# Unsearchable Riches

# A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

#### **VOLUME LXXIX**

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#### **CREATION**

O Lord, how varied all Thy creatures are!
In wisdom hast Thou made them all. The earth
Is full of Thy vast riches. Each new birth
Proclaims Thy power. Thy fame is spread afar
Throughout the world, while in the skies each star
Joins in a pattern to extol Thy worth;

And in the deep, again, there is no dearth
Of Thy creations. Yet men seek to mar
Thy glory by attempting to maintain

That all these came by chance, or have evolved From protoplasmic cells. Such thoughts are vain; Such speculations leave facts unresolved.

There is one Book wherein the truth is told.

All is of God. His works are manifold.

J.H.E.

# **UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR IANUARY 1988** BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY-NINE

# **EDITORIAL**

As we begin a new volume of *Unsearchable Riches*, we are conscious of the continuing need to stand by the evangel of God's grace heralded by the apostle Paul. The sad words penned near the close of his career still haunt us: "... all those in the province of Asia were turned from me" (2 Tim.1:15). Even today there is a failure to come to grips with Paul's message; a failure which we also have sometimes fallen into. For there is something both unbelievable and unpalatable about gratuitous grace. It allows no room for pride and boasting in ourselves.

The leaders in Asia did not turn from Paul because he announced the death and resurrection of Christ. Indeed, we may be sure they believed this and made it the center of their faith. But that this meant everything, that their calling was fully in grace and was entirely apart from their own personal attainments or

piety was unacceptable.

The tendency has always been to obscure the clarity of grace in Paul's message. And this tendency is an apostasy from the evangel he brought. In this second letter to Timothy, Paul had already reminded his child in the faith to "be rekindling the gracious gift of God which is in you" (2 Tim.1:6). He has pointed to God as saving and calling us with a holy calling, "not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given us in Christ Jesus before times eonian" (1:9).

It is not difficult for us to recognize we need God, but it is almost impossible for us to accept the 100% fullness of this need. Indeed we cannot even admit this dependency apart from the grace of God. It is far more acceptable to be told we need to reform our ways than to be told that God chose us before the eons began and has doomed the enemy death to destruction entirely apart from our help. We know we need God's aid, but we reason that if nothing is required of us, then we will do nothing in response, or even worse, will become more irreverent and undisciplined.

Paul ended up a prisoner in Rome because he refused to allow any system of human works and ritual to stand between the believer and his salvation. Those in Asia turned away from him because of the "disgrace" of seeming to make too much of grace. Yet that grace stayed with Paul so that we last see him in an exultant state, writing, "Yet the Lord stood beside me, and He invigorates me" (2 Tim.4:17).

There seems to be a strong interest among Bible students in making predictions about what 1988 and the following years will bring to the political, social and economic spheres. Wars, famine, financial disaster and still further lowering of moral standards are widely spoken of. We know that such things must be, yet we must not neglect Paul's message of joy and peace in the evangel of the happy God. To stand with Paul means to stand with fullest confidence in God's grace and rescue, and with fullest assurance in the triumph of His grace.

Consequently, our prayer for this new year is that we too may "stand by" this word of grace and conciliation (2 Tim.4:2). We realize that there are many dangers ahead. But the Lord stands beside us, and His grace is with us. And so for all our readers we repeat Paul's last words, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit! Grace be with you! Amen!"

D.H.H.

# Praise and Prayer

## THE GLORY OF HIS ALLOTMENT

The second great prayer request of Ephesians 1:15-19 is that God might give us a spirit of wisdom in perceiving "the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints" (Eph.1:18). The joint enjoyment of the allotment among the celestials is such a tremendously transcendent truth that no one is able to receive it without a special spiritual enduement. It certainly calls for prayer! It calls for prayer today! Now that we have discovered our own distinct destiny and the unparalleled favor which it involves, let us join the apostle in his prayer for all the saints who belong to His body.

#### THE RICHES OF THE GLORY

The riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment! What a wealth of words are needed to indicate the blessedness of our celestial apportionment! Israel was alloted the land. But their tenancy has been spasmodic and temporary, with intervals of banishment from its blessings. In fact, their deportations have lasted longer than their tenancies, and their persecutions among the nations have outweighed their blessings in the land. Even while there, they seldom experienced the riches and glory of the days of David and Solomon. Yet they will have a millennium under the rule of Messiah which will far outshine their past experiences. The reason why the past has been so variable and unsatisfactory lies in the fact that their

allotment was not in the proper person. In the future it will be in their Messiah. He will share His blessed portion with them.

It is not easy for us to realize and enjoy the riches of our allotment among the celestials, for that is a sphere of which our knowledge is very scant. Indeed, our own little life span and the limited range of our past activities form no foundation on which to base an estimate of the wealth of glory which inheres in our celestial allotment. We must turn away to Him in Whom our lot is cast (Eph.1:11), and consider His glories on earth and in heaven in order to get even a glimpse of our own in Him. Even then we must consider His earthly honors first, in order to grasp the sublime supremacy which is His among the celestials.

#### PARALLELS WITH ISRAEL

To a large extent the spiritual blessings of Israel on earth are paralleled by the portion of the ecclesia in the heavens. The Scriptures are studded with details dealing with the future of the holy nation, yet very little is revealed concerning our expectation. But, if we look at both from the divine side, we will be overwhelmed with the wealth and overpowered with the prospect of that which lies ahead of us. Indeed, though the destiny of the ecclesia which is His body may run along the same lines among the celestials as that predicted by the prophets for Israel on the earth, it will be on a much loftier level, and on a greatly grander scale.

God's prime purpose with both Israel and the ecclesia is to reveal Himself to the balance of creation, so that He may come to be All in all (1 Cor.15:28). Let us never lose sight of this. It will keep us from many a devious detour, and give us a star by which to steer

straight to His grand goal. This will be accomplished along two main lines, rule and religion, in correcting and regulating the relationships of His creatures to one another, and in leading them to worship God. Under their Messiah Israel will not only be governed by Him, but they will be used by Him to rule the rest of the nations. Moreover, He will not only lead them in the worship of Yahweh, but they will bring the other nations to bow the knee to God. He will be their king and priest. So they will be a royal priesthood set over the millennial earth (1 Peter 2:9).

The millennial glories of Christ are revealed on many a page of Holy Writ. But His highest honors, His sublimest supremacy, was concealed from mortal gaze until the revelation of the present secret administration of God's grace. His headships in Israel and over all the earth were gradually revealed along with the future glories of the holy nation. Now that the riches of the glory of our allotment among the celestials must be made known, it became necessary first to disclose His heavenly headship which, combined with that over all the earth, makes Him universally supreme. All is to be "headed up in the Christ, both that in the heavens and that on the earth - in Him in Whom our lot is cast . . . " (Eph.1:10,11). Associated with His celestial headship, our allotment is immeasurably grander and more glorious than anything that earth can ever know.

In our present mortal, earthbound conditions it is almost impossible for many of us to visualize an allotment that does not consist of a part of the earth's surface, including a shelter from the elements, and food for our bodies, and means of satisfaction for our souls. In heaven, of course, this would not be a mean hovel, but a "mansion," not merely food to exist, but feasting for pleasure. And something of this nature will be included in Israel's allotment. They will have comfortable homes in the land, with an abundance of grains and fruits and wine to satiate their souls. And on the new earth they will enjoy the glories of the new Ierusalem.

But no such allotment lies before us. For humans on the earth it does bring happiness to have all that satiates the soul. But even they will have a higher source of joy. It is happiness to give rather than to get. Spiritual satisfaction is superior to soulish sensations. After all, Israel's chief pleasure will be based on blessing the other nations. And these blessings will be spiritual, not material. Their principal export will not be oranges and chemicals from the Dead Sea, but the law of Yahweh. Even during their deportation their most prized possession, the Hebrew Bible, has brought untold spiritual wealth to the other nations. In the future they will spread the knowledge of Yahweh over the whole earth. This will not only be the greatest possible boon to the others, but the highest height of their own happiness.

Our powerful, spiritual, immortal, glorious bodies will be immeasurably superior to their earthbound soulish frames, and will require no local habitation or material sustenance. We will not need to make provision for our flesh. The universe is our "mansion," and the all-pervading spirit of the Deity the source of our sustenance. We will not need to be concerned with our own provisions, but will be able to devote ourselves, unhampered, to the welfare of others. This is the supreme source of the highest happiness. God Himself finds His greatest joy in blessing the creatures of His heart. He will accomplish this through His Christ, in Whom we have our allotment.

In anticipation, this can be a spring of purest joy to

us now, if we conform to these principles. Let us seek, not only to be a blessing to *others*, but to impart *spiritual* values rather than material necessities. At present we cannot refuse physical aid to the infirm and famished, for even this brings its blessing. Yet greater still is our joy to share our spiritual riches with the saints of other nations, even in the remote regions of the earth

## CHRIST'S HEADSHIP

Christ is seated at the right hand of God, the highest political position in the universe. He outranks every sovereign and authority, every power and every lordship. His peerless name has the precedence over every other in heaven as well as on earth. All must be subject to Him. The marvel for us is that this supremacy, this headship over all, is His as Head of His body, the ecclesia. We, as members of this spiritual organism participate in His political supremacy. We are His complement, the needed staff through which He will administer His universal government. Just as in the earthly sphere, the chosen nation will be associated with Him in the rule of the whole earth, so we will be one with Him in His reign over the rest of the universe (Eph.1:20-23). The Circumcision will have no preeminence, because the two are made into one joint body (Eph.2:15; 3:6). The figure of the body remains, with members of different functions and gifts, but the rift between Jew and Gentile disappears.

Paul's epistle to the Colossians deals with Christ's headship in the heavens. In his prayer for the saints there, Paul gives thanks to the Father, who makes us competent for a part of the allotment of the saints in the light, Who rescues us out of the jurisdiction of darkness and transports us into the kingdom of the

Son of His love, in Whom we are having deliverance, Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships, or sovereignties or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him (Col.1:12-17).

#### PRESENT IURISDICTIONS

At present we are subjects, under the jurisdiction of some political authority, which, being in line with God's mandate for this era of the nations, we are bound to obey (Rom.13:1-5). There will be no deliverance from it in this era, on the earth. But there is another, a spiritual jurisdiction, whom we are to withstand. In Ephesians it is called "the world mights of this darkness," and further defined as "the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials." These now rule there as the sovereignties, or independent powers, and the authorities, who derive their position from them, and contest our right to our allotment, for they exercise the political power there at present. Only Michael, the chief associate with Israel (Dan.10:21; Jude 9; Rev.12:7) seems to be on the Lord's side. even as Israel on the earth.

Some of the saints are inclined to think that we exaggerate the opposition of our spirit adversaries at the present time. We can readily understand their position. It is easy to think that the spirit world would not merely fail to oppose much that goes on among the saints, but would actively aid and abet what is agreeable to them. Some saints even imagine that all prosperity, all success, even when it is plainly contrary to the Scriptures, is evidence of the Lord's blessing! Then

Paul must have been very wicked! Even our Lord Himself lacked these supposed seals upon His work! The smiles of circumstance, advancement, affluence, and such selfish gains, are far more often a stratagem of the Adversary in these last days when apostasy is the popular sin.

But, once we take our stand for God and His Word and withstand the Adversary's attempts to drive us from the enjoyment of our allotment in the heavens, and we engage in such a work as the restoration of God's revelation to His people, or aid in making it known, we will soon find our path filled with hurdles and traps to hinder and trick our feet at every step. Not only our foes, but even our friends will be used to discourage and destroy, little dreaming that they have been deceived by false appearances. I have seen indisputable facts so handled as to give an impression the exact contrary to the reality. I have seen unquestionable truth used to prove the reverse. We should not be ignorant of these things, lest Satan overreach us (2 Cor. 2:11). Even as the saints are a small minority compared to the rest of mankind, so also very few of them are free from the toils of his "messengers of light." Almost all succumb to his stratagems. Few even think of praying for the spirit needed to enjoy their own allotment!

But our invisible spirit enemies will not be allowed to oppose us forever. At the end of this eon, the air will be cleared of wicked spirit powers. Michael will battle with the dragon, and so Satan, who is deceiving the whole inhabited earth, will be cast out of heaven (Rev.12:7-9). After he has raged down here for a short period, he will be expelled from the earth also, and bound in the abyss (Rev.20:1-3). But the time seems to be very near when, even before this, Satan will be

crushed under our feet (Rom.16:20). When Joshua was conquering the land of Israel, he had his captains put their feet on the necks of five kings (Josh.10:24) in token of their defeat. So also will we put our feet on the neck of the Adversary, and go on with our Joshua (which is the Hebrew form of Jesus), to take possession of our spiritual political allotment among the celestials.

A.E.K.

The preceding installment of the *Praise and Prayer* series was originally published in 1950 and entitled "The Riches of the Glory of the Allotment" (*Unsearchable Riches* vol.41, pp.167-182). This contained an introductory section consisting of a concordant study of the word "allotment" which has now been divided as a separate article and begins on the opposite page. May its readers be enlightened to perceive "the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints" (Eph.1:18), and to rejoice in the realization that the word of God's grace is able to edify and to "give the enjoyment of an *allotment* among all who have been hallowed" (Acts 20:32).

#### **NORMA GEIGER**

Norma Geiger died December 20, 1987 at the age of 98 at La Grande, Oregon. She was actively associated with the ministry of the Concordant Publishing Concern for many years. During the 1960's she contributed a number of articles to our series known as The Young People's Department. Over the years, she also helped with various volunteer projects.

Sister Geiger's grandnephew David Ferguson spoke at her memorial service about her staunch faith, "that God's sure intention is to save all His creatures from the effects of sin and death, each in his own time."

We know this is so, for "our Saviour, God,...wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth" (1 Tim.2:4). We are grateful to God for the long life and stable testimony which He gave to Sister Geiger who is now reposing in Christ, to be vivified in the day of His appearing.

# Concordant Studies

# DIVINE ALLOTMENT

THE LOT takes all determination out of the hands of man and puts it into the hands of God. All life, all history, is due to divine allotment. Even if man does try to force his wild will into the perfect plans of the Deity, it can only play the part assigned it in His intention. Apart from the awards for faithful service, almost all of the treasures and honors which are to be divided among God's creatures during the conclusion of the eons, which is now impending, will be distributed by lot. Man's will will be ignored. Nothing will be left to chance. God alone will place everyone in the position which He determined for him in the beginning.

In Israel the lot was an honored institution, given by Yahweh. Far from leaving anything to luck, or to the fortuity of fate, it evaded the mistakes of men, and put all into the hands of the Deity, where it belongs. It was a device to avoid conflict with the will of Yahweh where His way had not been specifically revealed. It was the method He gave His people of distributing land and of selecting men according to His intention, without His immediate intervention. Our rich and glorious allotment is not an "inheritance," due to the death of the Deity, or based upon our close relationship to Him, but is given to us graciously from the hand and heart of the All-Sufficient.

We often read of the *lot* in the revered Authorized Version, but never of *allotting* or of the *allotment*. There it is altered to *inherit* or *inheritance*, although it

is clearly accomplished by lot. The confusion that this mistranslation has introduced into God's revelation is most regrettable. Even when very young and ignorant in the faith, I could never grasp the thought that I was an heir of God, or a joint-heir with Christ (Rom.8:17). I knew that an heir could not enter into the possession of his inheritance until the death of the testator, and I had not the slightest idea that God would ever die. Indeed, I shuddered at the thought, though it was so often intimated on the pages of Holy Writ. Of what value was an inheritance that could never be enjoyed? It could only rouse false and futile expectations. The use of the word "testament" for covenant has also contributed to the confusion.

Let us expunge the words heir, inherit, and inheritance from the pages of God's revelation. They are false and misleading, when used of the Deity. They suggest that man can take over that which belongs inherently to God. They give color to the mistaken idea that we can own anything apart from Him. They give us a title to property of which we are only tenants. They have no equivalents in the divine vocabulary. In their place we should usually use some variation of the word lot. In a few cases it should be changed to tenant, as it is in the Hebrew. Until we do this, our thoughts in this sphere will be cloudy and confused, and we will not be able to enjoy our own allotment as we should. God has not made us His heirs, but has granted us a rich and glorious part in His grand program, not to have and to hold apart from Him, but to enjoy in fellowship with Him.

On the other hand, it is cause for profound thankfulness that our popular version almost always translates lot correctly. In Hebrew, gurl is always "lot." In Greek klêros is "lot" seven times, "part" twice (Acts 1:17,25),

"inheritance" twice (Acts 26:18; Col.1:12), and "heritage" once (1 Pet.5:3). This is due to the fact that it is so often used in connection with *casting* the lot. They could not well *cast* an inheritance! The "lots" were usually small objects, such as pebbles, which were marked so as to be indentified. They were cast into a pouch and withdrawn unwittingly, so that man's choice was eliminated. To the ungodly it seemed an appeal to chance, a wild gamble. To the pious Israelite it was Yahweh's method of making known His will.

The first occurrence of the word lot clearly sets forth its significance (Lev.16:8-10). Two hairy goats were taken. One was to be offered for a sin offering, but the other was to be left alive and sent into the wilderness. The question arose, Which was to be the goat of departure (A.V. "scapegoat")? Which was to be sacrificed? This same problem came up again and again. It could hardly be settled once for all by a written revelation. such as was given to decide the other matters connected with this ritual. Neither could Yahweh leave it to the priests or the people, for they themselves were sinners, and would sin even in offering a sin offering. Yahweh did not give them the ritual in order that they should be independent of Him. He arranged it so that they had to refer many things to Him, and so to realize His living interest in their affairs at all times.

So the lots were cast into the bosom pouch and drawn out in order to determine the fate of each of the two goats. We might reason, why make so much fuss about so mean a matter? They were only animals, not men. Both would die in due time. What difference could it possibly make whether it was one or the other? In either case the picture presented by the type would be the same, would it not? By no means! It was of the very essence of this typical presentation that it be

personally and particularly in harmony with the will of God. The great Antitype, Jesus Christ, was offered up according to the *specific counsel* and *foreknowledge* of God (Acts 2:23). He left no details to the mind of man, however trivial and tiny they may seem to us. And so it is with our allotment. Let us thank God that He has left no gleam of its glory for us to determine, but all is in line with His will.

It is the lot that is cast forth in the bosom; Yet from Yahweh is its every judgment (Prov.16:33).

This is an illustration, on a small scale, of the allembracing and God-glorifying truth that all is of God. To have told them this outright in those dim days, would have blinded them, as Saul of Tarsus was on the Damascus road. Even today, immature saints are not able to bear its effulgence. So it was doled out to them, not in plain words, but in obscure acts constantly repeated, and impressed upon them, not only through their ears but by their sight and other senses. It may seem immaterial and far beneath the dignity of the Deity, to choose between two goats, as to the part they should play in presenting this little pre-view of the drama of redemption. We might object, what difference does it make which goat is slain and which departs? Could not Yahweh leave such a small matter to men or to chance? Is it not an eloquent illustration of the tremendous truth that nothing is left to chance! All is alloted by Yahweh!

The lot was used in the allocation of the tribes in the land. In general, we might ask, what mistake could be made if they had been placed otherwise? But the question would only manifest our ignorance of God, and His plan and purpose. In His counsels each tribe

had its part to play, and this required that they receive their proper place upon the stage. In some cases we can get a glimpse of this. Judah and Jerusalem should not be far apart, for rule and religion were combined in Israel. The fact that the Levites had no allotment, and lived among the other tribes should show us that all was designed for the purpose God had in view. So the land was distributed by lot, not to leave it to chance, but to make sure that God's plan was carried out.

One of the most delightful and God-honoring customs in Israel was the yearly allotment of the farm land. The farmers did not own or lease or live on their land as with us. Their homes were in little villages, with the houses clustered together for safety and mutual protection, in the midst of the cultivated ground. This was not reckoned theirs at all. They were merely tenants. It belonged to Yahweh and was redistributed to them every year by lot. In this way they were continually reminded of their absolute dependence on their God, Who not only supplied the soil, but provided the sunshine and the rain from heaven, without which it was worse than useless. Their food and clothing, the very necessities of life, were annually doled out to them directly from His living and loving heart.

The cultivated ground was divided into parcels, according to the number of plows and teams in the village, and these were alloted, not to each man alike, but according to his ability to farm it. If he had only one plow he received a single lot. If he had many teams he was given accordingly. First the villagers and farm lands were separated into groups with a head to each company. At first a number of marked pebbles, corresponding to these groups, was put in a bag by the village elder, and an innocent little child drew one out

for each group. The individual farmer was alloted his land *in* the head of his group. The head of the group was first alloted all the land for all the men in his company. They were considered to be *in* him.

Let us pause at this point to enjoy this precious picture of our place in Christ. Our allotment is in His. We were chosen in Him. God has given Him the highest allotment in the heavens. But it is not for Himself alone. He, like the head of a village group, shares His allotment with all who are in His company. The individual allotment comes later. After each group had been assigned its section of the village lands, pebbles were again put in a bag for each plot or parcel, and each individual received that which Yahweh apportioned to Him.

This was Yahweh's practical and powerful plan of becoming ever present with His people, and making them perpetually dependent on Him. He was in full control. Not they, but He, was master of their souls. Their health and wealth and happiness were directly derived from His providence. Should He withhold the rain, their allotment could no one sustain. But this was a sign that they had displeaseed Him and departed from His worship. Let us not think of the famines He sent His people as vindictive punishment. Rather they were salutary discipline designed to draw them back to Him, with the added experience of evil that would enable them to appreciate His blessings to the full, and bind them to His heart in thankful adoration.

A.E.K.

We should have clothbound copies of volume LXXVIII of *Unsearchable Riches* (1987) in stock by the time you receive this current January 1988 issue of the magazine. The price is \$7.00 per copy. The price is \$275.00 for all available volumes.

# Among the Celestials

# WALKING IN LIGHT

(Ephesians 5:3-21)

Now all prostitution and uncleanness or greed—let it not even be named among you, according as is becoming in saints—and vileness and stupid speaking or insinuendo, which are not proper, but rather thanksgiving (Eph.5:3,4).

The apostle continues his advice on the right conduct of the saints, accompanied by warnings against the things we should avoid. Prostitution, uncleanness and greed are vices which have become most prevalent since the time of Paul, and especially today, for they are undermining the stability of society as never before. We have only to read 2 Timothy 3:1-9 to see how these evils (and others like them) permeate the "last days," while in Romans 1:21-32 we find the reason for this state of affairs. God has relaxed His restraining hand and has assigned humanity to its own sinful way.

Because men neglect their duty to God and do not "glorify or thank Him" for the many blessings they receive at His hands, He "gives them over" three times: to "uncleanness" (v.24), to "dishonorable passions" (v.26) and to "a disqualified mind" (v.28). The effects of this threefold withdrawal of restraint by God can surely be seen in the world around us today, and even in religious circles. Human depravity is always increasing. We should do our best to distance ourselves from this. Until we are called away, we are

required to be in the world but should not be of it.

While ever thankfulness is uppermost in our hearts, we shall not be prone to these vices, nor to "vileness and stupid speaking or insinuendo." It is when gratitude lapses for awhile that these follies tend to take over.

For this you perceive, knowing that no paramour at all or unclean or greedy person, who is an idolater, has any enjoyment of the allotment in the kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph.5:5).

God has not chosen us in Christ to be paramours and idolaters, but to be "holy and flawless in His sight" (Eph.1:4). Therefore let us eschew those practices which would debar us from enjoying to the full our allotment in the kingdom of Christ and of God. This is not a reference to the coming kingdom of Christ on earth, but to that wider kingdom which finds its present subjects among the ecclesia but which will eventually embrace the whole universe (Col.1:18-20).

Let no one be seducing you with empty words, for because of these things the indignation of God is coming on the sons of stubbornness. Do not, then, become joint partakers with them, for you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord (Eph.5:6-8).

This is the second reference in this epistle to "the sons of stubbornness." The first was in chapter 2, verse 2. Once we were numbered among that category, doing "the will of the flesh," but now we are "light in the Lord." We are being made competent "for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light" and are being rescued "out of the jurisdiction of darkness" and transported "into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col.1:12,13). Nevertheless, while we remain still in these bodies of flesh, there will be lurking within us the desire to do things that are not pleasing to God,

unless this desire is at all times made subject to the spirit of God which is likewise within us. The perpetual conflict inside the believer is described in more detail in Romans 7. Only grace can rescue us out of this body of death, and it is in grace that our salvation is assured.

God's indignation is awaiting the sons of stubbornness. We should be rejoicing in the fact that He prefers us from the beginning for salvation, and, relying upon His faithfulness, we are awaiting His Son out of the heavens, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation (cf 2 Thess.2:13; 1 Thess.1:10).

As children of light be walking (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), testing what is well pleasing to the Lord. And be not joint participants in the unfruitful acts of darkness, yet rather be exposing them also, for it is a shame even to speak of the hidden things occurring, done by them. Now all that which is being exposed, by the light is made manifest, for everything which is making manifest is light. Wherefore He is saying, "Rouse! O drowsy one, and rise from among the dead, and Christ shall dawn upon you" (Eph.5:9-14).

We come back to the "walks" of the Ephesian epistle. This time it is walking in light. We were once darkness, yet now we are light in the Lord. Really, it should not be too difficult to walk in the light, for in the context of our calling, light is our natural element. We were chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world, that is, before ever darkness made its appearance. Our realm is inherent in the heavens. It is only because we have been "loaned to the flesh," as it were, that darkness comes into our lives at all, and indeed we have to experience darkness and its adverse effects in order to be able to appreciate light and all its bless-

ings. But having now been translated from the jurisdiction of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love, we are led to endeavor to walk as children of light, with the thought always in mind of doing that which is well pleasing to the Lord.

It is a well known fact that fruits will not grow in darkness, and they certainly need the sun to ripen them. Acts of darkness are thus described as "unfruitful." It is also a fact that evildoers like to operate under the cover of darkness. Jesus said that "men love the darkness rather than the light, for their acts were wicked" (John 3:19). But it is the consistent teaching of Scripture that at some time or another all will be made manifest—brought into view—and the light will do it, showing up once and for all how despicable the things of darkness really are.

Be observing accurately, then, brethren, how you are walking, not as unwise, but as wise, reclaiming the era, for the days are wicked. Therefore do not become imprudent, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, in which is profligacy, but be filled full with spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and playing music in your hearts to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things, in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, to our God and Father, being subject to one another in the fear of Christ (Eph.5:15-21).

The exhortations in these verses are truly straightforward. The days are wicked and have been ever since Paul wrote this letter. To the extent that we are walking in the light of God's will, and bearing witness to Him, we are reclaiming the era and are using the time in accord with His delight (cf Phil.2:13). In these verses, wine is contrasted with holy spirit. We can be drunk with wine, and some find delight in such aban-

donment to overindulgence; or we can be filled full with spirit. The joy occasioned by the latter finds expression in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," and is pleasing to God, for it is accompanied by thanksgiving. A parallel passage in Colossians 3, verses 16 and 17, reads, "Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly . . . in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, singing, with grace in your hearts to God. And everything, whatsoever you may be doing, in word or in act, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God, the Father, through Him."

John H. Essex

(To be continued)

#### CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Brother Rocke has completed the preparation of Ezra and Nehemiah for typesetting, and is now working on Esther. Dean Hough continues with Jeremiah. We have not given up on the plans to issue Psalms as a separate book, and trust that this project will be hastened with the purchase of our new typesetting equipment. We have prepared a small supply of the Concordant Version manuscript pages of "The Assembler," commonly called Ecclesiastes (photocopied sheets). Single copies are available without charge.

#### PSALM 119:33-48

It may be helpful to read the verses from Psalm 119 (given on the following page) along with Romans 7:13-23. The psalmist's "ardent desire" for Yahweh's precepts, and his delight to tread in the tracks of Yahweh's instructions was reflected in the will of Saul of Tarsus to fulfill the just requirements of the law. But Saul found that he could not carry out his will, and as the apostle Paul, he was led beyond the viewpoint of the Psalm. Paul rejoiced in God's finished work in the sending of His Son concerning sin. So we should profit from reading Romans 7:4-8:4 after reading these verses from Psalm 119.

# Concordant Version of Psalm 119:33-48

- Direct me, O Yahweh, in the way of Your statutes,
   \*That I may preserve it as the consequence.
- 34 Cause me to understand, \*that I may preserve Your law And keep it 'with all my heart.
- 35 Cause me to tread in the track of Your instructions, For I delight in it.
- Stretch out my heart to Your testimonies, And not at all to selfish gain.
- <sup>37</sup> °Turn my eyes to pass from examining futility; Revive me in Your way.
- Sonfirm for Your servant Your sapromise That leads me to fear You.
- 39 Cause my reproach, from which I shrink, to pass away,

For Your judgments are good.

- 40 Behold, I ardently desire 'Your precepts; Revive me in Your righteousness.
- <sup>41</sup> And let Your benignities come to me, O Yahweh, Your salvation according to Your <sup>sa</sup> promise.
- <sup>42</sup> <sup>+</sup>Then I shall have a word to answer the one reproaching me.

For I trust in Your word.

And do not <sup>7</sup>divert<sup>~</sup> the word of truth from my mouth <sup>fr</sup> utterly For I have <sup>m</sup>set my hope <sup>7</sup>in Your judgments.

44 \*So let me keep your law continually, For the eon and further.

45 And let me walk in wideness,

For I have sought after Your precepts.

<sup>46</sup> <sup>+</sup>Then let me speak of Your testimonies in front of kings

And not be ashamed.

- <sup>47</sup> <sup>+</sup>For I am reveling in Your instructions Which I love.
- 48 \*Thus I am lifting my palms 'in praise of Your instructions <sup>10</sup> that I love
  - <sup>+</sup>That I may meditate <sup>i</sup>on Your statutes.

# Studies in Deuteronomy

# THUS SHALL YOU DO TO THEM

"WHEN YAHWEH YOUR ELOHIM brings you into the land where you are about to enter in order to tenant it, and He eases many nations out before your face, the Hittite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, seven nations more numerous and substantial than you, when Yahweh your Elohim gives them up before you, and you smite them, then you shall doom, yea doom them. You shall neither contract a covenant with them nor be gracious to them, nor shall you intermarry with them. You shall not give your daughter to his son, and you shall not take his daughter for your son. For it might take away your son from following after Me, and they might serve other elohim, and the anger of Yahweh would grow hot against you, and He would exterminate you quickly. But rather, thus shall you do to them: you shall tear down their altars, break their monuments, hack down their Asherah poles, and you shall burn their carvings with fire" (Deut.7:1-5).

#### HE EASES MANY NATIONS OUT

The Hebrew verb *nahshal* occurs seven times in the Old Testament and is used to describe a performance without great effort, such as easing off the sandals from one's feet (Ex.3:5; Josh.5:15); *nahshal* is also used of olives that drop off the tree (Deut.28:40), and of the iron head that may slip off the handle of the ax when a man is cutting down a tree (Deut.19:5). A

similar effortless and gradual movement seems to be indicated in Exodus 23:29,30 where Yahweh had said to Moses: "I shall not drive them out before you in one year lest the land should become desolate . . . little by little shall I drive them out before you" (cf Deut.7:22).

#### SEVEN SUBSTANTIAL NATIONS

Among the inhabitants of Palestine whom the Israelites were going to smite were seven nations which Moses described as being more numerous and substantial than Israel. The Hittites had come as migrants from Anatolia in Asia Minor; some had settled around Hebron in Abraham's day (Gen.23:10). The Girgashites may have been a tribal people living in the north of Palestine. The Amorite dwelt west of the Jordan, in the Judean hill-country, and the Canaanite further west, by the sea (Josh.5:1; 11:3). It seems that the Perizzite dwelt in central Palestine during the patriarchal period (Gen.13:7), probably in a forested countryside (Josh.17:15), perhaps close to the Jebusite who lived in Jerusalem and the territory around the city (Josh.11:3). We know of the Hivites that they were dwelling in the hill-country of Lebanon below Mount Hermon (Judg.3:3). Most of these names occur in the genealogical annals of Genesis 10:15-17. Noah's curse found its fulfillment in the depravity and the abhorrences of these decadent nations (Gen.15:16; Deut. 20:17.18).

#### YOU SHALL DOOM THEM

Moses could not say how many years the divine process of easing out these nations would take. For Israel's entry into the land in order to tenant it, he gave however the divine guidelines: When Yahweh your Elohim has delivered them (or given them up) before you, and you have smitten them, then you shall doom, yea doom them. Again, Israel's victory was assured from the start, as had been the case in the campaigns against the two Amorite kings, Sihon of Heshbon, and Og of Bashan (Num.21:23,24, 33-35; Deut.2:32-34; 3:1-3).

"Devoted" and "doomed" is the same word in Hebrew (chehrem). We find these occurrences in Leviticus 27:28,29. "Every devoted thing which a man may devote to Yahweh... it shall not be sold nor redeemed. Every devoted thing, it will be holy of holies to Yahweh. Every doomed one [devoted to destruction] which is doomed of humanity shall not be ransomed; he shall be put to death, yea death."

In the context of Deuteronomy 7:2 "doom" means a ban for total destruction of all that is considered to be accursed before Yahweh Elohim. The application of this ban was not uniform in practice. In the cities of the seven nations west of the Jordan nobody should be kept alive that had breath (Deut.20:16). In cities of other nations only adult males were to be smitten with the edge of the sword (Deut.20:12-14). In the cities east of the Jordan the Israelites had doomed the entire population, but kept all the domestic beasts and the loot for themselves (Deut.2:34,35; 3:6,7).

#### NO CONTRACT WITH DOOMED CITIES

With reference to the seven decadent nations, Moses warned his audience: "You shall neither contract a covenant with them nor be gracious to them" (Deut. 7:2). Yet later, after Joshua had captured Jericho and Ai, he was deceived by the men of Gibeon who claimed to be ambassadors of a far country; and so he made a treaty with them. When their ruse was detected three days later, the Gibeonites' lives were spared, but they

were reduced to the position of perennial slavery as woodcutters and water carriers (Josh.9:3-27).

Yahweh's injunction against any form of liason with the dwellers of the land was based on His own covenant with Israel; it ruled out any covenant with the decadent nations of Palestine. Moses also warned the post-Sinai generation against any intermarriage with the inhabitants, thus paraphrasing Yahweh's own words.

At Mount Sinai, forty years before, Yahweh had addressed Moses as the representative of all Israel: "Behold, I am contracting a covenant; in front of all your people shall I do marvels . . . . Behold Me driving out from your presence the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, [the Girgashite] and the Jebusite. Guard vourself lest you contract a covenant with the dwellers of the land, to which you are entering, lest it become a trap among you. For their altars shall you break down, and their monuments shall you break, and their Asherah poles shall you cut down. For you shall not bow yourself down to another el (for Yahweh, Jealous is His name; He is a jealous El) lest you contract a covenant with the dweller of the land when they prostitute after their elohim and sacrifice to their elohim, lest one call to you that you eat of his sacrifice. If you would take of his daughters for your sons and give your daughters to their sons, then his daughters would prostitute after their elohim and cause your sons to prostitute after their elohim" (Ex.34:10-16).

"Prostituting after their elohim" is a metaphor that is used to describe unfaithfulness to Yahweh, Israel's "Husband," to whom she is "betrothed" for the eon; this metaphor is doubly appropriate since the immoral nature of Baal worship is in view here as well as marriage arrangements with idolaters (Hos.2:16,17,19; 4:13,14).

#### OBLITERATE IDOLATRY

The injunction to eradicate all symbols of idolatry is repeated in Deuteronomy 12:2-6, where Moses gives the following detailed specifications: "You shall destroy, yea destroy all the places where the nations (in whose stead you are tenanting) have served their elohim on the high mountains, on the hills and under every flourishing tree. Tear down their altars and break their monuments; their Asherah poles [symbolizing the fertility-goddess] you shall burn with fire, and the carvings of their elohim you shall hack down; thus you will destroy their name from that place."

At this juncture Moses added a further warning: "When Yahweh your Elohim cuts off before your face the nations where you are entering to tenant in their place, then you will tenant in their place and dwell in their country. Guard yourself lest you should be trapped to go after them after they are exterminated before your face, and lest you inquire about their elohim, saying: How do these nations serve their elohim that I, I too, may do thus? You shall not act thus toward Yahweh your Elohim, for every abhorrence which Yahweh hates they perform for their elohim, for even their sons and their daughters they burn with fire for their elohim" (Deut.12:29-31).

In the book of Genesis we read of another kind of stone monuments which Jacob placed at Beth-El (House of El) where Yahweh Elohim had spoken to him (28:18,19,22; 31:13; 35:14). Then there was the monument in the hill country of Gilead, east of the Jordan, that was set up as a reminder of the peaceful agreement between Jacob and Laban (31:45-52). The me-

morial stone that Jacob put over Rachel's tomb is also called a monument (35:20). And twelve stone monuments, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel, were set up when the people ratified the covenant with Yahweh at Sinai (Ex.24:4). All these monuments were nothing else but memorial stones.

But the monuments (earmarked for destruction) in the area of the seven nations were objects of idolatrous worshiping; they symbolized the local god or Baal in some manner, such as the wooden poles represented the goddess Asherah. We read in Judges 6:25,28 that Asherah poles stood alongside the altar of Baal. Then there were sculptured objects of wood, overlaid with gold or silver, in the shape of a human or an animal. All these items of idolatry were to be destroyed, so that the foreign cult centers where they were found would be divested of any semblance of sanctity.

Furthermore the Israelites should obliterate from their minds even the idea of idol worshiping; they should never consider the possibility of serving the elohim of the seven nations. Otherwise the anger of Yahweh would grow hot against Israel and would lead to their extermination (Deut.7:4).

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

#### FROM THE MOUTH OF THE SUPREME

"Who is this who speaks, and it is coming to be, when my Lord did not instruct? Is not the evil and the good faring forth from the mouth of the Supreme?" (Lam.3:37,38). Whether the homespun predictions of the ordinary man, the audacious premonitions of the psychic, or the sacred prophecies of God's own holy prophet—when the prediction does "come to be," this is only so because of God's appointment. Evil's presence serves God's purpose. It is His servant, not His master.

# No Longer Minors

# CHRIST'S LORDSHIP AND OUR MATURITY IN CHRIST

Some thirty-six years ago God led me into a class of "Truth Seekers" whose sole purpose was to study the Sacred Scriptures and try to glean from them an appreciation of God's real plan of salvation for mankind. Most of us had been brought up in Christian homes rooted in many of the popular denominations, and in many instances we had to lay aside some of the teachings and interpretations of the Bible that had been passed on to us from previous generations.

The matter that troubled me most was the apparent conflict in the teaching of Peter and the rest of the Twelve versus that of the converted Saul of Tarsus who never even saw Jesus in the flesh. Not until we had studied together for over two years did it occur to me that there were two distinctive evangels: that concerning the Kingdom heralded by Jesus Himself and His Jewish followers, and the Pauline Evangel. The former evangel was based upon salvation through a combination of faith and conformity to law; the latter was channeled through the grace of God alone. This distinction, finally dawning upon me, did then, and does still, represent one of God's greatest gifts to me, and I have endeavored in my small way to pass this realization along to as many others as possible.

One of the facets of this "new" concept which has particularly kindled my interest was its relationship to the Lordship of Christ. The prevailing concept of Christ's Lordship differs surprisingly from that presented in Paul's epistles. It is this matter that I would like to discuss in this article.

It is common knowledge that the Scriptures often speak of God's indignation (wrath) and of divine vengeance. It would seem that this emphasis was carried over into the early Christian religion as a critical factor in its organization. This has continued to the present day.

Thus the distinctive evangel that Paul announced during his lifetime both to Jew and Gentile (salvation by grace from a kind and loving God) was obscured. In Romans 1:18ff Paul had spoken of God's indignation as a matter exhibiting the great *need* of the evangel of grace. Yet the church hierarchy related it to the Lordship of Christ and made it a motivating principle for Christian service. Similarly, Paul referred to God's vengeance as evidence that believers should not seek to avenge themselves on their enemies (Rom.12:19), while church tradition has generally presented it as a threat to the believer in order to keep him in line.

Under the distorted (cf Gal.1:7) evangel of salvation based on fear and works, to become a Christian one had to conform to a ritual, the first step of which was to acknowledge Christ as Lord and Saviour, confessing sins, repenting and being baptized. The second step, to assure one's ultimate deliverance from wrath was to follow in the footsteps of the Saviour, accepting His Lordship in everyday life. For while past sins were washed away at baptism, it was inevitable that a believer would commit more sins during his lifetime, and even though he confessed and repented frequently, there would undoubtedly be some unforgiven sins on the Book of Life which God could use on Judgment Day to condemn him to an eternity in Hell. No one was

ever sure whether he was saved or not until that final day, so everyone lived a life of uncertainty regarding his ultimate destination.

The Pauline Evangel, however, teaches us to acknowledge Christ as our Saviour, the only begotten Son of God, He Who emptied Himself and took on the form of a human and dwelt among us for thirty-three years, Who was humiliated and suffered an unmerciful death on the cross for all of our sins, Who arose on the third day and now sits at the right hand of the Father, waiting for the time when He will appear in the air and call "the elect" to meet and be with Him always. Our salvation is based solely on this conviction, not by any works that we do or any laws that we conform to.

These provisions, centered in the accomplished work of Christ, annul the Lordship-precepts prescribed by traditional Christianity. Christ's Lordship is not imposed to enhance one's chances for salvation, but rather it is based on a salvation already graciously gained on our behalf.

Nevertheless, those who have mixed the two evangels claim that the salvation-by-grace concept encourages believers to accept the philosophy of "eat, drink and be merry" because all is forgiven by the grace of God anyway. This is the conclusion that many might reasonably come to, but I would implore them to read on.

Paul's letter to the Romans was written to bring the believers of that day as well as us from an immature to a more mature concept of God's plan of salvation. The whole book is priceless in this regard. I had a Jewish convert once say to me, "How could one remain a Jew after having read Romans?"

There is one section in Romans that has a direct

bearing on a mature recognition of Christ's Lordship. It begins with chapter 6, verse 1, where Paul asks, "What, then, shall we declare? That we may be persisting in sin that grace should be increasing?" In other words, we who have finally accepted Christ as our Lord and Saviour, after having lived a life of sin and knowing now that we have been justified in God's sight, should we now persist in our sins knowing that God's grace is unlimited, and knowing that through Christ's sacrifice, we are all justified in the acts we have done or will do in the future? If that is our attitude, we are far from maturity, as Paul explains in Romans 6:2-14. "May it not be coming to that! We. who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Iesus, are baptized into His death? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death, that, even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life. For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death. nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that our old humanity was crucified together with Him, that the body of Sin may be nullified, for us by no means to be still slaving for Sin, for one who dies has been justified from Sin.

"Now if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall be living together with Him also, having perceived that Christ, being roused from among the dead, is no longer dying. Death is lording over Him no longer, for in that He died, He died to Sin once for all time, yet in that He is living, He is living to God. Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"Let not Sin, then, be reigning in your mortal body,

for you to be obeying its lusts. Nor yet be presenting your members, as implements of injustice, to Sin, but present yourselves to God as if alive from among the dead, and your members as implements of righteousness to God. For Sin shall not be lording it over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

Finding that Christ is our Lord and Saviour means that we desire to walk "worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God" (Col.1:10). This is an attitude we most willingly accept because of all the wonderful blessings He has endowed us with. This acceptance of Christ's Lordship does not rise out of fear of His indignation, or of being sentenced to an eternity in Hell. It is the mature attitude that rises from an appreciation of the evangel of grace.

At the same time, we recognize that we are still subject to human frailties. And even though we are strongly motivated out of our love, affection and appreciation for God's grace, we fail and even yield from time to time to sinful influences. This is the human condition and is true of everyone, no matter what our views may be of the evangel. The question is, What is the mature concept of Christ's Lordship that God has provided for us in dealing with our everyday weakness and sins? Is it a Lordship established by a gracious, accomplished salvation, and is such a concept of His Lordship an effective force in our lives for making progress in dealing with our weaknesses?

Again, Paul, who says, "Become imitators of me, according as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor.11:1), leads us in the path of maturity. He writes, "Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected. Yet I am pursuing, if I may be grasping also that for which was grasped also by Christ Jesus. Brethren, not as yet am I reckon-

ing myself to have grasped, yet one thing—forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus. Whoever, then, are *mature*, may be disposed to this, and if in anything you are differently disposed, this also shall God reveal to you. Moreover, in what we outstrip others, there is to be a mutual disposition to be observing the elements by the same rule

"Become imitators together of me, brethren, and be noting those who are walking thus, according as you have us for a model, for many are walking, of whom I often told you, yet now am lamenting also as I tell it, who are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose consummation is destruction, whose god is their bowels, and whose glory is in their shame, who to the terrestrial are disposed. 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.3:12-21).

Another helpful passage from Paul on this matter is as follows: "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, surging hither and thither and being carried about by every wind of teaching, by human caprice, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception" (Eph. 4:13,14).

As we continue to "grasp" for maturity in Christ, we should not become discouraged by our human weaknesses and assume a guilt complex. Our course in the Lord should be to acknowledge our mistakes, and

truly regret them, while continuing to praise God all the more for His grace and goodness. The recognition that we serve the Lord Who has dealt with our mistakes on the cross is truly an effective force in dealing with present weaknesses. Our aim comes to be one of glorifying God in everything we think, do or say because we know that in His eyes we are spotless, totally justified, and our destiny is with Him. This is maturity in Christ.

W. W. Bentley, Jr.

## "KINGDOM" AND "ALLOTMENT"

The themes of "kingdom" and "allotment" seem to dominate this issue. We trust our readers will find these matters both timely and edifying. Turmoil in the political and economic spheres of this world strengthen us in anticipating the future aspects of God's kingdom and the allotting of His favors which He has promised. Yet current events should also stir up our appreciation for the present aspects of divine rule in our hearts.

## FEW, MANY AND ALL

Jesus often spoke of "few" being saved (cf Matt.7:14; 22:14; Luke 13:22,24). Paul also wrote of "not many" wise and noble being chosen (1 Cor.1:26). Yet in Romans 5:19 he saw ahead to the time when the "many" will be constituted just. This is more than an increased entrance into a select group, for verse 18 has shown clearly that "all mankind" are in view. These are all the many descendants of Adam, all who have been constituted sinners because of his disobedience. Indeed, the testimony of verse 18 which speaks of "all mankind" is itself dependent upon what is revealed in verse 19 concerning "the many." "The gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ, to the many superabounds" (Rom.5:15b). "Those obtaining the superabundance of grace and the gratuity of righteousness shall be reigning in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:17b). "Not for works which are wrought in righteousness which we do, but according to His mercy, He saves us" (Titus 3:5). Today, only a few are graciously granted faith, but in the end God will be All in all.

## Peace and Righteousness

# **JERUSALEM**

PROBABLY no other city on the planet is as well known as Jerusalem. And probably no other city on earth has fallen so far short in living up to its name. The name is a compound, "occupy-peace." Some have also suggested that it means "possession of peace." But in reading the pages of history one is hard pressed to find a single city that has been the site of such repeated bloodshed and destruction as experienced by Jerusalem. Many of history's major events have focused on this place. Apart from faith, the exhortation of Psalm 122 to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" seems little more than a wisp of despair rising over twice burned ashes.

Yet by faith and revelation we see that this city, Jerusalem, the occupation of peace, is a symbol of God's grand scheme. The Scriptures introduce us to Jerusalem first as Salem (Gen.14:18), and as the residence of a king who represented the One true King and Priest of the most high God. The name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness," and king of Salem means "king of peace" (Heb.7:1-3). Thus, even in the opening pages of Scripture, Jerusalem is intimated as being the place where God will initiate righteousness, peace and fellowship with Himself for the world.

We next see Jerusalem still unoccupied by the chosen people, and still ruled by a "lord of righteousness" (Adonizedok) in Joshua 10:1. A battle followed on a day that was like no other day (Josh.10:12-14); the lord of righteousness was killed, hanged on a tree till

the going down of the sun and then sealed in a cave (Josh.10:23-27). All of these things speak to us of the One Who is both our Righteousness and our Peace.

The book of Judges opens with a reference to Ierusalem. This time it is the scene of restitution and death, and Judah, the kingly tribe, possesses the outskirts of the city. But the city is not yet won. Nor will it be until one is made king whose name means "beloved" (David). Indeed, man's despairing struggle to obtain true peace, to possess and occupy it, could hardly be more vividly portrayed than that description of the impregnability of Mount Zion. "You shall not enter here, for even the blind and the lame will make you withdraw ... " (2 Sam.5:6). But the Beloved knows that the secret to the city of peace lies in its perennial water supply (cf 2 Sam.5:8; Ezek.47:1-12; John 7:37-39; Rev.22:1-5), and the city of peace soon became "the city of the beloved" (2 Sam.5:7). The Beloved knows what things belong to Jerusalem's peace (Luke 19:42), and it was imperative that He be there (Luke 13:33) to make the costly sacrifice that would stop the plague of death (2 Sam. 24:24,25).

The truths presented typically in these passages are quite plain. The primary truth is that there can be no peace apart from righteousness. This is why the king of righteousness and the lord of righteousness ruled the city of peace. But mankind is a dying creature and incapable of obtaining righteousness through any effort of his own. Yet God is love, and He has sent His Beloved, "that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor.5:21). And being justified out of His faith, "we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:1).

But the story of peace does not end on the cross; rather it begins there. Through the peace of the blood

of the cross comes reconciliation for all, both those of the heavens and those on earth (Col.1:20). And heaven and earth rejoice together in it. The heavenly messengers sing of peace on earth (Luke 2:14), and men acclaim peace in heaven (Luke 19:28). And so it should be, for the celestial Jerusalem "is mother of us all" (Gal.4:26), while the terrestrial Jerusalem was the altar for the shedding of the blood which cleanses those things of the heavens (Heb.9:23-26).

We are shown a view of the earthly climax, and certainly the celestial one could be no less glorious. The new earth receives a new Jerusalem, one that descends out of heaven from God (Rev.21:12). This new city of Peace will be the source of rule for the entire earth till rule is no longer needed, and tears and death are done away.

J. Philip Scranton

## SEEKING THE WISDOM OF GOD

As a teacher of history in a public high school, it is part of my job to consider the great ideas and writings of men throughout human history. It is evident to me that human wisdom is actually not very wise at all or the world would be a much better place than it is.

Though certain aspects of human wisdom are most admirable, it is easily put in its place through a consideration of God's Word on this subject. Paul admits to the Corinthians that he certainly did not come to them with the persuasive words of human wisdom (1 Cor.2:4), but rather with a spirit and power that is of God. He tells them that the chief men of this age will be discarded along with all of their wisdom, yet that the wisdom of God will be revealed to the mature in Christ through His spirit (cf 1 Cor.2:6-13).

The most dangerous and subtle aspect of human wisdom comes from those of the religious world who for centuries have misled, sometimes with sincere motives and sometimes not, those who have sought leadership and guidance before God. We must constantly strive to consider the Scriptures for ourselves, that we might be growing in divine wisdom, progressing toward maturity in Christ Iesus.

David Benson

## Studies in Romans

# **GOD'S KINGDOM WITHIN**

(Romans 14:16-18)

Our Lord began His earthly ministry by "heralding the evangel of the kingdom of God, saying that 'Fulfilled is the era, and near is the kingdom of God!'" (Mark 1:14,15). There was a definite time element in this message. An era was filled up, and a new era, described as "the kingdom of God" had drawn near. Yet as His ministry progressed it became evident that the kingdom's nearness in space was also in view. "Now, being inquired of by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God is coming, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God is not coming with scrutiny ... for lo! the kingdom of God is inside of you'" (Luke 17:20,21).

This heralding of Jesus concerning God's kingdom was based on the promises made to the patriarchs and prophets of Israel. In particular our Lord was elaborating on the words in Daniel 2:44 which declared that the God of the heavens will "set up a kingdom that for the eons shall not come to harm." This kingdom would be established on the earth in the hearts of God's people, even as it began to operate among the disciples nearly two thousand years ago.

After Jesus rose from the dead, His disciples asked, "Lord, art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). Obviously the element of its nearness in time had become less certain, and the Lord's

reply did not change this situation. "Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction" (Acts 1:7). As long as God ruled in the hearts of His chosen, His kingdom remained spatially near to humanity, but its external establishment seemed to be delayed. Thus the writer of the letter to the Hebrews noted that "what is being observed has not come out of what is appearing" (Heb.11:2), and Peter answered the scoffers who were saying, "Where is the promise of His presence?" by reminding his readers, "The Lord is not tardy as to the promise, as some are deeming tardiness, but is patient because of you, not intending any to perish, but all to make room for repentance" (2 Pet.3:3-9).

Those who were conscious of God's kingdom within their hearts continued to teach its full inner and outer manifestation even though the outer aspects no longer seemed near in time. Paul himself certified and heralded the kingdom of God based on the books of Moses and the prophets (Acts 28:23,31).

Yet in accord with the unique commission given him, our apostle also revealed additional developments of God's kingdom, both for the present and for the future. He spoke of the Lord's "celestial kingdom" (2 Tim.4:18), and using a slightly different figure of speech wrote, "... our realm is inherent in the heavens," (Phil.3:20). And not only did He expand on the extent of this kingdom's location, but He also spoke of an enlargement of its subjects until all are subjected to Christ Who will turn all over to God that God may be All in all (1 Cor.15:24-28). The scope of the kingdom of God is eventually to be universal, and for this to be truly God's kingdom it will surely be a rule established both externally over all and internally in the heart of everyone.

#### THE PRESENT INNER KINCDOM

Nevertheless, as Paul also testifies in his epistles, there is a continuing *present* operation of the kingdom of God that parallels our Lord's words in Luke 17:21. He writes in Colossians 1:13 that God "rescues us out of the jurisdiction of Darkness, and transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." And in the earlier letter to the Romans, he explains (with more traditional language) in a context dealing with the believers' service and walk:

Let not, then, your good be calumniated, for the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in holy spirit (Rom.14:16,17).

We have noted how Paul founds all that He says concerning our deportment on the solid basis of the evangel. What he writes in Romans 14 rests enduringly on what he affirmed in Romans 1-8. Hence, what is said here about the kingdom of God is related directly to what has been said about the death and resurrection of Christ and the grace of God in the early chapters of the epistle. In testifying to Israel concerning God's kingdom, Paul gave stress to what was prophesied in the Old Testament, but in his epistles, the kingdom is presented principally in relationship to the cross of Christ.

This is clear in Philippians where God's rule is exhibited in our behavior as worthy *citizens* who are guided and motivated and empowered by "the evangel of Christ" (Phil.1:27). Similarly, in Colossians our placement in the kingdom of the Son of God's love is associated with the peace being made "through the blood of His cross" (Col.1:13,20). Here in Romans, God's kingdom is characterized by the very traits that characterize the evangel presented in this epistle: righteousness, peace and joy.

God rules within us to discipline us, not with laws concerning food and drink, but with the manifestation of His righteousness and love in the gift of His Son. This produces inner attitudes toward our brethren that become translated in right behavior and selfless actions. That will become fully exhibited in the future when we take part in the celestial kingdom, but it is also becoming true today in a spiritual way in the lives of those who are believing. The kingdom of God is operating right now where the believer is appropriating the evangel.

#### RICHTEOUSNESS

In God's future kingdom on the earth Israel will be clothed "in the robe of righteousness" (Isa.61:10). This will be initiated by great acts of judgment and indignation (cf Acts 17:31; Rev.19:11-16). But in Romans, the basis of righteousness is the manifestation of God's righteousness through Jesus Christ's faith (Rom.1:17; 3:21,22,25,26). We learn of divine righteousness not so much by association with divine judgment as by association with divine grace. It is "Christ crucified" Who becomes to us Righteousness (1 Cor.1:23,30).

If we know God's righteousness only as it is revealed in His judgments (as, for example, in Psalms 98:2,9), then precepts concerning food and days become very important. But since we have been shown God's righteousness in the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24) we not only appreciate our freedom from such legalism, but we avoid flaunting or misusing that freedom lest it stumble a brother. Even the "good" of our freedom submits to the good of dealing graciously with one another.

In this way our good acts are not calumniated. They do not become a barrier to others who are less mature,

keeping them from a deeper appreciation of the evangel. God's righteousness revealed in the faithful obedience of Christ works a similar concern for others in our lives as is right for believers.

#### PEACE

Peace will also characterize the future kingdom of God, both on earth and among the celestials. And peace is a central factor in the evangel expounded in Romans. There we learn that being "justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God" (Rom.5:1). God has conciliated us, enemies as we were, to Himself "through the death of His Son" (Rom.5:10).

Consequently, God reigns in our hearts producing peace in our present lives. His kingdom is peace. We do not war against those who feel they must eat certain foods or observe certain days, for we realize that they have not yet comprehended the word of the conciliation. Yet we long for their growth, that they also might know the peace that is in our calling. We will continue to serve patiently and diligently as ambassadors of peace... "as of God entreating through us,... beseeching for Christ's sake, 'Be conciliated to God'" (2 Cor.5:18,20).

## JOY IN HOLY SPIRIT

The joy that God is producing inside of us is vitally related to the grace that He has granted us in Christ Jesus. In the Greek language "joy" is *chara*, and "grace" is *charis*, both terms obviously belonging to the same family of words. The joyful gift of grace creates joy in those who obtain it. "The grace of God and the gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:15) already is superabounding in our lives. It overwhelms us as it did our apostle (1 Tim.1:14) and

stirs us up in genuine and enduring joy, not a surface enthusiasm that rises and fades in accordance with the environment.

This is a spiritual operation, an invisible empowering of joy (and righteousness and peace as well) within the believer. The fuel is the evangel of God's righteousness, the word of the conciliation, the grace that is in Christ. "Did you get the spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith?" Paul asked the Galatians (Gal.3:2,5). And because they turned from that which called them in the grace of Christ (Gal.1:6), they lost their happiness (Gal.4:4).

Yet it is possible for those who have a greater grasp of God's grace to dwell upon their grasp, and in their pride to forget that they are sinners saved by grace and enemies conciliated through the death of God's Son. Then this is bound to lead to impatience with the immature, even to becoming incensed toward them. All of us need to be rejuvenated in the spirit of our mind (Eph.4:23) so that God's joy will remain with us as an essential factor of His kingdom within.

#### SLAVING FOR CHRIST

For he who in this is slaving for Christ, is well pleasing to God and attested by men (Rom.14:18).

At first sight, it will seem incongrous that the figures of God's kingdom in us and our enslavement to our Lord are thus linked. But for Paul there was no greater honor in the present era than to be a slave of Christ Jesus. He gives this position first place, even above his apostleship, at the beginning of the epistle (Rom.1:1). "Slave" is the very second word of Romans, and it occurs no less than eighteen times throughout the letter in various forms. Here in 14:18 it describes the ideal expression of our present participation in God's

kingdom. It points back to the apostle's entreaty in Romans 12:1,2 to our logical divine service and in 12:11 to our "slaving for the Lord."

The kingdom of God within us is a most distinctive force. There is nothing else like it. It spreads its selflessness, its challenging concepts of concern for others, its singleminded dedication to righteousness, peace and joy, into every part of our nature. It bypasses all thought of personal gain and ambition, and it focuses our attention on the glorious achievements of God through the faith of Christ and their implications for the entire universe.

Strange as it appears, this enslavement is the very position we most truly stand in need of. It gives relevance and significance to our lives in two directions. First of all it is "well pleasing to God." It brings pleasure to the all-wise, the all-powerful, the all-righteous Deity. What more could we want? Yet more is involved, for in being slaves of Christ and in pleasing God we will also be receiving the trust and confidence of those around us. People may reject what we say and scorn the very idea of grace from God through the death and resurrection of Christ, but they will note and perhaps even respect the effects of this evangel upon our attitudes and actions.

# THE SCOPE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Thus we discover that the term "kingdom of God" is used in many ways in Scripture. Its reference to the rule God will set on the earth in the future is perhaps best known because of its prominence in our Lord's ministry in the land. Yet the Lord also spoke of that coming kingdom in accord with its inner aspects, the rule of God's spirit in the heart of His chosen people. Paul, too, looked forward to the oncoming eons when

Christ's Headship will be fully established over the believers. In location, this will be "among the celestials," and in purpose, it will be for the display of God's transcendent grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Eph.2:7). But in character, it will retain all the essential features of God's kingdom whenever and wherever it may be established. It will be full of righteousness, peace and joy.

These spiritual aspects of the kingdom of God have special significance for our lives today. And they are strengthened by the assurance that the faith of Jesus Christ unto the death of the cross enables God's purpose of becoming All in all to be achieved. Then, there will be no spot in all the universe where righteousness, peace and joy will not reign.

D.H.H.

(To be continued)

## **EDITORIAL NOTES**

This issue contains more articles than usual, including one by William W. Bentley, Jr. of La Jolla, California. Brother Bentley is the author of the book, The SIMPLE STORY OF THE UNIVERSE, with which many of our readers are familiar. We welcome this, his first contribution to *Unsearchable Riches*.

Most readers will observe something different about our type. Our old typesetting equipment had become obsolete, so that it was nearly impossible to find parts and get service for necessary upkeep. We are optimistic that our new equipment will prove more efficient in meeting our unique needs, especially for the extensive and exacting preparations which are requisite to the completion of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament. (See Psalm 119:33-48 on page 24 which, along with this entire issue, was set with our new equipment.) Hopefully our readers will be pleased with the finished product.

However, because of the time required for getting familiar with this new equipment, James Coram was unable to complete his article for this issue. The Lord willing, we will resume the series, His Achievement Are We, in our next issue.

D.H.H.

# UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1988 BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY-NINE

## **EDITORIAL**

"YET NOW CHRIST has been roused from among the dead..." (1 Cor.15:20).

The first two articles in this issue deal specifically with Christ's resurrection and ascension, and their significance for the believer and all mankind. This is both a timely theme and an important one to our everyday faith.

The glory of Christ's resurrection can never be fully grasped and appreciated without an understanding of the evil of death. Until we face up to the stark horror of death we will be unable to enter fully into the joyful triumph involved in the rousing of Christ.

Apart from the resurrection of Christ, there is no hope, there is no comfort, there is no future for those who have died, and indeed for us all, for we are all dying.

Yet the evil of death is almost everywhere covered over. Believers are assured that, at least for them, and perhaps for their families as well, death is not a very great enemy. It is spoken of as an entrance into an "intermediate state," which possesses something of value, perhaps for growth or for adjustment and preparation for the more complete life that is given at resurrection.

Paul's words concerning a gain coming with his death are made to refer to some sort of personal gain for Paul rather than a gain in the magnifying of Christ (Phil.1:20,21). (If death is ever this kind of gain, are we to suppose that the condemnation that came into the race through Adam was not so very bad after all? Does death, then, possess some redeeming features? ... or at least is it capable of possessing such?)

So also we are told that the death of the believer

means that he is immediately "home with the Lord" (2 Cor.5:8). But it is resurrection, not death, that brings us to this home, when we shall "be dressed in our habitation which is out of heaven" (2 Cor.5:2). In this passage, Paul was referring to the time when the mortal is swallowed up by life (2 Cor.5:4), and that occurs when we are resurrected and roused and vivified, in His presence (1 Cor.15:51-53).

When a fellow believer dies, we do not sorrow like those who have no expectation (1 Thess.4:13). But this reduction in our sorrow is not built on any concept of value in death. It is rather built on our expectation of resurrection, of being together with our Lord always.

Again it is pointed out that death is a release from suffering and pain, which indeed it often is, and as such it may be said to be "welcome," at least to some degree. But death cannot be made more pleasant intrinsically just because it is the culmination of an agonizing process of dying. Though there is no more suffering in death, there is no consciousness and capability for usefulness (Ecc.9:5,6; Psa.88:10-12). Even as there is nothing good we can say about dying, there is nothing good we can say about death.

But there is something good about recognizing that we cannot say anything good about death! Once we realize that death is the worst of enemies we can truly exult in the rousing and the resurrection of Christ from among the dead. We can fully glory in His vivification, as the Firstfruit of those who are reposing (1 Cor. 15:20). Resurrection is not an improvement on a tolerably acceptable condition; it is a removal and rescue from hopelessness. And when we accept this good news, we will be genuinely strengthened in assurance, peace and joy. "Now thanks be to God, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

# Praise and Prayer

# THE TRANSCENDENT GREATNESS OF HIS POWER

In the first Ephesian prayer, Paul prays that we may perceive the prospect, the riches, and the power of the joint allotment among the celestials. In our previous installments in this series we have meditated on the prospect and the riches of this allotment, and now we wish to give further consideration to the power of this tremendous transaction.

#### CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

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

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

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

Why did God allow them to crucify His Son? Yea, rather, why did He forsake His Beloved in His hour of direst need? Christ is on the accursed tree. He is made sin. Soon a dense and dreadful darkness hides the scene, feebly figuring the hiding of God's face.

But God did not cast Him off forever, and in His very death, Christ commends His spirit to His Father's care.

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

#### HIS ASCENSION

Christ arose! The high priest's guards, affrighted,

flee! He breaks the seal of Caesar! He escapes from Satan's jurisdiction, death! With victorious and majestic calmness He carefully strips off His cerements, the tokens of their temporary triumph, and folds them up, and lays them in their appropriate place. He comes forth the Victor over the vast confederacy of the forces of evil!

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

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

Luke presents us with a picture of Adam's greater Son. The very fact that Acts takes up the unfinished thread of Luke shows that this aspect of His work is incomplete. In view of this we need not be surprised when Stephen sees Him *standing*. There is no seating of the *Son of Mankind* until He comes in His glory to rule the nations of the earth (Matt.25:31).

John's evangel presents a distinct aspect of His ascension, as the Son of God, which we should not ignore, for it is a prelude to the present grace far more fitting than the subsequent public scene on Olivet. Even as He, as the Son of God, partially anticipated

Pentecost by breathing the spirit on them beforehand, so He also ascended on the resurrection day. Mary was forbidden to touch Him because He had not yet ascended (John 20:17). Thomas was asked to touch Him on a later occasion. It is not so very strange, then, that the later ascension is not recorded in John's account. The spiritual tendency of the narrative forbids it. The ascension of which He spoke to Mary is the one for us, before the forty days sojourning, before any human contact.

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

#### CELESTIAL SOVEREIGNTY

In light of these glories, Paul prays for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in perceiving what is "the transcendent greatness of [God's] power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating 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: and subjects all under His feet,

and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all" (Eph.1:19-23)

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

When He was on earth He had no allotment for His own. Now, as the Son of Abraham, every inch of the promised land is His. The jackals had their burrows, the winged creatures had their roosts, but the Son of Mankind, their rightful Head, had nowhere to pillow His head. Now all of Adam's lost authority is vested in the erstwhile homeless Nazarene. The One Who left His riches in the glory to become poor has returned to become the Owner of the universe. The weakness that suffered them to take Him in Gethsemane has given place to a personal power and presence of such awful intensity and force that it fells His beloved apostle at His feet (Rev.1:17). The Man Who submitted to Pilate's petty power and Satan's suzerainty has seized all that and vastly more. Satan once offered Him the sovereignty of the earth if He would but worship him (Matt.4:1-10). Soon He will receive it from the hands of God.

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

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

These thoughts, these kingdoms, do not clash. The future realm to be set up on earth replaces earthly kingdoms. He will rule His people as the Son of David and all others as the Son of Mankind (Dan.2:44). The kingdom now in force is opposed, not to any earthly government (for we are bound to be subject to such), but to the spiritual overlordship of which Satan is the sovereign. It does not lead us to acknowledge Christ as David's or as Adam's Son (though we gladly hail Him these as well), but as the Son of God, the true Suzerain of the spirit realm. All hail to the Son of God, the Sovereign of the universe! All hail to His God and

Father, Whose power has placed Him at the summit of creation!

#### HEADSHIP OVER THE ECCLESIA

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

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

This is the key to high heaven's restoration. Christ's blood not only avails for all, but fills the throne of the universe with the dregs of earth. They become the wonder and amazement of the heavenly throng, for they display the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the plenitude of His power, the overwhelming

redundance of His grace and love. Through them, His name, His fame, will form the theme of praise from the pole star to the southern cross.

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

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

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

A.E.K.

(To be continued)

## "IF THERE IS NO RESURRECTION"

WE ARE FAMILIAR with the three verbs Paul uses to describe the evangel he brought to the Corinthians: died, entombed and roused (1 Cor.15:1-4). To these the apostle adds a fourth term: seen (15:5-11). He lists the occurrences when Christ was seen after He was roused from the dead. This witness is now a triple-fronted defense for the importance of the resurrection of Christ: (1) It is an indispensable part of the evangel, being associated with God's power to save. (2) It stands on the authority of the Scriptures. (3) It is a documented historical fact.

Having laid this foundation, Paul addresses the Corinthian problem with a question of surprise: "... How are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead?" He then begins a logical, thorough and systematic presentation of the indispensability of the resurrection. The Corinthians were among the wisdom-seeking Greeks to whom the cross seemed stupidity (1 Cor.1:22,23). Yet God's grace overflows, even to those holding the standards of current human wisdom. And God's Word testifies to them, in the form of logical reasoning, the essential truth of resurrection.

Five times, with various changes in wording, Paul presents a hypothesis we summarize as: "If there is no resurrection of the dead . . . ." Each time he gives the logical consequences which uphold the necessity of the resurrection. In each case the statement begins with "if." In four of the five statements the word

"dead" is used, and it is plural in each usage. This indicates that Paul's argument is of universal scope. He is not arguing for the fact of Christ's resurrection only. Twice he does deal specifically with Christ's resurrection (verses 14 and 17), and there he uses the sub-hypothesis: "if Christ has not been roused." The five primary statements follow the Roman numerals in the outline that follows:

I. If there is no resurrection of the dead,

Then neither has Christ been roused;

if Christ has not been roused,

then for naught, consequently, is our heralding, then for naught is your faith (v.14).

Then we are being found false witnesses also of God, seeing that we testify by God that He rouses Christ, Whom, consequently, He rouses not if so be that the dead are not being roused (v.15).

II. If the dead are not being roused,

Then neither has Christ been roused (v.16);

if Christ has not been roused,

then vain is your faith,

then you are still in your sins (v.17)!

Then consequently those also, who are put to repose in Christ perished (v.18).

III. If we are having an expectation in Christ in this life only.

Then more forlorn than all men are we (v.19).

(Here we skip to verse 29. Verses 20-28 form a parenthetical statement brought on by the weight of the statement that Paul has just made. Verse 29 picks up the argument again, though Paul changes his format slightly.)

IV. If the dead are not being roused,

Then what shall those be doing who are baptizing (v.29)?

Then baptism is for the sake of the dead absolutely; why are they baptizing also for their sake (v.29)?

V. If the dead are not being roused (v.32),

Then (why suffer persecution for Christ?)

Why are we also in danger every hour? Daily am I dying. By this boast of yours, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, if, as a man, I fight wild beasts in Ephesus, what is the benefit to me (vs.30-32)?

Then we may be eating and drinking, for tomorrow we are dying (v.32).

VI. The conclusion of the matter:

A. Be not deceived: evil conversations are corrupting kind characters (v.33).

B. Sober up justly and do not be sinning, for some have an ignorance of God (v.34).

C. To abash you am I saying it (v.34).

I. The first argument may be summarized as the consequences to Paul's ministry if there is no resurrection of the dead. The first consequence would be that Christ could not have risen, and taking this first consequence as a sub-hypothesis ("if Christ has not been roused"), Paul shows that the issue would be that both his preaching and the faith of the Corinthians would be worthless.

Returning to his primary condition ("if there is no resurrection of the dead"), the second consequence would be that Paul and his fellow laborers are proven to be false witnesses of God. This statement may be understood in two ways: (1) Paul and those who ministered with him are liars in that they misrepresented God; or (2), because they testified by God to the resurrection, God is a liar. Such is the outcome if there is no resurrection of the dead.

II. The second argument may be summarized as the consequence suffered by the Corinthians if there is no resurrection of the dead. Since the faith of the Corinthians was established through Paul's ministry, it will be seen that the second argument is parallel to and overlaps the first. Again, two results are given which must follow the condition of no resurrection. As before, the first is that Christ could not have been roused, and again this would lead to two further consequences: (1) the Corinthians' faith would be vain, and (2) the Corinthians would still be in their sins. Simply put, if Christ has not been roused, they have no salvation. This would then relate back to the primary hypothesis: If there is no resurrection of the dead, then there is no salvation.

The second consequence concerned the Corinthian believers who had died. If the dead are not roused, then believers who have died have perished. This statement speaks strongly and clearly about the state of the dead. "Perished" can hardly be a viable term for describing conscious existence, especially an existence in bliss with Christ. As the third, fourth and fifth arguments will clearly confirm, Paul did not believe the dead have a conscious existence.

III. The final three arguments present contradictions that would confront the believer's life and faith if there was no resurrection. The third argument very logically picks up where the second left off. Its emphasis is on the obliteration of expectation created by this false teaching. In Romans 8:24 Paul had said, "For to expectation were we saved." What is the quality of life for believers if they do not have the resurrection to look forward to? Paul rewords the hypothesis to stress the blessing of expectation. Instead of saying, "If there is no resurrection," or, "If the dead are not being

roused," he says in effect, "If our expectation in Christ is only good as long as we are living this present life...." The consequence would be that believers are more forlorn, in a more pitiful condition, than all mankind. This statement is made in such unqualified terms that it is surely worthy of careful consideration. Notice again that there is no intimation of joy or reward in death.

It is the weight of this thought that causes Paul to digress into the parenthetical passage (verses 20-28) that follows. There Paul names Christ as the Firstfruit of the dead. As the Firstfruit, He is both the assurance and the consecration of the harvest-resurrections to follow. All will be vivified! Death will be abolished! All will be subjected to God and God will become All in all! That is the glorious achievement promised in the resurrection of Christ.

In the final two arguments Paul is putting the Corinthians on the spot. As he mentions later, he is shaming and embarrassing them into forsaking such an untenable doctrine.

IV. Much controversy has developed over this passage composing Paul's fourth argument. The apostle begins by asking, How do those who are baptizing reconcile this with their doctrine of no resurrection? Baptism was an important issue to the Corinthians and had even become a matter of controversy and strife (cf 1:10-17). Paul said the Israelite patriarchs were "baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2). Their baptism was more than a passing through water and deliverance from Pharaoh at the Red Sea. It also included the daily walk of following the pillar of cloud and fire. It also involved a unity of eating and drinking of the same spiritual Rock, Christ. Paul later said, "In one spirit we all are baptized into one body [a

living unity]... and all are made to imbibe one spirit" (1 Cor.12:13). In Romans 6:3-11 he speaks of being baptized into Christ. And in unmistakable terms he repeatedly explains that unity with Christ in death is the basis for unity with Him in life.

In all these passages, Paul makes it clear that life, new, resurrection life, is an inseparable part of the teaching of baptism. If, then, there is no resurrection, the teachings of baptism are meaningless. Why be involved with something that proclaims resurrection if you do not believe in resurrection?

V. Paul's final argument needs little explanation. In plain terms he says, "If there is no resurrection of the dead, there is no reason or benefit for suffering persecution for Christ. If there is no resurrection of the dead, eat and drink and take what enjoyment you can from life, for tomorrow you will die, and that is the end." This could not be said if there was any blessedness or benefit in the state of death.

VI. In concluding the matter, Paul make three points: (1) Be not deceived! The results of entertaining such teachings and teachers is corruption, of both faith and life. (2) Wake up to what is going on and do not miss the mark of truth in correcting this matter. It springs from an ignorance of God and His Word. (3) I have carried this argument to the full extreme. Maybe I have even gone overboard, but my purpose in doing so was to shame and stir you into doing what is right.

We have seen that resurrection is a vital aspect of our faith. And in the parenthetical section of verses 20-28 we come to appreciate how critical the resurrection of Christ is to all mankind and God's purpose of becoming All in all. Thank God for the mighty operation of His power in raising Christ from among the dead.

J. Philip Scranton

# Studies in Deuteronomy

# NOT ON BREAD ALONE

In response to all three temptations in the wilderness, our Lord Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy; two of His replies reflect the wording of verses 16 and 13 in chapter six (cf Matt.4:7 and 10). When tempted to command stones to become cakes of bread, He quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3, saying: "It is written, Not on bread alone shall man be living, but on every declaration going out through the mouth of God" (Matt.4:4).

"It is written" is the sword of the spirit (the divine declaration, Eph.6:17) that will destroy all insinuations originating from the world-mights of this darkness (Eph.6:12). So there is a definite need for continuous, adequate, spiritual sustenance. This is why Paul reminded Timothy to be an ideal servant of Christ Jesus, fostering himself with the words of faith and of the ideal teaching (1 Tim.4:6)

#### MOSES TEACHING THE YOUNGER GENERATION

"All the instruction which I am enjoining on you today, you shall observe to obey, that you may live and multiply and enter and tenant the land about which Yahweh had sworn to your fathers. And remember all the way which Yahweh your Elohim caused you to go these forty years in the wilderness, that He might make you humble; to probe you so as to know what is in your heart, whether or not you shall observe His instructions. So He made you humble and let you hunger; then He fed you with the manna which nei-

ther you had known, nor had your fathers known, that He might make you realize that not on bread alone shall the human live, for by every utterance from the mouth of Yahweh shall the human live. Your garment has not worn out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. So you know with your heart that just as a man disciplines his son, Yahweh your Elohim is disciplining you. Hence observe the instructions of Yahweh your Elohim so as to walk in His ways and to fear Him" (Deut.8:1-6).

Moses was the ideal teacher for the post-Sinai generation of Israelites who were ready to cross over the Jordan and enter the promised land. They should remember the way in which Yahweh Elohim had disciplined their nation for repeated rebellious behavior during the past forty years in the wilderness.

The reason why Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:3 calls the manna "spiritual food" lies in the spiritual background behind the divine gift. Moses said essentially the same when he declared in simple language: Yahweh fed you with the manna in order to make you realize that you shall not live on bread alone (i.e., not on material sustenance that is readily available and hence taken for granted). You shall rather live by every utterance from the mouth of Yahweh.

So He had to let them go hungry before He made food available to them by His word: "In the morning you shall be satisfied with bread" (Ex.16:12); and He kept His word, six times a week, for forty years (16:29). Yet Yahweh provided not only water and bread for their journey, but also clothing and physical strength (Deut.8:4). The remembrance of divine care when they were unable to support themselves should provide the motivation for humble obedience in the future, always mindful of the covenant bond between Yahweh

and His chosen people. So Moses told his audience: "You know with your heart that just as a man disciplines his son, Yahweh Elohim is disciplining you. Hence observe the instructions of Yahweh your Elohim so as to walk in His ways and to fear Him."

#### THE GOOD LAND

"For Yahweh your Elohim is bringing you into a land good and wide, a land of watercourses, with water from springs and from the abyss coming forth in valley and in mountain, a land of wheat and barley and vine and fig and pomegranate, a land of olive oil and honey, a land in which you may eat bread, not in frugality. You shall not lack anything in it, a land whose stones have iron ore, and from its mountain ranges you may hew copper. When you have eaten and are satisfied, then bless Yahweh your Elohim for the good land that He has given to you" (Deut.8:7-10).

The richness of the good land is in stark contrast to the bleak and dismal wilderness where Yahweh alone could provide the strength to survive. Yet in the promised land there would be bountiful water supply and rich daily bread from crops, fruit, oil and honey. Furthermore, iron and copper were mined in the vicinity of the Aravah (the great rift valley), particularly in its southern part from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba. So the good land would provide them with everything to ensure their prospertity in every respect, or, as Moses put it, they would eat and would be satisfied. But then they should always bless Yahweh Elohim for the good land that He had given to them.

Earlier in his address, Moses had spoken of *special blessings*; if they would observe Yahweh's instructions, statutes and judgments, then He would keep the covenant with them and continue to show the kind-

ness about which He had sworn to their fathers. He would love them and bless them; they would have many children; their domestic animals would multiply and the ground would be so fruitful that an adequate food supply would always be available for the increasing population. Every illness would be taken away from them, particularly all the bad diseases of ancient Egypt (cf Deut.7:11-15).

#### **GUARD YOURSELF LEST YOU FORGET**

"Guard yourself lest you should forget Yahweh your Elohim by failing to observe His instructions and His judgments and His statutes that I am enjoining on you today, lest, when you eat and are satisfied and build good houses and dwell in them, and your herd and your flock multiply, and silver and gold increase for you, and all that is yours is abundant, then your heart becomes exalted and you forget Yahweh your Elohim Who was bringing you forth from the country of Egypt. from the house of servants. Who was causing you to go through the great and fear-inspiring wilderness with burning serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground in which there is no water, Who was bringing forth for vou water from the flinty rock, Who was feeding you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers had not known, that He might make you humble and that He might probe you, to do you good in your latter days. Guard vourself lest you say in your heart: Mu vigor and the staunchness of my hand make for me this great estate. Yet vou will remember Yahweh vour Elohim. for He is the One giving to you the vigor to make this estate, that He may confirm His covenant that He had sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Iacob, as in this day" (Deut.8:11-18).

In this section of Deuteronomy we have two more

occurrences of the phrase, Guard yourself, lest you forget! Here, in 8:11, it introduces one of the longest sentences in the Old Testament, with a string of reminders to Israel of Yahweh's probing and testing and feeding them in the wilderness (verses 11 through 16). Failing to observe the divine instructions, judgments and statutes would indicate that they had forgotten Yahweh Elohim was the One Who had been escorting His chosen people since the days of the exodus from Egypt, the house of servants.

With increasing prosperity and security in the good land, there would be looming an indistinct and distorted image of Yahweh Elohim, of the One Who had been *feeding them with manna* for a special purpose, namely to make them humble and thus prepare them for the "latter days" in the good land.

They might tell their children of their ancestors' slavery in Egypt and their journey through the great and fear-inspiring wilderness with its poisonous serpents and scorpions and the lack of water. But if these facts were remembered in a literal sense only, the need for continuous adequate spiritual sustenance would dwindle away.

Should they no longer emphasize the great truth that they had not been living on the manna-bread alone, but rather by every utterance from the mouth of Yahweh, then the spiritual experience of the past would be reduced to a mere humanized perception of things and events. Failing to bless Yahweh for the good land (Deut.8:10) would blot out the spiritual experience of Yahweh's actual presence in everyday life.

Their ancestors had experienced the reality of Yahweh in a unique way when they heard His voice from the midst of the fire on the mountain (Ex.19:18,19;

20:18-20; Deut.4:11,12,36). And more recently, Yahweh had told the post-Sinai generation through Moses: "I have started to deliver up before you Sihon king of Hesbon," and (with reference to Og king of Bashan) "Do not fear him, for into your hand I will give him" (Deut.2:31; 3:2). These are but three examples out of forty years of Israel's spiritual experience how they lived and survived and vanquished by utterances from the mouth of Yahweh. Yet the memory of these and similar events may fade away when their wealth will be abundant (Deut.8:13).

In times of prosperity and security, there is always a temptation for men to boast of their own achievements. Hence Moses warns his audience: "Guard yourself lest you say in your heart: My vigor and the staunchness of my hand make for me this great estate" (Deut.8:17). So Moses reminded his audience that Yahweh their Elohim will be the One giving them the strength and ability to acquire wealth, and this for a special purpose, namely that He may confirm His covenant that He had sworn to their fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, as on this very day when the covenant is being renewed in Transjordan in the plains of Moab, so that each human in Israel shall live by every utterance from the mouth of Yahweh.

H.H.R.

## ANITA S. YODER

Sister Anita Yoder was put to repose on February 19, 1988 in Murietta, California, at 89 years of age. Her husband of fifty-seven years, Maurice J. Yoder, preceded her in death in 1975. The Yoders had been staunch supporters of the Concordant Publishing Concern since the early 1920's, and are survived by their children, our friends in faith, daughters Madena Anderson and Evelyn Tatton, and sons Charles, Joseph and David Yoder.

# Among the Celestials

# "THIS SECRET IS GREAT"

(Ephesians 5:22-33)

Let wives be subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He is the Saviour of the body. Nevertheless, as the ecclesia is subject to Christ, thus are the wives also to their husbands in everything (Eph.5:22-24).

This passage (and those following, up to 6:9) contains specific instruction from the apostle to the various parties in the ordinary household. In turn, we have sections addressed to wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves and masters. In each case, the injunction is given to the more dependent members first; wives and then husbands, children and then parents, slaves and then masters. The same arrangement is followed in the parallel passage in Colossians 3:18-4:1.

Let us here note an important point. The sex of a person is no longer a prime issue. It is not a question of women, just because they are women, being subject to men, but rather of wives, because they are wives, being subject to their husbands. In regard to the evangel, men and women stand equal before God. Indeed, as Paul makes clear in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive [fleshly] passed by. Lo! there has come new!" As a consequence of this, there is, in Christ, "no male and female," but we are "all one" in Him (Gal.3:28). We

are all designated "sons of God" (Rom.8:14), and have the same expectation, namely, to be conformed to Christ's body of glory (Phil.3:21).

Nevertheless, as long as our spirits reside in these bodies of flesh, family relationships will continue, and for the sake of harmony and peace within each household, Paul submits these injunctions, from which, if they are followed, much blessing will accrue to all concerned. Moreover, their observance will bring home to us many invaluable scriptural truths.

For instance, in every family there should be a recognized head, and that must involve direction on the one hand and subjection on the other. The wife is to be subject to the husband if harmony is to prevail. And this subjection is to be in accord with subjection to the Lord Himself, for in an ideal partnership the husband is a picture to the wife of Christ as Head. There should be nothing irksome about this, for (as we shall see presently) the husband, in his turn, must make his own effective contribution to the relationship.

But the great spiritual truth is this: the pattern for this human affinity is that which exists between Christ and His ecclesia. He is the *Head* of the ecclesia, and He is the *Saviour* of the body. Directing, controlling, empowering, these are the functions of a head; rescuing, preserving, protecting, these are the operations of a saviour.

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, cleansing it in the bath of the water (with His declaration), that He should be presenting it to Himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless (5:25-27).

In a home in which Christ deigns to dwell, love must

prevail, and the husband must take the lead in this. By loving his wife, a husband is following the example of Christ, Whose love for the ecclesia is so intense that He is continuously giving Himself up for its sake. There is a very special sense in which Christ gave Himself up for the ecclesia at Golgotha. For the ecclesia, chosen in Him before the disruption of the world, could have no existence in these fleshly bodies until the question of sin in the flesh had been dealt with, and this was done on the cross. These bodies of flesh are to be considered as being dead, so that, in a new creation, the ecclesia could live to Christ. The saving work of Christ is already an accomplished fact; His cleansing work is a continual process. His aim is to present to Himself a glorious ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless.

"Holy and flawless," these are the terms in which the ecclesia was first contemplated (Eph.1:4). Eve was holy and flawless in Adam's sight when she was first presented to him, but because of her soulishness, she soon sinned, and Adam with her. Christ, on the contrary, is "the One not knowing sin" (2 Cor.5:21), and His complement, the ecclesia, must be seen to be without blemish in God's sight. This can only be in "a new creation" where the primitive is completely passed by (2 Cor.5:17). That is why "Nothing, consequently, is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" and why no one can properly "be indicting God's chosen ones" (Rom.8:1,33).

Thus, the husbands also ought to be loving their own wives as their own bodies. He who is loving his own wife is loving himself. For no one at any time hates his own flesh, but is nurturing and cherishing it, 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.5:28-32).

This is truly showing us the depth of love which should exist between husbands and wives. The two are to be regarded as one, and no one hates his own body, but does his best to care for it. The inspiration for the husbands' love for their wives should be the love which Christ has for the ecclesia, for we are members of His body. Then the apostle goes back to the very beginnings of humanity, and quotes from Genesis 2:24 to prove his point that "the two shall be one flesh." Even when God was forming woman, as a separate entity, to be the complement of man, He had in mind the eventual bringing into being, as a separate entity, of Christ's complement. This was the secret kept all down the centuries until it was revealed here by Paul. It is generally termed, "The Secret of Marriage," and we would not quarrel with this designation, but suggest that it might equally be termed "The Secret of the Complement."

We dealt fairly fully with the subject, "The Ecclesia as Christ's Complement" in an earlier article in this series (volume 76, pages 265-272). Perhaps, by way of reminder, and for the benefit of any who may not possess the earlier article, we may be permitted to quote a few lines from it, slightly adjusted:

"Adam's complement must come from within himself.... Christ's complement, too, must come from within, and that is why we find ourselves, if we are members of that ecclesia which is His body, 'chosen in Him before the disruption of the world' (Eph.1:4). Let us carry the analogy a little further. Prior to the stupor falling upon Adam, that which was to form the essential nature of the woman, lay latent within him, un-

seen and unknown except to God Who had created humanity, and Who, in the day when they were created, had called their name Adam (Gen.5:2). Similarly, prior to the time when the stupor of death fell upon Christ, that which was to form the essence of the ecclesia lay (figuratively) concealed within Him.... After our Lord's rousing from among the dead, the ecclesia begins to have a separate existence, beginning with the call of Saul of Tarsus, and continuing even to the present day. At some point in the not too distant future, we believe, the ecclesia will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Then He will be presenting to Himself a 'glorified ecclesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it may be holy and flawless.'"

The relationship between Christ and His ecclesia is profound, complete and most glorious. No human relationship can ever match it or even approach its splendor. At best it can be but a faint reflection, but it should be a reflection. The secret of the complement is great, though sadly understood by only a few, even among believers.

Moreover, you also individually, each be loving his own wife thus, as himself, yet that the wife may be fearing the husband (Eph.5:33).

This is Paul's conclusion of the whole matter, and it is the logical one. If the husband loves the wife in the way that has been defined, she will find the subjection a joy and not anything irksome. The "fearing" in this connection does not imply terror, for perfect love casts out that kind of fear; rather it implies a willing acquiescence in a Divine arrangement, and a concern lest she should be found wanting in any way. It is the same kind of feeling that we should all possess when, "with fear and trembling" we carry our own salvation into

effect, and this stems from a realization of the fact that it is God Who is operating in us "to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight" (Phil.2:12,13). It is not a slavish obedience; in fact, the word "obey" is not used in either Ephesians or Colossians in connection with wives as it is with children and slaves. On the contrary, it is a voluntary acceptance of her role in a Divinely appointed partnership. In saying this, we must not ignore or in any way lessen the responsibility of the husband to be "loving his own wife as himself," for this is the real basis of a truly happy marriage, in which all is being done "as to the Lord."

One further point: we have noted that Christ is to present Himself with a glorious ecclesia without any spot or wrinkle, but this does not alter the fact that the ecclesia is really God's great gift to His Son. For the ecclesia was in the mind and purpose of the Father before ever the eons began (2 Tim.1:9). Nor must it be forgotten that Christ was given, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body (Eph.1:22,23). Each is given to the other, and if we could only remember this in our human relationships, how blessed would be the results!

(To be continued)

## REPOSING

We are sorry to report the death of Roland A. Wright, of Sheridan, Illinois, on December 20, 1987. Brother Wright had subscribed to *Unsearchable Riches* for many years.

Another one of our friends was put to repose in December, Helga Elizabeth Thompson, on December 17. Bettie was the wife of our friend in the Lord, Jim Thompson, of Phoenix, Arizona.

Both of these brethren greatly rejoiced in God's purpose to reconcile the universe to Himself. They will live again in that day, displaying the transcendent riches of God's grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

## Studies in Romans

## PEACE AND EDIFICATION

(Romans 14:19-21)

SALVATION from such fleshly ways as pride, jealousy, anger and strife is one of the greatest blessings available to us in our present lives. God's power for this salvation (and future salvation as well) is provided by the evangel itself (Rom.1:16), as is now emphasized here in the latter chapters of Romans.

In believing that we are being justified gratuitously in God's grace through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24), our mind and disposition are freed from self-centeredness into the joyful liberty of thankfulness and praise. There is no room for hate when we are genuinely occupied with God's love in the death of His Son for our sakes (Rom.5:8). Those who have obtained the conciliation will be enjoying peace toward God (Rom.5:1,11). And this in turn will motivate them in peaceful attitudes and actions toward those around them.

Consequently, then, we are pursuing that which makes for peace and that which is for the edification of one another (Rom.14:19).

Our idea of peace often is simply a matter of expecting others to live at peace with us. However, some truly desire peace for others. Yet Paul is even going beyond this when he directs us to be pursuing that which makes for peace. The words "consequently" and "then" show us that the pursuit of peace is based

on particular matters that have already been mentioned. It is not a desire for peace based on some sort of humanitarian concept, or on any philosophy of man, but an actual operation of peace that arises from a specific motivation and guiding force placed within us by God.

In our previous article we noted that God has established a kingdom, a rule, within us who are believing. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:19, God is placing in us the word of the conciliation. It would not be misleading at all to connect Romans 5:10 and 14:19 as follows: "We were conciliated to God through the death of His Son; consequently, then, we are pursuing that which makes for peace."

Similarly, we will say, God spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all and graciously grants us all; consequently, then, we are pursuing that which is for the edification of one another (Rom.8:32; 14:19). We are so very rich in peace and spiritual strength, and this solely because of God's love and grace, that we cannot help but be seeking good for others.

Of course others will take advantage of this, no doubt despising it as weakness, but that is beside the point. More and more we will seek to live in accord with what we are in Christ. Hence Paul does not say that we must or even that we should be pursuing peace and edification, but he says, "Consequently, we are pursuing peace and edification." The consequence of God's grace in us is that we become gracious, not indeed overnight, but in a process of growth toward maturity.

Again, we may not see any positive effects on others, but that too is beside the point. The long term and short term effects of our behavior on others are in God's hands. Yet for ourselves, the results are entirely

beneficial. In imitating God as beloved children (Eph. 5:1), our spirits are blessed and our faith is strengthened.

Not on account of food demolish the work of God. All, indeed, is clean, but it is evil to the man who with stumbling is eating. It is ideal not to be eating meat, nor yet to be drinking wine, nor yet to do aught by which your brother is stumbling, or is being snared or weakened (Rom.14:20,21).

"These are safe tests to apply to all our intercourse with our fellow saints. Will it provoke strife? If so, let us avoid it. Will it edify? If not, let us forego it. Peace and the edification of others, rather than our own privileges should be pressed . . . ." (Concordant Commentary, p.244).

Eating the right foods and (even more importantly) avoiding the wrong foods were once very vital in the service of God's people. The precepts of Deuteronomy 12 and 14 make this very clear. And even today, many reason that if this was once required, then it still is required. They see only dimly the changes that have come about because of the cross of Christ and the evangel of grace that was given to Paul. And so Paul had to say very plainly, "Now food will not give us a standing with God" (1 Cor.8:8). Nothing is contaminating in itself, for the kingdom of God is not food and drink (Rom.14:14,17).

The situation is very different today from what it was before Paul was called. God's people pleased Him by obeying His instructions, including those concerned with foods. We are no longer under such laws, but we may be pleasing God by abstaining from foods that we have full liberty to eat, because we do not want our actions to stumble a weaker brother. It is not the law of Moses that dictates to us about abstaining from foods.

Rather it is the grace that is in Christ Jesus that guides us, in some cases to abstain from foods because it will be better for others, in other cases to eat whatever is set before us because that will be most edifying.

This is the principle of grace as it operates in our lives. Of course it extends to other matters besides eating and drinking and observing days. We will find brethren who feel there is something required of us in patterns of prayer and worship, in forms of divine service, symbols and signs, and in our attitudes toward and contacts with the world, if we are to be pleasing to God. Many will not be comprehending the truthfulness of the good news "that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38.39).

Thus Romans 14:19-21 will need to be applied to many situations. It is a most helpful and practical passage of scripture. It is so easy to get bogged down in fightings about such things as baptisms and ecclesiastical government. We become quickly stirred up about the errors of the immature, both in doctrine and deportment, that we forget about God's gracious and patient dealings with us. If we are not dealing graciously with the immature brother, how is he to learn much about grace?

Our task is to continue straight forward in proclaiming and in living the evangel. The message of grace and peace will never bring harm to anyone. It cannot stumble or snare or weaken a fellow believer. And when it is manifested in our behavior as well as proclaimed by our lips it cannot but edify all with whom we come in contact.

D.H.H.

## His Achievement Are We

# THE WORD OF CHRIST, ITS GRACE AND POWER

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

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

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

light" (Col.1:10-12).

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

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

Paul speaks to us from the vantage point of his own evangel, the evangel which came to him through a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal.1:12), which he heralded among the nations (Gal.2:2). He does not even take up the many details of the personal ministry of Jesus, those things associated with the Lord's "personal entrance" to "the entire people of Israel" (cp Acts 13:24; Matt.15:24). Paul begins his evangel where Matthew, Mark, Luke and John conclude theirs. From beginning to end (cp Acts 13:16-48; Phil.2:8-11), Paul's message is the sacrifice of Christ and "the blood of His cross" (Col.1:20).

<sup>\*</sup>for a consideration of each of these expressions, cf "Herald the Word," Unsearchable Riches, vol. LXXVI, pp.89-94.

# THE "SCANDAL" OF THE CROSS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### FAITH IN WHAT GOD HAS SPOKEN

The word of Christ needs to be making its home in us not only richly, but "in all wisdom" (Col.3:16). "Brethren, do not become little children in disposition.

But in evil be minors, yet in disposition become mature" (1 Cor.14:20). "Do not become imprudent, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph.5:17). It is not sufficient simply to read the Scriptures casually, or to repeat many passages from its pages merely by rote. We would become *aware* of the facts which it contains, and acquire an intelligent grasp of what the Scriptures actually say. This itself is a great advance. Even then, however, we would judge each passage as to whom it concerns, when it applies, and in what sense it is true. This calls for competency, and especially for *wisdom*. Wisdom is "the faculty which makes the highest and best application of knowledge" (Keyword Concordance, p.329). We need to use our minds\* and to use them well.

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

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

It can certainly be helpful to be "admonished" (MIND-PLACED) by those who teach us well, but we also need to be admonishing *ourselves*, "in psalms, in hymns,

<sup>\*</sup>It is interesting to note that the elements of the Greek word for "foolish," anoêton, are UN-MINDED.

in spiritual songs, singing [whether literally or figuratively], with grace in our hearts to God" (Col.3:16). It is at least as important for true grace to be a matter of the heart as it is for it to be a matter of the intellect. The joy and assurance of God's gracious goodness to us cannot live in mere intellectual correctness. It is vital for us to be correct that we might be faithful, but it then becomes vital for us "to know the love of Christ as well which transcends knowledge—that you may be completed for the entire complement of God" (Eph. 3:19).

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

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

#### FAITHFULNESS VS. SUCCESS

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

If we have any hope in heeding this imperative, however, it is not to be in ourselves. The confidence that we have is "through Christ toward God" (2 Cor. 3:4). "Not that we are competent of ourselves, to reckon anything as out of ourselves [would be wrong], but our competency is of God" (2 Cor.3:5). "He, then, Who is supplying you with the spirit, and operating works of power among you—" [will be completing what He has undertaken] (Gal.3:5; cp Gal.3:3).

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

But when we fail, as we often do, we wish to recognize that this is because of what we are in ourselves. We are members of the old humanity. We sin because of what we are. We are flesh. "The disposition of the flesh is death... because the disposition of the flesh is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able" (Rom.8:6,7). Indeed, whenever

we obey or disobey, we act due to a cause, and therefore *must* act as we do whenever we do act as we do.

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

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

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

Knowing the truth and loving the truth—while making some progress in pursuing righteousness even though falling far short of the ideal—is ever so much

better than being ignorant of the truth or willfully repudiating what is actually true, even if we should manage to gratify many of our desires for success and happiness by so doing.

The withdrawal (or "apostasy") from the faith is inevitable, for the spirit is saying "explicitly" that it will occur (1 Tim.4:1,2; 2 Tim.3:1-13; 4:3,4). The only question, from the human standpoint, is whether we will be a part of it. Therefore, under God and in His grace, we wish to save ourselves from such a course (cp 1 Tim.4:1,16). Paul's words to the Ephesian elders serve ideally as a solemn entreaty for us as well: "Now I am aware that, after I am out of reach, burdensome wolves will be entering among you, not sparing the flocklet. And from among yourselves will arise men, speaking perverse things to pull away disciples after themselves. Wherefore, watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I cease not admonishing each one with tears. And now I am committing you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to edify and give the enjoyment of an allotment among all who have been hallowed" (Acts 20:29-32).

#### LIVING BY THE FAITH OF THE EVANGEL

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

"The word of the cross... to us who are being saved... is the power of God" (1 Cor.1:18). Or, to say the same thing, the power of God is the word of the cross. It constitutes God's appointed means. The word

of the cross is the agency which God uses to savingly affect us. It is "powerful to God" (cp 2 Cor.10:4). Wisdom will not drink from any other fountain, no matter how sweet its water or promising its cures.

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

James Coram

(To be continued)

## THAT WHICH IS ABOVE

"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" (Col. 3:1-3). Oh, that we could all be disposed to that which is above! We spend a great deal of our time worrying about our present station in life—how to improve it, how to preserve it, how to understand it. Though we say that we are concerned with those things above, the vast majority of our time is spent disposed toward the things below. Though we want to be content in all circumstances (Phil. 4:11) and be satisfied with having sustenance and shelter (1 Tim. 6:8), there is not one of us who has not worried about what tomorrow will be like or what we can do to improve this present world for ourselves. This is because we are not often disposed to that which is above.

In spirit, we need a longing to be, "where Christ is." It is from this vantage point that our personal concerns are most wisely perceived and attended to. We must not be seeking our own glory, fondly imagining that we ourselves are finally the key to our welfare, to bringing victory from defeat. Humility is impossible from such an outlook. Instead of seeking our own glory, let us be seeking "that which is above."

David Benson

# The Apostle of the Nations

## PAUL

SINCE FIRST I was introduced to the truths of God's Word, more than half a century ago, there has been one concern that has continued to trouble me. That concerns the matter in which the apostle Paul has been and still is treated. It almost seems that he is accorded the position of a second-class apostle. Why is there so little appreciation of his unique and important place as the apostle of the nations?

In the CV of Romans 11:13, we read that Paul is "the apostle of the nations," but many other translations speak of him here as "an apostle." To be sure, the definite article "the" does not appear in the original Greek of this passage (as is indicated by the use of lightface type in the CV). But the English sublinear in the Concordant Greek Text of this passage brings out a definite stress on this commission given to Paul. Literally, he writes, "... as much as indeed, then, I am, I, of the nations commissioner . . . . " The "I" appears both as part of the verb "am" and as a separate pronoun. There is something truly unique about this apostleship.

My idea in this article is to gather from the Scriptures themselves an account of Paul's testimony concerning the distinctive features of his call and apostleship.

Let us begin with Paul's defense given as he stood on the steps of the citadel in Jerusalem:

"I am a man, a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, yet

reared in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, trained according to the strictness of the hereditary law, being inherently zealous for God according as all of you are today, I, who persecute this way to death, binding and giving over both men and women to jail, as the chief priest also was testifying to me, and to the entire eldership, from whom, receiving letters also to the brethren, I went into Damascus, to be leading also those being there, bound, to Jerusalem, that they may be punished" (Acts 22:3-5).

We probably all will agree that this man did not seem to be very well qualified to be an apostle of Christ. Also he did not seem to be very well prepared to bring a message of grace to the nations:

"If any other one is presuming to have confidence in flesh, I rather: in circumcision the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, in relation to law a Pharisee, in relation to zeal, persecuting the ecclesia, in relation to the righteousness which is in law, becoming blameless" (Phil. 3:4-6).

And yet he was called: "Now it occurred, at my going and drawing near to Damascus, about midday, suddenly out of heaven a considerable light flashes about me. Besides, I fall flat, and I hear a voice saying to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting Me?' Yet I answered and said, 'Who art Thou, Lord?' Besides, He said to me, 'I am Jesus, the Nazarene, Whom you are persecuting.' Now those who are with me gaze, indeed, at the light, yet they hear not the voice of Him Who is speaking to me. Now I said, 'What shall I be doing, Lord?' Now the Lord said to me, 'Rise. Go into Damascus, and there you will be spoken to concerning all which has been set before you to do'" (Acts 22:6-10).

Of this surprising call, Paul later said, "Grateful am

I to Him Who invigorates me, Christ Jesus our Lord, for He deems me faithful, assigning me a service, I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager: but I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief. Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, foremost of whom am I. But therefore was I shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian" (1 Tim.1:12-16).

After Paul's call, a considerable time elapses before we come to his meeting with the other apostles in Jerusalem: "For I am making known to you, brethren, as to the evangel which is being brought by me, that it is not in accord with man. For neither did I accept it from a man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you hear of my behavior once, in Judaism, that I inordinately persecuted the ecclesia of God and ravaged it. And I progressed in Judaism above many contemporaries in my race, being inherently exceedingly more zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

"Now when it delights God, Who severs me from my mother's womb and calls me through His grace, to unveil His Son in me that I may be evangelizing Him among the nations, I did not immediately submit it to flesh and blood, neither came I up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I came away into Arabia, and I return again to Damascus" (Gal. 1:11-17)

As we see here, Paul went into Arabia and then to Damascus again.

"Thereupon, after three years, I came up to Jerusa-

lem to relate my story to Cephas, and I stay with him fifteen days" (Gal.1:18).

After this visit there is again a lengthy separation of Paul from those who were commissioned before him.

"Thereupon I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Yet I was unknown by face to the ecclesias of Judea which are in Christ. Yet only they were hearing that 'He who once was persecuting us, now is evangelizing the faith which once he ravaged.' And they glorified God in me.

"Thereupon, after the lapse of fourteen years, I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. Now I went up in accord with a revelation and submitted to them the evangel which I am heralding among the nations, yet privately to those of repute, lest somehow I should be racing or ran for naught" (Gal.1:21-2:2).

Surely, if this had been the same evangel that the Twelve proclaimed, there would have been no need for Paul to make it known to them. At all times he acted in conscious independence of the Twelve. He was in no way inferior to them, as he writes in 2 Corinthians, "For I am reckoning to be deficient in nothing pertaining to the paramount apostles. Yet even if I am plain in expression, nevertheless I am not in knowledge, but in everything being made manifest in all for you" (2 Cor.11:5,6).

Again he wrote, "... for I am not deficient in anything pertaining to the paramount apostles, even if I am nothing" (2 Cor.12:11).

He does not defend himself or boast in his achievements of learning, but he fearlessly defends his apostleship and the message he was given to proclaim:

"Now from those reputed to be somewhat—what kind they once were is of no consequence to me (God is

not taking up the human aspect)—for to me those of repute submitted nothing. But on the contrary, perceiving that I have been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision (for He Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision operates in me also for the nations)...[they] give to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship..." (Gal.2:6-9).

Nevertheless, this recognition of Paul's distinctive apostleship and its unique emphasis on grace was not always observed: "Now when Cephas came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, for he was self-censured. For, before the coming of some from James, he ate together with those of the nations. Yet when they came, he shrank back and severed himself, fearing those of the Circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also play the hypocrite with him, so that Barnabas also was led away with their hypocrisy. But when I perceived that they are not correct in their attitude toward the truth of the evangel, I said to Cephas in front of all, 'If you, being inherently a Jew, are living as the nations, and not as the Jews, how are you compelling the nations to be judaizing?'" (Gal.2:11-14).

Paul had mentioned two evangels, the evangel of the Circumcision, which had been assigned to Peter, and the evangel of the Uncircumcision (Gal.2:7). It is important that these expressions be correctly understood. They do not designate the same evangel or gospel being heralded to the Circumcision and to the Uncircumcision, as is most generally believed. The "of" shows us that Paul is speaking of a divergent nature of these messages and a distinct sphere of application.

To me, these passages (and others as well) show that Paul was and is truly the apostle of the nations. He should thus be recognized among all believers. May we, like Timothy, be fully following him in his teaching, motive, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions and sufferings (2 Tim.3:10) and be holding fast to the pattern of sound words which he proclaimed (2 Tim.2:11-13).

Julius S. Shaw

#### **EDITORIAL NOTES**

We are pleased to include an article in this issue by our good friend, Julius S. Shaw of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, an elder well-deserving of double honor for his many years of toil and teaching (1 Tim.5:17). Brother Shaw, like Saul of Tarsus, is of the race of Israel according to the flesh. But as to the spirit, he is like Paul "the apostle of the nations," of whom he writes starting on p.91, one who has been overwhelmed by grace.

The Saviour of All Fellowship will be sponsoring two days of special meetings in Lansing, Michigan, May 19,20. Leonard Bowerman and Dean Hough will be speaking on the theme: "The Obedience of the One." For further information write, S.A.F., 6800 Hough Road, Almont, MI 48003.

We are glad to announce that, as in the past two years, arrangements have again been made for a Scripture conference in Greenville, South Carolina. This year the dates are July 15-17. Talks are planned by Jim Coram around the theme, "Loving His Advent" (2 Tim. 4:8). For information, please contact, Alvin Robinson, Box 333, Marietta, SC 29661.

The annual Baldwin Fellowship is scheduled this year for August 5-7. Write to Pastor Lloyd Hibberd, Grace and Truth Chapel, Box 84, Baldwin, MI 49304, concerning this and other 1988 gatherings.

We are continuing to make available photocopies of the manuscript for the Concordant Version of "The Assembler," commonly called Ecclesiastes. Single copies are available without charge.

Several months ago we prepared a descriptive Catalog of our current publications. We also have a Tape List of our recorded messages. Another item of interest is the monthly Concordant Newsletter. Though this is presently only sent to those who write us during the month, upon request, we would be happy to share any extra copies which we may have on hand.

# UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 1988 BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY-NINE

## **EDITORIAL**

JOY AND PEACE characterize the evangel from start to finish. Paul begins and closes every letter with some mention of grace (which has as its root meaning, "joy"), and he joins it with the word "peace" in his opening salutation. In his epistle to the Philippians he seems to give these terms special emphasis.

When Paul reminds the Philippians that they are not alone, but are joint participants with him of grace (1:7) and are competing together in the faith of the evangel (1:27), we rightly feel he is speaking to us also. Despite the centuries that have elapsed since he wrote, we recognize this man's kinship with us.

We turn to Philippians and read that God has undertaken a good work among us. And He is going to keep performing it until it is finished (1:6). There is surely a great deal of joy and assurance in that.

Sickness and failure bring a bleakness into the lives of many of us, especially as we grow older. Yet we find joy and peace in knowing that we are awaiting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory (3:20,21).

Yet all of Paul's epistles are characterized by these blessings. Indeed several article titles in this issue are taken from various Pauline passages, and they could be strung together to explain the source of our joy and peace: "The Faith Which [We] Have" is that "God is Working," so that "We Rely on the Living God" Who saves us in grace, "Not Because of [Our] Own Righteousness." Praise God for His joy and peace. D.H.H.

# Among the Celestials

## OBEDIENCE IN THE LORD

(Ephesians 6:1-9)

Children, be obeying 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).

Having dealt with the relationship between husbands and wives, Paul now turns to that between parents and children. Addressing the children first, he exhorts obedience, for this is right and proper. Even Christ was not too proud to be obedient; indeed, as a Son, He learned obedience from that which He suffered (Heb.5:8), becoming, in fact, "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:8). Without this obedience there can be no way out of the impasse into which mankind has been drawn through sin, for it is "through the obedience of the One" that "the many shall be constituted just" (Rom.5:19). The "Wherefore" of Philippians 2:9, clearly shows that the glories which follow were the result of Christ's humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death.

The obedience of children to their parents is in accord with the fifth commandment which God gave to Moses, and which the apostle quotes (see Exodus 20:12). It is the first precept with a promise. The previous four all contained negatives—"You shall not...." Even the fourth, which opened positively,

"You are to remember the sabbath day to hallow it," swiftly turned to a negative injunction, "You shall *not* do any work." All the remaining commandments are completely negative; the fifth is the only one which is entirely positive.

The relationship between parents and children illustrates the ideal for which the whole purpose of God was conceived, and to which it is being directed, namely, that He should be recognized, honored and glorified as Father by all His creation. When Christ eventually hands over a reconciled kingdom, it will be to "His God and Father" (1 Cor.15:24). Children, who obey their parents, are to be commended; one of the adverse signs of "the last days" is that children are stubborn to parents (2 Tim.3:2).

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

Fathers have a responsibility, too, and this of course applies to mothers as well. They have the power to vex and annoy their children, to treat them roughly or lose patience with them, but their constant aim should be to nurture them, having their well-being at heart, teaching and directing them in accord with their own walk in the Lord. Again, one of the indications of the last days is that men (and this includes fathers) will be "without natural affection, implacable...." (2 Tim. 3:3). How blessed children are, who are brought up in families where God is revered and Christ is welcomed!

Slaves, be obeying your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the singleness of your heart, as to Christ, not with eye-slavery as man pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the soul, with good humor slaving as to the Lord and not to men, being aware that, whatsoever good

each one should be doing, for this he will be requited by the Lord, whether slave or free (6:5-8).

The English word "slave" is not used properly these days; we give it a meaning associated with "cruel servitude." In the Scriptures, the Greek word doulos is used of "one whose person belongs to another." There should be a bond between master and slave, and in the ideal, that bond should be love. The slave can then find delight in serving his master, knowing that the latter will shelter him from adversity. Paul had no hesitation in describing himself and Timothy as "slaves of Christ Jesus" (Phil.1:1). In the third chapter of this letter to the Philippians, he declares himself ready and willing to forfeit all in order that he might be "gaining Christ" and be "found in Him" (Phil.3:8,9). Do we realize that, in the conversion of Saul of Tarsus from the foremost of Christ's persecutors to His most loyal slave, we have the greatest possible proof of God's ability and desire to reconcile all to Himself? For Christ can have no opponent more implacable than Saul, who was "a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager," nor a servant more devoted than Paul, who became "a pattern of those who are about to be believing on Him for life eonian" (1 Tim.1:12-16).

Onesimus is an example of a slave who ran away from his owner, but was sent back to him by Paul with a loving appeal, in the form of a letter from the apostle, which would ensure his favorable reception by Philemon, and a happy reconciliation between the two. This, of course, is a picture of wider reconciliation, for Philemon, whose name means "fond," portrays God in this connection (Titus 3:4), while Paul, in his intercession for the runaway, imitates Christ in His constant pleading for our sakes (Rom.8:34).

"With fear and trembling" is an expression which

had been previously used by Paul in 2 Corinthians 7:15, and will occur again in Philippians 2:12. It expresses a feeling, not of terror or physical fright, but of mental apprehension lest we fall short of the ideal. For example, we carry our own salvation into effect "with fear and trembling," in the knowledge that it is God Himself Who is operating in us "to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight." If we fail, or fall short in any way, it will not affect our salvation, but it may grieve the spirit of God which is dwelling in us. In a similar manner, slaves should be serving their masters as though working for the Lord and not men. The Lord will not be slow to requite each and all of us, whether slave or free, for whatever good we do while still in the flesh (2 Cor.5:10).

And, masters, be doing the same toward them, being lax in threatening, being aware that their Master as well as yours is in the heavens, and there is no partiality with Him (6:9).

If parents have responsibilities, so, too, have masters. Though they may occupy a superior station on earth, this again is only in the flesh, and both classes today have a Master in the heavens, Who is common to both, and He will be completely impartial when assessing the good deeds of each. A master should regard a fellow believer as Paul urged Philemon to regard Onesimus—"no longer as a slave, but above a slave, a brother beloved" (Philemon 16). Paul would remember how he himself had been enrolled into Christ's service with the greeting "Saul! Brother!" (Acts 9:17).

Three short paragraphs in The Concordant Commentary (page 294) are most appropriate here, and we do not hesitate to quote them.

"It is of principal importance that we distinguish the double relationship which we sustain to Christ and to the Lord. In Christ all physical distinctions vanish. There are no slaves and masters; even the sexes are not distinguished 'in Christ' (Gal.3:28). But 'in the Lord' these physical distinctions are recognized and made the basis of our conduct toward one another. Wives are subject, children are obedient, slaves are subservient 'in the Lord.'

"The key to all correct conduct lies in the recognition of our heavenly Master. The true slave seeks to please Him; the master acknowledges Him in his behavior toward his slave. Children obey their parents 'in the Lord,' for such is His wish. Fathers train them 'in the Lord,' conforming to His gracious methods.

"The slave is especially encouraged by the fact that he will receive his due from his heavenly Master even though he receives nothing from his earthly one."

John H. Essex

## CONCERNING THOSE WHO ARE REPOSING

Elsewhere in this issue we have announced the recent deaths of two close associates of our work, and here it is our sad task to report the loss of two other brothers who have completed their career and await our Lord's applause in that day. Donald G. Hayter of Bournemouth, England, was one who greatly honored God's words, and earnestly longed for them each day, in his words, "with the yearning of a lover." Our readers will remember his fine notes on the Psalms which appeared in *Unsearchable Riches* volumes 64 to 68; a rereading of his series entitled "Our Happy Expectation" in volume 65 will prove especially rewarding in light of his death.

The death of Charles S. Anderson of Thorold, Ontario, on April 28 brings to a close a faithful ministry spanning more than a half century. Brother Anderson was one who was truly overwhelmed by the grace of our Lord. He found great joy in teaching the evangel of God's grace, and lasting peace in relying on the living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind. We sorrow in all these losses, but not without expectation.

# Praise and Prayer

## THE DISCIPLES' PRAYER

THE DISCIPLES of our Lord were taught much concerning prayer while He was with them on the earth. They felt their ignorance and asked Him to teach them to pray (Luke 11:1). In response He gave them what is usually called "the Lord's prayer," but in reality it is the disciples' petition. On other occasions He instructed them how to pray and what to pray for. Usually all of this is taken as if it were intended for us, so that the formula He gave to them is almost universally used in Christendom today as a model for our practice or imitation. And, indeed, some of the gracious spirit that pervades His words is in harmony with ours, yet it falls far short of that which should actuate us today. In view of this popular misconception it will be wise to stress the contrast with what is ours, rather than seek to apply it to the present.

It seems that John the baptist had taught his followers to pray, so a certain one of our Lord's disciples, after He had ceased praying, requested and said, "Lord, teach us to pray." Then He not only told them what to say, but encouraged them to persevere, by the parable of the "importunate" friend and a likeness in which He compared God to a father who gives good gifts to his children. As these refer to certain parts of the prayer, we will consider them in connection with it. Our Lord gave the disciples the prayer on two different occasions (Matt.6:9; Luke 11:2). The wording is almost the

same, but His accompanying remarks are very different, and correspond to the character in which He is set forth, the King in Matthew and the Man in Luke.

The prayer is plainly divided into two parts. First we have God and His glory, and then man and his misery. His glory here is that of Father, and this name is to be held sacred, and is declared to be so by the disciple. This is a marvelous commencement, and the principle should be followed in all prayer. It first gives God His proper place, and then reveals the attitude of the petitioner toward Him. As the prayer is for provision and pardon and pity, how good it is to give God the place of Father! On earth children look for these things from the one to whom they are related by filial affection, not from strangers. And likewise, especially in the Orient, the father demands and receives the highest consideration and honor. His name is his most precious possession. In many eastern lands there is nothing so jealously guarded and protected as the "face" or reputation of the head of the house. All this the disciple transfers to his Father in the heavens.

While this prayer falls far short of what we have today, it also is far beyond what was known before. Previously, God had not revealed Himself to the nation of Israel as their Father, nor did He do so, even when His Son was on earth. This prayer is not for the nation, but for the disciples. There had always been two classes in Israel, those on the side of Yahweh and those against Him, those who clung to His worship and His temple, and those who served other gods and forsook Jerusalem. But there never was the distinct cleavage which was brought about by the presence of their Messiah among them in His humiliation. In their spiritual relationship to God the disciples went far beyond the nation as a whole. In figurative terms, this

was expressed in the language of the future, when Israel will be born "again." They experienced an individual new birth and could claim God as their Father in the heavens.

This expression, "in the heavens," is very striking when compared with the past and the future. In Israel their immediate fathers and their early forefathers had a very prominent place in their religion. In a sense their fathers on earth were essential to their whole religious outlook. They inherited their promises and place as God's priestly people from their fathers, and would lose it all if they could not establish their physical descent from them. The clause, "our Father Who art in the heavens," implied a great deal that we cannot well appreciate. It was no clean cut with their earthly place and blessing. By no means did it even hint that their place was in heaven, or that they would go there in the resurrection.

## THE FATHER'S KINCDOM

The kingdom of the Father, like the kingdom of God, expresses a much wider and higher and more permanent conception than is generally associated with the term "kingdom." "The kingdom of the heavens" seems to be strictly limited to the reign of Christ during the day of the Lord, or Yahweh, in the millennium. Even at that time it seems that the kingdom of the Father includes only those begotten by His spirit, the faithful who recognize and appreciate His care and provision. During the eons the kingdom of the Father embraces a continually increasing company including those alone who seek to do His will. But at the end of the eons, when death is abolished and all are reconciled to God, then it is that the kingdom is given up to God, the Father, and all creatures will come under His

beneficent, paternal rule. The prayer our Lord taught His disciples was not an appeal to place Israel in power over the nations, a kingdom such as the unregenerate Pharisees desired, but for that higher spiritual rule that will gradually grow until it embraces the whole race.

#### THY WILL BE DONE

The kingdom consists essentially in doing His will. In fact, there is no need of any rule where there is unanimity. That is how it should be in the case of all who are led by God's spirit. And that is how it will be when all sovereignty and authority and power are nullified at the consummation (1 Cor.15:23,24). The disciples were instructed to pray to that end. We might ask: Why should they pray for this, when God had already determined that it should be so, and will certainly carry out His intention at the proper time, but in the far future? Their prayer certainly was not "answered"! Perhaps not, from their viewpoint. But it was being answered already in their case, for their prayer itself, and the desires which it awakened in their hearts, began to lead them to do the Father's will. And it will be fully and perfectly fulfilled in their future experience in resurrection, when they see the kingdom gradually expand to include all Israel, and all mankind, and finally every spirit in the universe.

#### THE DAILY DOLE

Some of us may not relish the idea, but, as a matter of fact, we are all "on the dole." Apart from the ability given us by God, we could never earn the food needed to sustain our bodies. No doubt this will be clearly manifest in the kingdom, for then God will control the natural forces that produce food, so that all will know

Whom to thank for their fare, and praise will go to Him for every good gift. The word here used, which we render "dole," is *epiousion*, on-being-ed. Perhaps our idiom, that which is *dealt out* to anyone, will best convey the idea. From the verb *deal* we get the noun *dole*, which, in its wider usages, described a *share* or *lot*. It seems especially fitting in this prayer, where the supplicant goes to the eventual Giver of every good thing for his portion for the day.

This petition was most fitting when used by our Lord's disciples, especially those who went about heralding the kingdom, as they lived from hand to mouth, as it were. They were not even to carry the usual beggar's bag (Matt.10:10; Mark 6:8; Luke 9:3).

#### FEATURES OF FATHERHOOD

The greatest gift that God can bestow is His holy spirit (Luke 11:13). In Matthew, with its narrower outlook, our Lord mentions all good things, in place of this essential one (Matt.7:11). Yet both agree, for all good is involved and included in the holy spirit. Now that the disciples know God as their Father, our Lord encourages them to act accordingly, in their prayers to Him. Even an earthly father can be relied upon to give good things to his son. If a child asks for bread, for food, he will not, instead, hand out a stone, which will not nourish his body. For a fish he will not substitute a serpent, which might bite and harm him, a scorpion, which could sting him and cause excruciating pain, or even death. Wicked as mortals are inherently, few are so lacking in natural affection as to do such things. If, then, God establishes a like relationship with the disciples, they may rest assured that He will not take advantage of their requests to harm them. He will not, instead of the dole of bread, supply them with food

lacking in nurture, or a dangerous or deadly diet (Luke 11:11-13).

#### THE FAILURE OF FRIENDSHIP

Our Lord contrasts their heavenly Father with a mere friend who refuses to be inconvenienced in order to do his friend a favor (Luke 11:5-8). Often this parable is interpreted as though God were like this lukewarm friend, and the conclusion drawn is, that we must keep on pestering Him if we want Him to do as we wish. He will eventually do it to get rid of us. But this is just the opposite of the prime object of prayer. God wants to commune with us, but He does not want us to think Him niggardly and unkind, unwilling to be out out to fulfill our wishes. The opposite is true, even though it may not seem so sometimes. All should approach Him with confidence that God will always give what they request. All shall find what they seek. He will open to those who knock. But all in due time. The saints will find every prayer fulfilled when they are vivified. And all the rest will be satisfied when they are made alive at the consummation.

#### THE PARDON OF SINS

Pardon is the proper word for the kingdom (Luke 11:3), for it is the prerogative of the political power. But how far short it falls of justification! It is not gratuitously by His grace, but deserving, based upon conduct. If the grace which comes to us in Christ Jesus were measured by that which we show to others, how restricted it would be! There could be no riches of grace, or transcendent favor, for we are in no position to show this to others. Few of the saints would even deserve pardon, for they are not noted for this trait. And among the disciples of our Lord some did fall

away. Judas was the most notorious example. The epistle to the Hebrews speaks of others. Let us never pray for a pardon conditioned upon our own conduct! No matter how kind and gracious we may consider ourselves, it is nothing compared to the fullness of favor which is ours in Christ Jesus.

#### BRINGING INTO TRIAL

"Mayest Thou not bring us into trial" (Luke 11:3) is a strictly kingdom prayer. When it has come, the evil eons will be past. Under Christ's beneficent rule, good will be the order of the day. Those who abide in Him need fear no evil. But what a contrast is the experience of our apostle, Paul! He suffered much indeed. Alexander displayed to him much evil. The Lord did not deliver him from it. All he could do was to warn the saints to guard against him because he had withstood Paul's words (2 Tim.4:14,15). Paul does not say that he prayed to be kept out of this severe trial. He suffered much weariness and blows and flogging and stoning and fasting and thirst and famine and cold and nakedness and in solicitude for all the ecclesias (2 Cor.11: 23-28). When he was given a splinter in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him, he did entreat the Lord thrice, that it should withdraw from him. But the answer was no! The Lord protested to him, "Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in infirmity is perfected" (2 Cor.12:9). Paul was a marvelous healer, even at a distance (Acts 19:12). But, in this administration, he himself was not healed!

#### RESCUE FROM THE WICKED

The disciples will be rescued from the wicked in the kingdom (Luke 11:3). But we are protected against spiritual forces of wickedness in quite another way.

Just as God uses evil for our good, so we are open to attack from spiritual powers, and can shield ourselves only by means of the panoply of truth and righteousness and peace, and must defend ourselves by faith and God's declarations (Eph.6:10-17). Yet we are confident that the evil which does come to us by this means, like Paul's splinter in the flesh, will be used by God for our good, and is necessary in order to fit us for our future mission among the celestials. Nevertheless, let us don all this protective armor and stand, not merely to gain a name for ourselves, but to bring glory and honor to Him under Whom we have enlisted.

#### PARDON FOR PARDON

The one part of this prayer which should not be our petition under any circumstances, is the prayer for pardon. It is conditioned on human conduct, which is perfectly fitting in the adjudication of the earthly kingdom, but is utterly contrary to the grace of God in this administration, which imparts God's righteousness to the believer, and on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ. Although I pardon freely those who owe me aught, I would shudder to use that as a ground of God's pardoning me, or the measure in which God absolves me from sin. The vain repetition of this part of the prayer may be the cause of the fearful ignorance of God's transcendent grace, and the almost utter disappearance of the evangel of His righteousness and reconciliation.

#### THE PARDONED NATION

When applied to the whole nation of Israel, this principle was the underlying cause of their apostasy. In the parable of the ten thousand talent debtor (Matt.18:23-35) our Lord foretold the course of events

in Israel. He prayed for them on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they are not aware what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). So, instead of destroying the nation for the crucifixion of their Messiah, pardon is proclaimed once more on the day of Pentecost. But the Jews would not tolerate the extension of this blessing to the nations. When Paul spoke to reverent proselytes in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14-52), the Jews were filled with jealousy, and contradicted him. Their accumulating debt, due to their rejection of Yahweh and the murder of His Messiah, did not lead them to pardon the much smaller sum owed by the nations for their apostasy from God. Consequently, the pardon of Israel, as a nation, was withdrawn, and now they are still suffering and paying installments on their enormous debt.

A striking feature of this prayer is generally overlooked. Although given to His disciples, it is all in the plural: Our Father . . . Give us our daily dole . . . pardon us...for we ourselves...owing us... bring us not ... rescue us. They were still Israelites, still members of the favored nation, and their prayer was not each for himself as an individual, but for their whole nation. The kingdom did not come because only a few accepted their Messiah. It will not arrive until the nation repents and looks upon Him whom they pierced. No one can pray this prayer intelligently on his own account, for the plural includes others. It is very difficult for us, of the nations, to grasp this fully. If we should pray that the kingdom should come, we would pray, not for us, but for Israel. The kingdom will be given to them, not us.

We can say part of the "Lord's" prayer today, but other parts of it are out of place. "Our Father" is suitable at all times, when a child of God is seeking paternal aid or communion. But we need not locate Him in the heavens, for, in spirit, in which alone we find our blessings, He is with us everywhere. "Hallowed be Thy name" may be said today, but we should rather rise higher and bless Him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Thy kingdom come" is in tune with His purpose at all times, but the particular application which the Circumcision disciples would have in mind, the millennial kingdom on the earth, is not in accord with our expectation, which is to be caught away from the earth and enjoy our blessings among the celestials. "As in the heavens" is not true now, but will be when the kingdom on earth is established.

The second part of the prayer, concerned with the disciples themselves, has far less that is pertinent now. Although we recognize God as the Giver of all good things, few of us live day by day as they did, so need not pray for our daily dole of bread. We do not pray for pardon of sins when we have God's righteousness. Nor do we base anything upon our treatment of others. We pray for endurance to bear the trials God sends us. rather than to be relieved of them. And we are equipped to stand and defend ourselves from the spiritual forces of wickedness. How thankful we should be that our prayers are so far beyond those of the disciples! As our place in the heavens is high above the earth, so should the spirit of our petitions transcend those of the favored nation. Glory be to God for the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus! A.E.K.

### SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE

The date for this year's Greenville summer fellowship is July 15-17. Messages are planned by Jim Coram around the theme "Loving His Advent" (2 Tim.4:8). Contact Alvin Robinson, Box 333, Marietta, SC 29661.

# Studies in Deuteronomy

# NOT BECAUSE OF YOUR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS

THE POST-SINAI GENERATION was ready to cross over the Jordan and to evict the Canaanites. Without mentioning any details of Israel's latest idolatry in *this place* (Deut.9:7; i.e., the Shittim area in the plains of Moab), Moses pronounced the following solemn warning:

"It will come to be that if you forget, yea forget Yahweh your Elohim and go after other elohim and serve them and bow yourself down to them, I testify against you today that you shall perish, yea perish. Like the nations which Yahweh is destroying before your face so shall you perish, inasmuch as you do not hearken to the voice of Yahweh your Elohim" (Deut. 8:19,20).

#### I TESTIFY AGAINST YOU TODAY

We have heard this solemn formula before, at the end of Moses' first address to Israel's younger generation, in the plains of Moab: "When you...do evil in the eyes of Yahweh your Elohim so as to provoke Him to vexation, *I testify against you today* by the heavens and the earth, that you shall perish, yea perish quickly off the land, where you are crossing over the Jordan to tenant it" (Deut.4:25,26). We shall find a variation of this solemn formula at the end of Moses' third address: "Today I call the heavens and the earth to *testify against you*: Life and death I have put before you, the blessing and the malediction" (Deut.30:19).

Divine malediction will hit the Israelites if they should succumb to the dangers of future prosperity in the promised land. Forgetting Yahweh their Elohim and going after other elohim means ignoring His commandment: "You shall not come to have other elohim in preference to Me.... You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor be made to serve them" (Deut. 5:7,9). Failing to obey this first commandment would result in Israel's destruction by the hand of Yahweh Himself; He would do to them as He was going to do to the present inhabitants of Canaan. Moses described His course of action as follows:

#### BY THE POWER OF YAHWEH ELOHIM

"Hear, Israel! Today you are ready to cross over the Jordan, to enter to tenant in the place of nations greater and more substantial than you, cities great and defended to the heavens, a people great and tall, the sons of the Anakim whom you know and of whom you have heard it said: Who shall station himself before the sons of Anak? Know then today that Yahweh your Elohim, He is the One crossing over before you as a devouring fire. He Himself shall exterminate them, and He Himself shall make them submit before you; yet you must evict them and destroy them quickly just as Yahweh has spoken to you" (Deut.9:1-3).

Thirty-eight years before, the older generation of Israel was deceived by guile when the unfaithful explorers of the promised land succeeded in weakening the people's morale, saying: "Indeed it is gushing with milk and honey...only that the people dwelling in the land are strong, and the cities are [well] defended and exceedingly great" (Num.13:27,28), thus implying that Israel would never be able to conquer the promised land.

We read about the sons of the Anakim in Deuteronomy 2:10,11. As a people of superior stature, they were probably known as Emim in Moab, as Zamzummim in Ammon (Deut.2:20), and as Anakim in Israel (Num.13:33). Obviously the post-Sinai generation had heard the proverbial saying: "Who shall station himself before the sons of Anak?" Yet they should not be afraid of them as their parents and grandparents had been after the explorers had actually spread harmful misinformation among them. The younger generation received truthful information from Moses about the enemies in their well defended cities and the power of Yahweh Elohim; for He Himself shall exterminate them, while giving a military victory to Israel's untrained militiamen, who were expected to evict the Canaanites and destroy them quickly.

At this juncture Moses felt that it was necessary to warn his audience against any arrogant reasoning on their part; Yahweh would lead them to victory not because of some inherent righteousness of their own, as they might say in their heart. Victory would not belong to Israel by right; it would be Yahweh's alone.

## THE VICTORY IS YAHWEH'S ALONE

"Do not say in your heart when Yahweh your Elohim thrusts them out from before you, saying: Because of my own righteousness Yahweh brings me in to tenant this land. Rather it is because of the wickedness of these nations that Yahweh is evicting them before your face. It is not because of your own righteousness or the uprightness of your own heart that your are entering to tenant their country, for it is because of the wickedness of these nations that Yahweh your Elohim is evicting them before your face, so that He may confirm the word that Yahweh had sworn to your

fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. Know then that it is not because of your own righteousness that Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you this good land to tenant it, for you are a stiff-necked people" (Deut. 9:4-6).

At the time of Moses' address, the Israelites were well aware of their own military weakness and of the great vigor of Yahweh Elohim Who had promised to evict greater and more substantial nations from their presence (Deut.4:37,38). Yet after the conquest they might say in their heart that Yahweh had given them the tenancy of the promised land because of their own righteousness. Their salvation toward victory may be compared to ours: "For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting. For His achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them" (Eph.2:8-10).

Israel was a stiff-necked people (Deut.9:6) and could not claim to be righteous in the sense of Moses' statement that he had made earlier in this second address: "We were servants to Pharaoh in Egypt, yet Yahweh brought us forth from Egypt with a steadfast hand. And Yahweh gave signs and miracles, great and bad, against Egypt, against Pharaoh and against all his household before our eyes. Then He brought us forth from there, that He might bring us in and give to us the land about which Yahweh had sworn to our fathers. Then Yahweh instructed us to obey all these statutes, to fear Yahweh our Elohim for our good all the days so as to keep us alive, as it is this day. So it shall come to be righteousness for us when we observe to do all this instruction before Yahweh our Elohim, just as He had enjoined on us" (Deut.6:21-25).

The nations of Canaan were to be evicted because of their wickedness. This is what Yahweh had told Abram when He contracted the covenant with him: "In the fourth generation they shall return hither, for the depravity of the Amorites has not been repaid hitherto.... To your seed I give this land" (Gen.15: 16,18).

So the impending eviction of these nations was due to their wickedness, and due to Yahweh's covenant promise to the patriarchs, but *not* due to Israel's own righteousness, for it could not claim any. Moses' three-fold statement to this effect gives extra emphasis to the divine viewpoint:

Do not say in your heart: Because of my own righteousness Yahweh brings me in to tenant this land.

It is not because of your own righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you are entering to tenant their country.

Know then that it is not because of your own righteousness that Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you this good land to tenant it, for you are a stiffnecked people.

#### REBELLIOUS AGAINST YAHWEH

Moses was addressing the post-Sinai generation of Israel "in Transjordan in the country of Moab" (Deut. 1:5) when he said: "Remember, do not forget that you provoked Yahweh your Elohim to wrath in the wilderness. From the day in which you went forth from the country of Egypt until you came to *this place*, you were rebellious against Yahweh" (Deut.9:7). Here Moses referred to Israel's latest rebellion in the Shittim area in the plains of Moab.

We remember that the sons of Israel had "encamped in the plains of Moab along the Jordan across from Jericho" (Num.22:1). While Israel dwelt here in the Shittim area (cf Josh.2:1; 3:1), "the people started to commit prostitution with the daughters of Moab, who called the people to the sacrifices of their elohim. The people ate their sacrifices and bowed themselves down to their elohim. Thus Israel was paired with Baal-Peor, and the anger of Yahweh grew hot against Israel" (Num.25:1-3). Everyone in Moses' audience remembered the punishment that Yahweh Elohim had meted out. For 24,000 people were killed by the plague that was halted after the ringleaders had been executed by the judges and the sin of Zimri had been stopped (Num.25:5-9,14,15). Then Yahweh had spoken to Moses, saying: "Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, reversed My fury from the sons of Israel in his zeal for My jealousy in their midst, so I did not finish the sons of Israel in My jealousy. Therefore say: Behold Me giving to him My covenant of peace; it will be his and his seed's after him, the covenant of an eonian priesthood, inasmuch as he was zealous for his Elohim and made a propitiatory shelter over the sons of Israel" (Num.25:11-13).

This event was later remembered in Psalm 106 where it says:

"But *Phineas* stood up and mediated, And the stroke was restrained.

This was reckoned to him for righteousness"

(106:30,31)

H.H.R.

#### DENVER MEETINGS

A special Bible conference is planned in Denver, Colorado August 5-7. Jim Coram plans to present talks on the theme, "Becoming Settled, Unmovable." Contact Dave Benson, 6545 South Elm Circle, Littleton, CO 80121 (303-771-8039).

# Steps in Romans

## GOD IS WORKING

Now we are aware that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God, who are called according to the purpose that, whom He foreknew, He designates beforehand, also, to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren. Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also (Rom.8:28-30).

This passage is surely one of the most encouraging in Scripture. God is working all together for our good! In the dark hours of trial, it can soothe. In the midst of the chaos of this world, it can calm. The revelations soar higher and higher until we realize that *nothing* "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.8:39).

On what is this superlative blessing based? We find nothing in ourselves to merit it. It flows to us, of course, through our Lord Jesus Christ's faith and obedience. And it is through His sacrifice also that God calls us, justifies us and glorifies us.

Let us look at the step by step ascent to this spiritual height found in the preceding chapters of Romans.

## GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

The stairs to these heights start with God's righteousness. The first thing He established on the way to our justification was *His* righteousness. "If He is not just, our righteousness, even if we had any, would be of no avail.... Let us fix it firmly in our minds and hearts that... the sacrifice of Christ [was], first of all, a display of *God's* justice."\*

#### **JUSTIFIED**

The gift of justification was first given to Abraham, and he is its great example. "Now 'Abraham believes God. and it is reckoned to him for righteousness'" (Rom.4:3). There is much in Scripture about Abraham and his believing God against all human evidence. Even though the promises to Abraham relate specifically to his descendants and the nation of Israel, he is the father (in spirit) of all those to whom righteousness is reckoned through faith. "Now it was not written because of him only, that it is reckoned to him, but because of us also, to whom it is about to be reckoned. who are believing on Him Who rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead, Who was given up because of our offenses, and was roused because of our justifying" (Rom. 4:23-25). God's righteousness and His justifying us are the wonderful foundations of our faith.

#### PEACE TOWARD GOD

Now with God's own righteousness, justified by faith, we are carried a step higher. "We may be having peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:1). We are beyond the atmosphere of the court where justification was pronounced. The walls between God and us, erected by our guilt, are down. We approach Him confidently in Christ. He has made peace. It is toward God. We no longer fear to face Him.

<sup>\*</sup>A. E. Knoch, Unsearchable Riches, vol.40, p.43

We are beginning to rise above the enmity in our flesh. It is through Christ that we have access into this grace.

#### GLORYING IN AFFLICTIONS

You may, with me, marvel at this step: "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" (Rom.5:3-5). Glorying in afflictions?

We see the afflictions of others and fear we could not face them ourselves, yet God assures us He will not be leaving us to be tried above our ability. We will acquire endurance. Testedness will strengthen our testimony. Our expectation grows. We perceive that the afflictions are not an expression of God's hostility, and mortification abates. Yes, surely it is possible to glory in afflictions!

#### THE TRANSMISSION OF SIN

Now, why do we make all these mistakes? Even the things we do well are not quite right. It is a great step upward to learn that we are born with this tendency to sin. "Therefore, even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned...." (Rom.5:12). On which all sinned. It is the dying process that causes it! It came about through one act of sinning—Adam's! He had a few brief moments of pleasure in eating a piece of forbidden fruit, and whatever was in that fruit produced consequences beyond our comprehension. We had nothing to do with it—it came through one man. That is a great step in our

faith; now consider the next: "For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just" (Rom.5:19). Adam's disobedience constituted all but one Man sinners, and that One's obedience shall constitute the same number just.

While Adam brought death and sin with all of their horrible results, Christ brings life and incorruption. There are several parallels in this, but I think the most gripping is that Adam's act left us no alternative but to become a sinner—at birth! That is true of every human being descended from Adam with a human father. The parallel is that Christ's obedience at the cross will constitute the same human beings just, entirely apart from any choice of their own. Christ abolishes death (2 Tim.1:10)!

#### WE DIED TO SIN

Romans 5:21 declares that where sin increases, grace superexceeds. Some think this is dangerous, that it would lead to sin. The answer: "May it not be coming to that! We, who died to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His death? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into death...." (Rom.6:2,3).

We were in Him when He died! Entombed together with Him. But not left there, for, "even as Christ was roused from among the dead through the glory of the Father, thus we also should be walking in newness of life" (Rom.6:4).

"Should be walking" expresses the subjunctive verb form or mood. It is conditional, and the condition has been met. *Christ was roused*. We had nothing to do with His death, entombment, or rousing. We were just *there*, in Him.

So this is how we are walking in newness of life, freed from the slavery of Sin. We do not struggle as if under law. We cannot conquer sin; we died to it. We are baptized into Christ's death.

#### A MAN UNDER LAW

The law of Israel stated the highest standard of conduct. Yet no one in these bodies of death can keep it. Israel surely did not. But many today are attempting to keep a modified form of it as a means of attaining righteousness.

Only failure can result. The man of Romans 7 is gratified with the law of God, yet his body cannot do the bidding of his mind. He does not even know what new offenses his body might commit (Rom.7:15).

He finally cries, "A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? Grace! I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom.7:25).

"There is no other deliverance possible. (When)... we recognize the imperial sway of Grace, putting us beyond all possibility of condemnation, whether we sin or not... then we will not be wretched and self-occupied, but happy and exulting in God, in Whose favor we are basking, and Whose delight we are, in Christ" (Concordant Commentary, p.237).

#### WALKING ACCORDING TO SPIRIT

It is clear in Romans that salvation is not through any merit or act of ours: it is not attained by flesh, but by spirit. Not only so, conduct to accord with our position in Christ comes through the same channel. Our walk, like salvation, is not improved by activity or will of the flesh, but spiritually. God's spirit makes its home in us. Christ's spirit is in us. We have spiritual resources unknown to unbelievers, influencing profoundly our walk. Relative to our previous conduct, our walk is not according to flesh but according to spirit. These wonderful truths are found in the first part of Romans 8.

Walking according to flesh has no future. Its products and sensations are temporary, however pleasant and civilized. Its only harvest is death and decay.

Those in Christ Jesus have another walk—according to spirit. They are "disposed" to that which is of the spirit. They have a tendency, mood, or inclination that way. They want to hear about God, to believe and investigate His Word, to please Him, to associate with His saints.

#### THE GLORY ABOUT TO BE REVEALED

"For I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us" (Rom.8:18).

Believers may suffer as a result of their faith. Yet this may serve to qualify them, as "joint enjoyers of Christ's allotment" (Rom.8:17), to participate in His reign (cf 2 Tim.2:12). Such sufferings will be "with the evangel" (2 Tim.1:7-9), "as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim.2:3), and will include the persecutions which result from "wanting to live devoutly in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim.3:12).

Believers also participate in the sufferings which result from the "slavery of corruption" (Rom.8:21), our inheritance of death from Adam. This condition is common to the "creation," including all mankind descended from Adam (with human fathers). The creation is subjected to "vanity": apparently, to be born, to toil, suffer, experience some joy, to die.

The inspiring point of the passage is that God subjected His creation to vanity for a purpose: the condition will end, and it is not to be compared with the glory about to be revealed. The creation has a premonition of this. We who are believers and in whom God's spirit makes its home, have definite and wonderful statements in the Scriptures about our glorious future.

#### AID IN OUR PRAYER

We are nearing the climax of this section of Romans. We have seen that the evangel, even after we are saved, keeps on working in our lives through our mental attitude, in our security, conduct and disposition.

Now we learn of further grace: that we have help in prayer (Rom.8:26,27). We are aided by the spirit. In accord with God is it pleading for us. We are not aware of what to pray for, to accord with what must be. We cannot know the infinite details affecting our lives here, so His spirit, which makes its home in us, pleads for us in accord with God.

Even if we do not know what to pray for, we can know we are praying to the One Who will subordinate the entire universe, Who is working all together for our good. With this knowledge it makes perfect sense not to worry amid this chaos, for what shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?

#### NOW WE ARE AWARE

We have almost reached the summit of this section of Romans. We have covered briefly most of the steps along the way. We are aware of God's concern for us, and we are aware now that "He is working all together for the good of those who are loving God."

Who are loving God? Consider that there is a com-

ponent, the flesh, in every human that cannot love God. It may range from indifference to active hostility. Its disposition is enmity (Rom.8:6,7). Then how can a human love God? God's spirit makes its home in believers. It is received when believing the evangel. Its disposition is life and peace. Those who have God's spirit and Christ's spirit are not "in flesh" but "in spirit." Believers are the ones who are loving God. They are the ones "who are called," given an invitation which cannot be rejected.

They are called according to a purpose. God is not reacting to events. He is operating all. His purpose began in love, in the Son of His love. God will bring all to a successful consummation, "and through [Christ]...reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross)" (Col.1:20). His purpose includes us, whom He foreknew and designated beforehand. Long before we demonstrated our unworthiness, we were included in His purpose. "Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls, these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also" (Rom.8:30).

Perhaps along with me, you have considered the glorifying to be entirely future. But consider that He says "glorifies," the fact form, indefinite as to time. He considers us His achievement in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10). In our case, the calling and justifying are past, but perhaps the glorifying in Christ is progressing as He draws us closer and closer to His heart.

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

# **Graciously Granted Sufferings**

# THE DEFICIENCIES OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST

"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, in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you, to complete the word of God..." (Col.1:24,25).

Our title is a phrase which has been a source of bewilderment and even consternation to many a mind. Probably the most unsettling thought raised by these words is the suggestion that possibly something was lacking in Christ's sufferings of the cross. Yet this is obviously not what Paul intended to convey, because shortly he would confirm that "you are complete in Him" (Col.2:10).

By highlighting three phrases in this passage, we may be able to focus more clearly on Paul's thought: "... my sufferings for you,... the deficiencies of the afflictions of Christ, for His body... in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for you...." Notice that Paul's sufferings, the afflictions of Christ and Paul's dispensing according to God's administration, were all "for" the Colossians, either specifically or as members of the body. The benefit of the Colossians is the connecting link.

What, then, was the purpose of these sufferings? Verses 28 and 29 tell us that Paul was toiling and struggling "that we should be presenting every man

mature in Christ Jesus." And the remainder of the epistle follows on the statement: "I want you to perceive what the struggle amounts to which I am having for your sakes ...." Paul was stressing the idea that his hardships were a necessary and divinely designed part of his ministry. It is easy to overlook the fact that Paul's imprisonment, sufferings and struggles were all related to the maturing of the members of the ecclesias. "And the majority of the brethren, having confidence in the Lord as to my bonds, are more exceedingly daring to speak the word of God fearlessly" (Phil.1:14). "Little children mine, with whom I am travailing again until Christ may be formed in you!" (Gal.4:19). "For we who are living are ever being given up to death because of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So that death is operating in us, yet life in you . . . . For all is because of you, that the grace, increasing through the majority, should be superabounding in thanksgiving to the glory of God" (2 Cor.4:11,12.15).

As long as we are living in a wicked eon (Gal.1:4), in which Satan is god (2 Cor.4:4), the true God will be building His works upon a foundation of suffering. This must be so that "the transcendence of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor.4:7). And so to believers, and especially those who nurture the younger in faith, "it is graciously granted, for Christ's sake, not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also" (Phil.1:29). But this suffering is not a suffering limited to individuals on this terrestrial sphere. Rather, it is "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10). For whenever the members of Christ's body are persecuted, it is Christ Who is persecuted (Acts 9:4). Thus Paul was the participating display of suffering in the flesh in the stead of Christ (Col.1:24). Or we might

say that Christ was suffering, through Paul, the afflictions that were necessary to bring the Colossians to maturity.

The third phrase noted earlier, "in accord with the administration of God, which is granted to me for vou...." describes the shape Paul's sufferings must take. The beginning of a new administration required several adjustments. First, the old administration must be dissolved. Sin was reigning, and the strong-armed executive branch of its government was law. The law was fulfilled by Christ and set aside, leaving sin powerless, and making provision for grace to take power and ascend the throne of administrational dominion. Yet something else was mandatory in the setting aside of the law. Since the prominence of Israel over the nations was based on a covenant of law, that prominence must also be set aside, the law having fully prepared for the reign of grace. The character of grace is too broad to be confined to a single nation. In addition, the subjects and citizens of the realm must be educated as to the ways and means of the new administration. Paul was commissioned as the chief herald. As the former administration focused on a prominent group, so also, the present administration focuses on a prominent group, the ecclesia. Certain miraculous, identifying occurrences initiated the rule of law and the prominence of Israel which corresponded with the character of that administration. And, in accord with an administration in grace, the ecclesia was established and identified by the extraordinary sufferings of Paul, and the continual sufferings of the called-outones. Sufferings are a keynote of grace, because only in sufferings is the sufficiency of grace made known (2 Cor.12:9), and the power seen to be all of God (2 Cor4:7).

The struggles and sufferings Paul underwent in bringing the Colossians to maturity primarily emanated from the conflict of the old administration with the new. The old, under law, was rooted in the flesh. The philosophy, traditions, elements of the world, ceremonies, holy days, diets and the like, which Paul warned about are all things of the flesh. The law was never endowed with the power to bring humanity to maturity. Only in an administration of grace and in spirit can we be circumcised in the death of Christ, baptized into His tomb and raised to life through His faith in the operation of God (Col.2:10-15). And it is the realization of these things that brings maturity. Law can accomplish none of this through human flesh. Maturity, like salvation, is truly a gracious gift, yet God has designed that those who grow into it travel a difficult road as the means of obtaining it.\*

J. Philip Scranton

## WILLIAM W. BENTLEY, JR.

Before his death on April 5, 1988, Brother Bentley expressed the wish that we mention his gratitude for the help several others gave him in opening his mind and heart to the Pauline evangel. These include his teachers, the late Frank Lyons of Centerville, Ohio, and Adlai Loudy, as well as John Essex and Bob Killen (both of whom have contributed articles for this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*). As many of you know, he endeavored to pass along his beliefs to others personally, and through his book, The Simple Story of the Universe. He was also the author of an article that appeared in the January issue of our magazine this year. Brother Bentley rejoiced not only in universal reconciliation but in God's operation of all, according to His good purpose. We extend our sympathy to his widow, Katy, and join her in anticipating that happy day when we will all be together with our Lord.

<sup>\*</sup>cf "Christ Among the Nations," Unsearchable Riches, vol.71, p.99.

## His Achievement Are We

# "WE RELY ON THE LIVING GOD"

God is the First Cause, Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will. This is the testimony of the Scriptures, but, as we have found, the deceptive teachings of "free will" and "chance" drastically and direly undermine this truth of God's deity.

Another most dangerous error, and one that equally obscures the character of God, is the idea of everlasting punishment. This denies to God the achievement of His will to save all mankind and bring them into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). In addition, it gnaws away at our own confidence in God and the glorious effects of Christ's obedience even to the death of the cross.

For we read, "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome (for for this are we toiling and being reproached), that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers" (1 Tim. 4:9,10).

In this article we wish to test one of the principle arguments used in defending the doctrine of unending loss as opposed to the teaching that God is the Saviour of all. This is the claim that the words *aion* and *aionios* have different and even opposite meanings in different passages of Scripture.

## THE EONS, WORD MEANING AND COMMUNICATION

There is a likeness between the arguments for "free will" and those for giving aion ("eon," CV) the idea of

endlessness. In both cases, the actual issue, that which is most pertinent and important, is unrecognized. It needs to be emphasized that the underlying position which has been taken here is that some words in Scripture, certainly *aiōn*, do not have any meaning at all. In themselves, they mean nothing whatever.

Even as it is not realized that those who teach "free will" champion the absence of causality as to human choice (even though this actually gains them nothing), it is also not realized that the position of those who oppose us on the eons affirms the absence of all meaning in the word aion (and, in a number of other terms as well). It is claimed that the word aion has a variety of meanings; it may mean "world," or it may mean "age," or it may mean "endless ages," or perhaps it may even mean "timelessness; eternity"; that which is outside of time (including ages) altogether. Again, it may mean "lifetime" or perhaps "course" (as the AV renders the word in Ephesians 2:2). Yet none of these "meanings" can be taken as intrinsic. This is indeed the traditional position, that there is no actual, singular meaning that can be applied to aion. We might call it the doctrine of "the destitution of inherent morphological meaning."

Now a number of corollaries follow from this position: (1) In all non-definitive passages, of which there are many, it will be impossible even to assign any meaning at all to the word with any certainty. For instance, when we read that "God makes the eons" (Heb.1:2), how can we have any idea of what He makes? After all, a wide variety of ideas, even beyond those suggested above, might also be assigned to aiōn, and for these non-definitive passages, it would be impossible to determine which of these is to be understood; most all such "meanings" would make sense. (2)

Even when a genuinely definitive passage is discovered (a passsage in which only one idea will even conceivably make sense and avoid absurdity), the definition discerned must be confined only to that passage and any other fully parallel ones. That is, the basic idea or meaning discovered in such a passage may not be applied to other types of passages. (3) This "principle" of the absence of inherent morphological meaning for some terms would actually have to be applied to all words. But it will follow from this that (4) there will not even be a single stable context in which to discover the meaning of any word in question. After all, these contextual terms may themselves mean something quite different in one passage than they do in another! But if this were true, we could not know the meaning of even a single passage of Scripture.

The purpose of language is to communicate, and yet the "orthodox" position, when fairly considered, makes communication impossible. Besides, its advocates are not foolish enough to practice it very often themselves. If they were to employ it continually, they would soon know nothing at all! It is only when one of their pet notions, such as "everlasting life" or "eternal punishment" is challenged that they seem to want to give much heed to it.

Other terms do not take on an altogether new nature "in some contexts," and they certainly do not become antonymous to themselves. Does the word "dog," in some places, come to mean "cat"? Does darkness become light, good become evil, and false become true upon occasion? Then neither does eon, a period of time, mean endless "in some contexts."

THE CONCORDANT PRINCIPLE OF TRANSLATION

Those who oppose the concordant principle of trans-

lation, the use of concordances through which definitive passages are discovered for intrinsic word meanings, are actually claiming, whether realized or not, that scriptural words do not *have* any meaning at all. Instead they assign a wide variety of meanings to be applied as fits their predetermined ideas.

It is not enough for us to produce a variety of New Testament, Septuagint and secular citations which are manifestly speaking of time periods by means of the word aiōn. For it will generally be freely admitted that aiōn has such a sense in these passages. Indeed, most all students acknowledge that in those cases in which the AV translates aiōn as "world" the meaning is actually that of an age or eon. And most will agree that this is its meaning in a number of other passages as well.

Our opponents do not disagree with us here. Nevertheless, after considering these many definitive passages, they remain unconvinced that the basic idea inherent in the word "eon" (that of a period of time) is to be understood in all passages in which some form of the word aiōn is present. They insist that the word aiōn used in those passages which speak of life, redemption and judgment acquires a sense that is the very opposite of "age," not at all referring to a period of time. It is this practice of arbitrarily assigning quite different senses to the words aiōn and aiōnios from context to context, without recognizing a single, inherent meaning, that is used to defend everlasting punishment and to obscure the fact that God is truly the living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind.

#### APPEAL TO TRADITION

Good men, intelligent, educated and dedicated, have believed all manner of things. The Arminians and the Calvinists have been unable to agree concerning who it is for whom Christ died (all or some), and whether the work of Christ saves or only makes salvation possible. A number of renowned scholars and famous theologians, due to their findings in the Scriptures, have been constrained to affirm that the dead are not alive, only to have most others, no less erudite than themselves, just as insistently reply that it is in death that glorious life, or terrible pains, truly begin. Similarly, over the centuries, most have confidently believed that God will never actually give the nation of Israel the glorious terrestrial kingdom which her prophets so explicitly predict, even if Isaiah and all the rest should insist otherwise.

In light of such a history of human controversy, how doubly welcome it is to place reliance on the living God and His Word. He is the Saviour of all mankind and is faithful to this designation.

## "EVERLASTING" LIFE AND CONTEMPORARY SELFISHNESS

Perhaps the most common objection we receive concerning the eons is the claim that if "everlasting punishment" should ever come to an end, then "life eternal" would do the same (Matt.25:46, AV). The objector is so selfishly preoccupied with preserving what he supposes to be blessings for himself in this passage, that he is prepared to assist in stoking the fires of hell forever if this should be necessary in order to protect his own interests.

Instead of the usual "translation," these words should be rendered "chastening eonian" and "life eonian." By its ending, -sis, kolasis ("chastening") refers not to a state, but to an action continuing on. And it has in view an action performed not as a penal infliction, but one with a view toward amendment or rectification. Since God is love, and wills to save all, His ultimate purpose in even His most severe judgments could never be the "eternal punishment" of anyone. He cannot deny Himself.

Indeed, it is well known that even the secular usage of *kolasis* had in view not some kind of terrible vindictive punishment, but acts done for the sake of betterment or correction.\* In the Scriptures, in Acts 4:21, the Jews released John and Peter, "finding nothing how they should be *chastening* them." Did they not aim to reform them? Was not their "chastening" with a view toward their returning to the unbelieving Jewish fold? From their standpoint the word was certainly used to convey the idea of reformation.

To show that it had this meaning in Greek usage, we cite Plato: "For if, O Socrates, you will consider what is the design of punishing (kolazein) the wicked, this of itself will show you that men think virtue something that may be acquired; for no one punishes (kolazei) the wicked looking to the past only, simply for the wrong he has done - that is, no one does this thing who does not act like a wild beast, desiring only revenge. without thought-hence he who seeks to punish (kolazein) with reason, does not punish for the sake of the past wrong deed, but for the sake of the future, that neither the man himself who is punished, may do wrong again, nor any other who has seen him chastized. And he who entertains this thought, must believe that virtue may be taught, and he punishes (kolazei) for the purpose of deterring from wickedness."\*2

Besides, the words kolasin aionion in Matthew 25:46

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>o1</sup>cf John Wesley Hanson: Aiōn-Aiōnios, Northwestern Universalist Publishing House (1875), pp.50-55. cf F. W. Fartar: Eternal Hope (1883), pp.199-201; Mercy and Judgment (1881), pp.407-409.

<sup>\*2</sup>Hanson: op. cit., p.53; quotation from Protag.Sec.38, vol.1, p.252.

are in reference to national judgments which the Son of Mankind will make in the day of the Lord, "whenever [He] may be coming in His glory" (Matt.25:31). These judgments concern the kingdom of the heavens, and are to be implemented in the coming eon. This judgment of God is prompted by the unworthy way in which many of the living nations will treat the people of Israel in the time of her great affliction, in the conclusion of this present eon.

Concerning the judgments of that day, Isaiah declares, "For as a light are Your judgments to the earth [O Yahweh], The dwellers of the habitance *learn righteousness*" (Isa.26:9b). Instead of suffering "the eternal torments of the damned," the nations will "learn righteousness."

Matthew 25:31-46 is not concerned with any of God's dealings with the members of the ecclesia which is Christ's body (cf Eph.1:22). Instead, it has in view the granting of rewards, or chastenings, in response to the works of the nations of that day. It is not a revelation concerning divine grace, nor of the evangel of our salvation and its transcendent grace. Perhaps the best proof that men do not really believe that our salvation is a matter of gratuitous grace is the fact that this passage concerning the "sheep" and the "goats" is commonly perceived as a summary of the gospel for today.

Though eonian life (and certainly, eonian chastening) will come to an end, death will one day be abolished, and all will then be made alive, in an era in which it already will have been true for an entire eon that "death will be no more" (Rev.21:4; 1 Cor.15:20-28). The promises concerning our future life do involve the thought of endlessness. But this idea is not conveyed through any usage or form of the word aiōn. Therefore

we should never speak of the matter of the endlessness of our future life by employing any of the usages of this word.

Instead, we should say that we will always be together with the Lord (1 Thess.4:17,18). We will be immortal and incorruptible (1 Cor.15:53), conformed to the image of God's Son (Rom.8:29), our mortal bodies having been vivified (Rom.8:11; 1 Cor.15:23). We will have already been alive for a thousand years (the coming eon) when the promise goes forth that there will be no more death! We will continue to live during that eon as well (the length of which is not revealed), until the consummation when all will finally be vivified. Death will then be abolished for all mankind.

#### THE SAVIOUR OF ALL

The entire case for everlasting punishment is built on faulty arguments. Definite, intrinsic meanings are denied to Scriptural terms. The ideas of certain good and wise men are made decisive when apparently contradictory passages such as Matthew 25:46 and Romans 5:18 are considered. But perhaps most dangerous of all, there is a clear tendency to deny to God the achievements through the work of Christ that He has claimed. He is the reliable, the living, the saving God, Who cannot fail to achieve His purpose.

**James Coram** 

## T.D. IYPE

Long-time readers will recognize the name of this gentle brother who patiently shared the good news of salvation in Christ in his home area of Western India. Word now reaches us of his recent death. In the face of this loss we long with Paul for the time when the mortal will be swallowed up by life.

## Studies in Romans

# THE FAITH WHICH YOU HAVE

(Romans 14:22,23)

OUR FAITH is that God has achieved a resounding victory over all evil through the death and resurrection of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God is operating all, and that He is doing this righteously, and therefore all is for good. As for ourselves, we cannot add anything to the achievements of the cross and can only respond with thanksgiving and with behavior that reflects God's grace, as His spirit works within us.

Yet most everything we see and experience in the flesh contradicts this faith. Not only this, but even our fellow believers often contradict and sometimes oppose the fullest implications of the evangel. And most disturbing of all, we find ourselves many times crying out with the words of the father whose son was possessed, "I am believing! Help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Yet, in this way, we learn what a truly gracious gift it is to be believing on Him (Phil.1:29)!

While following through Romans 14 we may have felt that there are numerous disadvantages to us today in faith, especially in maturity of faith. Those who recognize that foods, observance of days and other matters stressed in the Mosaic law give us no standing before God are not to be scorning those who are infirm in the faith and who do not have this appreciation (14:3). The stronger our faith, the more we will be careful lest we place a stumbling block for a brother (14:13). We will put restrictions on our freedom when

this appears to be needed for the good of others. We will not be hasty in defense of our own actions even when they are unjustly criticized, but will be satisfied in knowing God sees into our hearts:

#### THE HAPPY BELIEVER

The faith which you have, have for yourself in God's sight. Happy is he who is not judging himself in that which he is attesting (Rom.14:22).

Indeed, this seems to make our pathway all the more difficult. Those who are most faithful are the ones who "bend over backwards" in patience and tolerance toward those who are immature. They will be gracious and lenient when being criticized. This is not an easy thing for the flesh.

Nevertheless, it is not a burden for those who are walking in accord with spirit (cf Rom.8:1-14). Our faith is not a harsh taskmaster but a benign power that increasingly fills us with joy and peace as we become more and more conscious of its significance. The happy man is the one who is believing and walking in accord with this faith.

It is no mortification to say and believe, "All is allowed me, but not all is expedient. All is allowed me, but not all is edifying. Let no one be seeking the welfare of himself, but that of another" (1 Cor.10:23, 24). In fact it is a privilege and a pleasure to deal graciously, for our God also, in Christ, deals graciously with us (Eph.4:32).

The terminology used here in Romans 14:22,23 is borrowed from the early chapters of the epistle, where the evangel is presented. This is significant, for our walk and service is based fully on the message of grace and peace and needs to be expressed in similar terms. Faith has a distinctive importance in the evangel and

also in our behavior; happiness is characteristic of the revelation as well as of our service; future judging and condemnation are excluded for those who are called, and present self-examination and feelings of condemnation and guilt are taken away from the daily lives of those who are guided by God's spirit. In what follows, we will note some of the connections the thoughts of Romans 14:22,23 have with chapters 1 through 8.

#### HAVING FAITH

What is the faith which we have? In Romans 4:5 it is described as "believing on Him Who is justifying the irreverent;" this is our faith which is reckoned for righteousness. When we see irreverence, as indeed we continually do, all around us, we remind ourselves that God will abolish it, but He will also bring every irreverent person, whoever he may be, into righteousness. That may seem like a reckless and dangerous viewpoint, but then, we do have this evidence in its favor: that sinners like us are being now justified in the blood of Christ (Rom.5:9).

Hence there are situations where the mature believer will not press his freedom in Christ. This may, in truth, lead to a certain amount of loneliness; leniency is seldom appreciated and is invariably misunderstood. But that can be no great affliction, for in accord with the spirit of sonship (Rom.8:15) we are conscious of our Father's searching of our hearts (8:27). We do not hold our faith alone by ourselves, but we hold it in God's sight.

The phrase, "in God's sight" appeared previously in Romans in quite a different context. In 3:20, Paul said that "by works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in [God's] sight." Our faith does not justify us either (we are justified through the faith of Jesus Christ), but its

value is multiplied in the awareness that God is seeing that we are believing.

Truly the apostle is stressing the benefits of faith, and not at all any imagined shadows. *Happy* is the one who is not "judging himself" in these matters of faith which he is putting to the test. Our faith speaks of our happy position before God (*cf* Rom.4:6-9), and the appreciation of this happiness also leads us into a happy situation in our daily lives. We are not plagued with doubts about the sufficiency of our works and service, because we are aware that God is working all together for our good and that nothing can separate us from His love.

The word "judge" appears often in Romans, especially in chapter 2 where the judgments of God are compared with those of man. God judges in accord with truth (Rom.2:2), which shows us that the idea of close and careful examination is denoted by the word. It is certainly a welcome situation where we can leave this work to God and be delivered from constant self-examinations and doubts. What a joy it is to know that "Nothing... is now condemnation to those in Christ Jesus" (Rom.8:1)!

That which we are "(at)testing," or putting to the test, has been presented as "the will of God" in Romans 12:2. Earlier in Romans Paul charged mankind with a failure to "test God, to have Him in recognition" (Rom.1:28), but believers are subjecting themselves to the impressions of God's will as revealed in the evangel. Much the same thought is brought out in Ephesians 5:1,2, where Paul entreats us to become imitators of God... and be walking in love, according to the pattern of Christ's sacrifice. The mature believer walks in this pattern, and he serves his Lord in this way. He knows that it is the right way, because it is

the pattern shown by Christ in giving Himself up for us as a sacrifice to God for a fragrant odor.

#### THE UNHAPPY DOUBTER

Yet doubts creep in as soon as our attention is directed away from God's grace in Christ and toward ourselves:

... Now he who is doubting if he should be eating is condemned, seeing that it is not out of faith. Now everything which is not out of faith is sin (Rom.14:23).

Paul is still referring to believers, but now to those who are "infirm in the faith." When Abraham was told that Sarah would have a son from whom would come many nations of descendants, "the promise of God was not doubted in unbelief" (Rom.4:20). Believers today are those who accept the truth that Christ died for our sins (1 Cor.15:3), but even in believing this, we may hold doubts about the fullness of this work and its achievements on our behalf.

If we are believing that there is no condemnation for us who are in Christ, we must not be vaunting over those of our brethren who have not grasped this great grace. Yet we will be seeking their growth and be ready to aid them as God opens the way. Our hearts go out to them, for their doubts reflect an unhappiness, a self-centeredness that takes away their enjoyment of the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This is a self-imposed condemnation, the present condemnation of not believing there is no condemnation for them at all in Christ.

Literally, there is no condemnation for any of us who are believing, whether or not we are strong in the faith. But those who do not know this glorious truth or are doubting it cannot be enjoying it, and in this figurative sense they are condemned. Their viewpoint and habits of thinking are "not out of faith." Yet Abraham himself did not always exhibit full confidence in God's declarations, and all of us have experienced doubts about God's declarations. We know the misery of feeling unsure about certain aspects of the good news, and we cannot help but hurt along with our brethren who are struggling with this very human weakness. We certainly know the force of the figure of speech "condemned" in this verse, and we pray diligently on their behalf. May we all be growing in faith and in faithfulness!

The last statement in Romans 14 is not intended as a definition of sin. Paul writes that "everything which is not out of faith is sin." But by this he is showing that it is "missing the mark" of "living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service" (Rom.12:1) to be doubting what God has said to us. We cannot be honoring our Lord and serving Him ideally when we become occupied with rules about foods and days and requirements about worship and sacrifice. It remains true that we have "died to sin" (Rom.6:2), but we still fail while we remain in the flesh. And one of the greatest failures for believers is the failure of not believing that we are justified in Christ's blood, that we shall be saved from indignation through Him, that we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son and shall be saved in His life (Rom.5:9,10). This is the sin of thinking that when Christ died He somehow did not deal with every one of our sins.

Truly, the foundation of our logical divine service is faith. We cannot be useful in service to our Lord while we are doubting that we are being justified gratuitously in God's grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24). Yet what a blessing it is to be believing. Happy is he who is not doubting what God has declared.

# UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 1988 BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY-NINE

# **EDITORIAL**

That which was written before the ministry of Paul is valuable to us for teaching endurance, consolation and expectation (Rom.15:4). Yet, so that we correctly cut the word of truth (2 Tim.2:15), we note whether an Old Testament passage presents a contrast or a similarity to the evangel heralded by our apostle.

In this issue we observe the parallels Paul made between certain experiences of Israel and those of believers today in 1 Corinthians 10:6-13 (see p.159) and in Romans 15:4 (see p.165). We also suggest some similarities between Psalm 119 and our own experiences (p.147).

In this way we learn from the *types* and pictures given in the ancient writings. The connection between our Lord's ministry and types in the Hebrew Scriptures is even closer as shown by the article on "Our Lord's Prayer" (p.148). Here, as Brother A. E. Knoch points out, the various materials used in the incense offerings pictured various aspects of this prayer.

By way of contrast, a new writer for our magazine, Marvin Rice, shows how the call of the calumniator, Saul of Tarsus, was evidence of the change of administrations (p.181), and John Essex shows other evidence for much the same thing from Ephesians 6:10-12 (p.187).

All of God's Word is accurate and exact (see the article beginning on page 171). But its lessons are sometimes learned by contrasts and sometimes by close parallels. Much of the ministry of this magazine involves pointing out these distinctions.

D.H.H.

# Concordant Version of Psalm 119:49-64

49 Remember Your word to Your servant, On which You have <sup>m</sup>set my hope.

50 This is my consolation in my humiliation', That Your sa promise revives me.

That four supromise revives me.

The arrogant, they mock me fr exceedingly.

Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.

- 52 I remember Your judgments from the eon, O Yahweh, And I find 'comfort for myself.
- 58 A simoon storm has taken hold of me fbecause of the wicked Who are forsaking Your law.
- 54 Your statutes, they have become my psalms In the house of my sojournings.
- I remember Your name in the night, O Yahweh, †That I may keep Your law.
- 56 This has become my practice, That I preserve Your precepts.
- 57 You are my portion, O Yahweh; I have sa promised to keep Your words.
- I have beseeched Your presence with all my heart; Be gracious to me according to Your sa promise.
- 59 I have mtaken account of my ways;
  +So let me turn back my feet to Your testimonies.
- 60 I hurry and do not dally To keep Your instructions.
- 61 The cables of the wicked, they bind me about, Yet I do not forget Your law.
- 62 At midnight I 'arise to acclaim' You on For Your righteous judgments.
- 63 I am the companion to all who fear You, And to those keeping Your precepts.
- 64 Your benignity, O Yahweh, it fills the earth; Teach me Your statutes.

## PSALMS IN THE NIGHT

Our lives are often dominated by troubling uncertainties and even distressing certainties, so much so that we call these periods our nighttimes. Here the psalmist speaks of his "humiliation" (v.50a) when the "arrogant" mock him (v.51a) and attack him like a searing desert storm (v.53a). Yet along with these afflictions he comes to know, in a greater measure than otherwise possible, the consolation and comfort of Yahweh's Word.

In such dark periods he remembers Yahweh's Name (v.55a) and arises to acclaim Him (v.62a). Yahweh's statutes then become his psalms (v.54a) in a special way.

Similarly, when we undergo trials of sorrow, loneliness, persecution or similar affliction, we find ourselves recalling God's words to us, and our spirits are soothed (cp 1 Cor.16:18). Yet this is not to speak of sufferings as though they were good in themselves. The pain that comes from betrayal of a friend or the death of a son (to use two of David's trials as an example) is real and sometimes devastating. The night in and of itself is no less dark because it has led us into the light of spiritual rejuvenation. It is the "sequel" or that which comes out of the trial and enables us to undergo it (1 Cor.10:13) that is good.

One major difference between the psalmist's situation and our own should be noted here. Whereas he was troubled by human enemies, we are troubled by spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Eph.6:10-12). Our "nighttimes" are filled with fiery arrows of doubts, despair, anger and bewilderment which are intended by the enemy to distract us from the joy and peace of the faith. May it be that we will be protected by the panoply of God, and that our sorrows and humiliations may lead us to rise and acclaim God for His marvelous grace.

# Praise and Prayer

### **OUR LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Lord was often in the prayer of God, but it is seldom that we are given a record of the words that He used or the contents of His petitions. But in John's account a whole chapter is devoted to His communion with the Father. We are taken, so to speak, into the very holy of holies, and are given the precious privilege of listening to the most marvelous and intimate interchange of thought between the Son and the Father in regard to His mission to Israel on the earth. The circumstances are such that we would expect a recital of the sins that surround Him and a plea for protection from the evil devices of the Adversary. Instead, as becomes the golden altar of incense, He is occupied with His glories and those of His disciples.

In meditating on any passage in the accounts of our Lord's life it will help us much to get an intelligent grasp of its message if we keep in mind which account contains it, and in what part of each account it occurs. This is comparatively simple if we keep in mind their skeletons as given at the end of the Keyword Concordance. For those who do not have one of these in their possession, we will repeat, briefly, the important facts, so that we may understand the crisis which called for the Lord's lengthy prayer in the seventeenth of John.

Christ's glory and His humiliation are the two great themes which are set forth in the accounts of His life and ministry. Matthew writes of His glory as the King of Israel, while John correspondingly reveals this glory as the Son of God. Mark and Luke are occupied principally with His humiliation, the former as the *Servant* and the latter as the *Son of Man*. We should remember this in reading them, and place them as the backdrop of every scene and incident they contain. For example, the Lord's prayer in John is not based upon His royal rights, His lowly service or His descent to human form, but upon the glory of His divine sonship.

Furthermore, all of the accounts have the same general skeleton, that is, they deal with the same subjects in the same order. Each one has a central crisis, after which the same subjects again occupy our attention, but in reverse order. Up to the crisis He is heralded, after the crisis He is rejected. It is often vital to the understanding of a passage to keep these things in view. The standard formula for all of the accounts may be condensed to this: Credentials, Baptism, Kingdom, King = King, Kingdom, Baptism, Credentials. For example, our Lord's prayer, which we are about to consider, occurs at the end of the rejection of the Kingdom, and can be understood and appreciated only as we view it in this light.

More definite and detailed indications of what to expect in our Lord's prayer can be gained if we trace the matter still further in the skeleton. The period dealing with the rejection of the kingdom (John 11:54-18:1), divides into two corresponding sections, both of which deal with His departure (11:54=12:36), hostility (11:55-12:19=12:37-50), and the hour of His glorification (12:20-36=13:1-17:26), but the former half is concerned with the throng and the Greeks, the latter with the disciples and the Father. In this latter discussion of His glorification He first speaks to His disciples (13:1-16:33), then prays to His Father (17:1-26). Such is the setting of this most marvelous of the communications between the Son of God and His Father.

### A SHORT INTRODUCTION

To condense it briefly, in a single sentence: God reveals Himself in Christ in the Greek Scriptures, veiled in flesh in the four Accounts, as the Son of God in John, as communicating with His Father in regard to the rejected kingdom and His disciples in our Lord's prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John. If all expositors would introduce their subjects after this fashion, tracing them, figuratively speaking, from the main stem, through the big boughs and the diminishing branches to the fruit, we would not so often be deceived, and be handed a lemon picked from a sycamore tree, or an olive from a fig. We should always view every passage in the light of its place. Then we would never "take" or "apply" or "appropriate" a prayer which belongs to our Lord's disciples, and pertains to His kingdom at its rejection, for ourselves, especially when we can enjoy it much more when we leave it to its rightful owners.

Ever since His rejection as King, after the Jews sought to kill Him, He no longer walked in Judea (John 7:1), and began His return to the Father. He had come out from God and now was on His way back to Him. Significantly, this, the principal crisis in His career on earth, came at the festival of tabernacles (John 7:2). It suggests that, as in the days of the tabernacle in the wilderness, the priest, in passing into the presence of God, made his way by the altar and laver in the court, and the lampstand and showbread and golden altar in the holy place, and passed the curtains into the holy of holies with its ark and cherubim and the shekinah glory, so now He, in the same order, wends His way back to the Father. Indeed, the narrative commences with a suggestion of His sacrifice, for the Jews were out to kill Him.

1-5—6-8Glorification-Recognition24—25-26 9-11Unification
15
-1Father4
2 GiftEonian LifePurpose 3
RECOGNITION
626
7-825
KEEPING THE DISCIPLES
12-13 WordsPurposeWorks 18-19
14- GivenTruth 17
-1415-16

The prayer itself can best be grasped and enjoyed when we see the subjects and their marvelous balance. At its commencement (1-8) and at its close (24-26) we are occupied with the Glory of the Son. Then, second, as well as second from the end, is a plea for Unity (9-11=20-23). In the center the subject is the Keeping of the Disciples. This divides into two complementary parts, Christ's keeping (12-14) and God's (15-19). In general the Son is the subject at the beginning and the end, just as He is First and the Last in the greater themes of creation and salvation. And the center is taken up with the Disciples, their Unity and Protection. Yet all of this is in view of the failure of the Kingdom heralding, and His consequent departure.

He Himself is the Way, the true and living Way (John 14:6). No one else can come to the Father except through Him. But He is also represented by all that is on the way. He is the *Door*, as well as the *Shepherd* Who lays down His soul for the sake of the sheep (John 10). He is the *Laver*, but not alone for outward clean-

ing. He provides life-giving water which not only hallows but satisfies and vivifies (John 7:37-39). He is also the Lampstand, for He is the Light of the world, and gives the light of life (John 8:12). He makes even the blind to see (John 9:1-6). At the so-called "last supper" He is the "Showbread," or bread of the presence, and shares Himself with the disciples (John 13). And then, in the prayer He offers we recognize Him as the Incense as well as the Golden Altar, just before the curtain. Soon after this the Curtain was rent and He became the Propitiatory. But, at this time He stops before the altar to offer incense in this most marvelous of all His prayers.

### INCENSE AT THE GOLDEN ALTAR

Christ is the Antitype of the golden altar on which incense ascends as a savor of rest up to the Deity. Only through Him can we send up to God our prayers of appreciation and praise. This incense was of a very special composition, and was used only for the worship of Yahweh. As all else in God's dwelling places was designed to be a physical representation of spiritual realities, we may be certain that the ingredients which composed it will tell us much of the composition of that which pleases and glorifies God in His worship. We will therefore consider each of its components and seek to discover what qualities will yield a fragrant odor when offered on the altar, Christ.

Strange as it may seem, almost all have some most disagreeable quality, bitterness, or blackness, or a bad odor, so that they offend one of our senses, taste, sight or smell, tongue, eyes or nostrils. This may be divine illustrations of the function of evil in the eons. When substances which are repugnant to our senses are transformed by the fire into sweet, soothing incense, it

may help us to see how God transmutes the evils which we abhor into sweet praise for His name. Bitter burdens, black experiences, bad behavior, all may be turned, by the alchemy of His sacrifice, into light loads and bright events and good conduct, which ascends to the presence of God, in worship and adoration, through the cross of Christ, our Lord.

### INGREDIENTS OF THE INCENSE

The material ingredients of the incense used on the golden altar (Ex.30:34) are not accurately known, but we have endeavored to sift the evidence very carefully. The first one is simply called a drop (ntph) in Hebrew, the same word used in Job 36:27 for drops of water. The Greek version calls it staktê, our stacte, which also means drop, but was used of special kinds of aloe or cinnamon or myrrh. The Septuagint is woefully loose in this case, as staktê is used of aloe, of labdanum and of carbuncle, as well as of myrrh. An ancient author, speaking of myrrh, says the drops which exude from the tree of their own accord, without an incision, is called "stacte," i.e. drop, which makes the best of all myrrh. So it seems that the principal ingredient of the incense used in the worship of God by Israel, was drop myrrh, the natural, not artificial exudation, which probably exceeded all others in its bitterness.

And is not this in fullest and finest accord with the spiritual ingredients of praise and worship, especially in the case of our Lord? The fumes ascending from myrrh are most agreeable, but it is so exceedingly bitter to the taste that the Hebrew name is simply the stem *mr* of the word *mrre*, *bitterness*. His course, since He left the Father and began His Messianic ministry, was bitterly bitter. His own brothers did not believe on

Him. His neighbors tried to hurl Him to death. His people rejected Him. The scribes derided Him. The priests and elders sought to murder Him. All His efforts seemed to be a complete failure. Instead of the crown of the kingdom, He was about to be wreathed with thorns. Instead of the most glorious throne on earth He was soon to occupy the most ignominious and shameful place in the universe, gibbeted as a dangerous criminal on the cross of shame.

He has endured it all, and in this way has glorified God on the earth, and finished the work God gave Him to do. There is a tremendous lesson here for those who have eyes to see it. During the evil eons glory comes to God, not through great success, not through the winning of vast multitudes for Him, but through bitter experiences of defeat and through a few faltering followers and rejection by the religious world. In this regard our course should agree with His, for we know that mankind as a whole will repudiate the evangel of God's grace just as Israel rejected the gospel of the kingdom. And glory arises today from this bitter way, and ascends to the nostrils of God as incense, a restful perfume most acceptable to Him, when His messengers to the nations are persecuted, just as it did when the great Herald of the kingdom was despised and forsaken, except by a faltering few. The incense that ascends from a martyr, burning at the stake, is the delight of God's heart.

### BLACK - MUREX

The second ingredient is also much easier to understand spiritually than to ascertain materially. It is simply black. This is applied to the black lion, because this color is so unusual. Here it seems to indicate the black murex shell, which was the base of most oriental forms

of incense. Spiritually, the name is most suggestive, for it points to everything that is black, or opposed to the light. Just as the bitter is most unpalatable to the taste so the black is unwelcome to the eyes. Just as the persecution He endured was bitter to His soul, but fragrant in God's nostrils, so the depravity of men, which appalled Him and cast a gloom upon His spirit, ascended to God as a sweet odor when fumed upon the altar.

### MILK-WHITE — GALBANUM

Galbanum, the third ingredient, gives us another contrast. Its Hebrew name, *chlbne*, *seems* to be a combination of *chlb* MILK or fat and *lbn* WHITE, that is, MILK-WHITE. It was probably a gum resin which resembles asafetida, with the same *fetid* odor. The myrrh was bitter to the taste, the murex was black to the sight, now the galbanum is a stench to the nostrils. So was our Lord's ministry an offense to His people.

#### WHITE - FRANKINCENSE

But not all the ingredients of the incense which ascended on the golden altar are disagreeable to the soul in their native state. The frankincense was a fragrant gum resin, agreeable to the eyes and, though it has a faint turpentine flavor, is not bad to the taste. So with the spiritual counterpart. In our Lord's ministry, and in all efforts for God's glory during the evil eons, there is a measure of pleasure as well as pain, there are men who hear as well as the many who will not hearken, some who see as well as the majority who are blinded, and those who accept with pleasure as well as masses who are offended. Frankincense by itself is the usual incense today, and this is an apt ingredient to picture God's pleasure.

### SALT - PRESERVATIVE

The only other ingredient seems to have been salt. This was added to keep it from going to corruption, as, indeed, it is widely used today. Our Lord knew no corruption, not even of His flesh, in death. So it is not one of the *ingredients* of the incense, but an added element which is most necessary when we seek to send up our worship in the incense of praise and adoration. It seems to suggest that which was largely lacking in Israel's worship, but abundant in our Lord's career, that is *discipline*. If the walk is corrupt, the worship is a stench in the nostrils of God. No matter how it appears outwardly, no matter how vast and successful our career may be, if it does not conform to the Scriptures, it lacks the salt, apart from which God is not well pleased.

Our Lord cannot be accused of lack of love, for He gave His whole soul for the salvation of the lost. Nevertheless there were times when He seemed to be excessively harsh. When He exposed the Pharisees He called them the progeny of vipers (Matt.3:7). Even when He rebuked a beloved disciple, He did not hesitate to use a term which we could not use without reflecting upon our own conduct. He called Peter a satan, the Hebrew title of the Adversary (Matt. 16:23). This salt was rather sharp, but it was most necessary. The disciples were the salt of the earth, but how could they be if they themselves were corrupt in their conduct?

The offerings also demanded salt. It must not be lacking. On the other hand no leaven or yeast or even honey was allowed on the present or "meat" offering (Lev.2:11-13). They could have oil and frankincense, but no honey. Does this not suggest to our minds such natural sweetness as conflicts with God's will and

condones evil? A father should be fond of his child, but he should not fail to admonish and correct it on that account. We should be fondly affectionate with our friends, but let us not allow this to influence our attitude in case of misconduct. Honey is good (Prov.24:13) yet it is not good when eaten in excess (Prov.25:27). It should not interfere with helpful discipline, or enter into our spiritual relationships. Its sweetness should never be found in the incense of praise and prayer. Our Lord did not include a petition for Judas.

### THE GLORIFICATION OF THE SON

The opening and closing thoughts of this prayer reveal to us the very heart of God's purpose in the Greek Scriptures, as well as the method of attaining it. God's glory is made manifest in the glorification of His Son. On the other hand, He imparts eonian life to make it possible for His disciples to get this knowledge. It is a marvelous condensation of the object of all creation and revelation. God is inherently and infinitely glorious, but it is far too bright for mortal gaze. It must be reflected so that we can look upon it. First, we are introduced to it in the shadows of the Hebrew Scriptures, then we see it in the Son, but not at a glance. We must have time to look and learn. For this purpose we are given eonian life. After all have learned the lesson, then they will have indissoluble life at the consummation, but that will be the result, not the means of a knowledge of God's glory.

### THE HOUR COMES

The closing period of the lowly life of the Son of God has arrived. In anticipation of its end He prays to the Father, for this will be impossible while He is under the curse of the cross, forsaken for our sins. So that the exact time which He assumes in spirit is when He cries, "It is accomplished!" (John 19:30). Then it is that He gives up the spirit, and then it is that the work which the Father had given to Him was finished (John 17:4).

### THE VARIOUS GLORIES

His first thought is to glorify the Father. He had glorified Him on earth in *humiliation*, now He desires to do it by a totally different method, by means of His own glory. It is most striking to note these different methods in connection with the two evangels. The apostles had continued with Him in His *trials* (Luke 2:28). No one who had not been with Him from the baptism of John until His ascension could be numbered with the twelve apostles (Acts 1:22). But He met Saul of Tarsus in glory above the brightness of the mid-day sun. This is the glory for which He asked the Father in this prayer.

(To be continued)

## WILLIAM R. MATTHEWS

When we announced the death of Bro. Charles Anderson in our last issue, we had not heard that his and our good friend, William R. Matthews of Toronto, Ontario, had also been put to repose. Many of our readers will remember Bro. Matthews' enthusiastic interest in the truth of God's Word and encouragement in the things of consequence. He often attended the meetings in Baldwin, Michigan and elsewhere, and will be greatly missed. His death occurred just a few days after his 99th birthday, in early May.

### FALL CONFERENCE

A conference is planned by the Scripture Study Group, with messages presented by various speakers, the weekend of October 21-23, in Brevard, North Carolina. For information, write Ken Bachand, Route 1, Box 192B, Brevard, NC 28712.

# Studies in Deuteronomy

# YAHWEH PROVOKED TO WRATH

"You are a stiff-necked people. Remember, do not forget that you provoked Yahweh your Elohim to wrath in the wilderness. From the day in which you went forth from the country of Egypt until you came to this place, you were rebellious against Yahweh. Even at Horeb you provoked Yahweh to wrath, and Yahweh showed Himself angered with you enough to exterminate you" (Deut.9:6-8).

### REMEMBER HIS DELIVERANCE DO NOT FORGET

In chapter seven of Deuteronomy Moses had spoken to the *fearful* among Israel's post-Sinai generation, expounding this basic truth: since Yahweh Elohim had given deliverance before, He is certainly able to do it again. He would ease their enemies out before their face, little by little: Fighting would be followed by restful periods and renewed fighting, yet never more than they could handle.

As the apostle Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "No trial has taken you except what is human. 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."

This verse follows Paul's admonition to the arro-

gant: "Now these things became types of us, for us not to be lusters after evil things, according as they also lust. Nor yet be becoming idolaters, according as some of them, even as it is written, 'Seated are the people to eat and drink, and they rise to sport' [Ex.32:6].

"Nor yet may we be committing prostitution, according as some of them commit prostitution, and fall in one day twenty-three thousand [cf Num.25:1,9].

"Nor yet may we be putting the Lord on trial, according as some of them put Him on trial, and perished by serpents [Num.21:4-6; "impatient on the way"].

"Nor yet be murmuring, even as some of them murmur, and perished by the exterminator [Num.14:2,37].

"Now all this befalls them typically. Yet it was written for our admonition, to whom the consummations of the eons have attained" (1 Cor.10:6-11).

### COVENANT PLEDGES AT HOREB

In chapter nine of Deuteronomy Moses spoke to the arrogant among Israel's post-Sinai generation who later might claim to have merited the tenancy of Canaan by virtue of their own ability or their own righteousness. Their salvation toward victory reminded us of the fact that ours today is also not out of us (Eph.2:8), for no one can stand before God with self-complacency and relate his salvation in any measure (yet so tiny) to his own merit.

Moses knew how to jolt the arrogant in his audience out of their complacency: "Remember, do not forget that you provoked Yahweh your Elohim to wrath in the wilderness.... Even at Horeb you provoked Yahweh to wrath." In the words of Paul, the Israelites were lusters after evil things; some of them became idolaters in the mountainous area of Horeb around Mount Sinai where, a little more than six weeks be-

fore, they had gone forth from their camp to meet the One, Elohim (Ex.19:17). After having heard the words that Yahweh spoke to the whole assembly at the mountain, in a loud voice from the midst of the fire, the darkness, the cloud and the murkiness, the people had become so terrified by this theophany that they sent the heads of their tribes and their elders to Moses, saying:

"Behold, Yahweh our Elohim has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we heard His voice from the midst of the fire. This day we have seen that Elohim speaks with the human and he still lives. Yet now, why should we die? For this great fire shall devour us. If we are continuing to hear the voice of Yahweh our Elohim any further, then we will die. For who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living Elohim speaking from the midst of the fire as we have, and he still lives? As for you, go near and hear all that Yahweh our Elohim says; then you shall speak to us all that Yahweh our Elohim shall speak to you, and we will hearken and obey" (Deut.5:22-27).

Then Moses related to the people all the words of Yahweh and all the judgments of the covenant. And at the solemn ratification ceremony, all the people responded with one voice and said: "All the words which Yahweh has spoken, we shall do."

Furthermore, Moses took the scroll of the covenant and read it in the ears of the people; so they said: "All that Yahweh has spoken we shall do and hearken to" (Ex.24:3-7).

### REMEMBER YOUR PROVOCATION AT HOREB

How could the people ever forget the awe-inspiring manifestation of Yahweh's presence over Mount Sinai (Ex.19:18; Heb.12:18,19)? How could they fail to

remember all the details of the solemn ratification ceremony (Ex.24:4-8)? The peace offering (that had been part of it) closed with a sacrificial feast (cf Lev.7:11,15,17) for Moses and the selectmen who were the representatives of Israel's hundred thousands that could not participate (Ex.24:9-11).

Moses and those with him at this meal were privileged to enjoy the presence of Elohim while sitting beneath His feet and looking up into the very heavens for purity. Moses deputized two of them (Aaron and Hur) to act on his behalf during his absence. Yet they were feeble and infirm, unable to enforce the observance of the covenant stipulations during the weeks to come.

When Moses had ascended to the mountain to receive the stone tablets, the glory of Yahweh tabernacled over Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. On the seventh day Yahweh called to Moses from within the cloud. Then the appearance of the glory of Yahweh was as a devouring fire on the summit of the mountain, and the sons of Israel perceived His glory with their own eyes, while Moses entered the cloud and remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights (Ex. 24:12-18).

# IDOL WORSHIP\*

Toward the end of the forty days and nights while Yahweh instructed Moses about covenant worship, the sons of Israel decided to practice forbidden idol worship, in flagrant violation of the covenant that they had contracted with Yahweh about a month before.

In passive obedience the Israelites had worked hard

<sup>\*</sup>H. H. Rocke, "Covenant Worship Spurned," Unsearchable Riches, vol.73, excerpted and adapted from pp.231-233.

under the supervision of their Hebrew foremen (or superintendents) and under the control of their Egyptian taskmasters (or exactors, Ex.5:6). Now, at Horeb, they had been idle for over a month, waiting for the return of the man Moses in whom they had seen a representative of Yahweh. No one had any idea how to fill the empty days of the people in a meaningful manner. Not even Aaron had shared the full spiritual experience of Moses, and the majority of the Israelites had still the minds of slaves who had been set free only a few months before. To them Yahweh seemed to have vanished just as Moses had disappeared whom they supposed to have perished on the mountain in the fire that they had seen. Hence they wanted to resume their march with visible elohim (gods) to go before them (Ex.32:1).

Aaron failed to control the people's trend toward idolatry and obviously tried to work out a compromise in order to restrain their complete defection from Yahweh; he gave them a molten calf, built an altar before it and proclaimed "a celebration to Yahweh tomorrow" (Ex32:5). For most of the people this was a public holiday. "So they rose early on the morrow and brought up ascent offerings and brought close peace offerings. And the people sat to eat and drank and rose to make fun" (Ex.32:6; 1 Cor.10:7).

In this way, at Horeb, the Israelites provoked Yahweh to wrath, and Yahweh showed Himself angered with them enough to exterminate them (Deut.9:8). Three times they had expressed their acceptance of the covenant stipulations: "All that Yahweh has spoken we shall do and hearken to" (Ex.19:8; 24:3,7). Yet there was no one among them to stand up and reprove the people for their flagrant violation of the covenant obligations.

# THE TRACEDY OF ISRAEL'S FAILURE TO FULFILL THE LAW\*

They had taken upon themselves obligations which not only totally transcended their powers but absolutely ignored the greatest of all truths, that God alone has the power to do anything, and any obedience on their part would be His work, not theirs. Yet what could teach them their own incapacity better than bitter experience? The tragedy of Israel's failure to fulfill the law is God's graphic course of instruction in the nothingness of man and the allness of the Deity.

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

\*A. E. Knoch, "Covenants, Literal and Figurative," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.30; excerpted from p.357.

### NOW WE ARE COMMENDING

It has been observed that while we often honor faithful brethren after they have died we seldom commend the service of our friends who are actively competing together with us in making known the evangel. In the sixteenth chapter of Romans, the apostle Paul names many of these fellow believers, in effect commending them all as he does Phoebe in verse 1. As space allows, we would like to follow his example in this.

We are thankful for the toil in the Lord of Brother Louis Abbott of Stover, Missouri, who has been travelling to many areas of the country and Canada, visiting the brethren and encouraging them in the faith. Among those he has visited recently are Ray Young and Nova Richardson Young of Boise, Idaho, who have spent many hours aiding our work; Sister Nova has been especially helpful with work requiring acquaintance with Hebrew and Greek.

Recently some of us in Michigan and Ontario enjoyed a visit from Andrew and Barbara MacLarty of Nottingham, England. They staunchly stand for the evangel of grace brought by Paul, and we are certain they are an encouragement to our co-workers, John Essex and Frank Orton, as well as all our friends in their area.

# Studies in Romans

# CHRIST PLEASES NOT HIMSELF

(Romans 15:1-4)

THE DIVINE SERVICE of a holy life, well pleasing to God, and of a transformed mind, described in the last five chapters of Romans, constitutes a present day salvation for all believers. This is the process of "being saved" which issues from retaining the evangel in faith (1 Cor.15:3). It is not the completed salvation that was achieved in God's approach present of the death of His Son (Eph.2:8; Rom.5:8), although it is based on that finished work. Neither is it the future salvation from indignation into sonship, the deliverance of our body (Rom.5:9.10: 8:23), although it anticipates that coming glory. As we grasp the salvation Christ has accomplished for us, and as we look forward to the glorious salvation ahead, we are being saved from much of the despair and vanity of our present life. "For the saving grace of God made its advent to all humanity, training us that, disowning irreverence and worldly desires, we should be living sanely and justly and devoutly in the current eon" (Titus 2:11).

As we noted in Romans 14:23, our actions are to be "out of faith." Now faith for us is something quite specific: it is believing that "while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes" (Rom.5:8), and that nothing can separate us from this love of God's in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom.8:38,39). There is power in this good news that we are believing, and this power is for salvation right now as well as for the future.

The sins of selfishness and frantic efforts to please ourselves are major evils of the current eon. Yet the stronger our faith in God's grace becomes, the more able we become in dealing with such failures.

Now we, the able, ought to be bearing the infirmities of the impotent, and not to be pleasing ourselves (Rom.15:1).

The "able" are those who are continuing to believe who are retaining in heart and mind, what Paul said in bringing the evangel (1 Cor.15:2). They are fully assured that what God has said regarding His Son He is able to bring to completion (cf Rom.4:21). They are not plagued with doubts regarding human requirements, knowing full well that "good is not making its home" in them (Rom.7:18) and that "what is impossible to the law . . . did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin . . . "(Rom.8:3).

But there are many brethren whose faith is not strong (cf Rom.14:1). They are not fully confident that they are being justified gratuitously in God's grace through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3:24) and are concerned that certain prior-requirements (which they find in the Scriptures) are placed on them. Among those in Rome, there were evidently some who felt they must eat certain foods and avoid others and keep certain days, as instructed in the law of Moses, in order to be accepted before God.

They were wrong, but it was an error that sprang from ignorance and from immaturity rather than from pride or ambition. And so Paul avoided severity toward them and concentrated on the opportunity their weakness afforded to "the able." Those who are strong in faith ought to be manifesting their faith in their attitudes and actions. Later, Paul was to put it this way: "Put on, then, as God's chosen ones, holy and

beloved, pitiful compassions, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another and dealing graciously among yourselves, if anyone should be having a complaint against any. According as the Lord also deals graciously with you, thus also you" (Col.3:12,13).

The Lord had taught His disciples, "All, then, whatever you should be wanting that men should be doing to you, thus you also be doing to them, for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt.7:12). If that is the "golden rule" (as it has been appropriately termed), then Colossians 3:13 gives us the "diamond rule" as revealed to Paul by the risen Christ. We do good unto others because God, in Christ, has done good unto us (cf Eph.4:32). This is exactly the point of Romans 15:1-4.

Let each of us please his associate, for his good, toward his edification (Rom.15:2).

In 2 Corinthians 5:14,15, we read that the love of Christ is constraining us to live in such a way that we please Him. To know that He gave Himself up for our sakes constrains us to seek the good of others. To realize that God is for us to the extent that He did not spare His Son but gave Him up for us all (Rom.8:31,32) leads us even to restrict our freedom if it will benefit our brethren. Such realization is knowledge in action, an awareness that becomes translated into love.

"Knowledge [by itself] puffs up. There is a prideful tendency to make a show of our liberty in Christ, but grace considers the weak rather than the strong. If there is to be peace and unity it must come from the condescension of those who are able. The weak in faith are not asked to consider the strong..."

Then, what is this good news that we are believing?

<sup>\*</sup>Concordant Commentary, p.244

It was presented in Romans 3:21-8:39, but it now comes before us again in Romans 15.

For Christ pleases not Himself, but, according as it is written, "The reproaches of those reproaching Thee fall on Me" (15:3).

"... Christ is the most brilliant example in this as in all else. What marvelous condescension He displayed in His dealings with His disciples, whose weakness and lack of faith was a constant source of distress to Him! If He could bridge the great gulf between Him and His disciples, surely we can bear with those whose infirmities we all share."\*

Christ never sought His own pleasure, and this can be shown over and over again from the accounts of His ministry. But His greatest condescension was at Golgotha where He gave His life for our sakes. Chapter 15, verses 1-5 is to Romans what chapter 4, verse 32 is to Ephesians and chapter 3, verse 13 is to Colossians. We learn to set aside our own pleasure and to seek the good of our associate as we come to believe and realize the depths of God's grace in the gift of His Son.

When Christ ministered to Israel, there was a progressive rejection of His message, especially as it related to His approaching death, which was indeed a reproach against God. All of this fell on our Lord, culminating in His crucifixion. And it is not difficult for us to see ourselves in the self-centered ambition of James and John (Mark 10:35,37), the denial of Peter and even the betrayal of Judas. We, too, likely would have shown our reproach against God by actions such as these. In any case, in ourselves we are irreverent and unjust (Rom.1:18), and even after we have believed, we have often rejected or contradicted God's

<sup>\*</sup>Concordant Commentary, p.244

way and truth in some manner or other. All these reproaches fall on Christ, and most specifically are part of that load of sin which He bore at the cross.

Paul quotes from Psalm 69:9 here, and indeed much of the Sixty-ninth Psalm points ahead from David's experiences to those of Christ in His suffering and death. "Multiplied more than the hairs of my head are those hating me gratuitously" (Psa.69:4); "Those sitting in the gateway are mulling about me, and those drinking intoxicants make me the accompaniment of their songs" (v.12); "They give me poison in my repast, and for my thirst they cause me to drink vinegar" (v.21).

And so Psalm 69:9 is used here in Romans 15:3 to remind us that all the reproach and ridicule and hate of all mankind against God fell upon Christ, and when He died it was all borne away. This is some of the meaning of Christ not pleasing Himself but giving Himself up for the sake of His enemies. What a powerful message! No wonder it works in the believer, motivating each one of us to seek the good of our associates!

We have noted that Paul uses phrases and expressions from Romans 1-8 (where he presented the evangel) here in the latter part of Romans (where he shows how the good news empowers us in worthy service and walk). In addition, the apostle often borrows from the Old Testament as he has done here in Romans 15:3 in order to present his evangel more vividly and memorably. He had learned these writings as the young Saul, but as the apostle Paul he came to know them as a real joy with great depths of meaning. Now in Romans 15:4 he comments briefly on this value of these ancient writings to us today.

For whatever was written before was written for this teaching of ours, that through the endurance and the consolation of the scriptures we may have expectation (Rom.15:4).

The key words here describing the value of the Old Testament are *endurance*, *consolation* and *expectation*. What David and Moses wrote concerning Israel ideally present and illustrate these themes. As we ponder them we learn endurance, consolation and expectation. And thus these older writings are "for this teaching of ours."

What David wrote in Psalm 69 teaches us endurance in that he endured severe afflictions, and even more so in that his words pointed ahead to the endurance of Christ under the sufferings of Golgotha. There is consolation also in this passage especially in its application to Christ as the Bearer of man's reproaches. If others reproach us unjustly, we know that our Lord has borne it away on the cursed tree. Then again, if we have reproached others in anger or petty annoyance, or especially if we have reproached God by our thoughts, words or actions, and shown impatience or displeasure at His ways, we are consoled in our contrition by knowing that Christ has also carried away this sin of ours.

As we apply the testimony of the Sacred Scriptures to our own experiences and gain endurance and become consoled, we find that our expectation becomes stronger. The life of the believer is conditioned by what he is believing, and the benefits of endurance, consolation and expectation are sharpened. This is increased as he meditates on the words of the Psalms or the prophets of old, most especially as they pointed ahead to Christ, Who pleased not Himself.

D.H.H.

### His Achievement Are We

### THE LIVING GOD AND THE EONS

In the providence of God, concerning all terms of consequence, the sacred writings provide their own internal evidence which establishes the significance of their vocabulary terms and grammatical forms.

Many important passages, however, are nonetheless not definitive passages. For example, in themselves, those passages which refer to the life which pertains to God's people, or to the duration of certain adversative judgments, simply are not definitive. This is because perfectly conceivable ideas may be represented by both "eonian" and "everlasting." Whether these should be foreign or familiar to our traditions is altogether irrelevant.

In the majority of instances, words are not used definitively. A passage may be vital, but that has nothing to do with whether its key terms are used definitively. For example, the words of Romans 3:24 are of the greatest importance to us, for they lie at the heart of the gospel: "Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus." But what does it mean to be *justified?* What does it mean for something to occur *gratuitously?* What significance is there to the fact that this gratuitous justification (whatever that may be) occurs in God's *grace?* The passage itself will not inform us.

We must learn the force of each of these terms from other places. For example, "justify" appears definitively in passages such as Luke 7:29 and Romans 3:4, "gratuitously" in John 15:25 and 2 Thessalonians 3:8, and "grace" in Romans 4:4 and 11:6.

It is through such passages as these latter ones that we determine the meaning of these key expressions. We then carry the knowledge we have gained concerning the meaning of these words into our considerations of Romans 3:24. Before we read it, we already know what each of these terms mean, and only wish to note their particular usage in the passage at hand. There is no other way to be certain of the meaning of a word whenever it appears (as is often the case) in a passage that is less than definitive. In many texts it is possible to assign any one of several ideas to a term and still express a conceivable thought through the clause in which it is found. But this is only to speculate: it is not to know. We are not to guess; we are to believe. Yet we cannot know what to believe if we do not know what has been said.

It is popularly believed that many words have two or more meanings. Actually, however, this is not the case. In any certain instance, according to its usage, a word may indeed convey a special connotation, one which is not present in other passages in which it is found. Yet no such specialized usage—even in the slightest degree—changes a word's essence, its denotation or basic meaning.

Within any certain era, those words which come into common use during such a period (or already exist at its beginning) cannot possibly *denote* more than one idea, even if they should soon find themselves being employed in a multiplicity of special applications. Otherwise, communication (much less translation), except for perhaps a few well-placed grunts, would be impossible and vanish from the face of the earth.

A "word," then, is simply a linguistic form which is

used to communicate an idea, a form which, by itself, is capable of conveying an unmistakable thought. Strictly speaking, a "word" (apart from homonyms) is "a linguistic form that can meaningfully be spoken in isolation."\*

Dictionary definitions of a word's usage must be distinguished from a word's own definition, its meaning, which distinguishes it from other expressions. Since many derived usages necessarily enter into popular speech in reference to new applications or objects, most people hazily and mistakenly refer to such usages (which, in turn, become dictionary "definitions") as "different meanings." Nonetheless, whether we speak of a dining room table, a multiplication table, a desert table (a mesa or plateau) or tabling (postponing) a project, the meaning of "table" (viz., "a flat horizontal surface") never changes.

This principle, then, must be true concerning the word aiōn as well. Therefore, while all scriptural passages in which some form of aiōn is found are either definitive or indefinitive, none of them present any essential different meaning than the rest. As we shall see, the idea of an "eon," or of that which is in some way eonian, is always present in any of the definitive usages of this word. None of the definitive occurrences of aiōn can sensibly be conceived as signifying "that which has no end."

# THE MEANING OF "EON"

We have been asked to give a simple explanation concerning the word "eon." Basically, an eon (or age) is simply a *period* of time; in most cases, it is used of a

<sup>\*</sup>Funk and Wagnalls Standard College Dictionary, The Reader's Digest Association (1966), p.1547.

very long period of time. Being a period, it has a beginning and an end.

The Scriptures make reference to five notable eons five epochal periods—which are determined, or marked off, by exceptionally extraordinary occurrences, tremendous upheavals in the established order. They run their course, (1) from the beginning of creation to a great cosmological disruption (evidently of a geological nature though occasioned by moral disruption or sin); (2) from the disruption of the world to the great flood; (3) from the flood to the establishment of the Messianic kingdom on earth (which includes the present era, necessitated by the Pauline evangel which unfolds the untraceable riches of Christ for the nations); (4) from the establishment of the terrestrial kingdom (primarily the thousand years or "millennium") to the destruction of the earth by fire; and (5) from the creation of the new earth to "the consummation" revealed by the apostle Paul.\*

After the consummation of vivification and of the eonian times which are revealed in Scripture, the kingdom of the Son of the Most High will continue on, never ceasing, for "of His kingdom there shall be no consummation" (Luke 1:33b). The Scriptures do not reveal any certain events during the endlessness which follows the time when God becomes All in all. Long periods of time may well be marked off by notable events and termed eons, but any such things are not revealed to us now.

Christ's literal rule will be so effective as to "rule out" all rule. None will be needed, for all will be subject, vivified, headed up in Christ and reconciled.

<sup>\*</sup>cf"Eternal Torment or Universal Reconciliation?" pp.25-28, A. E. Knoch

The term "kingdom" will be retained not because He is still finding it necessary to rule those who are insubjection, but, by association, in honor of what was accomplished and permanently established as a result of His literal reign until the time when He gave up the kingdom to His God and Father.

"Eonian" simply means "of or pertaining to, the eons [or eon]." In the Scriptures, the "eonian times" are from "the beginning" to "the consummation." The meaning of "eon" and "eonian" never change, even though they are sometimes used in different senses and in reference to more than one subject. Aionios never means "age-lasting," and so should not be translated thus, even though some of its occurrences are in accord with this thought (others are not, only making reference to a portion of an eon). In most cases, it is "the oncoming eons" (Eph.2:7) which are in view. Some passages refer directly to the periods of time themselves; others, by association, have in view the character or nature of things which will prevail during the periods being discussed. God has various operations (economies or administrations) during the eons for the accomplishment of His goals, all leading to the greatest one of all, becoming All in all at the consummation.

#### DEFINITIVE EONIAN PASSAGES

The following are a few representative examples of passages in which the Hebrew olam, and its Greek equivalents, aiōn and aiōnios, are definitively used in the Scriptures: "Yahweh, He shall reign for the eon and further" (Exodus 15:18); "the earth is standing for the eon" (Ecc.1:4); a statute "for Aaron and for his sons, . . . it is an eonian statute" (Lev.24:9); "Across the stream dwelt your forefathers from the eon" (Joshua

24:2); "The years of the eons will I remember" (Psa. 77:5); "before the eons" (1 Cor.2:7); "before times eonian" (2 Tim.1:9); "a secret hushed in times eonian, yet manifested now" (Rom.16:25,26); "the present eon" (Gal.1:4); "the current eon" (1 Tim.6:17); "the eon of this world" (Eph.2:2); "this eon" (Matt.12:32); "that eon" (Luke 20:35); "the coming eon" (Mark 10:30); "the oncoming eons" Eph.2:7); "the conclusion of the eon" (Matt.24:3); "the conclusion of the eons" (Heb.9:26); and "the consummations of the eons" (1 Cor.10:11).

Thus we can be certain that "eon" means a period of time; it is the longest segment of time known in the Scriptures. It is not used to speak of endless time, or of any foggy philosophical speculations about "eternity."

### HE WHO IS LIVING FOR THE EONS

Likewise, concerning God's living "for the eons" (Rev.4:9,10; 10:6; 15:7), it is only because this expression is unfamiliar to us that it seems awkward or difficult. A parallel familiar expression should make this evident. Were we to declare that the living God is living today, this would be found quite acceptable. It becomes evident, then, that it is just as sensible (even if most are not familiar with the expression) to declare that He will be living tomorrow, namely, in the glorious scriptural morrow of the oncoming eons. The fact that He Who is living during this current era will also be living "for" (actually, "into," eis) the eons of time ahead, constitutes a further word of assurance concerning His providential care during these future long eras of time.

It is to be regretted that the hazy English "for" can be misused in connection with the eons. The literal rendering "into," in such cases, however, would unduly strain English idiom. Opposers imprudently couple "for" with their own gratuitous inference "only (for)" in order to "disprove" the meaning of aiōn as "eon." This is done in order to make the meaning eon appear to be obviously mistaken with regard to the revelation that God is living eis tous aiōnas tōn aiōnōn ("for the eons of the eons," CV). The Authorized Version rendering, "God, Who liveth for ever and ever," adds to the confusion, and lends support to the popular misunderstanding. For it makes the reference appear to be to the length of God's life, when it instead is a reference to a particular time during which God will be living ("God, Who is living for the eons of the eons," CV).

Inasmuch as the word aiōn appears in both classes of passages, crude reasonings from the usual mistranslations of those passages which interconnect God, or Christ (Rev.1:18), a form of the word "life," and the word aiōn, are routinely set forth as clear proof in favor of "everlasting (aiōnion) punishment" (e.g., Matt.25:46). That is, since God "liveth for ever and ever," and it is felt that the thought here must be that His life never ends, it is concluded that the punishment of the lost must likewise be endless, since the same Greek word is used concerning these respective revelations.

This conclusion, however, is based on mistaken premises, ones which are derived from false inferences and mistranslation: (1) the injecting of "only (for)" into "for" (in relation to the phrase "for the eons") while failing to note the literal "into"; (2) the AV mistranslation "liveth" ("lives" in modern English) instead of the correct form "is living"; (3) the gross mistranslation "for ever and ever" instead of the accurate rendering "for the eons of the eons."

Whenever we read the expression "for the eons," we should always keep in mind the actual literal idea of *into*. That is, God *will* be living on, *into* those eras of time, in order that He should be living *within* or *during* those time periods as well, even as He is living within or during these present hectic times, when we need Him so much.

The fact that I lived during the nineteen seventies is no proof that I now am dead in the nineteen eighties! And if I should say that I am living in the year 1988, and that, the Lord willing, I shall be living on into the year 1989, this would give no license to any of those who might translate my words into another language to make a claim, and so translate, to the effect that while in one case where I used the word "year" I actually meant a year, while in another place where I used this same word I did not mean a year at all (even if I did say so!).

Yet this is just the sort of thing that most translators of the Scriptures have done with the words in the Original for "eon." Most simply lacked the insight to see the point of many of the passages that spoke of the eons. Since they were able, however, to make sense of these passages by translating by "everlasting" or "eternal," they simply went ahead and did so, any resultant problems notwithstanding. Due to a lack of sensible thinking and an abundance of confidence in the flesh, it is impossible for most to face the fact that the usual translations of this word are quite mistaken and extremely harmful.

We believe that God's life will never end, not because of any passages in reference to Him which include the word "eon," but because it is written that His "years shall have no end" (Psa.102:27). Furthermore, since God is the Source of all life, and since, at the

consummation, all will be gloriously made alive so that He may become All in each one, it is evident that He must ever have life Himself in order to impart it to His creatures.

As the Lord declared, "Seeing that I am living, you also will be living" (John 14:19). In light of the fearful nature of the terrible judgments in the Revelation, one might infer that all hope is lost. But this is not the case at all. For the living God, Who is living today, will be living on as well into the coming eons! The fact that He is said to be living, at any time, is not declared in order merely to inform us that He still exists, but is a lively figure of association designed to testify to His great power and subjectorship. He lives! He is the living God, and so is great and marvelous, strong to save, and "able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending" (Eph.3:20). "We rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers. These things be charging and teaching" (1 Tim.4:10,11).

#### THE EONIAN GOD

In light of these things, we may join Paul in saying, "Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless that within us is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us a transcendently transcedent eonian burden of glory, at our not noting what is being observed, but what is not being observed, for what is being observed is temporary [proskairon, TOWARD-SEASON], yet what is not being observed is eonian" (2 Cor.4:16-18).

Paul is not making a contrast between time and eternity, as the Authorized Version's terms "temporal" (pertaining to time, from the Latin tempus) and "eter-

nal" would suggest. Antithetical terms are not the only ones which may be set in contrast to one another. Paul is contrasting this present lifetime, the present brief season in which we are afflicted, with the exceedingly long future *eons* in which we will enjoy a great burden of glory.

Our God and Father is the God of the eons, the eonian times or ages revealed in the Scriptures (this fact is reflected in the well-known hymns, "Rock of Ages," and, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," which includes the line, "From age to age the same"). The Greek word for "God," Theos, means "Placer" (or, "Subjector"; cf Keyword Concordance entry, p.127; e.g., 1 Cor.12:18,28). It is not His name, nor is it a reference to Him as the Creator of nature or as the heavenly Father. Instead, "God" is a title which represents the Deity as the Disposer, Subjector or Placer of all things (Acts 17:24,25).

It is not improper to accommodate custom and use the English word "God" when speaking of the Supreme. It is not so vital just which word we use as the idea we conceive whenever we use a certain word. God is the great Placer of men, nations, and the entire world during the eonian times. Consequently, He is the *eonian* God (Rom.16:26). Thoughts along these lines are in view in those passages in which God is identified with the eons.

By the consummation, all will have been placed by Him into such conditions as have been best and for the good of all. Then there will be no more need for authority and government. Rule will be ruled out; all will be ideal, for the living God will be All in all.

**James Coram** 

(To be continued)

# The Foremost of Sinners

# OVERWHELMED BY GRACE

Before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus had told the disciples two very important facts concerning the holy spirit. One was that when He went away, He would send a consoler (John 16:8). "Now, whenever the consoler which I shall be sending you from the Father may be coming, the spirit of truth, which is going out from the Father, that will be testifying concerning Me" (John 15:26). And the second matter was that "Every sin and blasphemy shall be pardoned men, yet the blasphemy of the spirit shall not be pardoned. And whosoever may be saying a word against the Son of Mankind, it will be pardoned him, yet whoever may be saying aught against the holy spirit, it shall not be pardoned him, neither in this eon nor in that which is impending" (Matt.12:31,32).

When God's holy spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in power and great glory, glorifying God and magnifying Christ, it was very evident to all of those present that something had happened to these followers of Jesus, the Nazarene. The onlookers did not immediately know what caused these things, but they knew beyond a shadow of a doubt, something had happened. Some thought they were drunk with new wine. While others, coming from afar, heard them speak in their own languages and marvelled. Others saw miracles wrought; and great things were done. Many heard marvelous declarations and saw the power of God demonstrated. The holy spirit of God was

operating and dwelling in the hearts of the sons of men.

In Acts 7:55 we learn that Stephen was possessing the fullness of faith and holy spirit, as were all those of the Circumcision who were announcing the coming of the Just One. And at the stoning of Stephen there was a young man who endorsed his assassination, named Saul (Acts 7:58;8:1).

Saul was not a dishonest, crooked person. He was not wicked and ungodly, but instead he was a deeply religious person, fearing God and greatly respecting the elders and the traditions of Israel. Yet, in spite of his sincere desire to please God and the fathers, he refers to himself as the foremost of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15,16). "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not competent to be called an apostle, because I persecute the ecclesia of God" (1 Cor.15:9).

Why did Paul refer to himself as the foremost of sinners when he had been so religiously involved with the rituals and traditions of Israel? The answer is simple. It was because, by his acts of persecution, he had committed the "unpardonable sin"! This was the worst of all sins. Even those who were guilty of the crucifixion of our Lord could have been forgiven. In fact, we remember the Lord praying for them, "Father, forgive them, for they are not aware what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). But Paul, as Saul of Tarsus. did not have the hope of forgiveness granted to the Lord's murderers, neither in this age nor in that which is impending, for he had blasphemed the holy spirit. "I, who formerly was a calumniator and a persecutor and an outrager ..." (1 Tim.1:13). He had sealed his own doom, for Jesus had said, "Verily, I am saying to you that all shall be pardoned the sons of mankind, the penalties of the sins and the blasphemies, whatsoever they should be blaspheming, yet whoever should be blaspheming against the holy spirit is having no pardon for the eon, but is liable to the eonian penalty for the sin" (Mark 3:28,29).

Saul had rejected the signs and miracles wrought by the power of the holy spirit. And in persecuting those who were filled and operating in accord with the holy spirit, he was opposing the spirit of God.

Those Jews who were followers of the Lord Jesus greatly feared Saul. He had the authority given to him by leaders in high places to persecute these disciples and even to eliminate them. So fearful were they that many of them fled from Jerusalem (Acts 8:1). Hence the chief priest gave Saul the written authority to go to Damascus to lay hold on these followers of this new faith and bring them *bound* to Jerusalem. Having sealed his own doom by rejecting the Messiah and persecuting those who were full of the holy spirit, and by approving of the death of Stephen who also was spirit filled, Saul set out on the road to Damascus to persecute the believing Jews who had fled to that city.

Saul might well have been struck dead as he went to this gentile city, because of his blasphemous attitude. This indeed had been the fate of Ananias and Sapphira who had lied to Peter and the apostles and thus to the holy spirit (Acts 5:1-9).

Yet God (!), before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4), had purposed to introduce, at a given time, an administration wherein, apart from the efforts of man, God would display His vast grace. God would display His superabundant and overwhelming grace in spite of man's behavior. "But I was shown mercy, seeing that I do it being ignorant, in unbelief. Yet the grace of our Lord overwhelms, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all

welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim.1:13-15).

Grace—regardless of how deep and far reaching sin had become, no matter to what extent it had gone, the grace of God would superabound in quantities untold and to deeper depths and higher heights than any evil and sin could ever begin to attain. Grace is gushed upon us to more than eliminate all sin, with no possibility for any sin to be considered unpardonable in this all-new administration, this administration of grace. For, as Paul was to write later, "Where sin increases, grace superexceeds" (Rom.5:20).

This new administration that God was about to bring in was more than new. It had been a secret, hushed during the preceding eons: "... in accord with the revelation of a secret hushed in times eonian..." (Rom.16:25).

And now it was about to be revealed to the worst enemy of our Lord Iesus Christ. He was to be the one to unfold it to mankind! Saul, the foremost of sinners. who not only had blasphemed the holy spirit with his actions but had also compelled the saints to blaspheme (Acts 26:10,11), was about to become acquainted with the One he opposed and to instantly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He would proclaim Him to the world and make known a new administration where neither Jew nor Gentile, bond or free, male or female would hold sway, an era wherein man would be saved apart from his own efforts, and all through Christ. He would reveal the Son of God, not in the flesh of humiliation and rejection, but in the lofty position of the risen, ascended glorified Son of God's love, the Christ of glory. This new era of grace would now be proclaimed by God's chosen vessel, none other than Saul of Tarsus

Yet the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a choice instrument of Mine, to bear My name before both the nations and kings, besides the sons of Israel..." (Acts 9:15).

Instead of Saul receiving judgment and instant death as Ananias and Sapphira had, he was halted by the overwhelming brilliance of the glory of the Son of God, the One Whom he had been persecuting. The Lord Jesus revealed Himself to Saul. In the presence of this glorious splendor, Saul lost all of his strength and fell to the ground, prostrate, as Daniel had done when the messenger of the Lord appeared to him (Dan.10:7-10). There in the radiance of this awesome brightness of our Lord Jesus Christ, Saul, for the first time in his life, met Jesus Whom He had been persecuting. Saul lost all fight and animosity, recognizing that this visit was one that was of a supernatural, celestial quality.

It did not take Saul long to acknowledge this Visitor as Lord, and he immediately inquired, "Who art Thou, Lord?" He acclaimed Him Lord. When the Lord responded with "I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting," it did not take Saul long to lose all doubt, and immediately believe this glorious One to be the Son of God, the very One Who had been crucified by the insistence of his elders.

Words could never describe what Saul experienced that day and in the days to come. He, who once had committed the "unpardonable sin," because of a new era, was now a saved man; a choice instrument of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Saul is truly a pattern, an example, for all people who happen upon salvation from that time until the end of this age: "But therefore was I shown mercy, that in me, the foremost, Jesus Christ should be displaying all His patience, for a pattern of those who

are about to be believing on Him for life eonian" (1 Tim.1:16).

No one could be in a worse position for salvation than Saul, no matter what the sin. The grace that overwhelmingly superexceeded all of Saul's sins will reach far beyond any sin of any other person in the generations that have followed.

Yet he was not just a pattern to show us the hopelessness in ourselves of our position. But he was a pattern for God to display, through His Son Jesus Christ, the glories of the riches of His grace and His vast love with which He loves all creation. God's vast love surpasses all love that man has ever known. Such love it is, that He gave His Son for our sakes. And as it overwhelmed the foremost of sinners, so it continues to overwhelm every believer since that day when Paul was called to faith.

Marvin W. Rice

The preceding article is excerpted and adapted from a booklet entitled "Introducing the Apostle Paul," which along with other studies may be ordered from the author at 9401 88th Way North, Largo FL 34647.

### CONCERNING DROUGHTS

No doubt the severe drought that has gripped much of our continent this summer will be related by some to the Lord's description of those days leading up to "the conclusion of the eon" (Matt.24:3-14). Wars and famine and lawlessness have always characterized this eon, and these will be multiplied near its end. But we are more concerned with the "last days" of the present administration which Paul describes in terms of inner dangers such as pride, selfishness and conceit and of spiritual deprivations such as a lack of genuine devoutness and realization of the truth (2 Tim. 3:1-9). Here it appears there is a growing drought. Therefore we are praying for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:15-17).

# Among the Celestials

# BE INVIGORATED IN THE LORD

For the rest, brethren mine, be invigorated in the Lord and in the might of His strength. Put on the panoply of God, to enable you to stand up to the stratagems of the Adversary, for it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Eph.6:10-12).

In these studies on Ephesians, we have several times quoted extracts from the Concordant Commentary. In the very first article, we drew attention to the "Framework" of the epistle, given on page 288 of that publication. If we examine this again, we shall find that Paul, after a statement affirming his apostleship, and his opening salutation, draws our attention to our allotment in heaven and its attendant blessings. But we cannot have the blessings without the obstacles, and now, near the end of the letter, we find a further reference to our allotment in heaven, with the last usage of the phrase "among the celestials," together with a description of our warfare against the powers of spiritual wickedness that at the moment prevail there.

We are, in fact, in a similar position to that in which Abraham was placed when he found himself in the land of promise. In Genesis 12:6 we read that he passed "into the land as far as the place of Shechem ... and the Canaanite is then dwelling in the land." The Canaanites were to prove an irritant to Abraham

and his descendants for centuries to come. Do we realize that our being "blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials" means that we may well incur the opposition of those who are there before us? Abraham's possession of the land included its indigenous inhabitants, and so does our allotment "among the celestials." That much is implied in the last four verses of the first chapter of our Ephesian epistle where Christ (Himself being seated at God's right hand "among the celestials") is given "as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all."

#### INVICORATION

For us to be able to cope with the forces of wickedness "among the celestials," we need to be invigorated in the Lord. There are several cases, perhaps many, in the Hebrew scriptures of people being invigorated by God to enable them to fulfill the role in His purpose which He had assigned to them. Abraham and Moses are two that instantly come to mind, and a brief consideration of each is extremely helpful. To take Abraham first, he had been promised a seed, but twenty-four years later, Sarah was still barren. Paul, in Romans 4:16, calls Abraham "father of us all," and continues "according as it is written that, A father of many nations have I appointed you-facing which, he believes it of the God Who is vivifying the dead and calling what is not as if it were - who, being beyond expectation, believes in expectation, for him to become the father of many nations, according to that which has been declared, 'Thus shall be your seed.' And, not being infirm in faith, he considers his body, already deadened (being inherently somewhere about a hundred years) and the deadening of the matrix of Sarah, vet the promise of God was not doubted in unbelief, but he was invigorated by faith, giving glory to God, being fully assured also, that, what He has promised He is able to do also."

Moses was eighty years old when God called him to service by the burning bush, having spent forty years in Egypt and forty years in the land of Midian (Acts 7:23,29,30). Yet to Moses is credited Psalm 90, in which he wrote (v.10), "The days of our years, in them are seventy years; and if, by mastery they are eighty years, even in their abundance is toil and lawlessness." There seems to be little doubt that Moses was specially invigorated for the great work of the next forty years in which he led God's people in their deliverance out of Egypt and all through their wilderness experience. This is borne out by the fact that, at the very end he was able to climb a mountain sufficiently high for him to survey the length and breadth of the land of promise, and it is specifically stated that "neither had his eye dimmed, nor had his vitality fled" (Deut.34:1-7).

In the exhilarating passage of Romans 8:9-11, Paul tells us how we, too, may be invigorated, even while still on earth. He writes, "Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God's spirit is making its home in you. Now if anyone has not Christ's spirit, this one is not His. Now if Christ is in you, the body, indeed, is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness. Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you."

#### THE MIGHT OF HIS STRENGTH

We are to be invigorated "in the Lord and in the might of His strength." This last phrase has a familiar

ring. We came upon it in the first chapter of Ephesians, where Paul reminds us of "the transcendent greatness of [God's] power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating 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: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all." We cannot repeat these words too often; the question is, Can we assimilate them and grasp their meaning?

Christ was not simply awakened from death; He was lifted up against all the opposition of Satan and his minions, to a pinnacle of power where He is Head over all, and all is made subject to Him. The parallel thought in Colossians is in chapter 1, verses 18-20, "And He is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens."

Our invigoration is "in accord with the might of God's strength" which was used in exalting Christ to a position of majesty second only to God Himself. It is inexhaustible. The corresponding statement in Colossians is, "... being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory" (Col.1:11).

Our chief opponent is very cunning. He constantly resorts to stratagems to gain his ends. He controls powerful forces, here described as sovereignties, authorities, world-mights of this darkness, spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials. When these forces are about, seeking our destruction, or at least our discomfort, it is folly to play into their hands by wrestling with blood and flesh. Let the world do this if it wishes; we are not of the world. Elsewhere we are exhorted to be working, as we have occasion, "for the good of all, yet specially for the family of faith" (Gal.6:10). Commissioned as we are to preach a message of conciliation (2 Cor.5:18-21), we can only be at peace with all mankind (Rom.12:18). Of course the Adversary may aim his darts through the medium of our relatives, friends and neighbors, but we have no chance of escaping their poison while casting blame on the human agency without recognizing the "spiritual forces of wickedness" behind them.

The opposition of these sovereignties and authorities among the celestials is directed against the Headship of Christ, and it is because Christ is given to the ecclesia as "Head over all" that we are especially liable to their attacks. Furthermore, scriptural history reveals that whenever a fresh development in God's purpose is disclosed, the Adversary is poised to pounce. Satan does all he can to destroy God's efforts, but invariably fails, though he may wreak much havoc in his failures. For instance, when man first appeared on the scene, Satan was soon in evidence, and his machinations in Eden caused sin and death to pass through to all mankind. What a havoc this has caused! But Satan has not secured a victory, for though he might bring about the destruction of the old humanity, headed by Adam, he could not prevent the creation of a new humanity, headed up in Christ. What may have seemed to him, at the time of the crucifixion, to be his greatest triumph, will eventually be seen by all to have been the turning point in the Divine purpose leading inexorably to his total defeat.

When the Lord came to earth as a babe, Satan attempted to destroy Him by causing Herod to slay all the male children born about that time. When Jesus appeared at Jordan, and was proclaimed by John as "the Lamb of God Which is taking away the sin of the world," the Adversary was standing by to try Him over a period of forty days. After the disciples had been chosen, and had accompanied Jesus throughout His earthly ministry, Satan entered into one of them to betray Him and induced another to disown Him three times.

And now that the celestial glories of Christ have been revealed, and the secret concerning the ecclesia which is Christ's body, has been made known, we may expect the Adversary himself to be again especially active, and this, in fact, is the case. It is his stratagems that we have to stand up to at this time. It is for this that we need a unique protection, and indeed, in light of this need God has provided His panoply. We cannot hope to stand in our own strength; our opponents are far too crafty, determined and ruthless. This is no occasion for rest and relaxation, but for continued vigilance and constant prayer. Yet what a marvelous provision it is, this invigoration in the Lord, and the protective panoply God has put at our disposal!

John H. Essex

(To be continued)

### CHECK YOUR PANOPLY

In connection with the preceding article we suggest a reading of Bro. Rocke's book, CHECK YOUR PANOPLY (The Whole Armor of God), available from the Concordant Publishing Concern (240 pages; \$5.00).

# UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 1988 BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY-NINE

# **EDITORIAL**

The evancel is an amazing message of justification, peace and glory, yet it does not satisfy human desires for the sensational and spectacular. A few weeks ago, a friend sent me a copy of a booklet entitled, "88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be In 1988 - The Feast of Trumpets... September 11-12-13." This bold prediction was partly based on passages such as 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, but its spirit was one of alarm and anxious concern. It betrayed much misunderstanding of our expectation, yet it stirred up a lot of interest, both supportive and derisive. The claims for the shroud of Turin, similarly, have attracted widespread notice, though here the matter is not one of biblical interpretation. The point is that somehow the message of reconciliation through the blood of Christ's cross does not get the hearing that many other matters do.

It is not that the evangel is not full of spectacular and vital revelations. But the key factor of the grand revelations of Scripture is one that is not very appealing to the human imagination. That is that these great achievements of deliverance, rescue and glorification are all of them God's achievements, channeled through the death and resurrection of Christ.

We can never be helped so much as when we heed carefully what God's Word is saying, endeavoring to avoid making it say what we want it to say. The message of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is for consolation, not challenge. Walking by faith matures and blesses our lives far more than seeing or touching something physical.

After defeating Israel's enemies, David could surely have strengthened his political position if he had stressed his great accomplishments rather than being so concerned about building a house for Yahweh (see pp.195-204). Moses also, in pleading for Israel, might have spoken more of their potentialities for greatness, rather than appealing to the glory of Yahweh's name (see pp.213-222).

Perhaps this magazine could attract more attention if an article on the panoply of God laid less stress on the defensive nature of the armor than Bro. Essex's article does on pages 208-212. To be sure, the sword of the spirit, which is a declaration of God is a powerful and effective weapon, but united church efforts and mass communication seem to be given a greater place in modern "Christian warfare."

There is no great allure for human dedication in the sort of service spoken of in Romans 15:5-7 and Philippians 2:1-11 (see pp.223-230). Humility and mutuality may be fine in theory but they are usually considered much too ineffective from a practical standpoint. It is very difficult for human beings to see how the truth that all is out of God and through Him and for Him, so that He is truly glorified in everything, becomes the basis for divine service (Rom.11:36; 12:1,2).

Finally, Brother Coram's article on "Choice and Deity" (pp.231-240) goes entirely against the grain of popular thought. Yet if it is true to the Word of God that we are His achievement in every way, then this is the message we need, the one that will give us lasting joy and spiritual strength, and that will never let us down.

May we be watching and be sober (1 Thess.5:6), be rejoicing and filled with peace in believing, and be fully assured that He Who begins a good work among us will be bringing it to completion.

D.H.H.

# Praise and Prayer

# DAVID'S DYNASTIC PRAYER

The Davidic dynasty had a very delightful beginning. The shepherd king never asked for a continuance of his line. Indeed, instead of being concerned with his own affairs, he was thinking of the glory of God. He was dwelling in a house of cedar, a very rare and rich structure for his day, while the coffer of God was lodged under a covering of sheets. This did not seem right to him, so he desired to build a house magnifical of gold and silver and of costly stones and cedar, more in keeping with the glory of Yahweh's name. This greatly pleased his God, for it manifested an unselfish and grateful heart, in which the Deity delights (2 Sam. 7:1-17).\*

The tabernacle and the temple were not really David's affair. He had been anointed to be *king*, not chief *priest*. Indeed, he could not be, as he was not of the house of Aaron. But what priest has composed so many and such precious psalms in praise of Yahweh Elohim? But he never ventured to intrude into the priestly prerogatives like Uzziah, who dared go into the temple to burn incense, and was stricken with leprosy for his transgression (2 Chron.26:16). But he did put the worship of God before the welfare of men, for he knew that this is the source of all blessing. This is the great lesson to be learned from history. It is nowhere more fully and clearly illustrated than in the chronicles of the house of David. If his seed had

<sup>\*</sup>See pp.205-207 for the Concordant Version of this chapter.

inherited his spirit of worship, its record would have been very different. But the failures are clearly set forth as due to departures from the ways and worship of Yahweh.

Because David was so eager for God to have a house suited to His splendor, Yahweh turned the tables on him and promised him a "house," that is, that his name should be carried on by his descendants, and his throne should be established for the eon. This assured him of political headship for the eons. It will be finally fulfilled by God's Anointed, Whose parents were both descendants of David. Joseph was of the spiritual and legal line, and Mary, His mother, the physical link. This made Him the Seed and Son of David and Heir to his throne. His domain will reach even further than was promised to David, even until all rule is ruled out, and the kingdom becomes the Father's.

The Davidic dynasty is God's delegate in ruling the nations of the earth. He had given Adam, and his race, the right to sway over the lower creatures because they are subjectors like Himself, so far as these are concerned (Gen. 1:28). He also inaugurated the rule of man over man after the deluge (Gen.9:6). From this sprang nations. Of Abram He promised to make a great nation to bless all the rest (Gen. 12:2). He Himself was the King of Israel when they became a nation, after their deliverance from Egypt. He ruled through priests and prophets and judges. But the people rejected Him and called for a human king, like the other nations. As a result He gave them two dynasties, first the "house" of Saul, according to the wishes of the people, and when he failed, He gave them David, a man in harmony with His own heart, and his "house," from which came the Son of David, the Lord of lords and King of kings.

#### THE CLUB OF MORTALS

Meanwhile, until the coming of David's greater Son, the seed of David was not to continue in an unbroken line, for the covenant of the kingdom was contingent on their conduct. His first follower, Solomon, carried out David's wish and built the magnificent temple to which his name is attached. But he was not true to Yahweh in his later years, so his successors were corrected with the club of a mortal, as Yahweh has foretold. He even sent His prophet to appoint Jeroboam to be king over the ten tribes before Solomon's death. And, when Rehoboam, his son, wished to fight for the throne, Yahweh would not allow him to do so (1 Kings 11:26-40).

Ever since the days of Solomon, Israel has been under the discipline of the club. The mortals were of two kinds, first, the kings of the ten tribes, the successors of Jeroboam, against David's seed on the throne of Judah, and, second, the kings of the nations against the whole of Israel. For David's sake Solomon was spared the division, and Judah was given a longer tenancy in the land than Israel. Today, once more, a remnant of the nation is in the land, and they have chosen themselves a president. But they have paid no attention whatever to the claims of David's seed, so they will suffer their greatest affliction under the club of the false messiah. Yet this will prepare them for the advent of the Son of David, and their place of supremacy over the nations in the day of Yahweh.

In response, David's figurative posture and mental attitude will give us the first and finest clue to his character. He sat before Yahweh. He was at rest in His presence. He had led a very active life, and would have gladly continued and crowned his life work by building a splendid sanctuary for the God of Israel. But

he was not hurt or offended by Yahweh's refusal to grant his request. Indeed, though he did not actually erect the temple himself, he provided the site, and prepared for the building by accumulating a vast amount of the material. His lifelong experience had taught him to bow to the will of Yahweh with gladness, for he was assured that Yahweh withheld no good from His people.

Not only his attitude, but his words, are most significant. "Who am I?" "What is my house?" Here we see exemplified a primary and prevailing principle in God's government. He who is exalting himself shall be humbled, vet he who is humbling himself shall be exalted (Luke 18:14). Eventually all will be headed up in Him Who was meek and humble in heart (Matt. 11:29), not in the son of destruction who lifts himself above all others, even the Deity Himself (2 Thess.2:3-5; Dan.11:36). Headship is not inherent in mortal man, and is his, not because of his qualifications or ability, but only as a gift from God. Nebuchadnezzar had not been taught this in his experience, as David was, so had to learn it in a short time by severe discipline. This also was true of David's successors and the nation of Israel. Their trials and persecutions are God's means of preparing them for their headship.

# DAVID'S PRIMARY CONCERN

David had been anointed king over Israel while Saul was still reigning, long before he ascended the throne. In this he was a type of the rejected, persecuted Messiah. But even after he had been king for some time, he had not received any promise for his seed. It was only after he had defeated the enemies of Israel and sat in his own house at peace, that the question of his "house," or dynasty, came up. David was not

primarily concerned about his future descendants, but about a proper habitation for Yahweh. It was his solicitude for the glory of God that drew out the response of Yahweh and the throne covenant. Through Abraham Israel had the covenant as to the *land* (because he *believed* God) which will be fulfilled by the Son of Abraham. Through David came the covenant as to the *throne* (because he *honored* Yahweh) which will be fulfilled by the Son of David when He comes, in the day of His appearing.

The principal concern of the reign of David was the habitation of Yahweh. In the first half he brings the tabernacle back to its place in the midst of Yahweh's people. As a result, he is prospered in all his efforts and conflicts, so that he was at rest. Once again his thoughts turn to Yahweh's dwelling, and he laments that it is only a temporary tent, while he lives in a permanent palace, as though Yahweh was paying a fleeting visit, while David himself was a fixture! His desire was that Yahweh have a permanent place in the midst of His people, and in such a splendor as befits His glory.

It was this desire of David to give Yahweh a terrestrial temple to be the immovable, permanent center of Israel's worship, which prompted Yahweh to give David a covenant to correspond to it, by promising him a permanent royal "house." Thus God's rule as well as worship will be established in Israel for the future. And with this in mind, David once more takes his seat before Yahweh and gives vent to his feelings of thankfulness, not only for himself, but for Israel also, and prays for those who form his future "house" (2 Sam. 7:18-29).

The very form of David's prayer shows that it is vivified by divine inspiration. He balances his thanksgiving for himself (18-22) by a petition for his house (25-29), and, parenthetically, for the whole nation of Israel (23-24). Even his own abasement (18) he beautifully balances with the exaltation of Yahweh (22), and God's promise (19) with His heart (20-21). We have all heard human prayers, and multitudes have been composed to assist us in our devotions, but where is one that is so naturally and delightfully formed? This, of course, is a minor matter in itself, but as an intimation and expression of God's spirit, it is most suitable and in accord with the sentiments conveyed, and marks it, not merely as a prayer of David, but also a prayer of God.

# DAVID'S HUMILITY

"Who am I?" The ancestors of David were nothing to boast about, unless it be that his great grandmother was Ruth. But she was a Moabitess, and no man of her race could enter into the assembly of Yahweh (Deut. 23:3). Notwithstanding her faith and lovely character, she was not an asset in Israel. In his own family David was last and least. He was not a firstborn son by any means, but an eighth-born, for he had seven older brothers. His eldest brother evidently excelled him so far as stature and outward appearance were concerned, even though he was ruddy, with lovely eyes (1 Sam. 16:12). On the other hand, he was descended from Abraham, and Israel, and of the tribe of Judah, to which the scepter, or club of preeminence belonged, although among the lowest of these. This was his inheritance from the past.

But his present position was very high, indeed, and might easily have filled him with self-importance and pardonable pride. Had he not slain Goliath, and saved Israel from a humiliating defeat (1 Sam.17:23-51)? He it was of whom the women sang, saying,

"Saul has smitten his thousands, Yet *David* his myriads" (1 Sam.18:7).

He it was who had brought Israel rest from their enemies, and prosperity and power such as they had never had before. He it was who had led the praises of Israel. He had brought back the coffer of Yahweh. And he was now concerned to build a temple for the honor of His name. Who else could boast of any feats comparable to these? But his greatest accomplishment, by far, was his knowledge of Yahweh, which made him small in his own sight, so that he humbled himself, and deemed himself altogether unworthy of these new honors.

### DAVID'S HOUSE

In the orient, perhaps the greatest disgrace is not to have a son, and the greatest honor is to found a dynasty made up of a continuous chain of sons. David's thanksgiving was, first of all, confined to the blessings he had already enjoyed. But this he considers a small thing in Yahweh's eyes, for now he was promised immeasurably more in the far future. And, indeed, what did David's honors amount to up to this time, compared with those which come to him as the founder of the Davidic dynasty of many kings, or of even One, the Son of David, the Messiah of Israel? He will not only be the King of Israel, but King of all other kings. Indeed, He will subject all under the Father's feet, and then Himself be subject, so that God is All in all.

#### THE LAW OF MANKIND

The A.V. makes 2 Samuel 7:19b an unanswered question: "And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?" This seems to imply that man does *not* act in this way. But the Revisers, seeing that it is not a

question in Hebrew, make it a statement: "And this, too, after the manner of men." This suggests that men do act this way. Neither of these are in accord with the context. The Hebrew reads, "And this [is] the law [for] humanity [the human]." If we had a sublinear which shows the stems, it would read, AND THIS AIM of THE TO-be-LIKE. We might render this freely: This is the aim of the one who is like (God, the Subjector). David, himself, in one of his psalms, is the best commentator on this text. Speaking of man and his mission, he says (Psa.8:5,6):

And with glory and honor You crown him. You give him the rule over the works of Your hands.

God's aim with mankind was announced to Adam at his creation (Gen.1:26). The sphere of his sway is gradually enlarged from being "like" (adm) God in relation to the lower creatures, to include the headship of a family, a nation, all mankind, and all creation. It culminates in the subjection of all to Christ as the Son of Adam and the Son of David, and the Son of God. Of all the Circumcision writers, David seems to have a greater grasp of this truth than any other; hence he refers to it as the "law" of mankind. He finds himself in the line of God's purpose. He realizes that God is fulfilling His own delight in thus dealing with him, so that there is no need for him to be great or worthy in order to have a place in His plan.

#### GOD IS AWARE

But these thoughts overwhelm David, much as Paul was compelled to confess that we are not aware what we should pray for (Rom.8:27). So he falls back on the comforting consciousness that God is aware, and says, "You Yourself know Your servant...." He does not

need to explore for any merit in himself to find a basis for God's blessing. Yahweh does it for the sake of His own Word, and in harmony with His own heart. Perhaps we are in a better position than David to see that Yahweh needed a character like him to typify the coming One, Who *does* deserve all the greatness that came to David, and far more, and will fulfill that which David only foreshadowed (20-21).

David had commenced this portion of his prayer, which concerned himself (18-22), with a confession of his own worthlessness. Now he closes it with an acclamation of Yahweh's greatness. "You are great, Yahweh Elohim, for there is no one like You, and there is no Elohim except You among all of whom we have heard with our ears" (22). What a fitting finish for this "selfish" part of the prayer! He now turns away from his private interests to the nation with which his lot is cast (23,24) and then to the "house," his future seed, which was the impulse to the prayer, to begin with.

### PRAYER FOR ISRAEL

"Who is like Your people, like Israel?" Is there another nation on the earth which is guided by God . . .? (23). What a contrast with "Who am I?" (18)! David fully realized, what few of the chosen people have ever comprehended, that the blessing of Israel is not dependent on their worthiness, but upon Yahweh's glory, for His fame follows from their welfare. He had already used them to make known His fame, by delivering them from Egypt. And now He needed only to perform His own promises, and glorify His own name, in order to bring them eonian bliss. In fact, their utter unworthiness during this wicked eon will only enhance His glory in the eons of the eons, when the Son of David is on the throne.

# PRAYER FOR DAVID'S HOUSE

David was not allowed to build the temple. He could supply some of the material of Yahweh's house, but left its erection to his son, Solomon. Is this not a physical parallel to the spiritual truth that his sons and successors never succeeded in making a permanent abode for Yahweh, but have left it for David's greater Son, the Messiah? The promise was that David's *seed* should build Yahweh's house (13), but David knew fairly well what is in man, so he had little confidence in him. He himself had written (Psa.8:4): "What is a mortal, that You are mindful of him?" So, in his prayer, he boldly claims that Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, had said, "I shall build a house for you." (27).

Although David's prayer has no direct application to us today, the spirit of it is far above that which prevails among us. This should not be, for we have been shown grace far beyond that revealed in David's day, and have been enriched with spiritual celestial blessings of which he could have no conception. It should help us to see how utterly absent was his dependence on man, either himself or his house, and how strong was his confidence in God. To faith, his prayer has already been answered, for the Son of David, through His humiliation, His sacrifice, His resurrection, ascension and coming again, has not only prepared for a temple much more magnificent than ever Solomon's, but laid the foundation for a spiritual house, composed of all His saints, in whom He now makes His home, and which will be His permanent habitation for the eons and further. A.E.K.

In response to numerous requests, we have prepared an exposition entitled, "The Law and the Sabbath." It is currently available in manuscript form (\$1.00).

# Concordant Version of the Old Testament

# SECOND SAMUEL SEVEN

7 <sup>+</sup> It came to 'be 'when the king was seated in his house, and Yahweh Himself had 'given' him rest from all his enemies' fround about, <sup>2</sup> <sup>+</sup>that the king 'said to Nathan the prophet, See, <sup>pr</sup>now I am dwelling in a house of cedars while the coffer of the One, Elohim, is dwelling in the midst of 'tent-sheets. <sup>3</sup> <sup>+</sup> Nathan 'sa replied to the king, Go ahead, do all "that is in your heart, for Yahweh is with you.

4 \*But it 'bwas in 'that same night \*that the word of Yahweh bcame to Nathan the prophetc, saying, 5 Go and say to My servant 'David, Thus saspeaks Yahweh: Should you yourself build 'Me a house for Me to dwell in it? 6 For I have not dwelt in a house ' from the day I cbrought 'the sons of Israel up from Egypt + until 'this 'day; +but I 'bcame to walk' about in a tent, + in a tabernacle. 7 In any place where I have walked about iamong all the sons of Israel, have I ever spoken a word 'to one of Israel's "judges" whom I commissioned to shepherd 'My people 'Israel,' saying', Why have you not built for Me a house of cedars? 8 And now, thus shall vou sav to Mv servant 'David, Thus saspeaks Yahweh of hosts: I Myself took you from the homestead, from following the flock, to become governor over My people, over Israel. 9 + I shall bbe with you in every place w where you go, and I shall cut off 'all your enemies' from before you. + I will dmake for you a great name, like the name of the great ones who are on the earth. 10 And I will pl provide a place for My people 'Israel: 'I will plant them so 'that they can tabernacle "by themselves and shall not frlonger be disturbed; the sons of iniquity shall not continue to humiliate them just as 'at the first, 11 and ever since the day when I commissioned judges' over My people Israel. And I will  $^c$ give  $^{\flat}$  you rest from all your enemies'.

- <sup>+</sup> Yahweh tells ' you that Yahweh shall 'make a house for you. <sup>12</sup> 'When your days shall be fulfilled and you will lie down 'with your fathers, 'then I will raise up 'your seed after you 'that shall come forth from your internal parts; and I will establish 'his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He' shall build a house for My name, and I will establish 'the throne of his kingdom 'for the eon. <sup>14</sup> I Myself shall become for him 'like a father; and he' shall become for Me 'like a son. 'W' When he 'sins out of depravity', 'then I will correct him 'with the club of mortals and 'with the contagions of the sons of humanity. <sup>15</sup> 'As for My benignity, it shall not withdraw from him as 'W I took it away from 'Saul whom I took away from before you. <sup>16</sup> 'Your house and your kingdom will be authenticated before 'Me'' fror the eon; so your throne, it shall become established 'fror the eon.
- <sup>17</sup> According to all 'these 'words and according to all 'this 'vision, so did Nathan speak to David.
- 18 +Then king David came and sat before Yahweh; + he 'said: aWho am I, my Lord Yahweh, and awhat is my house that You have brought me fr hither? 19 +While this may be frstill small in Your eyes, my Lord Yahweh, tyet You are speaking mralso about Your servant's house in view fof the far future; and this is the law for humanity, my Lord Yahweh. 20 + What frmore could David add in speaking to You, for You Yourself know Your servant, my Lord Yahweh? 21 For the sake of Your word and according to Your own heart You have done 'all 'this 'greatness, 'and cmade it known 'to Your servant. 22 Therefore You are great, MYahweh Elohim<sup>c</sup>, for there is no one like You, and there is no Elohim except You <sup>7</sup> among<sup>cs</sup> all of whom we have heard with our ears. 23 And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation ion the earth wthat Elohim went to ransom for Himself 'as a people, + to plmake for Himself a name and to do for Mthem great and fear-inspiring deeds: 7to drive out<sup>c</sup> nations and their elohim from before Your people wthat You ransomed for Yourself from Egypt? 24 +

You have been establishing 'Your people Israel for Yourself 'as Your people 'for the eon; and You Yourself, Yahweh, have become their 'Elohim.

25 And now, Yahweh Elohim, confirm fror the eon, the word wthat You have spoken on concerning Your servant and onconcerning his house; + do just as You have spoken. 26 + May Your name be magnified fror the eon. 'saving'. Yahweh of hosts is Elohim over Israel; and the house of Your servant David, may it become established before You. 27 For You, Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, You have revealed 'to the ear of Your servant,' saving, I shall build a house for you; therefore Your servant has found courage 'in his heart to pray to You 'with this 'prayer. 28 And now, my Lord Yahweh. You are He Who is the One. Elohim; 'as for Your words, they shall become realized truth; and You are speaking to Your servant 'of 'this 'goodness. 29 + Be disposed now and bless 'the house of Your servant 'that it may come to be before you for the eon; for You, my Lord Yahweh, You have spoken. +So by Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed for the eon.

### TEXTUAL NOTES

The explanation for the symbols and abbreviations used here is given on the inside front cover of the CV of Deuteronomy.

The conjectured word "judges" in verse 7 replaces the word "tribes" which appears in the Masoretic Text. The two words are very similar in Hebrew, and "judges" is used in 1 Chronicles 17:6. In verse 16 the Hebrew reads "before you," but we follow the Septuagint, Syriac and a few Hebrew manuscripts which have "Me" here. Several Hebrew manuscripts and the Syriac Version have "Yahweh Elohim" (which we also use) instead of "my Lord Yahweh" as in the Masoretic Text in verse 22. We used the same evidence to replace the plural pronoun "you" with the pronoun "them" in verse 23, and the replacement of "among" (literally "in") for "as" in verse 22 is also based on the same evidence, with additional support from the Septuagint Version. Finally, where the Masoretic Text has "for your land" in verse 23, we have used "to drive out" on the basis of the Septuagint and Syriac readings. See also 1 Chronicles 17:21.

# Among the Celestials

### **ENABLED TO WITHSTAND**

(Ephesians 6:13-17)

Therefore take up the panoply of God that you may be enabled to withstand in the wicked day, and having effected all, to stand. Stand, then, girded about your loins with truth, with the cuirass of righteousness put on, and your feet sandaled with the readiness of the evangel of peace; with all taking up the large shield of faith, by which you will be able to extinguish all the fiery arrows of the wicked one. And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit, which is a declaration of God (Eph.6:13-17).

Paul desires most earnestly that we should be able to stand up against the spiritual forces of wickedness, but to do so, we need the protection of God's armor. All the pieces of equipment described, with one exception, are defensive. The one attacking weapon is the sword of the spirit, which is a declaration of God. Jesus showed how to use it effectively when He was tested by Satan himself while He was weakened by a forty days' fast. He answered the Adversary with three declarations, all from the book of Deuteronomy. Satan retired, defeated.

Let us notice that Jesus was not the only One to quote scripture. Satan did as well, when he extracted two statements from Psalm 91 (verses 11 and 12) and quoted them completely out of context. It was in answer to this that Jesus said, "You shall not be putting on trial the Lord your God" (Matt.4:5-7).

This is a form of attack against which we, too, must be warv. It is most insidious, for it contains an element of truth. But truth, when quoted out of context or through inaccurate translation, can soon turn into a lie. An example of this is given in 2 Timothy 2:18. Following Paul's injunction to cut correctly the word of truth, he gives the example of Hymeneus and Philetus "who swerve as to truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred, and are subverting the faith of some." Hymeneus and Philetus did not deny the truth of the resurrection, but by putting it into the past instead of the future, they moved away from truth. Have we not seen this same thing done many times in our own day? Many believers have stated that the Lord has already returned, invisibly, and that in consequence we are some way into His millennial reign. One well known hymn begins, "Hail to the Lord's Anointed, Great David's greater Son! Hail, in the time appointed, His reign on earth begun!" This hymn was written around 150 years ago; its author, James Montgomery, died in 1854. Though he may have been looking to the future when he wrote it, many have since sung it with a present interpretation.

#### THE PANOPLY OF GOD

The various pieces of armor here listed would be brought to Paul's mind through his contemplation of the soldier standing by his side. In the accouterment of the latter, provided by the Roman authorities for his overall protection, the apostle would see a correspondence with the spiritual armor provided by God for our safety. This, too, covers the whole being, but each part has its own particular significance.

First, there is the protection of truth girded about our spiritual loins, essential if we are to combat error. To change the metaphor for a moment, the truth of God's Word is a touchstone, against which error is immediately exposed. God's indictment of mankind in general is that they "alter the truth of God into the lie" (Rom.1:25), but "let God be true, yet every man a liar" (Rom.3:4).

It has often been said that the first casualty of any war is truth. This is because each side is out to deceive the other. Yet in our "warfare," only one side seeks to gain by deception; the other stands by the truth, heralding the word of God, opportunely and inopportunely (2 Tim.4:2), and thus refuting the lies of the Adversary.

Second, there is the cuirass of righteousness. The cuirass is a piece of armor for protecting the breast and back; it therefore shields the heart, and defends us from the wickedness of attacks which otherwise might mortally wound us. However vicious or venomous such assaults may be, we know that no one can justifiably indict God's chosen ones, and no attacks can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom.8:33-39). The righteousness referred to is not of ourselves, but "the righteousness which is from God" (Phil.3:9). It has come to us through the death of God's Son on the cross, when He, "not knowing sin," was made to be sin for our sakes, "that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him" (2 Cor.5:21).

Third, there are the sandals of the readiness of the evangel of peace. In this age of turmoil and disruption, of violence and danger, of anger and hatred, there is only one way that we can obtain peace, and that is through the evangel. "Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:1). Of humanity in general (including ourselves before we heard the evangel) the

apostle writes, "the way of peace they do not know" (Rom.3:17). However, we now may have "all joy and peace in believing" (Rom.15:13). So, let nothing be worrying us, for the peace of God is "superior to every frame of mind" and will be garrisoning our "hearts and our apprehensions in Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:6,7).

Fourth, we have the shield of faith. This is a large shield, mobile in the hand of the one who holds it, and it can be moved to quench the fiery arrows of the wicked from whatever direction they come. One cruel weapon of ancient times was an arrow to which a flaming brand was attached. It would not merely wound but also burn the unprotected recipient. But the shield of faith is adequate to extinguish the spiritual darts of doubt and despair that are frequently hurled at us. Let us always remember that "in grace, through faith," are we saved, and this is not out of us (Eph.2:8). It is a gift, an approach present made by God in order to draw us to Him. But once we have received it, it becomes to us a bulwark against attack, a massive shield in our defense. It is never given short; God parts to each the measure of faith (Rom. 12:3).

The fifth item in our armor is the helmet of salvation. This protects the head. Let us realize this: our salvation is assured. There is no "possibly" or "maybe" about it. It does not depend upon us in the slightest iota; it is entirely of God. If the wayward Corinthians were to be confirmed "until the consummation, unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ," so also are we. "Faithful is God, through Whom we were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1 Cor.1:8,9). Let us note that we receive the helmet of salvation. We do not have to work for it; we cannot earn it. We do not even have to put it on; it is put on for us. Salvation was ours from the time we were chosen

in Christ before the disruption of the world. Nothing can ever take it away from us. However much the Adversary may try, he cannot pry that helmet off.

Thus completely protected, we are given our one offensive weapon, the sword of the spirit, which we discussed earlier. Yet in this picture, we are portrayed as neither advancing nor retreating, but standing firm. Three times in quick succession the word "stand" is used (verses 11,12,14). Let us herald the word and stand by it, rejoicing in the Lord always, aware of the forces against us, but not afraid of them. For victory over them has already been won, not by us, but by Him Who is our sovereign Lord and Head.

John H. Essex

(To be concluded)

### **GRACE BORLAND**

First hearing about God's purpose for all mankind through the ministry of Pastor George L. Rogers, Sister Borland, of Almont, Michigan, retained a keen interest in our work for many years. She died on September 14 at the age of 98.

### REMEMBERING THEIR WORK OF FAITH

Like Paul concerning the Thessalonians, we remember often the work of faith and toil of love and endurance of expectation (1 Thess.1:3) of many. John Braucht of St. Petersburg, Florida, has carried on a tape and literature ministry for many years, besides encouraging others personally in their struggles and needs. He was instrumental in getting us going on the reprinting of U.R. volumes 1-3, and he continues to give generously from his means. Much of his enthusiasm was implanted through the ministry of Brother Julius Shaw of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, who contributed an article in our March issue. Not related, but sharing more than the name, Jack and Laurel Shaw of West Covina, California, have helped us at our office often in the past few years, and like Bro. Julius, they are always ready with a word of encouragement and with praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

# Studies in Deuteronomy

# FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

"When I ascended to the mountain to take down the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that Yahweh contracted with you, I dwelt on the mountain forty days and forty nights. Bread I did not eat, and water I did not drink. Then Yahweh gave to me the two tablets of stone, written by the finger of Elohim, and on them were all the words just like those that Yahweh had spoken with you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. It came to be at the end of forty days and forty nights that Yahweh gave to me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant" (Deut.9:9-11).

#### THE TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY

In the presence of God, Moses fasted for forty days and nights (as Jesus did when He was led up into the wilderness by the spirit, Matt.4:1). While Moses was in communion with Yahweh Elohim and did not need food or drink, the Israelites had their public holiday with the molten calf, and they sat to eat and drink and rose to make fun (Ex.32:6).

During these forty days, Yahweh spoke to Moses about the heave offerings which the sons of Israel should bring for the construction of His sanctuary. He said: "Thus they will make for Me a sanctuary, and *I will tabernacle in their midst*. According to all that I am showing you, the model of the tabernacle and the

model of all its furnishings, thus shall you make it" (Ex.25:8,9). At the end of forty days and forty nights, Yahweh gave to Moses (as He finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai) the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the testimony (cf Ex.31:18; Deut.9:11).

#### YOUR PEOPLE HAVE BECOME CORRUPT

"Then Yahweh said to me: Arise! Go down quickly hence, for your people, whom you brought forth from Egypt, have become *corrupt* [cf Ex.32:7]. They have withdrawn quickly from the way which I had instructed them. They have made for themselves a molten calf.

"And Yahweh spoke to me saying: I have seen this people, and behold, they are a stiff-necked people. Hold yourself back from Me so that I shall exterminate them and wipe out their name from under the heavens, and I shall make you into a more substantial and numerous nation than they" (Deut.9:12-14).

Here (in his second address to the post-Sinai generation) Moses repeated Yahweh's words almost verbatim. as we read them in Exodus 32:7-10. Earlier, Yahweh had promised them: "If you shall hearken, yea hearken to My voice and observe My covenant, then you will become mine, a special possession, above all of the peoples, for Mine is all the earth" (Ex.19:5). Yet Israel had broken the first commandment (you shall not come to have other elohim in preference to Me), and the second commandment as well (you shall not make for yourself a carving nor any physical representation of that in the heavens above or that on the earth beneath or that in the waters beneath the earth: Deut.5:7,8). Since the Israelites had broken the covenant. Yahweh threatened to destroy them and obliterate all memory of them.

Here (in chapter nine of Deuteronomy) Moses did

not mention the words of his first intercession for Israel as we find them recorded in Exodus: "Then Moses beseeched the face of Yahweh his Elohim and said: Why, Yahweh, has Your anger grown hot against Your people whom You have brought forth from the land of Egypt with great vigor and with a steadfast hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, saying: For evil He brings them forth to kill them in the mountains and to finish them off the surface of the ground? Turn back from the heat of Your anger and show mercy concerning the evil to Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself. You spoke to them, saying: I shall increase your seed as the stars of the heavens, and all this land, as I have said, I shall give it to your seed, and they will gain it as an allotment for the eon" (Ex. 32:11-13).

### MOSES BROKE THE TABLETS BEFORE THEIR EYES

"Then I turned around and came down from the mountain while the mountain was consuming with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. Then I saw, and behold, you had sinned against Yahweh your Elohim. You had made for yourselves a molten calf. You had withdrawn quickly from the way which Yahweh had enjoined on you. So I grabbed the two tablets and flung them from my two hands and broke them before your eyes" (Deut. 9:15-17).

The narrative of Deuteronomy 9:9-10:11 refers five times to "forty days and forty nights" that Moses spent twice on Mount Sinai in the presence of Yahweh (9:9, 11,18,25; 10:10), in order to receive the two tablets of the testimony. When he had descended from the mountain the first time, Moses broke the tablets in a symbolic

action to indicate what Israel had done to the covenant. In the ancient Near East, this was the typical procedure when treaties were broken.

When Moses descended from the mountain the second time, he put the tablets of the testimony into the coffer of the testimony (Ex.25:16; 26:33). With the repetition of the phrase "forty days and forty nights" this narrative (of Deut.9:9-10:11) puts the main emphasis on what occurred during these two time periods. Hence all that took place after Moses' first descent from the mountain (Ex.32:20-33:23) is condensed in a single verse in Deuteronomy 9:21. "As for your sin, which was the calf you had made, I took it, burned it with fire and pounded it, grinding it well until it was pulverized to soil, and I flung its soil into the watercourse that was descending from the mountain."

#### AS THE FIRST TIME

"Then I cast myself down before Yahweh as the first time for forty days and forty nights. Bread I did not eat and water I did not drink on account of all your sin which you had sinned by doing what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh your Elohim to provoke Him to vexation" (Deut.9:18).

The first time, Moses dwelt on the mountain (Deut. 9:9), no reason was given for his fasting. As we said, while Moses was in communion with Yahweh Elohim he did not need food or drink. The second time (Deut.9:18) Moses fasted for forty days and forty nights on account of Israel's sin and the evil with which they had provoked Yahweh to vexation.

#### AT THAT TIME

"For I shrank away from the presence of the anger and the fury with which Yahweh was wrathful against you enough to exterminate you. But Yahweh hearkened to me even at that time.

"Against Aaron Yahweh showed Himself exceedingly angered, enough to exterminate him. So I prayed also about Aaron at that time" (Deut.9:19,20).

Moses' intercession for Aaron is not mentioned in Exodus where we find the wording of Moses' first intercession for Israel (Ex.32:11-13). We are not told what Yahweh answered at that time. Yet Moses told his audience in the plains of Moab that Yahweh listened attentively to his beseeching prayer: "Turn back from the heat of Your anger and show mercy concerning the evil to Your people" (Ex.32:12,14).

At that time (after his first intercession for Israel) Moses shrank away from the presence of the anger and the fury of Yahweh. We may assume that He Himself directed the swords of the Levites against the most stiff-necked idolators, "and there fell of the people in that day about three thousand men" (Ex.32:28).

Shortly after the execution Moses returned to Yahweh and pleaded: "If You should bear with their sin, bear it. Yet if not, wipe me, I pray, from Your scroll which You have written." Yahweh answered: "Whoever has sinned against Me, I shall wipe him from My scroll. And now, go, guide the people to the place of which I spoke to you. Behold, My messenger shall go before you, and in the day of My visitation, then I will visit on them their sin . . . . For I shall not go up among you . . . lest I should finish you on the way" (Ex.32:32-34; 33:3). So Yahweh's anger and fury had abated to a certain extent.

#### ISRAEL REBELLIOUS AGAINST YAHWEH

In Deuteronomy 9:22,23 Moses gave a few examples of Israel's stubbornness and sin, though not in their

chronological order; the sequence rather moves from the smaller to the more serious forms of rebellion: at Taberah (Num.11:1-3), at Massah (Ex.17:1-7), at Kibroth-hattaavah (Num.11:31-35), at Kadesh-barnea (Deut.1:19-40). Moses concluded this summary with the words: "You have been rebellious against Yahweh from the day I knew you" (Deut.9:24).

#### INTERCESSION FOR ISRAEL DURING THE FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

"When I cast myself down before Yahweh (during the forty days and forty nights that I cast myself down. for Yahweh had said He would exterminate you), then I prayed to Yahweh and said: My Lord Yahweh, do not bring ruin on Your people and Your allotment, whom You ransomed by Your greatness, whom You brought forth from Egypt by Your steadfast hand. Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Do not face against the obstinacy of this people, against their wickedness and their sin, lest the people of the country whence You brought us forth should say: Because Yahweh was unable to bring them into the land about which He had spoken to them, and because of His hatred of them He brought them forth to put them to death in the wilderness. Yet they are Your people and Your allotment whom You brought forth from Egypt by Your great vigor and Your outstretched arm" (Deut. 9:25-29).

[After Moses had been given a spiritual "insight" of divine grace (Ex.34:4-7), he "bowed his head toward the earth, bowed himself down, and said: I pray, if I find grace in Your eyes, my Lord, I pray, let my Lord go among us, for they are a stiff-necked people, and You will pardon our depravity and our sins, and You will gain us as an allotment" (Ex.34:8,9).]

#### AS ON THE FIRST FORTY DAYS

"I stayed on the mountain as on the first [40] days, forty days and forty nights, and Yahweh hearkened to me also at that time: Yahweh would not bring ruin on you. Then Yahweh said to me: Arise! Go on your journey before this people that they may enter and tenant the land about which I had sworn to their fathers to give to them" (Deut.10:10,11).

#### AS THE FIRST TIME

The phrase "as the first time" in Deuteronomy 9:18 suggests that Moses was now speaking of his second stay of forty days and forty nights. He reported the details of his prayer "during [these] forty days and nights" in Deuteronomy 9:25-29. Moses' plea, "Let my Lord go among us," is not mentioned here (only in Ex.34:9).

The terms of the intercession (in Deut.9:25-29) are reminiscent of those in Exodus 32:11-13 when Moses beseeched the face of Yahweh in his first intercessory prayer. On both occasions Moses pointed to the unique exertion of divine power for their deliverance from bondage in Egypt

"with great vigor and with a steadfast hand" (Ex.32:11),

"by Your steadfast hand" (Deut.9:26),

"by Your great vigor and by Your outstretched arm" (Deut.9:29).

In both prayers Moses reminded Yahweh of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to whom He had promised the land (Ex.32:13; Deut.9:27).

On both occasions Moses pleaded for the vindication of Yahweh's honor in the sight of the Egyptians who would say:

"For evil He brings them forth to kill them in the

mountains and to finish them off the surface of the ground" (Ex.32:12).

"Because Yahweh was unable to bring them into the land about which He had spoken to them, and because of His hatred of them He brought them forth to put them to death in the wilderness" (Deut.9:28). But here Moses added with confidence in Yahweh's compassion: "They are Your people and Your allotment" (Deut. 9:29). This confidence was based on Yahweh's assurance, given prior to Moses' second stay on the mountain for forty days and forty nights: "I shall write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke" (Deut.10:2).

## THE NEW TABLETS AND THE COFFER OF THE TESTIMONY

"At that time Yahweh had said to me: Carve for yourself two stone tablets like the first ones, and ascend to Me to the mountain. Also make for yourself a coffer of wood. Then I shall write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets that you broke, and you will place them in the coffer. So I made a coffer of acacia wood, carved two tablets of stone like the first ones and ascended to the mountain with the two tablets in my hand. Then He wrote on the tablets, like the first writing, the ten words that Yahweh had spoken to you at the mountain from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly; and Yahweh gave them to me. So I turned around and descended from the mountain and placed the tablets in the coffer that I had made, and there they came to be, just as Yahweh had instructed me" (Deut.10:1-5).

Here Moses dealt with another aspect of his second 40-day stay on the mount, with the new stone tablets. "At that time" (10:1) indicates the time prior to his

ascent for another forty days and forty nights. All the facts pertaining to the new tablets are condensed in just 5 verses: Yahweh's order to carve new stone tablets and make a coffer for them and ascend; Yahweh writing the ten words on the tablets, handing them over to Moses before his descent from the mount.

#### A PARENTHETICAL COMMENT

"The sons of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene-jaakan to Moserah [probably in the vicinity of Mount Hor; cf Num.20:27,28; 33:38,39]. There Aaron died, and he was entombed there; and Eleazar his son served as priest in his stead. From there they journeyed to Gudgodah and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a country of watercourses with water. At that time Yahweh separated the tribe of Levi to carry the coffer of the covenant of Yahweh, to stand before Yahweh to minister to Him and to bless in His name until this day. Therefore Levi came to have no portion or allotment with his brothers. Yahweh, He is his allotment, just as Yahweh your Elohim had spoken concerning him" (Deut. 10:6-9).

This comment is a departure from the theme of chapter ten; these four verses are reported in the third person as a parenthesis in Moses' address. Yet there is a point of contact with the main theme: "the coffer of the covenant of Yahweh."

#### FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

"As for me, I stayed on the mountain as on the first [40] days, forty days and forty nights, and Yahweh hearkened to me also at that time: Yahweh would not bring ruin on you. Then Yahweh said to me: Arise! Go on your journey before the people that they may enter and tenant the land about which I had sworn to their

fathers to give to them" (Deut.10:10,11). [One Hebrew manuscript has the reading "this people" and is supported by LXX and Samaritan. The emendation should not be taken as a derogatory remark. Moses was the leader; on the march he went in front of the people.]

In the long narrative of Deuteronomy 9:9-10:11 we have come to the fifth occurrence of the phrase "forty days and forty nights." Here (as in 9:18 and 9:25) Moses used this phrase in order to lead his audience back to the main theme of his address. Yahweh had hearkened to Moses' intercessory prayer; He would not bring ruin on Israel. The broken stone tablets had been replaced by identical new ones so as to indicate that the covenant had been reestablished with the fathers of the post-Sinai generation that was listening to Moses' reminiscences.

(To be continued)

### HURRICANE GILBERT

We know that many brethren suffered from the devastating effects of Hurricane Gilbert early this month, especially as it struck the island of Jamaica. We have sent an emergency financial gift to Brother James Hemmings, our agent there, and plan to send more after we hear from him concerning the situation. Anyone who wishes to contribute to this need may do so through us.

#### REPOSING

Matie LeFevre, 96, was put to repose on June 21. She had resided in Colorado for many years. Matie was endued with an indomitable spirit and was an inspiration to all, especially to our friends in faith in the Denver area. She will be remembered for her great trust in her Lord and Saviour, in expectation of the day when God will be All in all.

Irene Anderson, 87, another dear sister in the Lord, fell asleep in Christ on July 15. Sister Anderson, a resident of Albuquerque, New Mexico, was a devout believer, and had graciously supported the ministry of the Concern for many years.

## Studies in Romans

## ACCORDING AS CHRIST

(Romans 15:5-7)

In support of his entreaties for ideal service, Paul has borrowed from the language of the evangel (e.g., "the faith which you have... in God's sight... happy" [Rom.14:22]) and that of the Old Testament (cf Rom. 15:3). But all of this really has been a pointing to the example of Christ Himself. He is the center of faith and the great pattern for faithfulness. This is clearly the case in Romans 15:5-7 which we are presently studying:

Now may the God of endurance and consolation grant you to be mutually disposed to one another, according to Christ Jesus, that, with one accord, with one mouth you may be glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore be taking one another to yourselves according as Christ also took you to Himself for the glory of God.

## ROMANS 15 AND PHILIPPIANS 2

This passage, in many ways, parallels the second chapter of Philippians, where also Christ is presented as the example for our thinking and attitude. Almost every phrase of Romans 15:5-7 has its counterpart in Philippians. It may be helpful to set some of these out, as follows:

"the God of endurance and consolation" (Rom.15:5)

"if . . . any consolation in Christ" (Phil.2:1)

"you to be mutually disposed" (Rom.15:5)

"that you may be mutually disposed" (Phil.2:2)

"according to [that in] Christ Jesus" (Rom.15:5)

"this disposition...which is in Christ Jesus" (Phil.2:5)

"with one accord, with one mouth" (Rom.15:6) "disposed to one thing" (Phil.2:2)

"glorifying the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . as Christ also took you . . . for the glory of God" (Rom.15:6,7)

"He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross . . . for the glory of God the Father" (Phil.2:8,11)

These are parallels not only of language but of theme as well. In both passages Paul is showing us that mutuality and concern for others is characteristic of those who are strong in the faith. A disposition that is selfless and humble and that dwells upon the needs of others is founded on this rare mind-set as seen in Christ. Our Lord Himself sets the pattern for every aspect of our service including this disposition which is a sign of maturity and above all else brings glory to God.

#### THE DISPOSITION OF CHRIST

This disposition of mutuality and desire for God's glory which is in Christ is presented several times in a pattern of three very clear steps: (1) He gives Himself (2) for others' good (3) to the glory of His God and Father. Note how this occurs in Ephesians 5:2, where we read: (1) Christ gives Himself up (2) for us, (3) an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor.

We can also trace this pattern in Philippians 2:5-11 as follows: (1) Christ Jesus humbles Himself even to the death of the cross, leading to His exaltation where (2) every knee should be bowing and tongue acclaiming His Lordship (3) for the glory of God the Father. Then, here in Romans 15:1-7 we are told that (1) Christ also pleases not Himself, and that (2) He took us to Himself, (3) for the glory of God.

#### LONGINGS OF PAUL'S HEART

In Romans, this pattern appears in association with a benediction or prayer-request, expressing the longings of Paul's heart for his brothers and sisters in Christ. Hence it is, in itself, an actual display of what is being entreated. Yet it is not some sort of ordinance laid upon believers for them to work out in their lives from their own strength. As Paul had shown earlier in Romans, it is not enough to know what is good and ideal: "... for not what I will, this I am putting into practice, but what I am hating, this I am doing . . . for to will is lying beside me, yet to be effecting the ideal is not" (Rom.7:15,18). We need something outside of us that will be given to us and enter into our personality and being, something that will effectively motivate us and enable us to grow toward the maturity described in Romans 14 and 15. The rescue from the dilemma of knowing what is right, yet not being able to do it no matter how much we may want to do it, lies in the power and discipline of grace! (Rom.7:25).

What is this grace? It is "the grace of God and the gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:15). Our appreciation of the "obedience of the One" (Rom.5:19), especially as we see it in the three steps described above (selflessness, for the good of others, to the glory of God), is what invigorates us

toward maturity. Hence, like Paul in Romans 15:5, we look to God to grant us that disposition of mutuality as He manifests it to us in Christ Jesus.

## THE GOD OF ENDURANCE AND CONSOLATION

While he was writing this letter Paul doubtless was thinking of his own personal need for endurance and consolation. He was facing the journey to Jerusalem where he knew he would not be well received, and he had just come through the frightening experience of the Ephesian riots recorded in Acts 19:23-41. If, as seems likely, he wrote Romans during his three months stay in Greece (Achaia), he was, at this very time, being threatened by plots against him by the Jews (Acts 20:3). His life was filled with one danger after another.

Yet God is the God of endurance and consolation (cf 2 Corinthians 1:3, which was written about this same time). An appreciation of God's grace, while instilling inner peace and happiness, makes for certain difficulties in our associations with fellow believers who may not grasp the fullness of salvation and justification. But these hardships should also sharpen our appreciation for God's provisions. As Paul wrote earlier in this epistle, "... we may be glorying also in afflictions, having perceived that affliction is producing endurance ..." (Rom.5:3).

"Consolation" represents the same Greek word rendered "entreaty" in Romans 12:8. Literally it means BESIDE-CALLING, the act of calling someone to our side for a beneficial purpose. The last five chapters of Romans are especially concerned with entreaty (cf Rom.12:1), which also ought to be conceived of as consolation. Since God is the God of consolation, we understand that He is calling us to His side, pointing us

to the mature disposition of mutuality and selflessness that is manifested in our Lord. What can be more consoling than entreaty from God?

#### MUTUALLY DISPOSED

As individuals we are amazingly different. Our backgrounds, our thought processes, our personal goals, these are as varied as humanity itself. Yet with all the distinctive characteristics that God has created in us, He, nevertheless, brings us together in "one body in Christ" (Rom.12:5).

This unity is but imperfectly enjoyed at present, yet where there is maturity there is bound to be a foretaste of our oneness in Christ. The more truly we realize that we are being justified gratuitously in God's grace (Rom.3:24), the more fully we will be grasping, and living in accord with, this unity.

Mutuality is literally "sameness" (from the Greek word auto, SAME), but not at all in a sense of monotonous repetition of ideas and actions, as the English word "sameness" might suggest. It is a oneness of interest, concern and purpose which is in view here, and a very important and unusual concern it is. The "one accord" and the "one mouth" spoken of in verse 6 are associated with the desire to glorify God. Just as the evangel is fully centered on the divine achievements of justification, conciliation and reconciliation, so our mutuality is a matter of focusing upon God, and not upon Him simply as God but as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In this we are one, and in this we are able to rise above petty fault-finding and harsh bickering. There is no room for selfishness when we are believing that God spared not His Son but gave Him up for us all, that His love commended to us is found in Christ dving for sinners.

#### IN ACCORD WITH

Twice in this passage we find the preposition "according" used in association with Christ. Our mutual disposition toward one another is to accord with, or be "according to" [that disposition which is in] Christ Jesus. And this pattern of Christ's disposition taking root in our lives and bearing fruit of mutuality and love is shown again in Romans 15:7, where we are entreated to take one another to ourselves according as Christ also took us to Himself.

In what way, then, did Christ manifest a disposition of mutuality? He was so concerned with us, who are irreverent and infirm, that He emptied Himself of His glory and died for us. But this was not simply a self-emptying for the sake of displaying humility, but it was for our sakes! It was a sacrifice that was required for our deliverance. It was the very thing we needed! And nothing else would have met the need! This is the compassion, the empathy, the mutuality toward those who need something but are completely undeserving of it, that Christ displayed.

Hence, as we comprehend and apprehend this astounding evangel, we learn to give to and help others, especially our brethren who are weak in faith, but all humanity as well (cf Titus 3:1-7). They may, indeed they likely will, reproach and reject us. Yet we will be patient, lenient, pacific, "ready for every good work."

And in what way does Christ take us to Himself? Here perhaps we should focus on the glories of the conciliation which we have received "through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:11). The One Who died for us is the One Who "is also at God's right hand, Who is pleading also for our sakes" (Rom.8:34).

Does this not train us to be living in accord with this disposition of Christ? Since we enjoy this consolation

in Christ, this comfort of love, this communion of spirit, this compassion and pity, we will be more and more disposed toward others with mutual love, "not each noting that which is his own, but each that of others also" (Phil.2:1-4).

As we genuinely believe that Christ took us to Himself, enemies and sinners as we were (cf Rom.5: 6-10), we begin to realize the goodness of taking one another to ourselves for their progress and joy of faith (cf Phil.1:25). We thus become sensitive to the needs of others, with a genuine solicitude for their concerns, such as Timothy had (Phil.2:20), and take them to ourselves as brother to brother, as nurse to child (cf 1 Thess.2:7), as true friend to true friend. This is according as Christ took us to Himself, with the purpose of focusing their attention on the grace of God, which will be for their good and to the glory of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

Philippians 2 shows that Christ's emptying of Himself leads eventually to the bowing of every knee, which is indeed a blessing for all. Here also in Romans 15 we see that the bearing of reproach which Christ endured leads to His taking of us to Himself. And this, too, is a great blessing. But the consummation of all that Christ does is the glorifying of God. This is another way of saying that there really is no blessing for us if there is no glory for God. Our blessings are entirely due to God's achievement, to His grace in Christ Jesus. If we are being blessed, it is because of God Who blesses us. Hence it is to His glory.

In this we are reminded once again of the dangers in thinking God leaves something in our justification and service of righteousness entirely to us. The concept of human independence in any respect, apart from divine purpose and operation is a treacherous thing. The inevitable result is that we become occupied with ourselves and are never certain that we have done enough or even that we have taken the right pathway in supplementing the grace of God.

Nothing is so detrimental to the glory of God. We may deceive ourselves by often repeating, "To God be the glory," but if we intend by such an expression that we want God to be glorified by something we have achieved, how then is *He* being glorified? God will be glorified by what *He* achieves in Christ Jesus, and through Him by what *He* achieves in us who are believing.

Consequently, when we take others aside to ourselves, it is with God's glory in view. A good example of this is when Priscilla and Aquilla took Apollos to themselves, "expounding the way of God to him more accurately" (Acts 18:26). Their specific concern was that Apollos would appreciate God's operations more fully. Let it be that the power of the evangel creates this disposition of mutuality and concern in us, so that we point to God, His ways and achievements in Christ.

When we are participating in this ideal service of putting aside our own selfish wants and boasts and giving time and strength to others so that they might appreciate and enjoy *God's* grace and peace more fully, we are truly walking *in accord with* the pattern set by Christ. This is His disposition. May it become ours, so that indeed we, like Him, will be bringing glory to His God and Father. To accord with Christ, this is the ideal service. To bring glory to God, this is the highest blessing of all!

D.H.H.

## His Achievement Are We

## CHOICE AND DEITY

FREE WILL is a hallmark of orthodoxy. It is believed not only that it is true, but that it is essential, upright and noble. Many even claim that it is the chief capacity distinguishing man from beast. Consequently, its proponents often become filled with "righteous indignation" at the least suggestion of its untenability. They earnestly desire the concept to be true; and, that the scriptures might be fulfilled, it has long been certain that they will defer to their own desires, instead of the word of God (2 Tim.3:1-8; 4:3,4). They seek to discover this idea in the Scriptures, and are confident that they have done so in many places. But their sedulous efforts are in vain, for, as with the Trinity, it is nowhere expressed, frequently disproved, and only falsely inferred.

Like every good thing, the great and foundational truth that *all* is out of, through and for God (Rom. 11:36), can be abused. Its liberty can be misused by the foolish as an incentive to the flesh (*cp* Gal.5:13). Yet the wise must learn the truth on this theme so that they might make *good* use of it and be freed from the evil imposed upon them through its denial. God's truth is not only true; it is also vital and beneficial.

Even those believers whose consciences are generally sensitive as to the need for sound words, seem to have no compunction when it comes to the misuse of volitional terms. They regularly employ words such as "choice," "decision" or "responsibility," in quite

the same sense as is common in the world. Much of this is the result of peer pressure and the influence of popular ethics.

Good and glorious as it is, like the teaching of eventual universal reconciliation, the teaching of God's deity seems both false and wicked to those who cannot receive it. And even if we should receive it, it may be that we will do so only faintheartedly, and so fail to "herald the word" concerning it or live our lives in accord with it. Yet if this should be the case, this too will be the wisdom of God.

#### THE NECESSITY OF ACTION

In light of Romans 11:36, I freely agree (in essence if not in semantics) with the renowned physicist Albert Einstein, who said, "I do not at all believe in human freedom in the [popular] philosophical sense. Everybody acts not only from external compulsion but also in accordance with inner necessity. . . . A man's actions are determined by necessity, external and internal, so that in God's eyes he cannot be responsible [i.e., able to act otherwise], any more than an inanimate object is responsible for the motion it undergoes. . . . [This realization] mercifully mitigates the easily paralyzing sense of responsibility [i.e., in the sense of contrary choice] and prevents us from taking ourselves and other people all too seriously; it is conducive to a view of life which, in particular, gives humor its due"\*

"If men had not this false refuge of human responsibility, many more would be forced to reconsider the fiendish doctrines of human destiny which they hold. As it is, if their hearts are not utterly hard, they will

<sup>\*</sup>Albert Einstein, Ideas and Opinions, pp.8,39; New York: Crown Publishers, 1954

not believe in the damnation of infants, and are led into many non-scriptural notions as to the age of accountability, the appointment of sponsors at baptism, confirmation, and what not, seeing that *eternal* torture or annihilation can never be justified in the case of those who are not fully answerable. If they could only see that God holds *none* responsible, they would find everlasting suffering or death utterly repugnant and impossible. 'Responsibility' is a twin heresy with eternal doom. . . . "\*

#### MISUSE OF VOLITIONAL TERMS

At the outset, advocates of free will commandeer the word "choice" (and its synonyms) and boldly incorporate the thought of avoidability into the term itself, even though this is actually no part of the meaning of any volitional synonym. Instead it is merely what most believe to be true concerning human choice. This extremely common practice is completely unwarranted, and leads to much error. For a choice is simply that which is chosen or selected; man's opinion as to whether or not choices are avoidable forms no part of the meaning of the word itself and should not be forced into it.

It is most unwise to impose the idea of "avoidability" onto the word "choice," as if this somehow validated the concept of *freewill* choice. To do so is both linguistically incorrect and logically fallacious. It is also unfair, and exposes its own prejudice. Worse still, it is deceptive, for to those who are unable to think clearly, it seems to give much credence to the idea of free will.

Reading the idea of avoidability into the word choice

<sup>\*</sup>A. E. Knoch, The Problem of Evil and the Judgments of God, p.234

is the equivalent of reading the word "flat" into the word "earth," or the word "endless" into the word "eons": (1) "The only earth fit to be called such is a flat one." (2) "The only number of eons worthy of the saint's life and the sinner's punishment is an infinite number." (3) "The only choice worthy of the name is an avoidable one."

The problem is only compounded by those who otherwise speak plainly, who may not fully realize that clarity of expression is needed on this theme as well. We are not at all suggesting any undue or gratuitous strictness, but only that we avoid being ambiguous or evasive. We must define our terms and speak clearly in order to be clearly understood, so as not to be sadly misunderstood.

Due to common misconception, one might well suppose that only the proponent of free will believes that men do whatever they want, according to their own choice or voluntarily. Yet these are our convictions as well, and are concepts which are fully in accord with our teaching. The fact that we act according to our own choice, and, had we chosen to do so, could have acted differently than we did, is not at issue and is acknowledged by all.

## THE VAUNTED "POWER OF CONTRARY CHOICE"

No one can be what he is not, or, at present, act contrary to his present character. "How can Satan be casting out Satan?" (Luke 11:15). Even God cannot deny Himself (2 Tim.2:13). "From their fruits you shall be recognizing *them...*. A good tree *can not* bear noxious fruit, neither is a rotten tree producing ideal fruit" (Matt.7:16,18).

Due to influences from within and without, a man may well change in the next moment from what he is in the present moment, but *in* any certain moment his deeds are simply the outflowings of his heart (Prov. 4:23b). They reflect what is presently choice *to him*; that is, they constitute his true preferences, however excellent, or awful, they may be.

Though we do what we want, according to our own choice, and therefore act voluntarily, we cannot always want what we want. That is, we cannot truly want, in a decisive sense, what we want, simply in an abstract sense, so long as there are other things that we want more, in a decisive sense, than we want the ideals for which we abstractly long. Even if, abstractly speaking, we love righteousness, often, decisively speaking, we prefer the "temporary enjoyment of sin" (Heb.11:25). This is the very message of Romans 7:15-23, as well as that of all perceptive personal observation. It is vital for us to be clear as to these two distinct senses in which the word "want" (or, "will") is used.

Of course what those who advocate "free will" actually mean to stand for by means of this expression is the notion that men have the power of contrary choice: Even though, in fact, we chose as we did, we could have chosen otherwise. That is, we could have done so at that time. It is not contended (nor is it disputed) that, hypothetically and by itself, we might have chosen otherwise. That is not the idea at all. Instead, it is claimed that, notwithstanding the fact that we did choose as we chose, we nonetheless could have chosen otherwise. This, and this alone, is the question to be resolved.

Due to our self-reliance, pride, impatience and anger, as well as our self-assured ethical notions about praise, blame and judgment, this idea of contrary choice is an extremely attractive one. Then there is the matter of our strong desire, whether acknowledged or not, for independent personal glory. Thus the wish becomes the father to the claim, and, consequently, the very foundation of human ethics.

Advocates of this position, which should be called, "the power of contrary choice," prefer to perpetuate it instead under the innocuous and advantageously ambiguous title "free will." At once, this gives it the advantage of a respectable-sounding name, and makes those few who are constrained to reject the actual doctrine appear as strange extremists, inasmuch as they reject such a well-accepted, desirable and seemingly reasonable concept.

The advocate of free will actually stands for the position which asserts that man's choices are uncaused—absolutely devoid of all necessity. And yet he does not realize, or at least he refuses to admit the fact, that the denial of causality will not bring him any closer to what he wants than its advocacy.

Essentially this matter is a simple one: It is impossible to prevent anything that is the product of a cause from coming into existence; and, it is also impossible to prevent anything that is not the product of a cause from coming into existence. If a truly uncaused event were ever to occur (were such a thing even possible), being the product of nothing, uninfluenced and uninfluenceable, it would simply "show up," appearing "out of nowhere." While it would not be brought in, neither could it be kept out.

Whether "determinism" (i.e., causality), divine or otherwise, is true or false, we cannot possibly be free either way—that is, in a freewill or contrary-choice sense. If we are *caused* to choose as we do, we cannot help choosing as we do. And, if we are *not* caused to choose as we do, we still cannot help choosing as we do.

"Surely we cannot be free agents, in the ordinary, strong, true-responsibility-entailing sense, if determinism is true and we and our actions are ultimately wholly determined by causes which existed anterior to our own personal existence. And surely we can no more be free if determinism is false and it is, ultimately, either wholly or partly a matter of chance or random outcome that we and our actions are as they are."\*

Neither determined nor random will afford any place for free will. Neither determinedness nor randomness (nor any mixture of the two) can give or allow what is wanted, even though between these two the field of possibilities is exhausted. Therefore, contrary choice or "free will" not only does not exist but cannot exist.

#### OUR NEED OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Perhaps an illustration would be helpful. Whether an object falls to the ground because of the law of gravity or by sheer chance, in either case, it is not responsible for what it does. It could not help falling. The principle is the same concerning man's chosen deeds. For either they are caused to be as they are or they are not. Whether a man behaves as he does due to some cause or entirely apart from any cause at all, in any case, he is not responsible for (able to avoid) what he does.

Therefore, man is never responsible and cannot ever become responsible for any of his actions at any time. The recognition of this fact depends solely upon one's ability to think sensibly and fairly. It does not

<sup>\*</sup>Galen Strawson, Freedom and Belief, p.25; London: Oxford University Press, 1986

depend upon a personal conviction that the Scriptures are the Word of God, much less upon any judgment that our exegesis thereof is correct. Indeed, even if both of these were to be rejected, it would still remain true that man is not responsible and that free will is a foolish myth. Unless we have a secret fondness for myths (at least when it comes to this subject), we will be grateful to see them exposed and disproved.

Whether causality should be affirmed or denied, either way, free will is false. Thus we possess conclusive evidence that free will is not only a mistaken position, but is logically impossible, and consequently, inconceivable. The acceptance of this fact, however, requires not only intellectual honesty but genuine understanding.

This issue is far from complex, and where understanding is granted, is easy to comprehend. We cannot expect assurance, however, apart from understanding, for true assurance is impossible apart from genuine understanding. May we be growing into maturity (Col.1:28), "into all the riches of the assurance of understanding, unto a realization of the secret of the God and Father, of Christ, in Whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed" (Col.2:2,3).

Otherwise, even where simple and sufficient evidence is given—perhaps we should say, especially where this is the case—it may not yet be *recognized*. While stubbornness is certainly a cause of the rejection of truth, so is a lack of understanding. It is the glory of God to conceal a matter (Prov.25:2), and, in His greatness, even as He is able to reveal the most complex things imaginable, He is also able to hide the simplest things conceivable.

Samuel Johnson had the perfect answer to the man who has not yet been convinced by sufficient proof:

"Sir," he said, "I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."\* If, however, in the case of the reader, the light is beginning to dawn, it is important that you act upon your newfound knowledge, thus being adjusted by it while rejoicing in it (cf 2 Cor.13:11). Indeed, since we are men, and, "men love the darkness rather than the light" (John 3:19), "be walking while you have the light, lest the darkness may be overtaking you" (John 12:35).

#### INVIGORATION BY GRACE

So many, inferring ability from duty, have claimed, "I ought, therefore I can." This simply does not follow, and it is not true. Others have cleverly said, "Though you cannot, Christ can, and He will if you will only let Him." If it were acknowledged that both any "letting" of our own and any action in us by our Lord were themselves entirely the work of God in His own time and way, we would gladly concur. As these are denied, we cannot do so. Apart from the truth of God's deity, any talk of "letting the Lord have His way," degenerates into ill-disguised religious self-help, for it gives the vital glory to man, upon whom all depends.

We are indeed entreated to put on the new humanity and to think and walk ideally in every way, according to the apostle Paul's wise counsel which he got from the Lord. This includes our implementation of the panoply of God. But what we are not entreated to do is to create those influences which will cause us to heed these very counsels. For this we have a God, and He will see to all our needs.

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<sup>\*</sup>Samuel Boswell, Life of Johnson, 6 vols., 4:313; New York: Oxford University, 1970

This simple point is of great significance—indeed it is revolutionary—and, as it begins to influence us more, it will remove much of our self-hatred for our failures while enabling us to obey. This is so, even though we will have to bear the proud attitudes of others who cannot understand, since they do not rely on God alone for victory but ultimately look to themselves.

Having the spirit of sonship, as those who are loving God and are fond of the Lord Jesus Christ, we long to be well pleasing. We already *have* a new disposition and a new walk. It is too late for us to do our part by attempting to work one up. We are invigorated in the Lord and in the might of *His* strength (Eph.6:10). We are invigorated by the *grace* which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim.2:1), and so do not need to have any confidence in the flesh (Phil.3:3).

In addition, we are aware that ideal acts are beneficial and that all that are otherwise are destructive, both at present and at the dais of Christ. So as Paul says, "we are ambitious... to be well pleasing to Him" (2 Cor.5:9). We do not reason, Since I cannot help it if I should sin, let sin be increasing. Rather, we say, Even though that is true, if we should sin, we shall suffer and God will be displeased.

We do not need any help from myths about free will and contrary choice to give us an incentive to obey. Rather, we have the word of God which is operating in us who are believing (1 Thess.2:13). Therefore, let us pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace (2 Tim.2:22), recognizing our self-control and faithfulness for what they are, the fruit of the spirit, the spirit of our dear God and Father.

**James Coram** 

# UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 1988 BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME SEVENTY-NINE

## **EDITORIAL**

Some thoughts on ideal government and our need to be praying for those in authority over us (1 Tim.2:1-4) appearing in Brother A. E. Knoch's article on Solomon's prayer (see p.243) struck us as especially timely. Hence we have extracted them for our editorial in this issue:

The ideal is government by God Himself, as it will be in the consummation. But there is a gradual approach to this during the eons. To begin with, God gave Israel priests, but no king. He Himself intervened by means of "judges" or rulers, when necessary. A king was not given until the people clamored for one. So we see that kings, as well as priests, are only a temporary expedient, a passing provision, until all these functions are superseded by direct submission to God and immediate worship of the Supreme. There are intermediate stages in which priesthood and rule are strictly separate, yet other times when they are combined. This was foreshadowed by Melchizedek, who was both priest and king, and will be clearly exemplified by the Messiah, Who combines the two offices during the thousand years of His reign over Israel and the earth. Then they also will be a nation of priests.

In order to appreciate the perfection of Solomon's prayer, we must see its place in God's plan. There is something very remarkable in the fact that Solomon, a *king*, should *pray* at the dedication of the *temple*. It is highly suggestive that there seemed to be no special building to house the seat of government in Jerusalem, such as the capitol in Washington, or the Parliament or

Whitehall in London. Indeed, King David had built a palace for himself, corresponding to the White House, and Buckingham Palace, but these are not the seat of government, only the residence of the ruler. In Israel the center around which the nation was gathered was *God's* House, not *man's*.

Although Solomon did not actually infringe on the legal functions of the priesthood, in spirit he seems to have anticipated the union of the two to some extent in this prayer to Yahweh. Indeed, the reigns of David and Solomon over all Israel are a type of the glorious kingdom of our Lord, in the future. Strictly speaking, his business was to rule the people, not to pray to God. But he was wise enough to see that both must go together, for no one can rule acceptably unless God be with him. Indeed, if we learn nothing else from Solomon's prayer and his reign, we must be impressed by the close connection between the worship of God and the prosperity of the people. Notwithstanding the terrific drain upon their resources which it entailed, they enjoyed welfare as at no other time in their history.

In the present secret celestial administration the separation of church and state is much to be preferred, although it is contrary to the ideal. We are nearing the climax of man's rebellion against the Deity, and it is not the time for the ideal, except in our private experience. We must be subject to the political authorities, but we are not obliged to submit to the ecclesiastical powers. Whenever these have usurped control, it has been very trying for men of God. Priests may be much more merciless than politicians. The very word "inquisition" reminds us of the misuse of political power by religious potentates.

A.E.K.

## Praise and Prayer

## SOLOMON'S TEMPLE PRAYER

The praise and prayer at the dedication of the temple of Solomon (2 Chron.6:12-42; 1 Kings 8:22-53) is, like the building itself, a magnifical fabric of gold and silver and incorruptible thoughts, more valuable and indestructible than any other work in the worship of ancient times. This inaugural petition, when compared with its fulfillment as recorded in later history and prophecy, will help us much to perceive the place of prayer in God's dealings with His creatures. Wherever it calls for human cooperation, it fails to be fulfilled. Nevertheless, after man's impotence has been manifested, then God steps in and brings about a grand and glorious conclusion, as the final fulfillment.

The prayer of Solomon ascends to Yahweh in the crisis of a divine demonstration. God is staging the tragedy of Human Government in the land of Israel for all the world to see. And He has had it recorded for all future generations to read. It was not enacted merely to entertain, nor written for pious edification. It is God's means of teaching us a vital lesson that men and messengers must learn in order to enter into the joy and satisfaction of God's grand ultimate.

The two introductory scenes in the tragedy of Human Government, as revealed through the nation of Israel, had already been staged. They epitomized all that was to follow. Saul was a man's man. David was a man of God. Saul depicted the glory and energy of the flesh. He towered tall above the heads of all the people.

Physically he was the superior of everyone. He should have fought and conquered Goliath. Instead, his physical inferior, the little lad, David, is given the kingdom and promised it in perpetuity to his descendants, because he did not rely on his own strength, but on the help of God.

In Solomon we reach a climax and a turning point. He brings the kingdom to its highest glory, yet leads it to a cataclysm from which it has not yet recovered. Nor will it ever be restored to the power and splendor of the days of David and Solomon until the Messiah, David's greater Son, brings it back to God in the eons of the eons. There are two significant facts which should not escape us if we desire to get a grasp of the great lesson which the kingdom is intended to teach. The first is that Christ is not presented as the Son of Solomon, but of David. The second is that the kingdom was not restored by David's fleshly descendants, but will be by Him Who is also the Son of God and Who is anointed, not only with oil, but by God's holy spirit.

Another point is important and in perfect harmony with this lesson. The idea of building a temple, a magnificent house for the worship of Israel's God, did not originate with Solomon. It was *David* who desired to honor God in this way. His spiritual instinct made him uncomfortable in his house of cedar, while the God Whom he adored lived in a temporary tabernacle. Spiritually speaking it was the temple of *David*, rather than Solomon. He planned it and prepared for it.

We cannot repeat too often the striking fact that the greatness and glory of Solomon's reign was based upon the temple, not the throne, marvelous and magnificent as that was. Prosperity and power in the political sphere must rest on the spiritual basis of worship of the Deity, to be real and lasting.

#### THE PRAYER BEGINS

In 2 Chronicles 6:13-17 we read that Solomon stood on the copper laver in the outer court, knelt before the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his palms to the heavens, and prayed:

"O Yahweh Elohim of Israel, there is no elohim like You in the heavens and on the earth, keeping the covenant and the benignity toward Your servants who are walking before You with all their heart. You Who have kept with Your servant David, my father, what You spoke to him, You spoke with Your mouth, and You fulfilled it with Your hand, as on this day. And now, O Yahweh Elohim of Israel, keep with Your servant David, my father, what You spoke to him, saying: There shall not be cut off a man of yours from before Me, to sit on the throne of Israel, if your sons should keep their way to walk in My law just as you have walked before Me. And now, O Yahweh Elohim of Israel, let Your word come true that You have spoken to Your servant."

#### THE GOD OF ISRAEL

Yahweh is the God of Israel, and of no other nation. It is the eonian nation, predestinated by God to be the head and ruler, and the channel of blessing to all the rest. He is bound to them by His promises in the past and their fulfillment in the future. No other nation has such a God. By His revelation of Himself in the past and His promises for the future He has made of Israel a unique nation, altogether different from the rest. As has been fully explained elsewhere, His Name covers and comprehends their whole history, for they are welded into a special people by His dealings with them in the past, His discipline of them in the present, and His promises to them for the future.

#### THE COVENANT OF GOD

God had a covenant with Israel. If they kept His law, He would bless them. They thought they could keep it, but they failed miserably. Nevertheless, whenever they did so in some measure by the help of His spirit, He was faithful to His covenant, and they prospered, only to fall back into failure again. When they have learned the lesson that they cannot keep the law in their own strength, then He will write it on their hearts, and fulfill it by the power of His spirit in the day of Yahweh.

God's covenant with David and his dynasty is almost a perfect parallel to this. David himself, however, did not have the self-confidence of the people. He took it as an undeserved favor. That is why he was able to please Yahweh, and to sing His praises, and received such a special measure of blessing during his lifetime. Yet even he was disciplined, and the penalty for his sins was extended to his descendants (2 Sam.12:10). Like the law, this covenant was conditioned on their conduct. As a result, the history of the kingdom is a record of division and declension and apostasy, with a few intervals of restoration, until the kingdom was taken from them and Israel was deported and scattered among the nations, who were given their place of rule at the head of earthly dominion.

But, at the same time that God fulfills the law by placing it in their hearts, He will also give them a King, a Son of David, the Messiah, Who was begotten by God and anointed with His spirit, hence is fully able to meet the conditions and bring to Israel all the blessings which they failed to win in the past because of their disobedience.

Solomon prayed, "Keep with Your servant David, my father, what You spoke to him, saying, 'There shall

not be cut off a man of yours from before Me to sit on the throne of Israel, if your sons should keep their way to walk in My law, just as you have walked before Me'" (2 Chron.6:16). We can only too well understand Solomon for saying this, for the history of his descendants became one great demonstration of the faithlessness of David's line and its disastrous consequences, ending in the destruction of the magnificent building itself and the loss of the throne. Yet it is overwhelming to realize in what far more wonderful way God will, in the end, answer this prayer and fulfill His promises to David, notwithstanding the sins of his descendants and his people. He will send the Messiah, and overfill His covenant, in spite of their failure.

## GOD'S CONDESCENSION

Solomon's wisdom and humility was displayed in his next plea and petition. He had just finished what was probably the most marvelous temple ever built. No other God ever had such a magnificent place of worship. But Solomon was well versed in nature. He had been awed by the grandeur of the heavens. He reveled in the visible creation of God. In comparison with His handiwork, what was this temple that he had built? How could the God of the celestial realms come down to earth? How could He Who was high above the hosts of heaven condescend to dwell among men? Here is a note of wonder and adoration that may find an appropriate place in any prayer. Far more marvelous, however, is it that He should home in our hearts, for our base bodies cannot compare with the house that Solomon built in size or splendor.

Hence, Solomon exclaimed, "Will Yahweh truly dwell with mankind on the earth? Behold, the heavens and the heavens of the heavens themselves cannot contain You; how much less this House that I have built! Yet You will give countenance to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplication, O Yahweh my Elohim, to hearken to the appeal and to the prayer that Your servant is praying before You today. O that Your eyes be open toward this House by day and by night, toward the place where You promised to place Your name and to hearken to the prayer that Your servant is praying toward this place. You will hearken to the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, who are praying toward this place" (2 Chron. 6:18-20).

#### SOLOMON PRAYS FOR THE WORSHIPERS

Solomon himself and the people of Israel were to pray "toward" the temple with which God's name was connected. It was to be the place, the center, to which all should turn, in appealing to the Deity. His glories were represented there in tangible form for the eye to see and the ear to hear and the nose to smell; and all this was in accord with His own instructions. It is the elementary method which must be used with soulish creatures who must learn through their sensations. The walls which surrounded it indicated His holiness. the path through the curtains, past the altar and the layer revealed His salvation, the lampstand His illumination, the showbread His provision, and the golden altar with its incense the way of worship. Above all, in the holy of holies, the shekinah glory proclaimed His presence, even to the material man. In full accord with this was the instinctive desire to turn toward it when praying to the God Whom it housed and hid.

But Solomon was too wise to reason about God as if He were a man like himself. If one of us, or even Solomon were to take up our residence in the temple he had built, we would be forced to leave the place where we had been. We cannot be in more than one place at the same time. Yet the wise king realized that not even the heavens were vast enough to accommodate Him. How then could He forsake them entirely and dwell in a single place upon the earth (2 Chron.6:18)? Hence, throughout his prayer, he speaks of God as dwelling in heaven as well as on the earth. But the house that Solomon had built is distinguished as the place on earth where Yahweh has placed His "name." This is a most expressive figure of speech, in Hebrew, and denotes the location where the greatness of His glory and manifold magnificence is revealed, where His essential virtues are disclosed to the senses, by means of which mortals are able to realize and appreciate what He is to them in spirit.

Solomon's prayer was prophetic, for he did not fully follow Yahweh, even under the most favorable circumstances. His glory was great indeed, yet he sinned, and, when he was old, he went after the false gods of the nations, and his heart was not perfect with Yahweh, his God, as the heart of David, his father. We should learn from this that our prayers, be they ever so wise and consecrated, and even if we seek to throw all the responsibility on God, as every wise man will certainly do, will fail utterly to be fulfilled if there is the least of self involved. On the other hand, the appeal to the service of David was heard, for Solomon himself did not live to see the results of his defection. It was after his death that the greater part of the kingdom was rent from the house of David. The dire effect of his sins continued throughout the era of the kings. The house of David never again ruled over all Israel, and will not, until they are united in the hands of Messiah, in the future.

#### THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY

In Solomon Yahweh fulfilled what He had promised David up to that time. But thenceforth his further sons did not come up to the conditions, except in checkered fashion. They seldom kept His way and walked in His law. Consequently the line was cut off and the kingdom ended and given over to the nations in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. As a whole the line degenerated, but there were occasional returns to Yahweh, with consequent periods of blessing. It was only after the hopelessness of human rule had been fully demonstrated that the line was cut off temporarily, and the Davidic dynasty came to an end.

Nevertheless, even though David's sons according to the flesh had failed, his greater Son, Christ Jesus, will fulfill all that was promised to David, and far more, in the coming kingdom. And the splendors of His glorious rule will be greatly enhanced by the dark background of the past.

# THE WORSHIPERS PARDONED AND JUSTIFIED

The pardon of that day was *conditional*, even as our Lord showed when He told His hearers about the ten thousand talent debtor (Matt.18:24). The sacrifices offered on the altar of the temple had no such efficacy as the blood of Christ.

Justification was only for the *just*. It consisted in a recognition of their righteousness by Yahweh and a suitable reward. Many sought to justify themselves and merit God's blessings, like the Pharisee in our Lord's day. But few, indeed, were like the tribute collector, who did the right thing in acknowledging the wrong, and his need of a propitiatory shelter. (Luke 18:11-14)

#### THE PARDON OF THE NATION

As a nation, Israel was subject to God's judgments. When they sinned, Yahweh sent their enemies against them, who took away some or all of their land. This happened again and again. But when they prayed and supplicated Yahweh, they recovered what they had lost. Yet, eventually, Israel was deported, and never came back. Then Judah was carried to Babylon. But Daniel and others repented, and a remnant was restored. These were in the land when the Jews committed their greatest sin, the crucifixion of their Messiah. For this they were forgiven, at the request of the Saviour, on the cross, but they did not bring forth fruit suitable to repentance. Hence their pardon was withdrawn. To this day they are scattered among the nations. Those who return to the land are due to endure the great affliction, until their Messiah, the Son of David, will come and give them the kingdom.

All this is in fulfillment of this part of the prayer (2 Chron.6:36-39): "In case they are sinning against You (for there is no man who does not sin), and You are angry with them, and You give them up before the enemy, so that their captors capture them and bring them to the country of the enemy, far or near, yet they turn back their heart in the country where they are captives, so that they return to You and supplicate in the country of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned, we are deprayed, we are wicked, and they return to You, with all their heart and with all their soul, in the country of their captors who had captured them, and they pray to You in the direction of their land that You gave to their fathers and toward the city that You have chosen and toward the house that I have built for Your name, then You will hearken from the heavens, from the site of Your dwelling, to their prayer and their supplications, and You will execute right judgment for them, and pardon Your people who have sinned against You."

## THE "ANSWERS" TO SOLOMON'S PRAYER

The principal profit in judging such prayers as Solomon's lies in considering their fulfillment. From this we can see what to expect in our own case. In general, if we crave blessing contingent on human conduct, and not on God, we must prepare to be disappointed in our expectations. If we base them entirely on God, we are safe. Nevertheless, even our selfish wishes will be fulfilled fully and finally, not through our efforts, but in His final favor. We should consider each petition in order and see how it is answered in Israel's history. It is very helpful to have such a long period and so much detail, in which the prayer is worked out in actual practice in the Davidic dynasty, in the worshipers of Yahweh, in Israel as a nation. It will help us to understand the present Jewish crisis, and the struggle for the land of Palestine. God alone is the Source of every blessing, and it comes to His creatures through Christ. A.E.K.

(To be continued)

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# Studies in Deuteronomy

## LOVE HIM AND SERVE HIM

"AND NOW, ISRAEL, what is Yahweh your Elohim asking of you, save to fear Yahweh your Elohim, to walk in all His ways, to love Him and to serve Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, to observe the instructions of Yahweh your Elohim and His statutes that I am enjoining on you today for your good?" (Deut.10:12,13).

In his second address to the post-Sinai generation, Moses had dealt with the basic commandments, such as they were condensed in the Ten Words (the Decalog), and he had recalled Israel's attitude and behavior during the past forty years. With this background in mind, Moses turned to the present day situation: "And now, Israel!" Then he put a rhetorical question to his young audience: "What is Yahweh your Elohim asking of you?" In other words: What are His requirements regarding your behavior and your attitude toward Him? What does He require of you now, in this present day, and in the days to come?

The answer is first given in summary form and then expanded in the verses that follow: Fear Yahweh your Elohim, walk in all His ways, love Him, serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and observe the instructions of Yahweh your Elohim and His statutes. Moses knew that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God, and so he ended his long rhetorical question with the words, "that I am enjoining on you today for your good."

### COMPLETING HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF GOD

What was Yahweh Elohim asking of Israel's post-Sinai generation? Only this: Fear Yahweh your Elohim .... This injunction brings to mind Paul's words to the Corinthians: "For all of us must be manifested in front of the dais of Christ, that each should be requited for that which he puts into practice through the body, whether good or bad. Being aware then of the fear of the Lord...." And in view of the divine promises he wrote: "We should be cleansing ourselves from every pollution of flesh and spirit, completing holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor.5:10,11; 7:1).

Awareness of such fear does not mean that we should be frightened or afraid of Him; rather we ought to be filled with extreme reverence and awe toward the One Who foreknew us before the disruption of the world (Rom.8:29), we to be holy and flawless in His sight.

Similarly Yahweh had foreknown Abraham whom He had called and justified and appointed to become a father of many nations, especially of Israel whose case history was later given in the poetic verses of the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel: "In the day you were born you were not even swaddled, no eye commiserated over you . . . and you were flung to the surface of the field . . . . Seeing you weltering in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' A myriad, as the sprouting of the field I will make you." Or, in the words of Moses: "It was not because your multitude was more than all the other peoples that Yahweh was attached to you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all the peoples. But it was because of the love of Yahweh for you..." (Deut.7:7,8). Yet Israel had also been warned that they would perish as a nation if they would forget Yahweh their Elohim and not hearken to His voice

(Deut.8:19,20). So Israel should venerate Yahweh with profound reverence and awe, but should not be afraid or frightened of Him.

Paul too had a deep awareness of this awe that ought to inspire each believer's heart when he or she is reminded of the dais of Christ for the disclosure not only of what has been good and valuable in this life, but also of what has been worthless according to divine standard. Since each of us shall be giving account concerning himself or herself to God (Rom.14:12), Paul was filled with a wholesome reverence for his Lord, which caused him to be faithful as a deputy of Christ and an administrator of God's secrets (1 Cor.4:1)

So in the fear of God, in reverence and devotion toward Him Who has chosen us to be holy and flawless in His sight (Eph.1:4), we are now completing this holiness in response to His claim: "Present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service, and not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what is the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect" (Rom.12:1,2).

### WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS

We remember that holiness is the main theme of Leviticus. "Become holy, for I am holy" (19:2) could be termed the motto of this book. A third of it deals with prescriptions for *practical holiness*, such as basic principles about sacrifice and food (ch.17), standards for neighborliness (ch.19), statutes concerning religious festivals (ch.23) and sabbatical and jubilee years (ch.25). All of these things and more (such as cleansing of diseases, ch.14) make up the requirement of Deuteronomy 10:12, "Walk in all His ways."

During the past forty years, the constant disobedi-

ence and unfaithfulness of the older generation had been outward evidence of a corrupt inward attitude. If the post-Sinai generation would now learn to fear Yahweh, such an attitude of deep awe and respect for Him would manifest itself outwardly by walking in *all* His ways, or in other words, by observing His instructions and statutes (10:13).

### WALK WORTHILY OF THE LORD

In the present administration of the grace of God (Eph.3:2), we enjoy the privilege of praying and requesting for ourselves and others that we may be filled full with the realization of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, all of us to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God, being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy (cf Col.1:9-11). Let us give thanks to the Father Who through this prayer creates a yearning in our hearts to be walking as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), so that we may be testing what is well pleasing to the Lord (cf Eph.5:9).

Our inward man will be renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16) as long as we are fostering ourselves with the words of faith and of the ideal [Pauline] teaching (1 Tim.4:6). And so, whatsoever we may be doing, in word or in act, we will endeavor to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through Him (cf Col.3:17). Whenever we should more or less fail in this matter, Paul will remind us not to give up "the ideal contest of the faith" (1 Tim.6:12). He says to us: "We are asking you and entreating in the Lord Jesus that, according as you accepted from us

how you must be walking and pleasing God (according as you are walking also), that you may be superabounding yet more, for you are aware what charges we give to you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God: your holiness" (1 Thess.4:1-3).

### LOVE HIM AND SERVE HIM

Earlier in his second address (Deut.6:4-25) we heard Moses exhorting his audience to *love* Yahweh Elohim and to *serve Him alone* (6:13). To "love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your intensity" (6:5) is virtually synonymous with "*serve* Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (11:13).

In another context we learn that serving Yahweh Elohim will be outward evidence of an upright inward attitude, i.e., of love for Him. Should anyone ever say, "Let us go after other elohim (whom you have not known), and let us serve them," then Israel should not hearken to the words of that prophet or dreamer of dreams, "because Yahweh your Elohim is probing you to know whether you are loving Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:1-3). And so Moses emphasized: "He is the Elohim of elohim and the Lord of lords, the El, the great, the masterful and the fear-inspiring One. Yahweh your Elohim shall you fear, and Him shall you serve; to Him shall you cling" (10:17,20).

## GOD'S SERVANTS IN THE EVANGEL OF CHRIST

Timothy, said Paul, "slaves with me for the evangel" (Phil.2:22). And he used the introductory term "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus" (1:1), so as to conform to the foremost example for service and suffering, Christ Himself, Who took the form of a slave

(2:7). In a short paragraph (2:19-24), Timothy is presented as a model for service in this era. Some may not wish to serve without doing their own will and attending to their own welfare; they are not worthy of the title "slave," for the latter has no privileges or property that he calls his own; he only wants to please his Owner, his Lord Whom he dearly loves.

When the Thessalonians became imitators of Paul and [thus] of the Lord, they too were "slaving for the living and true God" (1 Thess.1:9). Elsewhere Paul had called Timothy: "God's servant in the evangel of Christ" (1 Thess.3:2).

#### HIGHEST SERVICE

Paul was announcing Christ among the nations, the expectation of glory; he was admonishing and teaching every man in all wisdom. Here we have the highest sphere of *sevice for today:* "that we should be presenting every man mature in Christ Jesus" (Col.1:28).

When Paul compared himself with the other apostles, he did not appeal to his superior training, his greater faith or any of his achievements, but rather he appealed to grace alone. "Yet in the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace which is in me, did not come to be for naught, but more exceedingly than all of them toil I—yet not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor.15:10).

Paul was writing to "those who are loving God" (Rom.8:28; 1 Cor.2:9). Hence he need not repeat the injunction of Deuteronomy 6:5 which our Lord had called "the great and foremost precept" (Matt.22:38). Yet (in His words) Leviticus 19:18 is like it. Paul quoted the latter in Galatians 5:14. "For the entire law is fulfilled in one word, in this: You shall love your associate as yourself."

## THOSE WHO ARE LOVING GOD\*

These words stand in the emphatic position in Greek (to the ones loving 'God, all is working-together 'God into good). This statement limits its application to those who have already been named saints (1:7) and sons of God (8:19). Only believers in whose hearts His love has been poured out, really love God. We love Him because He first loved us. Just as the sun is seen in its own light, so God is loved with the love that He has put in us and commended to us. Despite the differences which divide believers, they all have a love for God that marks them as His.

This is the only mention in Romans of the believers' love to God. But much is said of faith, and where there is faith, there is love and expectation also. Our love cannot but follow our faith. The greater our faith the more ardent will be our love, because faith occupies us with the great Lover, and love begets love. Should one ask, How may I know I am called? he may get his answer by asking another question, Do I love God? Love to God in our hearts witnesses to the fact that we have been called.

Our love to God is the token by which we may know that what is said in this passage (Rom.8:28-30) is true of ourselves. We know we do love God, even though we may lament that our love is faint or cold. If we doubt our love, we may be reassured by occupation with God and His word, while remembering that believers may become fond of their own gratification rather than of God (2 Tim.3:4). Love to God is a present positive effect that may be traced back to its cause in the divine call, the divine foredesignation,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>o</sup>Geo. L. Rogers, "God Works All Together for Good," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.26, excerpted and adapted from pp. 351,352.

and the divine foreknowledge. To discover love to God in our hearts gives us definite assurance that we are living within a predestined plan that will eventuate in the consummate glory of the sons of God. All true believers are lovers of God.

"Grace be with all who are loving our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption! Amen!" (Eph.6:24).

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Readers desiring a copy of the bound volume of *Unsearchable Riches* for 1988 may reserve one in their name (Volume LXXIX; \$9.00). We should have copies in stock by February, 1989.

The health of our Editor Emeritus, Ernest O. Knoch, who turns 82 this month, continues to be good. His address is: 6538 W. Ave. L12, #81E, Lancaster, CA 93536.

We appreciate the brief article by Bro. Harold G. Tutterrow that appears in this issue. Together with his wife Mary, he has attended our Bible classes in the Los Angeles area faithfully for many years, enthusiastically supporting and participating in our ministry.

As we reported in our last issue, many of our brethren in Jamaica have indeed suffered from the devastation wrought by Hurricane Gilbert in early September. Pastor James Hemmings writes, "The hurricane did extensive damage, inflicting much destruction. It affected my nerves badly. I spent a few days in bed after the hurricane, because I was too weak to go about, but thanks be to God I am feeling much better now. We lost three of our church buildings, including the largest and best one. Many of our brethren also suffered the loss of their homes and others were badly damaged, but we are trusting in the Lord to help. I should say that none of our brethren lost their lives or were severely injured. As for the work of the Lord, we are still going on. We had a lovely convocation at one of our country churches on October 16,17. The theme was, 'The Church, the Body of Christ.' I also presented an outline on 'The Bride of the Lambkin.' Please convey my love and best regards to all the dear saints and friends for me. God bless you all, and the wonderful work you are doing." Anyone who wishes to contribute to this need may do so through us.

## His Achievement Are We

## HIS ACHIEVEMENT ARE WE

For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God's approach present, not of works lest anyone should be boasting. For His achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them (Eph.2:8-10).

This passage is a most enlightening one. Its revelations are clearly expressed and are exceptionally glorious. We are overwhelmed by the magnificence of these declarations, and are exceedingly glad that they are true. For they allow us—indeed, they constrain us—to glorify God as God and to take our proper place as His creatures.

Ephesians 2:8 begins with the word "for" (gar, SURELY-CONSEQUENTLY): "For in grace, through faith, are you saved." Gar is "a causal conjunction, introducing the logical reason" (Keyword Concordance, p.114, entry "for"). Whenever a sentence or clause begins with this word, what follows tells us why that which has gone before is so. It joins one thought to another, forming the causal link between them.

### YET GOD

As in any passage in which gar appears, in Ephesians 2:8 at the beginning of the verse, we should note the causal relationship between a former and a latter statement, in order to understand why the declarations which have already been set forth are true.

The immediate revelation previous to Ephesians 2:8 is comprised in verses 1 to 7. There we learn that, notwithstanding our former walk, our shameful behavior in the lusts of our flesh, being, in our nature "children of indignation, even as the rest, yet God...." (Eph. 2:3b,4a).

Yet God! "O what meaning, O what wealth these words impart." It is true that, having become unnatural through our own inherent disposition with which we were born (Rom.8:7), besides the ravages of mortality and those influences of sin which "accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air" (Eph.2:2), we were indeed, "in our nature, children of indignation, even as the rest" (Eph.2:3b). Consequently, we could only anticipate severe divine judgment. This is because, in the day of indignation and revelation of God's just judgment, "indignation and fury, affliction and distress" will be upon "every human soul which is effecting evil" (Rom.2:9).

Nonetheless, Yet God! It is evident that Paul is speaking here in an ultimate or final sense in accounting for the stupendous change that has occurred with regard to our present standing and future course. He has just rehearsed our awful past and insisted that insofar as anything related either to our acts or nature is concerned, it can only be said that we were, "children of indignation, even as the rest." That is, we had no more claim upon God's blessing and were no more entitled to exemption from indignation, much less to possession of eonian life, than anyone else.

Now if it were true, as many will say, that man is finally the key to his own welfare—especially to such unspeakable gain as exemption from indignation and deliverance unto glory—this would have been just the place to have made this known. In fact, if such a thing

were true, Paul should have made this clear, and would have been terribly remiss in having failed to do so.

But what does our apostle declare? Does he say, "Yet man..."? Does he say, "Yet men, those such as ourselves who are saved, at the vital point, their former sinfulness notwithstanding, summoned something from within so as to make the right decision and thus qualify themselves for divine deliverance"? If this idea is the truth, Paul should have said as much, and he should never have said—especially at this vital juncture—"Yet God..."

Yet this is just what he did say! He said, setting forth the truth, "Yet God...." "Yet God, being rich in mercy, because of the vast love with which He loves us (we also being dead to the offenses and the lusts [cp Rom.6:10]), vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Eph.2:4-7).

### THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH

The words of our Lord in Luke 6:32-35 give us an illuminating illustration of true grace: "If you are loving those loving you, what grace\* is it to you? For sinners also are loving those loving them. And if you should be doing good to those doing good to you, what grace is it to you? For sinners also are doing the same. And if you should ever be lending to those from whom you are expecting to get back, what grace is it to you? For sinners also are lending to sinners, that they may get

<sup>&</sup>quot;"thanks," literally, is "grace"

back the equivalent. Moreover, be loving your enemies, and be doing good, and be lending, expecting nothing from them, and your wages will be vast in the heavens, and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked."

Grace is that which is *not* out of works (Rom.11:6), which exists in order to bring joy and blessing to its beneficiaries (*cp charis*, joy, "grace"; *charisma*, joy-EFFECT, "grace"; *chara*, joy, "joy").

While Grace is not partial (sinfully preferential), it is nonetheless *purposeful*. Any gracious gift, then, that is not intended for all, through its very purposefulness, necessarily excludes those for whom it is not designed, as much so as would be the case if its motivation were that of partiality.

"Grace" refers to God's work or action of grace, the work which He does for us and in us, as a favor or gracious gift. As ordinarily used, the expression "God's grace" is a figure of speech. It is a metonymy (figure of association) for "God's work of grace," in reference to whatever gracious gift may be in view. That is, literally, grace is not an action, but the character of an action.

The grace of God is effective, for it, like everything else, only exists according to God's own intention and purpose (Eph.1:11; Rom.9:19; Isa.46:10,11). Indeed, it is the *saving* grace of the *Almighty* God (Titus 2:11; Rev.11:17).

Consequently, then, since it is effective, grace is a causal entity. This entails the necessary and inevitable existence of its achievements. That is, *Grace cannot fail*.

Grace is not a wage or requital in response to service or cooperation (Rom.4:4). Instead, it constitutes a *favor*. Grace acts in order to bless. It does not offer to bless, but actually effects blessing. Therefore, at the deepest level, grace always *initiates*, out of its own intrinsic virtue. Though it responds to need, it is never under extrinsic obligation to do so and can never be put under such obligation.

Our God is in the heavens: He has done whatsoever He has pleased (Psa.115:3; cp Psa.135:6). Though He loves His creatures and provides for them ideally, He is never beholden to them. "For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:36).

"The word of the truth of the evangel... is bearing fruit and growing...[in] you...," "from the day on which you hear and realized the grace of God in truth" (Col.1:5.6).

### IN GRACE, THROUGH FAITH

In light of these prior and related revelations, Paul declares, "For in grace, . . . are you saved" (Eph.2:8). We have all that we enjoy in Christ, because we are saved in grace. It is true, in the nature of things, that we are saved by grace, for we are saved by God Who acts in grace in saving us. "Grace," however, is in the dative case, and this idea is most clearly conveyed in English by the word "in" (or "to," or "into"). It speaks of the sphere in which salvation occurs, in which we find ourselves, the effectual agency of which having wrought our salvation.

We are about to address the question of the words "through faith," which we omitted (indicated by the elliptical dots) in our citation from Ephesians 2:8 in the previous paragraph. We did so not because we wish to minimize them or pass them by altogether, but because we wish to show that they do not represent the

primary revelation here. The emphasis of this passage is upon God's grace, not the means which it employs.

### FAITH IS A CHANNEL

It is frequently very helpful to simplify a statement into its most basic form, for apart from the wider thought of its complete expression, the basic expression of a thought in itself remains fully true. For example, if we are told that "thus God loves the world, that He gives His only-begotten Son . . . . "(John 3:16a), it must be so, first of all, that "God loves the world." He could not love the world "thus" if He did not love the world at all.

Similarly, we could never be saved in grace "through faith," if it were not first of all true that, in any case, "in grace . . . are you saved." We have been saved in grace. The revelation of any further particulars concerning our salvation in grace will not change this fact.

In most considerations of the phrase, "through faith," "through" is usually ignored altogether, "faith" alone being given any attention. Yet what does it mean for something to come to us "through" something else? That is, what does "through" mean? "Through" is a preposition which means "by way of." A synonym for "through" is "by means of." That which serves as the means through which something else is achieved, is merely a channel. It is the means which the one who achieves the objective in view uses in order to accomplish his purpose.

The fact that God uses the faith that we havewhich He first of all grants us—in order to effect one aspect or another of the salvation which He Himself thus works in us, does not make faith into some type of contributing factor which ultimately owes its existence

to the flesh and not to God.

## GOD'S APPROACH PRESENT

Similarly, before giving emphasis to our own pursuit of a righteous walk, we would emphasize God's righteousness, and seek to perceive its significance as well as its achievements. God's righteousness is manifested to us "through Jesus Christ's faith" (Rom.3:22). Even Christ's faith, His faithful obedience to God even unto the death of the cross, is only the channel of God's own righteousness. Ultimately, it is the Deity Himself Who alone is our God and Saviour. Our Lord's sacrifice would have occurred in vain were it not the fulfilling of God's own counsels (cp Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:27,28).

In speaking of our glorious salvation in grace through faith, Paul would have us know that "this is *not* out of you; it is God's approach present, lest anyone should be boasting" (Eph.2:8b,9). We doubt that any are so foolish to suggest that salvation itself is actually man's creation and that God only makes use of it after it comes to Him "out of us." This cannot be what the words, "this is not out of you" are denying (Eph.2:8b). Rather, Paul's point is that it is not due to something from (i.e., "out of") us that we now find ourselves in Christ and the beneficiaries of God's saving operations.

Instead, our salvation in grace through faith, is God's "approach present" (dōron, GIVE-GUSH). Our salvation, in its entirety is a present! It is that which God has given us out of His love. Dōron is practically the same word as dōrea (GIVE-GUSH) and is defined for us by the adjectival form, dōrean (GIVE-GUSHEd), which means "gratuitously" or "freely."

This clearly shows that it is completely mistaken to conceive of one's faith as a means of qualification, a practical warrant entitling its bearer to God's salvation while placing the Deity under obligation to grant it, as if He had promised to do so on such a basis.

In Greek this special form, dōron, served to represent the Hebrew "corban" (korban, Heb. qrbn, NEAR, approach; Mark 7:11). In the figure, here in Ephesians 2:8b, instead of the sinner bringing a sacrificial gift unto God, God brings a sacrificial gift on behalf of the sinner in order that he may approach unto God! The gift has already been purchased and its character fully determined before we are even told what it is. Any "rejection" of it by ourselves will not change the fact that it is ours. That is, this will be so if we are indeed among God's chosen ones, which is evidenced not by our understanding of these mature revelations of Ephesians but by our basic faith in Christ's death and resurrection.

Indeed if we should reject the salvation encompassed in the approach present of God of Ephesians 2:8, it can only be because we really do not believe at all, or because while we do believe in Christ and His sacrificial death, we do not yet believe what God actually says as to the nature of His approach present for us which is presented in this passage. This, of course, will not change the character of God's gift; it will only mean that, at present, we cannot *enjoy* what we actually possess, being in the trap of the Adversary, having been caught alive by him, for that one's will (*cf* 2 Tim. 2:25,26).

### THE DOINGS OF GOD

Our salvation is not out of ourselves. We do not possess it because we have done this or that in order to acquire it. Consequently, boasting is debarred (Rom. 3:27). This is because we are God's achievement. "For His achievement are we" (Eph.2:10a). We are saved because we are God's achievement. It is just that simple and this is fully the truth.

The word "achievement," is poiêma (Do-effect). We are the product of God's doings. It is only unbelief that will seek to modify this or to explain it away. This unbelief is due to the deceptive influences of the worldly philosophy known as free will. We do not care for the fact that we ourselves, who effect much evil and some good, are the product of God's own doings.

God, however, is able to operate in us, to will and to work for the sake of His delight (Phil.2:13), so that we think of these matters continually, and in a profitable and uplifting way. As those who are God's achievement, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, ones which God Himself prepared beforehand, there is no possibility but that we should be walking in them. Indeed, since the subjunctive, "should," in this case, points us only to God, the good works to which it refers are just as certain to be accomplished as would be the case had the indicative "shall" been used instead.

May God grant us a foretaste of the superabundant and transcendent good works of the future in a measure of good works even now, even if the best of these should be totally eclipsed when compared to our labors to come, during the oncoming eons, when we are conformed to the image of God's Son and seated together among the celestials (Rom.8:29; Eph.2:6).

"Lest anyone should be boasting"—lest we ourselves should artfully contrive some way to look to and lean upon the flesh—we would glory only in God and in His Christ. We are saved in grace through faith, faith being an assumption, based upon God's own word, concerning what is already true prior to and apart from our conviction in it. "For His achievement are we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them" (Eph.2:10).

# The Disposition of Christ

## "IN HIS HUMILIATION"

THE HUMILIATIONS of Jesus were determined and willed by His God and Father before the disruption (Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Pet.1:19,20). Indeed, as the Lamb of God, they were the basis of God's grace, foreknown before times eonian (2 Tim.1:19). Jesus came as Son of God and as Son of mankind. As Man, He was appointed to the self-same humiliations as man: birth, as man also is born, except with no earthly father; knowing the frailities and afflictions of man; and then the rejection of all that He had to offer as Messiah and King, leading up to His crucifixion and entombment, with what appeared as the Adversary's victory over the Christ, the Anointed One, the Son of God.

"To His own He came, and those who are His own accepted Him not" (John 1:11). He was crucified by Iew and Gentile alike:

"As a sheep to slaughter was He led,

And as a lamb in front of its shearer is not bleating, Thus He is not opening His mouth.

In His humiliation His judging was taken away.

His generation who will be relating?

For His life is being taken away from the earth"

(Acts 8:32,33).

"These things Isaiah said, seeing that he perceived His glory, and speaks concerning Him" (John 12:41). The prophets, like Isaiah who was quoted in Acts 8, were to write (how fully!) of Jesus' earthly appearance and of His rejection and humiliation. Much in the Psalms also concerns Christ in His sufferings. Jesus was to fulfill, and did fulfill, all that was written about Him in the "law of Moses and the prophets and psalms" (Luke 24:44).

### HIS BIRTH

"And suddenly with the messenger there came to be a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God . . .'" (Luke 2:13,14). This was at His birth in Bethlehem, certainly a humiliation to the Christ, the Anointed One, and yet in full obedience to His God: to be born of woman, to be born as man.

### FRAILITIES AND AFFLICTIONS

The words of Yahweh Elohim to Adam were: "Yet from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are not to be eating from it, for in the day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying" (Gen.2:17). Then we read: "In the sweat of your face shall you eat your bread, till you return to the ground, for from it are you taken, for soil you are, and to soil are your returning . . . . And Yahweh Elohim is sending [Adam and Eve] away from the garden of Eden to serve the ground whence he is taken" (Gen.3:16-24).

It was into this world that He came. "For thus God loves the world, so that He gives His only-begotten Son" (John 3:16). Christ Jesus "empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming

that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2:7-11).

In this we read of God's full acceptance of His Son's obedience to His Father's will, and to the humiliations He suffered here on earth.

### THE CURSE

We read further in the later chapters of the four Accounts, all that led up to man's ultimate humiliation against God's Son on Golgotha. Further than this, He was to endure God's curse upon those crucified, "for it is written, Accursed is everyone hanging on a pole," and yet, it was that "Christ reclaims us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for our sakes..." and "... that the blessing of Abraham may be coming to the nations in Christ Jesus, that we may be obtaining the promise of the spirit through faith" (Gal.3:13,14).

And so are we given in chapter 53 of Isaiah a prophecy, a record, of all that He must needs suffer, that He might be in the perfect will of His God and Father, and that He might be, as He said: "... the Way and the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6).

How gloriously does our God, in the humiliations of Christ, display His grace for man to know!

"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).

Jesus Christ's first coming was in humiliation. His second shall be in glory (2 Thess.1:10)!

Certainly humiliation, and man's need for God, these all precede God's justifying, and God's All.

Harold G. Tutterrow

# Among the Celestials

## CLOSING THOUGHTS

(Ephesians 6:18-24)

During every prayer and petition be praying on every occasion (in spirit being vigilant also for it with all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints, and for me), that to me expression may be granted, in the opening of my mouth with boldness, to make known the secret of the evangel, for which I am conducting an embassy in a chain, that in it I should be speaking boldly, as I must speak (Eph.6:18-20).

### PETITIONS FOR BOLDNESS

Paul here makes a request of those to whom he was writing, that prayers should be continuously made on his own behalf, but not for his own welfare, but rather that the ministry committed to him by God should be boldly pursued. We cannot now pray that Paul's mouth might be opened for him to speak fearlessly, but we can pray that our hearts and minds (and those of all the saints) might be opened to receive the secret of the evangel which he proclaimed.

It is of particular interest that we should note that Paul himself sought the prayers of others. After all, he was an apostle, with a message committed to him by God, yet he was concerned lest he should fall short in the promulgation of it. He might be too timid, vague or indefinite—in short, not bold enough. If he felt that way, how should we feel? Let us never imagine that

we can do without the upholding prayers of fellowbelievers, nor think that they do not need ours. Paul never ceased to give thanks for the saints, making mention of them in his prayers (Eph.1:16). Again, in Colossians 1:9, he tells the saints in that ecclesia that he does not cease praying for them and requesting that they may be filled full with the realization of God's will.

A statement, similar to that in the passage we are considering, occurs in Colossians 4:2-6. There Paul prays that God should be "opening for us a door of the word." The fact is that neither the apostle nor we can get anyone to accept the evangel unless God opens the way. We cannot of ourselves convert anybody. Jesus Himself said when He was on earth, "No one can come to Me if ever the Father Who sends Me should not be drawing him" (John 6:44). If that was true when He was proclaiming an earthly kingdom, how much rather is it true of those who come to appreciate Paul's evangel with its celestial calling and allotment!

Paul describes himself as conducting an embassy in a chain. This chain was laid about him on account of the expectation of Israel (Acts 28:20). Paul's ministry was first to the Jews, but they rejected his teachings and delivered him up to the Romans, even when the latter could find no fault with him. This had been the cause of his appeal to Caesar, which had brought him to Rome as a prisoner. It was as a prisoner that he revealed and proclaimed the wonderful truths outlined in the so-called prison epistles, and especially the one we have been studying. Yet God allowed him to be bound and suffer imprisonment.

An ambassador in chains is, to human minds, an untenable situation. It would be a direct affront to the Power whose ambassador he was. To imprison or enchain a foreign ambassador is tantamount to an act of war. Yet God allows His ambassador to be chained while proclaiming through him an evangel of conciliation and peace. God refuses, during this interval of grace, to be drawn into any form of conflict, but continues to hold out the hand of true love and friendship. As Paul declares in 2 Timothy 2:9, after he had made the point that he was suffering evil unto bounds as a malefactor, "the word of God is not bound."

Richard Lovelace once wrote, "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage," and this is certainly true of the Word of God. In no way is it bound at any time. God's servants may be imprisoned, indeed many have been, but His Word never. Few expressions in scripture, are more absolute in their meaning than this, "the word of God is not bound." It is invariably in accord with His purpose, and is fearless in proclaiming His intentions. Moreover, it never compromises the truth, but throughout maintains the righteousness of Him Whose word it is

#### ACCORD

We have almost come to the end of our studies in this wonderful epistle, but before we close, we might note how often the root word "accord" occurs in this letter. Its variants are "according as," when followed by a verb, and "according to" or "in accord with" when succeeded by a noun. There are more than twenty instances in Ephesians, and the full list is as follows (note particularly the comprehensive nature of the expressions to which comparison is made in the majority of these):

- 1:4 according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world
- 1:5 in accord with the delight of His will

- 1:7 in accord with the riches of His grace
- 1:9 in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Him
- 1:11 according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all
- 1:11 in accord with the counsel of His will
- 1:19 in accord with the operation of the might of His strength
- 2:2 in accord with the eon of this world
- 2:2 in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air
  - 3:3 according as I write before, in brief
- 3:7 in accord with the gratuity of the grace of God
- 3:11 in accord with the purpose of the eons
- 3:16 in accord with the riches of His glory
- 3:20 according to the power that is operating in us
- 4:4 according as you were called also with one expectation of your calling
- 4:7 in accord with the measure of the gratuity of Christ
- 4:16 in accord with the operation in measure of each one's part
- 4:17 according as those of the nations also are walking
- 4:21 according as the truth is in Jesus
- 4:22 in accord with its seductive desires
- 4:24 in accord with God, is being created in righteousness
- 4:32 according as God also, in Christ, deals graciously with you
- 5:2 according as Christ also loves you, and gives Himself up
- 5:3 according as is becoming in saints
- 5:25 according as Christ also loves the ecclesia
- 5:30 according as Christ also the ecclesia

Most of these expressions merit a study on their own. For instance, let us remind ourselves again of the first one. What a depth of truth there is in the statement: "according as He chooses us in Him." To be chosen at all by God is a tremendous honor; to be chosen in Christ is a privilege beyond measure. And when we add the further fact, "before the disruption of the world," we are entering into a new dimension indeed. For only three times in scripture does the expression, "before the disruption of the world," occur, and the other two relate to the love which God has for His Son (John 17:24) and His foreknowledge of Christ's sacrifice (1 Peter 1:20). These three usages indicate, firstly, the motive behind the evangel, which is declared to be "concerning God's Son" (Rom.1:3); secondly, the means by which its accomplishment is attained, "making peace through the blood of His cross" (Col.1:20); and thirdly, the *medium* through which this is to be completed, namely, the ecclesia which is Christ's body (Eph.1:23).

To be chosen in Christ before the disruption of the world means that we were given a part in God's purpose before there was any sign of rebellion in God's universe. and, as we saw in an earlier study, nothing that has come about as a result of that rebellion can have any lasting, detrimental effect upon those who form the ecclesia which is the body of Christ. They forever remain "holy and flawless" in God's sight (see Unsearchable Riches, volume 75, pages 69-71, for earlier discussion on this passage).

And so we could spend profitable hours examining each of these expressions in far more detail than we have been able to give them in these studies. Thereby we would grow in grace and in the knowledge of our God and His glorious purpose, in which we have been designated beforehand to play a vital role. In our meditations on this letter of Paul to the Ephesians, we have been touching on, and venturing into, the greatest truths that God has ever revealed to humanity. He has disclosed the intimate secrets of His heart, and only those motivated by His spirit can receive them. But the spirit searches all things, even the depths of God, and we are privileged indeed if we have the spirit of our Father dwelling within us, for that spirit not only reveals God's thoughts to our minds, but is also a pledge, sealing us in such a way that no one will be able to rob us of the full enjoyment of our eonian allotment in Christ (1 Cor.2:10; 2 Cor.1:22; Eph.1:14).

### PERSONAL CONCERN

Now that you also may be acquainted with my affairs, and what is engaging me, all will be made known to you by Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful servant in the Lord, whom I send to you for this same thing, that you may know our concerns, and he should be consoling your hearts (6:21,22).

The last few words of this epistle are in the form of personal regards and solicitations. Paul always shows a concern for those to whom he is writing, and is aware that they are anxious about him. Such personal messages among brothers and sisters in Christ are a valuable ingredient of true fellowship, and can be of both encouragement and consolation to those who participate. Nowadays, messages are easily transmitted through the press and postal services. In Paul's day reliance had to be placed in trusted carriers, one of whom was Tychicus, whose name occurs again in Colossians 4:7, as well as in Acts 20:4, 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12 (five times in all, again the number of grace). Evidently he was well-travelled and very useful to Paul and the saints in that he not only carried

documents, but also was charged with the privilege of adding further explanations by word of mouth. No doubt, for example, he would be a pillar of support to the repentant Onesimus when he accompanied him back to Colosse, the home town of Philemon.

#### INVOCATION FOR DIVINE BLESSING

Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be with all who are loving our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption! Amen! (6:23,24).

The first half of the Ephesian epistle ends in a doxology, an ascribing of praise to God (3:20,21). The second half ends in a benediction, an invoking of divine blessing from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace, love, faith, grace. How these terms have all been enhanced through their usage in this letter! Peace becomes the tie by which the unity of the faith is kept (4:3). The love of God becomes, to the ecclesia, the vast love with which He loves us (2:4). The love of Christ is here the knowledge-transcending love of Christ (3:19). The grace of God is now the riches of His grace (1:7), and, in the oncoming eons, will be the transcendent riches of His grace (2:7). This is in accord with the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing (1:19). As for faith, it is portrayed in turn as the medium through which we are being saved (2:8), the means by which Christ may dwell in our hearts (3:17), the basis for unity (4:5,13), and a shield of defense against the fiery arrows of the Adversary (6:16).

May our grasp of these thoughts, and all the others in the epistle, stimulate us to a greater love for our God and Father, and for our Lord Jesus Christ, Whose complement we are. May our love for one another also be unfeigned; then we shall indeed walk worthily of the calling wherewith we have been called. Amen.

John H. Essex

note: With this article, Brother Essex concludes his series of studies in Ephesians, which he entitled "Among the Celestials." The series began in the January 1984 issue of *Unsearchable Riches* (vol.75, p.5). We take the liberty here of adding these few thoughts from the closing article of A. E. Knoch's series on this epistle:

## **GOD'S VAST LOVE**

Love underlies it all. All was created in the Son of God's love. The eons will not cease to unfold until all shall respond and satisfy the longings of His heart. To display His love and create a response in the breasts of His creatures is the purpose of the eons. Does not this explain the pain, the sorrow, the despair, and the death which seem to have blighted all His efforts? These are but the background, the contrast so essential for the revelation of their opposites. They are the bitter ingredients without which we cannot know the balm, the joy, the ecstasy, the ineffable delight which God has prepared for us. Adam would never have known good if he had not eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We can never know grace unless we first experience sin.

In Ephesians we see man at his worst and God at His best. There is the deepest degradation and the greatest grace. It is an epistle of superlatives. The last becomes first, the lowest highest. The dregs of earth become the elect of heaven. We are His achievement, a special and permanent display to exhibit to an admiring universe the multifarious wisdom and the immense wealth of grace there is in Him.

A.E.K.

## Studies in Romans

## "YET THE NATIONS"

(Romans 15:8-13)

THE BENEDICTION of Romans 15:5-7 might well lead the reader to suppose Paul is ending his letter. He has invoked "the God of endurance and consolation," seeking mutuality and oneness for the believers from Him. This is to accord with Christ's disposition of selfless compassion for others' good and for the glory of God. What better summation could be made of the evangel Paul was heralding? What more is there to be said?

Yet the apostle is not through. Indeed, he has not really completed his benediction and will take it up again in verse 13. In the meantime there is still a need, not so much for further revelation as amplification of what has been revealed. At least two related matters will now be taken up. First, Paul wishes to underline the fact that Christ has taken all believers to Himself, whether of the Circumcision or Uncircumcision. And secondly, he wishes to stress that this point concerning those out of the nations is vital to his whole ministry (see verse 16).

It is essential for the believer to become acquainted with Christ as Paul presented Him. We must see Him as the One Whose obedience leads to righteousness for all, as He was manifested in Romans 5:12-19. The restricted, earthly ministry of Jesus, confined almost entirely to the nation of Israel, would not adequately serve to instill us with the kind of service Paul has in

view in Romans 15. While the labors of our Lord in the land did manifest a disposition of humble service, to Paul was given the revelation of God's Son dying for everyone who was a sinner, even for enemies, and without any consideration of their fleshly connections or history. This needs to be appreciated if we are to know the peace and joy of mutuality among ourselves and to be glorifying God in our service.

For I am saying that Christ has become the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises (Rom.15:8).

Verse 7 has stated that Christ took us to Himself. Now verse 8 reminds us that He had become the Servant of the Circumcision. There is a revelation of His humble disposition in both statements, but the first stands out as the more astounding. It is one thing for Christ to have become a Servant to the chosen nation, but it is far more surprising that He should have approached Israel's enemies and drawn them to Himself in love and peace. Divine promises made in ancient times to the patriarchs had prepared for Messiah's descent to them. But His emptying of Himself and humbling of Himself even to the death of the cross, on behalf of Gentiles as well as Israelites, was astonishing, even though there were prophecies in the Old Testament that harmonized with such a development.

Verse 8 is not given primarily to display Christ's humble disposition (though it does do that, and that is most relevant to the context), but to remind us that the exclusiveness of Christ's former ministry no longer applies. The "Servant of the Circumcision" is now the Saviour and Lord of all those who are believing.

Brother A. E. Knoch observed, "Christ never went outside the land of Israel. He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.... Throughout the Lord's public life He emphasized the fact that His mission was to Israel exclusively. A few proselytes, indeed, received blessing, but they were counted as one with the favored nation. The Syro-Phoenician woman had to take the place of an outcast before she could get a crumb from Israel's board."\*

Christ confirmed the patriarchal promises. But these promises which were given to Israel, also spoke of blessings for the nations. Such prophecies (although they did not directly speak of the things Paul has been teaching) accorded very well with his ministry.

... Yet the nations are to glorify God for His mercy, according as it is written ... (v.9a).

The self-emptying of Christ was on behalf of Israel in confirmation of Old Testament prophesies, but not on their behalf alone. *In accord with* the many prophesies looking forward to blessings for the nations, Christ's humbling was also on behalf of those who are of the Uncircumcision. As Paul had previously written, "There is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23). This lack is also filled without distinction; whether of the Circumcision or of the Uncircumcision, we are "being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus" (3:24).

Similarly, there is to be no distinction, or bias shown, among believers in taking others to ourselves in kindness, graciousness, leniency and concern. This special pattern of service set forth by Paul in Romans 14 and 15 is also in accord with Old Testament passages.

Therefore, the nations are to glorify God for His mercy. This should recall verse 7 to mind. There is an

<sup>\*</sup>Concordant Commentary, p.245

obvious connection between the statement that Christ took us to Himself for the glory of God, and these words in verse 9 about the nations glorifying God. We also have a part in this great process of giving ourselves for others' good to the glory of God.

And this blessing is according as it is written in the Psalms, in Deuteronomy and in Isaiah (representing the three sections of the Hebrew scriptures, cf Luke 24:44), even though in the original contexts, the specific blessings in view for the Gentiles differed from those Paul has been discussing in Romans.

The first citation is from Psalm 18:49 which Paul

adapts as follows:

"Therefore I shall be acclaiming Thee among the nations,"

"And to Thy name shall I be playing music" (Rom. 15:9b).

Although the Psalm most certainly was originally an expression of David's personal desire to make known Yahweh's greatness among the nations he had contact with, the ultimate application is to Christ making known God's glories to Gentiles in the Kingdom. Now Paul shows us that even as the great Son of David will acclaim the glories of God among the nations during His future reign, so also (in accord with that) God's glories are now being acclaimed among the nations through the evangel Paul is dispensing, given to Him by a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal.1:12). This also accords with what was written in Deuteronomy 32:43, which is presented here in Romans 15:10, as follows:

And again he is saying,

"Be merry, ye nations, with His people."

Moses had first sung these words, and now Paul finds in them a pattern of the mutuality in joy that develops among believers, whether of the Circumcision or of the Uncircumcision. Again, the original associations of this passage in the context of Deuteronomy are not in view here in Romans. But the pattern is very much the same. The word "merry" serves now to point ahead to the words "all joy" in verse 13, and the phrase "with His people" points back to verse 5 where Paul had entreated us to be mutually disposed to one another.

Next, Paul cites another passage from the Psalms, and uses it as a precedent for Gentiles being involved in glorifying God:

And again he is saying,

"Praise the Lord, all nations"

And "let all the peoples laud Him" (Rom.15:11).

This is based on the shortest of all the Psalms, Psalm 117, verse 1, where we read,

"Praise Yahweh, all nations!

Laud Him, all clans!"

The nations will bring glory to God during the millennium, and this pictures what Paul has been saying about believers being useful today in service to the praise and glory of God. The apostle sees this pattern of Psalm 117:1 being represented today in the way the evangel works in believers' lives. Even if we are immature and ignorant of many of the things of God made known to Israel, if we have been enabled to manifest something of Christ's disposition we will be bringing glory to God.

And again Isaiah is saying, there will be "the root of Jesse,

And He Who is rising to be Chief of the nations:

On Him will the nations rely" (Rom.15:12).

The Greek word for "rely" is the same as that for "expect," and so it connects with the noun "expectation" in Romans 15:13. The expectation of all believers,

including Gentiles, is in Christ on Whom we all rely. He is "Chief" of Gentile believers as well as those who are out of the Circumcision. Thus the passage in Isaiah 11:10 becomes a pattern for the thoughts of Romans 15. Our expectation is in Christ, Who is fully reliable; this is an amazing thing for people who had no claim on Him according to the flesh.

Now may the God of expectation be filling you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the power of holy spirit (Rom.15:13).

Here is a second benediction, which is really, as we have noted, an extension of verses 5-7. Verses 8-12 have served as a parenthesis, dealing with the marvel of Gentiles being included in God's gift of endurance and consolation, as revealed in Paul's evangel. And now the benediction concerning daily and sustaining blessing for believers is resumed.

In verse 5, Paul invoked God as the "God of endurance and consolation." Now the complementary designation, "God of expectation," is used. Earlier the apostle had written that we may be boasting "in expectation of the glory of God" (Rom.5:2). God Himself, as the God of expectation, has given us this blessing. And we note how closely this expectation is related to glory, both to glory enjoyed and to the glorifying of God, which in fact are inseparable matters.

There is so much struggle and discouragement in our current lives in the flesh, that the grace of expectation cannot help but become more and more precious to us. It is one of the three greater graces that remain and encourage us throughout our lives (1 Cor.13:13).

Here, as in other passages in Paul's epistles, expectation is closely associated with faith. Its blessings are given "in believing." Hence Paul looks to the God of

expectation to *fill* those who are believing with joy and peace.

We have often noted that the word "joy" is nearly the same as the word "grace" in Greek. Joy and peace are the fruit borne by the believer who has received and has come to appreciate the divine gifts of grace and conciliation. God gives us grace and peace (cf Rom.1:7b), and this is good news, gospel, evangel. Then, this good news works inside us, motivating and invigorating us to a life of joy and peace.

How does this happen? There is something in the evangel that stirs us. Scripturally expressed, this "something" is *the power of holy spirit*. "Now the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal.5:22,23).

Let us join in this benediction on behalf of each other. Let us all look to God as the God of endurance, consolation and expectation, Who gives to us this good news concerning the grace that is in Christ Jesus and the peace gained through the blood of His cross. There is not one of us who does not need the joy and peace that God has provided in this evangel. But it is there for us all, no matter who we may be, no matter how wise or powerful or noble or how well connected according to the flesh. To God be the glory!

D.H.H.

(To be continued)

## ANTONIO M. OBLENDA

It is with sorrow that we report the death of our faithful friend, Evangelist Antonio M. Oblenda of Ozamis City, Philippines. He fell asleep in Christ quietly and peacefully on October 26 after a year of agonizing pain due to cancer. Survivors include his wife Elpidia Oblenda and his daughter Raquel Oblenda Montolo, who hopes to continue to serve in the evangel distributing the Concordant Version and literature.

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