliant and equitable, more suited to the conditions and needs of the time.

The Book of Micah presents just such a transition period in the career of Judah. It is a drama of a revolution in three acts. There is first a glimpse of the old, decrepit order on the eve of its disruption. It is a period of criticism and vision. There is a feeling of general discontent; loud

protests against the corruption of religious and ecclesiastical institutions are heard. Uncertainty in regard to the future and dim presentiment of disaster mingles with vague dreams of new things. It looks as if the transition from the old order to the new might come of itself. Then a sudden catastrophe, in the form of an Assyrian invasion, gives a new turn to the situation. The vision pales before a vast conflagration. The prophet disappears before a mad mob of wreckers. Panic, excitement and lawlessness prevail. But in this fracas a strong character is forming, and men, by the anarchy, are being taught in preparation for him, the necessity of law and order. Then ensues the crowning act—the appearance of the *man* who evolves order out of chaos. He drives away the invaders, reclaims his people to the faith of their fathers, restores peace and harmony at home and becomes renowned abroad.

We have seen in Jonah that, by divine appointment, the leadership has been given over to Assyria. Micah delineates the times of Assyrian supremacy, from the first passage of arms which established its leadership, down to the time of its collapse before Jerusalem's walls. The working out of the theme is best conveyed by detailed analysis.

Title: The historic period covered—1:1.

1. The Assyrian campaign that wipes out Samaria and humiliates Judah—1:2-3:8.

2. The Conflict of Assyria with Judah: political— 3:9-5:15.

3. The Conflict of Assyria with Judah: religious— 6:1-7:20.

First we get a general view of the whole period of Assyrian supremacy in its relation to the two houses of Israel. The invading tide, set in motion by God Himself,

rolls on from nation to nation; gains an impetus in its advance toward the holy land; carries off Samaria; and reaches up to the very gate of Jerusalem (1:2-3:8).

Then, in a special and more extended review, Judah's contest with Assyria is presented in its two aspects—the political and the religious. In its political aspect the crisis takes the form of a contest between two rival powers. Trooping enemies are about to strike the final blow, but one from little Bethlehem proves a mighty power against the Assyrian. The invading tide is repelled, and recedes back to its source. The former dominion returns to the daughter of Zion. The diminished nation is as irresistible as the dew, as mighty as the lion (3:9-5:15).

The religious aspect of the crisis takes on a forensic form. Jehovah has a contention with His sinful people. The mountains—Ebal and Gerizim, where Israel, as a nation, assumed the obligations of the law—are appealed to as witnesses. God Himself arraigns: He recites His acts of mercy from the exodus to the crossing of the Jordan. The defendant people tremblingly ask what reparation can be made. Their answer brings out the cause of defection—zeal for law. In divorcing the form of the law from its essence they lapsed into a barren routinism of ceremonial performance. And now, as Jehovah arraigns, their only thought of making amends is by redoubling ceremonial zeal. The mountains as judges pronounced the essence of the law: "He has told you, O humanity, what is good; and what is Ieue requiring from you save to do judgment and love kindness, and to walk meekly with Ieue your Alueim?" (6:1-8).

The trial is over. The nation is convicted. The sentence is about to be pronounced. But, in this crisis, one is found who, having met the law's requirement, is a fit instrument for the carrying out of the divine pleasure. When Jehovah's voice calls to the city, he willingly

responds. The stroke of God falls upon him; he is stricken with a serious illness. But his faith remains unshaken. By his righteousness he averts threatened destruction. By his submissive suffering in trial he wins for himself a position of peculiar honor in the sight of all nations and brings about the spiritual renaissance of his people.

In Micah's representation of Judah's trial we meet with a startling paradox. The nation is at first represented as frightened, trembling, panic-struck (4:9). The next moment it appears full of energy, bold as a lion (5:8). This striking contrast is a stroke of prophetic art. Judah is an instrument to display God's glory, whose strength is in God alone, and it must be shown that it has no natural strength. The object is to show a vessel timid by nature made brave by grace. We see at the outset Judah as nature made her—a weak, abject, trembling figure. We see a people paralyzed with terror in the presence of the foe, speechless and prostrate before a danger it is powerless to avert and impotent to face. But as we gaze upon the humiliating spectacle we feel that it is to be but the background of a great glory. We feel that it is meant to intensify an effect which is about to be produced. That effect is the power of unaided grace.

Have you seen a conjurer offering to put articles into an empty box through magic? The first thing he does is to show that the box is empty. He removes the lid and passes the box around to convince the audience that there is nothing in it. So is it with the prophet. His purpose is to show that God can put treasures into a vacant mind, that He can fill an empty vessel. He shows Judah in its native weakness—barren, weak, useless. Truly the box is empty!

By and by the box is shut, and, when next it is opened, a startling spectacle presents itself—the vacant space has been filled! We see nothing to account for the change. No hand has been visible at work, no process of

replenishment has been observed. When last we saw the cavity, it was void; it is now entirely occupied. To drop the metaphor: In a short time after the manifestation of her perplexity, Judah appears before us full of power, instinct with vigor. When last we saw her she was prostrate in the dust; when next we meet her she is erect with the bearing of a warrior—a warrior confident of victory. And the strange thing is that, so far as eye can see, there is nothing to account for the change.

Whence, then, came this transformation of Judah? From within. It was a strengthening of the heart, a renewing of the mind wrought by the example of a man who had been struck and paralyzed with fear, but who had sought a place of prayer, and that place made a man of him. The whole effect of the picture is made to center in the Spirit of God. The life of Hezekiah furnished the material for this prophetic portrayal. Like Judah, he is nothing in himself; he is only strong in the presence of God. The triumph of divine grace does not lie in the destruction of Sennacherib's host. It lies in the fact that the Spirit of God can make a weakling brave, a craven bold, a croucher kingly. That was the real victory over the power of Sennacherib.

The prophet's last message (6:9-7:20) presents the central figure of this crisis under specific aspects. There rises clearly the one great essential figure—the deliverer from Assyria and the restorer of Israel's faith. There stands forth the majestic figure of the king bearing all the secular woes of the nation upon him; the sufferer teaching the lesson of humility and resignation. He stands out as the embodiment of poise and patience teaching with what conscience and hope Judah should bear national adversity and wait upon God. He appears, not less lovable, but more human, when for a moment he desiderates the fall of the tyrant who was crushing the

spirit of liberty out of the earth. But this desire for redress is soon gone, for he feels his unworthiness to be greater; and, seeking forgiveness, his last word is what Judah's should ever be—trust in the covenant mercy of God.

Vladimir Gelesnoff

CONCERNING OUR NEWSLETTER

Nearly every month we mimeograph a brief newsletter which we enclose with our replies to letters received. These are not sent out on our mailing list since that would involve more time and expense than we can spare, but occasionally we do send out a longer newsletter to all those who have requested them. Even these mailings, however, have been very infrequent the last year or two. We apologize for this, knowing that these newsletters can be very helpful in maintaining contact between our readers and us. Yet we must give priority to our regular publishing work and the projects of the Old Testament translation and the complete New Testament concordance. If you have not received our newsletter in the past but would like to be on that mailing list let us know. We hope to send one out this summer, the Lord willing.

THE C.V. IN GERMAN

A new edition of the Concordant Version of the New Testament in German has been published by our friends in Pforzheim, West Germany. Printed on thin ivory colored paper, this 651 page volume also contains the German Keyword Concordance. We have a small supply here priced at $15.00 each.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note your subscription expiration date on the envelope after your name. If it is "79" this means our records show that you have not renewed your subscription yet this year, unless it has come to us after the first of July.

THE SECRET OF MARRIAGE

(Part Three)

THE EPISTLE to the Hebrews opens with the revelation that God appoints His Son "enjoyer of the allotment of all." This truth has the widest compass and should thrill the heart of every saint of God, for it is one of the great glories of our beloved Saviour, Who is the Son of God's love, the Image of the invisible God and the Firstborn of every creature (Col.1:13-15). He is also God's creative Original (Rev.3:14). *All* is created *in* Him; *all* is created *through* Him and *for* Him; He is *before all,* and *all* has its cohesion *in* Him (Col.1:16,17). *All* will be subjected under His feet (1 Cor.15:24-28; Eph.1:22; Heb.2:8), and, in the administration of the complement of the eras (the fifth eon), *all* in the heavens and on the earth will be headed up in Him (Eph.1:10).

In Christ, as the One in Whom *all* will be headed up, the *lot of the saints,* who are called into faith in this present administration of the grace of God, *was cast also* (Eph.1:10,11). As the glorious and universal Head, Christ is given to the ecclesia which is His body and His complement (Eph.1:22,23).

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews also reveals that He Who is the Effulgence of God's glory and the Emblem of His assumption, and is seated at the right hand of the Majesty in the heights, enjoys *the allotment of a more excellent name* than the messengers (Heb.1:4). This is in accord with the truth made known by the apostle Paul to the Philippian saints that God graces Christ

Jesus "with the name that is above *every* name" (Phil.2:9). The name of *Jesus* is above *every* name that is named, even that of the messengers, excellent though their station and designation may be. When God roused His beloved Son from among the dead, He seated Him at His right hand "among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and *every name that is named,* not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending" (Eph.1:20,21). Thus Christ Jesus enjoys inalienably, because God-given, *the allotment of all* and *the allotment of the more excellent Name.*

CHRIST'S ALLOTMENT AMONG THE SAINTS

In the first of the three Ephesian prayers (Eph.1:15-23), there is a reference to Christ's allotment. The apostle Paul prays that the saints may be given, by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him," so that, with eyes and heart having been enlightened, they may perceive:

"What is the expectation of His calling, and
What the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of *His allotment* among the saints, and
What the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing" (Eph.1:17-19).

It has been said of this prayer that it is "perhaps the most important prayer in which the believer can engage." If we give every phrase—yes, and every word—of this sublime petition the careful and prayerful examination that, as believers, we should, the value of the thought quoted above will come to be realized. The "spirit of wisdom and revelation" in the realization of Christ Jesus, sought of "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of

glory," is a *special* spirit to enable us to "perceive" the truths held within, which develop from the three statements introduced by "what" (Eph.1:18,19).

The use by the apostle Paul of the term "therefore" in the opening verse of the prayer, really directs our attention to the preceding verses (3 to 14) of Ephesians chapter one. In these twelve verses, the truths of the supernal glories of God's achievement, in Christ, for the believer, are revealed. These are of so high an order that they draw forth from the apostle the prayer for the spirit of wisdom and revelation, a spirit so essential to each believer if these truths are to be fully grasped. The prayer also looks forward, for it has a vital bearing upon (and anticipates) the revelation to Paul of the administration of God's secret grace, which has been concealed from the eons in God (Eph.3:2-13).

It is into the second of the three items ("and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of *His allotment* among the saints . . .") that the subject of our present meditation, the secret which Paul calls "great" (Eph.5:31,32), leads us. This phrase is usually understood to refer to the believers' enjoyment of God's allotment of *all* to Christ. Of that blessedness there is absolutely *no* doubt, for the children of God who are also sons of God are "enjoyers, indeed, of an allotment from God, yet *joint* enjoyers of Christ's allotment" (Rom.8:17). Each believer, as a son of God, is "an enjoyer also of an allotment from God, through Christ" (Gal.4:7). But is Christ's allotment of *all* the allotment to Him which is in view in the first Ephesian prayer? Might we apply our hearts to the consideration of an alternative understanding?

The first intimation of the secret of Christ (the secret of God's will) is before us in the first chapter of Ephesians (verses 9 to 12). *All* in the heavens and on the earth will

be headed up in Christ in the future administration of the complement of the eras. However, there is an *initial* aspect of this secret and it is that *Christ is among the nations*, the expectation of glory (Col.1:24-27). This is the *present* position in this administration of the grace of God. As earlier mentioned (but the truth will bear repetition), the lot of the believer was cast into Christ *as the One in Whom all is being headed up* (Eph.1:11).

Our beloved Saviour is not Head over all because He is Head of the body (Col.1:18), for it is as *Head over all* that God gives Him to the ecclesia which is His body (Eph.1:22). Christ is Head of the body because He is Head over all, and He is Head over all because "*the all*" came to be transferred by God, His Father, from Himself *into* His Son, so that "*the all*," then being *in* Christ, could and would be *through* Him (Rom.11:36 and 1 Cor.8:4-7). *All* came into being *through* "the word" (John 1:3,10). *All* is created *through* Him and *for* Him (Col.1:16), and *all* will ultimately be *for God.*

The Headship of God's Son, the Firstborn of every creature, was an established glory when the eons commenced their long course. It is a *permanent glory* which events, celestial or terrestrial, could not and cannot extinguish, although they have overshadowed and temporarily dimmed the radiance of that glory. The truth of the Headship of Christ is irrefutable. He has *never* relinquished His high office, and it has not been and never will be wrested from Him, but the eons (up to and including the present wicked eon) have been marked by bitter and sustained opposition to it.

The rousing of God's beloved Son through the glory of the Father (Rom.6:4), and by the power of God (2 Cor.13:4; Eph.1:19,20), and the vivifying of Christ as the Firstfruit (1 Cor.15:22,23), combine as the greatest proof of and witness to Christ's universal Headship.

Christ Jesus "is designated Son of God, with power, according to the spirit of holiness, out of the resurrection of the dead" (Rom.1:4). This is in reference to His *own* resurrection which was *out* from the midst of "dead ones."

As the Firstborn from among the dead (Col.1:18; Rev.1:5), Christ is the Head of the *New* Creation, which He will lead forward into the all-embracing and reconciling love of God.

DISRUPTION AND HEADSHIP

In view, then, of the high office held from the beginning by God's beloved Son, the Firstborn of every creature, and still held by Him, is it not strange that we should find, so closely together in the first chapter of the Ephesian epistle, a reference to "the *disruption* [DOWNCASTing] of the world" (verse 4) and to the secret of God's will "*to head up all in the Christ*—both that in the heavens and that on the earth" (verse 10)?

The dedicated and prayerful consideration given over many years by beloved brethren closely associated with *Unsearchable Riches,* to the subject of "the disruption" and to the question of Christ's Headship in relation to that event and to the subsequent state of disruption, led to the conclusion that the Headship of Christ had been questioned and opposed by celestial beings, led by the Adversary, in the first eon. The disruption of the world (Matt.25:34; John 17:24; Eph.1:4; Rev.13:8; etc.), the jurisdiction of darkness (Luke 22:53; Col.1:13) with its world mights and spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Eph.6:12), and the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 19:19; Gal.6:14; Phil.2:8; etc.), all furnish adequate evidence of opposition to and rejection of the Headship of Christ. The rebellion among the celestial hosts, which caused the disruption of the world (*kosmos:*

SYSTEM), was followed by serious repercussions on the earth, culminating in the cross of God's Son.

The disruption of the world was not an accident. It was not an occurrence which God had not foreseen. It was not a crisis in the ways of God which had befallen Him unawares. The disruption had its essential place in the counsel of God's will, in accord with which He is operating *all* (Eph.1:11), and also in the purpose of the eons which God makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Eph.3:11). The disruption of the world was in accord with God's intention and necessary to the revelation of Himself.

THE ECCLESIA AFFIRMS THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST

Bearing in mind, therefore, the active and persistent opposition to the Headship of Christ over all, how has God's worthy Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, been sustained in the face of such protracted hostility? God had originally transferred "the all" into Christ, and "the all" has its cohesion in Him (Col.1:17), so that the repudiation of His Headship (thus of His leadership) was a matter of utmost gravity for Him. The answer to the foregoing question lies in the truth of *God's allotment to Christ among the saints* (Eph.1:18). As God's Son was, from the beginning, enjoyer of the allotment of *all*, the allotment among the saints is not an additional allotment, but a *distinct and very special aspect* of His allotment of all. It is that company of believers who were chosen by God, in Christ, before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4); and, although blessed with every spiritual blessing *among the celestials* (Eph.1:3), chosen, not from among the celestial hosts (amidst whom the opposition to Christ's universal Headship originated), but *from among the nations*, inhabitants of the earth and members of the human race. They were chosen *before* the disruption of

the world and its ages-long reverberations, when there was no *apparent* need for such a choice.

But in God's counselling within Himself before the eons, He also purposed the formation of a company the members of which He would choose in Christ before the disruption of the world. In two administrations (the latter, that of His secret grace, concealed within Himself from the eons until the time predetermined for its revelation), these would be called into faith-obedience through an evangel which would concern His beloved Son. The members of this company would be known, collectively, as "the ecclesia which is His (Christ's) body" (Eph.1:22).

The ecclesia is God's allotment "among the nations" *to Christ*, and, by it, God affirms to His Son, *His Headship over all* in face of all repudiation of that truth. Because of the choice of the members of the ecclesia *before* the disruption of the world, Christ was possessed of that affirmation from the first instant of the celestial rebellion against His Headship and from the first instant of the disruption concurrent with that rebellion. The ecclesia continues to assert and to confirm the fact of the Headship of the Firstborn of every creature and remains the token of God's abiding pledge to His Son of the ultimate universal acknowledgment of His Sovereignty (Phil.2:9-11; Col.1:18).

In the present era, only the members of the ecclesia which is the body of Christ realize and acknowledge the glorious fact of Christ's Headship *over all.* It is the deep, spiritual recognition of this cosmic and transcendent truth, and what is bound up in it for the entire creation, that constitutes "the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of *His allotment among the saints,*" that is, the saints' enjoyment of the allotment of Christ *among them.*

Alan Reid

(To be continued)

CONCERNING COVENANTS

Why are God's promises so often called covenants?

The real nature of a covenant is more easily seen among men, who are equal. In some countries a contract is not even legal if there are not mutual obligations. I have signed contracts into which the fictitious sum of ten dollars was inserted, in order to comply with the law. In reality *all* literal covenants are *mutual*, and *both* contracting parties assume obligations, and must meet conditions. So-called "unconditional covenants" are figurative, being literal promises or gifts, and are called covenants because of some notable relation or association, and because the one active party assumes the gift or promise as an *obligation*, which goes far deeper than a promise.

The covenants made between God or Jehovah, and Abraham are exceedingly graphic presentations of the meaning and usage of the word "covenant," for they range from the literal and physical to the purely figurative and spiritual, and, at times, this is indicated by the manner in which they are inaugurated. Even the literal covenants with Abraham, in contrast with the law, demand so little from man, and promise so much from God, that they are merely promises, as they are usually called in the later Scriptures. In the first covenant Abram's part was to leave his own land and people and go into Canaan. For this he is to be

made a great nation, be blessed, receive a great name and be made a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen.12:1-3). For parting with Lot, the land and seed as the soil are promised to him. When Abram refused to take any rewards from Sodom, Jehovah gives *Himself* in place of these. As a result, without any further obligation, he is promised seed as the stars of heaven. And because Abram *believes* this he is reckoned righteous (Gen.14:21-15:6).

We should seek to get beyond the facts to the profound *feeling* expressed in God's "unconditional covenants." A contract is a formal promise in which the acts of the one party *oblige* the other to perform his part. If a man kept the law of Moses, Jehovah was *bound* to see to his welfare. In His covenants God does not simply *promise* to do this or that, but *binds* Himself to fulfill His Word. It is this precious quality which is brought over into the "unconditional covenants" by retaining the word "covenant," when, in reality, there is no second party who could hold Him to it by fulfilling his part. In fact there cannot be an "unconditional covenant" or a contract with no obligation for one party. In figure it is a glorious reality that God, knowing that we can do nothing in return, nevertheless engages Himself to bless us just as if we could pay Him for it to the last mite!

Why does Paul call the message he dispensed a "new covenent" in 2 Corinthians 3:6?

As Paul is commissioned for the *nations,* this covenant is for *them,* not for Israel. As the spirit was already being dispensed, it was not future, but

The "new covenant" of Jeremiah 31:31, given to Israel, lacks the essential features of a literal contract,

for it demands nothing in return for the wonderful blessings that it confers. Literally, it is a *promise*, by Jehovah, to replace the old covenant, which failed because they did not fulfill their part, by a different relation, in which *He alone* would be the active Agent and they merely the recipients of His blessing. If this is true of that future covenant, how much more so of the Pauline one? What part had the nations in fulfilling? On what conditions did they receive their blessings? Every literal covenant puts definite obligations on both contracting parties. What did the nations take upon themselves? Nothing! It was not Israel's covenant, nor any literal covenant which Paul dispensed.

If Jehovah has already indicated the depth of His mercy to Israel by calling His promise to them a covenant, how much more fitting is it for Him to use this figure when revealing His grace to the nations! Oh, that we could all realize and enjoy the depth of grace which this figure conveys! Personally, all who know a little of God's grace realize that we have made no promise, we have executed no contract, we have assumed no obligation, either for present blessing or for future glory. If we had, the outcome would be questionable, or rather foredoomed to failure. How then can there be a literal covenant between us and God? But how delightful to realize that God has not merely made known His beneficent intentions toward us, but has confirmed them by transforming them into *obligations* on His part, which He, for His own honor, must fulfill! A.E.K.

Grace and Truth Chapel, Box 84, Baldwin, Michigan 49304, will host its annual Summer Fellowship this year, July 29 through August 2. The theme is "God Chooses us in Christ."

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES for SEPTEMBER 1980
BEING the FIFTH NUMBER of VOLUME SEVENTY-ONE

EDITORIAL

YAHWEH HAD BLESSED ABRAHAM IN ALL THINGS; this statement (Gen.24:1) summarizes God's dealings with the patriarch until the time when he was well advanced in years. We know that Ur of the Chaldeans had been the land of his birth (*cf* Gen.11:27-32). This was a country of idol worshipers as Joshua reported a few centuries later when he addressed the Israelites at Shechem with these words: "Thus says Yahweh, Elohim of Israel, 'Across the stream [Euphrates], there your forefathers had dwelt from the eon, Terah, father of Abraham and father of Nahor; and they had served other elohim [other gods]' " (Josh.24:2).

God referred to one of Abram's earliest blessings (which included the severance from idolatry) when He said "I am Yahweh Who brought you forth from Ur of the Chaldeans" (Gen.15:7). Terah with his family had already departed from Ur at an earlier date, but he had come only as far as Charan where he died. Here it was that Abram received the first promise which was linked to a divine command: "Go, get yourself away from your land and from your kindred and from your father's house to the land which I shall show you. Then I shall make you into a great nation and I shall bless you . . ." (Gen.12:1-3).

Yahweh spoke to him on various occasions, and he invoked His Name. Abraham knew Him as the *Supreme* God, the *Owner* of heavens and earth, and as *El-Shaddai* (the Deity-Who-Suffices, Gen.17:1). The promises which the patriarch received were not based on anything he had done so as to deserve them. It was for His eonian purpose that God needed *a nation of His own;* Abraham was chosen as their forefather because he was physically *un*fitted for this task. He certainly was a man of dignity in his own family and society; but before God he was a failure like the rest of us. It took him long decades of years until he learned to walk by faith, and by faith alone, until he was able to say: "Yahweh shall see to it" (*Yahweh-yireh,* Gen.22:8).

Isaac too knew Yahweh as the Deity-Who-Suffices; for he used this divine title when he blessed his son Jacob before his departure to Syria: "El-Shaddai shall bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, so that you will become an assembly of peoples . . ." (Gen.28:3,4).

When God changed Jacob's name to Israel, He spoke to him: "I am El-Shaddai. Be fruitful and multiply! A nation and an assembly of nations shall come from you, and kings shall go forth from your loins. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I shall give it to you; to your seed after you I shall give the land" (Gen.35:11,12).

Through trials and errors the patriarchs had learned that Yahweh was for them El-Shaddai, the Deity Who sufficed in all their needs, Who straightened out the evil results of their own foolish acts and ordered their lives, *Who blessed them in all things* and gave them the promises. Actually the patriarchs suffered comparatively little evil from the hand of Yahweh.

THE EXPERIENCE OF EVIL IN EGYPT

When the sons of Israel (i.e. his descendants) were in Egypt, the Name of Yahweh was made known to them whenever the old stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were told and repeated and thus handed down from generation to generation. These patriarchs had lived like kings in Canaan and had had many servants of the people of the land. But the descendants of Abraham in Egypt were actually slaves; and the wonderful promises given to him did not seem to apply to them at all. They were a nation in bondage and were certainly not blessed in all things, but experienced dire evil at the hand of Pharaoh. This king even threatened the nation of Israel with extinction when he ordered their males to be cast into the Nile. It was quite obvious that Yahweh was dealing with them in a quite different way, as He had never dealt with Abraham. As a matter of fact, it was Yahweh Himself Who gave them the experience of evil, just as He had foretold Abram in the early days, before He had changed his name to Abraham (*cf* Gen.15:13; 17:5).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME OF YAHWEH

Proper names have become more or less meaningless to modern man. In the Scriptures, however, the meaning of names is often so significant that it may be indicated, wherever helpful, in our Version parts of the Old Testament. The fact that names were intended to represent the attitude and the character of their bearers, is most emphatically brought out when there was a change: from Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Jacob to Israel (Gen.17:5,15; 35:10).

When Yahweh called to Moses from the flame of a thornbush fire, He said: "I am the Elohim of your forefathers . . . . I see, yea see the humiliation of My people who are in Egypt. And I hear their crying . . . . Hence I am descending to rescue them from the hand of Egypt and to bring them from that land to a land good and wide, to a land gushing with milk and honey . . . . Now go; I am sending you to Pharaoh" (Ex.3:6-10).

When Moses hesitated to obey immediately, Yahweh began His reply with the important basic revelation: "*I shall come to be with you!*" And He continued: "This will be the sign for you that I have sent you: When you bring the people forth from Egypt, you [ye] shall serve the One, Elohim, on this mountain" (3:12).

Moses anticipated that the Israelites would question him as to the *significance* of the Name of Yahweh; for the mere *knowledge* of the Name held no promise to them in their present distress. They would demand a satisfactory explanation as to His attitude toward them and His purpose concerning their dismissal from Egyptian bondage.

They might ask, "What about His Name?" But Moses was not sure how to answer them, even though Yahweh had just stated His purpose as to His people and had assured Moses, "*I shall come to be with you!*" Now Yahweh expanded this basic revelation as follows: "*I shall come to be* [with them always], *just as I am coming to be* [with them now].* Thus you shall

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*Here the *incomplete* form of the verb is used twice; it indicates progressive development with interruptions and/or repetitions in the *process* of bringing out the significance of the Name. For more details *cf* our Editorials of March and July 1980.

say to the sons of Israel: '*I-shall-come-to-be* sent me to you' " (3:14).

AS SURELY AS I AM YAHWEH

When Pharaoh had rejected Moses' initial request for the dismissal of the Israelites, and their lot had become even worse (Ex.5:4-11), then Moses asked Yahweh: "Why have You done evil to this people? And why is it that You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people. Yet You have not rescued, yea rescued Your people" (5:22).

Moses knew what the divine Name *signified* to himself and to the people. Hence the new divine assurances are supported by the thrice repeated statement: "I am Yahweh!" This is the succinct Hebrew way of saying: As surely as I am Yahweh, each promise is guaranteed to be fulfilled.

EXODUS 6:2-8

I AM YAHWEH and I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as El-Shaddai [the Deity-Who-Suffices]; as to My name, Yahweh, I was not [fully] realized to them. However, I set up My covenant with them to give to them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, in which they had sojourned. Moreover, I have hearkened to the moaning of the sons of Israel whom the Egyptians are making their servants; and I am mindful of My covenant. Wherefore say to the sons of Israel:

I AM YAHWEH; hence I will bring you forth from beneath the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rescue you from their service. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm with great judgments. I will take you to Me as a people. I will become to you as Elohim, and

you will realize that I am Yahweh your Elohim, Who brought you forth from beneath the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you to the land which I lifted up My hand in swearing to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a tenancy. I AM YAHWEH.

NOT YET FULLY REALIZED

For the seven promises in verses 6-8 we have used the auxiliary "will" (I will bring you forth, rescue you, redeem you, take you, become to you, bring you, give it to you). They indicate the divine intervention in seven correlated steps. These are complete verb forms since (in Yahweh's eyes) the seven promises are so *certain* that *He* can see them as *finished facts*. Another precious promise is embedded among them, namely that Israel will eventually *realize* that their God is Yahweh (verse 7). In His foresight this comprehension is already a *permanent* fact; it has been taken up by the prophets and has been repeated by the writer of Hebrews: "I shall be to them for a God, and they shall be to Me for a people" (8:10). "Imparting My laws to their hearts, I shall be inscribing them on their *comprehension* also" (10:16).

The usual rendering of verse 3 (by My name Jehovah was I not known to them, AV) does not agree with the narrative in Genesis where the patriarchs used the Name all the time. Thirty-five years ago A. E. Knoch ventilated this problem and arrived at a possible conjecture (by My name Yahweh I was not evil to them). However, this could not be supported by any reading in other manuscripts or ancient translations; and so he made no final decision in his handwritten sublinear to verse 3, and the matter remained in limbo. Since he had occasionally used the variant

"realize" for the standard KNOW, the wording "as to My name, Yahweh, I was not [fully] realized to them" should be acceptable.

The Septuagint reads here: *to onoma mou . . . ouk edêlōsa autois* (My Name . . . not I-made-evident to-them). This agrees with the Hebrew verb form which is Niphal complete, i.e. it describes a *certain* condition or a *general* fact and may be either passive or reflexive. If reflexive, it would read: "I have not made Myself [fully] knowable to them." We have, however, preferred to render the verb as a passive: "As to My name Yahweh, I was not [fully] realized to them."

H.H.R.

THE 18th century poet and clergyman, John Donne, once asked, "If God would not have all, why took he me?" Centuries earlier, the apostle Paul had written, "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, foremost of whom am I" (1 Tim.1:15).

Both men were conscious of their own unworthiness and of God's mercy and grace in calling them to Himself through Christ. And in both cases the favor they had received made them conscious of the needs of all the rest of humanity. For Donne it was a question, Why does not God take all? For Paul it was a declaration, Christ died for sinners. Yet the question answers itself as surely as the declaration. God will take all since He took me. Christ died for all since He died for me.

Christ died for the irreverent, for sinners and for enemies (Rom.5:6,8,10). Consequently it was "for all mankind for life's justifying" (5:18). D.H.H.

HERALD THE WORD

There are a number of gatherings scheduled this Autumn for the heralding of the Word. This notice will be too late for some of them, but it is good to be aware of these efforts so that we can be giving praise to God for His achievements in believers' lives.

The Summer Fellowship held in Baldwin, Michigan was well attended with good interest in the theme, "God Chooses us in Christ." United Gatherings are held most every month in Michigan (for announcements and reports of these write to Grace and Truth Chapel, Baldwin MI 49304). "A United Gathering for Concordant Bible Study" was held in Bramcote, Nottingham, England from August 29 to September 1. The 13th Annual Bible Conference and 50th Anniversary of the Bible Fellowship Church, 15400 South State Street, South Holland, Illinois, is scheduled for October 3, 4 and 5. The annual Bible conference for western Canada is to take place October 10-13 at Faith Tabernacle, 5007 21st Avenue N.W., Calgary, Alberta. The theme will be "Walk Worthily of the Calling." The Florida Study Group conference is scheduled for November 28-30. It will be held in the conference room of the Chamber of Commerce Building, 1005 East Strawbridge Avenue, Melbourne, Florida, with the theme, "The Wondrous Judgments of God." For further information write to Charles E. Bard, 2600 Pineapple Ave. A-4, Melbourne FL 32935.

The messages of grace and reconciliation are also being heralded in India, the Philippines and other countries, despite opposition and financial difficulties. Besides his usual schedule of work, Bro. Raju in Andhra, India, hosted a small Summer Bible School this year with 15 students attending. He and Bro. Oblenda from the Philippines are both translating many of our publications into their native languages. Those wishing to send aid to these brethren may do so through our Concordant Mission Fund.

Brother Donal reports that the annual conference and reunion which he hosts in northern Philippines was held on May 16-18, despite the bad weather caused by a typhoon. There were sessions for all ages with prayer, testimony, song and consideration of God's Word. In the southern islands Brother Oblenda reports several invitations to speak this year at various conventions.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
(Part One)

CHRIST, with His secret glories, is the determining factor in doctrine and deportment for today. When we give Him His high place in our heads and hearts we cannot go far astray. Now that Paul has set forth the secret of Christ, he deals with departures from it in doctrine (2:8-23), and discusses its bearing on our conduct (3:1-4:1). Doctrinal departure may be grouped under two distinct heads, that which comes from men, and that which comes from God. Reasoning and ritual are the two dangers against which we are warned.

If we realize our completeness in Christ and His glory as the complement of the Deity, we are immensely wealthy. We possess riches beyond the power of figures to express. We cannot consider the millionaires or billionaires of these last days in our class, for their riches are loaned to them only for a few brief years, and even then they bring with them more care than contentment, more unpleasantness than joy. Ours is sure to us for all time. On one point, however, we are like them. We may lose the enjoyment of it for a season. This may be taken from us if we do not beware.

Philosophy and religion have robbed us of more vital values than any other foes. One denies Christ His place as the Complement of God. The other refuses to accept Him as the Completeness of the saints. Today

the extreme of these two movements may be seen in Modernism on the one hand and Romanism on the other. A vain philosophy is seeking to eliminate God and His Christ from the universe. An empty ritual is seeking to displace the work of Christ. We may not go to either of these extremes, yet in all of us lies the tendency to put reason and religion in the place of God's Anointed. Hence the apostle's warning.

BEWARE

In Ephesians we are warned to beware how we *walk* (Eph.5:15). In Philippians we have a threefold warning as to our *service* (Phil.3:2), but in Colossians it is applied to departure from the great *doctrine* of Christ as the Complement of all. The saints are almost all being robbed, yet, as it were, in a legal way, so that they are not aware of the great loss which they have sustained. Indeed, most of them cling to the substitutes, and would feel themselves robbed rather if these were taken away from them. Thus, not being even aware of their vast loss, they cannot beware lest it be taken from them. In these days the situation has been reversed. The saints have lost these precious possessions and now need instead to *recover* their property.

The saints as a whole *have* been despoiled through philosophy and empty seduction, in accord with human tradition, in accord with the elements of the world. What is needed is that we recognize this in our own case and seek to remedy it insofar as we are able. Two things are necessary in order to accomplish this. First, we must seek to absorb into our whole being the great companion truths of Christ as the Complement for God and man. Then we should examine the Scriptures so that we may recognize the enemies of these

vital verities, rationalism and religion. Both pervade Christendom today to an extent that would astonish the saints if they only realized it. Christendom is poor today, beggared by these two robbers, who have taken our Christ from us.

PHILOSOPHY OR HUMAN TRADITION

Men allege themselves to be wise, yet are stupid. Their heart is darkened. They are vain in their reasonings. Yet even many of the leaders in Christendom laud man's "God-given reason," and encourage us to make use of it, especially in the search for truth. To be sure, such reason as man has left was given him by God, but, knowing God, they did not glorify or thank Him as God, hence *they were made vain in their reasonings* (Rom.1:21). As many, if not most, of the saints are partakers in this sin of not glorifying God *as God*, they also manifest the futility of reasoning, especially in the things of God.

Perhaps no better example can be given of the vanity of human ratiocination where God's glory is denied than the imbecility of the evolutionary hypothesis. I consider the mere fact that this silly theory could be entertained by the scientific world for so long a time as ample evidence of the intellectual decadence of this era. There has never yet been found a single fact on which to form a logical syllogism on which to base the theory of evolution, yet the great majority of western scientists swallowed it whole, and sneer at all who do not share their infatuation. The real basis of the theory lies in its irrational commencement without a creation, and its continuance without a Creator. It robs God of His glory, gives Him no thanks, so, morally and rationally, *must be* a vacuous vanity.

But even we, though saints, are not exempt from this law. Few, indeed, glorify God *as God* in these days, and, as a result, their mental processes are clouded and confused, and lead to error, rather than to truth. I have ceased to expect full clarity of thought from anyone who does not bow to the absolute deity of God, without reservation or restriction. The nearer there is an approach to this the more will reason be rational. Yet the nearer we come to the acknowledgment of God's deity, the more we will discard reason for faith, and philosophy for revelation, and the less will we be guilty of injecting philosophy into God's Word.

This has been a sore evil in these latter days, especially among those who seek to be Bible students. With many of them the Scriptures have been transformed into a bog of proof texts instead of a full-fledged faith to be believed. Philosophies are propounded and supported by texts from Genesis to Revelation, with little regard to their contexts or actual contents. Figurative statements have been treated as if literal and used to prove that which is not true. Philosophy is then installed in the place of Holy Writ, and demands implicit faith, such as should be given to the Word alone.

The only true philosophy must be based upon the great truth that, in Christ, the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily. Even those who recognize God, such as Solomon, find unsolved problems in the world as it is. If he, with all his wisdom, as well as a measure of revelation, could not finish his philosophy, what can other men do? Many have tried it, and have only led mankind further from God and the truth. A great scientist and believer once expressed his conviction that, if we only knew all, we

would conclude that this world is the very wisest and best that could be. But the accepted philosophers have taken the opposite stand, and have sown distrust and hatred and despair in the hearts of mankind. A close student of Schopenhauer has said, "He seems to have the key for a few doors of our life, but he has none for its exit."

The world as it is, is abnormal, and presents no proper premises for reason to build upon. Things are wrong, and the wrongs are not righted. It is only as we bring in God, and His activities in Christ, in the past and in the future, that all becomes rational and understandable and glorious. In His Beloved, and through Him, He will fulfill all the beneficent designs which move His heart. And all that God needs or will use in accomplishing His purpose, is in Him. If, indeed, we also have a part in this glorious work, it is only because we are in Him. In ourselves we contribute only to the negative, the destructive, the preparatory phase of God's plan. The positive, the constructive, the conclusive work is all done by Christ, or through those who are His.

We are not philosophers, indeed, and have no philosophy in fact, but we have the reality, the substance, of which philosophy is only the shadow, the elusive phantom. The philosophers nearly all disagree. Were they good reasoners, they would deduce from this fact alone that philosophy is mostly a bad dream. And none of the philosophies is complete or satisfactory, because they deal with a transitory phase of God's dealings with man as if it were the whole. They have no light beyond the tomb and know nothing of judgment and reconciliation. We have what the philosopher is seeking, and find all included in Christ, Who is the Wisdom of God.

Christendom, and even the vast majority of the saints within it, do not know Christ thus. The title "Complement" is His because He brings all to a satisfactory *Completion.* But the final phase of God's purpose has been hid from Christendom, so that the creation which it commences in chaos, manages to bring millions of sentient beings into existence, not for their own happiness or the glory of God, but for their unending torment and the eternal disgrace of the Deity. Any philosophy based on the creeds of Christendom must lead to desperation and insanity. Even when death is made to end all, oblivion is no jewel in God's crown, and is no rational apology for creation. Reason and revelation demand that God be glorified, that suffering receive a satisfactory explanation, and that a *completed,* not a shattered universe crown the efforts of Deity and the intervention of His Anointed.

Perhaps the greatest treasure of which the saints have been despoiled is the reconciliation of all. Almost precisely the same words as are used here in 2:9 are used to introduce this glorious truth. Let us refer to it again (1:18-20): "that in all He may be becoming first, seeing that the entire complement delights to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all to Him . . . ." It is because He is God's Complement that all will be reconciled. If He does not reconcile all, then all will not be complete and He is not God's Complement. The full force of "complement" or "fullness" is denied by nearly every saint who bears His name. Only a tiny remnant dares to acknowledge Him as God's Complement. It is a jewel of far more value than any gem in any diadem of any potentate of earth.

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

THE SECRET OF MARRIAGE
(Part Four)

THE COMPLEMENT OF THE HUMAN

When the Genesis verse ("Therefore a man shall forsake his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they two become one flesh") is considered within its immediate context (Gen.2:18-25), it will be found that it leads us to the truth of "the complement" for the human.

The connective "therefore" carries our thoughts at once back to the previous verses of this particular context to seek the reason for a man forsaking his father and mother to "cling to his wife," and this we find given in the words of Ieue Alueim, "Not good is it for the human for him to be alone. Make for him will I a helper *as his complement*" (Gen.2:18). In the marvelous way described (Gen.1:26-28; 2:15-25), the sexes existing in the *one* human of chapter one were separated, and the complement for the human was provided, being at once recognized by him and acknowledged as "bone of my bones and flesh from my flesh." The account of these matters in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 was summarized (and with telling effect) by the Lord Jesus in His reply to Pharisees who sought to try Him: "Did you not read that the Maker from the beginning makes them male and female, and He said, 'On this account a man shall be leaving father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh'? So that no longer are they two, but *one flesh*. What God, then, yokes together, let not man be separating."

While the truth of the Genesis verse quoted by the Lord Jesus Christ and, later, by the apostle Paul, was recorded concerning the original progenitors of the human race (and here we bear in mind that God "makes out of *one* every nation of mankind, to be dwelling on all the surface of the earth"—Acts 17:26), the verse does define concisely the divine principle effective in wedlock in *all* succeeding generations. Very little thought is given to these remarkable facts in this present wicked eon.

On page 108 of the *Keyword Concordance,* it is shown that the word "complement" is one of the terms employed in the Concordant Version of the Greek Scriptures to render into English the Greek word *plērōma* (FILLing). An explanation then follows: "that which is put in to fill . . . not fullness . . . but the necessary increment which makes full . . . ." The use of the word "complement" gives emphasis to the thought of "completing." In the pristine circumstances around the first human (Adam) and his complement (Eve), there was a completion, with a resultant unity; the two became "*one flesh.*"

THE COMPLEMENT OF THE CHRIST

In Christ, "the *entire* complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily" (Col.2:9), and in Him "the *entire* complement *delights* to dwell" (Col.1:19). Christ is the complement of God, His Father, and as God's complement He will bring *all* to its glorious completion, for He "ascends . . . up over all who are of the heavens, that He should be completing all" (Eph.4:10). Christ also is the complement of every believer, for each saint is "complete in Him" (Col.2:10). All that the God and Father of Christ requires, He finds in all its fullness in His beloved Son: every need of every believer is met, in like fullness, in and by Christ.

The ecclesia which is the body of Christ is *the complement of Christ* (Eph.1:22,23), and Christ Himself has given to the ecclesia, apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers towards the adjusting and upbuilding of the body of Christ "unto the end that we should all attain to the unity of the faith and of the realization of the son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of *the complement of the Christ*" (Eph.4:11,13).

The *complement* of Christ and the *allotment* to Christ out from among the nations are one and the same. Both are composed of the same believers, all chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world and more frequently called "the body of Christ." The position is, simply, that the Lord Jesus Christ, in His deep gratitude to His Father for the allotment among the saints assigned to Him, has made that allotment His *complement.* As we have already noted, the allotment to Christ among the saints has, all along, asserted and affirmed Christ's universal Headship, and the making of His allotment to be His complement is the *gratuity of Christ* to the members of the ecclesia, His body (Eph.4:7). Not only so, but the gratuity of Christ also includes the granting of the essential stature ("the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ"—Eph.4:13) to *each saint* in order to fit the saints for the high office of their association with Christ, the Head of the ecclesia, in the ministry together with Christ to the celestials. Even now, to the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials, the multifarious wisdom of God is being made known through the ecclesia (Eph.3:10). How wonderful and precious is the truth that "to each one of us was given grace in accord with the measure of the gratuity of Christ" (Eph.4:7). The "*measure* of the gratuity of Christ" and the "*measure* of the stature of the complement of the Christ" are truths which hold in view the attaining "to a mature man."

AS TO CHRIST AND AS TO THE ECCLESIA

"This secret is great: yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia." As already mentioned (vol.71, page 90), "*this* secret" can only refer to the truth concerning the oneness in flesh of man and wife, although that truth is not presented in its original context (Gen.2:24), as a secret. Nevertheless, faith firmly grasps the truth as revealed and believes it, realizing that a secret possibly intrinsic to the truth of the oneness in flesh of man and wife (how *two* can become *one* flesh), may not have been divulged. If there be concealment of such a secret, then that *may* be a possible reason why the apostle Paul describes the secret as "great," in the way we would say of a hidden matter, "it was kept a great secret."

Be that as it may, *the fact of the oneness* is the central thought and, relative to it, the apostle goes on to say: "yet I am saying this as to Christ and as to the ecclesia." By these words, introduced by the adversative "yet" (and, therefore, the statement following is to be carefully considered), the apostle Paul has deftly moved the subject of this oneness in flesh of husband and wife out of the realm of the physical into that of the spiritual. He has taken the wonderful truth of the oneness of the marriage bond (as this is revealed in Genesis), completely away from its associations with the flesh and applied it *to Christ and to the ecclesia* as a figure of the spiritual bond that unites the ecclesia indissolubly with Christ, the ecclesia's Head.

In saying this, we are not overlooking the fact that the Genesis verse is quoted by the apostle Paul in that section of Ephesians (5:21-6:9) which deals with "the body—in the Lord," and Christ as the acknowledged Head of the ecclesia. In such a setting, the unity in flesh of believing husbands and wives is an exceedingly precious truth, and one which has a direct bearing upon the saints'

deportment "in the Lord," as this is regarded in the light of the truth of Christ's Headship of the ecclesia and of His presenting to Himself "a glorious ecclesia . . . holy and flawless" (Eph.5:27).

Truths pertaining to matters "in the Lord" frequently anticipate the truths concerning the greater glory of the believer's position "*in Christ.*" For example, when Paul pleads with, or admonishes the saints regarding their walk and behavior (truly matters "in the Lord"), he may well have in mind the ultimate stature purposed for each believer, that "we should *all* attain to the unity of the faith and of the realization of the son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the complement of the Christ, that we may by no means still be minors . . ." (Eph.4:13,14).

When the members of the body of Christ are considered as being "in Christ," as we find they are in the parallel section of Ephesians (1:20-2:10), the position radically changes because of the wonderful truth that "if anyone is *in Christ, there is a new creation* . . ." (2 Cor.5:17). There is also *a new humanity,* as this is revealed in the section of Ephesians (2:11-22, see also Col.3:10), which follows the companion section referred to.

In Christ, in the new creation and in the new humanity, the great national, physical and racial cleavages which have divided mankind, will disappear. Paul enjoins: ". . . put off from you, as regards your former behavior, the *old humanity* . . . yet be rejuvenated in the spirit of your mind, and . . . put on the *new humanity* which, in accord with God, is being created in righteousness and benignity of the truth" (Eph.4:22-24). To the saints and believing brethren in Christ in Colosse, he writes similarly: "Yet now you also be . . . stripping off the *old humanity* together with its practices, and

putting on the *young*, which is being renewed into recognition, to accord with the Image of the One Who creates it, wherein there is no Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but all and in all is Christ" (Col.3:8-11).

A secret which merits the title "great," and is declared by the apostle Paul to be "as to Christ and as to the ecclesia," must surely relate to the ecclesia as it exists "in Christ."

COMPLETED FOR THE ENTIRE COMPLEMENT OF GOD

What, then, is the secret which Paul, the apostle and teacher of the nations in knowledge and truth, calls a *great* secret, and wherein lies its greatness? After much thought and prayer, we feel led to offer the suggestion that the answer to both questions may be discovered in the truth of the absolute oneness of the perfect unity of the ecclesia, which is the complement of Christ, *with* Christ, Who is the complement of God. We have already considered the fact that Christ, as an expression of His profound gratitude to His Father for the gift to Him of the allotment among the saints, made that allotment of saints to be His complement. Together with His complement Christ will complete "the all in all" (Eph.1:23).

Christ Jesus, the One in Whom the *entire* complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily requires no completing, yet He has made the ecclesia His complement. Christ *loves* the ecclesia: He *gives* Himself up for its sake that He should be *hallowing* it, *cleansing* it in the bath of water (with His declaration): He *nurtures and cherishes* it, for the saints who compose it *"are members of His body."* He will present to Himself "a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless" (Eph.5:25-31). By making the ecclesia His complement, Christ graciously confers upon

the saints of the ecclesia, the highest possible honor. As His complement (*and thus one with Him*) the ecclesia shares together with Christ, not only His allotment of all, not only His ministry to the celestial hosts, and not only the completing of "the all in all," *but Christ's glory as the complement of God.* Because of this, in his second Ephesian prayer (Eph.3:1,14-21), Paul petitions that the saints "may be completed *for the entire complement of God.*" Further, he also prays that we "be made *staunch with power,* through the spirit, in the man within" (verse 16). The apostle, fully conscious of the sheer transcendence of such truths, realized how much the saints require the mature stature and *staunchness of spirit* to bear the weight of such glory. On our behalf, he sought this staunchness of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is *He* Who is the One "Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are asking or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us . . ." (Eph.3:20). Are *we,* in this current era, aware of our need of such staunchness, and are we praying the prayer "to be made staunch with power, through His spirit"?

The ecclesia is closely and fully involved in the other three secrets mentioned in the Ephesian epistle. God has, indeed, determined in His grace, an essential part for the ecclesia in each of them, even to the extent that every believer will participate in the ministry of the grand truth of the conciliation to the celestial hosts. In view of the apostle's remarks concerning the Secret of Marriage, there is every likelihood that this secret must surely hold a *spiritual* glory akin, in magnitude, to that of the Secret of the Evangel, the Secret of Christ and the Secret Administration of the Grace of God.

If it be, then, that the explanation of the secret which the apostle Paul styles "great" is to be found in the twin truths of God's allotment to Christ of the ecclesia which is

His body, and the making, by Christ, of the ecclesia to be His complement, the members of the ecclesia will share together with their Head, the glories of his *universal* Headship, and also Christ's high honors as the complement of His God and Father. Although the ecclesia will share such glories as associates of Christ in an inseparable oneness in spirit with Him, Christ does not give up the Headship of the ecclesia, nor does He ever relinquish His Headship over all. From the consummation into which He brings all, He will *lead* all, in all, in God's dwelling place in spirit.

Should a correct understanding of the secret of Ephesians chapter five have been reached in the course of this meditation, it will be readily realized, and appreciated, why Paul exclaimed, "*this secret is great.*"

MAKING ALL GROW INTO HIM, WHO IS THE HEAD—CHRIST

There is a general recognition among believers of the truth of "the one body in Christ" and also of the companion truth that "all are one in Christ Jesus." This is commendable, especially when there is an accompanying awareness that the "one body" is, in spirit, a "joint body" (Eph.3:6). But do we all, as members of the body of Christ, realize how *absolute* this oneness is? It is *so* absolute that the glory which is the *glory of Christ* as the One Who is the Image of the invisible God, and in Whom the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily, *is also the glory of the ecclesia,* the complement of Christ. This is a truth for the spirit and it is a truth which fortifies us in our spirits as we endeavor to keep the sevenfold "unity of the spirit with the tie of peace" (Eph.4:3-5). It also strengthens our resolve that, "being true, in love we should be making all grow into Him, Who is the Head—Christ" (Eph.4:15), for only by holding the Head can we be growing in the growth of God (Col.2:19).

A growing realization of the wonder of the consummate unity of the ecclesia with Christ its Head, should bring with it a consciousness of the error of sectarianism. If a believer should consider identification with, or adherence to a sect to be an essential adjunct to faith, or even a means by which to enhance one's standing before God, then questions automatically arise and should be considered. We list a few examples:

(1) Are not the schisms which divide believers, a denial of the complete *oneness* of the ecclesia (the one body) with Christ?

(2) Is faith, which is God's gracious gift, God's "approach present" to every believer (Eph.2:8), considered insufficient of itself and has, therefore, to be augmented by associating with a sect?

(3) Each believer is God's achievement (Eph.2:10). Can membership in a religious denomination improve upon the perfection of that which God accomplishes for the saints?

(4) The believers are *complete in Christ* (Col.2:9,10). Does not sectarian involvement imply that they are not?

(5) By schisms, "Christ is parted" (1 Cor.1:13). Do not members of His body, by their voluntary identification with sects, keep our beloved Saviour "divided"?

These and kindred questions require to be weighed carefully and answered, not to man but in the quietness of the heart before our God and Father. The saints owe *no* allegiance to man-made schisms or to those who cause or lead them. Our allegiance is solely to God, in Christ! "For freedom Christ frees us! Stand firm, then, and be not again enthralled with the yoke of slavery" (Gal.5:1).

The factional outlook of some believers, which can so frequently lead to strife and further division, would in-

dicate that they are "not holding the Head." When the Head is not being held, there can be little or no evidence of growth "in the growth of God," for it is *out of the Head* that "the entire body, being supplied and united through the assimilation and ligaments, is growing in the growth of God" (Col.2:19). This is the growth, the fullness of which is *maturity,* and so, then, may we, "being true, in love, be making all grow into Him, Who is the Head—Christ" (Eph.4:15). Compliance with this injunction will soon show us that it is not so much *we* who hold the Head, but it is the *Head* Who holds us. Nourished by the rich supply from the Head, and *united* through the assimilation and ligaments, we will find that the support of sectarian or denominational allegiance is not required.

Please bear with us as we repeat: the ecclesia is "one body in Christ;" it is a spiritual "joint body" enjoying a joint allotment" in Christ; it is the body of Christ, joined together with Him in a unique and indissoluble oneness. The oneness of husband and wife is *in flesh.* The unity of the ecclesia with Christ its Head is *in spirit:* it is absolute and unbreakable. Nevertheless, the schisms that have rent and still rend the ecclesia in (shall we say) its visible course in the pathway of faith, have severely weakened and marred its witness for God and for Christ, and to the Scriptures. This is the cause of our concern and the reason for the plea, which we express in words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ: "What God, then, yokes together, let not man be separating" (Matt.19:6).

God yokes together *with* Christ, those whom He "chooses *in* Christ before the disruption of the world," in a oneness that can *never* be broken. How light is the yoke that binds us to His Beloved, and how infinitely glorious! There is no thrall in it, unless it be the gracious bondage of His love.

Alan Reid

OPPOSITION TO THE PAULINE MESSAGE

"NOW THE WORD OF THE LORD was carried through the whole country. Yet the Jews spur on the reverent respectable women and the foremost men of the city, and rouse up persecution for Paul and Barnabas, and they ejected them from their boundaries. Now they, shaking the dust off their feet against them, came to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy and holy spirit" (Acts 13:49-52).

Jewish opposition to Paul and his evangel invariably flared up throughout his career. The hostility which he had experienced in Damascus and Jerusalem was just as fierce in Pisidian Antioch. Here it was enhanced when Paul demonstrated that God's favor was also for those outside the synagogue since He is not the God of the Jews only, but of the nations also, since God is One (*cf* Rom.3:30).

INFLUENTIAL JEWISH FAMILIES

For about 250 years Jews had been playing an important role in the Hellenized cities of southern Galatia which had once been part of the Seleucid empire*. In order to secure the loyalty of the indigenous

*cf vol.70, p.148.

population of Asia Minor to the Seleucid dynasty, 2,000 Jewish families from the Mesopotamian and Babylonian regions of the empire had been transferred to Lydia and Phrygia and had become a stabilizing factor in these areas. As reported by Josephus, these Jewish colonies were granted full religious freedom; they also enjoyed tax privileges and expanded in numbers and influence. It was Caesar Augustus who made Pisidian Antioch a Roman colony; thus it became the chief military and civil center of the Phrygian region of Galatia.

Antioch (like other Roman colonies) was situated at a strategic point of the military road system which served to safeguard the interests of the Roman empire. Antioch's municipal administration (which was similar to Rome's) was of course in the hands of Roman citizens, and part of the population consisted of veteran soldiers on their retirement.

Even if the influential members of the Jewish community did not participate in municipal government, they were able to prejudice the leading citizens of Pisidian Antioch against Paul and Barnabas. When Luke mentions *respectable women* in Acts 13:50, he means the wives of the *foremost men of the city.* Some of these respectable women had become *reverent* proselytes, i.e. they were loosely attached to the local synagogue. A few of them, who had not followed Paul, were persuaded by the Jews to influence their husbands against Pauline teaching.

The events described in verses 49-52 did not occur immediately after Paul's second public message which was presumably given on the fifteenth of Tishri (Lev.23:34), the day when the festival of ingathering (Ex.23:16) was celebrated. On that day believing Jews and Gentiles had followed Paul and had formed the

nucleus of the Antioch ecclesia. the process by which more non-Jewish believers were added was, of course, a gradual one and may have taken a few months. People from other places of the area came to Antioch for trade, for lawsuits, for the great Roman festivals or any other reason. Quite a few may have heard the word of the Lord, and they believed and carried it throughout the whole region.

OPPOSITION AGAINST PAUL AND BARNABAS

After some time the influential Jews were able to "rouse up persecution for Paul and Barnabas." We may assume they persuaded the magistrates of the city that the expulsion of the two was justified in the interests of peace and order. Since the official decree was restricted to the Antiochene territory, Paul and Barnabas were free to go elsewhere in the province of Galatia.

They were probably escorted to the gates of the city and thus driven out. They protested, not against the Roman municipal authorities, but against their Jewish persecutors. They did so by the solemn act of shaking the dust off their feet as a testimony against them. This was in accordance with the Lord's instructions to the twelve apostles and to the seventy-two disciples; shaking off the dust served as a reminder of the day of judgment (*cf* Matt.10:14; Luke 10:11).

In spite of the antagonistic attitude of the Jewish community, the Antiochene disciples remained faithful, "filled with joy and holy spirit."

OPPOSITION AGAINST THE BRETHREN

"Now in Iconium the same thing occurred at their entering into the synagogue of the Jews and speaking, so that a vast multitude of both Jews and Greeks

believe. Yet the stubborn Jews rouse up and provoke the souls of the nations against the brethren. They indeed then tarry a considerable time, speaking boldly in the Lord, Who is testifying to the word of His grace, granting signs and miracles to occur through their hands" (Acts 14:1-3).

Paul and Barnabas had taken the eastward road to Iconium and they may have covered the distance of 80 miles in about four days. Visiting the local synagogue first was part of Paul's standard operational procedure. Here, as in Antioch, a multitude of both Jews and Greeks believed the word of God and of the Lord. So the two apostles spent a considerable time in Iconium while the Lord testified "to the word of His grace, granting signs and miracles." Years later, Paul referred to this divine confirmation of his message with the reminder, "supplying you with the spirit and operating works of power among you" (Gal.3:5).

In the course of time, it was again the stubborn Jews who succeeded in stirring up opposition, not the Roman authorities acting on their own initiative. A great number of the inhabitants took sides with the apostles, and apparently just as many with the influential Jews who were obviously held in high regard by the municipal administration, probably because these Jewish families had been enjoying certain privileges both under the Seleucid and the Roman provincial governments. Hence the authorities closed their eyes when the Jews provoked the souls of the nations (i.e. the Gentiles) *against the brethren.*

When a riot broke out and plans were made to assault and to stone the apostles, "they fled for refuge into the cities of Lycaonia: Lystra and Derbe, and the country about. And there they were bringing the evangel" (14:6,7). It seems that the two apostles fled

to Lystra, while some of the brethren found temporary refuge in Derbe and the surrounding countryside.

THE MESSAGE TO LYSTRAN IDOLATORS

Lystra, about twenty miles to the south of Iconium, was a military colony with a Roman garrison whose language was Latin, while the indigenous Anatolian population spoke their Lycaonian dialect, though they all understood Greek. There were not enough Jews in the city, not even ten men, in order to form a synagogue. We do know, however, that a Jewish family lived there, Eunice (whose Greek husband had probably died) with her mother Lois and her son Timothy. Many years later Paul mentioned the *unfeigned faith* "which first made its home in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice" (2 Tim.1:5).

Among the early believers in Lystra was a lame man who had been a cripple since his birth and had never walked. He was among the crowd who heard Paul speaking. The apostle looked intently at him and perceived that he had faith both to be saved and to be healed. So he said to him with a loud voice, "Rise upright on your feet" (14:10).

Other versions have here, "faith to be healed" (AV), "faith to be made whole" (ASV) or "made well" (RSV), thus stressing only the physical recovery of the lame man. However the Greek verb *sōzō* (save) is used here in the wider sense of delivering from both the disease as well as from his sins (*cf Keyword Concordance*, page 257).

Obviously the miracle was performed in a public place, and it seems that no Romans of authority were present when the throngs cried out in their Lycaonian vernacular, "The gods, made like men, descended to us" (14:11), and the crowd called the apostles "Zeus"

and "Hermes" (the highest pagan god and his messenger). It is conceivable that our two apostles did not understand right away what was said, and they may have gone to the house of Eunice who (as we assume) had invited them to stay with her family. All three of them, Lois, Eunice and Timothy, would naturally have been eager to hear more about the word of God and of the Lord.

When Paul and Barnabas learned that preparations were being made to pay them divine honors, they tore their garments (the Jewish gesture of horror at blasphemy) and rushed out among the crowd since the local priest intended to sacrifice bulls to them. Hence the apostles cried out:

"Men! Why are you doing these things? *We* also are men, of like emotions as you, ***bringing the evangel*** to you to turn you back from these vain things to the living God, Who makes heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, Who in bygone generations leaves all the nations to go their ways, although He leaves Himself not without the testimony of good acts, giving showers from heaven and fruitbearing seasons, filling our hearts with nourishment and gladness" (14:15-17).

Luke gives here only a partial report of the statements given by the two apostles at this occasion. They did not quote from the Old Testament since the Lycaonian idolators were not acquainted with it at all. Hence Paul and Barnabas spoke of the living God, the Creator and Sustainer Who will no longer leave the nations to go their own ways. We may assume that the apostles also proclaimed the evangel of the grace of God in some detail as soon as, with much difficulty, they had stopped "the throngs so as not to be sacrificing to them" (14:18).

SET FOR EONIAN LIFE

Divine manifestations such as signs and miracles were in accordance with the transition administration when it was still necessary that Paul's service received the same divine approval as the service of the twelve and their associates in Jerusalem. Using the words of Hebrews 6:6 we may well say: All who were enlightened in those days and became partakers of the holy spirit, they all tasted the ideal declaration of God and the powerful deeds, in Jerusalem as well as in Galatia.

For Paul's service, divine confirmation was even more important since the future expectation for Gentile believers had to be very vague: They were set for eonian life (Acts 13:48). No more could be revealed at that time. When Paul himself learned more of the details, he was not allowed to speak about them for fourteen years (2 Cor.12:2-4).

OUR REALM IS INHERENT IN THE HEAVENS

Today, we no longer taste the powerful deeds of the transition administration since we do not need them for the strengthening of our faith. *We* are aware of "that which the eye did not perceive, and the ear did not hear, and to which the heart of man did not ascend—whatever God makes ready for those loving Him" (1 Cor.2:9).

We do not look for divine manifestations in the physical realm, "for our realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself" (Phil.3:20,21). H.H.R.

REPORT

A tentative translation of most of the Old Testament has been typed up (only Joshua, Judges, Job and Proverbs remain to be finished). Using these typed sheets we are able to check the translation word by word with the Hebrew and make adjustments and corrections, and in this stage of the work we have pretty well finished Deuteronomy and Exodus.

Various card files are being prepared for the new philological concordance. These will be used for the English and Greek indexes, and for further analysis of the New Testament vocabulary.

WILLIAM J. BAYNE

Our dear brother, William Bayne, of Somerton, England, died on July 9th following a severe attack of pneumonia. He was a fervent believer for most of his life; in his later years he came into contact with the truth of universal reconciliation and enthusiastically endeavored to impart this teaching to others. The study of prophecy was his main interest, especially the subject of the Lord's coming (for which he longed). He will always be remembered for his generosity and remarkable sense of humor. We look forward to meeting again with this beloved fellow worker when Christ calls.

F.O.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
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NAHUM

THE BOOK of Nahum consists of a double title and two odes vibrant to the impending fall of Assyria. The title runs *The load of Nineveh; the scroll of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.* The two divisions of the title supply an index to the special scope of the two component poems. While both treat the common topic of the fall of Nineveh, the two odes are quite distinct in character. The first (1:2-2:2) delineates a national crisis. The second (2:3-3:19) is a study of a moral problem.

The first ode reflects a definite historical situation. It celebrates the defeat of Sennacherib and the passing away of Assyria's supremacy. It begins by affirming the power of divine vengeance and the certainty of the overthrow of His enemies. Jehovah is patient and slow to anger, but in the end He must rise to judgment. He has a vast range of weapons to encompass the overthrow of His adversaries. The whole armory of physical forces is at His disposal (1:3). From the Persian gulf to the Mediterranean the nations are in tumult (1:4,5). Who can stand before the fury of a God Whose arsenal embraces the whole range of nature's forces (1:6)? But the very idea of irresistible power, which invests the thought of His vengeance with terror, enhances immeasurably another divine quality—goodness (1:7). Jehovah protects His people with the same inflexibility of purpose and relentless

energy with which He pursues His foes. The God Who works with such irresistible, absolute power in nature will not relax in the fate He is preparing for Nineveh. He will destroy her utterly at one stroke, not needing to raise His forces a second time. No half measures are His, Whose are the storm, the drought and the earthquake (1:8).

What can Nineveh scheme against Jehovah? What do her carefully planned campaigns amount to in the face of Jehovah's irrevocable verdict of utter destruction? Has not an evil counselor, scheming evil against Jehovah, gone out of her? That fact fixes her fate and seals her doom. As dry stubble before the fire so will his mighty legions go down before Him (1:9-11). In verse 12, Jehovah, presiding over the waters, dissolves the confederation, and thus frustrates the ambitious scheme of the Assyrian. More than this: Jehovah has fixed the fate of the evil counselor himself. "No longer shall your name be perpetuated. From the house of your alueim will I cut off carving and molten image. I will set up your tomb, for you are slight" (1:14).

Let Judah rejoice! The bearer of glad tidings is in her midst. Behold him standing on the temple mountain! Hark to his proclamation of peace! He brings to the citizens of Judah the welcome intelligence that the tyrant is laid low! No more will he trespass in the holy land.

The scene now changes from the threat of vengeance to its historical consummation. Nahum peers into the distance and sees the innumerable mounted horses of the Mando closing upon the city (2:3). The outer line of forts has fallen into their hands like ripe figs into the mouth of the eater (3:12). The old lion has withdrawn to his inner den and is making his last stand (2:11). The prophet cries to Nineveh to

prepare for the siege (3:14). There is fighting in the suburbs before the assault on the walls. The out places are full of marching troops; prancing horses, rattling chariots and cavalry patrols dash through the streets (2:4). The water works fall into the hands of the besiegers. The breech is effected by directing upon the wall the waters of the canal: the gates of the rivers are opened, the palace is dissolved (2:6). The queen is captured, and, attended by the court ladies moaning like doves, is led away into captivity (2:7). Then comes the mad rush of the barbarians into the city. Nahum hears the whips crack beneath the walls, the rattle of the leaping chariots; the end is slaughter: the streets and broad places are filled with dead bodies (3:2,3). Next we see a vivid picture of the sack. In the forces of the Mando there must be inhabitants of provinces which had been ruthlessly devastated by Assyrian conquerors. They certainly had grievances to revenge, and were likely to spare not. These had joined the Mando for hatred's sake or for the sake of the vast plunder which must have been stored in the city (2:9). For ages Assyria had plundered all people within the range of her possible influence. For centuries the whole civilized world had paid unwilling tribute to the great city. Plunder beyond dreams of avarice was there heaped up, awaiting the despoiler. The city was plundered of everything of value which it contained, and then given to the torch. The vast majority of the houses, built probably of unburnt brick, soon were a ruin. The great palaces, when the cedar beams which supported the upper stories had been burnt off, fell in heaps. Their great, thick walls, built of unburnt bricks with the outer covering of beautiful burnt bricks, cracked open, and when the rains descended, the unburnt bricks soon dissolved away into the clay of

which they had been made. The rains and the overflow of the river made the soft clay into a covering over the great palace and their records. The winds bore seeds into the mass, and a carpet of grass covered the mounds, and stunted trees grew out of them. Year by year the mounds bore less and less resemblance to the site of a city, until no trace remained above ground of the magnificence that once had been.

As often in history, the period of Assyria's decadence was marked by a development in the arts. Science, whether astronomy or mathematics, reached a higher point than in the history of man before. The literature of Assyria took a marvelous development. Books of song and story, of religion and of law, of grammar and lexicography, were produced in extraordinary numbers and of a remarkable style of execution. The pride of the Assyrians swelled as they looked on all these things, and saw around them the marvelous material prosperity which likewise had exceeded all the old bounds. The Assyrian trader was in all lands, and his wealth was growing apace.

But all this outward grandeur was not the fruit of normal, healthy growth: it was a sympton of decay presaging the approach of disintegration. Her haughty spirit alienated from her all peoples. She won no friend and no ally. She was hated all over the world, and her cruelty fanned that hatred into a passion. Everywhere that her name was known it was execrated. Nahum concludes his ode by expressing the whole volume of hope, wrath and just passion for vengeance which had been gathering for more than a century among the oppressed peoples, when he says: "All hearing the report of you will clasp hands over you, for over whom did not your evil pass continually?"

Vladimir Gelesnoff

THE END OF IT ALL
(Part One)

THERE is a popular saying that "all good things come to an end," and this is true when we are thinking in terms of human experience. Our holidays come to an end, our active working days come to an end, even life itself comes to an end. And, in a much wider concept, the purpose of God will come to an end.

Men have another saying, very prevelant in these days of distress and disruption, of trouble and disturbance, of disorder and violence—"What will be the end of it all?" Very often it is a question of despair, of despondency, of resignation. With all the evidences of increasing lawlessness which surround us, we may well ask, "What will be the end of it all?" And we are equally entitled to ask, when we consider the purpose of God, "What will be the end of it all?"

We shall not find the answer to our question in the surrounding conditions, though these are all accounted for in the purpose of God, and nothing ever takes Him unawares. We shall not find an answer in human philosophies and human teachings, for the soulish man cannot understand the things of the spirit of God, and the wisdom of this world is shown to be stupid when brought up against the ways of God (1 Cor.1 and 2). Only in God's Word shall we find the answer, and though it is there quite clearly expressed,

the vast majority of men have failed to see it, and many sincere believers have not discerned it because they have allowed the clear-cut issue to become entangled with the webs of their own confused thinking.

It is our intention, in this short series of studies, to first find from the Scriptures what is the goal of God's purpose, then to examine it in some detail in order to get a fuller grasp of its meaning, and finally to consider what is the vitally important role allotted by God to the ecclesia, which is Christ's body, in the attainment of that goal.

In our investigations, we shall find that the Scriptures make it quite clear that, though it may still be a long way off, there will be a most glorious end to God's purpose, the end for which God Himself is looking and longing, the end for which all creation is waiting, and indeed the end for which we, if we are members of that ecclesia which is the body of Christ, and His complement, have been specially chosen; for it is revealed that God is to find "glory in the ecclesia, and in Christ Jesus, for all the generations of the eon of the eons," that is, up to that very moment when God's purpose is consummated. It is most desirable that we should be aware of the nature of the service for which we are chosen, and from which God is to receive such glory, and it is with this aim in mind that we are putting these thoughts before you.

That God has a purpose is made clear to us in Ephesians 1:11, where we are also told that He is operating all according to that purpose. Let us remind ourselves of this wonderful passage, from verse 8, ". . . in all wisdom and prudence making known to us the secret of His will (in accord with His delight which He purposed in Him) to have an administration of the

complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth—in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, that we should be for the laud of His glory, who are pre-expectant in the Christ."

This revealing scripture not only declares that God has a purpose, and that He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will towards the accomplishment of that purpose, but it also links us vitally with that purpose and with that accomplishment. For our lot was from the beginning cast in Christ, and wherever Christ is seen as carrying out the purpose of His Father, then the ecclesia is assuredly associated with Him in a ministry which takes it right through to the very end.

God's purpose is also described as "the purpose of the eons" (Eph.3:11). That is to say, it is contained within the eons; it does not overlap them, or stretch beyond them at either end. Therefore, because the eons have both a beginning and an end, so has God's purpose within them. It is erroneous to suggest, as does the King James (Authorized) Version, that it is an eternal purpose, for then it would never come to an end. Though its results do, indeed, last for eternity, God's purpose itself has a moment of consummation at the end of the last eon.

A GRAND EDIFICE

At the time these words were being penned, a very large building was being erected not far away, and frequently we would stroll along to see how much progress had been made. We have watched the huge cranes lifting the heavy girders into position as the

main framework gradually took shape; we have speculated on the ultimate height of the tower as it rose story by story; we have seen the bricklayers continually adding to the walls and the masons fixing the facing stones. But all the time, as we have watched, we have had in mind the grandeur and beauty of the finished edifice, and frequently we have gone to a corner of the building, where, in a little panel in the wall, the architect has given us his picture of what the structure will look like when all is completed. By constantly referring to this, we can see how every part is being made to contribute to the whole; and we can see, too, that however impressive may be any part of the building, and particularly the lofty tower, during the period of construction, its glory will not compare with the glory of the whole when all the scaffolding is taken away, when the last rough edges are smoothed off, and when the naked framework is covered by polished stones glistening in the noonday sun.

We may ask ourselves, do we tend to give too much consideration to the various portions of God's purpose, and too little to its ultimate fulfillment? Can we really understand the meaning of, and the reason for, any part of the Divine project unless we see it in relation to the completed whole? And do we grasp what that completed whole really means? Do we ever seriously try to realize what conditions will be like when God has achieved all that He has set out to do?

Has God ever given us a glimpse of the ultimate, upon which we can form intelligent answers to our questions? Indeed, He has; and in this series of studies, we want to direct you to a little panel in one corner of His Word, where He, the Designer and Architect, has given us His conception of what all will be like when His purpose is accomplished.

Let us, then, examine the Scriptures, and see if we can find this panel which contains the Divine Architect's drawing of the finished whole.

STAGES IN THE DIVINE OPERATIONS

As we open the volume of God's Word, the first phrase to meet our eyes is, "Created by the Alueim were the heavens and the earth," and we realize that something has started; something has happened. But the second chapter of the first book (Genesis) begins, "And finished are the heavens and the earth and all their host. And finishing is the Alueim, on the sixth day, His work which He does. And ceasing is He on the seventh day from all His work which He does."

"Finishing," "ceasing"—these terms indicate completion. Is this the panel where God portrays the fulfillment of His purpose?

In the light of later revelation, we are bound to answer, "No." This is the termination of a *part* of His purpose, the completion of the foundations, perhaps. We have to differentiate between God's *creative* work and His *operative* work. Here, for the time being, He terminated His creative work (later we read of a new creation), but His operative work never slackens off. As in Genesis, so in Paul's day; as in Paul's day, so in ours; God is operating all according to the counsel of His own will.

Turning rapidly over the pages of Scripture, we are suddenly arrested by another passage, a cry from a cross, which has echoed round the world and reverberated down the centuries. "It is finished"—"It has been accomplished." Is this the panel we seek, the fulfillment of God's purpose?

Again, no, only the fulfillment of a part. Christ had accomplished the work which His Father had given

Him to do in settling once and for all time the problem of sin. This was a vital step, a stupendous advance, in the outworking of God's designs, but we are still a long way from their completion. Nevertheless, no second Stone of Salvation will ever be laid in the edifice of God's purpose other than that which has been laid, Jesus Christ, the Righteous.

Similarly, we could turn to other pictures in the Scriptures. Near the end of Revelation, for instance, we have a message, "And I perceived a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth pass away, and the sea is no more. And I perceived the holy city, new Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I hear a loud voice out of the throne saying, 'Lo! the tabernacle of God is with mankind, and He will be tabernacling with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them. And He will be brushing away every tear from their eyes. And death will be no more, nor mourning, nor clamor, nor misery; they will be no more, for the former things passed away.' And He Who is sitting on the throne said, 'Lo! New am I making all!'" (Rev.21:1-5).

In a booklet, which came to our notice many years ago, and of which we have forgotten the title, we noted these words, "Through the Church, God purposes to make known His love to all personal beings and draw them, if they will respond, into Christ and His community. In the last book of the Bible we see this purpose brought to its fulfillment and fruition. We see there in vision the redeemed and perfected community, the Holy City. That is the end, the fulfillment of the divine purpose."

With all respect to the unknown author, we are

bound to disagree with this conclusion. The picture in Revelation is the fulfillment of a *part* of God's purpose, the completion of another *stage* in its outworking, but not the consummation of the whole. It is natural for us to look to the end of the Bible for the culmination of God's designs—in any man-made book, that is where we would expect to find the winding up of the plot. But God's ways, as He Himself tells us, are not man's ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts, and so we find that there are messages in earlier parts of God's Word, notably in the writings of Paul, which take us beyond the limits of the final scenes of Revelation.

Turning to Paul's writings, we remember Ephesians 1, which speaks of "the expectation of His [God's] calling, and of the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints," and gives us a picture of Christ seated "at His right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship," and of Him being given, "as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement by which all in all is being completed" (or "the complement by which He is completing the all in all"). With this, we could couple Philippians 2, which speaks of God highly exalting Jesus, and gracing Him with "the name that is above every name," that in His name "every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father." Likewise, Colossians 1:18, "And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming First, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell." Do these scriptures, which speak of the exaltation of Christ and of His ecclesia,

represent the panel of the completion of the purpose of our God? We answer this by saying that the tower, however lofty and imposing and beautiful it may be, is not the completed building, any more than are those lower stories that we saw in Revelation, although it is obvious that all other lines in the structure must conform to those of the tower.

Finally, we might look at Colossians 1:20, which tells of God, through Christ, reconciling all to Himself, making peace through the blood of His cross, "through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens," and we ask whether the reconciling of the whole universe to God through Christ represents the fulfillment of His purpose. Again we answer, "No," although now we are very, very near the fulfillment. There is, however, one step to be taken after the reconciling of the universe before God will be satisfied that His purpose is consummated.

WHERE IS THE DESCRIPTION OF THE CONSUMMATION?

Where, then shall we find this panel of the Architect? In what corner of the Scriptures shall we find the picture that will tell us what conditions will be like when all is fulfilled?

Strangely, and yet perhaps not so strangely, we shall not find it in the "perfection" letters of Paul—Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians—which contain much of the highest revelations of God to man, though there is a special reference to it in Ephesians, which we shall examine in a later study. The reason is that these epistles deal primarily with the exaltation of Christ and His relationship to the ecclesia, and have their setting "among the celestials." After all, the architect does not put his drawing at the top of the tower, where only climbers could see it, but he puts it

where it can be seen by all. So, too, with God. He puts His picture of His finished purpose in one of Paul's "preparatory" letters. Since it concerns all, it is put in that group of letters which deals with such all-embracing subjects as justification and conciliation, resurrection and vivification—themes which are appreciated and enjoyed by the ecclesia at the moment, but will be the lot of all eventually.

Before actually taking you to this panel, let us give you another illustration, to show how our conceptions of God and of His purpose have changed with the advance of spiritual perception.

WIDENING VISIONS

Man has already made tremendous advances in his knowledge of the extent and the contents of space. We have learned most of this knowledge, however, not from direct contact with the heavenly bodies, but from the light that comes from them.

With the naked eye we learn little. We can see the sun, and the moon with a few marks on it resembling a face; we can discern certain patterns among the stars, and make out a few planets. But with the aid of even a small telescope, the marks on the moon become more distinct, and are seen to be really mountains; we perceive that the planets are indeed little globes in themselves, and that some have moons like our earth, only more of them; and that one planet, Saturn, is also encompassed by beautiful rings. With a larger telescope, our knowledge is further increased, and we can see that certain stars, which we took for single ones, are, in fact, double stars, immensely far apart, and each component independent of the other. Finally, with the largest telescopes of all, we can see that the knowledge of all previous astronomers

regarding the extent of the universe was limited indeed, for galaxy after galaxy of fresh stars come into view, and we can only marvel at the greatness and power of God, Who created them all, and calls each by name.

As with space, so with time; we are limited in that we can only examine a brief period at first hand. Our direct contact is with the present, perhaps seventy or even a hundred years; for acquaintance of the past and of the future we must rely on outside help, and the best help that we can get is undoubtedly the Word of God. Yet with the naked mind, unassisted by the spirit of God, we shall not get very far. Many people see the Bible as a book of lovely literature and of good moral teaching, but fail to see the Divine hand that caused it to be written. With only a small mental telescope—only a small measure of God's holy spirit—things become more distinct, and we can see something of the beauty of Christ's sacrifice, although we may still be more inclined to concentrate on the manner of His life than on the meaning of His death. We may see a beginning in Adam and an end in the Millennium, as did earlier saints; but with a larger telescope we can see an eon *before* and an eon *after* those that they perceived. They saw three eons, which were termed "Dispensations," but now we see that there are five.

Also we perceive that the gospel, instead of being a single message, is a double one at least, and that the gospel, or evangel, as delivered by Jesus, and taken up by the twelve apostles of the Kingdom, is quite distinct and different from that later given out by Paul. The hopes of Israel and of the world during the eons are quite different from those of the Body of Christ.

But if we can look at God's Word through an even larger spiritual telescope, we shall see that there was a

time before the eons, when all was in God, and that there will be a period after the eons, when God will be in all. And we would suggest that, however long we make the eons themselves (and they are long compared with anything that we can measure), they have nevertheless *somewhere* a definite beginning and *somewhere* a definite end. Also we would suggest that the most extensive epochs, if it is correct to use such a term in this connection, are the one *before the eons,* which stretches out into the immeasurable past, and the one *after the eons,* which extends into the never ending future. Somewhere in the past before the eons, God's purpose was conceived—all is *out of* Him; during the comparatively brief period of the eons, His purpose is being worked out—all is *through* Him; and after the eons He will continue to enjoy the unending and undiminishing rapture of its accomplishment—all is *for* Him.

Looked at in this way, the whole period covered by the Scriptures, during which God's purpose is being worked out, and in which sin and evil and death are permitted, bears the same relation to unending time as the earth bears to unlimited space. In each case, it is the relation of the finite to the infinite, the small to the immeasurably great.

Against this background, the purpose of God, in its simplest terms is this: a change over from a state before the eons when all was in God, to a state after the eons when God is in all. To use another illustration, God is piloting the ship of the universe across the ocean of time from port to port from the port that is called "all in God" to the haven that is termed "God in all." *Everything else* is a means to that end, and the panel in the Scriptures for which we have been searching, and which gives the Architect's

own conception of the fulfillment of His designs, is contained in a corner of Paul's first Corintian epistle, chapter 15, verse 28, and consists, in its English translation, of only seven words, "*that God may be All in all.*"

It is a very tiny panel compared with the building itself, and yet how comprehensive! A minute passage compared with the volume of God's Word, and yet how significant, seeing that it gives in full the goal of God's purpose of the eons! Only seven words, frequently quoted, yet, we submit, seldom given the attention they deserve.

Someone has calculated that the popular King James (Authorized) Version of the Scriptures contains 31,173 verses, consisting of 773,692 words made up of 3,566,480 letters. Now these figures have no special significance, and we quote them only to demonstrate a contrast. For though everyone of these verses, words and letters contributes something towards the outworking of God's purpose, the end result is to be found in one tiny phrase—a small part of one verse—consisting of seven tiny words made up of only twenty letters!

Over 700,000 words to describe the outworking of God's purpose—seven tiny words to describe the end result. "That God may be All in all!" One word of four letters, four words of three letters, and two words of two letters. Could anything be expressed more simply? Yet, to use a phrase of one of our poets in reference to a different subject, but undoubtedly true here, "That is all we know, and all we need to know." So little material does God need to describe the outcome of His glorious purpose!

J. H. Essex

(To be continued)

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES for NOVEMBER 1980
BEING the SIXTH NUMBER of VOLUME SEVENTY-ONE

EDITORIAL

THE two Scripture references given on our front cover reflect the mission of this magazine. As we continue to meditate on the untraceable riches of Christ (Eph.3:8), going from glory to glory (2 Cor.3:18), we are stirred up in joy and strength. Yet we are also sobered in humility.

In the present issue we read the following from the pen of Brother A. E. Knoch, about the risen Christ: "As He is, so are we, in spirit. Already, in God's sight, we are as we shall be in the future, when in the presence of our Lord, immortal, incorruptible. His burial is our baptism, and His vivification is our life." Another rich thought is discussed by Brother John Essex in his article on *The Meaning of the "All's"*. He writes, "And so, when we read 'thus God may be All in all,' we are intended to understand that everything that is known to have been 'in God' before the eons began, will feel the presence of an indwelling God when His purpose of the eons is consummated." Also in this magazine Brother Rocke reflects on *Paul's Way to Celestial Awareness*, "The celestial vantage point, far above the fleshly and soulish spheres, would put all things into the right perspective."

These are glorious themes. Yet, again, the joy that they bring is not one that makes us proud and exclusive, but humble and meek. Our calling is in the grace of Christ (Gal.1:6). It is not of ourselves lest we

should be boasting, for we are God's achievement (Eph.2:9,10). Therefore, Paul writes, "I am entreating you, then, I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called, with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love . . ." (Eph.4:1,2).

Riches and humility do not often go together. Most of us have known the pride of possessing some special treasure which perhaps someone else does not have. Our experience is that those who are rich in the world hold themselves above the rest. And this is often true among believers in what we feel are spiritual attainments. Yet the glorious riches which God has given us in Christ produce humility.

It is not a religious humility such as Brother Knoch discusses in this issue, which holds us away from God, but it is that humility which looks at others who do not know the riches of God's love and says, "There, but for the grace of God, go I." It extends to "bearing with one another" in all circumstances, even where fellow believers do not agree with us, and oppose us . . . even where they deny the glorious riches we revel in.

For, how is it that anyone can come to a realization of the transcendent riches of God's grace? It is only as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory" gives us a spirit of wisdom and revelation (Eph.1:17). We are rich beyond imagination, but we have done nothing to deserve it. Our calling is high, but in our relationship with each other it brings us low. "According as the Lord also deals graciously with you, thus also you" (Col.3:13). It is our prayer that we and our readers will so grasp the glories of the untraceable riches of Christ that we will truly be walking more worthily of such a calling, with all humility and meekness, and patience. D.H.H.

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION
(Part Two)

THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD

One of the worst robbers in Christendom is ritual. Nor should we confine this term to those vast communions which use it in their form of worship. Ritual is not merely a recalling of the Jewish service and sacrifices in such things as the celebration of the mass among those whose Christianity is no more than a name, but includes the rite of baptism among those who are alive, and intelligent, and active in the service of our Lord. For the spiritual believer there is more danger in ritual than in rationalism, for ritual is divine in its origin, and seems to be God's will, when the Word of truth is not correctly cut.

Ritual can only be countered by the precious truth of completeness in Christ. Religion implies incompleteness and demands that something be done to fill our lack. Circumcision, baptism, the keeping of decrees, of festivals, and all religious ritual are intended to make us more acceptable to God in ourselves, though none of them is more than a mere shadow. Christ is the Reality which they portray, and, in Him, we have the substance, hence do not need the shadow. Indeed, if we seek to make ourselves complete by means of these shadows, the reality will be lost to us. Few things are more needed in these days than a knowledge of our completeness in Christ.

REAL CIRCUMCISION

A considerable portion of mankind is distinguished by the sign of circumcision, because they are descendants of Abraham, and should shadow forth the fact that blessing comes through faith, not through flesh. It signifies that the flesh is cut off. It foreshadowed the cross of Christ, where He was cut off, and all further hope of anything through His flesh was at an end. In Him we also were cut off, and our flesh has no place before God. If then, our flesh is cut off, why act as if it were not so? The Circumcisionists of Paul's day lacked the reality. In fact they fought against it. With them the flesh was vitally important. They were not the circumcision, but the *maim*cision (Phil.3:2). The rite itself kept them from the reality. And so it will rob all who submit to it now that we are complete in Christ.

GENUINE BAPTISM

Circumcision was needed to enter into the community of God's people. Baptism speaks of a much nearer approach. It was for the priests when they came near to worship in the tabernacle and the temple. Symbolically it cleansed the flesh whenever it sought the divine presence. The reality is found in the entombment of Christ. The body that bore the sin of the world was laid away in the tomb. Thus has God dealt graciously with all of our offenses. All the water in the world could not have removed a single one of them. It can only *indicate* the actual cleansing. To repeat the rite, now that we have the reality, is to deny the great truth that we have all of which it speaks, in Christ our Complement.

The great proof that we have had the real baptism is that we are roused and *vivified* jointly with Him. One

who is vivified cannot offend again, but is wholly without sin. Why should such a one be baptized? Should Christ once more return to the tomb because of our offenses? Or is He alive beyond the reach of sin and death? As He is, so are we, in spirit. Already, in God's sight, we are as we shall be in the future, when in the presence of our Lord, immortal, incorruptible. His burial is our baptism, and His vivification is our life.

ERASING THE DECREES

Not only did the Jews of Paul's day seek to insist on the circumcision and baptism of converts, but they sought to put them under law. Their attempt to enslave them under the law of Moses did not succeed, due to Paul's energetic remonstrance, as we see in his Galatian letter, but this did not hinder them from making rules of their own for them, which, while they seem to free them from the observance of the Mosaic ritual, nevertheless brought them under the authority of the apostles just as if they were subjects in the millennial kingdom, instead of having a celestial allotment of their own.

So far as the relation of the nations to God is concerned they will be under the sovereignty and authority of the chosen nation in the future on earth. Nevertheless that nation, by crucifying their Messiah, has forfeited all right to such a place, and will exercise it only when once again restored to divine favor. In the book of Acts, where Israel is continually becoming more and more apostate, and James, who was not an apostle, gets the upper hand, it seems utterly unwarranted on their part to assume to dictate to the converts among the nations, except as we view this as a foretaste of the kingdom.

Although Christendom has not given much heed to the decrees, issued by James, the same thing has been repeated thousands of times in its many organizations. Men have arisen and taken upon themselves to rule and regulate the conduct of the saints by means of "disciplines" and "manuals" and other substitutes for the law, usually incorporating a portion of the Mosaic code in their own. All such attempts to bring us into bondage to human "sovereignties and authorities" are destructive of our completeness in Christ. He has nailed them to His cross. They are not *for* us, but *against* us. They are hostile to us. They bring us into bondage, after Christ has made us free. In Him we need no regulations from the hands of men.

Israel had a *divine* law, which was holy and just and good. But did it make them complete for God's presence? Far from it! Rather it revealed their incompleteness. How then shall human enactments help to make men acceptable to Him? They do not! They have the opposite effect. Let us strip them off! Such human additions to God's requirements were given the greatest weight in Israel, but it did not help them to recognize their Messiah, but rather to crucify Him. His crucifixion was a public spectacle showing how weak and worthless such things were, and at the same time a repudiation of them, and a triumph over them. No human enactment, unless it be the decree that caused Christ to be crucified, furnishes us fully for the future.

For us the figure of the body takes the place of the shadows of the law. Instead of ceasing work on a Saturday we look above and see Christ *seated* at God's right hand, His work on our behalf completed. The difference is vast. Not our work, or even our cessation from work, makes us meet for glory, but our position

in Christ has already placed us there in spirit. Knowing this, we will allow no one to judge us, should we work on the seventh day of the week, or should we eat that which has been offered to idols, or fail to keep a festival found in the law.

LET NO ONE JUDGE YOU

The decrees issued from Jerusalem were partly concerned with food. The nations were not to be allowed to eat anything which had been strangled, or blood (Acts 15:20). Now the apostle puts an end to such prohibitions. The law of Moses dealt with such matters as food and drink, the details of a festival, the new moons, and the sabbaths, not that it might make those who kept it perfect thereby, but, partly at least, in order to foreshadow the true perfection of the future in connection with Christ. He is the true Food and Drink. The festivals point to His work and the sabbath to the cessation of all work for salvation, in Him. All of these have a future fulfillment on the earth, hence have their place with the people of the earth, but not with us, whose destiny is different.

LET NO ONE ARBITRATE AGAINST YOU

Israel had a divine ritual. It would have been high-handed presumption for anyone of the people to enter the holy places. Such a one would send his representative or messenger, the priest, in his place, and not without due regard to the formalities prescribed by the Mosaic ritual. It seems like real humility today to take a far-off stand, and allow another to take our place in approach to God, by means of elaborate rites and splendid ceremonies, which appeal to the eye, but it is a sham. The mind of the flesh can actually pride itself on this humility, and turn against those who con-

sider themselves fit for God's presence for no other reason than their confidence in Christ.

HOLDING THE HEAD

Ritual calls for the intervention of intermediate messengers, such as priests or clergy, and these take the place which belongs to Christ as the Head of the body. Ritual demands an organ*ization* rather than a living organ*ism*, in which each member is in living connection with the Head. We should hold fast the Head and reject all interfering substitutes. Ritual demands stagnation; faith brings growth. Occupation with the shadows and symbols is not to be compared with vital union with Him to Whom they point. Let us not be subject to these but to our living Head, and grow into the assurance of our completeness in Him, where no rites or ceremonies are needed to finish our perfection.

DEATH TO THE ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD

In Christ we have died to everything which is against us. In Him we died to sin (Rom.6:2). Those under the law died to it (Gal.2:19). We have been crucified to the world (Gal.6:14). The "elements" of the world had their proper place in the past, in Israel. During their minority they were enslaved to these elements (Gal.4:3). When the Galatians went back to these things they scrutinized days and months and seasons and years (Gal.4:9,10). The elements are poor and infirm, yet there is a continual tendency on the part of the saints to fall back to them. Religion is practically composed of them. But we have died to them.

Were we living in the world, as Israel was under the law, then we would have part in the "Christian religion," with rules and regulations and a ritual to be

observed—just as most of the saints are! Then, indeed, all would be negative—you shall *not* touch this or taste that, nor make contact with the other. These regulations are made by men and seem to be wise measures for the conduct of religious worship. How much better that all churches go through the same ritual each Sunday! And what an advantage that all observe the same calendar and the same festivals each year! From the standpoint of the world this all seems excellent, but it is fit for infants, not for full-fledged saints.

Willful humility has no value in God's sight. In one of the great confessions in a foreign country, every time the Lord's supper is observed, the whole congregation must repeat together something like the following: "I, poor, miserable, sinful creature, confess herewith all my sins . . . ." Yet, after reiterating this for a lifetime, most of them never realize that they are anything of the kind. In other places they fast and castigate themselves. But all of this is powerless to effect its purpose. All of it is directed toward the improvement of the flesh, yet it only serves to make it worse. We have died to the elements of the world, and are mature in Christ, hence pay no heed to human decrees.

SOUL OR SPIRIT

Philosophy is dependent on human experience, which is abnormal at present, hence it cannot reason to any satisfactory conclusion. Religion seeks to deal with the sensations rather than the spirit, hence lacks permanent power. Both utterly fail to settle the problems with which they deal. They are essentially soulish, not spiritual. Christ and His cross and His crown are the only satisfactory solution to the riddle of

the universe. He exemplifies God's Wisdom and God's Righteousness. He is all that God needs to effect the purpose of His love with creation. He is all that we need in order to fully fit us for that perfection. He is our Philosophy and our Religion. A.E.K.

(To be continued)

REPORT FROM JAMAICA

The 23rd annual Convocation of the Bible Truth Churches of God was scheduled this year for August 3-7, in Kingston, Jamaica, but "Hurricane Allen" which passed near that island on the 5th, interrupted the meetings for two days. They regrouped on the 7th and carried on until the 10th of August, reporting a wonderful time of fellowship with the saints, sharing the evangel of the grace of God and the word of the conciliation. Bro. Thomas Sutton of New York was the guest speaker. Our representative in Jamaica, Bro. James Hemmings, was appointed General Overseer for the groups there, succeeding Bro. N. H. Hawthorne who retired at 91 years of age. Bro. Samuel Rickard was appointed the "national teacher" for Jamaica.

The hurricane caused considerable damage in the island, but no loss of life among the brethren. One of their temporary church buildings was lost as well as roofs from several other buildings, and there was great damage to their crops. We have sent some emergency relief to them, and Bro. Hemmings reports that it was received with much appreciation. Aid also was received from the brethren in England.

Bro. Hemmings has provided us with a brief history of the Bible Truth Church of God. The Jamaican work began in 1925 with the evangelistic efforts of Rev. Leon A. Bynoe of New York City. Brother Bynoe returned for many more visits in later years, and in 1948 he sent Bro. E. C. King to Jamaica, who introduced many of the teachings which have appeared in the *Unsearchable Riches* magazine. There are twelve branches of the Bible Truth Church of God in Jamaica with about 400 members, most of whom are small farmers or are unemployed because of the present economic problems in the country. There is considerable interest in our literature which we try to make available to them from time to time.

HABAKKUK

IN "The load which Habakkuk the prophet perceived" the whole question of the relation of law to faith is dramatized as a providential mystery developed in dialog between the prophet and God. In 1:2-4 the prophet complains of the falling away of his people. Violence, oppression, strife and contention prevail. Judah has defied the law. When the prophet begins to reflect upon its reality, puzzles emerge. The law is "torpid"—proving itself unequal to curb the flesh. The most aggravating feature of the situation is the fact that the extant condition seems to have faded out of the divine thought and interest altogether. God does not hear prayer. He does not rescue the innocent. Circumstances have conspired to produce a perplexing situation sorely taxing the prophet's faith.

Then, in 1:5-11, the Lord directs the prophet to look among the nations, because there the storm is gathering that will burst upon Judah. On the distant horizon the Chaldeans have risen as a world power, trampling down the nations. Ere long God will do an unheard of thing: He will stir them against Judah, as His punitive instrument for law-breaking. They are fierce, terrible, unmerciful, of quick action and hasty impulse, and recognize no authority other than their own predatory instincts. Like a mighty cyclone, they sweep onward toward Judah, overthrowing kingdom after kingdom

in the path of their irresistible advance. On reaching Palestine the haughty conqueror gives full rein to his passion for destruction, and strives ruthlessly to exterminate many nations. Trusting with carnal confidence in the unexampled success of his arms, he worships his own vigor and becomes guilty.

At this point (1:12) we meet a strange paradox. How can a threat of destruction beget assurance of preservation? God has revealed Himself as being behind the destructive instrument; and if God is back of it, then He controls and directs it and makes it subservient to His own ends. The prophet falls back on the immutability of His counsel made known to the fathers aforetime. He is a Rock—stable, unmovable, invincible. His changelessness, His supremacy, His holiness, His stability—these elements of God's character assure that nothing can induce Him to change His mind and annul the Abrahamic promise.

The perfection of the divine character has cleared up a vexing question by teaching the prophet to differentiate between His purpose and method. Since God is blessed, He can only act in blessing, for He is always consistent with Himself. He could only commit Himself to a course eventuating in the blessing of every creature (2:14). No destructive agency can hold permanent place in His purpose. Habakkuk's teaching of the transitoriness of law rests on the impregnable foundation of God's character. Destructive in character, the law is necessarily evanescent; otherwise it would militate against the promise and invalidate it. We may not be able always to trace His purpose or interpret every feature of His work, yet we know that God's will is being done. We know that His ways subserve His purpose. This is an absolute condition of our moral and mental sanity.

We long to know that we have not fallen into life headlong, that we are in the hands of Him that made us, and that He is always near. It is not adversities that men fear, but adversities without God in them. It is not calamities that oppress and depress us, but calamities unrelated to any divine purpose, that spring from nothing and lead to nothing. If these are appointed by God for the discipline and development of mankind, they can be viewed with equanimity and borne with fortitude; men break down only when they view them as the spiteful work of an enemy or the blind raging of a storm. Now from this distress the belief in the divine supremacy and goodness saves. He is in the darkness as well as in the light, in failure and sorrow as well as in success and joy, in judgment as well as in mercy, in death as well as in life. This is really the view men desire to reach.

We know as little as before why things are as they are; but we know nevertheless that they work for the ultimate good of the nations. We know that God is carrying on the great historical movements and is working His will therein. He is in the ordinary movements of life and society, and His gracious purpose is being accomplished in and through the movements of humanity.

This doctrine of the divine care can be held only in connection with the purpose of the ages, and needs ages for its vindication. It is a long-range doctrine—for *faith* and not for sight (2:4). God's providence involves failure as well as success, loss as well as gain, sickness as well as health, war as well as peace. He is the God of all things, and is God over all things, and is blessed forevermore.

In chapter 3, the prophet's prayer reveals the interaction of feeling, intellect and moral will. "Yahweh,

I hear Your report; I fear, Yahweh, Your contrivance." Such was the impression produced by the news of the Chaldean invasion. Fear drove Habakkuk to prayer, and communion calmed him. Upheld by faith in God's mercy, he regains poise and looks with composure on judgment as it begins to move on its course. Thus rooted and grounded on the immutability of God's counsel, faith weathers the storms of opposition (3:17,18). Yes, it rejoices in tribulations, is beset by all manner of trouble, but comes off more than conqueror (3:19).

(The preceding article was adapted from "The Habakkuk Quotation" in PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, *by Vladimir Gelesnoff.)*

FROM THE OFFICE

A renewal envelope is enclosed with this issue for all North American subscribers whether or not their subscription is due. Subscribers in Australia should remit through their agent as listed on our inside front cover, and those in the British Isles should do so through our agent there, Frank Orton, 58 Moor Lane, Bramcote, Nottingham. Canadian subscribers may send their renewals directly to us or to Ewald Degen, 246 Seven Persons Drive, S. R. Medicine Hat, Alberta T1B-2E1.

A number of magazines this year were sent out with occasional blank pages. We apologize for this. If you received one of these please write to us about it, and we will replace the issue with one fully printed.

We hope to issue the ten-year index for volumes 61 through 70 during 1981. The task of compiling the lists of scriptural references and subjects was handled by volunteer workers who did an excellent job.

Because of the press of work, especially on the Old Testament translation project, we have been unable to prepare a Fellowship Directory this year or send out newsletters to our regular mailing list. We do prepare brief newsletters, however, to enclose with replies to letters received.

THE MEANING OF THE "ALL'S"

THE most essential thing to grasp about the few words that form the expression, "That God may be All in all," is that we may not qualify them except as required by their immediate context. For example, we may not limit the second "all" to include only those who believe during this life, as so many sincere Christians endeavor to do. If we were allowed to impose such a limit here, then we might also claim the right to do so in other places adjacent to this text. For instance, we might say, "As, in Adam, *some*, or *most*, are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall *some*, or *most*, be vivified."

Worse still, when the apostle speaks of the nullifying of *all* sovereignty and *all* authority and power, and of the subjecting of *all* under Christ's feet, we must not read this as though it means that only those sovereignties and authoirities and powers will be subjected, that are willing to be conformed to God's will in this respect.

When we seek to impose limits on this word, are we not doing what is so aptly expressed by the hymn-writer?

But men make God's love too narrow
By false limits of their own,
And they magnify His vengeance
With a zeal He will not own.

Speaking of God, in Romans 11:36, Paul says that "out of Him, and through Him, and for Him, is all." Now these words can have no force whatever if the word "all" is restricted; it cannot be limited, for instance, to "all good" and take no account of that which is evil. It is true that the word "all" is always limited by its context, but here, as in 1 Corinthians 15, the only exception to the "all" is God Himself.

In 1 Corinthians 15:27, Paul goes to some trouble to explain that, when he says that God subjects all under Christ's feet, only God Himself may be excluded from the scope of the word "all" in this connection, and *that* only because He is the One Who performs the act of subjecting. And so, when we read "that God may be All in all," we are intended to understand that everything that is known to have been "in God" before the eons began, will feel the presence of an indwelling God when His purpose of the eons is consummated.

But if we may not limit the second "all" in the phrase we are considering, dare we limit the first? God will be *All* in all. Do we realize—can we realize—what this means? Can *you* realize what it will mean to you when God is *All* in you? Not part, but *All* in you?

Let us differentiate between the thought of God being All *to* you, and God being All *in* you. You may feel that God is All to you now: that if you take God out of your lives, nothing would be left. But certainly God is not yet *All* in you. If He were, you would never make a mistake, never have a sinful thought, never do an unkind action. On the contrary, the Divine presence would be reflected in everything you did, however tiny or however great, and you would be *filled full* with the spirit and the power and the wisdom and the love of God.

THE SUBJECTION OF GOD'S SON

It may help us to grasp the force of this happy condition, "that God may be All in all," when we consider what is needed in the last resort to bring it about. We read that God subjects all under Christ's feet, and this fulfills Paul's prediction in Philippians 2:9-11, that on account of all that Christ relinquished and suffered in descending to the depths of the death on the cross, "God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming Him as Lord, for the glory of God, the Father." Here the whole universe is seen praising and acclaiming God's Son, to Whom all will have been subjected, and we are told that this is for the glory of God Himself.

But this is not the absolute fulfillment of God's purpose, for one further step has to be taken before His goal is reached, and that is the abdication of God's Son. This tremendous event—this giving up of the Kingdom to His God and Father—is described in these terms, "Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all."

The plain fact seems to be that God may be much in all, but cannot be All in all, so long as the entire universe is acclaiming Jesus as Lord (even though that acclamation be for the glory of God, the Father). Acclaiming Jesus as Lord is the final phase, and a supremely glorious one, of the purpose of God, but it is not the end. This comes only when Jesus Himself abdicates, in order that the entire praise and glory may be given to God. By this step, we are told, God becomes All in all.

By this step, the subjecting work, which is the real purpose of the eons, comes to full fruition, and God takes His desired place as a universal *Father.* That is His sovereign will—to be in recognition and in fact, a *Father,* or rather, *the* Father, not just of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor only of those who even now in spirit may cry, "Abba, Father," but of all His creatures in the complete universe, for after Him every kindred in heaven and earth is being named (Eph.3:15).

EONIAN NOT ETERNAL

Consideration of these matters drives us to several inescapable conclusions, and may lead us to adjust our thinking.

One of these is, that much that we may have regarded as lasting and eternal, is, on the contrary, only temporal. In fact everything to which we attach the word "eonian" (in the King James Version "eternal") *must* be temporary—eonian life, the eonian burden of glory reserved for the saints of the Body of Christ, even the eonian God. The "eonian God" of Romans 16:26, is not the same as what the K.J.V. phrase, "the eternal God," would suggest to our minds, for God was not an "eonian God" before the eons commenced, nor will He be an "eonian God" after they have run their course. He is only an "eonian God" during the working out of His eonian purpose. So the terms "eonian life," "eonian burden of glory" (which is our immediate expectation) and "eonaian God" are temporary in the sense that they are applicable only during the period of the eons. Life and glory will, however, in themselves be permanent, and will continue when the adjective "eonian" has passed away.

But why do the Scriptures never promise "eternal

life" for all mankind, and "an eternal burden of glory" for the saints? The answer lies simply in the fact that God has promised something *far greater*, and the greater every time includes the lesser.

There is no need for God to promise you *eternal* life if He is to be *All* in you, for then you will have life inherent—life dwelling in you because God is in you—life that can never be touched by death or pain or decay, for death and all that goes with it will by then have passed into final destruction. You will have put on immortality in the sense that you will have become "un-deathed"—freed for ever from death's power and released for all time from its dominion. And this is something that will apply not just to you, but to all.

Similarly, there is no need for God to promise you "an *eternal* burden of glory," if the God of all glory is to be All in you, for then you will be filled with glory beyond all present comprehension. *Eonian* gifts are always in the nature of advance gifts, granted precedently to carry you to the end of the eons; there is no need for them after the consummation in the light of this greater promise.

Will you require an assurance of peace when the God of peace is All in you? *Then* you will have a peace which cannot be disturbed by as much as a flutter, as well as a joy which cannot be even tinged with sorrow, and a righteousness which cannot be tainted by sin. God's peace, God's joy, God's righteousness will be yours, and will be shared by every member of His universal family. The great God of the universe will be All in all.

Divine power, Divine wisdom, Divine love in complete measure will be the portion of each when God is All in all. Complete in the sense that each will be *filled*

full of these Godlike characteristics. Note that the scripture does not say that "*All God* will be in all," but that God will be "*All* in all."

THE GLORY OF THE CONSUMMATION

Can we even begin to realize what will be the glory of the outcome of God's purpose? It is certain that if we could be transported for a few moments to a time after the consummation our whole outlook on things present would change completely. For just as the glory of a finished building is greater than the glory of a finished part, so the glory of God's completed purpose will be greater than the glory of any phase of that purpose. If, then, we have tried to imagine the glory of the restored earth, when all the sorrows, spoken of in Revelation 21, are passed away; if, in addition, we have tried to estimate the glory of the eonian burden which is reserved for us in the heavens, and which Paul could only describe as "transcendently transcendent;" if, indeed, we have any faint conception of what must be the glory of the risen Lord, seated at the right hand of God, what, then will be the glory of God's completed purpose, when He is All in all? Truly it will be transcendently transcendently transcendent, yes, ten thousand times transcendent.

The complete purpose of God in creating a whole universe of individual beings, both spiritual and physical, with faculties to comprehend Himself, is that He might eventually be in all. Let us examine our panel more closely. God in you, and God in us; God *All* in you and *All* in us. God All in Jesus? Yes, of course! God All in the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ? Yes, certainly! All in Simon Peter, who denied that he knew Christ, and disowned Him three times? Yes, we can have no doubts about Peter. All in Judas

Iscariot, who betrayed his Master? Is Judas included in that 'all' in the panel? *Dare* we leave him out? And what about Nero, that great monster that encompassed the death of the apostle Paul? God All in Nero? Yes, but he will not then possess those characteristics that made him so obnoxious as an emperor. He will not be Nero, the tyrant, then, but a son of God, like all the rest.

And what are we to say about Satan, the archenemy of all, the chief opposer of God? Is he included in that panel? If we truly believe that God will be All in all, we must answer, Yes; otherwise we have to admit the existence of one who has come into being apart from God. Only if God is All in *all* (absolutely), can He receive the glory due to Him as the Originator of His grand and wonderful purpose; only thus can the great questions of creation and disposing be answered. Only thus can God justify Himself in loving Jacob and hating Esau; in creating vessels to honor and vessels to dishonor. Our Lord was the supreme example of a vessel created to honor; Satan the outstanding case of a vessel created to dishonor. It was God Who created evil (Isa.45:7); Who "created the ruiner to harm" (Isa.54:16); Whose hand "travailed with the crooked (or fugitive) serpent" (Job 26:13). Only in the light of the final outcome of His purpose can God be vindicated in all His doings, but what a complete vindication it is! A God Who will save to the uttermost; Who will turn an implacable enemy into a pattern for all who would afterwards believe, as He did with Saul of Tarsus; a God Who will not lose one of His vast creation, but will ultimately reconcile all in heaven and earth to Himself through Christ, making peace through the blood of His cross. Not one will be found missing when the final count is made. God will be All

in all. Yet cut short God's purpose at any point prior to the consummation (as many believers do), and God would be proved unjust, for death would still operate on many.

ALL IS FOR GOD

Another point upon which many of us must adjust our thoughts, is this: We may at some time have spoken of God's purpose for mankind, or His purpose for His people, or His purpose for the universe. We may well be in order in speaking of His purpose *concerning* one or another, but His purpose is essentially *for* Himself. He has conceived it for His own great satisfaction and glory and joy. "*Out of Him* and *through Him* and *for Him* is all; to Him be glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:26). We may have come to realize that all indeed is out of God, and that all, both good and evil, is through Him; but we do not grow into a full realization of Him, and a full appreciation of His purpose, until we completely accept the fact that *all* is *for* Him. He has conceived, and is carrying out, His purpose in order that He, God, may be All in all; that He, God, may reap a supreme delight; that He, God, may obtain glory. The fact that we and others are to be richly and eternally blessed is secondary to this prime fact. Even the glorification of Christ is secondary to the glorification of God Himself.

The great scriptural paradox is that the more God seeks to glorify Himself, the more will blessings accrue to His creatures. Self-glorification in men is an evil because it invariably leads to selfishness at the expense of others. The very opposite is true of God. We can rejoice with all our hearts that He has purposed to glorify Himself with such a magnificent and all-embracing glory.

OUR ATTITUDE TO THE CONSUMMATION

Let us ask ourselves a question. Do we tend to give too much consideration to the various portions of God's purpose, and too little to its ultimate fulfillment? We would answer in this way.

God is the supreme Economist. The earth, which He created to be the stage upon which the main events of His purpose would be enacted, is but a tiny speck in His vast universe; and one *small square yard* out of the many millions of square *miles* of the earth's surface, one small square yard at Golgotha was sufficient room for Him to demonstrate to the uttermost His immeasurable love for all His creatures. The Book, which tells us of this, is but one collection of writings compared with the vast multitude of volumes which cram the shelves of the libraries of the world, yet who has fully assimilated it? The eons, by the same rule, are just a few sin-infected moments inserted by God into an otherwise unbroken continuance of a sinless eternity.

Now we cannot grasp eternity—we can only glimpse it; and for that reason we are sure that it is right and proper that we should give the most consideration to those tremendously important parts of our Father's great Design which are within our comprehension, and especially that part which most intimately concerns ourselves. Nevertheless, we are convinced that we do well to make *more frequent excursions* to that corner of the edifice where the Architect's panel of the finished whole is to be found. By fixing our eyes on the consummation, we may the better be able to keep each portion of God's Word in its true perspective.

Again, we are sure that it is right for us to pray for

the fulfillment of any particular part of God's purpose, as Jesus taught His disciples to pray for the coming of the Kingdom. With equal propriety, we can pray for that blessed day when our Lord shall come to meet us in the air, and receive us unto Himself.

Yet, because all such prayers must necessarily be tinged with an element of self-interest, we are persuaded that we do extremely well to pray constantly for the coming of that day which will see our great Creator's purpose consummated, for then we give ineffable joy to our loving Father, since *then* we are praying that He will achieve all that He has willed to accomplish, and in which *He* will find *His entire heart's delight*, and *all* His creatures their *everlasting joy*.

J. H. Essex

(To be continued)

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

To tell of God's great purpose is their aim,
Declare His faithfulness, His wisdom prove;
They speak of His unbounded power and love,
And all His precious promises proclaim.
Fear not to read, and fear not to believe,
For God is far more gracious than all thought.
The joys that lie in store when all is wrought
Surpass the grandest hopes one can conceive.

Dear Reader, God desires our trust in Him.
He sent His Son to crown His love for man.
This was the apex of His glorious plan
Which has *salvation* as its constant theme;
All to be saved! With none His promise fails.
He must be *All in all* when Love prevails.

J.H.E.

PAUL'S WAY TO CELESTIAL AWARENESS

"YET JEWS FROM ANTIOCH AND ICONIUM come on, and persuading the throngs and stoning Paul, they dragged him outside of the city, inferring that he is dead. Yet when the disciples surround him, rising, he entered into the city. And on the morrow he came out with Barnabas to Derbe" (Acts 14:19,20).

There is no indication in Luke's report how many days or even weeks may have passed between the two major events in Lystra: the healing of the lame man, and the stoning of Paul. The miracle by itself and the instantaneous effect on the Lycaonian crowds would not have stirred up the jealous Jews in other cities. It is conceivable that Paul and Barnabas had some opportunity to proclaim the evangel in Lystra, and that the Lord testified to the word of His grace.

Even though Pisidian Antioch was more than a hundred miles away, some Jews from this city and others from Iconium arrived in Lystra and succeeded in inciting the *disillusioned* part of the crowds against the two apostles. The latter had been hailed as gods by the Lycaonians who remembered their local mythology according to which two of the gods, disguised as poor mortals, had once come to the area and had been turned away by the population, apart from one elderly couple. As the myth goes, the plain was submerged in a flood and all the people perished because of their rejection of the gods, and only the two

friendly old folks survived. Certainly the Lycaonians would not want to incur the wrath of the gods again; hence they had made preparations to pay Barnabas and his speaker Paul divine honors. When the two apostles had convinced the throngs that they were no gods, they had spoiled the festive mood of the crowds who were obviously very *disillusioned* about the cancellation of the sacrifices which were intended to honor the stately Zeus and his messenger Hermes (*cf* 14:12).

Luke does not mention how the Jews from Pisidian Antioch and Iconium succeeded in "persuading the throngs." Perhaps the Lystran idolators were given a new interpretation of the miracle healing, namely that it had been accomplished by two very evil men who had used some form of sinister magic. What happened to Paul, was not the judicial stoning according to the Mosaic Law, but rather a riotous assault against his life. Apparently the Lystran disciples were in no position to protect the apostle. When he was struck down and was unconscious, the mob "dragged him outside of the city, inferring that he is dead," thus trying to conceal their crime from the Roman authorities.

Imagine the joyful surprise when the disciples found Paul alive, even though bruised and bleeding from the stones of the rioters. The Sahidic version suggests that it was under the cover of darkness that the disciples brought the apostle back into the city, possibly into the home of Eunice, where first aid was administered to him. On the morrow Barnabas took him to Derbe, a frontier city of the province of Galatia, about 40 miles away.

IN WEARINESS MORE EXCEEDINGLY

It was customary in those days to mark a slave with

the brand of his master. The stoning in Lystra, five Jewish scourgings, three Roman beatings, and blows received in other persecutions, had doubtless left many marks on Paul's body, so he could write the Galatians at a later date: "For the rest, let no one afford me weariness, for *I* am bearing in my body the brand marks of the Lord Jesus Christ" (6:17).

The apostle mentions the stoning in his catalog of sufferings in 2 Corinthians 11:23 *ff.* "In weariness [plural!] more exceedingly, in jails more exceedingly, in blows inordinately, in deaths often. By Jews five times I got forty save one. Thrice am I flogged with rods, once am I stoned . . . ." And on the next page of the same epistle we read: "I shall also be coming to apparitions and revelations of the Lord" (12:1).

How was the apostle able to stand all this hatred? He wrote, "Now we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the transcendence of the power may be of God and not of us. In everything, being afflicted, but not distressed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not perishing—always carrying about in the body the deadening of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our body . . . . Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless that within us is being renewed day by day" (2 Cor.4:7-10, 16). Paul enjoyed a continual spiritual refreshment which was sufficient for the demands of the service for his Lord, and so he wrote to the Galatians, "With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ" (2:20). Living in union with Christ certainly did not result in immunity from persecution, suffering and affliction, but rather in immunity from distress and despair.

INEFFABLE DECLARATIONS

"Snatched away to the third heaven . . . snatched away into paradise. And he hears ineffable declarations, which it is not allowed a man to speak" (2 Cor.12:2-4). "God has a way of giving His servants a vision of the end at the beginning, to sustain them in the trials on the way. Joseph knew God's purpose for him and was prepared for the pit and the prison, for he realized that these led to the throne. So, we may well believe, God made known to the apostle Paul His purposes of grace for the nations long before Paul made them public from Rome. And what time would be so opportune as this, when the evangel for the first time is carried directly to the nations? Indeed, about fourteen years later, Paul seems to refer to his stoning at Lystra as the time when he received his greatest visions and revelations, which he was not allowed to publish until his kingdom ministry in Acts was brought to a close. Such a revelation must have been made in a setting calculated to reveal God's grace. And what occasion compares with this? Let us remember that Paul was stoned but once and this by the Gentiles just as soon as the evangel breaks through to them. The Jews reject the evangel and call down judgment. How dire must be the punishment due to these uncircumcised aliens for stoning the chosen vessel God had sent for their salvation! This is surely the opportunity demanded by grace to show its potency! They drag his body, battered and bleeding, outside the city, but his spirit flies far ahead to the paradise of the new earth, and soars into the heights of the third heaven. There he sees the despised, undeserving Gentiles, who had stoned him to death, ruling the celestial realms as members of Christ's body and *blessed with every spiritual blessing among the*

celestials (Eph.1:3). Here we reach the summit of grace, the secret (1 Cor.2:7) which God had prepared for those who love Him. Though Paul was not really dead, it is well to note that, from this time on, he reckons himself and all believers as having died, and as living a resurrection life (2 Cor.1:9)" (*Concordant Commentary,* page 201).

IN CHRIST JESUS SEATED IN THE CELESTIAL REALM, IN SPIRIT

"And on the morning he came out with Barnabas to Derbe. Evangelizing that city besides and making a considerable number of disciples . . ." (Acts 14:20,21).

Luke does not mention how wearisome and difficult the 40-mile trip to Derbe may have been to Paul whose body and limbs were still aching from the stoning on the preceding day. He may have been very quiet on the road; he felt no resentment against his enemies, and there was certainly no bitter brooding over the injuries which he had received. However he may have pondered over his spiritual experience which he had had while being unconscious, though he could not talk even to Barnabas about the ineffable declarations which he had heard.

It is conceivable that from here on Paul enjoyed his celestial status and was better able to view the events around him more objectively, almost in the same way as his risen Lord would see them. The celestial vantage point, far above the fleshly and soulish spheres, would put all things into the right perspective. This was because of his enhanced knowledge of the divine purpose of the eons, i.e. to head up all in the Christ and to make God's multifarious wisdom known even to the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials.

Paul learned to take his stand on his celestial allotment (as if already seated among the celestials) while going on with his service in the terrestrial sphere. Hence he was able to write: "Being reviled, we are blessing; being persecuted, we are bearing with it; being calumniated, we are entreating. As the offscourings of the world we became, the scum of all things, hitherto" (1 Cor.4:12,13).

When Paul and Barnabas reached the southeastern frontier of Roman Galatia at Derbe, they had escaped the pursuit of their stubborn Jewish antagonists and were able to rest from the strenuous months of their campaign for the word of God and of the Lord. When the apostle, many years later, wrote his genuine child in faith about the persecutions and sufferings which occurred to him in Galatia, he mentioned Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, but not Derbe (*cf* 2 Tim.3:11). Hence it seems that "evangelizing that city" did not meet any major opposition from either Jews or Gentiles. Thus, in the course of the following weeks and months, "a considerable number of disciples" formed the nucleus of a local ecclesia, among them Gaius the *Derbian*, one of the numerous fellow travelers who occasionally accompanied the apostle part of the way (Gaius of Corinth, the Macedonian, was another one of these, *cf* Acts 19:29; 20:4).

OUR CELESTIAL STATUS

Our own awareness of being seated "together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus" is almost continually dimmed by the powers of darkness. Time and again, our spirit may be dragged down to the earthly sphere where the spirit of the Adversary is now operating among the sons of stubbornness. The eyes of our hearts may be easily diverted from the spiritual

truth about our celestial status, downward to the lower planes of soulish sensations and earthly events. Whenever this happens (and we may be totally unaware of this), then we lose (at least temporarily) the full enjoyment of our celestial status and start seeing things and people from the usual earthly viewpoint, i.e. with a very *limited* perspective. Under such circumstances, earthly events begin to loom large, and we are easily overwhelmed by their seeming importance.

However, living *in union with Christ,* as Paul was, and praying as he did, will certainly open up for us a supply of vitalizing spiritual energy which flows out of the transcendent greatness of *God's power for us* who are believing (*cf* Eph.1:19; 2:6). H.H.R.

(To be continued)

CONFERENCE REPORTS

The sixth annual convention of the Concordant Scripture Concern in western Canada was held in Calgary, Alberta, on October 4-6. Pastor Victor Graham of Faith Tabernacle and Brother Ewald Degen were the hosts, with Brother Leander Peters, Hans Rakow and Art Kerber serving as moderators. Besides Brothers Graham, Peters and Rakow, Dr. J. W. Goerzen, Jack Heynen and Dean Hough brought messages on the theme, "Walking Worthily of our Calling" based on Ephesians 4 and 5. The transcendent grace in our calling was stressed and its striking relationship to humility and holiness.

A similar theme, based on Colossians 2:6,7, was used for the twenty-second German Concordant Conference held in the Black Forest near Karlsbad, West Germany, September 6-14. There were about 120 participants with several hundred more attending on the two Sundays, filling the meeting hall to capacity. Brother Herman H. Rocke was one of the speakers, continuing his messages on the book of Acts. This year he spoke on Acts 14:26-16:40 with such subjects as "Our Freedom in Christ," and "The Macedonian Call."

A PROFANED PEOPLE

IN THE MIDST of Ezekiel 22, between two sections which charge Jerusalem and Judah with profaning themselves in open disobedience to the law, there is a brief statement of the case which is couched in figurative language (22:17-22). The house of Israel is like dross to Yahweh, but the Lord adds that it is like the "dross of *silver.*" As with the parables of Jesus we sometimes can more readily find hints of the broader purpose of God in the figurative than in the literal language. Yahweh's anger against His people leads to judgment, and this is stated literally: "I scatter you among the nations, and I toss you away among the lands, and I cause your uncleanness to come to an end from you . . . . Then you shall know that I am Yahweh" (22:15,16). But what will it mean to know Yahweh?

In the figure the fury of the Lord is compared to the smelting of silver (v.22). There is a positive purpose; it is for good. Israel was like lesser metals and like the dross of silver, but God's wrath will refine and fuse them into pure silver. To know Yahweh truly will be to know Him in the miracle of the rebirth and the glory He will grant to His people.

Nevertheless, the general tone of this chapter is severe and harsh. The princes (6,25) and chiefs (27), the priests (26) and prophets (28) and the people of the land (29) have all profaned themselves with their sins. They have disobeyed the law; they have failed to keep

their part of the covenant agreement made at Sinai. The list of offenses given in Ezekiel 22:7-12 should be compared with the specific instructions of the law. The following passages are arranged from the tentative Concordant Version of the Old Testament:

Glorify `your father and `your mother, that your days may be [1]prolonged on the ground which Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you (Ex.20:12).

[+]As to the sojourner, you shall not tyrannize, nor oppress him, for you came to be sojourners in the land of Egypt. Any widow [+]or orphan you shall not humiliate (Ex.22:21,22).

`My sabbaths shall you observe, and My sanctuary shall you fear. I am Yahweh (Lev.19:30).

You shall not go about as a talebearer [t]among your people, [S]nor[n] shall you stand [on]against the blood of your associate. I am Yahweh (Lev.19:16).

The nakedness of your father and the nakedness of your mother you shall not expose (Lev.18:7).

And you shall not approach to a woman in the period of her uncleanness, to expose her nakedness (Lev.18:19).

And to the wife of your companion you shall not give your lying for seed, to be unclean [t]by her (Lev.18:20).

The nakedness of your daughter-in-law you shall not expose (Lev.18:15).

The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother, kindred at home or kindred outside, you shall not expose her nakedness (Lev.18:9).

[+] You shall not take a bribe, for the bribe is blinding the unclosed [7]eyes[ncs] and is subverting the words of the righteous (Ex.23:8).

If you [1]obligate `My people, `the humble with you, with silver, you shall not [1b]be as a money lender to him; you shall not [pl]impose interest on him (Ex.22:25).

You shall not extort from `your associate, nor shall you pillage (Lev.19:13).

In every respect the children of Israel had disobeyed the law. The only hope is in a new covenant where all the terms will be fulfilled by the Lord, and that is what is promised in chapter 36. Then it will be as Isaiah prophesied (Isa.1:25-27) that the nation will be refined and purified from its dross.

TEXTUAL NOTES

The use of **blow** (v.20) rather than the Masoretic reading **leave** is based on the contextual pattern of **convene, blow** (or **puff**) and **fuse**. Compare the note in THE COMPANION BIBLE, page 1137. We have used the word **princes** rather than **prophets** in verse 25 since it appears more appropriate to the context (the prophets are in view in verse 28). Both of these changes are based on the Septuagint and require only slight adjustments to the Hebrew. The other textual changes in this chapter are additions from the Septuagint or represent only minor changes in the Hebrew such as the use of **on** rather than **to** in verse 9.

D.H.H.

ADA E. CHRISTENSEN

Our sister in the Lord, Mrs. Harold F. Christensen of Hillsboro, Oregon, died on August 2, 1980 just days before her 71st birthday. She had been ill for many years but had greatly rejoiced in the truths of the Scriptures, and prior to her loss of memory would speak of the glories of the evangel eagerly.

THE WORK IN HUNGARY

Periodically we hear from Brother Charles Balazs of Budapest, Hungary, who has been working on a concordant translation of the Scriptures for many years. He recently reported that he has completed the Hungarian C.V. Sublinear of the New Testament and is continuing with the idiomatic version.

CONSOLATION IN EXPECTATION

CONSOLE one another with these words (1 Thess.4:18). The earliest revelation concerning our future fate was given to saints sorrowing for their loved ones. And to this day there are no more comforting words for the bereaved believer than Paul's message concerning those who were put to repose in Thessalonica. Here we have the balm we need for our wounded feelings when a beloved believer is put to repose. All has to do with our future experience at His presence. It is a solace for our *souls.*

In this it differs from Paul's revelations to the Corinthians, for that gives us the glories of our resurrection *bodies,* and ends with an exhortation to abound in the *work* of the Lord (1 Cor.15:58). There we are told that our bodies will not be raised soilish but celestial, not with blood, but vivified directly by spirit. The soil and air are mediums through which the power which comes from the sun is supplied to our bodies. In our new bodies these will not be needed. Life will flow to us directly, from its divine source, and abundantly, unhampered by the means of supply.

Our consolation increases as we consider the expectation of His calling (Eph.1:18) with all its glories which we will share as the complement of the Head of all future rule. This appeals to our *spirits.* In contrast to our poor expectations in this life, there seems to be no limit to the riches and glories that await us in the

next. These are promised to us, not on account of our deserts, but rather the opposite. God's main object is to reveal *Himself* to the heavenly hosts, especially the riches of His *grace* and *love*, so He needs such undeserving subjects as we are in order to press home, by practical examples, what He can do for those who are unworthy of His gifts and have done much to draw forth His enmity and little to deserve His favor.

Let us not miss the marvelous fact that our degradation and exaltation are both vital to the glory of our God. The certainty and satisfaction which this imparts will enable us to anticipate much of our future bliss. God has thrust us down for His own sake, and will exalt us for the same reason. He chose Israel, and cast them off, and will glorify them for His own name's sake. But how great is the wisdom He displayed in taking those who were not members of the elect nation, who had no prospects, no promises of their own, and giving them the place supreme among the celestials! This is the precious fruit of the secret of the resurrection. Not for naught are we to be changed from earthbound slaves of the soil to free citizens of the empyrean. We are the greatest achievement of God's grace in order to be the grandest display of His glory. Let us exult in God as He beams upon us in the secret of the resurrection!

A.E.K.

The preceding selections from our new publication, CONSOLATION IN EXPECTATION [$1.00], *by A. E. Knoch, represent the principal outline of the study. Three main passages of Scripture are stressed, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:35-58; and Ephesians 1:15-2:7.)*

PREDESTINATION

Is predestination only for believers?

Pre-determination, or rather, *designating beforehand* is a scriptural thought, which should be considered in its contexts to determine its scope. That it is applied to the *saints* cannot be questioned (Rom.8:29,30; Eph.1:5,11). But it is also applied to the *acts* of evil men, especially at the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 4:28). Paul, in Ephesians, puts us on the right track when he calls attention to the fact that we were designated beforehand according to the *purpose* of the One Who is operating *all* in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). Pre-determination is only one aspect of God's larger *purpose.* There is a double harmony in this verse. The *pre-determination* agrees with the *purpose,* and that agrees with the *counsel of His will.* The latter two are concerned with *all* which is headed up in the Christ, both that in the heavens and that on the earth (v.10).

The same agreement is seen in connection with predesignation in the conclusion of the first part of Paul's epistle to the Romans. We are aware that God is working *all* together for the good of those who are loving Him, according to the *purpose* that, whom He foreknew, He designates beforehand . . . (Rom.8:28,29). God cannot confine Himself in His working to the saints alone because they are vitally affected by their environment, sinners as well as

saints, things as well as persons. Consequently, while only those who love God are spoken of as designated beforehand for special blessing, this involves a previous *purpose* in regard to all as well as them. And the purpose must have been formed in God's mind before its execution or it would lack the essential sense conveyed by the elements of the original word, BEFORE-PLACing.

The divine process, expressed in human terms, but refined by divine usage, is this: God *wills* to reveal Himself. He *takes counsel* with Himself, as there was none other. As a result, He forms a *purpose* or *plans all* to the consummation. *Some* are *chosen* or selected and *designated beforehand* to be associated with Him in the execution of His purpose, and have a special place in His plan. What is true of them is not said of all, and should not be attributed to them. All will be saved, but only those chosen have *eonian* salvation. Only the members of the government in the United States are *elected.* The rest of us are not elected to be private citizens. Neither are the bulk of mankind chosen not to be saints. Saints alone are selected according to His purpose.

God is not a man, so we cannot reason from our standpoint to His. Yet a *wise* man will act more like God than a fool. As I did much of the work myself on the first house I built, I made no detailed plans, thinking I could save myself that effort. But experience taught me the folly of this. So, when I built my last house, I had an architect make detailed drawings from my full sketches. Alterations, while building, are vexatious and expensive. That is doubtless why God's plans show so much detail. Of course it could not all be revealed to us because of our limitations. But some prophecies of the future are most minute in their

descriptions, and these are only samples of God's foreknowledge.

What a marvelous revelation it was for our hearts when we first saw that God had a purpose, or plan! He knows all beforehand because He created all and operates all according to the counsel of His will. This word, *purpose,* is the one which tells us of God's activity in respect to *all* things before they enter the sphere of His *operations.* Nothing is left to chance. And the purpose is based upon *counsel,* not guesswork, and conformed to His *will.* He has a definite object in view, and has planned all beforehand, so that He will be All in all at the consummation. Let us keep this order. God's will leads to counsel, and counsel presents a plan or purpose which is for *all,* and not till then are election and predesignation introduced for *some.*

Is this not fatalism?

It is the very opposite of fatalism. For the greater part of a year I lived among a people who attributed everything to *kismet* or Fate. Its effect is quite the reverse of a joyous submission to a God Who is operating all for our welfare. They had not the least idea *why* things were as they are, or that they were cooperating for their benefit. Many were submissive, but depressed, hopeless and despondent, and some were quite sure that fate was against them and always would be. I object to the word fat*al*ism on philological grounds. It ought to be fate-ism. But I would not change it, for its effect is *fatal* and deadening. The result of seeing God's hand and heart in even the most trivial of our experiences, in contrast, is a continual solace for the bitterness of our existence and fills the heart with continual joy and rejoicing, even in the

severest strokes of apparent misfortune. It is an elixir of life and happiness.

What a puzzling task it would be to sort things out into essential and otherwise! Theologians could make this an eternal battle-ground, such as the age of responsibility, or just how much must the sinner hear in order to become a Christ-rejector, etc., etc. When I lose something, I almost subconsciously leave it in the hands of God lest it disturb my work, and manage without it meanwhile, if possible. In almost every case it turns up of itself, and I am thankful that its loss did not disturb my spirit, as it ordinarily would have done.

Is it not a sorrowful sight to see how the saints, who have believed for their own salvation, refuse to believe in His glorification? Almost all reject some phase of it. Some refuse to believe that all is *for* Him and denounce the reconciliation of all. Others will not give Him His place as the One *through* Whom all is being operated today. Still others, such as we have been considering, have difficulty in accepting the basic truth of the beginning, that *all* is *out* of Him. May He be gracious to us in our feeble efforts to grasp His glories, and grant that we give to Him the praise that is His throughout the times eonian!

A.E.K.

GOD'S WAY FOR US

And still I am showing you a path, suited to transcendence (1 Cor.12:31).

With every revelation of His mind and will for mankind God has always indicated a way of life suited to it. And in proportion to the height and advance of His revelation so has the way become more elevated . . . . The way suited to transcendence is the way of Love, a way which, in keeping with most of the deep things of God, is as simple as it is profound. Cecil J. Blay

VESSELS FOR HONOR

"HAS not the potter the right over the clay, out of the same kneading to make one vessel, indeed, for honor, and one for dishonor?" (Rom.9:21).

There can surely be no greater blessing than to realize that we are vessels for honor. God singled us out to be instruments of value to Him, not because we were among the worthy or wise, but that in His wisdom He chose us as "vessels of mercy," a folk upon whom He should be making known the riches of His glory.

And this is altogether of Himself. We are the bearers of a distinction *bestowed*, not in any way attained, nor an award. Simply a conferment, purely of grace, and His high intention. And what is it if not an entrance upon a deep and abiding experience of God Himself, to know Him in the vital things of life, to realize in countless ways, His directive wisdom and beneficent will?

We know not why, nor can we tell just how God's spirit moved—moved and prompted so that we were awakened to life-long response. Left to ourselves it could not, would not have been. But God imparted His illumination, even the radiance of the evangel of the glory of Christ. He gave us experiences in which He demonstrated His power and His love. He

confirmed again and again the truth of His Word, and strengthened conviction of its light-giving supremacy over all other literature.

The honor to which we are called is unique. It stands apart from all the coveted honors of a passing world. Distinctive and personal, it is full of an interest no human power can devise. It lies in the fact of a great enlightenment. We are led to see, as it were, the moving hand of God, to perceive the peculiar circumstances of life, and how in us they occasion reactions, responses. Do we rise to them as we should? Are we learning our lessons from and in them?

It is in the tangled circumstances of life that saints prove the wonder of God. They are definitely God-*conscious*, God to them being as a presence in life. Did He not waken them to a knowledge of Himself? Has not God, the merciful, the pitying, taken from the many, the few, as vessels for honor? He has, indeed, and it is for such to live in a more sensitive knowledge of it.

Life is filled with occasions for this experience. What we need is a larger capacity. A full and unreserved capacity for recourse to God, going to Him and depending on Him for required wisdom and help. It is an exercise good for mind and body alike. It is being actually alive to God, keenly aware of His ability to serve our interests, even hour by hour. Who is better able to act on our behalf? Is He not in command of all that *is*?

Living in such a consciousness of God will give a settled composure, a feeling of detachment from all those things which excite and inflame the mind. We shall be imitators of God, forbearing and gracious as He is, perceiving with what grace His purpose is charged concerning all. And, we have always to

remember, a sonship is ours no desire of the flesh or mind could possibly confer.

As vessels for honor, it is that we should "*be filled full with spirit*" (Eph.5:18,19). Now, in drunkenness the senses are so stupefied, that a man is bereft of the use and exercise of them in a proper manner. He is not himself. But, as "filled full with spirit," he is rather bereft of his carnal senses, and all that issues from them. He is himself, in the noblest conception of that self, being taken up with things of high concernment.

Thus filled, he or she is the better able to help others, and to utter "the word in season, to weary ones in needful hour." See how Abraham was able to help Lot. He was in true possession of himself. He lived in detachment, with choice and issue that raised him above the meaner longings of Lot. It set him apart, but in what a splendid isolation! And God honored the stand he took by calling him—"Abraham, My friend"! For Abraham was as a prince before God, undaunted and unappalled.

Above all, the honor is ours of resting in a God unutterably worthy of our trust. His grace and glory, His will and good pleasure are so exalted, and so beneficent, as to convey to our minds the purest and most perfect satisfaction. So well pleased is He in the Son of His love, that He has committed to Him a charge fraught with blessing to the whole of creation. Every inhabited sphere will be blessed in Him, the great Firstborn. In and through Him will be fulfilled a wonderful foreknowledge and purpose—a design of benevolence for beings everywhere. And, in such fulfillment God rests with a supreme contentment.

God, in all the grace of His being, is at once the center and circumference of life. He encircles in such an understanding way that we are never left to feel

ourselves insignificant units, lost in the crowd. With Him we are a host in ourselves. Think, too, of the quality of "the evangel of the glory of Christ"—its power and fragrance. And how many waiting hearts there are, eager for the faithful announcement of such a God.

As an ignorant African woman, after hearing, for the first time, God's pure evangel, remarked to her neighbor: "There! I always told you that there ought to be a God like that!"

We are so made to feel the enveloping, personal touch. And this is man's great need. But in these days the emphasis is placed upon institutional religion: what we should *do*, rather than what we should *think* concerning Christ and God. Ideals are presented for the animation of mass movements. There is to be a new order, a kingdom of love and brotherhood, brought about by "Christian" activities. But the return and presence of Christ in relation thereto is never mentioned. All that is required is a diffusion of knowledge, and the gradual "extension of the kingdom" is assured.

But thought-life, as in the purpose and province of God, is not thus nourished. The honor we have in view is an unmixed product, purely of God. Its blessings and rewards are in spirit, the body and soul so in accord therewith that little is left to be desired. This is well expressed in Paul's wish for the saints: "May your unimpaired spirit and soul and body be kept blameless in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ! Faithful is He Who is calling you, Who will be doing it also" (1 Thess.5:23,24).

So filled is man with doing, he forgets God's doing. This is where its keen remembrance should be often with us. It will afford us many occasions for thanks,

and for profound reflection. We shall see how wisely and well God can move in some desired way, apart from action of our own. But the would-be orderers of life's affairs see not this honor. Too intent on self-arranged programs, they leave no space for the wondrous play of God's ability. God does not want our life to be machine-like, nor yet without order. There is a happy mean, in which life, like a flower, is open to the dew, the rain, and the sunshine of God.

Honor accorded by man is a small thing compared with God's. There may be much applause, but how fleeting, and sometimes, how hollow! That indeed is honor which comes from God. And there are times when it greets the heart as if with spoken voice. For the written Word can be so instinct with life, that eye and ear may receive the rarest of thoughts. Think for a moment of the "grace and peace, from God to you."

From God to you. And in this unfolding there is all the majesty of set purpose, all the splendor of His will.

> "A splendor that illumines
> The abysses of the past,
> The marvels of the future,
> Sublime and bright and vast,
> While o'er the tiny present
> A flood of light is cast."

Within this radiance is the satisfying enlightenment of God's Word, an illumination we get from no other source. This is honor we may daily confirm. And if we are taken up with the broad sweeps of that Word, we shall see with unclouded mind how wondrously the Son of God is set for supreme honor.

The Lord Christ is the only One sufficiently worthy of God's great honor. He alone sounded those depths of obedience from which sprang our rare salvation. Therefore is it that we are vessels of an arresting mer-

cy, and how much this means is still untold to its fullest degree. And how many fail to see the enveloping grace of it all! The excellent gift of salvation is somehow missed, just because of the effort of man to *earn* rather than *receive* this salvation.

Yet what life, what honor lies in its reception, and what certainties! As the days go by, proof after proof becomes embedded in the heart. There is an awareness, growing keener and keener, that "God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God." How positive the statement! And with what power and richness are the little conjunctions of its language invested! God *is* working *for* the good of those who *are* loving Him.

The hearts that have been gladdened by the touch of God are blessed for all time. Narrating the experience of Blaise Pascal, a great thinker of his time, one has said, "All in a moment he was touched by God. He was caught in the grip of a mysterious power. Some stange spiritual chemistry blotted out his former tastes and inclinations and left him a new being. He consciously turned to God, not from vice, but from the bondage of the interests of time, and from the fascination of a merely intellectual life."

Quite a distinctive honor is that "our citizenship belongs to the heavens." From thence is the spirit which should prompt our thoughts, speech, and attitude. No literature of a lower stratum can truly feed this spirit. It does but leave a void. And this is only filled as we dwell on God's rare disclosure of His crowning grace, words that ever and anon take on fresh and beautiful meanings. They have always real value.

Life down here is but our starting point to the goal. God seals us and imbues us with potentialities,

which, in His own time, become actual. We are saved to show forth His grace, and not here alone, but in those waiting celestial abodes. For this, we are rescued out of the authority of darkness, and made competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light. The consciousness of this should be ever with us. At all times, and in all emergencies, it should be a great asset.

To feel that we are in touch with God as the Molder of our life means so much. There is a secret chamber where all is still, and from which there flows strength and repose. But this inner place must be kept open, and freed of all narcotic things. Then should we voice such lovely lines as Bonar penned:

"Fill Thou my life, O Lord my God,
In every part with praise,
That my whole being may proclaim
Thy being and Thy ways.
So shall no part of day or night
From sacredness be free;
But all my life, in every step,
Be fellowship with Thee."

William Mealand

THE COMING YEAR

Many years ago a series of studies on Romans 1:1-10:13 by the late Pastor George L. Rogers, appeared in the magazine, and the material on the first eight chapters was published as a book (now out of print). Pastor Rogers never completed the studies through Romans. Now we are planning to begin a new series on the last eight chapters, hopefully to complement the studies he wrote.

We will also be continuing the series on Colossians and Acts and conclude the excellent study on "The Fulfillment of God's Purpose." Other features, such as "Questions and Answers" and Old Testament studies will also be continued.

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