

Unsearchable Riches

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FOR GOD AND HIS

WORD

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Not of Works

Grace, triumphant in the throne,
Scorns a rival, reigns alone;
Come and bow beneath her sway,
Cast your idol works away.
Works of man, when made his plea,
Never shall accepted be;
Fruits of pride (vainglorious worm!)
Are the best he can perform.

Still the boasting heart replies,
What! the worthy and the wise,
Friends to temperance and peace,
Have not these a righteousness?
Banish every vain pretence
Built on human excellence;
Perish every thing in man,
But the grace that never can.

William Cowper

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EDITORIAL

IN A WORLD of uncertainties God speaks to us about certainties. We can have fullest confidence in what God has said. Luke referred to the *certainty* (or more literally, *security*) of the words concerning our Lord (Luke 1:4), and this applies also to the revelations of faith, expectation and love given to us in Paul's epistles.

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life . . . nor any . . . creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.8:38,39). ". . . seeing that out of [God] and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:36). "Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim.1:15). Our Saviour, God "wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all . . ." (1 Tim.2:4-6). In Christ "our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:11).

We do not immediately or entirely comprehend the depth of meaning and all the details involved in words such as these. But we begin by accepting them as certainties. There is One Who is "the only true God," as His beloved Son testified (John 17:3). "Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim. There is no one else aside from Him" (Deut.4:35). These are fundamental certainties which James Coram discusses in his article starting on page 10. "God's supreme position

as God,” as Brother Knoch expresses it on page 7, is also the theme of Robert Killen’s thoughts beginning on page 19.

In these three opening studies of this first issue of *Unsearchable Riches* for 1995, the certainty of God, and that of His revelation of Himself in Christ Jesus, are underlined. God is Supreme. He justifies with His own righteousness manifested through the faith of Jesus Christ. He is operating all, and evil itself does not lie outside His purpose but rather is intended as a temporary means toward the realization of the divine good and glory.

Two distinctive operations of God during the eons, terrestrial and celestial, regarding the Circumcision and Uncircumcision, traced by Donald Fielding and myself in the next two articles are certain and irrevocable. God has not made known all His operations at one time, but He is faithful to every promise and prophecy, to every calling and disclosure of His heart.

The glory of Yahweh’s call to Samuel and His message to Eli which Brother Rocke recounts, starting on page 41, may well be used to illustrate some of these points. Eli and Samuel were carrying on the service assigned to them, but God’s *word* to Samuel and through him to Eli made it clear that God was there over and with them and behind the events of their lives. Samuel heard the word spoken to him, and Eli urged Samuel to make it known, and Eli accepted it as a *certainty* that was *good* in Yahweh’s eyes.

So would we listen readily to what God says to us in His completed Word. We would trace His operations of old and go forward to the revelations of the depths of His love and purpose in Christ Jesus. But in doing so we would accept each word within its context, and, like Eli, receive what God has said without prejudice and with expectation of good. We would see that indeed God calls “what is not as if it were” (Rom.4:17) because of the certainty that it shall be.

D.H.H.

The Epistles of Paul

PAUL TO THE ROMANS

SINNER, would you know how to be just before God? *Read Romans!*

Saint, would you be at perfect peace with God? *Ponder Romans!*

The writer of these words became acquainted with God through a study of this epistle. It is emphatically *the* portion of God's Word which is adapted to show all men God's present grace, preparatory to the higher unfoldings of Ephesians.

TEACHING AND DEPORTMENT

The inclusive nature of the epistle to the Romans is evident in its opening words: "Paul, a *slave* of Christ Jesus, a called *apostle*." The first half of the epistle is especially devoted to doctrine which depends on his apostolic commission to give it weight; the latter part is especially occupied with the practice of the doctrine.

The two absorbing topics of the epistle are contrasted in the introduction and conclusion. As is detailed in the account in Acts (13:2), Paul was *severed* to the evangel of God, which had been promised before to Abraham (Rom.4). With this he contrasts "my" evangel (of which Acts contains not the slightest intimation) which is the proclamation of Christ Jesus in accord with the revelation of a secret hushed in eonian times, yet manifested now, through prophetic scriptures (Rom.16:25).

The evangel of *God* brings righteousness to the nations, outside of Israel's narrow pale, in the pattern of the promise to Abraham. Paul's "*my*" evangel retreats still further, and finds in Adam a shadowgraph of the conciliation (Rom.5).

The opening of Romans further emphasizes the fact that God's evangel concerns His Son, and is based on His power to raise the dead (Rom.1:4). The earth-life of the Messiah of Israel is not in view. Even as Paul himself did not become acquainted with Him until He was beyond death, in glory, so the commission given to him did not concern His previous career, but only that glorified condition subsequent to His resurrection.

Another point is important. Paul received "grace and apostleship" (Rom.1:5). By the figure *hendiadys*¹ we are impressed with the excessively gracious manner in which he received his commission. Peter and the rest were looking for the Messiah and gladly followed Him. Paul, on the contrary, persecuted Him beyond all reason. His commission came to him, not on the ground of merit or reward, but altogether on the ground of grace.

PAUL'S APOSTLESHIP

All revelation previous to Paul's severance to the ministries which are expounded in Romans, as given through the Lord and His apostles, was limited to the Circumcision, concerned with the kingdom promised by the prophets to Israel, and falls far short of the grace revealed through Paul in this epistle. They promised a probationary pardon on repentance, but here we have a complete vindication or justification or acquittal founded entirely on faith.

It seems possible if not probable that "Paul" is the masculine form of the Greek word *paula*, which would be *paulos*, meaning *cessation* or an *interval*. This is derived from *pauō*, to stop, cease, from which we have our English "pause." The aptness of this significance becomes more

1. *Hendiadys* (literally, "one through two"); where two nouns joined by *and* are used for an adjective and noun; hence *grace and apostleship* signify *gracious apostleship*.

striking the more we learn of the apostle's ministry. The whole of his service is occupied with a pause in God's dealings with Israel. It fills up the interval between their rejection of the kingdom and the return of the King in power.

Paul's ministry is an episode in God's revelation, connected with, yet distinct from, the rest. This, we submit, is the thought which greets us at the portal of every epistle. Paul, whose name opens them all, is not merely the person who wrote them but the appellation given to him at his separation and a distinct token of their unique and parenthetical character.

LITERARY FRAMEWORK

Reversal with Doctrinal Alternation

Evangel, *made known*, Justification 1:1-6

Greetings, *brief* 1:7

Prayer 1:8,9

Intended Journey 1:10-13

Previous Ministry 1:14-17

The Conduct of Mankind 1:18-3:20

DOCTRINE

Justification 3:21-4:25

Conciliation 5:1-8:30

God's Deity 8:31-39

God's Deity 9:1-29

DOCTRINE

Justification 9:30-10:21

Conciliation 11:1-35

The Conduct of the Saints 12:1-15:7

Previous Ministry 15:8-21

Intended Journey 15:22-29

Prayer 15:30-33

Greetings, *extended* 16:1-23

Evangel, *hushed up*, Conciliation 16:25-27

As is shown by the literary framework, Romans is dominated by three great doctrines: Justification, Conciliation and Deity. God's own righteousness, which He shares with the sinner, His own peace, which He imparts to the believer, and His own indomitable will, which forms the immovable basis of all blessing, are the bulk and burden of this epistle.

As justification is commonly degraded to a mere pardon, or forgiveness, and conciliation is unknown, and God's supreme position as God is denied, there is need to urge God's beloved saints to give the great truths of this epistle the place in their hearts and lives which they deserve.

Every doctrine in this epistle is discussed twice: first from the viewpoint of the individual, and again from the larger, national standpoint. The latter half of the third and the fourth chapters show clearly and exhaustively how anyone may be vindicated in the sight of God. The latter half of the ninth and the tenth chapter shows how this favor finds its way to the nations while Israel fails to effect it through the law. So, too, God's present attitude of peace toward all mankind and toward those who are justified is fully set forth in the fifth, sixth, seventh and part of the eighth chapters. The bearing of this on Israel and the nations is fully unfolded in the eleventh chapter. That God is for His people is shown in the end of the eighth chapter. His sovereign will with regard to Israel and the nations is shown in the succeeding chapter.

It is exceedingly important to recognize the *national* scope of the ninth, tenth and eleventh chapters. Much confusion has resulted from applying parts of these chapters to individuals rather than to nations. Nothing in these chapters which is said of Israel nationally, in apostasy, was true of Paul himself and the few faithful ones in the nation. These are not hardened, though the nation, as such, is. Israel, nationally, has not attained to righteousness, yet many in the nation cannot be included in this sweeping assertion. The nation, as such, not the faithful remnant, has stumbled. It is Israel as God's national witness in the earth which is figured by the olive tree. Some of the branches (the unbelieving majority) are broken off. The nations as a whole (the wild olive tree) are grafted into the cultivated olive tree. Now that the nations, as such, are apostatizing, they

are about to be cut out. Individual believers in the nations will not be cut out, for their faith would keep them in.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

The great theme of divine righteousness dominates much of this epistle (*cf* Rom.1:17; 3:21,25,26). *God's* righteousness differs radically from *man's*. All that He does is just because it contributes to His grand purpose to reveal Himself and thus bless all His creatures (*cf* Rom.8:21). All the evil that He does is right. When He locks up all in stubbornness, it is justified by the fact that this is the essential prelude to His mercy on all (Rom.11:32). But His justice goes far beyond what we count righteousness. In view of His self-revelation it is just for Him to justify the unjust, to be merciful to the criminal, and to be gracious to the foremost of sinners, for these acts are necessary to discover Himself to His creatures and to prepare them for the implicit confidence and absolute faith in Him which will be the portion of all at the consummation.

God's righteousness is manifested through Jesus Christ's faith and comes to us in Christ. We are involved in His deserts. Not only are we saved by His sacrifice, but we are one with Him in His resurrection, His rousing, His vivification.

Hence in this letter we learn not to rest on our own righteousness, even though we should use every effort to do the right thing in our contacts with others. Human righteousness has no true standard. Those who claim their "rights" almost always trespass upon the "rights" of others. May we all revel in the righteousness of God and so be filled with all joy and peace in believing (Rom.15:13).²

A.E.K.

2. The preceding was selected and adapted from the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.229, and *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.11, pp.44,230,231; vol.37, pp.82-84.

YAHWEH IS THE ONLY ELOHIM

“GOD IS SPIRIT” (John 4:24). “God no one has ever seen” (John 1:18a). Since God is spirit, He is therefore invisible, intangible, imperceptible. He is all-sufficient; He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. While such, indeed, are among God’s attributes, it is not inherent in this title (i.e., “the Subjector,” or “God”) that this is so. God alone is unoriginated and supreme; but it is neither entailed in nor does it follow from the fact that the Almighty is “God” that He is unoriginated and supreme.

It is true that in certain of its occurrences, the primary divine title, ELOHIM, does not refer to the supreme and only true God, but to a plurality of certain of His creatures. Clearly, in such cases, reference is made to a plural number of such beings, each one of whom, in some capacity, is a “subjector.”

In the overwhelming majority of the occurrences of ELOHIM, however, this term is *not* used in reference to certain creatures who, in a relative sense, may also bear this title together with the Supreme, but in an absolute sense in reference to Yahweh Himself alone, Who is the supreme and only true God. For example, “. . . Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim. There is *no one else* aside from *Him*” (Deut.4:35). “So you know today, and you recall it to your heart that Yahweh, *He* is the *only* Elohim in the heavens above and on the earth beneath; there is *no one else*” (Deut.4:39).

There are not only those both in heaven and on earth who are *termed* “GODS” (or “ELOHIM”), but there are also those

who *are* "GODS" ("there *are* many gods and many lords"; 1 Cor.8:5). "*Nevertheless*," declares the apostle Paul, "for us there is *one* God, *the Father*, out of Whom *all* is . . ." (1 Cor.8:6).

Just as Paul identifies to us Who the one true God is, saying that He is "the Father, out of Whom all is," Moses identified the one true God to Israel, declaring that He is the One Whose name is Yahweh.¹

Indeed, this is Israel's great confession: "Hear, Israel! *Yahweh* [is] our Elohim; Yahweh [the only] One" (Deut.6:4).

"The first Hebrew sentence that a Jewish child learns is [this very verse]:

SH'MA YISRAEL YAHWEH ELOHENU YAHWEH ECHAD
Hear, Israel! Yahweh our-Elohim, Yahweh One

"The observant Jew is required to recite it twice daily, in the morning and at nightfall, together with three related passages. He may add verse 5 ("So you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your intensity"), sometimes including the following verses 6-9; also Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41."²

The sense is that *not two* (or more) are Israel's "elohim," but only *one* is their Elohim. That *one* is *Yahweh* alone. To

1. The Divine Name, *Yahweh*, is composed of the elements of the verb "to become." Yahweh is "I am that I am," or literally, "I am becoming Who I am becoming" (Ex.3:14). In Revelation 1:8 John seems to give the meaning of the Name for His Greek readers: Who is and Who was and Who is coming (cf 1:4; 4:8 and 11:17; 16:5 where the future is omitted). Though these passages in Revelation speak directly of God Himself in contrast to Jesus Christ (cp 1:5), it is important to remember that while, absolutely speaking, Christ is not God Himself ("Yahweh," in the Old Testament), representatively speaking, Christ indeed is Yahweh, Who alone is God Himself (cp Zech.14:3,4).

2. Herman H. Rocke, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.78, p.280.

express the ellipsis inherent in the second clause, we would say, "Yahweh is our Elohim; Yahweh—*One*—[is our Elohim]."³

The title of this Jewish key prayer, "Shema," is taken from the first word of Deuteronomy 6:4, *Sh'ma* (Hear!). Most Jewish translators and commentators give the sense the same as that which appears in the Concordant Version. "The belief that God [Elohim] is made up of several personalities, such as the Christian belief in the Trinity, is a departure from the pure conception of the Unity of God. Israel has throughout the ages rejected everything that marred or obscured the conception of pure monotheism it had given the world, and rather than abandon that pure monotheism, rather than admit any weakening of it, Jews were prepared to wander, to suffer, to die."⁴

"Yahweh" is the name of the divine Being Himself, Whose chief title is "Elohim." The literal significance of the word ELOHIM is "subjectors-ward."

The shortest form of the divine title, *El*, which is singular, is the same in form as the connective *to* and the pronoun *these*. *To* and *these* indicate the direction, disposition, or subjection of that which is in view. For example, "The water from under the heavens shall flow together *to* one place" (Gen.1:9), *disposes* or *subjects* the waters. "*These* are the genealogical annals" (Gen.2:4), *places* the generations before the mind of the reader. This is the underlying thought, in accord with the true proverb, "Man proposes, but God disposes."⁵ It would seem, then, that the essential thought

3. The Authorized Version rendering of Deuteronomy 6:4, "... the LORD our God is one LORD," is confusing and misleading. The Revised Version (1901) is to be commended for including the correct sense in its margin ("... Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone"). The Revised rendering, however, which appears in its main text, "... Jehovah our God is one Jehovah," is even more perplexing than the AV translation.

4. J. H. Herz, editor: THE PENTATEUCH AND HAFTORAHS, Soncino Press, London, 1972, p.770.

5. cf A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.24, p.173.

of the divine title (which appears in three forms, *El*, *Eloah*, and *Elohim*) is *Subjector*, *Disposer*, or *Placer*.

We may be certain that this assumption is correct, since the Greek equivalent, *Theos*, which is derived from *the-*, PLACE, signifies the *Placer*. This may be confirmed from many words which share this common stem such as *tithêmi*, *place*, *lay*, *appoint*, *assign*, or *atheteō*, which means “repudiate” or *have no place for*. The meaning of *the-* may be seen as well in such English words as *theme*, *thesis*, and *theater*, in which a certain entity (whether a topic, proposition, or drama) is placed before an audience.

The intermediate form of the divine title is *Eloah*, which is also singular. 41 of its 58 occurrences appear in the book of Job. In order to express motion or direction, the ending *-ah* is occasionally postfixed to a noun, such as *westward* (Num.2:18). This same ending, which means *-ward* (i.e., “[to]ward”), appears in *Eloah* as well. This calls to mind John 1:1 where we read that “the WORD was *toward* God.” We are mindful that Christ’s name is called the “Word” (or “Expression”) of God in Revelation 19:13. Surely all that Christ is and does directs us toward God.

It is conceivable that the title *Eloah*, in an ideal sense, was especially intended to reflect the general direction of Christ’s activity, which is *Godwards*, *toward-the-Deity*, *toward-the Subjector*, *toward-El*. Perhaps certain of its usages even entail this thought, though we cannot be certain. That the word indentifies the one so termed as Christ, however, is not something that these morphological considerations themselves can prove. Indeed, in certain instances, we may be sure that ELOAH does not in any respect speak of the true God, Eloah of Israel, but of a foreign eloah or god (e.g., Dan.11:37,39). The main point to note, however, is that, whatever the original reason may have been (which may be lost to antiquity) for the employment of this special singular form which incorporates a

14 All Subjection accords with God's Purpose

suffix signifying *-ward*, this form as well, when used of the Eloah of Israel, ultimately directs us to the only true God.

The longest form of the divine title, *Elohim*, which contains the plural ending *im*, occurs much more frequently than either of the other forms. In a number of its occurrences it speaks of a plurality of beings, of various creatures, whether righteous or unrighteous, whether in heaven or on earth, of whom all are in some respect "subjectors," working *toward* the accomplishment of their own purposes, which, in the highest sense, all direct us *toward God* and the accomplishment of *His* purpose (*cp* Isa.10:5-15). All such "subjecting ones," in one way or another, are engaged in subjecting others, in the disposition of their affairs, in placing them under a certain authority. And, all such ones, in so acting, are the agents of the Supreme Subjector; thus they are included among "the men of His counsel" (*cp* Isa.46:11).

Many of the passages in which "elohim" appears merely speak of the idolatrous "elohim," the gods of the nations which Israel was prone to worship. Aaron declared to Moses: "The anger of my lord must not grow hot. You know the people that they are unbridled, for they said to me: Make *elohim* for us who shall go before us, for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him" (Ex.32:22,23; *cit.* Acts 7:40; *cp* Acts 7:43; Amos 5:25-27; Ex.22:20; Deut.7:25).

It is with such "elohim" in mind that Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "that which the nations are sacrificing, they are [actually] sacrificing to *demons* . . ." (1 Cor.10:20). This was so, by whatever name these "gods" of the nations may have been known. Such deceiving spirits actually are not *worthy* of the title "subjectors," for their subjection was unto evil ends and was not in the faithful service of the true God.

In the Song of Moses, in Deuteronomy 32:21, Yahweh speaks of Israel having followed such unclean spirits, ones

which were called "elohim" yet were only so in an evil sense, unworthy of the name: "As for them, they make Me jealous with a *non-el*. They provoke Me to vexation with their idols of vanity. As for Me, I shall make them jealous with a *non-people*; with a decadent nation shall I cause them vexation." Paul speaks of the time when the Galatians once, like the Thessalonians, had turned about "to God from idols, to be slaving for the living and true God" (*cf* 1 Thess.1:9). Until that time, however, and in a similar sense to that of Israel in her idolatrous worship of a "non-el," the Galatians had been "slaves of those who, by nature, are not gods" (Gal.4:8). These demons, however, were quite real, and certainly *subjected* the natives of Galatia to much evil. Therefore, it is only with a *faithful sense* in view that these wicked spirits were deemed "not gods."⁶

It is certain that Galatians 4:8 should be understood in such a sense as is suggested here, for there are a considerable number of scripture passages which speak of both men and messengers as being "elohim" (i.e., "subjectors"), each one, under God, working in his own *faithful* capacity toward the achievement of his own respective service. Note the following texts: "You shall not maledict the *elohim* [i.e., the arbiters or judges; *cf* Ex.21:6], and a prince among your people you shall not curse" (Ex.22:28). "Then the sheiks of Edom are flustered; the *arbiters* [*elohim*; i.e., judges, or disposers] of Moab, quivering took hold of them. All the dwellers of Canaan are dissolved" (Ex.15:15).

6. Some, in an effort to "prove" Trinitarianism, have found support for their claim in Galatians 4:8. Their notion is, based upon their own pre-supposition that the Galatians' erstwhile idols were *in no sense whatsoever* actually "gods," therefore "ELOHIM" is a term descriptive of *nature*, one which entails both supremacy and unoriginatedness. Hence it can legitimately only be used of the "Triune God" of their creeds. This illogical claim is simply contrary to the facts, and fails to note the sense and corollaries of Deuteronomy 32:21, to which Paul alludes.

“If the thief is not found then the possessor of the house will be brought near to the *elohim* [or “judges”] to show whether or not he has put forth his hand on the work of his associate. In every matter of transgression over a bull, over a donkey, over a flockling, over raiment or over every lost thing which one says that this is it, unto the *elohim* shall come the word of the two of them. Whom the *elohim* shall condemn, he shall repay double to his associate” (Ex.22:8,9).

Of the sons of Israel, collectively, it is written, “I Myself have said: you are *elohim*, and sons of the Supreme are all of you” (Psa.82:6). How glorious to know that these words will find a fulfillment in the kingdom of the heavens. Then, Israel will be the head and not the tail; then, in the kingdom, the chosen race will indeed be a “royal priesthood,” a “holy nation” (1 Peter 2:9). Citing the very words of Psalm 82:6, Jesus declared to the Jews, “Is it not written in your law that, ‘I say you are *gods*’? If He said those were *gods*, to whom the word of God came (and the scripture can not be annulled), are you saying to Him Whom the Father hallows and dispatches into the world that ‘You are blaspheming,’ seeing that I said, ‘*Son of God* am I?’” (John 10:34-36).

The words of Psalm 97:7, in reference to Yahweh, “bow down to Him, all you *elohim*,” are interpreted in Hebrews 1:6 as “worship Him, all the *messengers* of God!” In speaking of Christ, Hebrews 1:9 (citing Psalm 45:7) declares, “Thou lovest righteousness and hatest injustice; therefore, Thou art *anointed* by God, Thy God, with the oil of exultation beyond Thy partners.” Though there are others, whether celestial or terrestrial, who are themselves “anointed ones” of God (i.e., “*christs*”), who thus are our Lord’s “partners” (*metochon*, WITH-HAVER) in divine service, Christ’s own anointing and corresponding divine service is certainly beyond that of any others.

In Hebrews 1, verses 8 and 9 (citing Psalm 45:6,7), God declares to the Son, “Thy throne, O God, is for the eon of

the eon," and "Thou art anointed by God, Thy God." The text of Psalm 45:6, 7 itself reads: "Your throne, O *Elohim*, is for the eon and further . . . *Elohim* Your *Elohim* has anointed You."

In these verses of Psalm 45, not only is God termed "Elohim" but the Son is also termed "Elohim." While it is true that the mere form of this word is plural, it is just as true that each of the two Beings Whom it herein represents are singular Beings.⁷ One is God Himself, "the Majesty in the heights" (Heb.1:3), at Whose "right hand" the other One so addressed, termed "the Son," is seated. As is the case as well in the vast majority of the texts in which ELOHIM appears in which it is used in reference to God Himself ("Yahweh Elohim"), this form is used here not of a plurality of beings but, respectively, of Two individual beings, God and His Son.

It follows, then, the claims of Mormonism, among others, notwithstanding, that the plural form ELOHIM does not *mean* a "company" or "family" of beings. That it is *used* of a plurality of beings in certain passages and that certain of these are, under divine inspiration, *interpreted* accordingly in the New Testament,⁸ no one doubts. That, however, is not the issue. Indeed, it is just as true, and far more to the point, that in many places and in all cases in the Greek New Testament, God always used the Greek singular for Elohim whenever referring either to Himself or His Son.⁹

7. It should be noted that the plural form, "elohim," is used as well of *individual* gods of the nations (cf 1 Sam.5:7; Judges 11:24; 1 Kings 18:24).

8. cf John 10:34,35; Acts 7:40,14:11,19:26; 1 Cor.8:5; Gal.4:8.

9. For example, in Exodus 3:16 when God spoke to Moses out of the flaming thornbush, He revealed Himself as the *Elohim* of Abraham, and the *Elohim* of Isaac, and the *Elohim* of Jacob. Yet when our Lord cites this passage in proving the necessity of resurrection (Matt.22:32), and Steven brings it before the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:32), neither translates *Elohim* as plural. Thus we may be certain concerning Yahweh, that *He*

Perhaps, as many scholars have suggested, when "ELOHIM" is used of Yahweh Himself, the plural form "Elohim" is an idiom termed *plural amplitudinus* or plural of majesty, which originally had in view the plenitude of God's operations in which He acts through others who are energized by His holy spirit. Some such explanation must account for the mere plural form. This is because in the vast number of passages which speak of Yahweh Himself as "Elohim," even as where, under God, Christ as well is denominated by this same title, a single Being alone is addressed or is in view.

It is a fallacy that either supremacy or unoriginatedness is entailed by the word "God." It is a fallacy as well that wherever the word appears it speaks of the same being. And finally, it is a fallacy that if the word is used in a certain sense in one place, it is used in the same sense in another place. Each of these errors has been the source of much confusion. Collectively, the volume of deception which they have wrought is simply incalculable. If we are not snared by these errors ourselves, this can only be attributed to the grace of God.

We are often praying for a realization of God's purpose of the eons which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph.3:11), even as for discernment concerning His allotment among the saints, in which we have a part. May we complement such prayers by a request for the most fundamental realization of all, which is simply a realization of *Him* (Col.1:10). Truly, may the eyes of our heart be *enlightened*, in a realization of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory (*cf* Eph.1:15-19).

J.R.C.

(*To be continued*)

is the Subjector and Placer (not "subjectors" or "placers") of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.

GOD'S WILL, AND MAN'S

GOD'S WILL IS SOVEREIGN. His is the only "free will" in the universe. That has been pounded home in this magazine for over 85 years, but it cannot be overemphasized. Man's will is a complex mixture of several components, *not one of which is under man's independent control*. In the final analysis, God is in complete control of our lives, for "out of Him and through Him and for Him is *all*: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:36). We (and all else), are created out of God, and "*in Him* we are living and moving and are" (Acts 17:28). He is the "One Who is operating *all* in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:11).

The greatest "decision" of our lives, to believe God, came about because of His choice. For "*in grace*, through faith, are you saved, and *this is not out of you*; it is God's approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting" (Eph.2:8,9; cf Eph.1:4; Rom.8:28-30; 9:9-18). These are unequivocal statements of God. As to our experience in faith, His declaration is equally definite: ". . . *for it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight*" (Phil.2:13). If our wills are thus controlled in these great "decisions," should we quibble about man's part in the lesser ones?

Think on the decision of Joseph's brothers, mean-spirited, jealous men, who sold Joseph into Egypt. Later, as they were trembling before Joseph in Egypt, he reassured them: "And now, you must not grieve, and it must not be hot in your eyes, that you sell me hither, for to preserve life

the Elohim sends me before you" (Gen.45:5). The will of the brothers to eliminate Joseph was caused by Elohim!*

THANKING AND GLORIFYING GOD AS GOD

An early section of Romans discusses the conduct of mankind, and this section climaxes with the finding that "Not one is just—not even one" (Rom.3:10). One of the major charges is that "knowing God, not *as God* do they glorify or thank Him" (Rom.1:21). The key phrase here is the words "not as God." Thus we have italicized the words in the quotation, "as God," but what do they mean? The context defines them. "For His invisible attributes are described from the creation of the world, being apprehended by His achievements, besides His imperceptible power and divinity . . ." (Rom.1:20). So we should glorify and thank Him as Creator, Who creates and sustains the universe with power and divinity.

Recognition of God as Creator is apparently fading. Science flits from one theory to another, but it seems not many of the intelligent today attribute the creation to the Creator.

Now let us consider His power and divinity. The Greek word translated "power" in the CV, has been assigned the standard equivalent ABILITY. "Divinity," the qualities pertaining to God, bring to mind His PLACERSHIP. Thus He has the *ability* to *place* His creatures in the right place and at the right time to carry out His intention, and ultimately His will. His will is that humans recognize and glorify Him as God. The counsel (intention) of His will determines the degree to which all humans believe and follow His will. Our will should be to accept, thank and glorify Him *as God*; as believers we have the great advantage over the unbeliever of *believing* His Word which reveals His will.

Unbelievers and those without His Word have consciences

*Read the story in Genesis chapters 37-45.

and "reckonings between one another." By nature, they may be carrying out some, at least, of the demands of the law (Rom.2:14). They may fear God, recognize His power, and even to a limited extent "glorify and thank Him as God," even though knowing only what nature itself manifests to them.

Failure to *fully* recognize God as God is costly, for it adversely affects the quality of human minds, the objects of their worship, even as conduct (Rom.1:21-32). Perhaps every generation is shocked by what it perceives as declining morality and increasing violations of the instincts of humans, and if so, I am no different, for it seems to me that "God is giving them over" to "uncleanness, dishonorable passions" and "to a disqualified mind, to do that which is not befitting" (Rom.1:24,26,28,29) at an increasing rate.

Could believers participate in any of these? That may be rare in the more flagrant offenses. But failure to glorify and thank Him *as God* seems almost universal if we include a recognition of His deity as a criterion. Let us quote from the book THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD by A. E. Knoch, page 121:

"God's will is not only ignored by the world today, but even His saints set it aside, or water it down to a mere wish. How few there are who hold that the universe is being operated according to the counsel of His will! It has become the fashion to say that *will* means *wish*, and the margins of some Bibles do not hesitate to change it to *desire*. We are assured that God does *not will* all mankind to be saved, but merely *desires* it, and since man *wills* otherwise, He is quite powerless and impotent before the superior force of human determination. God is He Who is operating in us to will (Phil.2:13), yet even those who teach a "full surrender" insist that our own will is to be the means of honoring Him. The truth is that man's will is always opposed to God's, and the saints are safe only so long as they accept His will, as revealed in the Scriptures, and reject their own."

DOES HIS OPERATION INCLUDE EVIL?

Obviously, if we accept God's statement that He operates all in accord with the counsel of His will, then He must be operating the evil, for it would surely have to be included in *all*. Admittedly, that puts a severe strain on the faith of even the most sincere and earnest believers, for, consciously or not, they jump to the false conclusion that God must therefore sin, and no believer will stand for that. The answer lies in a study of the meaning of the words *evil* and *sin*. Such a study will show that evil has no moral bias, that God can and does operate evil, and does *not* sin in the process.

Evil is here, all around us. News reports are concerned with little else. God must have created it, for *all* is out of Him. And it surely was not unforeseen, for He provided its remedy long before sin's entrance, with the blood of the cross of Christ, "foreknown, indeed, before the disruption of the world" (1 Peter 1:20). God boldly and openly says that He creates evil. Listen to His words through the prophet Isaiah: "I am Yahweh, and there is no other. Former of light and Creator of darkness, Maker of good and Creator of evil, I, Yahweh make *all* these things" (Isa.45:6,7). The counsel of God's will says that we must suffer evil, that He may ultimately bring about His will of universal good. Evil is temporary; it will end when it has served its purpose.

Without minimizing the untold groans and travails of His creatures, yet expecting the future deliverance of our bodies, our hearts still can sing when we see God's character cleared from the confusion of misunderstanding, and when the earnest questions about God's failure to stop the evil in the world can be answered. Evil has a purpose, just as all of God's creations. He wants us to know *good*, to be able to return His love, and to perceive that He is accomplishing His purpose by subjecting us to vanity "in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God"

(Rom.8:20-22). God planted a tree in the garden which first and foremost gives us the knowledge of good, and does so through the knowledge of evil. That is implicit in the name of the tree, the tree of the knowledge of *good* and evil.

MAN'S WILL—ITS PROBLEM AND THE SOLUTION

Early in this article we mentioned the complex mixture which goes into the human will. The components are succinctly described in Ephesians 2:1-3. "And you, being dead to your offenses and sins, in which once you walked, in accord with the eon of this world, *in accord with the chief of the jurisdiction of the air*, the spirit now *operating* in the sons of stubbornness (among whom we also all behaved ourselves once in the lusts of our flesh, *doing the will of the flesh and of the comprehension . . .*."

So the human will may be made up of a combination of these: (1) influence from Satan or his workers; (2) influence from the flesh, a complicated mix of heredity, often influenced by the condition of one's body at any given time (e.g., hunger); and (3) one's evaluation (comprehension) of an environment or situation in which one finds himself. It is clear that we are by no means in control of our wills. God controls all the factors. If we had all the facts, perhaps with a super-super computer we could predict accurately a human's response to any situation. God has all the facts, controls them all and has the ability to predict the response (which may range from deeds of benignity to malignant sin), and is doing just that with billions of His creatures constantly!

We all have walked in accord with the above influences. "Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing . . ." (Rom.3:21,22). Jesus Christ's faith has changed the whole picture and will have universal

effects. Now there can be no question of God's righteousness. The evil is justified! The sins of mankind justified! God's own righteousness is for all and even now reckoned to believers! And new factors have entered the make-up of the wills of believers. God's spirit is given to the saints, sealing us "with the holy spirit of promise" (Eph.1:14). The Scriptures have been completed, for it was granted to Paul "to complete the word of God" (Col.1:25). We now have all that we need to know about God's will as revealed in the Scriptures. "So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!" (2 Cor.5:17).

In place of influence from without, from the "chief of the jurisdiction of the air, the spirit now operating in the sons of stubbornness" we have, through Christ's obedience, through hearing the evangel of our salvation, on believing also, God's own spirit within us. The flesh is no longer the dominant influence. Our comprehension is not confused by worldly, contradictory impressions which often do not represent the true state of affairs, but is directed to God's Word and the revelation of His will in the gift of His Son.

A RENEWED MIND

Now, perhaps beset by corruption and deterioration of our bodies even as by evils without, we may be encouraged by a renewed mind, recognizing that God has a purpose in evil, that it will play a part in His becoming All in all. Consequently, we will regard our distresses as momentary light afflictions, producing for us a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory (2 Cor.4:17,18). Thus, even now, while groaning in these bodies and horrified by events outside, in the midst of it all, we can indeed glorify and thank Him *as God!*

Robert B. Killen

THE ELOQUENCE OF OMISSION

“GOD’S GLORY, and His place in our hearts, depends upon the conception we have of Him, as He is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our standards of right and wrong may be faulty, but we cannot help judging the Deity by them. If we *think* He is right we honor Him. Our ideas of might may be mean; nevertheless, we must measure Him with them. If we *imagine* that He lacks sufficient might to master His creatures, our estimation of Him descends. If we believe that He works all according to His will, we cannot but admire Him. Our conceptions of wisdom may be crude, but we are forced to estimate the Deity by them. If there are problems beyond His powers, He is demeaned in our minds. But if we are convinced that He can cope successfully with any situation, we cannot but delight in Him. Our love is a feeble flicker, yet we must compare His with it. However much we seek to avoid it, if He does that which our love would not allow, we become cold to Him. But if our hearts are enlightened to see how far His love surpasses ours, and that naught that He does is condemned by our hearts, we are compelled to adore Him.”¹

We rejoice in Christ Jesus as the Effulgence of God’s glory, and we gladly acknowledge such precious perception being granted, solely through the wise and gentle revelation of the spirit of truth, to those whom He designates and calls.

Being about to leave His beloved disciples, our Lord declared, “Still much have I to say to you, but you are

1. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.24, p.77.

not able to bear it at present. Yet whenever that may be coming—the spirit of truth—it will be guiding you into all the truth, for it will not be speaking from itself, but whatsoever it should be hearing will it be speaking, and of what is coming will it be informing you. All, whatever the Father has, is Mine. Therefore I said to you that of Mine is it getting, and will be informing you” (John 16:12-15).

They were distressed and puzzled. His words, foretelling His shameful death and their consolation, confused them. Yet, through the medium of their subsequent ministry, their evangel was to reach out to Israel and was also to form an essential contrast to the grace of God’s purpose which would be heralded by the apostle Paul. How was this to be accomplished? Today, when we read the carefully preserved records of Scripture it is not hard to distinguish the inspiration of God’s spirit. This same spirit enabled them to apprehend what otherwise would have been enigmatic.

And yet . . . and yet they had not the slightest conception of the evangel which was entrusted to Paul as the apostle to the nations. This evangel, in its startling breadth and length and depth and height, is nothing less than the complete reconciliation of all, through Christ, to our God and Father! Later in his ministry, Peter wrote that he found Paul’s words, “. . . hard to apprehend” (2 Peter 3:14-16). Evidently, as indicated when the apostles asked, “Lord art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6), neither our Lord nor the spirit of truth enlightened them with this aspect of God’s universal purpose. Why then, this omission?

FIRST THE TERRESTRIAL

As initially observed, we seek for answers with flawed, subjective reason; but, since Paul completes the word of God, there is no need now for confusion or speculation. Our Father’s loving purpose has been scrupulously recorded for the satisfaction of each earnest inquiry.

Answering Nicodemus, a representative of Israel's ruling class, Jesus observed, "If I told you of the terrestrial and you are not believing, how shall you be believing if I should be telling you of the celestial?" (John 3:12). He then restricted His words to matters concerning the kingdom.

When Israel, rejecting His kingdom, crucified the Son of Mankind, His petition for their forgiveness was granted, and, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, the kingdom was once more heralded by the apostles, through holy spirit. Further rejection would be a sin against the holy spirit and could not be forgiven. But—and this is most important—God's covenant with this people will yet be honored!

The question is repeated. Why were the apostles and their nation left in ignorance concerning the celestial supremacy of Christ Jesus, our Lord? The following details are submitted in explanation:

Beside the vacant tomb, our Lord consoled Mary Magdalene, beseeching her not to touch Him. "Lo! I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God," He announced (John 20:17). How privileged she was to be the only mortal to speak to and behold the resurrected Son of God's love, prior to His Father presenting Him in exalted glory to the celestials!

"In the Scriptures, omissions are often of supreme significance. To accord with the character of the account, this ascension of our Lord is mentioned only here. The other narratives omit it entirely. But it is still more significant to note the silence as to the nature and object of this ascension. The reason is clear. John is not detailing the celestial glories of Christ. That belongs to Paul's later ministry."²

To the question posed by the apostles concerning the kingdom, our Lord answered, "Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction"

2. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.173.

(Acts 1:7). Many years later, when it became clear “. . . that callousness, *in part*, on Israel has come” (Rom.11:25), Paul declared: “Now if God, wanting to display His indignation and to make His powerful doings known, carries, with much patience, the vessels of indignation, adapted for destruction, it is that He should also be making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He makes ready before for glory—us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also” (Rom.9:22-24). Consequently, it must be concluded, quite simply, that *then*, such stupendous revelations would have been premature.

OUT OF AN INSTALLMENT

When Paul was arrested on his way to Damascus, our Lord revealed Himself with these words: “I am Jesus Whom you are persecuting.” It is most comforting to note this and to reflect that every hurt and humility suffered by each one of the ecclesia is, in effect, directed at Him Whom we gladly serve. Such awareness should both sustain and also assist us to comprehend the final words of Stephen and Paul as they faced imminent death. Further, they teach us something of their loving devotion.

Later in his ministry, Paul wrote of the transcendent revelations which were granted to him when he was snatched away to the third heaven, but he intimated that he was not allowed to speak of these (2 Cor.12:2-7). How well he understood the need for progression, for he also stated, “At present, I know out of an installment, yet then I shall recognize according as I am recognized also” (1 Cor.13:12). When his epistles were written from prison in Rome there was no such reserve. He then clearly set forth the secrets which complete God’s wondrous revelation! Now indeed, we should see *face to face*!

During the *temporary* period of Israel’s callousness, Paul, as the Christ-appointed administrator of the evangel of the

grace of God for the nations, blazed forth the triumphant declaration that *now*, "may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord; in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, through His faith" (Eph.3:8-12).

The recipients of his letters in Corinth were unaware of his omitting these "transcendent revelations." Yet he did disclose the secret of resurrection. More than this would have been premature. Just as Israel was calloused, in like manner a record of the lamentable conduct of some in Corinth was essential, in order to contrast the grace and glory of God's love. "Consequently, then, to whom He will, He is merciful, yet whom He will, He is hardening" (Rom.9:18).

All our Lord's recorded words on earth are treasured, but we should not look among these for disclosure of God's ultimate loving consummation. Since it is realized that such a statement may cause some pain or grief, it is well to add that Jesus Himself stated, "I was not commissioned except for the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt.15:24).

A CHOICE INSTRUMENT

It may be a great strain on the faith of some in the ecclesia to accept this declaration, so the amazing conversion of Paul is once more referred to, together with our Lord's words to Ananias: "Go, for he is a choice instrument of Mine, to bear My name before both the nations and kings, besides the sons of Israel, for I shall be intimating to him how much he must be suffering for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15,16). Only Paul was given the privilege of announcing the fullest details of God's glory through the sacrifice of His beloved Son (Phil.2:5-11).

God has lovingly provided a complete record of all His wise purpose for creation. Through the spirit of truth, He

has inspired devoted saints, placing into them a deep yearning to faithfully present His words as accurately as possible. Yet if there are struggles in this cause, nevertheless it is graciously granted to be suffering for Christ's sake (Phil.1:29).

This contemplation of God's word was undertaken with profound reverence. Not for a single moment may any presume that omissions in the *complete record* are herewith implied. Yet as God's Word was unfolding, certain revelations were held back until the appropriate time for their proclamation. In retrospection, relying completely on the guidance of the spirit of truth, it becomes obvious that premature confiding of many precious truths would have frustrated the outcome of certain important events, which consequently, were omitted from previous revelation.

There remains however, one unforgettable question, and the answer to this harrowing plea seems to be omitted. This anguished, poignant cry is engraved upon our hearts, and will so remain until the consummation:

"My God! My God! Why didst Thou forsake Me?"

It is humbly submitted that the answer will be found in the hearts of every creature when, "... 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.2:9-11).

Donald Fielding

MARCH CONFERENCE

"Though our Lord Jesus Christ" is the general theme for the monthly fellowship conferences in Michigan and Ohio this year. The March meetings are scheduled at the Days Inn-Dayton South, just west of I-75, exit 44. Sessions are planned for Friday evening, March 17, continuing during the day and evening on Saturday and ending about noon on Sunday. Speakers will include Rick Farwell, Dean Hough, Jeff Priddy and Bob Killen. In making reservations at the motel (phone: 513-847-8422), be sure to mention the "Centerville Bible Class meetings." For further information write: Robert B. Killen, 6505 Orchid Circle, Centerville OH 45459.

MUCH IN EVERY MANNER

WHAT HAS HAPPENED with God's work in calling and blessing the nation of Israel? To Abram, while still in Ur of the Chaldeans, Yahweh declared (Gen.12:2),

I shall make you into a great nation,
And I shall bless you;
I shall indeed make your name great,
And you will be a blessing.

This promise was repeated and expanded several times. In Genesis 17 important obligations were laid upon Abraham, so that the promise was expressed in terms of a covenant. "When Abram was 99 years old, Yahweh appeared to Abram and said to him: I am El-Who-Suffices; *walk before Me and become a man of integrity* I shall increase you exceedingly You will become a father of a throng of nations I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you And I give to you and to your seed after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, as an eonian holding; and I will be Elohim to them As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your seed after you, throughout their generations. This is My covenant that you shall keep, between Me and yourselves and your seed after you: *Every male among you must be circumcised*" (Gen.17:1-10).

At Sinai the sense of covenant, or two-sided contract, was clearly extended to the entire nation. There, Yahweh instructed Moses, "Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and tell to the sons of Israel, You have seen what I did to the Egyptians when I bore you on vultures' wings and brought you to Myself. Now, if you shall hearken, yea hearken to My

voice and observe My covenant then you will become Mine, a special possession, above all the peoples, for Mine is all the earth. As for you, you shall become Mine, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex.19:3-6).

CIRCUMCISION AND UNCIRCUMCISION

In apparent contrast to these promises and contracts Paul tells us, "If you should be circumcising, Christ will benefit you nothing" (Gal.5:2), and, "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision is availing anything, nor uncircumcision . . ." (Gal.5:6; 6:15). In the "young" humanity, "there is no Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but all and in all is Christ" (Col.3:11).

The evangel that we have received stands "apart from law" even though it is attested by the law and prophets (Rom.3:21). It is not a covenant that speaks of what we must do as a basis for God's blessings, but rather a message of God's achievement graciously granted apart from our works (Eph.2:8-10). The rite of circumcision has no place and offers no advantage under the evangel of grace that Paul was commissioned to bring. Only as a figure of speech can the word be applied to us in our walk and service, as in Philippians 3:3.

It is this, however, that makes our opening question such a pressing one. If there is no recognition of circumcision within the body of God's chosen people today, what has happened to that nation and those promises that were expressly associated with circumcision in Genesis and throughout the previously recorded scriptures?

Several answers have been offered since the days of the apostles, ranging from a complete denial that Israel and circumcision has any special place at all in God's program, to various attempts to prove that the body of believers today is actually and physically made up of people descending

from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. What might be called the majority opinion lies somewhere between these two extremes. It is the idea that the church has taken the place of Israel, or (perhaps more accurately expressed) has been brought into Israel is a spiritual way, with the promises to Israel being reinterpreted in terms of spiritual blessings. in

The scriptural solution, it has seemed to us, is to see God's promises being eventually fulfilled in a literal sense, despite the continued failure of Israel, and any of humanity, to meet the demands placed upon them. God Himself faithfully will bring about the state of blessing promised to Israel, even as He is faithful in calling us out from every race and nation today and blesses us in Christ Jesus. Even if Israel is "cast away" for awhile, yet they will be "taken back" (Rom.11:15). "And thus all Israel shall be saved" (Rom.11:26).

In this we see two operations of God, with many points of unity as well as points of distinction. It is proposed in this series of studies to examine some passages from Paul's epistles which seem especially important in establishing this view of God's faithfulness to all His words spoken to the Circumcision, as well as to us of the Uncircumcision who are called out from both Jew and Gentile. We begin with the references to the *benefits* of circumcision in Romans 2 and 3.

THE BENEFIT OF CIRCUMCISION

The benefit of circumcision as it was instituted in Genesis 17 was securely tied in with a walk of "integrity" in which they hearkened to and observed the instructions given by Yahweh. Paul himself verifies this, observing, "For circumcision, indeed, is benefiting if you should be putting law into practice" (Rom.2:25). It was not enough to agree with the demands of the law and desire to carry them out. Even a dedicated and sincere endeavor to heed the precepts was

insufficient in itself to satisfy the requirements of the law. "For not the listeners to law are just with God, but the doers of law shall be justified" (Rom.2:13).

This puts considerable doubt on the benefits of circumcision. And this doubt is increased with the consideration of Romans 2:25-29. If those of the Uncircumcision happened to put the law into full and perfect practice they would reap the benefits promised to the patriarchs and prophets. They would earn the applause of God and would be recognized as circumcised of heart and in spirit.

Yet here we must not suppose Paul is claiming that any of the Uncircumcision actually discharge the demands of the law, in a satisfactory way, so that they receive applause from God. Both Jews and Greeks are under sin (Rom.3:9). All sinned and are wanting of the glory of God (3:23). Nevertheless, any benefit associated with circumcision is enjoyed only where the people are putting the law into practice, whether or not they were physically of the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Since both Jews and Greeks have sinned, and "Not one is just"—not even one (Rom.3:10), the conclusion would naturally seem to be that there is no benefit whatsoever of circumcision.

WHAT THEN?

But the fact is that Paul does not come to that conclusion! In Romans 3:1 he asks a question that would seem well settled by what he has just written. "What, then, is the prerogative of the Jew, or what the benefit of circumcision?"

The apostle has shown that the benefit of circumcision comes only where there is a putting of the law into effect. And since the Jew has not fulfilled his part of the covenant agreement, we naturally conclude that the prerogative and benefit of circumcision has been made null and void. Nevertheless, Paul describes the prerogative of the Jew and the benefit of the circumcision as "Much in every manner"!

In commenting on this passage, a highly respected, twentieth century theologian quotes the question of Romans 3:1 and concludes, "The logical answer on the basis of Paul's argument is, 'None whatever!' But the trouble is that the 'Jewish objector' is in Paul's own mind. His Pharisaism—or shall we say, his patriotism?—was too deeply engrained for him to put right out of his mind the idea that somehow the divine covenant with mankind had a 'most favored nation clause.'"¹

A more conservative commentator has put the matter in better perspective: "Logically we expect the answer, 'Nothing at all.' But Paul surprises us with *Much in every way!* It is an important answer: if the Jew had no advantage, then either the Old Testament cannot be relied on or else God does not keep his promises."² The answer Paul gives is exactly the right one because it directs attention away from human failure to God. The vast scope of the benefit of circumcision is established by the faithfulness of God!

SPIRITUAL ISRAEL?

Others may point to the preceding statements of Romans 2:28,29 and see Paul as referring to those who are the "hidden Jew" who qualify under the designation, "circumcision of the heart." In turn it is claimed that Paul is now speaking of "spiritual Israel" in Romans 3:1, which is explained as a reference to Christians as the "true Israel." But the words of Romans 2:29 are not applied to believers but to anyone, if such may be, who is faithfully "putting the law into practice" from the heart, "whose applause is . . . of God." As we learn from Romans 3:9-20, these are hypothetical individuals,

1. C. H. Dodd, THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS, London, 1932, p.43.

2. Leon Morris: THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, Grand Rapids, 1988, p.152.

who achieve righteousness by their own acts; they do not exist in fact. And if they did exist there would be no room for the glory of God's faithfulness to be revealed.

That the terms "Jew" and "circumcision" of Romans 3:1 do not refer to us who are called out of both Jew and Gentile is made evident by the further question in verse 3, "For what if some *disbelieve?*" Paul has not left the problem introduced in Romans 2:25 behind. There seems to be no benefit in heeding the instructions of Genesis 17:10 because Israel has not accompanied this act with a walk in integrity. Yet somehow, there is benefit, and no small benefit by any means, in being of the Circumcision. Here in Romans 3:1, Paul is clearly speaking of those of the race of Israel, who are descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob according to the flesh. And he says of them that they have prerogatives and benefits that are *much in every manner*.

ENTRUSTED WITH THE ORACLES OF GOD

The benefit of circumcision is encompassed in the fact that God entrusted His oracles to them. But associated with these oracles are not only blessings of land and rule, and of being a blessing to others, but the blessing of having the law in their heart and upholding its standards. To enjoy the benefits spoken of in the oracles of God, Israel must enjoy the blessing of putting the law into practice. And that is exactly the testimony of the prophetic oracles of God. Those of the circumcision will indeed be granted "circumcision of the heart."

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

This is the new covenant, which fully accords with Genesis 12:2, and with Genesis 17:2 without making the blessings dependent on prior obedience to the instructions of Genesis 12:1 and 17:1. The obedience of Israel is now viewed, not as a prerequisite of blessing, but as an aspect of the blessings themselves. The promises of Ezekiel 36 harmonize even with the promises of Exodus 19, but the "if" clause of Exodus 19:5 is taken over by Yahweh Himself Who *makes* it that Israel shall obey His instructions.

Consequently, Paul finds that the benefits of circumcision are much in every manner. "For first, indeed, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God" (Rom.3:2). These oracles, or sayings of God, are those promises made to Israel by God from Genesis 12 to Ezekiel 36 and beyond. God will see to it that they are brought to realization.³

EN-FAITHED, UNFAITHFUL, FAITHFUL

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

Yet concerning Israel, some *disbelieved*. The word "believe" is the verb form of the noun "faith." Here it has a negative prefix, rendered *dis-* in the CV, but in order to continue using the root idea of "faith," we could render the question, "For what if some *were unfaithful*? Israel was *enfaithed* with the oracles of God; they were given

3. The way in which God righteously accomplishes this end, in the giving of His Son for sinners, is not revealed in Ezekiel 36 or discussed in Romans 3:1-4, but, as we will see in subsequent studies, this is brought out later in Romans (e.g. in 3:26,30, where the word "faith" refers to the faithful obedience of Christ).

these oracles for faithful keeping. But some, at least, of them were *unfaithful* to these oracles, and thus the nation failed to uphold its trust.

NON-NULLIFIABLE FAITHFULNESS

Will not their unbelief, their *unfaithfulness*, nullify the *faithfulness* of God? May it not be coming to that! (Rom.3:3,4). The pattern is clear. First of all we have something committed to Israel for their faithful keeping. Then we have Israel as a nation being unfaithful to that trust. And finally we have God being faithful to it. "God is faithful, and despite man's unbelief the oracles remain because validated by God's character."⁴

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

Israel was *unfaithful* to the oracles committed to them for their *faithful* keeping. But the *faithfulness* of God cannot be nullified. He faithfully fulfills the oracles committed to them. Because of God's faithfulness, and for no other reason centered in the human, but because of God's faithfulness alone, the benefits of all the oracles of God entrusted to Israel (including the benefit of putting the law into practice)

4. George L. Rogers, "Notes on Romans," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.20, p.283.

will be granted to them. No wonder Paul writes that the benefit is *Much in very manner!*

LET GOD BE TRUE

At this point in Romans 3, Paul does not dwell on this glory of God in remaining faithful despite human unfaithfulness. He simply sums up the theme with these words of Romans 3:4 (partly cited from Psalm 51:4): "Now let God be true, yet every man a liar, even as it is written: 'That so Thou shouldst be justified in Thy sayings, and shalt be conquering when Thou art being judged.'"

Israel has demonstrated what the human is like, unfaithful and lying. But God is faithful and true to His oracles, and in this lies the greatest of benefit to the Circumcision, and, as Paul will show, to all mankind.

As for Israel, Paul will later carry this theme forward in Romans 9, 10 and 11. The Israelites are those "whose is the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the legislation and the divine service and the promises" (Rom. 9:4). This is what was *entrusted to them*. Yet "they stumble on the stumbling stone" (9:32), they are "a stubborn and contradicting people" (10:21), who are enemies to the evangel (11:28). This is *their unfaithfulness*. Nevertheless God will take away their callousness and "all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written, 'Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer . . .'" (Rom. 11:25,26). This is *God's faithfulness*. The benefits promised to Israel in the oracles of God will come to them, and this will include God's placing of His spirit within them so that they are circumcised in heart as well as in flesh, and are putting the law into practice.

THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

The reference here in Romans 3:2 to the faithfulness of God has often been understood as speaking of divine

judgment. It is thus associated with the reference to *indignation* in verse 5 and the comments about *judgment* in verses 6 through 8. But first of all, "the faithfulness of God" must be associated with the oracles of God and set in contrast to Israel's unfaithfulness. In this way God is glorified, and the righteousness of His sayings is "commended" (verse 5). God is righteous and faithful in everything He has said to Israel, in His judgments to be sure, but finally and fully in His promises of blessing.

The message of Romans 3:5-8 is that even though human unfaithfulness (exhibited by the Circumcision) makes God's faithfulness more manifest and glorious by way of contrast, this does not mean God will not judge the sinner. The judgment of sinners is both necessary and *fair* (verse 9), and God will indeed be faithful in carrying it out and bringing forth its benefits. But the message of Romans 3:1-4 remains. God is faithful to His oracles, enfaithed to the Circumcision, and they will put the law into practice, they will receive the land, they will enjoy the blessings of the kingdom, and they will be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

Our benefits are not blessings according to the flesh, and God did not entrust to us the same oracles entrusted to the Circumcision. Nevertheless, the divine principle set forth in Romans 3:1-4 applies in our case as fully as it does for Israel. And this principle is set before us even more directly than it is to that nation, for right from the start of the evangel we see that God is the One Who justifies and conciliates and vivifies and reconciles in and through the faithfulness of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. All the many human failures and shortcomings, both of the Circumcision and of the Uncircumcision, cannot nullify the faithfulness of God.

D.H.H.

each year as he grew taller. His mother would bring it up to him from year to year, when she and her husband came to Shiloh on their annual pilgrimage and saw young Samuel who was *nurtured in faith* by Eli the priest. And Eli would bless Elkanah and Hannah, saying to him, "May Yahweh repay you and give you seed by this woman in place of the loan she had loaned to Yahweh" (1 Sam.2:20; *cf* 1:28).

Young Samuel had "remained in the ministry to Yahweh *in the presence of Eli the priest*" (1:11). During the following years (while Hannah gave birth to three sons and two daughters) "the lad Samuel *grew up in the presence of Yahweh*" (2:21), Who later nurtured the lad's *faith* when He stood by him in an *appearance* and spoke to him (3:10,15). This theophany occurred after Samuel had witnessed for years that Eli's sons "did not acknowledge Yahweh or the priests' due portion from the people" (2:12,13).

When the Israelites brought in animals for the offerings, the fat portions were to be burnt as a sacrifice to Yahweh. The chest and the right thigh were for the sustenance of the priests, and the rest of the animal was cooked and eaten by the offerer and his family (*cf* Lev.7:31,33; Deut.12:18). Yet Hophni and Phinehas intimidated the worshipers into allowing them to take a random selection of joints of meat, whether they were entitled to them or not; and they did not wait until the fat portions of the offerings had been burnt as a sacrifice to Yahweh (*cf* 1 Sam.2:13-17).

"Now Eli was very old; and he heard of all that his sons were doing to all Israel . . . But they did not hearken to their father's voice" (1 Sam.2:22-25).

By contrast "the lad Samuel was going on and growing greater in goodness both with Yahweh and with men" (2:26). Unsullied by the depravity of Eli's sons, young Samuel grew up in favor with Yahweh, and he was well liked by the worshipers who came to Shiloh from all Israel.

SAMUEL ESTABLISHED AS A PROPHET

“SAMUEL WAS IN THE MINISTRY BEFORE YAHWEH as a lad girded with a linen ephod. His mother would also make a small robe for him, and she would bring it up to him from days to days [from year to year], when she went up with her husband to sacrifice the [annual] sacrifice of days. And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, May Yahweh repay you and give you seed by this woman in place of the loan she had loaned to Yahweh. Then they went to their place. And Yahweh visited Hannah; she had pregnancies and gave birth to three sons and two daughters, while the lad Samuel grew up in the presence of Yahweh” (1 Sam.2:18-21).

PRIESTLY GARMENTS

The ephod (or vestment) was probably a tight-fitting garment without sleeves, usually reaching down to the knees. The one to be worn by Aaron and his priestly descendants was long enough to cover the chest as well. “Two joining shoulder pieces shall be for it” (Ex.28:7), and the breastplate of judgment with the Urim and the Thummim was laced to those shoulder pieces (28:28-30). The chief priest would use the Urim and the Thummim in order to ascertain Yahweh’s will in a given case. Ordinary priests would also wear the linen ephod (1 Sam.22:18). And when David was frisking and prancing before Yahweh, he was girded with a linen ephod (obviously a short garment; 2 Sam.6:14-16).

SAMUEL’S GROWTH AND MATURATION IN FAITH

The robe was a long outer garment worn by people of rank or special status. Samuel required a new child’s robe

DOOM PRONOUNCED ON ELI'S HOUSE

Samuel was still the young apprentice, and he may or may not have been present, when "a man of Elohim came to Eli" and pronounced to him the destiny of his whole family because of the depravity of his sons, and because he failed to prevent them from abusing the sacrificial worship. This prophetic message is recorded in 1 Samuel 2:27-30. It begins with a rhetorical question:

"Thus speaks Yahweh: Did I not reveal, yea reveal Myself to your father's [Aaron] house when they were in Egypt . . . I chose him [Levi] from all the tribes of Israel to be Mine for the priesthood, to ascend My altar, to fume incense, to wear the ephod before Me. And I assigned to your father's house all the fire offerings of the sons of Israel for food" (2:27,28).

The "you" in Yahweh's next question is plural in the Hebrew (i.e., you Eli and your sons), but singular in Qumran and Septuagint: "Why are you showing disrespect for My sacrifice and for My approach present?" (2:29). The "you" in the following question is singular in Hebrew and thus directed to Eli: "Why are you glorifying your sons more than Me?"

Then Yahweh pronounced the doom over Eli's house: "For those glorifying Me shall I glorify, yet those despising Me shall be dishonored. Behold the days are coming . . . when I will hack down your seed and the seed of your father's house, to keep them from becoming old in your house . . . And this is the sign for you that shall befall your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas: On the same day shall both of them die" (2:30,31,34).

YAHWEH CALLS SAMUEL

"The lad Samuel was in the ministry before Yahweh under Eli the priest" (1 Sam.3:1). He performed the work of a subordinate Levite as gatekeeper for the coffer of the covenant of Yahweh (cf 1 Chron.15:23). He slept in the

nave of the temple where the coffer of Elohim was and had to open the doors in the morning (3:3,15).

"In those days the word of Yahweh had become rare; there was no vision being unfolded" (3:1). This means that Samuel had had no contact with anyone to whom Yahweh had spoken, or who had had a vision of Him, since such events had become rare.

"It occurred on that day . . . [when] Yahweh called out to Samuel" (3:2,4); both Eli and Samuel were still asleep; "Eli was lying down in his own place," outside the temple, in the vestibule. "His eyes had started to grow dim, and he was not able to see." His failing eyesight meant that he had to relinquish the duty of sleeping in the temple. So "Samuel was lying down in the temple of Yahweh, [in the nave] where the coffer of Elohim was" (3:3).

"The lamp of Elohim was not yet quenched" (3:3). It was kept burning "from evening until morning" according to the eonian statute which is recorded in Exodus 27:20,21. So this lamp had not yet been extinguished when "Yahweh called out to Samuel, and he answered, Here I am" (3:4).

Obediently Samuel got up at once and "ran to Eli and said, Here I am, for you called out to me." Eli "replied, I did not call; turn back and lie down. So he went back and lay down" (3:5). We may assume that he had fallen asleep when "Yahweh proceeded to call yet again: Samuel! So Samuel arose and *went* to Eli and said, Here I am, for you called out to me." Now Samuel may have felt some uncertainty about who was calling him; so he did not run, but rather went to Eli. When the latter denied a second time that he had called, he added a term of endearment, "my son." So "he replied, I did not call, my son; turn back and lie down" (3:6).

THE WORD OF YAHWEH

Samuel was being called through an audible voice; but

“he had not yet come to know Yahweh”; he was unable to correctly identify the Speaker, since “the word of Yahweh had not yet been revealed to him” (3:7).

The prophet’s primary concern was *the word of Yahweh*, which came to him through visions and dreams. Once Yahweh had summoned Miriam and Aaron who wanted to put themselves on a level with Moses. “Oh hear My words,” He said to them, “If there were a prophet among you, I, Yahweh, *in an appearance* shall make Myself known to him; in a dream shall I speak to him” (Num.12:6). Eli had become priest by being born into a priestly family. But to become a prophet, one had to experience a personal call from Yahweh.

THE THREEFOLD CALL

“Yahweh proceeded to call for the third time: Samuel! So he arose and *went* to Eli and said, Here I am, for you called out to me. Then Eli understood that Yahweh was calling out to the lad. So Eli told Samuel, Go and lie down. When it occurs that He should call out to you, then you must say, Speak, Yahweh, for Your servant is hearing. So Samuel went back and lay down in his place” (3:8,9).

“Now Eli was very old” (2:22); “his eyes had started to grow dim, and he was not able to see” (3:2). Yet his spiritual vision was better than his failing eye sight, since he now “understood that Yahweh was calling out the lad.” The threefold call would ensure that the lad was fully awake and ready to listen. So Eli, as Samuel’s mentor, worded for him the response: “Speak, Yahweh, for Your servant is hearing” (3:8,9).

YAHWEH CAME AND STOOD BY

“Then Yahweh came and stood by and called out as He had done the times before: Samuel! Samuel! And Samuel answered, Speak, for Your servant is hearing. Yahweh said

to Samuel: Soon I shall do something in Israel about which both ears of anyone hearing it will tingle. On that day I shall carry out against Eli all that I have spoken against his house, from start to finish. I told him that I shall judge his house for the eon for the depravity, because he knew that his sons were dishonoring Elohim, and he did not remonstrate with them. Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, The depravity of the house of Eli shall assuredly not be sheltered by sacrifice or approach present for the eon" (3:10-14).

There is a noteworthy difference between the response, which Eli had suggested, and the one that Samuel actually used (*cf* 3:9,10). The lad did not repeat exactly all the words which Eli had enjoined him to say; for he omitted mention of the divine name "Yahweh," as if he was not yet quite certain that *He* would reveal Himself to him.

It was in an appearance close to the coffer that Yahweh made Himself known to Samuel who "was lying down in the temple of Yahweh where the coffer of Elohim was" (3:3). Here the lad received "the word of Yahweh" that was a condensed reiteration of the prophetic message which "a man of Elohim" had pronounced earlier, concerning the destiny of Eli's whole family because of the depravity of his sons (2:25-30).

The word of Yahweh to Samuel was even more forceful than the earlier divine message of doom for the house of Eli. When Yahweh pronounced a specially severe judgment (*cf* 2 Kings 21:12,13; Jer.19:3), He said of the effect upon its hearers that their ears will *tingle*, i.e., they will have a stinging sensation as from a sharp slap.

Yahweh emphasized that "*Soon . . . I shall judge his house The depravity . . . shall assuredly not be sheltered by sacrifice or approach present for the eon*" (3:11,13,14). Here Yahweh referred to the instructions He had given, in case an anointed priest had sinned *inadvertently* (Lev.4:1-3).

That priest had to sacrifice a flawless young bull calf as a sin offering to Yahweh.

Now Eli had heard of the highhanded manner of his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, how they “spurned the approach present of Yahweh” and intimidated the worshipers from all Israel who came to Shiloh (1 Sam.2:16,17). Eli’s rebuke, “You must not do so . . .” (2:24,25) was so gentle that Yahweh said, Eli “did not remonstrate with them” (3:13). Thus Eli too was “showing disrespect” for the sacrifice and the approach present; he was actually glorifying his sons more than Yahweh (2:29).

SAMUEL FEARFUL TO TELL ELI

“Samuel lay down until morning; then he rose early on the morning and opened the doors of the House of Yahweh. Now Samuel was fearful to tell Eli of the appearance; yet Eli called Samuel, saying, Samuel, my son! Here I am. Then he asked, What was the word that He spoke to you? Now do not suppress it from me. Thus may Elohim do to you and thus add to it* if you suppress from me anything of the entire message He spoke to you. So Samuel told him all the words and suppressed nothing from him. Eli replied, He is Yahweh! He may do what seems good in His eyes” (3:15-18).

Under the weight of the severe divine message, Samuel lay down until the morning, being fearful to meet Eli. Yet the priest insisted that the lad tell him every word of the message; and he accepted graciously all that he heard (3:18). In accepting the verdict of Yahweh, Eli and Samuel *were together in faith and obedience*, as they had always been. While the lad was growing up from boyhood into manhood, that verdict initiated him to his lifelong career as Israel’s prophet and last judge.

*Thus may . . . to it: a formula of imprecation (cf Ruth 1:17; 1 Kings 2:23).

A PROPHET FOR YAHWEH

“As Samuel grew up, Yahweh was with him, and He let none of all His promises fall to the earth. From Dan to Beersheba, all Israel realized that Samuel was authenticated as a prophet for Yahweh. And Yahweh continued to appear at Shiloh when Yahweh revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of Yahweh. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel” (3:19-4:1).

Yahweh was going to be with the young prophet who had had his first assignment. It was followed by further words from Yahweh to him. All divine promises were fulfilled when Yahweh continued to appear to Samuel at Shiloh who became authenticated as the prophet for Yahweh. Through Samuel’s mouth the word of Yahweh came to all Israel.

Samuel’s faith in Yahweh and his obedience toward him remind us of the closing words in Romans 16: “Now to Him Who is able to establish you . . . [in] faith-obedience—to the only, and wise God, through Christ Jesus, be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!”

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE PSALMS

By now most of our subscribers should have received a complementary copy of the Concordant Version of the Psalms. We secured a third class mailing permit for sending these to USA subscribers and have sent copies to those in other countries by allowable, printed-matter rates. We trust this publication will be a blessing in rekindling interest in many hearts in these ancient hymns of praise.

Regrettably the background of the Hebrew text on the cover was printed upsidedown, and the first page of the Introduction was slightly tilted. We would appreciate hearing of any typographical or possible translation errors that our readers may find and will make note of them for the prospective publication of the Concordant Literal Old Testament.

Many of our friends have written to us expressing their appreciation for this new publication. Additional copies of the Concordant Version of the Psalms (181 pages) are available for \$4.00 plus \$1.50 shipping.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1995
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SIX

EDITORIAL

QUESTIONS concerning the fate of the unbeliever in the light of God's love and the gift of His Son for sinners, or the fulfillment of the terrestrial and soulish promises to Israel, or the relationship of Christ to Deity, or even the absoluteness of God's will and wisdom and power, are often answered in the guise of divine mysteries or spiritualized conclusions that must not be examined closely. Any desire to understand may be considered irreverent. But Paul saw the consolation of our hearts and union in love among us as associated with the "assurance of *understanding*" and "a *realization* of the secret of the God and Father, of Christ, in Whom all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge* are concealed" (Col.2:1-3).

There are secrets being revealed in God's Word but not mysteries being institutionalized in vagueness and obscurity. What Paul taught was for "the stability of [our] faith" (Col.2:5). We may not always grasp what is being said, but we are convinced that God's Word is understandable. In this issue of *Unsearchable Riches* we give special attention to the following passages (among others), with the prayer that at least the consideration of the passage itself, if not our thoughts on the passage, will open up understanding and be edifying for spiritual growth:

"Love is never lapsing" (1 Cor.13:9; p.52).

"Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God" (Rom.5:1; p.59).

"Christ Jesus . . . [inhering] in the form of God" (Phil.2:5,6; p.69).

"Lord, Thou shouldst not stand against them this sin!" (Acts 7:60; p.77).

" . . . if so be that God is One, Who will be justifying the Circumcision out of faith and the Uncircumcision through faith" (Rom.3:30; p.82).

"The Lord is my Helper, and I shall not be afraid of what man shall be doing to me" (Heb.13:6; p.95).

D.H.H.

PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS (I)

PAUL'S first epistle to the Corinthians is a divine commentary on the conduct inculcated in the epistle to the Romans. The secret of a life well pleasing to God lies in the crucifixion of the flesh and resurrection by the power of the spirit (*cf* Rom.6:6-11). The Corinthians failed in both of these requisites, as will be seen by the framework. The first part of the epistle shows that though the apostle had pressed the preaching of the cross, which puts an end to all physical pretensions, they persisted in making much of men, and thus created divisions among themselves. The close of the epistle shows also that some denied the resurrection, though the resurrection of Christ was fundamental to the evangel and an absolute necessity to acceptable conduct.

FRAMEWORK OF FIRST CORINTHIANS

As is the case with so many of the epistles, each subject is taken up twice, as shown in the framework, dividing the epistle into two distinct parts, each having the same general subjects, but discussing them from distinct standpoints. In the first half all is personal. In the second all is ecclesiastical. The gifts in the former portion are men, Paul and Apollos. In the latter they are spiritual endowments, which were exercised in the ecclesia. Thus also, the abuse of the physical body is balanced by the abuse of the Lord's body. The private conduct of the marriage relation is replaced by their conduct in the public meetings of the saints. Idol sacrifices are discussed in their relation to the individual and as they affect the ecclesia, especially the Lord's table.

The central subject is the question of Paul's apostolic authority. First he discusses his personal rights, but then waives them all in his desire for the welfare of others.

Thus we see a marvelous symmetry and balance of thought in an epistle which is usually supposed to be without method.

Introduction (1:1-9)

The Word of the Cross (1:10-3:23)

God's Gifts, Personal (4:1-21)

Our Physical Bodies, Judgment (5:1-6:20)

Man and Woman

Conduct in Marriage (7:1-40)

Idol Sacrifices (8:1-13)

Apostolic Authority

Paul's Freedom (9:1-18)

Apostolic Authority

Paul's Servitude (9:19-27)

Idol Sacrifices (10:1-11:1)

Man and Woman

Conduct in Ecclesia (11:2-16)

The Lord's Body, Judgment (11:17-34)

The Gifts, Spiritual (12:1-14:40)

The Evangel of the Resurrection (15:1-58)

Conclusion (16:1-23)

SALUTARY CORRECTIVES

This epistle is a severe rebuke to the present day ecclesiastical systems. If division was a proof of carnality in Corinth, what does the multiplication of sects with which we are afflicted prove? There is far more need today of the salutary correctives in this epistle than there was in Corinth. There is need to proclaim, not only the death of Christ, but the *manner* of His death. A crucified Christ is the answer to the worldly wisdom and religious carnality of those who profess the Name of God.

SECRETS

1 Corinthians shows why so few are able to apprehend the marvelous secrets of Paul's later epistles. If the Corinthians were so carnal that the apostle could not reveal these to them, it is no marvel that they are hid from the immature believer of today. Yet the apostle did disclose to them the "secret of the resurrection."

In the midst of all the gifts the apostle points them to the transcendent grace which has since become ours by a later revelation. Where gifts such as prophecy and healing have ceased, faith, expectation and love remain. Let us hope that soon faith will be lost in sight, and expectation in realization. Then love alone will abide. May we give it the place pre-eminent.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1 Corinthians 13 is usually understood as an exhortation to love, especially in the exercise of the gifts. But it is far more than that. Love is the sum and substance of the path suited to transcendence. Love will never lapse, but the gifts will go (1 Cor.13:8).

There are three distinct periods brought before us in this chapter. In the first one are all the gifts besides faith, expectation and love. Knowledge and prophecy are "in part" (verse 9); it is the time of childhood (verse 11); vision is as though in a mirror, "in an enigma" (verse 12).

In the second period the gifts "lapse," "cease," or are "discarded" (verse 8), perfection comes and partial knowledge and prophecy are done away (verses 9,10), childish things are put away (verse 11), knowledge is "face to face" (verse 12), and only faith, expectation and love abide (verse 13).

The third period is only hinted at. Love never lapses. But we know that faith will be lost in sight, and expectation will vanish in the glory.

We all desire to walk in the way more excellent. No one

cares to linger in the lesser glory. But many of us have been taught that this perfect path is not for us now, but is reserved for the saints in resurrection. For such we have the most marvelous of all messages. *The path suited to transcendence is our present privilege and portion.* Paul was not speaking of our resurrection state, but of the final phases of his ministry, which went from glory to glory. He was contrasting one of these glories with another. He was speaking of his final revelations as unfolded in Ephesians.

How can we be assured of this? The trinity of graces that remain are ample proof. *Now* faith and expectation remain. They will have no place in the glory. Faith will be replaced by sight and expectation by fulfillment. Then we will not patiently wait for some future blessing, but rather enjoy the present. Expectation will vanish for lack of those adverse conditions on which it depends. And so with faith. In His presence it disappears in perception.

These are the abiding graces for the present. In contrast with the lesser gifts, such as prophecy, languages and knowledge, these remain *until the glory*. Only love remains forever. Only love never lapses. It is the supreme, the essential, the eternal grace, the way *most* transcendent.

The path suited to transcendence involves the most exalted vision of God ever granted to mortal man. Not only is He the Healer of earth's diseases during the days of the coming kingdom (to which all the miracles of healing pointed), but He will heal the hearts and minds of all His creatures in the consummation. A hopeful outlook is the most potent of all medicines, and the universal reconciliation is the balm of Gilead to every sin-stricken son of creation.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3,4

Christ is the solitary subject of the evangel, and three facts concerning Him, all of which took place within the narrow compass of three days, constitute its essence. He

died, was entombed, and has been roused. His death was for our sins; His resurrection is a token of their removal. So simple, yet so sublime, is the message that saves! Who can measure the depths of love which it reveals, or scale the heights of glory which it unveils? It sinks the most august Personage in the whole universe down into the deepest degradation, and it carries Him up to the highest heights in the heavens. It concerns God's anointed Saviour and that part of His career which effects our salvation. Apart from these three facts there is no evangel.

Christ died for our sins. The most Blessed Being in the universe, the Image of the Deity, the Channel of all creation, the Effulgence of God's glory, His Beloved Son, the promised Seed of the woman Who will bruise the serpent's head, the Seed of Abraham and David's Heir, the Prophet like Moses and the Priest after the order of Melchisedec, the promised Saviour of the world—such is the One Who died for our sakes.

That *such* a Christ should die—this is the great marvel. That He, through Whom all life has come, should enter the realms of death, opens up to our gaze the vast vista of God's love, for death could never have touched Him except as a Sacrifice for the sins of others.

He was entombed. As an evidence, both of His death and of His resurrection, we must press the fact of His entombment. There must be no question of the reality of His entrance into the death state, or it will react upon the reality of His resurrection.

He has been roused the third day. No event in the history of the world is better attested (*cf* 1 Cor. 15:5-11). But the evidence is not confined to the past. It is a vital force operating in every true believer. The grace which flows from Christ's glorious resurrection produces a power which should transform our lives so that we may walk as partakers of the power of His resurrection, and living reflectors of His glory.

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-28

Well do I recall the days when this part of First Corinthians was utterly incomprehensible to me. The "truth" which held me in its thrall turned it into a dark riddle, which I had no hope of solving, at least in this life. Its beams were too bright, and, in place of illuminating my whole being, as it does today, it blinded my eyes, as Saul was blinded by the brightness of our Lord's presence on the way to Damascus. But gradually the scales fell away, and now that which was the most obscure has become a light for illuminating all the rest.

The thoughts which close with the wondrous words "All in all" must be illumined by their light, or they will prove insoluble enigmas. The vivification of all, the abolition of death, the abdication of the Son—these truths are too much for the mortal whose heart is still confined in the confessions of human theology. In fact this part of God's revelation is far too magnificent in its scope to be cramped into the creeds of men. Hence we urge all who read these lines to remember at all times, when studying this superlative section of divine revelation, that the object of all which the apostle brings before us is a twofold universality in regard to God. *Every* creature of His will find in Him its *all*. Keeping this constantly before us we will be able to examine the steps which lead up to it, beginning with Him in Whom it has already found a fulfillment, the Firstfruit, Christ.

CHRIST HAS BEEN ROUSED

Christ *has* been roused from among the dead, and not only so, but He is the Firstfruit of those who are reposing (1 Cor.15:20). Just as, each year, a sheaf of grain was waved before Yahweh as a token and promise of the coming crop (Lev.23:10,11), so Christ, in His recall from death, was but the beginning, to be followed in due course by the whole harvest. All is reckoned as being in the Firstfruit, so that,

in another place, the apostle says, "If the firstfruit is holy, the kneading is also" (Rom.11:16). What is true of one is germinally true of all the rest. So that we need only look at Christ to see what God's heart has in store for all the creatures which His hands have made. His vivification is the sample and gives certainty to all the rest.

ADAM AND CHRIST

In his epistle to the Romans, the apostle shows how Christ's work parallels and far more than corrects the one act of Adam, to which is traced the entrance of sin and death. His conclusion was that, as it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one just award for all mankind for life's justifying (Rom.5:18). In fullest accord with this he now develops the same thought in connection with *life*. In this also, Christ is far more than the equivalent of Adam. Death, as well as sin, came in through the first man. So life, as well as righteousness, comes in through the Second, our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, this goes far deeper, for it is death working in us which is the cause of our sin. Remove death, and sin will cease of itself.

DYING AND VIVIFICATION

Far more than our decease was brought in by Adam, and something which affects our souls much more than the sleep which closes our career. God did not say to Adam, in Genesis 2:17, merely that he would die, but in the precise language of the Hebrew, He said, "to die shall you be dying." That is, there would be dying as well as death. As we now know, there is a long process of disintegration, with which we are all acquainted, even though we are accustomed to calling it life. Ever since Adam sinned, he and his descendants have been dying. Like ripe fruit plucked from the tree, our bloom soon passes away, and we show a

slow process of decay. In Adam, all are dying, even while they are still alive. That is the "life" that we inherited from our disobedient parent, which not one of his descendants has ever evaded.

Thus, we read, shall all be vivified (1 Cor.15:22). The contrast is not between the crisis of actual death and the resurrection, but between the dying process and a life process, beyond the touch of death. Indeed, it is not strictly true that all in Adam are doomed to die. Many have longed to be among the favored few who will not expire, but be vivified at the coming of our Lord. We who survive to the presence of Christ are slowly dying, but we will not complete the process when we hear the shout that will wake the dead and infuse immortal life into our dying frames. Not all of Adam's descendants will die, but all begin to tread the path that leads down to the grave as soon as they are born.

The contrast in this glorious promise is between mortality and immortality, between our present mode of existence and the glory before us. That vivification is far more than resurrection is abundantly evident, for it is for those who have not died as well as for those who repose. Our Lord is not only the Resurrection but the Life (John 11:25). Not only could He call back Lazarus from the tomb to life like that he had before, and thus be his Resurrection, but in the days to come He will call Lazarus once again to a life indissoluble and incorruptible, and thus become his Life.

GOD ALL IN ALL

The great truth of racewide vivification is one of the most practical that can be found. It is not a dry doctrine with little vital value. It is an elixir for all the saints. Next to personal salvation there is no truth so full of living power to help us on the way and to fill our hearts with joy and exultation.

But best of all, it gives us a God worthy of the Name. The glad message of God's love comes to us, not in word only, but in power and in much assurance. The clouds that concealed Him from our gaze vanish as before the rising sun. All the vanity that depressed us is filled with blessed purpose. In everything we see His hand. And the goal is the most magnificent, the most heart-satisfying, the most love-revealing that could be. What greater bliss can we wish creation, mankind, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and God Himself, than that God become All in all? What words of tongue or pen are half so sweet as those which fill the future with ineffable delight and the present with surpassing peace? Let us treasure them in our hearts and display them in our walk, and inscribe upon our banner, "All in all."*

A.E.K.

*The preceding was selected and adapted from the CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.248, and *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.15, pp.297-308, vol.58, pp.10-16, 101-104, 150-154.

SCRIPTURE CONFERENCES

Fellowship gatherings are scheduled in coming months in Florida, Washington, and Ohio. Such meetings are opportune times for special attention to things of consequence in God's Word, as well as for fellowship with fellow believers, for mutual edification and encouragement.

Grace Chapel of Melbourne, Florida is hosting a conference **April 21-23**. The theme for these meetings is, "God's Plan for Humanity." Scheduled speakers are: Coy Brock, Rick Farwell, Clay Kent, and Jeff Priddy. (Contact: Jack Ayers, 2938 Kosuth Rd. NE, Palm Bay FL 32905; 407-951-7052.)

Meetings are scheduled in the Seattle, Washington area for the second weekend of May, **May 12-14**, centered around the theme, "The Eonian Times." Jim Coram is to be the main speaker at these gatherings, and his wife Suella also hopes to be in attendance. (Contact: Gordon Gerbing, E 500 Gerbing View Dr., Union WA 98592; 206-898-4225.)

"Through Our Lord Jesus Christ," is the theme for the Scripture conference to be held in Willard, Ohio, **June 2-4**. Dean Hough is to be one of the speakers at these meetings. (Contact: Ted McDivitt, 9600 Wolf Rd., Windham OH 44288; 216-326-2554).

NOT ONLY SO

OUR BLESSINGS begin in the grace of God, and once they begin in this sphere they grow and superabound. Our justification and the salvation from condemnation which it entails are established in the grace of God (*cf* Rom.3:24; Eph.2:8). But the blessings do not end with this glorious deliverance.

JUSTIFICATION

The gratuitous justification channeled to us through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus is the source of many further blessings. One of these is the blessing of "peace toward God," which is set before us in Romans 5. "Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, though our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand, and we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God" (Rom.5:1,2).

This is a peace of relationship, as indicated by the word "toward." It is not described as a removal into isolation, away from all stress and agitation but an *access* into a new position with relation to God. It is not an experience of the soul, but a peace that is known "by faith" in what God has said. The grace, or joy, of this peace is not something felt by the nerves in comfort apart from jarring noise and the stresses of life. It is the *expectation* of the glory of God, that peace which is characterized by confidence in God despite and in the face of the pressures and burdens of our present experience.

As Paul goes on to describe it in this chapter, this blessing of peace is centered in an acquaintance with God's love in justifying and saving sinners, and in an appreciation of the conciliation which speaks directly of this close relationship with God. "God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes. Much rather, then, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation, through Him. For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son, much rather, being conciliated, we shall be saved in His life" (Rom.5:8-11).

CONCILIATION

Many years ago, Brother A. E. Knoch spoke of this relationship of peace toward God, as follows: "Does the accused criminal, acquitted though he be, straightway find himself upon the judge's list of friends, the object of his favors? No indeed, for justification leads to no such favors.

"Nor is justification by itself the grace which establishes us in settled confidence before God. Peace does that. Justification flows from that which God has *done*; what He *is*, is the basis of peace."*

But there is more. Being justified on the basis of the faith of Jesus Christ we may be enjoying this new relationship toward God of "settled confidence." But it is a settled confidence that exists in the midst of the storms and battles of the current eon. It is a peace that sees meaning and purpose in affliction because of what we believe concerning God. It does not only look ahead to the glory of God where failure and frustration do not exist, but it also looks about at the present and sees that all things are under the direction and control of the God of righteousness and love and peace presented in the evangel.

*A. E. Knoch: MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, pp.36,37.

GLORYING IN AFFLICTIONS

Peace toward God involves glorying in expectation of the glory of God. "*Yet not only so . . .*"

"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). The chain of blessings increases from justification to a relationship of peace toward God in which there is the favor of access and confidence before Him, and then to the enjoyment of relating our troubles to God's ultimate purpose of love.

Peace toward God involves a new spirit within us, one that is inundated by the love of God, saturated with assurance that even afflictions are beneficial and issue out of the heart of God for our good. As Paul writes later, "What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?" Nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.8:35,39).

SAUL AND DAVID

The first two kings of Israel may serve to illustrate the rich value of this blessing of peace spoken of in Romans 5. Both Saul and David were anointed for kingship (cf 1 Sam.10:1; 16:1,13). But Saul never seemed to be able to go beyond that blessing to a settled reliance upon the One Who blessed him. And even though he was a man of war, David had the peace of glorying in an appreciation of Yahweh that gave him endurance and assurance even in the harshest of circumstances. We have only to read the Psalms of David to understand that his anointing as king over Israel was not the end of his blessings. There was a relationship with Yahweh that Saul was never able to enjoy.

“As for the *spirit* of Yahweh, it had withdrawn from Saul, and an evil spirit from Yahweh frightened him” (1 Sam.16:14). Yet these were “the last words” of David: “The *spirit* of Yahweh has spoken by me, and His declarations have been on my tongue” (2 Sam.23:1,2).

This does not mean that David escaped affliction. In fact, he faced many of the same troubles that Saul encountered. But the challenge of Goliath, for instance, *dismayed* Saul and all Israel, so that they were *exceedingly fearful* (1 Sam.17:11). But David said of Yahweh, “*He* shall rescue me from the hand of this Philistine” (1 Sam.17:37).

David also had troubles that were unique to him, but even *in* his distress he found that Yahweh made a wide-ness for him and caused him to dwell *in serenity* (Psa.4:1,8). While Saul dwelt in luxury he was terrified in imagining David to be his enemy, and David was learning endurance in the wilderness. For David, peace was not an absence of turmoil but rather a matter of looking to God and a dwelling with confidence in His salvation: “As for me, I am calling to Elohim, and Yahweh, He is saving me He ransoms my soul in *peace* from the attack against me” (Psa.55:16,18).

GLORYING IN GOD

The death of God’s Son has brought blessings of justification and conciliation and the expectation of salvation in His life. “*Yet not only* so, but we are glorying also in God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we now obtained the conciliation” (Rom.5:11). What a great blessing this is, to be able to glory in God even when we face heavy disappointments and painful afflictions. But as long as we focus our attention on God as He reveals Himself in and through our Lord Jesus Christ we will be glorying in Him. This is what peace toward God is all about.

D.H.H.

THE ONLY TRUE GOD

WE BELIEVE that, ultimately speaking, "there is no other God except *One*" (1 Cor.8:4b). That *One*, is "*the Father*, out of Whom *all* is" (1 Cor.8:6). He alone is the Supreme (Lam.3:38; Dan.4:17); He alone is the Almighty (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev.16:14).

In Hebrew, "Yahweh" is God's *name*; "Elohim" is (the most common form of) God's *title*. The divine name speaks of the One Who is, was, and is coming (Rev.1:8); the divine title speaks of the One Who *places* or *subjects*, "according as He is intending" (1 Cor.12:11b; cf "Yet now God [lit., "*the Placer*"] *placed* the members, each one of them, in the body according as He wills," 1 Cor.12:18; cp 1 Cor. 12:27b). Therefore, when we say "Yahweh," we should think: "the One Who is, was, and is coming"; and, when we say "Elohim" or "God," we should think: "the Placer" or "the Subjector."

It is important to recognize that "GOD" is not a personal *name*, an expression by which one is known, but is a *title*, added to a personal name, indicative of one's office. A name speaks of that which one is *called*; a title speaks of that which one *does*, the capacity in which one *serves*.

While the title "GOD," when used relatively, can be used in reference to *many* beings, when it is used absolutely, it is only used in reference to *one* Being, God Himself. When this title, "GOD" (or "ELOHIM") is used of the *One* Whose name is Yahweh, the One Who is All-Sufficient, Who is the Supreme, the Almighty, of the One Who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only true God, or other-

wise of the One, so termed, Who is spoken of in contrast to or as distinct from Christ, it is evident that it is used in its absolute sense.

The title "GOD" (or "ELOHIM"), then, neither signifies nor entails either supremacy or unoriginatedness of being. Nor is it a term indicative of the essential nature of the being so designated. It is certainly true when this title is used in reference to the only true God, that it refers to One Who *is* supreme and unoriginated, and Whose essential nature *is* distinct from other beings. But the fact that these things are true of the One Who is the only true God, is no indication that any of these things are true of the *word* "GOD," itself, or of any other beings to whom this same *word* ("GOD") refers, when used in a *relative* sense.

It is deeply mistaken, then, to reason that since the word "GOD" is sometimes used in reference to Christ, men, or messengers, that therefore either Christ, men, or messengers, are unoriginated, supreme, or of the same essential nature as the Almighty.

The word "God" (or "god"), like all titles, concerns itself with office or service. In Greek, its stem, *the-* signifies PLACE; hence, the complete form, *theos* (GOD), means PLACER. This idea fits all the contexts in which *theos* is used. *Theos* is not only the original Greek word for the English "GOD," but is also the inspired translation of the Hebrew "ELOHIM," in all corresponding New Testament citations of Old Testament texts which refer to God Himself.

Any references to those lesser beings to whom the title GOD ("placer" or "subjector") also applies notwithstanding, then, we say, Nevertheless, there is only *one* God. He alone is the Supreme, the Almighty One. He is the God, and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and He is "the only *true* God" (John 17:3).

It is Christ Himself Who insists that this is so. The adjective *alêthês* (TRUE) speaks of "[that which is] in accord

with the facts.”¹ In accord with the actual, literal facts, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ alone is God. He is the only Placer Who is not Himself placed by another. He alone is self-existent and self-sufficient. All others to whom this title is ascribed, *including Christ*, possess it in a derived sense, *not* in accord with the facts absolute, but relatively speaking, or, in some figurative way.

Supremely speaking, there is only *one* true God, even though, speaking relatively, and even in a righteous sense, “there *are* many gods” (1 Cor.8:5). For, indeed, “there are those being *termed* gods, whether in heaven or on earth” (1 Cor.8:5; *cp* Ex.22:8,9; Psa.82:6). Consequently, we should hardly be surprised that, in certain passages, Christ also is so termed (*cf* Titus 2:13; Heb.1:8; 1 John 5:20b). Except for God Himself, Christ certainly has a right to this title in a way unspeakably above that of all others, to whom it is also properly applied. Yet conversely, we must also realize that the ascription of the title “God” to Christ—in certain senses and in various connections—is no more indication that He is the Deity than that any others to whom this title is also ascribed are the Deity.

SEEING THE INVISIBLE

The word “Godhead,” as in the Authorized Version and others, is a mistranslation of the nouns *theiotês* and *theotês*. *Theiotês* should be “divinity,” for it speaks of the *attributes* or *qualities* which *pertain to* God (Rom.1:20). The adjectival form, *theion*, should be rendered “divine” (e.g., 2 Pet. 1:3,4). The idea which is conveyed in English under the figure “head,” forms no part of these Greek expressions. Yet it is this very term, “Godhead,” taken either in a pluralistic sense, or in a corporate sense, which is a pillar of “the sacred mystery of the Trinity.”

1. KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, entry “true,” p.310.

We *believe* that "there is no other God except One . . ." and that this One is "God, the Father, out of Whom all is" (1 Cor.8:4-6). Yet we realize that the Father, the "Most High" (Luke 1:32) or "*Supreme*" God (Psa.87:5), speaking relatively, rightly says to the Son, "Thy throne, O God [O Placer], is for the eon of the eon" (Heb.1:8). Thus, Christ Himself is "the great God [Placer] and . . . Saviour" Whose advent we await (Titus 2:13).

However, we also believe, and insist, that Christ's Head is *God* (1 Cor.11:3), "the *God* of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory" (Eph.1:17). The Father, ultimately speaking, is "the *only* God" (Jude 24,25; *cp* Rom.16:27; 1 Tim.1:17).

We believe that Christ is the "Effulgence" (the Radiant Splendor) of God's glory (Heb.1:3). Likewise, we believe that Christ is the Emblem of God's *assumption* (Heb. 1:3), of the role God assumes whenever, in the Person of His Son, He manifests Himself before His creatures. It is the ministry of Christ, Who is a tangible, visible Being, to *represent* His God and Father, Who is an intangible, invisible Being, whenever, and in whatever way, the Deity wishes to manifest Himself. Therefore, where we read that the One Who is spirit, Who is therefore essentially invisible, Whom, accordingly, no one has ever (literally) seen (John 1:18), is nevertheless "perceived" by certain of His creatures, we are to understand that such perception is either by the agency of Christ, Who is God's Image, is visionary (Rev.5:1), or is through the eyes of *faith* (Matt.5:8).

It is only through the figure of *anthropomorphism* (human form) that the Supreme Himself is spoken of as having bodily members. Literally speaking, God is spirit (John 4:24), invisible (Col.1:15) and intangible, and so, in Himself, has no form or shape. How, then, does the Scripture speak of His arms and hands, His mouth, eyes, and face, as

if He were a member of the human race? In all such cases, God condescends to our low estate and speaks to us in human language. Otherwise we could never understand Him or enter into His thoughts and feelings.

When God impresses us through His Word, it is as if a man speaks to us with his *mouth*, so this feature is ascribed to Him. Since God sees us as a fellow man does with his *eyes*, organs of sight are ascribed to the Deity. The human body is the basis of many figures which contradict flatly the great facts concerning the Deity, if they are taken literally.

Spirit is intangible, imperceptible, and so is not an object of literal, or sentient, perception. Therefore God is not a Being of form or shape, these terms only being applicable to beings of corporeal, tangible existence.

GOD'S CREATIVE ORIGINAL

It is Christ alone, the Word or Expression of God (John 1:14), Who unfolds the Deity (John 1:18), for He is "the Image of the invisible God" (2 Cor.4:4). Christ enjoys the highest *delegated* authority in the entire universe. Even as Christ, "the Firstborn from among the dead" (Col.1:18), was once actually among the dead, thus also, Christ, the "Firstborn of every creature" (Col.1:15), was once actually created. These passages are parallel, the proper understanding of verse 15 (Christ's being the Firstborn of every creature), not depending upon verse 18 (Christ's being the Firstborn from among the dead) for its own interpretation. But actually, the former verse sets the precedent for the latter passage's proper sense, a sense which, ostensibly at least, no one doubts (the sense which reveals that Christ was once actually dead, that is, numbered among the dead).

Therefore the Son of God must have had a beginning. Consequently, our Lord must be One Who is among God's creatures, though One Who is unspeakably higher than any other. His beginning, however, must have been before

that of all others, since all² was created in and through Him (Col.1:16,17).

Truly, *all* is out of God (Rom.11:36), and all glory, even that which is Christ's, is to be ascribed to God: "to [God] be the glory in the ecclesia *and in Christ Jesus* for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen" (Eph.3:21). Christ is "*God's creative Original*" (Rev.3:14); literally, He is "THE ORIGINAL OF-THE CREATION OF-THE God" (CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT sublinear), Who, as Christ Himself declared concerning His Father, is "the *only* true God" (John 17:3).

"Christ is God's creative Original. According to the Greek, He is the Original, the Beginning, or the Chief, of every creation of God (Rev.3:14). The basic meaning of *archê* is ORIGIN, and all its forms are to be found under this word in the Concordance of the Concordant Version. In earliest times, all government was in the family, and the father, who *originated* it, was chief. So the stem came to be applied to the highest *of a class*, as the *archangel*, as well as the *archetype*, the pattern, or original. But the pattern comes *before* the product, the original *before* the copies. This accords perfectly with the fact that all creation was *in* Him. Adam was the original of all mankind;

2. It is illogical to reason from the mere presence of the words "all is created through Him" (Col.1:16), that since "*all*" is created through Him, that Christ Himself, therefore, is not a created being. In the "all" that was created in and through Christ, as with the "all" which, in beginning, came into being through the "word" (or "Word"; John 1:3), in both cases, the One through Whom all these creative works were achieved, obviously, already existed Himself. The scope of the "all" of the context, then, in both of these passages, is all that came into being from the time when, through Christ, all these creative works began. From that point onward, all, without exception, was created in and through Him. Whether Christ, at some antecedent point in time, was Himself created, is a question which neither Colossians 1:16 nor John 1:3 can answer. Since neither of these verses are concerned with that issue, it is wrong to offer them as proof in denial of His creaturehood.

his descendants, and all *originated* in him. So Christ is the *Original* of creation.”³

Metaphorically (in the sense that “this One *is* [i.e., represents] that One”), Christ Himself, as God’s Image, “is” the true God, even as He “is” life eonian (1 John 5:20b). And, even *literally*, in Himself, Christ is the great God (i.e., Placer) and Saviour of Whom Paul speaks in Titus 2:13. Nevertheless, it is *Christ’s own God*, His God and Father, Who is the Supreme and *only true* God.

THE FORM OF GOD

The entire *complement* of the “Deity” [or, “deity,” *theotês*, PLACERSHIP, the “GODness” or PLACERSHIP of God] is dwelling *bodily* in Christ (Col.2:9). In a *bodily* way, the entire array of *that which pertains to* God is *dwelling in* Christ. Since the entirety of that which pertains to God yet cannot be communicated *by* God in Himself, Who is spirit, is dwelling *bodily in* Christ, it follows that Christ Himself is *not* the Deity.

Similarly, since Christ alone was “inherently [lit., “inhering,” i.e., existing by right] in the form of God,” He, accordingly, “deem[ed] it not pillaging to be *equal with* God” (Phil.2:6,7).

Since Christ is the Son of God, He is a Being distinct from God. Christ therefore was not equal to God in an identification-of-person sense; instead, the *appearance* of Christ was in a form which is to be identified as that which is proper to Deity. To all appearances, Christ was the same as, or “equal to,” God.

We are not told that Christ is a Form of God (and, therefore, that Christ is a mere Form, instead of a tangible, actual Being). Instead, we are told that God’s Anointed, *Christ*, before He emptied Himself, was “inherently *in* the form of God” (Phil.2:6). Form refers not to inward essence

3. A. E. Knoch, “The Pre-existence of Christ,” p.4.

but merely to external appearance (e.g., 2 Tim.3:5). The form of God was not a manifestation of what Christ was in Himself, but a representation of His God. His glory consisted not in actually being the Deity, but in possessing the visible appearance through which God had chosen to manifest Himself.

"The form of God," does not refer us to that of which God Himself is composed, nor is it an expression corollarial to the notion that God Himself is a corporeal being. Instead, it refers to the personal *appearance* of *Christ*, in which He inhered and thus deemed it not pillaging to be *equal* with God (lit., "ANOINTED JESUS WHO IN FORM OF-GOD belonging . . ."). Christ was inherently in the "of-God" *form*; thus He *appeared* to be the Deity. He Who is the Image of the invisible God, existed in the form which is proper to Deity, the form in which God would have Himself made manifest.

THE CHRIST OF GOD

The English "anoint" is derived from the Latin *inungere* (to smear or rub on). The Greek verb *criō* ("anoint"), is the basis of the noun *christos*, which in English is "christ." It is to be regretted that we use "christ" for the noun of the verb *anoint*, thus obscuring its meaning from the ordinary reader. It corresponds to the Hebrew "messiah," a title applied to priests, kings, and prophets after their consecration by means of anointing with oil. Our Lord Jesus *Christ*, is the Christ of christs, even as He is King of kings, for He is "anointed" by the spirit of God with the oil of exultation *beyond* His partners (Heb.1:9), beyond that of all others who also enjoy an anointing of God.

Christ Jesus is not the only one Who is anointed. We ourselves are "christs," for all who have God's spirit are christs (anointed ones). Paul told the Corinthians, "He Who . . . anoints ["christs"] us is God" (2 Cor.1:21). Similarly, those to whom John wrote were anointed as well, for he said, "You have an anointing [Greek: *chrisma*]" (1 John 2:20).

Anointing is always connected with *service*. It is the vital badge of *office* under God. Christ's anointing, preeminently, equipped Him to be the Saviour, the Saviour of the world. As well as King and Prophet, His anointing made Him a *Priest*, a Mediator, "the one Mediator of God and mankind" (1 Tim.2:5). Thus He is "giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all" (1 Tim.2:6). He offered Himself to *God*. God did not offer Himself to *Himself*. The Offering was for us, to bring us to *God*. He did not offer Himself to bring us to *Himself*. We cannot approach God apart from Christ and His sacrifice. Yet this does not make Him God, but God's Anointed, His Mediator.

The Lord Jesus did not assume the office of Messiah, until he was about thirty years of age. But at His first public utterance, in the synagogue at Nazareth, He declared that, "The *spirit* of the Lord is *on* Me, on account of which He *anoints* Me to bring the evangel . . ." (Luke 4:18). Similarly, Peter said to Cornelius that, "after the baptism which John heralds, [came] Jesus from Nazareth, as God *anoints* Him with *holy spirit and power*" (Acts 10:37,38). No ceremonial oil was even used when *God* anointed His *Anointed One*.

God is not the Anointed, but the Anointer. He never needs to be anointed, nor can He be, for He is already the Almighty, the All-Sufficient One. In Him the spirit is immanent, not imparted.

Anyone who is perfect and all-powerful in himself hardly needs to be anointed. The mere fact of our Lord's being anointed shows that He was intrinsically lacking in the ability to fulfill His office. Christ's ability is not His own. It is derived from God, through His spirit. Of Himself, Christ could do nothing (John 5:30; *cp* John 8:28). "Now the Father, remaining in Me, *He* is doing His works" (John 14:10b).

The expression "the deity of *Christ*," is simply preposterous, for it is a contradiction of terms. God cannot be anointed by another. God needs no preparation, no impartation or empowering, for He is the singular Source of all. Who

is able to anoint Him? If Christ were the Supreme God, He would need no anointing. The possession of anointing by no means signifies Deity, but rather the opposite. No one who had any accurate idea of the scriptural function of anointing would ever accept the absurd thought that it was the equivalent of Deity. A christ, or anointed one, cannot literally be God, although, as God's Image, the term may be figuratively applied to His Son.⁴

ONE IS GOD HIMSELF

"God" is not a term in reference to the Almighty's essential nature, but is an expression which speaks of His universal governance. It has special reference to the eonian times, and to the purpose of the eons which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph.3:11). That purpose, when all has finally been *subjected* (1 Cor.15:27), is for Him to become All in all (1 Cor.15:28).

It is indeed so that we are "sons" of God (Gal.3:26) and are members of His "family" (Eph.2:19). Nevertheless, and no matter how fully it may be that believers will "partake of"⁵ the divine nature (2 Pet.1:4), this will not make them a part of God. There is only *One* Who is God; for any other, then, there is neither part nor lot therein.

Some who wish to point out that believers have a certain equality with Christ (e.g., Rom.8:29b) and are partakers of the divine nature, however, suppose that such considerations prove that we will someday "be God." Some even claim that "Christians" are "little gods" even today. Those who argue thus, however, take the title "GOD" as a term of essential nature or constitution. This is a fundamental error.

4. Portions of this section were adapted or excerpted from "Can the Deity be Anointed?" by A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.39, pp.103-112.

5. If one "partakes of" that which pertains to an apple pie, it hardly follows that one *becomes* an apple pie, or a component thereof.

It is claimed that those who are saved will, one day, as a term of genus, belong to "the God family." Such claims are made as if the Scriptures plainly declared them to be so. It is simply incorrect, however, to affirm that "god," when used in the plural, signifies a family of beings in which each member is of the same constitution or essence as God, the Father.

Historically, the teaching of "becoming God" is termed *Apotheosis*. Some who have affirmed a teaching of "Christian deification," whether among the church fathers or in certain of the writings of the Eastern Orthodox church, by this have only intended "that men are 'deified' in the sense that the Holy Spirit dwells within Christian believers and transforms them into the image of God in Christ, eventually endowing them in the resurrection with immortality and God's perfect moral character."⁶

If by the doctrine of *Apotheosis* (or "becoming God"), however, one intends to affirm that men are, or one day will become, *constitutionally*, of the same genus or speciation as God, the Father, this is unscriptural and is a form of polytheism. This is because such a teaching affirms a plurality of beings of which each is of the same constitution or essential nature as the supreme God. Thus, according to such a teaching, there is no supreme Being Who alone is God Himself. Such a proposition is contrary not only to Scripture, but to monotheism.

Actual Trinitarianism, together with Modalism and Arianism (the latter is the historic name closest to the Concordant teaching), are all monotheistic. This is because each of these teachings affirms that there is one Being Who alone is God Himself. This most fundamental prop-

6. Robert Bowman, *Christian Research Journal*, Winter/Spring, 1987, p.19; cited in *THE AGONY OF DECEIT*, "Ye Shall Be As Gods," Walter Martin (Moody Press: Chicago, 1990), p.93.

osition is denied, however, by *Apotheosis*, such as is taught by Mormonism and others. Since monotheism is the teaching of Scripture, polytheism, in whatever form, is contrary to Scripture and is therefore false.

Since the issues are tightly drawn, either Trinitarianism, Modalism, or Arianism must be correct, insofar as the dispute between them is concerned. Is Christ an aspect of the Deity yet not Himself the Deity (Trinitarianism)? Is Jesus Himself the Deity (Modalism)? Or is it that the Father is the Deity (Arianism)? We must go on to decide which of these claims is correct. But before we do so, we can be certain that we are correct in rejecting *Apotheosis*.

In the ordinary sense of the word "God," the Scripture no more teaches that men one day will "become God" than that I will be you or you will be me, or that either one of us will become either a tree or a fish. This is so, whether by "God" we have in mind God Himself, or, by association, ones who are of His constitutional essence.

It follows, then, that the sense in which it is true that God's creatures will become His "children" and "sons," is confined to the place (*cf* Eph. 1:5) and privileges which they will enjoy; it does not extend to their essential nature. Therefore, the reasoning that says that since humans beget little humans, God begets little gods, is simply undiscerning and fallacious.

The fact that this title, "GOD," applies to many others besides God, the Father, in various connections and senses, is beside the point. It is not that there is no sense at all in which the title "GOD" will ever be applied to us; therefore it is not incorrect to say that there is a sense in which it may be said that this or that person will one day be termed "a god" (i.e., a subjector). These things, however, are not disputed by ourselves, for the word "god" says nothing about one's constitution, but only concerns one's having some role in the subjection of all unto God Himself, that is, unto the supreme Subjector Himself, the only true God.

J.R.C.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE

COMMUNION OF HOLY SPIRIT, tenderly escorting each one from the misery of sin's captivity, will provide many instances of growing appreciation for the patterns of God's ways. As we mature, the primitive passing by, we continually marvel at the intricate and often delicate process of God's revelations. "Lo! there has come new!" (2 Cor.5:17).

A FLUTTERING OF WINGS

"A human infant is said to be the most helpless of all living things. Without care by parents or others, it would soon perish. It must be nurtured for many a long day before it is mature and able to fend for itself. Eventually all mankind will learn the lesson that this teaches, for we are just as helpless, in relation to God, as babes are in reference to their parents. This is doubtless the object in generation. Not only is it meant to teach us our helplessness, but also to put us in the place of God toward our families and to demonstrate to us how God cares and provides for and loves His spiritual children. Our affection is drawn out unselfishly by our offspring. So is the love of God for us.

"The rule of man over the living souls below him seems to be permanent, but the rule of the father of a family is continually shifting, from generation to generation. The child of today is the father of tomorrow. Normally, each man goes through all the experiences of childhood, maturity and parenthood, in order to fit him for a realization of God's relations to the race. He first sees God's provision, care, and love in his parents, and then experiences it himself with

his own offspring. But this passes on from one generation to the next, and is probably unknown in the resurrection. At the consummation God Himself becomes the All-Father, and all other rule is superfluous. This will be the fair fruitage of generation when all will find their peace in loving obedience and communion with God their Father.”¹

While reading the above extract, recorded in July, 1953 by our beloved brother, A.E. Knoch, I was continually distracted by the acrobatics of two brightly colored birds in the garden. Both these tiny creatures were shuttling back and forward in a positive frenzy of activity to feed their offspring. Occasionally, the male, which, unlike the unerringly accurate “bull’s eye” speed of its mate, returned via a most circuitous route, was joined on a final branch by the other bird which then, at his side, fluttered her wings in the same manner as their young chicks. I am no ornithologist, but I saw in these actions a grateful gesture in the language of love.

This turned my thoughts to numerous occasions in Scripture when concern and solicitude were expressed for those who were unable to perceive the rich truths of God’s wise purpose. Notable among those who were evidently deeply affected are our gracious Lord, and Stephen, and the apostle Paul. Let us earnestly review the circumstances of these expressions of sorrow and pleading in love.

HOW MANY TIMES?

Our Lord entered Jerusalem, and the Pharisees requested that He rebuke His disciples for their loud acclamations. “And answering, He said to them, ‘I am saying to you that, if ever these will be silent, the stones will be crying.’ And as He draws near, perceiving the city, He laments over it, saying that ‘If you knew, even you, and surely in this day,

1. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.44, p.192.

what is for your peace—! Yet now it was hid from your eyes, for the days will be arriving on you, and your enemies will be casting up a rampart about you, and will be surrounding you, and will be pressing you everywhere, and will be levelling you and your children in you, and they will not be leaving a stone on a stone in you, because you knew not the era of your visitation” (Luke 19:40-44). Assured of His future, glorious coronation, He could yet lament, “How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen does her brood under her wings, and you will not” (Luke 13:34).

These words of love culminated in that prayer on the cross that takes our breath away and leaves us silent: “Father, forgive them, for they are not aware what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

STEPHEN’S FINAL CRY

Are we sufficiently mature to note the significance of Stephen’s final words to the chief priest and all the Sanhedrin? Courageously charging them as “traitors and murderers,” he concluded his searching indictment with the words, “Lo! I am beholding the heavens opened up, and the Son of Mankind *standing* at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). The simple word, *standing*, is especially full of meaning. Our Lord was ready to return and bless the nation should they repent. After this He is always represented as being seated, His work accomplished, waiting until the apostate nation is made ready to receive Him as their Messiah.

Faithful to the trust bestowed on him as one of seven attested men, full of the spirit and of wisdom, Stephen, cruelly pelted with stones, recalled his gracious Lord’s petition for forgiveness on the cross. Even as he died, invoking, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” his final cry was, “Lord, Thou shouldst not stand against them this sin!” (Acts 7:60).

SAUL'S ENDORSEMENT

How ominous are the words of Scripture which follow this searing record of Stephen's murder: "Yet Saul was endorsing his assassination" (Acts 8:1). Do we suppose that this vile deed made no impression on Saul? Not so! Following his dramatic conversion, Saul, now Paul, declared to the multitude, "Now it occurred at my returning to Jerusalem and while I am praying in the sanctuary, I come to be in an ecstasy and to perceive Him saying to me, 'Hurry, and come quickly out of Jerusalem, because they will not be assenting to your testimony concerning Me.' And I said, 'Lord, they are versed in the fact that I was jailing and lashing those at the synagogues who are believing on Thee. *And when the blood of Stephen, Thy witness, was shed*, I myself also was standing by endorsing it, as well as guarding the garments of those who are assassinating him.' And He said to me, 'Go! For I shall be delegating you afar to the nations'" (Acts 22:17-21).

PAUL'S SORROW

Many years later, as his career came to a close, Paul reflected on his own circumstances of constraint. "At my first defense no one came along with me, but all forsook me. *May it not be reckoned against them!* Yet the Lord stood beside me, and He invigorates me, that through me the heralding may be fully discharged, and all the nations should hear; and I am rescued out of the mouth of the lion. The Lord will be rescuing me from every wicked work and will be saving me for His celestial kingdom: to Whom be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen!" (2 Tim. 4:16-18).

"How majestic stands the solitary figure of the apostle! His friends in Asia had all turned from him (2 Tim. 1:15). Demas forsook him (4:10). And now all abandoned him to his fate. He stands before his accusers unfriended and alone, except for his faithful Lord. Nor did this embitter him. Like his Lord, he prays, 'May it not be reckoned

against them!' This is our last glimpse of the apostle of the nations. To the last he stands as God's herald, welcoming death itself if only it gives him an opportunity to proclaim the evangel to all the nations."²

While it is true that ultimately all will rejoice in the realization of God's loving purpose, the sufferings of the Father and the Son for so worthy a consummation should never give rise to complacency. Not for this have we been graced in the Beloved. "For Christ, while we are still infirm, still in accord with the era, for the sake of the irreverent, died. For hardly for the sake of a just man will anyone be dying: For, for the sake of a good man perhaps someone may even be daring to die, yet God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, *while we are still sinners*, Christ died for our sakes. Much rather, then, being now justified in His blood, we shall be saved from indignation through Him" (Rom.5:6-9).

The last thing in the hearts and minds of our Lord, Stephen and the apostle Paul, was that their prayers for forgiveness would somehow placate an angry or disappointed God! Were the actions of the various antagonists, Israel in the persons of the people, the high priest and the Sanhedrin, and all who forsook Paul at his first defense, outside the working of God? Not by any means! They were all completely and inextricably involved with God's secret plans. Further, our Lord, Stephen and Paul each realized that they faithfully served the certain fulfillment of God's hidden ordering. He operates forces beyond our power to direct or control. The evidence of their understanding is plain for all who are loving God, but this knowledge most certainly did not exempt or relieve them from the grievous sorrow of witnessing the misery and pain which followed upon the rejection of their glad tidings. In this we trace the language of love.

Donald Fielding

2. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, pp.326,327.

GOD WILL BE JUSTIFYING

GOD Who entrusted His oracles to the Circumcision does not allow Israel's unfaithfulness to nullify His faithfulness (Rom.3:1-4). The abundant benefit of circumcision rests on the solid foundation of God's faithful operations, even as the riches of grace lavished on us today are assured on the basis of God's counseled and assured purpose in Christ Jesus (cf Eph.1:3-12).

It may be because the flesh and law and terrestrial concerns occupy such a prominent place in God's promises to Israel that the fundamental truth of God's faithfulness to these promises has so often been compromised. Certainly the frequent use of covenant agreements, with divine promises coupled with human requirements, has tended to obscure the significance of the many promises that stand apart from human requirements. To be sure, the apostasy and stubbornness of this people have produced divine displeasure and judgment, but the failures of the circumcision do not, in any way, keep God from honoring His words of blessing.

Literally, the phrase "the faithfulness of God" in Romans 3:3 speaks of "the *faith* of God," as is indicated by the type-faces used in the CV. With Deity, faith and faithfulness are the same. What God believes, He faithfully carries out. In this there is a great contrast with human believing, which indeed is the very point of emphasis in Romans 3:1-4. "Now let God be true, yet every man a liar."

THE JEW AND THE GREEK

Already in Romans Paul has distinguished various groups

of humanity. In 1:14 he declared his indebtedness to "both Greeks and barbarians, to both wise and foolish." This, however, was a grouping by social distinction rather than by distinctions of divine operations and choices. That latter distinction is expressed in Romans 1:16 and 2:9,10 by the terms "Jew" and "Greek," and later in chapters 2 and 3 with such terms as "Circumcision" (as well as "Jew") and "Uncircumcision" (as well as "nations").

What Paul has to say in heralding the evangel has application to all peoples, but it does not put an end to the earlier promises of God which gave a special place to the nation of Israel in receiving blessing and being a blessing to all the other nations on the earth. In fact, the evangel reveals the way in which God faithfully and righteously fulfills *all* His promises and keeps His every word. It becomes clear in the book of Romans that much of what Paul has to say about the achievements of God in Christ Jesus applies to both the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision within their respective callings.

God is faithful to the promises made to the Circumcision concerning the land and the kingdom and the law written on their heart. This is most significant to us who are called out of both Circumcision and Uncircumcision, for if God is justified in His sayings to Israel, we may be certain His sayings to us will also be fulfilled.

A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED

But what is the basis of God's faithfulness? Paul did not expound on this in Romans 3:1-4, yet throughout this section of his letter he was leading us forward to this very theme. How can God be justly faithful to His promises to Israel? How can it be that the abundant benefit of circumcision can ever be enjoyed?

The answer is found in the evangel in which God's righteousness is *revealed*, the very evangel that Paul was com-

missioned to bring. It is on the basis of Christ's faithful obedience to the death of the cross that God will righteously bring blessing to all mankind, and this includes the blessings promised to Israel.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR ALL

Starting with Romans 3:21, the apostle Paul unfolds the evangel of God concerning God's righteousness which is for all and which is gained through the faith of Jesus Christ. This is the means by which God delivers mankind from its hopeless cycle of sin and death, and by which He brings us into the expectation of the glory of God, and by which He faithfully fulfills His oracles entrusted to the Jew. The basis of justification is apart from human works; it is sourced in the faith of Jesus (Rom.3:26-28).

God will be justifying all (Rom.5:18,19), and He will be revealed as righteous in this great work (Rom.3:21,22,26). The reason for this is that Christ died for sinners (*cf* Rom. 3:23,24; 5:8), which is spoken of as *His faith* in Romans 3:22 and *His obedience* in Romans 5:19. This is that great and glorious message that Paul was commissioned to bring.

IF SO BE THAT GOD IS ONE

There are important distinctions between Circumcision and Uncircumcision, but in God's method of justifying sinners, there is a unity that accords with the Oneness of God. His righteousness is revealed through the faith of Jesus Christ and is for all.

This unity is reflected in the argument of Romans 3:29, 30. "Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not of the nations also? Yes, of the nations also, if so be that God is One, Who will be justifying the Circumcision out of faith and the Uncircumcision through [the] faith." In these words Paul shows a unity in God's operations set against the background of differences in His callings. The unity

is expressed by the word "One" and the one act of "justifying" and the one means of "faith." The distinction is expressed by the terms "Circumcision" and "Uncircumcision," and by the prepositions "out" and "through," as well as by the absence of the definite article before *faith* in its first occurrence here and its presence in the second.

Paul stresses the unity. His focus of attention is on the oneness of God's operation of justifying. God always justifies on the basis of the faith of Jesus Christ. That is the source, the foundation, the solid bedrock of justification, which manifests the righteousness of God in all His operations. It is because Christ died for sinners that it is true that all mankind will be constituted just.

Nevertheless, God grants the righteous effects of Christ's faithfulness to sinners at different times and under different circumstances. In speaking of the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision in Romans 3:30, Paul distinguishes both the oneness of the divine act of justifying and the difference in the circumstance in which God's one method of justifying occurs.

CIRCUMCISION AND UNCIRCUMCISION

Romans 3:30 recognizes two groups of people distinguished within the whole of mankind. Several modern translations render these words as "circumcised" and "uncircumcised" which may be intended to suggest that the passage is only concerned with different backgrounds of believers (similar to the usage of these terms in 1 Corinthians 7:18, 19). But this fails to connect our passage with the context. Paul has presented a real dilemma in noting that (1) in order to be justified, the Circumcision must be "doers of law" and "be putting law into practice" (Rom.2:13,25); nevertheless, (2) they failed to do this and must be charged as sinners (Rom.2:21-23; 3:9); and (3) God is faithful to and justified in all that He has said to Israel (Rom.3:4).

God must be displayed as a just Justifier (Rom.3:26). Yet He is faithful to an unfaithful people and grants them the multifarious benefit spoken of in His oracles entrusted to them. He passes over certain penalties of sins, displaying forbearance (Rom.2:4; 3:25). All of this involved this people in a unique way, the Circumcision, who cannot be justified on the basis of their own works.

It is perfectly true that believers today who are called out of a religious background of circumcision are justified on the same basis as believers called out of a background of uncircumcision. But if that thought is included in Romans 3:30 it is, at the very least, not the only thought. Taking Paul's wording as very precise and deliberate here, we are led to the conviction that he has that historical people in mind who are termed "Circumcision," and whose circumcision involves benefit that is "much in every manner," as well as those to whom matters of the flesh have no benefit at all, who are termed "Uncircumcision."

ORACLES CONCERNING RIGHTEOUSNESS

One of the most glorious of oracles entrusted to Israel was the promise of righteousness. Even though this was associated with law, it nevertheless was the divine expression of what was in view for this nation.

Concerning Abraham, Yahweh declared: "I have become acquainted with him in order that he may enjoin on his sons and on his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh *to do what is right and duly just*, so that Yahweh may bring on Abraham all that He has promised concerning him" (Gen.18:19). Later at Sinai, Moses announced, "Yahweh instructed us to obey all these statutes, to fear Yahweh our Elohim for our good all the days 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.6:24,25).

But it is only in God's faithfulness, on the basis of the cross of Christ, that Israel will enter into this righteousness and this observance of His instruction. Israel's continuing failure to obey these instructions for righteousness makes it clear that the law will have to be written on their heart by God Himself under the new covenant. In Jeremiah 31:31-34, this is expressed in terms of "pardon" of depravity and unremembered sins. But in Isaiah 45:25 the promise is expressed in terms that are more similar to Paul's wording in Romans 3:30.

*In Yahweh shall they be justified,
And shall all the seed of Israel boast.*

And again in Isaiah, the promise is repeated by the Holy One of Israel, "In righteousness shall you be established" (Isaiah 54:5,14).

When Israel enters into the enjoyment of this justification it will still be in association with works of law (*cf* James 2:24), but it will not be gained by works of law. Christ's death on behalf of sinners is the one basis of justification for Circumcision and for Uncircumcision. This is the teaching of Romans 3:30.

THE TWO PREPOSITIONS

This distinction between the *basis* of justification and its *enjoyment* is expressed by the two prepositions used in our passage. The preposition "out" points to the origin or source of righteousness, while "through" points to the channel in which the righteousness is sustained or experienced. In each case, the preposition used is both appropriate and significant.

A parallel usage of these two prepositions is found in Romans 11:36. All is *out* of God, and all is *through* God, as well as all being *for* God. We readily see the distinctions between *out* and *for*, but the distinguishing point of the *through* may not be easily appreciated. But since it lies

between the *out* and the *for*, we can grasp this much at least: that the *through* refers to God's operations between creation and glorification. The *out* refers to God as the *Source* of all, and the *for* refers to God as the *Goal* of all. Hence we see that the *through*, in this case, has to do with the process in between a beginning and a consummation. God *carries on* all things.

Paul may well have had a similar thought in view here in Romans 3:30. God justifies the Circumcision on the basis of the faith of Jesus Christ in His death for sinners. That is the *source* of their justification. But at this point Paul does not choose to use the word *through* with reference to God's justifying of the Circumcision, so that the process of justification of the Circumcision can still be related to works (as James insists), and law is sustained (as Paul insists in Romans 3:31).

To be sure, faith is also present for the Circumcision in their ongoing enjoyment of justification, but it does not characterize the continuing appreciation and living of righteousness that it does for us who are not under law but under grace. It would not be untrue if Paul had written that God justifies the Circumcision *through* faith, but *through faith* is the more fitting phrase for the justifying of the Uncircumcision.

Similarly, God is justifying the Uncircumcision *out* of the faith of Jesus Christ. There is no other source for justification. That is the only way. But the preposition *through* is more characteristic of the application of justification to the Uncircumcision, for whom faith is the primary factor of God's calling and blessing from the receiving of the evangel until "the deliverance of that which has been procured" (Eph. 1:13,14). For the Uncircumcision also, law is sustained, but more as Paul described it in Romans 3:28, as "faith's law" than the law as it was entrusted to Israel at Sinai.

Consequently (and here it seems best to speak person-

ally), I see that Paul uses the two prepositions in Romans 3:30 as representative of the two respective callings and the relationship of their justification with the faith of Jesus Christ. He does not wish to suggest that the preposition *out* is to be exclusively applied to the justification of the Circumcision, nor that the preposition *through* should be reserved only for the justification of the Uncircumcision. But he uses that preposition in each case which is most fitting to their calling.*

THROUGH THE FAITH

The use of the definite article "the" with the second occurrence of the word *faith* in Romans 3:30 may serve as a reminder that our ongoing appreciation and appropriation of justification is channeled through the very definite faith of Jesus Christ, and not through our own faithfulness. God is justifying the Circumcision out of Jesus Christ's faith, and He is justifying the Uncircumcision through *that* very same faith.

There is a danger, while considering the *process* of justification in our lives, of focusing attention on ourselves and forgetting about the One through Whom God is operating all. Again, this is not saying something true only of the Uncircumcision, but something that is true of any situation in which the believers' experience is in view. Hence Paul reminds us that the very definite and specific faith of Jesus Christ is still the force for righteousness channeled into our lives.

NOW LET GOD BE TRUE

Justification is one work because it is the work of God

*Many of the thoughts on these prepositions were suggested in an article entitled "[Out of Faith and Through the Faith] in Romans 3:30," by Stanley K. Stowers (*Journal of Biblical Literature*, 108/4, 1989, pp.665-674).

Who is One. It is achieved in and through the faith of Jesus Christ by the faithful God.

In God's grace the believer today has a clearer grasp of this evangel than could have been possible before Christ's blood was shed for sinners. Yet the promise of righteousness was given long ago under circumstances where ancestry and flesh and law were given a place that does not apply at present. Regarding these former promises, entrusted to the Circumcision, we declare with Paul, "Now let God be true!" (Rom.3:4). God's work of justifying is one, but it is not always brought into the lives of God's people in the same manner and under the same circumstances.

It will greatly help us appreciate the Scriptures as a whole, and more importantly, to appreciate the faithfulness of God, if we distinguish the two callings mentioned here in Romans 3:30 while rejoicing in the one work of justification. We may well say, in expanding on the words of 1 Thessalonians 5:24, *Faithful is God* Who is calling His chosen ones, Who will also be doing all that He has said concerning them.

D.H.H.

C. VAN HOEVEN

We are sorry to report the death of our Netherlands Agent, C. Van Hoeven. Brother Van Hoeven died after a short illness at the age of 69. He was pastor of the congregation Eben-Haëzer in Rotterdam for many years.

In the late 1970's, Brother Van Hoeven came across literature from Konkordanter Verlag in Germany, which showed the necessity to "have a pattern of sound words" (2 Tim.1:13), and to be "correctly cutting the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15).

Since then, he proclaimed Paul's evangel, the saving, justification, and reconciliation of all through our Lord Jesus Christ. He did so using concordant literature, Sunday services, Bible study groups, a bi-monthly magazine, and local radio programs. He will be greatly missed by those who heard him tirelessly proclaiming God's Word in preaching and in pastoral counseling.

Andries v.d. Wal

ISRAEL PLAINTIVE AFTER YAHWEH

"THE WORD OF SAMUEL came to all Israel. It was in those days that the Philistines convened for war against Israel. So Israel went forth to meet the Philistines in battle The battle was severe. Israel was stricken before the Philistines who smote about 4,000 men" (or: four contingents of men; 1 Sam.4:1,2). Israel's defeat pointed to their repeated addiction to the dissolute and impure worship of foreign elohim [gods]. Again Yahweh made use of Philistines as a scourge to check the apostasy of His people.

Israel's tribal elders asked: "Why has Yahweh stricken us today before the Philistines" (4:3). They did not consult Samuel since he was no military expert in their eyes. They did not take the defeat as a judgment sent from Yahweh that called for repentance. The elders believed they could achieve victory over the Philistines simply by mechanical means: They decided, "Let us take for us from Shiloh the coffer of the covenant of Yahweh; let it come to be among us and save us from the palm of our enemies" (4:3).

When Eli's two depraved sons (3:13), Hophni and Phinehas, arrived with the coffer at the army camp at Ebenezer (4:1), "all Israel shouted with a loud shouting, so that the earth rumbled The Philistines were fearful . . . and cried, Woe to us! Who shall rescue us from the hand of these noble elohim . . . who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of . . . disease!" (4:5-9).

THE GLORY HAS DEPARTED FROM ISRAEL

"The Philistines fought; Israel was stricken, and they

fled, each man to his tents The coffer of Elohim was taken, and Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's two sons, died" (4:10,11). While Eli was waiting in Shiloh for the news from the battlefield, "his heart was trembling for the coffer of Elohim" (4:13). A messenger came and reported all these details. When Eli heard that the coffer of Elohim was taken, he fell from his covered seat and died (4:18). He was ninety-eight years old; "he had judged Israel for forty years" (4:15,18).

When Phinehas's wife heard the news, the shock of it induced her labor pains, and, after giving birth to a son, she died. With her last words she had named him Ichabod,¹ "meaning, The glory has departed from Israel, for the coffer of Elohim was taken" (4:19-22).

While Samuel administered justice as a circuit judge in the central cities of Israel (*cf* 7:15), he probably did not comment on the loss of the coffer. We may assume that the Israelites thought it might have lost its power. The coffer had almost replaced Yahweh as the object of Israel's worship, when they shouted at the arrival of the coffer in the camp (4:5). This shouting was a bid for victory in the coming battle; but they did not implore Yahweh Elohim Himself to grant them victory over the enemy. So Samuel would wait until "all the house of Israel were plaintive after Yahweh" (7:2). In the meantime Israel would hear that the hand of Yahweh was harsh (*cf* 5:7) on the three Philistine cities where the coffer of Elohim was set up.

THE JOURNEY OF THE COFFER OF ELOHIM

The coffer was taken to the Philistine city of Ashdod and was set up, as a trophy of war, in the house of their national god Dagon, right beside his statue. Yet the next morning they found him prostrate before the coffer of Elohim;

1. Ichabod: lit., Where-is-the-Glory?

on the second morning they found the torso of Dagon "on his face to the earth before the coffer of Yahweh" (5:4), with his head and hands broken off.

When the bubonic plague struck the population of Ashdod and its environs, they sent the coffer of Elohim to Gath (5:8). When the disease struck Gath, the coffer was sent to Ekron (5:10). "There was a deathly discomfiture in the whole city: the hand of Elohim was very heavy there" (5:11).

After seven months the Philistine diviners and sacred scribes recommended to return the coffer, saying, "You should restore, yea restore it to Him with a guilt offering. Then you shall be healed . . . You must make images of your piles and images of the mice which bring the country to ruin. Thus you will give glory to Israel's Elohim" (6:3,5). The Philistine men did as they were told: They prepared a new cart (6:7) and "took two young cows, recently freshened firstlings, and hitched them to the cart, yet their young they detained at home. Then they placed the coffer of Yahweh on the cart and the case with the mice of gold . . . The young cows went straight ahead on their way in the direction of Beth-shemesh . . . and the chieftains of the Philistines were walking behind them" (6:10-12).

Their diviners and scribes had set up this experiment: Since the cows were unused to pulling a cart, and had calves dependent on them, their instincts would tell them to go back to their young ones; and they were indeed "lowing as they went" (6:12). But should they proceed to Israel's border town Beth-shemesh, then this would be a sign that Yahweh had been afflicting the Philistine cities.

Now their chieftains witnessed how the cows stopped in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite "where there was a large stone" (6:14). The Israelites "split up the wood of the cart, and they offered up the young cows as an ascent approach to Yahweh. The Levites had taken down the coffer and the case . . . in which the articles of gold were; and they had placed them on the large stone" (6:14,15).

THE PEOPLE MOURNED

For the journey through the wilderness, Moses and Aaron had been instructed by Yahweh how to dismantle the holy of holies (Num.4:1-14). But even the Levites who were appointed for the carrier service, were not allowed to come too close and "*see* the sanctuary in dismantling, for they would die" (4:20).

Thus Yahweh had warned Israel that He would punish those who were guilty of unseemly curiosity with regard to the furnishings in the holy of holies. Now, here in Beth-shemesh, Yahweh warned Israel that opening the coffer and peering into it would be punished as well. So He smote seventy men of the sons of Jeconiah "among the men of Beth-shemesh, for they had *stared into* the coffer of Yahweh The people mourned, for Yahweh smote among the people with a great smiting" (1 Sam.6:19).

As the hand of Elohim had been very heavy on the Philistines when they violated the holiness of the coffer, so the Israelites must take heed and not presume upon its presence among them. For the holiness of the coffer of the testimony did not permit anyone to draw too close, either Philistine or Israelite.

The majority of the people in Beth-shemesh had rejoiced when the coffer arrived. They did not touch it, but let the Levites place it on the large stone while they offered sacrifices to Yahweh. Yet now they felt that it was perilous to keep the coffer in their city. So they said, "Who is able to stand before Yahweh, this holy Elohim?" (6:20). At their request, the dwellers of Kirjath-jearim (6:21) came and took up the coffer of Yahweh; and they hallowed Eleazar "to be in charge of the coffer of Yahweh" (7:1).²

"And all the house of Israel were plaintive after Yahweh. So Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel" (7:2,3).

2. There the coffer remained for twenty years, until David took it to Jerusalem.

PREPARE YOUR HEART FOR YAHWEH

We may assume that Samuel preached his message in all the cities where he traveled, and that he sent messengers to distant places, saying, “If it is with all your heart that you are returning to Yahweh, then put away the foreign elohim and the Ashtaroth from your midst and *prepare your heart for Yahweh* and serve Him, Him alone. Then He shall rescue you from the hand of the Philistines . . . [Thus] Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel And the sons of Israel put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth and served Yahweh, Him alone” (7:3,4).

Samuel may have repeated the words of Moses: “Hear, Israel! Yahweh is our Elohim; Yahweh the only One. So you will love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your intensity. These words which I am instructing you today will come to be in your heart. Repeat them to your sons, and speak of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you arise” (Deut.6:4-7).

THE MIZPAH CONVENTION

So the Israelites prepared their hearts for Yahweh and renounced their former loyalties to foreign elohim (gods). As soon as their single loyalty was devoted only to Yahweh, then Samuel gathered the people at Mizpah, and he promised, “I shall pray about you to Yahweh” (1 Sam.7:5). When they convened at Mizpah, they poured out water as a ceremony of confession, and after fasting on that day, they said: “We have sinned against Yahweh” (7:6). “And Samuel judged the sons of Israel at Mizpah.”

YAHWEH DISCOMFITED THE ENEMY

After the Philistines heard about the convention at Mizpah, they marched up against Israel with their military forces. Israel’s tribal elders kept silent; obviously they had

learned that they could not achieve victory just by sending the coffer of Yahweh to the battlefield (*cf* 1 Sam.4:3,4). The sons of Israel were fearful; but there was a timid faith in the *power of Yahweh* to save them from their enemies. So they said to Samuel: "You must not keep silent to cry out for us to Yahweh our Elohim, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines" (7:8).

"Then Samuel took one milk-fed lambkin and offered it up as a wholly fumed ascent offering to Yahweh. And Samuel cried out to Yahweh over Israel, and Yahweh answered him" by discomfiting the enemy (7:9,10).

While Samuel was offering up the ascent offering, "a fire offering of fragrant odor to Yahweh" (Lev.1:17), "the Philistines were drawing close for the battle against Israel" (1 Sam.7:10). Yet the sons of Israel disregarded the approaching enemy and did not interrupt their worship of Yahweh; then He "thundered with a loud thunderclap over the Philistines on that day" (7:10).

Years later, after having been rescued by Yahweh "from the palm of all his enemies," David described a thunderstorm with these poetic lines (Psa.18:13,14):

*Then Yahweh thundered from the heavens,
And the Supreme, He gave forth His voice
With hail and flashing embers of fire.
He sent off His arrows, with which He scattered them,
And he multiplied bolts of lightning,
with which He discomfited them.*

This vivid description of a violent thunderstorm may help us to visualize the display of Yahweh's thundering "with a loud thunderclap over the Philistines" (7:10). The term "thunderclap" was obviously used as a collective singular; there was not just a single crash of thunder, but rather a long series of thunderclaps, together with "multiplied bolts of lightning," as we may assume. Thus Yahweh answered Samuel's prayer and thundered with loud thun-

derclaps "over the Philistines on that day and discomfited them, so that they were struck down before Israel. Then the men of Israel went forth from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and smote them" (7:10,11).

EBEN-EZER, THE STONE OF THE HELPER

Mizpah was located about eight miles north of Jerusalem (in the tribal territory of Benjamin) thus between Jerusalem and Bethel.

Not far from Mizpah was a place, called "The Tooth," Hebrew: Ha-shen, for which the Septuagint has "Jeshanah" (7:12), i.e., the "Ancient-[City]."

Now it was between Mizpah and Jeshanah, that "Samuel took one stone, set it up . . . and called its name *Eben-Ezer*, Stone of the Helper, for he said, Hitherto Yahweh has helped us" (7:12). This reminds us of another Eben-Ezer near the Philistine city of Aphek in the foothills to the west of Shiloh. The Philistines had encamped at Aphek, and Israel's army camp was at Eben-Ezer, from which the tribal elders had sent two depraved priests with the coffer of Elohim to the battlefield. So Israel was stricken, and the coffer was captured by the enemy (4:10,11). The tribal elders had not implored Elohim Himself to grant them the victory in the battle.

Yet now at Mizpah, Israel was plaintive after Yahweh and repented, and Samuel was in charge; he cried out for Israel to Yahweh Elohim Who discomfited the enemy (7:10,11). This was the end of forty years of Philistine predominance over Israel (*cf* Judges 13:1).

"The Philistines were made submissive, and they did not come anymore into Israel's territory; for the hand of Yahweh was on the Philistines all the days of Samuel" (7:13), i.e., before Saul became king.

THE LORD IS MY HELPER

"The Lord is my Helper, and I shall not be afraid of

what man shall be doing to me!" This word in Hebrews 13:6 reminds us of Psalm 118:6,7, and of similar statements in the Psalms:

*O do not conceal Your face from me . . .
You Who have become my Help (27:9).*

*Our soul tarries for Yahweh;
He is our Help and our Shield (33:20).*

*My Help and my Deliverance are You;
O my Elohim, do not delay (40:17).*

*For You became my Help,
And in the shadow of Your wings
shall I be jubilant (63:7).*

*O Elohim, do hurry to me!
My Help and my Deliverance are You (70:5).*

*Unless Yahweh were my Help,
Soon my soul would tabernacle in stillness (94:17).*

*Yahweh is for me; I shall not fear
What a human may do to me.
Yahweh is for me as my Helper (118:6,7).*

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

CLYDE V. SEVERN

Born May 16, 1912, Brother Clyde Severn of Clio, Michigan, was put to repose on February 28, 1995. In recent years he often remarked how privileged he felt to have lived during the major portion of this century of change and challenge. Although he keenly felt many sorrows and disappointments, he was granted faith in the living God as the Saviour of mankind. When one of their seven daughters was killed in an automobile accident, Clyde and his late wife, Florence, founded the Claudia J. Severn Foundation which was dedicated to the spread of the evangel committed to Paul. This evangel was central to many of the verses he penned, as in the following lines: "Then one day from above came a message of love By the Gift God sent down to man, Through the death of His Son, our Deliverance won, And the great gulf twixt us did span."

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 1995
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SIX

EDITORIAL

DOES IT MATTER? Does it matter that we attempt to translate Hebrew and Greek words and phrases in a consistent and concordant pattern, and indicate grammatical features, as in the Concordant Version of Job (p.110)? Does it matter how we understand our Lord's words to the generation living during His ministry, concerning His return (p.121)? Does it matter whether or not God's promises to the Circumcision will be literally fulfilled (p.133)?

Is there value in becoming acquainted with ancient scriptures such as Job (p.103) and 1 Samuel (p.113)? Do the lessons set forth in these writings hold meaning for us today?

Yes it does matter, and yes there is much value in carefully searching out the revelations of God's Word, even the small details of grammar and nuance. We need the consolation of the conciliation traced out in 2 Corinthians (p.98). We are greatly enriched in perceiving the *consummation* prepared by the Lord for human afflictions, in noting the example of *transformation* in the anointing of Saul, in distinguishing that which is *revealed* from that which is *hidden* in God's operation, and in *glorying* in God's faithfulness to all that He has said.

It takes only a glance at the turmoil in the world, at the personal problems of our own lives, at the infirmity and enmity and sinfulness of humanity, to remind us of the importance of God's Word.

God's Word matters very much. For even as the Son honored the written word (p.141), so we need the solid foundation of truth and enlightenment for our lives which lies in what was written and in Him Who is the living Word. It does matter, for "all scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial . . . that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act" (2 Tim.3:16,17). D.H.H.

PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

SECOND CORINTHIANS is an epistle for the heart. It engages us with the fond solicitude which stirs the affections of the apostle for his much loved Corinth. It was written because he wished to spare them and dreaded the severity which his presence might demand.

This loving epistle reveals an aspect of the evangel which is well-nigh lost. This is the *conciliation*. God is love. He will not rest satisfied in merely justifying us. He wishes to clasp us to His heart. To restore His creatures to righteousness may indeed erase the stain of sin, but offers no valid reason or excuse for sin's intrusion into the universe. But if the entrance of sin is to bear the precious fruit of reconciliation, if it is to bring us infinitely nearer to God than is possible without it, if it is the means of revealing God's love to us, then may we give thanks even for the sin which is the source of our sorrows. Sin made man not only a sinner, but an enemy of God. It brought in estrangement. The mediation of Christ not only saves and justifies, but removes every barrier for the free outflow of God's love. God now condescends to beseech the sinner to be conciliated to Him. What can be more gracious than this?

CONSOLATION IN AFFLICTION

Such is the aspect of the truth in this epistle. More than anything else he has written, this reveals the personal experiences and inward emotions of Paul during one of the most fruitful periods of his ministry. Instead of the smil-

ing, complacent, comfortable existence which is usually supposed to be the ideal of Christianity, we find him full of fears within, distracted with fightings without, restless, sick, and despondent. Yet all of this was in perfect accord with his fervent love for the saints and his vehement desire to lead them on into an appreciation of God's love.

The consolation and comfort he received in his afflictions fitted him to console and comfort others. It reveals God in the light of His affection. "Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of pities and God of all consolation, Who is consoling us in our every affliction to enable us to be consoling those in every affliction, through the consolation with which we ourselves are being consoled by God" (2 Cor.1:3,4).

FROM NOW ON

One short verse in the book of Acts hurries us over the whole period referred to in this epistle: "Now passing through those parts and entreating them with many a word, he came into Greece" (Acts 20:2). This alone should suggest the total divergence of their respective themes. Acts deals with Christ after the flesh, as the Messiah of Israel, and always gives the other nations a place subordinate.

But at the juncture when 2 Corinthians was written, Paul first made known the truth of the conciliation, that God, in Christ, is beseeching all men to be conciliated to Him (2 Cor.5:18-21). Physical relationship to Christ no longer counted with Paul after this. "So that we, from now on, are acquainted with no one according to flesh. Yet even if we have known Christ according to flesh, nevertheless now we know Him so no longer. So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new! . . . Lo! Now is a most acceptable era! Lo! Now is a day of salvation!" (2 Cor.5:16,17; 6:2b).

LITERARY FRAMEWORK¹

It has been felt by many that 2 Corinthians lacks unity. Yet it has a clear and definite cohesion of theme which we can see when we focus on the revelation of 5:18-21. "Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was, in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation. For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching: For Christ's sake be conciliated to God! For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God's righteousness in Him."

The entire epistle is based on this theme of comfort and consolation, "the word of the conciliation." In 3:1-5:17 Paul expounds this special aspect of the grace of God and sets before us the *many spiritual blessings* that conciliation has brought to us, leading up to the proclamation of the *new creation*. Corresponding to this portion is 6:1-8:15 where this same grace of God, leading from the proclamation of a *new era*, is applied to the practical affairs of life. On either side of these sections of the epistle are the personal considerations of 1:3-2:17 and 8:16-13:10. Here we are shown how the word of the conciliation influenced Paul in his attitude toward others and his walk before God. Finally, we have the usual gateway (1:1,2) and exit (13:11-14) of grace.

The outline can be shown as follows:

1. *Editor's note*: A. E. Knoch did not include a literary framework to 2 Corinthians in his introduction to the epistle (CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.266), but the following notes and outline from *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.64, pp.40,41, are inserted here as hopefully in accord with Brother Knoch's own thoughts on the epistle and its structure.

Salutation (1:1,2)

Personal (1:3-2:17)

The Grace of God Presented (3:1-5:17)

The Conciliation (5:18-21)

The Grace of God Applied (6:1-8:15)

Personal (8:16-13:10)

Salutation (13:11-14)

The key passage (2 Cor.5:18-21) calls for special comment:

OFFENSES NOT RECKONED

The Authorized Version's rendering of 2 Corinthians 5:19 by, "Not imputing their *trespasses* unto them" makes us miss the force of this passage. Here God speaks of our *offenses*, which is the real force of the Greek word used here.

Sin and transgression must be dealt with in accord with the inflexible rules of righteousness. But what necessity was there to deal with these at all at the cross? Why not wait until the day of judgment and give each his due deserts? What claims had His creatures which outweighed the request of His beloved Son that the cup pass from Him?

If God had taken account of the reproaches and scorn and contempt men heaped upon Him in the person of His Son, would He not be highly offended? Would He have remained firm in the face of Christ's request that the cup pass from Him (Matt.26:39-44)? O, how gloriously His grace shines even in Gethsemane! Men's *sins* and *transgressions* He lays upon His Christ, but their *offenses*, which well might turn Him against them, *are all ignored*.

Would He have provided such a Sacrifice in any other frame of mind? Men's foul and flagrant offenses abounded the more He had revealed Himself. And now they reddened their hands in the blood of His Anointed. No greater provocation could be offered. But, instead of reckoning these offensive deeds against them, He retreats within Himself and finds the immanent love upon which He founds His sweet revenge.

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE

But, though their offenses may be thus ignored, His justice requires vindication of the ruin wrought by their sins and of the breach of His holy law. These must be dealt with. Offenses may be overlooked, just as God pleases, without tarnishing His Name, but sin and transgression must be taken into account if God is to sustain His righteous and holy character. For these He Himself provides a Sacrifice. Christ is His sin offering (2 Cor.5:21).

The feeble flicker of faith sometimes lights up such precious portions of God's Word as 2 Corinthians, to our hearts, and we rejoice to find our sins are gone. But how often, in times of stress, we plunge into darkness and despair. O, that we would leave our sins and feelings and all that hinders fellowship with Him and enter into *His* peace! God Himself entreats even His own to receive the Conciliation (2 Cor.5:20). Justification is but one of His gifts. It should lead to an acquaintance with the great Giver.² A.E.K.

2. The preceding subsections, entitled "Offenses Not Reckoned" and "God's Righteousness and Peace," are selected and excerpted from *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.55, pp.38-40.

HAROLD G. TUTTERROW

Brother Tutterrow, who died on April 6, at the age of 82, learned of God's evangel of grace and purpose of reconciliation for all as a young man growing up in Indiana, and he readily accepted this message and enthusiastically shared it with others. He lived in the Los Angeles area most of his life and served on our Board of Directors for more than 25 years. He is survived by his wife, Mary, a son and daughter and their families, as well as the family of his elder daughter, Nancy (Knoch), who died in 1986.

Harold was a strong believer in universal reconciliation through the blood of Christ's cross, and was a man of order and stability (cf Col.2:5). He shared the longing of Paul "that the mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now He Who produces us for this same longing is God, Who is also giving us the earnest of the spirit" (2 Cor.5:4,5).

INTRODUCTION TO JOB

THE BOOK OF JOB is said to contain the earliest lesson in the world, and has been available for thousands of years. Yet how few, even today, can say, as Job did (Job 42:5,6):

With the hearing of the ear I had heard of You,

But now my eye sees You.

Therefore I recant and repent

On soil and ashes.

PERCEIVING THE CONSUMMATION

A divine commentary of this book is given in the only instance in which Job is mentioned in the Greek Scriptures. In James (5:11) we read: "You hear of the endurance of Job, and you perceived the consummation of the Lord, for very compassionate and pitiful is the Lord." The consummation is what counts. Apart from that our lives will be one long and fruitless debate.

The consummation is the only true test of God's dealings with His creatures. If He is to be All in all of them then the eonian times must reveal Him to their hearts. His compassion and pity can be appreciated only by those who have suffered evil.

Patience and endurance are not mere personal virtues which will be rewarded in due time. Their prime function is to provide an object lesson to others of the operation of God's spirit in the human heart, binding it to Him in spite of affliction and distress (*cf* James 5:12-14). For this reason evil is dominant in the first three eons, and will not be fully banished until the consummation (1 Cor.15:24).

The book of Job deals with this enigma. The infliction of punishment upon the wicked is no riddle. But the suffering of the righteous is one of the most perplexing of problems for a son of Adam to apprehend. In fact, it cannot be solved by human mentality, so God graciously gave mankind the record of a long and exhaustive debate, dealing with it from the various viewpoints of mankind, all of which prove fallacious. Yet God closed the argument Himself by the assertion and presentation of His deity, and by giving the sufferer of evil a double portion of bliss in conclusion. So He set forth not only in words, but in His dealings, a condensed personal preview of the course of evil during the eonian times. Its benefits are not confined to the wicked, but are shared by the just.

The example of Job is not given as a guarantee that evil endured will be richly compensated *in this life*. Such is by no means the case. To complete the picture it had to be so in Job's case. And it will be so in all others in due time. Our comfort and compensation are minor considerations, which should not be allowed to cloud the major object of all things, which is the revelation of God's love. That alone is worth all the suffering which we may be called upon to endure.

THE LITERARY STRUCTURE

The book of Job as a whole may best be viewed by considering its literary skeleton. Like so many works of inspiration, its form is like that of the higher animals, because it is the work of that divine spirit which imparts life to all that lives.

The opening portion, up to the mediation of Elihu is balanced by the concluding one in inverted order. There is the introduction (1:1-5) and the conclusion (42:14-17). The Adversary's accusation, at the beginning, which brings affliction (1:6-2:10), has its counterpart in his refutation,

which brings a double blessing (42:10-13). The arrival of Job's three associates (2:11-13) is balanced by their departure (42:7-9). The debates between them and Job (3:1-31:40) are more than matched by the discussion between Job and Yahweh (38:1-42:6). In the center stands the appeal of Elihu, the mediator. Though much in the speeches of Job's associates is foolish and false, the whole is inspired by the life giving spirit of God for the benefit of all His creatures.

Introduction (1:1-5)

Adversary's Accusation, Job's Afflictions (1:6-2:10)

The Three Associates, Arrival (2:11-13)

Job and His Associates (3:1-31:40)

The Appeal of Elihu (32:1-37:24)

Job and Yahweh (38:1-42:6)

The Three Associates, Departure (42:7-9)

Adversary's Refutation, Job's Blessing (42:10-13)

Conclusion (42:14-17)

A.E.K.



THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN THE BOOK OF JOB

The book of Job deals with the most perplexing of all topics, the Question of Evil. Adversity often has the effect of driving the frivolous to reflect upon the meaning of life. For God's people, next to the existence of God, the most fundamental question is the presence of evil in the world. Its existence seems to cast a shadow upon God's character, and is a standing source of perplexity to saint and sinner alike.

For the presentation of so momentous a theme a most effective mode of treatment has been chosen. A situation exhibiting evil that is unique is brought forward in a nar-

rated story, and then upon that situation is concentrated light from successive points of view. In this way the conclusion of the book is brought forward by quite natural stages, while the insufficiency of certain theories current among men is exhibited.

THE BOOK AS A WHOLE

A passage at the end of the book affords a view of its stately structure: "Then Yahweh Himself turned back the *captivity* of Job Thus Yahweh Himself blessed the *latter years* of Job more than his *beginning*" (Job 42:10, 12). This presents a suite of three magnificent chambers to our vista:

(1) *The beginning of Job* (1:1-5), his character, manner of life, family and possessions *before* the events related in the book occurred.

(2) *The captivity of Job* (1:6-42:11); "captivity" indicating "all the evil that Yahweh had brought upon him" (42:11).

(3) *The latter years of Job* (42:12-17), his character, manner of life, family, possessions and longevity *after* the events related in the book had become a vision of the past.

We notice that Job's "beginning" and "latter years" are mentioned together (42:12); the "captivity" is spoken of separately (42:10). This simplifies our task very much. We need but to study the book in this light. The "beginning" and the "latter" time are thus brought together and contrasted so as to point out the *difference* which constitutes the great lesson that the book of Job is designed to teach.

THE LESSON OF THE LORD'S CONSUMMATION

The contrast between Job 1:1-5 and Job 42:12-17 focuses attention on the lesson spoken of in James 5:11. "You hear of the endurance of Job, and you perceived the consummation of the Lord, for very compassionate and pitiful is the Lord."

We have heard of the endurance of Job, but have we seen the consummation of the Lord? We have heard of it, but have we *perceived* it? To know the Lord's compassion and the repose it gives is the height of human blessedness. Our attention is fastened on the "consummation," the captivity being but a parenthesis whose deepening shadows add to the luster and radiancy of the happy issue.

The long central portion describes the process and the various agents employed in bringing about "the consummation of the Lord."

The long central portion describes the process and the various agents employed in bringing about the consummation of the Lord. We are overawed by the ineffable magnitude of the vision unfolded and the numerous actors engaged in it. The Adversary, the Chaldeans, the Sabeans and forayers of the wilderness, the forces of nature, Job's wife and children, his associates and servants; each have a role to perform and a part to play which is instrumental in bringing about the great end, "the consummation of the Lord."

V. Gelesnoff



JOB AND DEITY

The book of Job does not entertain any doubt that life is lived out before God. What happens in this book is continually related to the Deity by those involved in the dispute, and is understood as indicating His approval or disapproval of an individual's conduct before Him. To Job's associates, as life moves along, God rewards or withholds or destroys according to the behavior of a person.

This estimate of life is, indeed, the first patriarchal view. It is seen in Jacob's vow at Luz (Gen.28:20-22), often inappropriately regarded as his bargaining with Elo-

him. It produced that element in human society termed "the fear of God."

A WIDER UNDERSTANDING

The outlook and understanding of the disputants in the book of Job is similarly limited. Those involved, who were outside the usual channel through which revelation was then given, certainly stood in need of instruction concerning the ways of God. Beneath Job's affliction, in the first stage of his enduring, the leading idea with which he struggled is that human conduct is dealt with in the course of present existence. Such a viewpoint excluded thoughts of the future. Later, it comes to light that Job had said to himself, in the days of his prosperity, "I shall breathe my last in old age, and I shall multiply my days like sand" (Job 29:18).

Yet when his associates began to press their limited viewpoint on him, he was roused to resist it most stoutly. This was because that which had overtaken him did not correspond with his attention to life and its duties.

It is amid the stress, which this problem created for him, that a feeble light was awakened in the mind of Job. The influence of his associates not only provoked and colored the development and expression of his resistance to their ideas, but also a possible solution of the situation around him began to grow in his mind during the course of the dispute. By this means a wider understanding of Deity is set before us.

Yet Job's own thoughts included many inaccuracies. And even Elihu was quite unable to proceed very far, due to his equally limited knowledge of the ways of Yahweh. This is the position we ought to expect, if our learning concerning God is from His revelation. Only Yahweh Himself can tell His ways. And it was Yahweh Who came to the aid of Job, correcting, instructing and blessing Job in accord with His own unrevealed glory. Thus it was Yahweh Who achieved the subjection of Job.

Job and his associates do seem to have had a real regard for God, and their worship of Him seems to be true and sincere. But their actual knowledge of His purpose was decidedly partial. To a large extent it was limited to an acquaintance with divine supremacy.

They did not understand that God had a "consummation" in view. They had little perception of the means that were necessary for such an end. Job himself, with all his excellent moral, dutiful and religious characteristics, had little grasp of God's ways. Job feared Elohim and withdrew from all evil. But it was not until Job endured the evils brought upon him that the love of the Deity was discerned by him.

E. H. Clayton



COMMENTARY ON JOB

With these introductory thoughts from the pens of three valued teachers, now deceased, we begin a study of the book of Job. Brother Knoch had left notes only into the tenth verse of chapter one, and Brother Gelesnoff had covered general themes of the book without going into detail on individual passages. Brother Clayton's handwritten notes were more extensive in the way of summaries along with more detailed comments on key features of the book.

I propose to draw from these mostly unpublished notes (Brother Gelesnoff's principal study appeared in *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 14) in preparing this series on the entire book of Job. This will require some excerpting and adapting of these earlier notes in order to produce a cohesive study, and occasionally there will be a need to supplement with thoughts of others as well as comments of my own.

If the result proves somewhat uneven in places, it is hoped that the series will still serve to open up the themes of this challenging book to the reader.

D.H.H.

JOB

1:1-2:13

1 There ^bwas a man in the country of Uz. Job was his name. + 'This 'man ^bwas flawless and upright, + fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil. ² + Seven sons and three daughters were 'born to him, ³ and his acquisitions came to 'be seven thousand small cattle, + three thousand camels, + five hundred pair of oxen and five hundred jennies, +besides very many servants, so +that 'this 'man came to 'be the greatest ^fof all the sons of the East.

⁴ +Now his sons would go and ^dhold a feast, each in his house on his day, and they would send and call to their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. ⁵ And it came to 'be ^twhen the feast days were concluded, +that Job would 'send and ^mhave them 'hallowed. + He would ^crise early in the morning and ^coffer up ascent offerings in number as them all. For Job would say, Perhaps my sons have sinned and have scorned Elohim in their heart. Thus Job was doing for all 'these days.

⁶ + There ^bwas 'a day +when the sons of Elohim would 'come to station themselves ^{on}before Yahweh, and the Adversary 'came ^{mr}also in their midst. ⁷ + Yahweh 'said to the Adversary, From where are you coming? +Then the Adversary 'answered `Yahweh and 'said, From going to and fro⁻ in the earth and from walking⁻ about in it.

⁸ +So Yahweh 'said to the Adversary, Have you ^{pl}set your heart on My servant Job? For there is no one like him ^ton earth, a man flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil. ⁹ +Then the Adversary 'answered `Yahweh, + 'saying, Does Job fear^l Elohim gratuitously? ¹⁰ Have you yourself not hedged him about, and about his house and about all ^wthat is his ^fall around? The ^dwork of his hands you have blessed, and his cattle breach forth ⁱthroughout the countryside. ¹¹ + Nevertheless, ^{pr}now put forth your hand and touch ⁱ all ^wthat is his. He shall assuredly scorn you ^{on}to your face.

¹² +Hence Yahweh ¹said to the Adversary, Behold, all ^wthat he ¹has is in your hand, but you must not ¹put forth your hand ¹upon himself. +Then the Adversary went ¹forth from ^{wi} Yahweh's presence.

¹³ +Now the day ^{1b}came +when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their brother, the firstborn. ¹⁴ And a messenger came to Job and ¹said, The oxen ^bwere plowing, and the jennies were grazing ^{on}at their sides, ¹⁵ +when the Sabeans ¹swooped down and ¹took them. +Then they smote ¹the lads ¹with the edge of the sword, +yet I ¹escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you.

¹⁶ This one was ^{fr}still speaking +when another came and ¹said, The fire of Elohim, it fell from the heavens, + it ¹consumed ⁱ the small cattle and ⁱ the lads, and it ¹devoured them, +yet I ¹escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you.

¹⁷ This one was ^{fr}still speaking +when another came and ¹said, The Chaldeans, they ^{pl}formed three bands, and they ¹merged on the camels and ¹took them. +Then they smote ¹the lads ¹with the edge of the sword, +yet I ¹escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you.

¹⁸ This one was ^{fr}still speaking +when another came and ¹said, Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their brother, the firstborn, ¹⁹ +when behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness, and it ¹assaulted ⁱ the four corners of the house. + It ¹fell upon the young people, and they ¹died, +yet I ¹escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you.

²⁰ +Then Job ¹arose, + ¹tore ¹his robe and ¹sheared ¹his head. + He ¹fell to ^dthe earth and ¹worshiped. ²¹ And he ¹said, Naked I came forth from the belly of my mother, and naked I shall return there ^d. Yahweh, He gives, and Yahweh, He takes away. Blessed ^{1b}be the Name of Yahweh. ²² In all this, Job neither sinned nor ^gascribed anything improper to Elohim.

2 + The day ^{1b}came around again +when the sons of Elohim ¹came to station themselves ^{on}before Yahweh, and the Adversary ¹came ^{mr}also in their midst to station himself ^{on}before Yahweh. 2 + Yahweh ¹said to the Adversary, From where are you coming? +Then the Adversary ¹answered

‘Yahweh, + ‘saying, From going to and fro in the earth and from walking about in it.

³ + Yahweh ‘said to the Adversary, Have you ^{pl}set your heart on My servant Job? For there is no one like him on earth, a man flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil. And he ^{fr}still is holding fast to his integrity, + though you would ‘incite Me ‘against him to swallow him up gratuitously.

⁴ + Then the Adversary ‘answered ‘Yahweh, + ‘saying, Skin in ^{fr}behalf of skin, + for all ^wthat a man ‘has would he ‘give in ^{fr}behalf of his soul. ⁵ Nevertheless, ^{pr}now put forth your hand and touch ‘his bone and ‘his flesh. He shall assuredly scorn you to your face.

⁶ + Hence Yahweh ‘said to the Adversary, Behold him in your hand; ^yonly keep ‘his soul alive.

⁷ + Then the Adversary went ‘forth from ‘Yahweh’s presence, and he ‘smote ‘Job ‘with evil boils from the sole of his foot unto his scalp.

⁸ + So he ‘took for himself a potsherd to scrape himself ‘with it + as he was sitting in the midst of ashes. ⁹ + Then his wife ‘said to him, Are you ^{fr}still ^cholding fast to your integrity? Scorn Elohim and die. ¹⁰ + Yet he ‘said to her, As some ‘decadent woman speaks are you speaking. ^{mr}Indeed should we receive ‘good from ‘the One, Elohim, and should we not receive ‘evil? In all this, Job did not sin ‘with his lips.

¹¹ + Now three associates of Job ‘heard ‘about all ‘this ‘evil ‘coming on him, and they ‘set out, each one from his ^{ri}place, Eliphaz the Temanite, + Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite. + They made an ‘appointment together to come ‘and condole ‘with him and ‘comfort him. ¹² + When they ‘lifted ‘their eyes from afar, + they did not recognize him. + Then they ‘lifted their voice and ‘lamented, + while each one ‘tore his robe, and they ‘sprinkled soil toward the heavens on their heads.

¹³ + They ‘sat ‘with him ‘on the earth seven days and seven nights. And there was no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that ‘his pain was very great.

APPOINT FOR US A KING

"SAMUEL JUDGED ISRAEL all the days of his life. As often as year by year, he went around to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah; and he judged Israel at all these holy places. Then his return would be to Ramah, for there was his house; there he would judge Israel, and there he built an altar to Yahweh" (1 Sam.7:15-17).

Samuel judged Israel in a circuit of the central cities of Israel, Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, with special concern for widows, orphans, and those reduced to poverty (*cf* Lev. 25:25,47). These places were all on the border between Benjamin and Ephraim, to the south of Shiloh. The tribes which had settled in the extreme north and south of the land would not have such regular visits.

A SPECIAL PEOPLE

But the settlement of legal matters was only one aspect of Samuel's appointment as the last judge in Israel. Actually he was a supreme governor whom Yahweh had appointed and equipped to demonstrate the sufficiency of non-royal leadership for Israel. So Samuel would refer to the divine statement: "For you are a people holy to Yahweh your Elohim; Yahweh your Elohim has chosen you to become His, *a special people from all the peoples* who are on the surface of the ground Hence observe the instruction and the statutes and the judgments [ordinances] which I am enjoining on you today" (Deut.7:6,11).

LIKE ALL THE OTHER NATIONS

"It came to be when Samuel was old, that he appoint-

ed his sons as judges for Israel. The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second was Abijah; they were judging at Beersheba. Yet his sons did not walk in his ways; they stretched their hands out after gain, took bribes, and turned right judgment aside.

"So all the elders gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, Behold, *you* are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint for us a king, to judge us *like all the other nations*. Yet the matter was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel, inasmuch as they had said, Do give us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed to Yahweh" (1 Sam.8:1-6).

Samuel's sons served as his deputies; "they were judging at Beersheba," in the extreme south of the land, well beyond Samuel's regular circuit. Yet his sons disqualified themselves in advance as successors of their father, because they took bribes and perverted justice, thus disregarding the instruction of Exodus 18:21 that judges should be "men of truth, hating gain," to whom Yahweh had given this ordinance: "You shall not take a bribe" (Ex.23:8).

THE REQUEST FOR A KING

The law that Yahweh had given to Israel, provided legislation for the establishment of kingship in Israel: "When you come to the land that Yahweh your Elohim is giving to you, and you tenant it and dwell in it, and you say: Let me set a king over me like all the nations who are around me, then you shall set, yea set over you *a king whom Yahweh your Elohim shall choose*. From among your brothers shall you set a king over you But he shall neither increase horses for himself nor . . . increase wives for himself, that his heart may not withdraw, nor increase silver and gold for himself to excess" (Deut.17:14-17).

These verses take the form of permissive legislation, rather than positing an ordinance. The Israelites were not pro-

hibited from having a monarchy as long as they observed the statute that the king must be a man "whom Yahweh shall choose."

All the tribal elders who had come to Ramah, were unanimous in their request for a king. They were quite content to let *Samuel* find the right man for the kingly office. "Yet the matter was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel . . . [and] so Samuel prayed to Yahweh."

YAHWEH'S ANSWER AND WARNING

Samuel may have remembered that, during the period of the judges, the men of Israel had said to Gideon: "Rule over us, both you and your son, and your son's son, for you have saved us from the hand of Midian. Yet Gideon replied to them, I shall not rule over you myself, nor shall my son rule over you; Yahweh alone, *He shall rule over you*" (Judges 8:22,23). Thus Yahweh was seen as Israel's Ruler or *King* Who appointed judges over them to lead the people as a community faithful to Yahweh's instruction, statutes and ordinances.

"Yahweh said to Samuel: Hearken to the voice of the people, to all that they are saying to you; for it is not you they have rejected; it is Me Whom they have rejected from being *King* over them . . . And now hearken to their voice, only you should testify, yea testify to them and tell them the customary rights of the king who shall reign over them" (1 Sam.8:7-9).

Samuel may have taken offense that the elders were linking his age with the need for a king. Yahweh's word ("It is not you they have rejected") was intended to comfort Samuel who felt he was being disrespected after a lifetime of faithful service to Israel.

So Yahweh assured Samuel, saying, "It is Me Whom they have rejected from being *King* over them." And he added in this context: "According to all the deeds that they have

done to Me from the day I brought them up from Egypt until this day, in that they have forsaken Me and have served other elohim" (1 Sam.8:7,8). Thus Yahweh indicated that initiating the monarchy was just another evil deed of Israel in that they had forsaken Him as their only Ruler and King, in order to serve an earthly king.

THE CUSTOMARY RIGHTS OF THE KING

"Samuel reported all these words of Yahweh to the people who were requesting a king of him. He stated, These will be the customary rights of the king who shall reign over you: He shall *take* your sons for himself, and he will make them serve with his chariots He shall *take* your daughters for perfumers, for cooks and for bakers. He shall *take* your fields, your vineyards, your olive groves, the best ones, and he will give them to his courtiers. He shall *take the tenth* of your seeds and your vineyards He shall *take* your menservants, your maidservants and your choice young men, the best ones, and your donkeys, and he will use them for his work. He shall *take the tenth* of your flock; and you shall become slaves for him. You will cry out on that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves; yet Yahweh shall not answer you on that day" (1 Sam.8:10-18).

Samuel's warning did not have any influence with the tribal elders, for their minds were made up. They refused to hearken to his voice when he explained to them the customary rights of a king. Four times Samuel used the verb "take," and twice the verb "take the tenth," in order to describe the social changes which the monarchy would introduce in Israel, due to conscription, forced labor, and taxation to support royal pomp and extravagance.

"But the people refused to hearken to the voice of Samuel; they said to him, No, for there should be a king over us, that we too would become like all the other nations. Our

king will judge us and go forth before us and fight our battles" (1 Sam.8:19,20).

OBSERVE MY COVENANT!

On Mount Sinai, Yahweh had said to Moses, "If you shall hearken, yea hearken to My voice and *observe My covenant*, then you will become Mine, a special possession, above all the peoples, for Mine is all the earth. As for you, you shall become Mine, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex.19:5,6).

Yet the tribal leaders ignored the divine statement that Israel was chosen by Yahweh, and that this community of covenant was not to be like the other nations. Rather, Israel was to observe the instructions, statutes, and ordinances of *Yahweh's covenant*, and to rely on *His love* for them (Deut.7:8,13).

"When Samuel heard all the words of the people, he spoke them in the ears of Yahweh. And Yahweh replied to Samuel, Hearken to their voice and give them a king to reign for them. Then Samuel said to the men of Israel, Go back, each man to his city" (1 Sam.8:21,22).

SAUL, SON OF KISH

We read in Acts 13:21, that God had given Israel judges till Samuel the prophet. "And thence they request a king, and God gave them Saul, son of Kish, a man out of the tribe of Benjamin, forty¹ years."

We have seen that none of Israel's elders had dared to nominate a man from his own tribe as a candidate for the kingship. They did not expect a consensus in this matter, and so they let Samuel take the initiative in attempting to find the right man for the kingly office.

1. The figure of forty years may cover the judgeship of Samuel as well as the reign of Saul.

Yahweh had told Samuel, "Hearken to their voice and give them a king to reign for them" (1 Sam.8:22). While each of the elders went to his city as told, Samuel would wait for Yahweh to tell him what to do.

Now Saul was "a choice youth and good looking; there was no man of the sons of Israel better looking than he; from his shoulder upward he was taller than any of the people. When the jennies of Saul's father Kish got lost, Kish said to his son Saul, Take now with you one of the lads; get up, go and seek the jennies" (1 Sam.9:2,3).

SAMUEL MEETS SAUL

"Now one day before Saul came [to the district of Zuph, 9:5], Yahweh Himself had revealed to the ear of Samuel, saying, About this time tomorrow, I shall send a man to you from the area of Benjamin, and you must anoint him as governor over My people Israel. He will save My people from the hand of the Philistines, for I have seen the humiliation of My people, and their outcry has come to Me" (9:15,16).

Meanwhile Saul and the lad with him had made a sweep of the territory, covering the hill country of Ephraim up to the Benjamite area (9:4); but they could not find the jennies. Then the lad suggested to consult "a man of Elohim in this city,"² since he had a quarter of a shekel of silver to "give it to the man of Elohim, and he will tell us about our way" (9:8).

Saul agreed, and "so they went up to the city. When they came into the midst of the gate, behold there was Samuel coming forth . . . on his way up to the high-place" (9:14). Then Yahweh told Samuel: "Here is the man of whom I spoke to you; this one shall steer the course of My people" (9:17).

2. Ramah, in the district of Zuph.

While in the midst of the gate, Saul asked, "Where is the house of the seer?"³ Samuel answered Saul, saying, I am the seer. Go up before me to the high-place, for you must eat with me today. In the morning I will send you off, and I shall tell you everything that is in your heart. As for the jennies that got lost three days ago today, you must not set your heart on them, for they have been found. Now to whom does *all that is desirable in Israel* belong if not to you . . . ?" (9:18-20).

With these words Samuel asserted in a subtle way that the kingship would belong to Saul. So he gave him an honored seat at the table; thirty men had been invited to participate in this anticipatory coronation banquet.

ANOINTED WITHOUT WITNESSES

Early the next morning, when "they were going down to the end of the city," Samuel sent the lad ahead and anointed Saul without witnesses, saying, that "Yahweh anointed you as governor over His people You shall save them from the hand of their enemies round about" (9:27-10:1).

SIGNS OF DIVINE CONFIRMATION

Samuel gave Saul three signs to authenticate the anointing: On his way home, Saul would meet two men (near the tomb of Rachel), telling him that the jennies had been found, and that his father had anxiously asked: "What shall I do about my son?" (10:2).

The second sign would be the appearance of two men (near the oak of Tabor), who would give food to him (10:3,4). The third sign would occur near Saul's own city; "a group of prophets descending from the high-place . . . and they will be prophesying [in ecstasy]. Then the spirit of Yahweh will prosper over you, and you will prophesy along with

3. "Beforetime, the prophet of today was called a seer" (9:9).

them; you will be transformed into another man. When it occurs that these signs are coming to you, do for yourself whatever your hand shall find, for the One, Elohim, is with you" (10:5-7).

All the three signs came to pass on the same day, and the effect on Saul was: "*Elohim transformed his heart*" (10:9), i.e., Yahweh filled him with energy and a powerful vitality that would enable him to function as a king.

We find the term "transformed" twice in the Pauline letters where it is used in a different sense.

OUR TRANSFORMATION, FROM GLORY TO GLORY

In Christ we are having the deliverance through His blood (Eph.1:7). Hence our conduct is not to look like that of the world, "not to be configured to this eon, but to be *transformed* by the renewing of [our] mind" (Rom. 12:2). "Now *we* obtained, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we may be perceiving that which is being graciously given to us by God" (1 Cor.2:12). "Now the Lord is the spirit . . . we all, mirroring the Lord's glory, are being *transformed* into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17,18).

H.H.R.

(*To be continued*)

JOHN F. LAMB

In the death of Brother John Lamb, age 87, of Pasadena, California, on April 30, we have suffered the loss of a hearty friend and supporter of our work. For many years he and his late wife, Mabel, hosted a Bible class in his home, originally taught by his brother, Charles Arthur Lamb, and after his death in 1978, by Dean Hough and Jim Coram. (This Pasadena class still continues, now in the home of Larry and Helga Oberlander.)

He was not a man given to finding faults in others, but was one who was ready like Paul in the midst of a storm, with a word that would encourage and cheer (*cf* Acts 27:33-37).

“THIS GENERATION”

“UNDER no circumstances *should* you be finishing the cities of Israel till the Son of Mankind *may* be coming” (Matt. 10:23b). “Verily I am saying to you that there are some of those standing here who under no circumstances *should* be tasting death till they *should* be perceiving the Son of Mankind coming in His kingdom” (Matt. 16:28; *cp* Luke 9:27). “Verily I am saying to you that by no means *may* this generation be passing by till all these things *should* be occurring” (Matt. 24:34; *cp* Mark 13:30; Luke 21:32). “For still how very little, He Who is coming will be arriving and not delaying” (Heb. 10:37). “Little children, it is the last hour, and, according as you hear that the antichrist is coming, now also there have come to be many antichrists, whence we know that it is the last hour” (1 John 2:18).

These and similar passages are often appealed to by unbelievers to show the exceedingly unreliable nature—indeed the sheer falsehood—of Jesus’ words and teaching, since the event which they predict, the “second coming” of Christ, did *not* occur within the specified time and has not yet occurred over 1,900 years later. Much is made of the supposed absurdity of “Christianity” at its very core, its claims being founded upon the word of such a manifest delusionist as Jesus of Nazareth.

After all, they reason, the sun was *not* darkened and the moon did *not* fail to give her beams, and the stars did *not* fall from heaven, *nor* were the powers of the heavens shaken; the sign of the Son of Mankind in heaven did *not* appear, all the tribes of the land did *not* grieve, *nor* did they

see the Son of Mankind coming on the clouds of heaven with power and much glory (Matt.24:29,30). Every eye did *not* see Him (Rev.1:7), much less did the kingdoms of this world become those of the Lord God and His Christ (Rev. 11:15); decidedly, the nations did *not* beat their swords into plowshares, *nor* their spears into pruninghooks, so as not to learn war any more (Isa.2:4).

Remarkably, however, certain believers, termed "Preterists" since they claim a fulfilled or *past* second coming of Christ, have appealed to these very same passages in order to show the exceedingly reliable nature—indeed the utter truthfulness—of Jesus' words. According to their claims, the "second coming" of Christ *did* occur within the specified time, all related prophecies being fulfilled accordingly.

Preterists, however, must explain all prophecy concerning Christ's advent and kingdom in highly allegorical or even mystical terms, contrary to the plain sense of the passages themselves. Nonetheless, these believers have convinced themselves of the legitimacy of their interpretations, since, according to them, either Christ's second coming did occur within a generation of the time in which He made these prophecies, or He is a deceiver and a false prophet. Since no believer will affirm that Christ is either of these, and since, according to Preterists, the only alternative is to accept their claims as to a first-century second coming, they imagine that they have proved the correctness of their position.

GOD'S HIDDEN INTENTION

A recognition of the hidden intention of God as distinct from His revealed will, is vital to our subject at hand. The revealed will of God is well illustrated by our Lord's *reproach* upon the cities of Israel in which most of His powerful deeds occurred, "for they do not repent" (Matt.11:20). Since the people had failed to repent, Jesus reproached

them for their failure to heed God's revealed will which had called for their repentance (*cf* Matt.3:2; 4:17).

Yet the hidden intention of God is equally well illustrated in Jesus' words in reference and as a complement to His preceding words of reproach upon the people: "At that season, answering, Jesus said, 'I am acclaiming Thee, Father, *Lord* of heaven and earth, for Thou *hidest* these things from the wise and intelligent and Thou dost reveal them to minors. Yea, Father, seeing that thus it became a delight in front of Thee'" (Matt.11:25,26).

If a recognition of the significance of Christ's powerful deeds is vital to repentance, and yet if God should *hide* this significance from some, those from whom it is hidden will be unable to repent. Yet even so, if this is what God has done, we too may well acclaim the Father, Lord of heaven and earth, seeing that thus it became a delight in front of Him.

It is important to understand that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined in relation to its purpose, according to the motive which sponsors it. Whatever God does is *right*; and, it is also *good*, with respect to His purpose. That which men devise for evil is that which God designs for good (*cp* Gen.50:20). If it should be that God's revealed will is not fulfilled, it is only that His hidden intention might be realized. Similarly, if God's present intention should entail a measure of evil, it is only that His consummate intention should be comprised of a superfluity of good (*cp* Rom.8:18-21). This should ever be kept in mind whenever we should be considering Israel's failure, or our own.

PROVISIONAL DECLARATIONS OF TRUTH

It is indeed important to believe what the Scriptures *say*. Yet the deeper question still remains: *In what sense* is what the Scriptures say to be *understood*. As we approach this question of the time of Christ's appearing, whether it

is past or future, it should first of all be noted that in the Original, each of these statements of Jesus concerning His appearing (e.g., Matt.10:23b; 16:28; 24:34) is expressed in the subjunctive mood, sometimes with the *conditional* particle *an* (EVER) included. These grammatical features are reflected in the Concordant Version by the auxiliaries "should" and "may."

The subjunctive mood calls attention to the contingent (i.e., dependent) nature of what is being affirmed. It speaks of the connection which obtains between what is affirmed and that upon which the affirmation *depends* for its fulfillment.

In the nature of things, if that upon which a declaration expressed in the subjunctive mood depends, is unrevisably certain, the declaration itself is unrevisable and is certain to occur. But if that upon which a declaration expressed in the subjunctive mood depends, is not unrevisably certain, the declaration itself is revisable and is not certain to occur.

Of course that upon which the first-century fulfillment of these texts in question immediately depended, was the will of God, then revealed. If the will of God, then revealed, was peremptory (final, barring any possible recension for whatever reason), then these prophecies were certain to occur in that generation. But if the will of God, then revealed, was not peremptory, then these prophecies were not certain to occur in that generation. It will not do simply to claim that since these prophecies were made, they were therefore made peremptorily. This is what is at issue, and must not be decided by circular reasoning, special pleading, or emotional claims.

It should be noted that the prophecies of the establishment of the kingdom within that present generation of Israelites to whom Christ came, were necessarily provisional. They were contingent upon Israel's national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour.

It is true that it was the revealed will of God that the kingdom *should* then come. This is reflected in the various passages such as Matthew 24:4-34 which predicted the occurrence of certain events preceding the kingdom's establishment within that present generation. But it is just as true that the kingdom did *not* then come.

"IN HIS OWN JURISDICTION"

It is certainly correct that Matthew 24:34 and similar prophetic declarations must be understood provisionally; this is because certain provisional considerations were entailed in their fulfillment (*cf* Acts 3:19,20). Ultimately, however, it is not their provisional nature that raises the question as to whether they were unrevisably certain to occur. If, in the counsels of God, they were unrevisably certain to occur, doubtlessly their provisional element would be entirely fulfilled. The only ultimate question is whether such a prophecy is an expression of the actual intention of God and is therefore a peremptory declaration.

This can only be decided by a consideration of all relevant issues. But to claim that because the future tense is used, such declarations are therefore peremptory and may not be understood provisionally either in relation to Israel's obedience or even in relation to God's hidden intention, is wholly unwarranted. This is especially true when it is noted that these texts are expressed in the subjunctive mood, which calls attention to their *dependent* nature. Their ultimate dependency is upon the actual intention of the Father, Who has placed the decisive times and eras for restoring the kingdom to Israel in His own jurisdiction (Acts 1:7).

Very simply, until the word of God was completed (Col. 1:25), one could not say to a certainty that a particular declaration of God's revealed will concerning things to come was also a declaration of His actual intention concerning things to come.

That this provisional yet prophetic declaration in Matthew 24:34 of the revealed will of God, was not a peremptory expression of the actual intention of God concerning that very generation, is made evident not only from history but from further revelation. The millennial kingdom did not commence in the first century and run its course until some time after 1000 A.D. Satan was not bound during this period, being cast into the submerged chaos, locked and sealed therein. Surely, during the Middle Ages, the rest of the dead of all past generations were not resurrected for judging and then cast into the lake of fire. Nor, during that same period, was the earth destroyed by fire, nor was a new earth created, one in which there was no more death, nor mourning, nor clamor, nor misery.

Therefore, the words of Christ in Matthew 24:34 and similar passages are to be understood within the compass of the will of God, then revealed. It is foolish to insist on taking such passages in a peremptory sense, as if no other sense but the peremptory existed, or as if this were the only possible sense in which these passages could be understood.

NOT UNREVISABLY CERTAIN

It is incorrect to claim that if the kingdom was not then established, Jesus was "wrong." His words cannot be taken beyond the bounds of an implicit "God willing—and He is—Israel's contingent obedience being understood." The words of Christ, then, in these texts in question, are altogether true in relation to the subject with which they are concerned.

It is neither dishonest, mistaken, or even inappropriate to make provisionally correct statements concerning future events. Indeed, nearly all of our own predictions concerning events of ordinary human affairs can be no more than provisionally correct. They are not unrevisably certain, since that upon which they depend has not been disclosed to us, certainly not in a peremptory sense ("if

the Lord should be willing"; *cp* James 4:13-17). The proviso "God willing," is *always* to be understood, for indeed it is always present, whether explicitly or implicitly.

In this respect, the predictions of Christ, the Son of God, are quite like our own. Whatever He declares shall occur (and this is especially emphasized where He uses the subjunctive and speaks of that which "should be occurring"), is only that which shall occur, "God willing." In light, then, of Matthew 24:34 and related passages, surely it is correct to say that *the then-revealed will of God*, to which our Lord was privileged to testify, was that that generation of Israelites to whom Jesus spoke should repent and receive their Messiah. God willing, then, these things should be occurring. Then, the kingdom *would* come.

GOD'S ACTUAL INTENTION

It is mistaken to take Christ's words as somehow transcending the implicit proviso, "God willing," or to assume that God's revealed will concerning that generation, was also necessarily His actual intention concerning that generation. The case of the Pharaoh of the exodus is a good example. God's revealed will unto Pharaoh was declared by Moses. Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh . . . Dismiss My people that they may serve Me!" (Ex.10:3). Pharaoh said, "Go!" (Ex.10:8). "Yet Yahweh made the heart of Pharaoh steadfast, so that he did not dismiss the sons of Israel" (Ex.10:20). This was God's actual intention.

The principle is the same with the nation of Israel of our Lord's day. Then, God's revealed will was that Israel should repent and enter the kingdom. But that it was His hidden intention that they should *not* do so, is evident, seeing that *He* has blinded their eyes and calloused their heart *lest* they may perceive with their eyes and apprehend with their heart (*cf* John 12:40; *cit.* Isa.6:10). God's intention concerning them, His revealed will notwithstanding,

was that "[they] must *not* be understanding . . . [and they] must *not* be knowing" (Isa.6:9).

Certainly, that which God wills should come to pass, shall come to pass (i.e., what He wants to occur will occur). Whatever is His actual intention, shall occur.

In Christ's personal ministry to the nation of Israel, He came to His own simply as "the Servant of the Circumcision, for the sake of the truth of God, to confirm the patriarchal promises" (Rom.15:8). The truth of God for the sake of which He testified was the truth of God revealed by Israel's prophets concerning God's glorious kingdom, under Messiah (or, "Christ"), to be established on the earth. Thus He confirmed the original promises which God had made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to bring blessing to their "seed."

Accordingly, then, *in relation to the revealed will of God* concerning the kingdom, Jesus could truly say, "Verily, verily, I am saying to you that by no means *may* this generation be passing by till all these things *should* be occurring" (Matt.24:34).

It is altogether a separate question—and indeed a question which Christ did not address during His ministry to Israel—whether this revealed will of God was also His actual intention. Apart from other considerations and without additional revelation, all that can be said as to Christ's testimony concerning "this generation" (which has now become "that generation"), is that it was true and correct, in relation to God's revealed will.

THE INTEGRITY OF CHRIST'S WORDS

It must ever be kept in mind that Matthew 24:34 and other similar "imminency" passages concerning the Messianic kingdom, are made in relation to the will of God, then revealed. That other considerations and further revelation have made evident that Christ's words, then spoken,

were not a declaration of God's actual intention concerning that very generation, is no dishonor upon Christ, nor does it follow that He was a false prophet.

If God's revealed will is not also His hidden intention, and if Christ's testimony here is only in relation to the former and not the latter, we should rather say that Christ's testimony as to "this generation" was altogether true and correct within the province with which it was concerned. If other considerations and further revelation should make evident that His testimony here was not true and correct concerning some *other* theme with which it did *not* deal, is no opprobrium upon the name of Christ with respect to any question of the veracity of His testimony.

Many true and correct statements are only true and correct concerning the subject with which they deal, and are incorrect with reference to other subjects. It is simply unintelligent, however, to characterize a statement as false if it is only true in connection with its own subject. To the contrary, such a statement is only to be characterized as true, it being a matter of the intelligent use of idiom that a "true statement" is one which is true insofar as its own subject is concerned, or insofar as it is contemplated within its own province.

How unreasonable it would be to require, in order to meet our approval, even as to gain our appraisal as a "true statement," that a statement must be true and correct not only concerning its own subject but concerning a different and incompatible subject as well. Similarly, it is absurd to ridicule or doubt the integrity of the words of Christ concerning "this generation" for only being correct in relation to that with which they are concerned. It is not Christ, or His words, that are mistaken, but we ourselves if we would expect His words within a certain sphere also to be true within a different and incompatible sphere, one which does not come under the purview of His words.

RICHES TO THE WORLD
THROUGH ISRAEL'S OFFENSE

The question remains, Since God could have turned the hearts of those first-century Israelites to repent and accept the Lord Jesus as their Messiah, why did He not do so? The answer is that it was in His purpose for them to be stubborn and disbelieving—not according to His revealed will but according to His hidden intention: “Yet, after His having done so many signs in front of them, they believed not in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet, which he said, may be being fulfilled, ‘Lord, who believes our tidings? And the arm of the Lord, to whom was it revealed?’ Therefore *they could not believe*, seeing that Isaiah says again that *He* has blinded their eyes and callouses their heart, lest they may be perceiving with their eyes, and should be apprehending with their heart, and may be turning about, and I shall be healing them. These things Isaiah said, seeing that he perceived His glory, and speaks concerning Him” (John 12:37-41).

God does all unto the end of salvation, and with a view toward mercy. God is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers (1 Tim.4:10). God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all. O the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments and untraceable His ways! (Rom.11:32,33).

On behalf of the conciliation of the world, God has temporarily “cast away” Israel (Rom.11:15). Even so, He has *not* “thrust” them away (Rom.11:1); He has not “thrown them out,” never to be recovered. Callousness, in part, has come on Israel, only until the complement of that which God is achieving through the nations has been realized (Rom. 11:25). Then, according as it is written, “Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when-

ever I should be eliminating their sins" (Rom.11:26,27; *cp* Isa.59:20,21; Psa.14:7; Jer.31:34).

It was needful that Israel should "trip" not that they should "fall," but that in their offense "salvation to the nations" might become a reality. Yet the nations' own salvation itself, in turn, is to provoke Israel to "jealousy," that they too might be saved (Rom.11:11; *cp* 11:25-27). Israel remains "beloved because of the fathers" (Rom.11:28).

"[Israel's] offense is *the world's riches*" (Rom.11:12a). That men, through unbelief, should be ignorant of their riches, does not remove these riches from their possession. A man who is ignorant of his wealth, is a wealthy man, even if an ignorant wealthy man. One who is ignorant of his possessions, though he fails to enjoy them, does not forfeit their ownership. Accordingly, through the blood of Christ, even now, the world *possesses* vast spiritual riches.

That which constitutes the world's riches is declared in the word of the conciliation, "how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them" (2 Cor.5:19). Though men continue to offend, through the Lamb of God, God nonetheless has taken away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Through Christ, God has united the world to Himself, and is no longer reckoning their offenses to them. Though God will judge all according to each one's need and according to His own purpose, nevertheless, the judgment, ultimately speaking, will be that of those whose sins have been taken away and whose offenses are not being reckoned.

THE POWER OF THE CONCILIATION

Whatever loss is incurred to man through eonian judging, is needful on behalf of God's own purpose. It will not continue beyond the eons. At the consummation, death will be abolished and all will be subjected, that God may be All in all (1 Cor.15:28). This is the ultimate fruit of the conciliation.

At present, while Israel is not God's people, until the times of the restoration of all which God speaks through the mouth of His holy prophets concerning them (Acts 3:21), when they will then become sons of the living God (Rom.9:26), God has granted to the apostle Paul this grace: "to bring the evangel of the *untraceable* riches of Christ to the nations" (Eph.3:8b).

These "*untraceable*" riches of Christ, revealed only through Paul, are those revelations concerning the Christ, which Israel's prophets did *not* seek out and could *not* search out, the scope of their ministry being confined to the grace which God had appointed for Israel (*cf* 1 Pet. 1:10). In contrast to this, it is the privilege of Paul and those who imitate him, "to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and authorities among the celestials the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph.3:9-11).

These glorious Pauline revelations, even as God's purpose concerning that company of believers (*cf* Eph.1: 22,23) who would be blessed according to Paul's evangel, could not be revealed at the time of Christ's personal ministry to Israel. It was necessary, for the sake of the conciliation of the world, that Israel not encounter that for which she was seeking (*cp* Rom.10:3; 11:7). Hence the revealed yet provisional will of God concerning first-century A.D. Israel, was superceded by the actual divine intention concerning that same people, according to God's own design and purpose. Let us rejoice in the marvelous wisdom and ways of our God. Seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all, we would praise Him accordingly, saying, *to Him be the glory* for the eons! Amen! (Rom.11:36).

J.R.C.

WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED

“NOW GOD IS FAITHFUL For whatever promises are of God, are in [Jesus Christ] ‘Yes’” (2 Cor.1:18,20). God’s promises are “Yes” because they are centered in and based on the work of Christ. This applies to the manifestation of God’s righteousness in the gratuity of justification (Rom. 3:21-28) and to the blessings of peace and conciliation that Paul writes of in Romans 5 and 2 Corinthians 5. It applies to all the spiritual blessings with which God blesses us in Christ, unfolded especially in Ephesians and Colossians. But it also includes every promise given by God to the patriarchs and prophets concerning Israel and the nations throughout the Sacred Scriptures. For in the final analysis the death and resurrection of Christ is the sole basis for the fulfillment of every divine covenant, promise and declaration of glory to come.

GOD’S FAITHFULNESS CENTERED IN THE FAITHFULNESS OF CHRIST

We have seen that God’s faithfulness to His oracles concerning the Circumcision cannot be nullified by human unfaithfulness. Hence the benefit of Circumcision is “much in every manner” (*cf* Rom.2:25-3:4).¹ This is because God’s faithfulness rests on the faith of Jesus Christ. The promise of righteousness for the Circumcision will be realized in God’s act of “justifying the Circumcision out of faith”

1. See the article “Much in Every Manner,” *Unsearchable Riches*, vol. 86, p.31.

(Rom.3:30), that is, a righteousness *sourced* in Christ's faithful obedience to the death of the cross.²

There is only one basis for the fulfillment of the divine promises, and that is the cross of Christ. It is important for us to appreciate this principle. God does not fulfill His promises simply by the use of His power and authority as God, but He builds His powerful achievements upon the one supreme operation that reveals His righteousness and commends His love.

In this there is no distinction between Circumcision and Uncircumcision. But, as far as the human element is concerned, there are distinctions, so that the covenants of circumcision and law remain a part of Israel's calling, and faith remains the characteristic factor in our calling where there are no physical signs. For Israel there are still requirements of the flesh, even though these requirements are empowered by God placing His spirit in them. Also there are signs given to Israel, circumcision itself being one of them (Rom.4:11), which are neither abrogated for that nation nor brought into the faith given to us.

ROMANS FOUR

The fourth chapter of Romans, while building on the evangel of God's work of justifying, directs attention to God's operation of *reckoning* righteousness to the believer. God will be justifying both the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision (that is, all mankind), but in the present He is putting to the believer's account that righteousness which has been gained by the faith of Jesus Christ.

In presenting this aspect of the evangel, Paul uses Abraham as our great example and leader. In fact, the apostle emphasizes this relationship with Abraham by using

2. See the article "God Will be Justifying," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol. 86, p.80.

that special term of which his very name is composed and which reflects his unique place in God's purpose, the term, "father." The purity and power of Abraham's faith, especially as displayed in Genesis 15:6, makes him the ideal human example of our present situation. Abraham simply believed what God said to him, and it was in light of this that God reckoned righteousness to him.

Romans 4:18 and 4:20 especially underline important parallels between Abraham and us. As sinners and dying creatures we are "beyond expectation," but God has brought us an evangel and grants us faith so that we are now "believing in expectation," no longer infirm in faith. As with Abraham the promise of God is not doubted in unbelief, but rather, being invigorated by faith, we are fully assured that what God has promised He is able to do. All of this leads inevitably to giving glory to God.

ABRAHAM AS FATHER

Hence in Romans chapter 4, Abraham is seen as the *father* of all who are believing God's word to them, to whom, on this basis, God is reckoning righteousness. This use of the term "father" is a figure of speech. Abraham is *like* a father to us who believe, in that he led the way in which we follow. The figure is developed clearly in Romans 4:12. Believers today are those "who are observing the elements of the faith in the footprints of our father Abraham . . ." The father sets the example for the sons to follow. What is written concerning God reckoning righteousness to Abraham in view of his faith is the very pattern of our experience "who are believing on Him Who rouses Jesus our Lord from among the dead" (Rom.4:23,24).

This pattern set by Abraham occurred before he received the covenant of circumcision. "For we are saying, 'To Abraham faith is reckoned for righteousness.' How, then, is it reckoned? Being in circumcision or in uncircumcision?"

Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision" (Rom.4:9,10). Hence he is the pattern for both the physical descendants of Abraham, to whom he is the "forefather, according to flesh" (4:1), and to those who follow in this pattern "in uncircumcision" (4:11). When God reckons righteousness to anyone there is faith, whether or not works and maintaining the law are given a place.

Yet because Abraham is figuratively the father of all who believe does not mean that he ceases to be the literal forefather of the nation of Israel, as well as other nations descended from him according to the flesh. The promises given to Abraham concerning his descendants are not altered. The happiness David spoke of in Psalm 32:1,2 will be granted to the Circumcision, and the fact that it is applied to us in Romans 4:7-12 apart from circumcision does not nullify the promise to Israel, as given, for example, in Jeremiah 31:34 ("For I shall pardon their depravity, and I shall not remember their sin any longer"). Because Paul sees that the enjoyment of "the allotment of the world" embraces the Uncircumcision, does not mean that the Circumcision will not be granted the land and be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

CURRENT VIEWPOINTS

When Paul wrote to the Romans there was little problem in understanding that God purposed blessings for the Circumcision. The problem was in seeing that the very essence of the divine blessing of righteousness being reckoned to sinners could be granted to the Uncircumcision. Yet today, the problem is often reversed, so that it is difficult to appreciate that there can be any benefit at all in Circumcision.

If we conclude that all the physical and terrestrial benefits promised to Circumcision have been somehow transformed into spiritual benefits, we obscure the glory of the

faithfulness of God. All of His promises are centered in Christ Jesus. And because of this they will all be fulfilled and affirmed as "Yes."

A SIGN AND A SEAL

Even though Romans 4 focuses on the great unity in God reckoning righteousness to Abraham and to his descendants according to the flesh and to believers today, the distinctions between Circumcision and Uncircumcision are still observed. Because righteousness is reckoned entirely on the basis of faith and entirely apart from the act of circumcising, does not mean that there is no longer any importance in that act for the nation of Israel.

Even in Romans 4, one particular value of circumcision is explicitly mentioned. Abraham "obtained the *sign* of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith" (Rom.4:11). It was something of the flesh that could be perceived. Always, "Jews signs are requesting" (1 Cor.1:22), and in the covenant of circumcision God was providing Abraham and his descendants according to the flesh with a physical sign that showed them the promises made to Abraham in Uncircumcision were safely sealed. For the Circumcision, circumcision remains as a God-given sign of His favor to them, for their assurance.

We also may often desire to see a sign that what God has said to us is securely settled as "Yes." Indeed Paul himself performed signs even up to the time just before his imprisonment (Rom.15:19; 2 Cor.12:12). But one, at least, of these signs, that of speaking in languages (*cf* 1 Cor.14:22), was to cease (1 Cor.13:8).

Certainly we are not given the sign of circumcision. Circumcision is not assurance to us that God's blessings of righteousness and deliverance will be fully realized. "Is anyone called in uncircumcision? Let him not circumcise." For us "circumcision is nothing," but for Israel, who were

brought under the precepts of God (1 Cor.7:18), it was a sign from God that His promises to them could be fully depended upon.

Nevertheless, there *is* a seal that assures us that what God has said to us is certain of fulfillment.

THE HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE

This seal, however, is not a visible sign. In Genesis 17 God provided Abraham with a visible sign that was God's assurance that the promises of Genesis 15 would be fulfilled. And that visible sign, no doubt, through the years was an encouragement to many of the descendants of Abraham, indicating to them that God would keep all His promises to them. Yet for us, we read that "on hearing the word of truth," the evangel of our salvation, and "on believing also," we are *sealed* with "the holy spirit of promise (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured)" (Eph.1:13,14).

Abraham *obtained* the sign of circumcision; we are given the holy spirit of promise. Sometime *after* God had reckoned righteousness to Abraham, circumcision became a seal of this blessing; yet God has given us, immediately *on believing*, the imperceptible seal of an earnest of His spirit which grants us assurance of our salvation in Christ until the full deliverance is reached. This seal is unseen and unfelt and centered entirely in faith. Yet along with our believing (which is itself a spiritual gift), we do find that it powerfully affects our lives, bearing spiritual fruit such as listed in Galatians 5:22,23.

Our pathway is one of faith apart from perception, even more so today than when Paul noted this in 2 Corinthians 5:7. As much as we may want some visible sign, we are coming to appreciate the privilege of walking entirely in the realm of faith. This is not to denigrate the calling granted to Israel, with its physical signs and blessings, but

is rather to appreciate what we have obtained. God's ways are always glorious, and they are ever faithful.

GOD IS ABLE

Even before he received the covenant of circumcision Abraham was "fully assured also, that, what [God] has promised, *He is able to do also*" (Rom.4:20). It is in this that Abraham is presented as the father of all who are believing. But what was it that God had promised to Abraham? If God was faithful in giving Abraham and Sarah a son when they were "beyond expectation" of such a thing, He also is faithful to all His promises to Abraham, including the following (first presented to Abraham before the covenant of circumcision was given):

"I shall make you into a great nation, and I shall bless you; I shall indeed make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I shall indeed bless those blessing you, and I shall curse the one maledicting you. In you all the families of the ground will be blessed" (Gen.12:2,3).

"Now lift up your eyes and see from the place where you are, northward and to the Negeb, eastward and to the sea. For all the land that you are seeing, I shall give it to you and to your seed unto the eon" (Gen.13:14,15).

"Now look up toward the heavens and count off the stars if you can number them . . . Thus shall become your seed" (Gen.15:5).

What God has promised Abraham, He will do.

So also God has spoken gracious and glorious words of good news to us, with even less evidence from what is perceived. Yahweh spoke directly to Abraham and gave him many empirical evidences of His faithfulness (even in Genesis 15). But as to the divine declaration of righteousness reckoned unto believers, we stand together with Abraham without a visible sign or any perceptible evidence. We stand in faith alone.

In this, Abraham, in Genesis 15:6, has led the way, and we follow in his footsteps as sons to their father. God's evangel to us differs in many respects from His words to Abraham, though indeed there are many marvelous parallels as Paul indicates in Romans 4. We believe that God vivifies the dead (Rom.4:17), but associate this not with the ability of procreation but, in Paul's words, with God rousing "Jesus our Lord from among the dead, Who was given up because of our offenses, and was roused because of our justifying" (Rom.4:25).

We have no visible sign that God has roused Jesus from among the dead, and even less physical support to this message of justification. But together with him who is set forth as the father of all who are believing, we believe that what God has declared He is able to bring into realization.

D.H.H.



ABRAM'S FAITH

In the midst of Abram's concern about his successor (Gen.15:1-6), *God* steps in and makes a promise. *He does not do* anything, but merely *tells* what He will do. Abram also *does nothing*. He simply *believes* that God will do it. The entire absence of works is the key to Abraham's individual relationship to God in uncircumcision. Indeed, faith itself has not the least merit. We do not deem it meritorious to believe an honest man. The promise is not of faith that it may accord with merit; it is of faith that it may accord with *grace* (Rom.4:16). Conversely, if God had fulfilled the wish of Abram at that time there would have been no room for faith. In that case Abram would doubtless have been grateful, but such help never could have displayed the deep and delightful confidence that Abram had in God. It would certainly not have brought to Abram this most marvelous gratuity that an unrighteous man can ever obtain. A.E.K.

“GOD WAS THE WORD”

THE above declaration concerning the Word “. . . should not be accommodated to the current creeds, but to the context to which it is an introduction. It is God’s oral revelation of Himself in the Hebrew Scriptures, where we read ‘Thus says Yahweh.’ God was revealed in His expression or words. Now, however, He is to be revealed in the life and actions of His Son. For the time He took the place of His written revelation, hence He is also called the Word of God. They were to hear Him.”*

“In the beginning was the word, and the word was toward God, and *God was the word*. This was in the beginning toward God. All came into being through it, and apart from it not even one thing came into being which has come into being And the Word became flesh and tabernacles among us, and we gaze at His glory, a glory as of an only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:1-3,14).

Communication between creatures is achieved mainly through the medium of the spoken or written word. Scientists have been aware for many years of the action and interaction of odors, colors, sounds and behavior, to attract, threaten or defend. But for humanity, audible and visual language is vital. Imagine then the utter consternation of those in the land of Shinar when Yahweh descended to see the city and the tower which the sons of humanity had built:

“Let us descend, and let us disintegrate their language

*A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.37, p.166.

there, so that each man may not hearken to the language of his associate" (Gen.11:7).

THE ROSETTA STONE

In the town of Rosetta, situated in the Nile delta of northern Egypt, a small, insignificant-looking basalt slab was discovered in 1799. The immense importance of this find did not immediately dawn on those who unearthed the stone, but when the archaeologists, conferring with the linguists, had fully considered the carvings in the stone, their delight knew no bounds. Carved around 196 B.C. were parallel inscriptions in Egyptian hieroglyphics, demotic characters, and Greek! This simple basalt slab, containing a prosaic message, provided the key which ultimately led to the deciphering of ancient Egyptian texts which had completely baffled all the experts. Now this complex language of picture symbols on the walls of tombs, and royal names enclosed within an oblong figure known as a *cartouche*, could at last be translated.

Contemplation of how this language came to be *lost* must surely call forth the question: How have the Scriptures survived? The history of the preservation of these precious words is filled with suffering and horror. Hold a copy in your hands and meditate on the appalling price in human misery which has been paid that we might know of God's loving purpose!

Yet we who are privileged to realize this same purpose know full well that all attempts to suppress or destroy these words were doomed to failure. As well strive to keep closed the stone seal which bound the entrance to Joseph's tomb, where the body of our crucified Saviour was placed!

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES

The value of the written Word of God is not a slight or casual matter. To all those who unwittingly serve the

Adversary by insinuating that the Hebrew Scriptures are no longer relevant, we would reply: Why were they quoted so frequently by God's Son? At the commencement of His ministry, we are granted the most beautiful scene of His entering the synagogue and reading from the scroll of Isaiah (61:1,2a),

*"The spirit of the Lord is on Me,
On account of which He anoints Me to bring
the evangel to the poor.
He has commissioned Me to heal the crushed heart,
To herald to captives a pardon,
And to the blind the receiving of sight;
To dispatch the oppressed with a pardon,
To herald an acceptable year of the Lord . . .*

"And furling the scroll, giving it back to the deputy, He is seated, And the eyes of all in the synagogue were looking intently at Him. Now He begins to be saying to them that 'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your ears.' And all testified of Him and marveled at the gracious words which are issuing out of His mouth" (Luke 4:18-22).

Again and again He referred to the sacred scriptures, declaring, "It is written." In Gethsemane He was completely obedient to His Father's will. Moreover, the absolute veracity of His Father's recorded words were of such supreme importance that He prompted those who vilely crucified Him: "After this, Jesus, being aware that all is already accomplished, *that the scripture may be perfected*, is saying, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel lay there distended with vinegar. Sticking a sponge, then, distended with vinegar, He said, 'It is accomplished!' And reclining His head, He gives up the spirit" (John 19:28-30).

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Minor variances in the accounts are in themselves sure and certain evidence of their true value. The reporting of

several witnesses to any incident must of necessity contain either discrepancies or omissions. Exact word-for-word details would convince even the most casual investigator that some prior conspiracy had taken place. The character of each of these accounts reflect the personality of the writers, yet holy spirit ensured that our Lord was presented as King by Matthew, as a model Servant by Mark, as ideal Man by Luke and as divine by John. The importance of their records demanded that inspiration of holy spirit was imperative.

“Still much have I to say to you, but you are not able to bear it at present. Yet whenever that may be coming—the spirit of truth—it will be guiding you into all the truth” (John 16:12,13). These comforting words of our Lord for those whom He knew would be completely desolate without Him, are a sure revelation of His love.

Then, added to this assurance of our Lord to His disciples, it must always be remembered that it is the apostle Paul who completes the word of God (Col.1:25). “You may not be ashamed, then, of the testimony of our Lord, nor yet of me, His prisoner . . .” (2 Tim.1:8). “Have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the holy spirit which is making its home in us” (2 Tim.1:13,14). “Herald the word. Stand by it, opportunely, inopportunely, expose, rebuke, entreat, with all patience and teaching” (2 Tim.4:2).

In these dark days of apostasy when so many have turned aside from the truth, there is a sore need of guidance and wisdom. There are “experts” on every subject under the sun. Despite this, moral standards are at such a low ebb that we must turn from the corruption, declaring, “Lord, to whom shall we come away? Declarations of life eonian hast Thou! And we believe and know that Thou art the Holy One of God” (John 6:68,69).

Donald Fielding

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 1995

BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SIX

EDITORIAL

THE QUESTION ARISES: "If our Lord's words concerning His return and the conclusion of the eon, were not fulfilled to the generation living during His ministry,* is there to be a future enactment of these same prophecies?"

Of course there will be no explicit, future enactment of these texts in which the twelve, and those evangelized by them, will see these various prophesied signs and events come to pass, those which precede Christ's appearing.

The events themselves of which Jesus speaks in Matthew 24 and parallel passages, however, are simply those which the Hebrew prophets had long ago foretold, the events related to Messiah's advent and the establishing of His kingdom, in the day of the Lord ("the day of Yahweh"). They include the time of unparalleled great affliction, known as "Jacob's trouble" (Jer.30:7, AV; "a season of distress for Jacob," CV). Our Lord's own words concerning these things, are but an inspired elucidation of the words of the prophets themselves concerning the events which will occur and the conditions which will obtain in "the conclusion of the eon" (*cf* Matt.24:3). The fact that God's revealed will—that these events should be arriving on "that generation"—did not come to pass, does not make the yet-future fulfillment of those same events in God's own time any less certain.

It is not true, contrary to the claims of many, that Scripture reveals that the generation of people living at the time when-ever Israel should first obtain national statehood, are the generation that will live in the day of the Lord and see the return of Christ to the earth. It is only when "*all* these things" (*cp* Matt. 24:33) which the prophets record concerning the conclusion of the eon are all contemporaneous, that anyone will be in a position to say that Christ's appearing is "at the doors," which is to say, immediately imminent (*cp* Matt.24:15, 33). Apart from such evidence, no generation can claim that their generation will see

*See the article "This Generation," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.86, p.121.

the end of human society as we know it, including the judgments of the Unveiling, followed by the return of Christ to the earth.

It is not at all that some supposed, unexampled intensity or prevalence of evil will characterize the era immediately preceding the day of the Lord, but that—*following* a period of unexampled peace and safety (1 Thess.5:1-3)—there will be a *startling and fearful return* to such swiftly accelerated, horrific evils, both in nature and among men, as indeed had ever prevailed throughout the course of history (Matt.24:7,8).

No one today can know that present-day levels of famine, disease, overpopulation, and the like, are of such a degree or nature that humanity *will* destroy itself within just a few years, apart from special divine intervention.

More importantly, the day of Christ's appearing for us is not dependent upon "end-time" occurrences. We do not look for signs concerning the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to Him. Instead, we are simply *waiting* for God's Son out of the heavens, Jesus, our *Rescuer* out of the *coming* indignation (1 Thess.1:10; 4:17; 5:9). In the meantime, we hope not to be led into the spirit of date-setting, by the reasoning that concludes that since the Scripture (supposedly) teaches that our generation will see Christ's return to earth, we ourselves *therefore*, on any account, will soon be snatched away to meet Him in the air.

Let us not vainly attempt to foster a true spirit of imminency through a false means employed unto that end. We do not need the help of so poor an assistant, one which cannot truly help us, though one which can decidedly hurt us, both in our ability to think clearly and believe accurately, even as in our resolve not to be swayed by the dashed hopes of many, should the latest round of date-settings fail, even as the many similar date-settings both of our own day and of centuries past have already failed.

We await the day when the Lord Himself will descend from heaven *for us*, the time when, even though the day of God's indignation will then fast be "*coming*," we, nonetheless, will be "*snatched away*" to meet the Lord in the air, that we should be living at the same time together with Him, and thus always be together with Him. Wherefore, console one another and edify one the other, according as you are doing also (*cf* 1 Thess.1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9-11).

J.R.C.

PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

PAUL'S Galatian epistle is the divine commentary on the doctrine of justification as set forth in the first four chapters of his epistle to the Romans.

Some time after Paul had been severed (Acts 13:2) and had gone among the nations preaching justification by faith (Acts 13:39) and had returned to Antioch, Judaizing teachers came down from Jerusalem teaching that "If you should not be circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). The matter was taken up in the council of the apostles at Jerusalem, and Paul and Barnabas were sent with the decrees which made it manifest that circumcision was not necessary for the nations who believed.

After they had delivered these decrees Paul passed through the Galatian province (Acts 16:6) and founded the ecclesias to which this epistle is addressed. Some years later he visited the Galatian province again, establishing the disciples (Acts 18:23).

We never hear again that the Judaizers taught that circumcision was essential to salvation. The decrees of the twelve effectually forbade this. Now, however, they try to graft the law on to the evangel and make circumcision and the keeping of the law a further privilege and a means of perfection for the believers among the nations. It is against this subtler form of error that this epistle is directed. Paul shows that, in his evangel, spirit and flesh, grace and works, faith and law, cannot be reconciled.

THE LITERARY FRAMEWORK

The structure of Galatians reflects Paul's emphasis on

defending his evangel and directing attention to its application to our deportment. It is in the message of "the grace of Christ" (Gal.1:6) that the believer finds his happiness (Gal.4:15) and direction for the walk in spirit (Gal.5:22-25).

The letter may be outlined as follows:

Greetings (1:1-5)

The Different Gospels (1:6-9)

Paul's Walk (1:10)

Personal Defense (1:11-2:21)

Doctrinal Defense (3:1-5:12)

Believers' Walk (5:13-6:10)

The Rival Teachers (6:11-17)

Greetings (6:18)

IN DEFENSE

Paul is called upon to present a defense of his evangel. This is divided into two distinct lines of thought. First he discusses its *origin* and then its *essence*. He proves that its origin was quite independent of Peter and the twelve. He demonstrates that its essence is incompatible with the keeping of the law. Then he further shows that its *fruits* cannot be produced in legal bonds.

The origin of the evangel involves Paul's personal history after his call, and his points of contact with the twelve, especially Peter. He carefully rehearses the details of his three meetings with Peter, showing that he had no opportunity to receive his evangel from him, but that, in each case, he communicated his evangel to Peter and the others.

The doctrinal defense discusses the difference between the Abrahamic and Sinaitic covenants, showing the priority of the Abrahamic promise and the subordinate and temporary function of the law. It acted as an escort, during the minority of the chosen nation, to lead them to Christ. It was a guardian, suitable only for those under age. It must not continue. If faith came four hundred years before its advent, it is in no need of law. When law utterly fails then

faith remains. Hence the utter folly of the Galatian ecclesias, to whom the law was never given by God, in voluntarily subjecting themselves to its demands when they already had far more than it could ever give them. Before law came, and after it fails, the just lived by faith. It never could give either righteousness or life. The Galatians had both, by faith in Christ.

In practice the law is powerless through the flesh. But grace, working through faith, can overfill the law's demands by ignoring its commands and curses.

THE DIFFERENT EVANGELS

In Galatians 2:7,8 Paul distinguishes his evangel from that given to Peter by the terms, "evangel of the Uncircumcision" and that "of the Circumcision."

Salvation, as seen in God's dealings with the Circumcision, *differs radically* from that which graces us who believe in the present secret administration. What is needed is an intelligent grasp of the *underlying purpose* of each, so that we cannot help keeping them distinct. This alone will enable us to enjoy the transcendent grace which is ours in Christ Jesus. Then we will never distort it by those ingredients which characterize the evangel of the Circumcision, as is almost universally done in Christendom today.

Let him be anathema! (Gal.1:8-9). How solemn are these words! We usually ignore them with the thought that they cannot possibly apply to us. Yet the appalling fact is that, with few exceptions, the beloved saints of God both believe and preach a *different* evangel, which is not another, and do not even realize it. Unlike the Galatians, they have not been transferred *swiftly*, but very slowly, away from the grace of Christ. Indeed, the most of them have not changed, for they have never known it. Alas! A few who once seemed to enjoy His grace have suddenly turned from it, as did the Galatians. May God make His grace abound in their behalf!

Israel's salvation is a great *national* demonstration, in which that people as a unit are segregated to show what is in humanity. God deals with them in the *flesh*, and under *law*, and under a *covenant*, with a gradually increasing admixture of grace and faith. *The prime object of this prolonged and varied demonstration is not their salvation, but to show beyond question that mankind, even under the most favorable conditions, is utterly lost without God.* Their testings prove conclusively that there is *nothing good in the flesh*. Their trial shows that men *cannot observe a law*. The tryout makes it clear that they are *incapable of keeping a covenant*. Works are of no avail in salvation. *Man's failure in this great demonstration is of the greatest value to the race and the universe.* Until we see this, we are inclined to question its worth, and charge God with failure, and to repeat the experiment in our own experience, only to involve ourselves in defeat, and in the disillusionment which is bound to follow.

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

WORKS AND FAITH

There are really only two means of salvation in the eons, *works* and *faith*. Israel is the chosen example to expose the *futility* of works, even when flavored with faith. Not knowing God, or acknowledging His deity, Christendom is inevitably drawn away by self-confidence into the sphere of works, and seeks to justify this course by appealing to that part of the Bible which belongs to Israel, where works have a place. The continual confusion and conflict on this subject will never be settled until it is seen that both sides have support "in the Bible," when all of it is applied indiscriminately to all, when it is not correctly cut. But when we realize that God uses works in Israel in order to demonstrate their *futility*, then we are more than ever satisfied to leave salvation to the Saviour, and to repudiate the false foundation of our own deeds.

DO AND LIVE *vs.* LIVE AND DO

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

live and do. We work because we *are* saved, not because we want to save *ourselves*.

WHY THESE TWO EVANGELS

Why are there two evangels? Were the object of both merely to rescue the sinner from a terrible doom, then one should suffice. But when we see that one evangel is part of God's great demonstration of the futility and failure of the flesh, hence must be based on flesh, and the other acknowledges the result of this demonstration, hence is based on spirit, then we see that they are nearly as wide apart as the poles. With such totally divergent objects in view they cannot help but differ radically, and any mixture is bound to be confusing and contradictory.

WITH CHRIST CRUCIFIED

Galatians 2:20 is a marvelous passage which sets forth great and distinctive truth for today: "With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ." Notice that this reads somewhat differently from the AV. It is a beautiful example of emphasis. *Christ* has the emphatic position. It begins with Christ and ends with Christ. We are given the least emphatic place, together with a negative. The very form of this passage teaches us the truth which it sets forth.

We are not overly much concerned about the personalities of the two thieves and two malefactors. The whole point lies in the fact that they were crucified *with Christ*, at the same time and place with Him. That is the great point we ought to press today—crucifixion *with* Him. In them we see what we were in God's sight. He would put us there if we had our deserts. The point here is that we also deserve, not simply death, but a *shameful* death, and that ignominious end is pictured for us by these sinners who were crucified together with Him.

What kind of characters were they? Most of us would

not like to be associated with them. But, thank God, we are! Because, unless we can see ourselves in their place, suffering the same shameful death that He suffered, until we can see that, we can never enter fully into the great truths that are for the Uncircumcision.

Later in the epistle, the apostle shows the practical side: Now those of Christ Jesus *crucify* the flesh together with its passions and lusts (Gal.5:24). Notice that! God is demonstrating what men amount to in the flesh, so, at the very beginning of the truth for the Uncircumcision, Paul shows the foundation of it, the crucifixion of the flesh. Then again, in Galatians 6:12, "Whoever are wanting to put on a fair face in the flesh, these are compelling you to circumcise, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ Jesus." Ever so many of the Lord's people are included in this category. But Paul says: "Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal.6:14).

You see, it is not the *death* of Christ merely, for salvation, but the *cross* of Christ for humiliation. So few make the distinction, but there is a tremendous difference. It is the *shameful* death. *The end of the flesh is in view here.* All the attempts to be spiritual Israel, to associate ourselves with the physical features of the evangel of the Circumcision, all that is in connection with the flesh and is finished in our case. Alas, how few indeed see the truth that we have been crucified with Christ.

Crucifixion applies not only to us, but also to the whole world. If that truth were owned today, it would change the entire face of this earth. If the so-called Christian nations acknowledged that the world has been crucified, practically everything they are doing today would be stopped, and they would do the opposite. If we realized what is written here concerning the world, it would change everything for us and give us peace.

A. E. Knoch

VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITE

“SAMUEL SUMMONED THE PEOPLE TO YAHWEH at Mizpah and said to the sons of Israel, Thus speaks Yahweh Elohim of Israel: *I* brought Israel up out of Egypt and rescued you from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you. Yet *you* have today rejected your Elohim Who has been bringing salvation to you from all your evils¹ and your distresses. But you said, No, for you should set up a king over us. Now station yourselves before Yahweh by your tribes and by your thousands.²

“When Samuel brought near all the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin was selected by lot. When he brought near the tribe of Benjamin by its families, the Matrite family was selected. When he brought near the Matrite family by masters, Saul, son of Kish, was selected. Yet when they sought him, he was not found. Then they asked Yahweh again, Has the man come here yet? Yahweh replied, Behold, he is hiding among the baggage. So they ran and took him from there. Then he stationed himself in the midst of the people; from his shoulders upward, he was taller than any of the people. Now Samuel said to all the people, Do you see whom Yahweh has chosen? Indeed, there is no one like him among all the people. At that all the people shouted, saying, Long live the king!” (1 Sam.10:17-24).

SAUL ELECTED KING

Samuel emphasized that Yahweh had rescued Israel

1. i.e. calamities.

2. i.e., clans or families.

not only from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt (*cf* Ex. 20:2; Deut.5:6), but also from all the enemies who had oppressed Israel in the past. And Samuel added that Elohim had brought salvation from all calamities and distresses. Then Samuel repeated his reproach: "Yet *you* have today rejected your Elohim." Earlier, Yahweh had assured Samuel, saying, "It is Me Whom they have rejected from being *King* over them." And Yahweh had told Samuel that this rejection was just another evil deed, in addition to all the deeds that they had done to Him since the exodus from Egypt (*cf* 1 Sam.8:7,8).

Yet the Israelites were not prohibited from having a monarchy as long as they observed the divine statute that their king must be a man whom Yahweh shall choose from among their brothers (*cf* Deut.17:15). So Samuel led Israel in the casting of lots in order to establish publicly whom Yahweh had chosen. We remember that lots had decided the allocation of the land of Canaan to the tribes (*cf* Joshua 18:10).³

"When Samuel brought near all the tribes of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin was selected by lot." It was a process of elimination from the nation to the tribe, to the clan or family, until Saul was finally designated Yahweh's choice. Thus the secret anointing of Saul by Samuel was now publicly confirmed.

Meanwhile Saul had been kept completely in the background; when the people sought him, he could not be found. So they asked Yahweh through Samuel: "Has the man come here yet?" And Yahweh replied: "Behold, he is hiding among the baggage."

When Saul was brought into the midst of the people, everyone was struck by his physical appearance; "from his shoulders upward, he was taller than any of the people." Samuel then presented him as the one whom Yahweh had

3. The last recorded use of the lot in Scripture is in Acts 1:26.

chosen, and the people accepted Saul with enthusiasm. They swore their allegiance, shouting: "Long live the king!"

SAUL WENT TO HIS HOME

"Samuel spoke to the people about the customary rights of the kingship; he wrote them in a scroll and left it before Yahweh. Then Samuel dismissed all the people, each man to his home. Saul too went to his home at Gibeah; and going with him were sons of valor whose heart Elohim had touched. But some sons of worthlessness said, How shall this one save us? So they despised him and did not bring any present to him" (1 Sam.10:25-27).

This was the end of Samuel's function as the last judge. Yet now, as the prophet of Yahweh, he laid down the stipulations that should ensure a constitutional monarchy.

When Samuel dismissed the people, Saul went to his home at Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men *whose heart Elohim had touched*. They were like the one described in Psalm 112 (verses 3,7,8):

*Wealth and riches are in his house,
And his righteousness is standing into the future . . .
He shall not fear an evil report;
His heart is established, trusting in Yahweh.
His heart is stalwart; he shall not fear.*

Yet there were others who despised Saul and did not bring any present to him. They are described as "sons of worthlessness," i.e., some of them were not worthy of respect, and others were socially marginal, like David's 400 men: "every man under constraint, every man who had a creditor, and every man bitter of soul" (1 Sam.22:2).

NO SAVIOUR FOR US?

The Hebrew text of 1 Samuel 10:27 ends with the short phrase, "Yet he was silent." Qumran has here: "Yet it was about a month later." The Qumran paragraph preced-

ing this short sentence (and missing in the Hebrew text) reads as follows:

"As for Nahash king of the sons of Ammon, he had oppressed the sons of Gad and Reuben unyieldingly. He had gouged out all their right eyes, thus allowing Israel no saviour. No one remained among the sons of Israel in Transjordan of whom Nahash king of the sons of Ammon had not gouged out every right eye. But 7,000 men had fled before the sons of Ammon and had come to Jabesh-gilead."

The Hebrew text of 1 Samuel 11:1-3 reports the siege of this city: "[Yet it was about a month later;] then Nahash the Ammonite marched up and encamped against Jabesh-gilead. All the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, Contract a covenant with us, and we shall serve you. But Nahash the Ammonite replied to them, I shall contract a covenant with you on this condition, that all your right eyes are gouged out; *I will make this a reproach for all Israel*. The elders of Jabesh said to him, Hold back from us for seven days, and let us send messengers throughout the whole territory of Israel; should there be no saviour for us, then we will come forth to you."

The envoys from Jabesh reported the harsh terms of this proposed covenant to every major city in Israel, and they may have emphasized that these terms were designed to bring *disgrace on Israel*. "When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these events in the ears of the people, then all the people lifted up their voice and lamented. Now Saul came in from the field, following the herd of cattle. And Saul asked, What ails the people that they should lament? So they related to him the message of the men of Jabesh" (1 Sam. 11:1-5).

The Ammonite in southern Transjordan were related to Israel (*cf* Gen.19:38). When Moses led his people to Transjordan, Yahweh spoke to him, saying, "You will come near to the forefront of the sons of Ammon. Do not dis-

treass them and do not stir yourself up against them, for I shall not give any of the country of the sons of Ammon to you as a tenancy, since I gave it to the sons of Lot as a tenancy" (Deut.2:19).

Yet the Ammonites were aggressive (Judges 3:13; 11:4); they claimed that the east bank of the Jordan belonged to them (Judges 11:13). Though they were a small state, they had oppressed the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben in northern Transjordan. Nahash, the Ammonite king, had gouged out all their right eyes, thus incapacitating them from taking aim in battle. If the Israelite city of Jabesh-gilead in the north had fallen to the Ammonite, Israel could well have lost all of Transjordan.

SAUL'S VICTORY OVER THE AMMONITE

The atrocities against the sons of Gad and Reuben provided just the opportunity Saul needed to take the initiative, and to prove to himself as well as to all Israel that he could save Jabesh-gilead from falling into the hands of king Nahash.

"The spirit of Elohim prospered over Saul when he heard these words; and his anger was exceedingly hot. He took a team of oxen, cut them in pieces and sent them throughout the whole territory of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, Should anyone not come forth following Saul and following Samuel, thus shall be done to his oxen! Then the awe of Yahweh fell on the people, and they came forth as one man. When he mustered them at Bezek, there were 300 contingents of the sons of Israel and 30 contingents of the sons of Judah" (1 Sam.11:6-8).

With his dramatic and symbolic action Saul imitated a similar one that had occurred in Gibeah, his home town, where a Levite had spent a night with his concubine (Judges 19:22-28). When sons of decadence had abused her so that she died, he cut her into twelve pieces which he sent throughout the territory of Israel (19:29).

The spirit of Elohim prospered over Saul and transformed him into a real leader and commander of men, when he threatened to slaughter the oxen of anyone who would fail to respond to his call to arms. Furthermore, the awe of Yahweh fell on the people when they were asked to follow Saul and to follow Samuel whom Saul expected to accompany him into the battle against the Ammonite.

All the tribes sent their fighting men to Bezek, on the left side of the Jordan, about ten miles away from Jabesh-gilead in Transjordan. Each clan had sent its contingent, we may assume, between five and fifteen men per unit. So Saul may have mustered between 1,500 and 4,500 men.

"He said to the messengers who had come, Thus shall you speak to the men of Jabesh-gilead: Tomorrow victory shall be yours when the sun is brightly warm. When the messengers came and told this to the men of Jabesh, they rejoiced. So the men of Jabesh said to Nahash the Ammonite, Tomorrow we shall come forth to you, and you may do to us just as it seems good in your eyes" (1 Sam.11:9,10).

On the morrow Saul divided his army into three groups for a surprise attack at dawn; "they advanced into the midst of the [enemy] camp during the morning vigil and smote the sons of Ammon until the day was brightly warm" (cf 11:11).

SAUL'S KINGSHIP RENEWED

Saul's generous treatment of his earlier critics is recorded in verses 12 and 13. "Then the people asked Samuel, Who was it who said, *Saul* shall not reign over us! Give us these men, and we shall put them to death. Yet Saul replied, No man shall be put to death on this day! For today Yahweh has given a victory⁴ in Israel."

OUT OF EGYPT

Twice Samuel quoted Yahweh as saying: "I brought them

4. victory, or salvation (the same word in Hebrew).

up from Egypt [or: out of Egypt]"; and once Samuel himself emphasized with reference to Yahweh: "Who brought *your fathers* up from the country of *Egypt*" (1 Sam.8:8; 10:18; 12:6). The apostle Paul used a similar approach when he spoke in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia (*cf* Acts 13:13-15).

Paul said: "The God of this people Israel chooses *our fathers*, and exalts the people in the sojourn in the land of *Egypt*, and with a high arm He led them *out of it* . . . And, pulling down seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributes their land by lot (about four hundred and fifty years). And after this He gives judges till Samuel the prophet. And thence they request a king, and God gives them Saul, son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, forty years. And deposing him, He rouses David for their king, to whom He said also, in testifying, I found David, of Jesse, a man according to My heart, who will be doing all My will.—From this one's seed, God, according to the promise, led to Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (Acts 13:17-23). H.H.R.

(*To be continued*)

WEEKEND GATHERINGS

Fellowship Gatherings beginning on Friday evenings and continuing over the weekends are scheduled in Baldwin, Michigan on August 4-6 and September 29-October 1 (Pastor Lloyd Hibberd, Box 84, Baldwin MI 49304); and in Fairview, South Carolina on October 20-22 (Pastor Rick Farwell, 131 Sundance Rd., Wagener SC 29164).

FROM THE PHILIPPINES

For many years Pastor Isidro Oguimas has heralded the message of God's grace in the Philippine Islands. Recently he wrote, "We are glad to inform you that upon the blessings of our Almighty God the work He entrusted to us is now growing. We have our scheduled activities such as home Bible studies, pioneering works and visitations, conducting fellowship meetings." Let us continue to pray for this effort and that of others throughout the world who are making the evangel known.

THERE WAS A MAN

(Job 1:1-5)

There was a man in the country of Uz (Job 1:1a).

MAN is the first and emphatic word in this book. This shows that its contents are racial, and its lesson is for all of Adam's descendants. Although included in the sacred literature of Israel, it is not at all limited to that nation, which had not yet appeared upon the scene. This is further affirmed by the place in which he lived. Though on the fringe of the land later given to Israel, it is never connected with any tribe. The name Uz in Hebrew denotes *FIX* or *counsel*, so is most suggestive of these deliberations which were held in it.

Job was his name (Job 1:1b).

"Job" is the common Hebrew word for *enemy*. It is so rendered on three occasions in the book itself (Job.13:24; 27:7; 33:10). It reminds us of the time when God put *enmity* between the serpent and the first woman and her seed. Here it seems to indicate the enmity toward God which even Job harbors because he thinks he is unjustly afflicted by the Deity. Since death came in, this enmity is inherent in the human race. Just as in Eden, after the offence, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of their God, so their descendants are estranged and keep themselves at a distance from Him.

This man was flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil (Job 1:1c).

The excellence of Job's character is heavily stressed, not only by piling up words and phrases, but by its prominent position at the beginning of the book. It should never be

overlooked in the interpretation, especially as it is assailed at great length by Job's associates. *Manward*, Job's faithfulness and flawlessness and uprightness leave little to be desired. But *Godward* Job's fear must ripen into friendship. His withdrawal from evil hints at a lack of experience with evil. For this he cannot be condemned, yet it is the object of the book to show how God uses evil to perfect his character in its Godward deficiency.

Seven sons and three daughters were born to him, and his acquisitions came to be seven thousand small cattle, three thousand camels, five hundred pair of oxen and five hundred jennies, besides very many servants, so that this man came to be the greatest of all the sons of the East (Job 1:2,3).

Not only was Job personally a man of many virtues, but he seems to have been abundantly rewarded for them, for his family had increased, and his prosperity seems to have exceeded that of anyone in his part of the country. This is all of fundamental importance, because this is supposed to be God's regular method of dealing with mankind by religionists, even such as use the Bible. Their slogan is: Be good and prosper. If you believe, God will guard you from all evil. It is a prime purpose of the book of Job to correct such philosophies; hence we must first be made to realize that, according to the religion of our day, he would be the last man on earth to be "punished" with evil by God.

Now his sons would go and hold a feast, each in his house on his day, and they would send and call to their three sisters to eat and drink with them. And it came to be when the feast days were concluded, that Job would send and have them hallowed. He would rise early in the morning and offer up ascent offerings in number as them all. For Job would say, Perhaps my sons have sinned and have scorned Elohim in their heart. Thus Job was doing for all these days (Job 1:4,5).

More than all this, Job was a seriously religious man. He

acknowledged God, not only in his own ways, but in those of his descendants. Very few carry their religion to such a length today. Perhaps some would insist on making atonement for the actual misdeeds of their offspring, but how many are concerned, not only about their doings manward, but their *thoughts Godward*? From the religious viewpoint Job did everything possible to avoid misfortune from man and retribution from God. He forestalled the *possibility* of God's anger himself, not by any pious deeds of his own, but by *sacrifices* acceptable to God. Surely, some would say, no evil can possibly overtake him from above!

A. E. Knoch



JOB OF UZ

The geographical location is "the country of Uz," concerning which Scripture offers positive information. The thirty-sixth chapter of Genesis is a record of

The generations of Esau in Canaan (1-8)

The generations of Esau in the hill country of Seir (9-14)

The sheiks of Seir the Horite (20-30)

The kings that reigned in Edom, before a king reigned over the sons of Israel (31-43).

From this document we learn that the sons and grandsons of Esau and the sons and grandsons of Seir the Horite (the original inhabitants of Idumea) became sheiks of Edom, "according to their dwelling places in the country of their holding" (Gen. 36:43). The various districts of the hill country of Seir were named after their sheiks. Thus "the Temanite country" (Gen. 36:34) was named after sheik Teman, grandson of Edom (Gen. 36:15). The "country of Uz" took its name from Uz, a grandson of Seir the

Horite (Gen.36:28). The weeping prophet exclaims: "Be elated and rejoice, daughter of Edom, you who are dwelling in the country of Uz" (Lam. 4:21). It may be difficult to determine the exact location of the country of Uz, but it is certain that it was a district in Idumea.

The foregoing is confirmed by the statement that Job was the greatest of "all the sons of the East" (Job 1:3). An examination of this title may assist us in fixing the locality of Uz. Genesis 29:1 declares that Jacob, after crossing the Jordan, came into the country of the sons of the East; this expression occurs four times in Judges (6:3,33; 7:12; 8:10) and refers to the trans-Jordan Amalekite and Midianite hordes; we meet it again in the following prophecies: In Isaiah 11:14, where they are associated with Edom and Ammon; in Jeremiah 49:28, where the sons of the East are identified with Kedar, second son of Ishmael; and lastly, in Ezekiel 25:4-10, the Ammorites and Moabites are associated with the sons of the East. Clearly therefore, the Edomites are among the sons of the East, and we have seen that the daughter of Edom dwelt in the land of Uz. From 1 Kings 4:30 we learn that they were renowned for wisdom.

As for the characters presented: Job, a dweller of the land of Uz and greatest of the sons of the East, was an Edomite; Eliphaz is a Temanite, a descendant of Teman, grandson of Esau (Gen.36:15), or native of Tema, a city of Edom (Gen.36:34; Amos 1:12); Elihu is a Buzite; Buz belongs to Edom, since it is mentioned in company with Tema and Dedan (Jer.25:23). Bildad is a Shuhite; Shua or Shoa, in Ezekiel 23:23, is associated with Koa, both belonging to tribes bordering on Chaldea. Zophar is a Naamathite, a descendant of Naamah, a name connected with Ammon (1 Kings 14:21-31).

In the light of the foregoing facts the appendix to Job in the Septuagint, taken from the Syrian version, seems to hand down valuable information founded on fact. This subscript identifies Job with Jobab, the second of the kings

of Edom (Gen.36:33) who was the great-grandson of Esau (Gen.36:13), by his wife, a native of Bozrah.

The kingly character ascribed to Job is consistent with several passages throughout the book.

Job 3:13-15. If Job had not been of princely rank he could not have claimed burial with kings and counselors of the earth who "lie in state, each man in his own house" (Isa.14:18).

Job 29:7. This verse pictures Job going forth to the seat of justice in the city gate, and to the seat in the broad place where business was dispatched. In the ancient times the administration of justice was a kingly function.

Job 29:9-10. His going forth to the seat of justice is marked by exhibitions of profound respect. Unless Job had been of kingly rank princes would not have refrained from speaking in his presence, nor would nobles have kept silence.

Job 29:25. Here Job actually states that he sat as chief, and tabernacled as a "king" among his troops.

According to the Septuagint the three friends were of rank and position equal to that of Job himself. Eliphaz is described as king of the Thaimanaeans; Bildad, as tyrant of the Sauchaeans; and Zophar, as king of the Mimaeans; Job himself being described as king of the Austiae, or Aestiae.

V. Gelesnoff



THE SONS OF THE EAST

The extraordinary character of the matter in the book of Job suggests that there are equally special reasons why the record is, in the main, concerned with a person belonging to peoples other than chosen Israel. The book does not even contribute, in any direct sense, material which advances the ways of Yahweh in regard to Israel.

Not only was Job not of Israel, but, if as seems likely, he

was of Esau, then his forebears had been deliberately set aside in the divine counsels, except in a most secondary sense. The associates of Job also belonged to peoples who later seem to be equally removed by Yahweh from connection with Israel. This is a most suggestive matter, not to be lightly turned aside.

The scenes are laid in Edom. The details given in Genesis concerning Esau in the district around Seir provide a helpful background for the book. The problem concerning the ways of God is resolved once for all. He works His will among all peoples, not merely the chosen people.

The expression "the sons of the East" was a somewhat wide designation including various peoples, even referring to some in the Semitic line whose descent was not through Jacob. The region indicated by the term was also indefinite and would seem to vary in accord with the context of the passage. Jacob passed through the area in his journey from Beersheba to Charen (Gen.29:1). Later the region is prominent in the book of Judges, being used for people other than the Amalekites and Midianites. Job and his associates were connected or classed with people under this term, "sons of the East." Job in particular was of the land of Uz, which appears to be later termed Idumea, south and eastward of what became the land of Israel.

It was in this district that Yahweh appeared to Moses, commissioning him to bring His people, Israel, out of Egypt. In the Scriptures there are several references to Moses' experiences in Midian (*cf* Ex.2:15-4:19) as the starting point in bringing Israel out of Egypt. In these passages it seems to be implied that the Deity dwelt in this area, as, for instance, in Habakkuk 3:3, where we read:

Eloah is coming from Teman,

And the Holy One from mount Paran.

These words recall the revelation of Yahweh to Moses in Midian as well as the later revelations to Israel in the wilderness (see also Deut.33:2). When Israel was in Egypt, out of

touch with Yahweh, it appears that Yahweh's presence was adjacent to Egypt in this wilderness district from Teman to Paran, south of Judah, including even Sinai. There it was that Moses met Yahweh, and so also it was in this district that a revelation from God was given to Job, a counterpart to the later giving of the law.

What we are leading up to is this: That to a descendant of Abram, other than through Jacob, was given an experience that reveals the Deity beyond (but still including) the factors of fear and reverence. These are but part of the larger matter of subjection. The action of the book of Job shows that the ways of Yahweh have a consummation centered fully in His own glory. No one should question His ways, for they will reveal His compassion and His pity, and thus uncover His love. Love is the true factor of subjection.

This revelation to Job is made in such a manner that it does not invalidate that which Yahweh had already begun in Abram. The land of Midian was used to shelter the great leader, Moses, and therein to acquaint him with his special appointment in the ways of Yahweh. Furthermore, eventually all the nations and families of the earth will be embraced in the glory which was inaugurated in Abram.

To Job, through the avenue of his experience, Yahweh imparted the understanding that the fear of God can be a weak and inefficient emotion, having little depth for one's spirit. It is but a start, not to be despised in the least, for in it there is wisdom, yet there is a great need that it be elevated and added to by acquaintance with the fuller character of Yahweh. Such knowledge will reveal the surpassingly glorious ultimate of His love. To this all the ways of Yahweh are leading; they are but stages toward our grasp of Him Whose initial glory we perceive in creation.

JOB IS UPRIGHT, YET AN ENEMY

We learn from the book that Yahweh could and did divert the course of Job's life. He brought the life of Job to an

issue which not only gave blessing, but also brought him to a deeper and more definite understanding and appreciation of Yahweh.

To begin with, Yahweh spoke of Job in excellent terms, for he was most moral, dutiful and religious. Yet, at heart, Job did not know El, nor yet perceive His ways. During his sufferings Job came to regard God as his enemy (*cf* 13:24; 33:10). In actuality, Job was an enemy of the ways of God, as his name itself indicates.

Job's lack was not in his relation to his fellow humans; that was excellent, and to this Yahweh testified. But in his perception of God and of His ways, Job had much to learn. He feared Elohim and withdrew from all evil. Consequently what Yahweh brought on Job was not due to any misconduct of Job's part. But beyond the profound respect and esteem for Elohim, the element of love for Him was small.

By the dealings and ways of God, Job was led to perceive and understand the reality of disinterested love. The book of Job shows the fact and the reality of God's compassion and pity. A righteous man is made to utter darkening counsel and to make declarations failing in knowledge, which impeach the ways of Yahweh. Yet the issue, in the ways of God, is blessing for the creature and glory to God. Thus evil is used to make possible the realizing of real glory.

But not only so, in presenting this lesson of God's ways, the book gives us a picture of God's Son, Who truly was righteous in every way, yet Who suffered as the sinner in the ways of His God and Father.

For us in our own times, this book points dramatically to God's ways which are in Christ Jesus. The grace which is in the evangel is such that our Father leads us to love Him, not for His gifts, great and glorious as they are, but for Himself. Then truly will it be that love responds to love. This is the ultimate to which the whole creation will come.

E. H. Clayton

"Ideally Has He Done"

"EPHPHATHA"

"AND they are bringing to Him a deaf stammerer, and they are entreating Him that He may place His hand on him. And getting him away from the throng privately, He thrusts His fingers into his ears, and, spitting, touches his tongue. And, looking up into heaven, He groans, and is saying to him, 'Ephphatha,' which is, 'Be opened up.' And immediately, opened up was his hearing, and straightway was loosed the bond of his tongue, and he spoke correctly. And He cautions them that they may be telling no one, yet, as much as He cautions them, they rather heralded it more exceedingly. And they were superexceedingly astonished, saying, 'Ideally has He done all! The deaf is He making to be hearing, as well as the dumb to be speaking'" (Mark 7:32-37).

Helen Keller (1880-1968), a United States author and lecturer, was both deaf and blind from infancy. She was taught to read, write and speak, and she became noted for her work on behalf of the handicapped. She was once asked whether she felt the loss of sight was worse than the loss of hearing. This was her reply:

"My dear, you can touch a rose, and you can smell it. You do not have to see or hear it to know it. but, not to hear a fellow human being's voice is the most grievous deprivation of all."

This remark may increase our appreciation for the glory of our Lord's achievement when He opens ears that are closed. "Ideally has He done!"

SPEAKING IN THE COMMON TONGUE

There are a few occasions in Scriptures when words from the ancient language of Aramaic, which was the common tongue spoken in Judah in the Lord's day, are used. Each time, the words are both transliterated and translated into Greek. These occasions are so rare that we may discern a vital significance. Three instances are submitted for our present consideration:

First, the anguished, orphan cry of our Lord at Golgotha: "*Eloi! Eloi! Lema sabachthani?*" (Mark 15:34).

Second, He summoned the deceased daughter of Jairus, one of the chiefs of the synagogue: "Talitha, coumi!" (Mark 5:41).

Finally, His healing of the deaf stammerer by the sea of Galilee within the boundaries of the league of ten cities, known as the Decapolis: Here, His command is "Ephphatha!" (Mark 7:34).

WHY?

It is impossible to consider the utter desolation of our Lord's words on that hideous cross without being engulfed in spirit with horror and remorse.

"God draws the veil of darkness over the scene during the awful hours in which He abandoned His Son. Then it was that He was accursed (*cf* Deut.21:23; Gal.3:13). Then it was that it pleased Yahweh to bruise Him, to put Him to grief, to make His soul a trespass offering (Isa.53:10). Here is a holy of holies into which we dare not come but with bowed hearts and unshod feet. It was the moral crisis of universal history, the grand, long-heralded event that will make this earth the shrine of all creation."¹

We cannot but be impressed by the fact that these words, of all those He uttered at the cross, are preserved in His childhood tongue.

1. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.85.

In what grievous strait He framed that plea
With speech employed by His mother's knee.

MAIDEN, ROUSE!

"And lo! coming is one of the chiefs of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and, perceiving Him, he is falling at His feet. And he is entreating Him much, saying that 'My little daughter is having her last gasp! . . . Coming, Thou mayest be placing Thy hands on her, that she may be saved and should be living'" (Mark 5:22,23).

During the course of responding to this plea our Lord is delayed as, through just touching His garment, a woman who had hemorrhaged twelve years was immediately healed. Even as He blessed this woman, some came from the chief of the synagogue with the sad news that the little lass had died. "Why are you still bothering the Teacher?" they declared. "Yet Jesus immediately, disregarding the word spoken, is saying to the chief of the synagogue, 'Do not fear! Only believe!'" (Mark 5:25-36).

Then we read, "And He does not let anyone follow together with Him except Peter and James and John, the brother of James. And they are coming into the house of the chief of the synagogue, and He is beholding a tumult, and they are lamenting much and screaming. And entering, He is saying to them, 'Why are you making a tumult and lamenting? The little girl did not die, but is drowsing.' And they ridiculed Him. Yet He, ejecting them all, is taking along the father of the little girl and the mother and those with Him, and He is going in where the little girl was lying. And, holding the hand of the little girl, He is saying to her 'Talitha coumi!' (which is being construed, 'Maiden, I am saying to you, rouse!'). And straightway the maiden rose and walked about, for she was almost twelve years old. And they were beside themselves, straightway, with great amazement. And He cautions them much that

no one may be knowing of this. And He told them to give her something to eat" (Mark 5:37-43).

Here was a little girl, who because of her youth, probably did not understand Greek. Hence the Lord spoke in her native tongue, and the message was heard.

"There is a sharp contrast between these two miracles in all their details, all of which are suggestive of the differences between the salvation which comes to the faithful before His future advent and that which He will bring with Him when He comes.

In one case there was diffident yet insistent faith, and the salvation is definitely founded on it. In the other, the little girl was beyond believing, and her father's faith was feeble, while the attendants were plainly dubious. In the former the woman pressed through the throng to reach Him. She comes to Christ. In the latter He goes to the little girl. Christ comes to her. In the former the healing is instantaneous. Such was the salvation by faith through His blood which His disciples enjoyed even though the kingdom did not come. In the latter the blessing was delayed until His arrival. Such will be the case when Christ comes again to restore all that the prophets have foretold."²

BE OPENED UP!

As in the above circumstances, there are, not one, but two miracles connected with the healing of the deaf stammerer. First, our Lord came into contact with a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician woman, who sought help for her daughter. Exhibiting the grace in which we rejoice, He lovingly acceded to her request (Mark 7:24-30). In association with this, the revelations concerning the manner in which our Lord healed the deaf stammerer are very profound.

"The meeting with the Greek woman of Syro-Phoeni-

2. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.65.

cia suggests a phase of kingdom service for which Israel, in our Lord's day, was utterly incapable. In Yahweh's day the Lord's word will go forth from Jerusalem. The evangel will be proclaimed in every corner of the earth. The knowledge of Yahweh will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. It will be the greatest missionary program the earth has ever seen, and the first to be fully successful.

"But the nation of Israel in our Lord's day was no more fitted to proclaim the evangel than a deaf-mute. They did not hear Him themselves, and they could not proclaim His message because they could not hear. This is the setting which suggests itself when they bring the Lord a deaf-mute, and He heals him. The peculiar method of healing has remained a mystery to theologians, who are at a loss why He should not heal him with a word, instead of putting His fingers in his ears and touching his tongue. Some have suggested that saliva is a healing agent! But the saliva was not put on his tongue. Little significance can be gathered from His actions unless we interpret their symbolism along rational lines.

"There are three elements in their preparation for the millennial ministry: His works, His words, His suffering. His works will force themselves on their attention. This is signified by His thrusting His fingers in the deaf man's ears. His words are signified by the saliva which came out of His mouth, and, accompanied by the touching of his tongue, enable them to talk. He will put His words in their mouths. His groans are the signs of His sufferings. Through them Israel will be saved. And the unrestrainable proclamation was but a small rehearsal of that glad day when the glad tidings will be heard in every land. The Jews are the great missionary nation. They are now being schooled in the great university of experience for the future evangelization of the world. They are inured to every climate, familiar with every language, at home, and in every coun-

try. Sustained by authority of the King of kings, they will carry out the first successful world missionary movement.”³

OPENED EARS

The precious gift of hearing and understanding the speech of another was testified to by Helen Keller. A deaf child does not know that things have names but knows the desire to exchange ideas. When this is achieved through sign language, there is not only a great victory but also a real appreciation of the gift of communicating. This may be indicated by the following poem by Willard J. Madsen, entitled “You Have to be Deaf to Understand”:

“What is it like to comprehend
Some nimble fingers that paint the scene,
And make you smile and feel serene
With the spoken word of the moving hand
That makes you part of the world at large?
You have to be deaf to understand!
What is it like to ‘hear’ a hand?
You have to be deaf to understand!”

For many centuries the word of God was not made available to the nations outside Israel. But when Paul was commissioned to bring the evangel to them, many ears were opened, as the apostle declared in Rome: “Let it be known to you, then, that to the nations was dispatched this salvation of God, *and they will hear*” (Acts 28:28).

Then also, what genuine joy and praise will be known and deeply felt in Israel in that day when the Lord’s words will be understood by opened ears and responsive hearts! And more than this, what glory and exultation will permeate the entire universe when every deafened ear will hear and comprehend the message of God’s love in Christ Jesus!

Donald Fielding

3. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.70.

THE PURPOSE OF GOD REMAINS

GOD is all-powerful, He is all-wise, and, as we have emphasized in these articles, He is all-faithful. His faithfulness goes beyond any steadfastness of believing that can be seen within humanity where even Abraham failed in certain respects. With us, all is relative, but the faithfulness of God is absolute.

To realize this we must take into account all the failures and evils of the world God has created. These must be temporary and serve His purpose. They cannot be ultimate roadblocks to His faithfulness. In no way may we think of God as one who salvages a portion of an original intention or who manages, against all odds, to achieve a part of what was desired. Even if, for some mysterious reason, God had intended beforehand to rescue only a select number of mankind, leaving the rest to everlasting contempt, this would reduce His faithfulness to arbitrariness and inexplicableness, separating it from those claims of power, goodness and love that fill His Word. In order to be all-faithful, God must not only carry out His declared purposes, but in doing so, achieve that which accords with all that He has revealed concerning Himself in His Word.

GOD AND ISRAEL

In these studies, we began with the question, "What has happened to Israel?" The answer we have given is "God is faithful." That is not an avoiding of the question. It is, rather, a focusing on Him Who operates all things, including all "happenings." If what we *see* appears to contradict what God has said, and this *seems* often, if not invariably,

the case, this does not mean that God has changed His mind. *What God has said is what shall be.*

The obstacles to the fulfillment of the many clear and specific promises to and concerning Israel are multitudinous. Citing Isaiah 65:2, Paul sums up the situation in Romans 10:21, with God's own declaration, "The whole day I spread out My hands to a stubborn and contradicting people." This is what we see.

But Paul writes also, "Thus all Israel shall be saved," which he associates with Isaiah 59:20,21, "Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them whenever I should be eliminating their sins" (Rom.11:26,27). This is that to which God is faithful.

We can examine historical records concerning the scattering of this nation throughout the world, follow closely the political developments in the Middle East, and consider the teachings of thoughtful and spiritually attuned brethren, but what is most needed in all points of controversy is a conviction that God fully honors His Word. "Now let God be true, yet every man a liar . . ." (Rom.3:4). The question of Israel's future can only be answered by what God has promised concerning them and by the reliability and strength of His faithfulness.

WHOSE ARE THE PROMISES

Romans 9 begins with Paul's personal feelings concerning what he *saw* in the situation round about him. His sorrow was great because, like himself before God showed him mercy (*cf* 1 Tim.1:13), his relatives according to the flesh wished to be anathema from Christ (Rom.9:1-3).^{*} These relatives were "Israelites, whose is the sonship and the glory

^{*}See the article "Anathema From Christ," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.72, pp.187-192.

and the covenants and the legislation and the divine service *and the promises . . .*" (v.4).

There is no separate term in Hebrew for the idea of "promise." The sense is expressed by the common verbs *say* and *speak*, or the noun *word* (derived from the verb *speak*). When one *speaks* of blessings for the future which are not evident in the present, it is a promise. The divine promises given to Israel are the words that God spoke concerning benefits that were as yet unrealized when they were spoken.

The following words of God concerning Israel are a few of the promises that may have been in Paul's mind when he wrote the ninth chapter of Romans:

Yahweh said to Jacob, "I am Yahweh Elohim of your father Abraham and the Elohim of Isaac. Do not fear! The land on which you are lying down, to you I shall give it and to your seed. And your seed will become like the soil of the land. You will breach forth westward and eastward, northward and southward. All the families of the ground will be blessed in you and in your seed. . . . I shall not forsake you until I should have done all that I have *spoken* to you" (Gen.28:13-15).

Yahweh spoke to David, through Nathan, saying, "I will provide a place for My people Israel; I will plant them so that they can tabernacle by themselves and shall no longer be disturbed Your house and your kingship will be authenticated before Me for the eon; your throne, it shall be established for the eon" (2 Sam.7:10,16).

Thus says Yahweh:

"I bring near My righteousness;
It shall not be far off,
And My salvation shall not delay;
And I will bestow salvation in Zion,
For Israel, My beauty" (Isa.46:13).

GOD'S WORD HAS NOT LAPSED

Some have claimed that the promises concerning Israel have been fulfilled, and others say they must be understood in purely "spiritual" terms. Without dismissing every argument given for these various theories (for, indeed, Scripture is appealed to in all these teachings), we nevertheless reply that God cannot be seen as faithful to these promises apart from an actual kingdom with a King of the seed of David sitting on a throne, in the entirety of the geographical area described, lasting for the duration indicated and granted to the actual people who received the promises. When Paul wrote, "And thus all Israel shall be saved," he spoke of something that would exactly and manifestly be carried out in every detail in accord with the promises given.

In Paul's day, and later after the destruction of Jerusalem, and for the long period that has followed, nothing that humanity has *seen* can truly correspond with what God had spoken concerning Israel. What we have seen could only imply that the word of God to Israel has lapsed. That was certainly the conclusion some had come to when Paul wrote Romans, for otherwise there was no need to write that "it is not such as the word of God has lapsed" (Rom.9:6). How, then, is it that what we see appears to belie what God has said?

THE PURPOSE OF GOD

What we see is that "not all out of Israel, these are Israel" (Rom.9:7). But this does not mean that God will not fulfill His word of blessing for all the descendants of Israel. To understand this, we must follow Paul in Romans 9 and focus our attention on what God is doing regarding Israel, rather than on the unfaithfulness of the nation. That not all out of Israel are presently reckoned as Israel is due to the purpose and the choice and the calling of God: "... that

the purpose of God may be *remaining* as a choice, not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling . . ." (Rom.9:11).

God carries out His purpose in His own way. Paul sorrowed over the direction his relatives were taking in his day. There were so few who were displaying the qualities represented by the name Israel. Most were not living as children of the promise. There can be only one explanation: *It is of God*; it is of the One Who is calling.

In our own times there is even less evidence of an Israel which accords with the promises. Yet we believe that God is faithful despite what we see around us, and faithful in His own manner, in accord with His wisdom and purpose.

DEPTHS OF DIVINE WISDOM

This is what is illustrated in the examples given starting with Romans 9:7. God's promises to Abraham and Isaac were fulfilled as God Himself purposed them to be fulfilled. We can look back now and see why Isaac and not Ishmael was the promised son. The one represented human efforts to help God out, while the other represented fully the divine achievement. The lesson is similar regarding God's choice of Jacob over Esau. In His wisdom (which is certainly not human wisdom) God chooses that which is not, so that His glory may be manifested.

But the parallel of Ishmael and Esau with those out of Israel who are wishing to be anathema from Christ does not lie in the fact that Ishmael and Esau were not children of the promise. This was certainly true of Ishmael and Esau, and it is also true that the faithless among Israel are not showing themselves as children of the promise. Nevertheless, this is not the point of Romans 9:7-13. The parallel Paul intends between the earlier situation and that of his day lies in the *way* God carries out His promises.

It looked to Abraham that Ishmael was the fulfillment of God's promise of a son. It looked to Isaac that Esau was the one whom God intended to receive the birthright. It

looked to anyone of Paul's day, and looks to us in our day, that God is not able to fulfill His promises concerning the descendants of Israel. But in His remarkable wisdom and love, God is working out His purpose in a way that will bring Him all the glory. Hence Paul concludes this whole section of Romans with the words:

God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all.

O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! . . . seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Rom.11:32-36).

NOT ALL OUT OF ISRAEL

Romans 9:6-8 has often been understood as the solution to Paul's sorrow and pain of heart. It has been taken as though it were a sort of loophole for God, as though to say God did not intend to save all Israel but rather a limited group out of Israel (who are "true Israel") to whom, and to whom only, His promises apply. Or, with similar reasoning, it has been taken to say God had in mind to make true Israel out of both Jews and Gentiles, while leaving the rest of those out of Israel in their stubbornness.

But it is no solution to the apostle's sorrow to say God purposed all along to save only a portion of those out of Israel. In 9:1-5 Paul declared that his sorrow was for his relatives, "*whose [are] the promises.*" His sorrow was not concerning those out of Israel who were truly Israel, but concerning those who were not then reckoned for the seed. His sorrow was concerning those who were included in the promises but who were not living as "the children of the promise."

Hence we see that Romans 9:6-8 is not a solution to the problem brought up in verses 1-5, but rather a further explanation of the problem. Not all out of Israel were true

Israel. The great majority of Israelites wished to be anathema from Christ.

But since we are looking at the problem from the divine standpoint starting with verse 6, the sorrow begins to be soothed. To relate unbelieving Israelites to God's purpose, and to see that at present He does not choose or call all out of Israel, is to place our thoughts in right perspective. Yet in doing this we must not suppose all out of Israel will never become true Israel. Rather we should be persuaded of just the opposite!

The promises mentioned in Romans 9:4 looked ahead to God's goal. The choosing and calling of some out of Israel and manifesting them even in this eon as true Israel is only a part of the process. The goal is presented at the end of Romans 11, and that will bring an end to all the callousness that brought so much pain into Paul's heart.

JACOB I LOVE

It is under the name *Jacob*, not Israel, that God expresses His love to the nation (Rom.9:13). This corresponds with the giving of the promises; they were made to one who was without claim in himself to the promises. If he honored the blessing and birthright more than Esau, the way in which he showed this hardly made him more lovable. For the most part, this second-born son of Isaac exhibited himself as Jacob and not as Israel.

We may say that the majority (if not all at some point in their lives) out of Israel have not been an Israel, but rather a Jacob. This does not mean that God, in any way, ceases to love them, or ceases to operate toward the fulfillment of all His promises to them, even to the entire nation. God's love and God's faithfulness will in fact abound in glory as it is expressed in a fulfillment of every promise to everyone out of Israel in every detail (and even beyond). All out of Israel will be Israel.

FAITHFUL LOVE

God's love is most glorious! His love for Israel is not expressed by first making that nation upright and then rewarding this with the fulfillment of His promises. Instead, Israel is led through centuries of apostasy and unbelief, stubbornness and self-pride, in which it displays the character of Jacob. And yet God loves Jacob and never ceases to love that people who still reflect that name.

In considering this we are brought back to the words of Romans 8. "What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? . . . Nay! in all these we are more than conquering through Him Who loves us" (8:35,37). Paul's words concerning Israel and the certainty of God's faithfulness to His promises to them encourage us and build up our confidence in God and His faithful love.

It is in walking by faith and not by perception that we become persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom.8:38,39). If our lives bring us into experiences of "unintermittent pain," as in truth they do, the comfort and soothing of that pain does not lie in concluding that God has taken away His love. He has not rejected us to whom He has *said*: Christ died for your sins. When God says something that cannot be proven by what is seen or felt, we, nevertheless, believe He will bring it about.

This is the great lesson set before us in Romans 9-11. Whether concerning the Circumcision or concerning the Uncircumcision or concerning humanity, or concerning the entirety of His creation, God faithfully carries out His promises. We may not understand just why He chooses and calls as He does, but we rejoice that these are part of the depths and riches of His wisdom. All is done in accord with His purpose, which is remaining and being worked out as He wills. To Him be the glory!

D.H.H.

SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES

SCRIPTURE TRANSLATION PRINCIPLES are a matter of great importance to us all, for only as sound principles of translation are followed can an accurate translation be made. Most believers, however, give little attention to such matters. Few seem to realize that various translations of the Bible, for all their similarities, differ in many particulars, often in matters of great consequence. Most would relegate such important considerations to "recognized authorities," to whom they defer in judgment.

It is true that authorities, experts in their field, concur in many points. Yet it is just as true that, especially in issues of theological significance, authorities differ widely among themselves. Men of great learning, of high intellect and prodigious ability, are still flesh; they are still fallible, mortal sinners even as ourselves. Besides, however learned, such ones can still be proud, stubborn, or simply unenlightened as to certain vital issues. It is foolish, then, uncritically to accept as true what certain authorities may say, especially when we have not carefully considered the views of other differing experts, both recognized authorities and those of less renown who are nonetheless skilled and knowledgeable in the biblical text and languages.

It is not that each one of us must become expert in one or more broad fields of learning within theology, philosophy, or linguistics before we can hope to judge any certain matter correctly. Nor is it that we must canvas the entire field of opinion, throughout all history, before we can decide even the simplest questions. Instead, we need only dis-

cern what is truly at issue, and then accept whatever position can actually be proved. While such judgments, indeed, require competency, God, in His own time, is able to make us competent, that we might, by His grace, not only hold correct positions, but objectively know that we do so.

Accordingly, God has appointed certain ones within the ecclesia who serve with a view "toward the adjusting of the saints for the work of dispensing, for the upbuilding of the body of Christ, unto the end that we should *all* attain to the unity of the faith and of the realization of the son of God, to a mature man . . . that we may by no means *still* be minors . . ." (Eph.4:11-14).

Beyond those specifically so named in Scripture, it is vain to speculate concerning the identity of such servants. But it is the part of wisdom to believe that God *does* give such ones to us. In His own time—whether at present or in the coming eon—those who *are* apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, will succeed in the work which, under Christ, God has appointed unto them (*cp* Rom. 10:15; 14:4; Col.1:6,7).

GRACE FOR DISCERNMENT

It is most unwise to find assurance in the consensus of popular opinion. Indeed, in an era of apostasy such as today (*cf* 2 Tim.4:3,4), it is especially foolish to assent to what the majority of authorities may say, for, at least in controverted matters, the majority are far more likely to be wrong than right. In the discernment of truth, as in all just judging, we must make our decisions "apart from prejudice, doing nothing from bias" (*cf* 1 Tim.5:21b).

Let us not merely assent to the opinions of others, but recognize and heed our *own* obligation to *correctly* cut the word of truth (*cf* 2 Tim.2:15). May we humble ourselves by admitting our ignorance, while at the same time accepting the duty of faithfulness. It is true that such an ongoing

endeavor will involve much self-effort; but it does not rise out of the self. We rejoice to know that *God* by His grace is able to work in us the very willing and working which is essential to our progress (Phil.2:13).

We would look to Him as our Saviour in this sphere even as in all others. Indeed, we would do so, for otherwise our cause is hopeless. Otherwise, even if we should find much gratification in our course, we can only take our place among the deceived. Dedication, zeal, and sincerity, are surely commendable. Success, health, and happiness, are certainly desirable. No such attributes or experiences, however, are any indication of faithfulness. For the discernment of truth, there simply is no substitute for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of God, that the eyes of our heart might be enlightened (Eph.1:15-19).

The fact that scholars disagree among themselves does not change the fact of our own accountability to God. Conversely, we must realize that understanding is ultimately the gift of God (*cp* Prov.25:2; Col.2:3; 1 Cor.3:5-9). If understanding is not granted to certain scholars, that does not mean that neither will it be granted to us. Let us earnestly seek the truth, endeavoring by God's grace to become competent workers in His Word. Faithfulness is developed *through* our own efforts; yet it is achieved solely *by* and *in* God's grace (1 Cor.4:7, 15:10; *cf* John 3:27).

TRANSLATION VERSUS INTERPRETATION

To "translate," is to *express* in another language. To the degree that, in our version, we have *conveyed* or *reflected* the vocabulary terms and grammatical forms of the original writing within the corresponding document in the receptor language, we have made a *translation*. To the degree that we have done so accurately, we have made an accurate translation. Because of differences in idiom between languages, a strictly literal translation is impractical if not

impossible. What is needed, then, is a *version* that is translated in such a way so as to be true to the original yet readable in itself as a literary work.

Such a work must, first of all, be *faithful* to the original. For this it must be *practically* "literal," even where, to preserve good diction and afford readability, it cannot be *actually* literal. In most cases, however, substantially literal renderings can be both understandable *and* true to the sense of the original. Where idiom demands, synonymical variants in vocabulary and alternative means of grammatical reflection can still preserve substantial accuracy while permitting necessary latitude in expression. The translators of the Concordant Version have endeavored to translate according to these principles, thus seeking to provide a uniform and accurate, substantially literal work.

The Concordant Version, in conjunction with its Greek-English Keyword Concordance, together with the companion volume, the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT, reflects many facts inherent in the original texts. Much of this information is presented in the translation itself, through the use of boldface type for words in the original and light-face type for words or parts of words added for readability, besides through the implementation of superior, abbreviation characters and grammatical symbols. Through various features of the Concordance even as of the Greek Text's English sublinear, much additional invaluable information is provided as well.

Faithful translation requires the establishing of standard equivalents between the vocabulary and grammar of the original writing and that of the translated work. When possible, these standards must be used in translation; where this is impracticable, a faithful translation must provide a consistent vocabulary which is as concordant as idiom will allow. There must be a correspondency, as uniformly expressed as possible, between the translated words and

the original words. Where variants in translation are necessary, so long as the members of any certain synonymical group are used solely to represent a single word in the original, practical correspondency may still be preserved. But, wherever possible, what must be avoided is the use of any certain word in translation as the representative of two or more words in the original.

Contrary to popular opinion, faithful translation is *not* a matter of employing whatever word "seems to make the most sense, according to the context." First of all, what "seems to make sense" may not be the true *sense* at all, but sensible only according to our own erroneous presuppositions. Yet even where one's suppositions and conclusions are substantially correct, the idea conceived to be that of the author, may be a connotative one in the original, perhaps expressed as a figure of speech, not as a literal declaration. In such a case, though we may have grasped the author's thought, we will fail to *translate* his *words* unless we render his words by words which, in essential meaning, *correspond* to his.*

Translation is not interpretation. An *interpretation*, even if correct, is still not a faithful *translation*. Interpretation is the province of the exegete; it is the realm of the expositor, not that of the translator. We cannot judge the *sense* of what is said until we know *what is said*; yet we cannot express what is said in the original unless we possess an essentially equivalent expression thereof in translated form. We cannot determine the correct sense of a word apart from a valid basis upon which to form such a conclusion. Translation must come *first*; only then may interpretation follow.

*We may, for example, be correct in judging that a writer's thought when saying the equivalent of "turn off the *light*," is actually "turn off the *lamp*." But even if so, if we would *translate*, not interpret, our rendering must be, "turn off the *light*."

DEFINITIVE USAGE AND ESSENTIAL MEANING

In consideration of the subject of word meaning, a word needs to be said first of all concerning both etymology and the meaning of word elements. "Etymology," or the study of a word's origin, is not central but strictly peripheral in determining word meaning. Even the meaning of a word's elements is not determinative of a word's own meaning. Considerations of etymology may be helpful; but they can also be misleading. A knowledge of the meaning of a word's elements is nearly always helpful, with a view toward one's general understanding of a certain word. Nonetheless, such information simply is not decisive in determining the actual meaning of a word itself.

Definitive context alone determines meaning. We have a definitive context when, with respect to the meaning of a word in question, a certain idea *alone* truly satisfies such a context. We have the evidence of a word's true meaning—and therefore of the meaning that *truly* satisfies such a definitive context—when that same meaning also fits all the occurrences in which the word appears. Due to considerations of idiom, such a meaning may or may not fit smoothly in all its occurrences. But if a certain meaning is cognizable in all of a word's occurrences, while being singularly capable of satisfying those of its contexts which seem definitive, we may be certain (1) that such a meaning is indeed the word's true meaning, and (2) that those contexts which we have deemed definitive, are, in fact, definitive.

Many passages simply are not definitive, even if they are otherwise very important passages. It is impossible for a word actually to have two or more *meanings*, however varied its *usages* may be. Communication would be impossible were we consistently to adapt the policy that words may have more than one meaning, or, to say the same thing, that they may have primary meaning, secondary meaning, tertiary meaning, and so forth. Meaning, that is, essence,

is a *singular* concept. The existence of a plurality of lexical *definitions*, even as of homonymical forms, does not change this fact.

Through the passage of time, in the case of any certain word, many specialized usages may well develop, whether figurative or literal. These are the *definitions of usage* found in our dictionaries, commonly referred to as a word's "meanings." Of course most may not realize that these usages, both literal and figurative ones, all stem from a common, basic meaning. We have called some of these "faded figures," since, through the passage of time, the original essential meaning of such terms may no longer be widely recognized.

The reader is not to base the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words in the original upon the ordinary dictionary definitions for the words which appear in any version, including the Concordant Version. Instead, where necessary, the English words in the Version are to be *attuned* by the reader in such a way that they are brought into accord with the original. The essential idea or meaning inherent to a word will usually be found, even if not identified as such, *among* the definitions of usage of a word appearing in our dictionaries. Yet the essential definition is not always the first definition or the most common definition; and certainly, it is not always the idea that most readily comes to mind for the ordinary reader. Instead, the English standards for the Concordant Version are the words which, in their essence, were found most closely to correspond to the essence of the Hebrew and Greek words which they represent.

Because in certain passages a particular idea may seem more plausible to us than that which the definitive evidence appearing elsewhere reveals a word's true meaning to be, we must not imagine that such a word actually has an entirely different meaning in one passage than in

another. This is true at all times, whether we are simply reading in our own language or are making a translation from one language to another. "False" never means "true"; "good" never means "bad"; "happy" never means "sad"; "black" never means "white," and so forth.

It is vital to distinguish between word meaning and word usage; that is, between denotation and connotation, or essential meaning and referential meaning. It is true that the same word is sometimes used to *convey* a different idea in one text than in another. It does so, however, not by inherent signification but by contextual application, or usage. In such cases, a common word has *in view* one thought in a certain passage, and another thought in another certain passage. That is to say, in one text the same word speaks *of* or refers *to* a particular idea that it does not speak of or refer to in a different text. Properly speaking, then, such a word has a plurality of *references*, according to its varied usages. It does *not*, however, have a plurality of intrinsic significations or essential meanings.

A word's essential meaning is also its universal meaning. Even if not primarily in view, a word's essential meaning is present in all of its occurrences, wherever it is used. If this were not so, we could never determine how a word was presently used, for we would have no idea in mind to serve as a basis for our deliberations. Indeed, if a word's essential meaning were not present in all its occurrences, since the majority of a word's usages are nearly always indefinite, in all such cases, it would be impossible to know what was to be understood by a word in question.

Speaking loosely, we may say that a word has two or more "meanings" in that in one place it is used to refer to one idea and in another place is used to refer to a different idea. But this is simply to say that in one instance a certain idea is in view and in another instance another idea is in view. Such a concept, however, speaks of *referential*

meaning, not *essential* meaning. We should always seek to grasp an author's thought. But we cannot know what he is saying at all, much less what he has in view, unless we already know, or the context makes evident, the *essential* meaning of the words he employs.

The consideration that a word may have a plurality of usages, gives no warrant to a translator to represent what are in fact merely his own interpretations as if they were actual translations of the original. In order to avoid confounding essential meaning with referential meaning, a translator must be careful to convey and maintain essential meaning in translation. Otherwise, a translator becomes an exegete; he is no longer a convertor of words and phrases from one language into their equivalent in another. He has become an *interpreter* of *sense*, instead of a *conveyor* of *essence*. He is supposed to tell us what is *said*, but insists instead on telling us what he thinks is *meant*.

From these considerations, then, it becomes evident that it is vital to distinguish between translation of what is said, from one language to another, and interpretation of the sense of what is said, under the guise, or simply confusion of mind, of translation, falsely so-called.

Due to idiomatic differences between the original and the receptor language (especially scope of usage or idiomatic range), in translation it is often necessary to use a number of synonyms or other variants to translate a single word in the original. These variants may be quite different from each other in certain obvious respects. Even so, they often share a common central idea among themselves, and, in any case, always *correspond* to the essential idea of the original expression. It is their idiomatic correspondence which allows them to serve well in the translation of a single, original word. This is true even in rare cases where an original word covering a wide range of thought, requires antonyms in translation for certain of its usages (e.g., "obligate" and "borrow" represent the same

Hebrew word in Deuteronomy 28:12). The fact, however, that in a translation good diction often requires the use of idiomatic variants, is certainly no proof that any particular word in the original text has a plurality of meanings.

In certain indefinite passages, a term in question in the original may seem to be more correctly represented in English by some other expression than that which appears in the Concordant Version, even by a word that is of a radically different significance. This, however, does not make such suggested renderings correct, regardless of the zeal and persuasiveness of those advocating such renderings. Such suggestions can only be correct if they accord with the evidence found elsewhere in definitive passages.

GOD IS ABLE

Rather than assuming that principles of Scripture translation and interpretation are wholly beyond our reach and it is ours either to hold no opinion at all or to blindly submit to some human authority, may we instead recognize our own duty to be faithful to the Word of God. While it is indeed impossible for us, of ourselves, to know what the Scripture truly declares, *God* is able to enlighten us and make our faith grow up. Accordingly, then, we rely on the living God (1 Tim.4:10).

If we enjoy only a little light at present, we would rejoice in it, finding assurance in the recognition that our Saviour, God, wills all mankind *to be saved and* come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). Now with men, indeed, this is impossible; yet with God *all* is possible (*cp* Matt. 19:26). It is with confidence in God, then, not in ourselves, that we exultantly declare: "Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that *is* operating in us, to Him be the glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus, for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!" (Eph. 3:20,21).

J.R.C.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 1995
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SIX

EDITORIAL

WHY did Christ die? What was accomplished by His crucifixion? What is the measure of victory in His resurrection? How does this remarkable deed bring glory to God?

It is surprising how vague believers are concerning these fundamental questions. Such matters lie at the heart of the evangel. Christ died for our sins. Justification and conciliation, deliverance from sin and death, subjection to the headship of Christ and reconciliation, these are established by the death of Christ. Vivification, the new humanity and the new creation, the very completion of God's purpose, these come forth in the resurrection of God's Son from among the dead. It is all God's work in Christ Jesus our Lord and brings true glory to Him.

If we should be clear on anything it ought to be on the evangel. Yet we hear such statements as: Christ died to make salvation possible; or: Christ died for the elect; which, though they are true, are designed to maintain a doctrine of everlasting Hell or eternal loss. If God's Anointed One is the One Who died for sinners, then salvation is not only possible, but it is certain in God's own time. If God chose and called out some people for eonian life, this cannot change what Christ accomplished for all mankind.

What makes the evangel *good* news is that it is the work of God, Who, in every way, is wise, powerful and loving, and it is carried out in and through His beloved Son, Who is His Image, and Who unfolds Him. If we say that God is limited in what He can do in dealing with sin and death, or that He purposely limits Himself in granting to mankind what Christ has gained for us, then we are denigrating both Him and the claims of His Word.

If the deity of God is the touchstone of truth, the evangel is the central manifestation of God's deity in His faithfulness, wisdom, power, righteousness and love. Job endured the evils of his trial because of his knowledge and growing realization that God had a purpose for it all and was operating wisely and successfully toward a worthy consummation. But Job was not given the word of God's grace in Christ Jesus which we have received. He only knew that somehow God would provide a living Redeemer (Job 19:25), and he received direct assurance only of God's powerful and able involvement in all that occurs (Job 38-41).

As Job clung tenaciously to the revelations given him, finding in these words renewed strength for reliance on God in the midst of suffering, so we need to hold fast to the evangel in every problem of life. We will not allow our closest associates and friends to speak of God's work in Christ as something incomplete, that we must somehow put the finishing touches on. Teachings of eternal torment or annihilation of some, or that God has given up on the physical nation of Israel, or that Satan is a power for evil independent of God, do not harmonize with the evangel and its revelation of God.

In this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*, we touch on some of these matters. We are not unmindful of Satan's power, of Israel's failures, and of the need for judgments. But the evangel presents God as faithful to His promises and powerful in the defeat of evil and just in His work of justifying and full of love in the very core of His being.

"God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes" (Rom.5:8). "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim.1:15). "Now thanks be to God, Who is giving . . . the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.15:57).

D.H.H.

PAUL'S PERFECTION EPISTLES

PAUL'S perfection epistles are emphatically *the* truth for the present. The Ephesian letter, being addressed to all believers in Christ Jesus, in contrast with the Circumcision, who hardly knew Him by this title, is the ranking revelation for the members of the joint body of Christ. Here first are revealed those secrets which distinguish this administration from all others. Never before has the celestial destiny of the present ecclesia been declared. All the other Scriptures deal with the elementary and immature, but here we find perfection. God's purpose had been only partially made known before and seemed confined to earth. But in this final transcendent revelation His ultimate universal goal is first revealed. These three letters are closely related to each other and should be studied together. This may be graphically presented thus:

EPHESIANS 1-3, *Doctrine*—The Body: its Members

EPHESIANS 4-6 *Deportment*

PHILIPPIANS, *Deportment*

COLOSSIANS, *Doctrine*—The Body: its Head

Ephesians begins by presenting a careful and comprehensive statement of the truth for the present secret economy, laying stress on those aspects which concern the *members* of Christ's body. Colossians is the counterpart of this, dealing with the same doctrines but presenting them in their relation to the *Head* of the body.

Both begin with God and with His primordial purpose. The members of the body were chosen before the disruption and now become the beneficiaries in His celestial allotment. Christ is His Image, being the Firstborn of

all creation and now becomes the Head of all creation in heaven as well as on earth.

Ephesians, then, unfolds the truth of the joint body in which all the members are of equal rank. Colossians makes Him the Head over the body and the members subordinate to Him.

SECRETS

Two secrets or "mysteries" are disclosed in these epistles. The secret of Christ (Eph.1:9; 3:4; Col.2:2; 4:3) was previously revealed but not as it is now revealed. His headship over the earth had been made known to the prophets of old. His headship in the heavens was made known to the apostles, especially Peter (1 Peter 3:22). But the secret economy, the present administration of grace, was never disclosed to any one except through Paul (Eph.3:9). It was not partially hidden, like the secret of Christ, but was an absolute secret, hid in God. It is the function of the first three chapters of Ephesians to explain its three aspects of the believer, and of Colossians to reveal the position which it accords to Christ.

These letters should be read in this light. It is only when we apprehend their radical difference and vast advance over the epistles written by others than the apostle of the nations (Eph.3:1) that we can appreciate their marvelous message. It is only as we allow them to dominate and modify Paul's previous epistles, of which they are the ripened fruit, that we are able to entertain the transcendent nature of their contents.

Paul's Perfection epistles are based upon his Preparatory epistles to the Thessalonians, the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians. They are addressed to those who had received the truth taught in his earlier ministries, who were in a state of prior expectancy (Eph.1:12; 1 Thes.1:10), who had been sealed with the holy Spirit (Eph.1:13; 2 Cor.

1:22), which was an earnest of more to come (Eph.1:14; 2 Col.5:5). They had been enjoyers of an allotment (Rom. 8:17; Gal.4:7), and now become *joint* allottees (Eph.3:6). Once they were members of bodies in which the members were of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision. Now that Israel is blinded and the celestial destiny revealed, it is changed to a *joint* body, in which all the members are equally exalted (Eph.3:6). The nations become *joint* partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus (Eph.3:6) which once they held as guests of Israel's covenant.

All saints, during the eonian times, are under God's *government*, belong to His *family*, and become the nucleus of His *worship*. On earth, the nations are subordinate, for Israel must be the head. Such was the place of those who received Paul's message before the Perfection epistles were penned. The new revelation not only changed their destiny to heaven, but made them the peers of the favored nation. We are *fellow* citizens. We are not merely guests, but members of God's family. We are an integral part of the temple which God is building for His worship (Eph.2:19-22).

The Perfection epistles should be studied as a group. The truth is set forth didactically and logically in the opening chapters of Ephesians. Philippians goes over the ground experimentally, showing the truth operating in Christ and Paul and other examples. It applies the teaching of Ephesians to daily conduct. The "calling above" (Phil.3:14) is the celestial calling of Ephesians 1:3. Colossians corrects departure from Ephesian teaching, with special stress upon the glories of Christ in creation and reconciliation.

Some of the chief figures of speech in these epistles have often been misunderstood, especially that of Christ's headship of the ecclesia. It is usually taken that all of the body except the head figures the ecclesia. This is not true. The head is reckoned as a member. The headship of Christ is not figured by the head of the body. Its parts, such as the

eyes and nose, are members. Christ is not a member of the body, but Head over the ecclesia, *as a husband is head over his wife* (Eph.5:23). The wife has a head apart from the headship of her husband.

The new humanity (Eph.2:15) is an entirely distinct figure from that of the body. It refers to the race, giving Christ the place lost by Adam. It can be *put on* (Eph.5:24), or taken off. This cannot refer to our union with Christ under the figure of the body.

It should also be remembered that the "mystery," or secret, is not the body of Christ, for that had been known before. It is threefold, and includes our relationship to God as allottees, and to saints as partakers, as well as to Christ as His body. It consists in the fact that, in each of these relationships, grace has raised those among the nations who believe to equal rank, so that all are *joint* allottees and *joint* partakers, and members of a *joint* body.

IN CHRIST JESUS

The title Christ Jesus, calling attention to His present place of power, is the key to the marvelous grace which came to believers of the Uncircumcision after the nation of Israel had been rejected, as recorded at the close of the book of Acts. As associated with Jesus Christ they would be still subordinate to the favored nation, which will rule the earth. But the title which recognizes His present glory in the heavens makes it possible for the far off "Gentiles" to be blessed in celestial realms equally with a favored few of the nation of His choice.

Having once realized the importance of the title "Christ Jesus" in defining those who are the recipients of the present grace, we naturally expect that the companion epistles of Ephesians—Philippians and Colossians—will enforce the same distinction. In this we shall not be disappointed. Paul associates himself with this title as a slave in Philippians, and as an apostle in Colossians.

Not only are they written *from* one who is in Christ Jesus, but they are addressed *to* those in Him as well. Philippians is to "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, together with the supervisors and servants." In Colossians there is some question as to the correct reading. The two best manuscripts read, "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ in Colosse." Codex Alexandrinus, however, adds His personal name, making it possible to render the passage "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ Jesus, in Colosse." As scribes were so much more liable to omit such a name than to add it, the evidence of a single first-class manuscript like Alexandrinus is almost enough to justify its insertion in the text.

Even as it is, this truth is more pointedly exemplified in the fourth verse, where the apostle speaks of their *faith* in Christ Jesus but their *love* for *all* the saints. Their faith could not be shared by all the saints, but this did not hinder the outflow of their love to those who did not have the same faith. The Circumcision were to be included in the circle of their affections, even though they could not apprehend the transcendent faith which could be founded only on Christ in His present exaltation in the heavens, which had little appeal to those whose expectation was anchored on earth, who looked forward to the Messiah of the prophets. In the fifth verse this very thought is suggested by the apostle when he describes their expectation as "reserved *in the heavens*." It crops out again and again, especially where the Colossians are exhorted to be concerned with that which is *above, not to that on the earth* (3:2).

The remarkable statement in the closing salutation (4:10-11) can be explained only in this light, "Aristarchus, my fellow captive, is greeting you, and Mark, cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you obtained directions: if he should be coming to you, receive him) and Jesus, termed Justus, *who are of the Circumcision. These are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who became a solace to me.*"

It is needless to insist that he had other fellow workers who were a solace to him. What of Tychicus, who carried this letter (4:7), of Timothy, who is one with him in writing it? But they were not fellow workers for the kingdom of God in the sense that the Circumcision were. These three men—Aristarchus, Mark and Justus—were within that limited circle of fellowship which Paul had with the Circumcision. Just as he gave James, Cephas and John the right hand of fellowship many years before (Gal.2:9) so he had continued to have fellowship with those connected with them, even though his transcendent revelations continued to widen the gulf between them in the sphere of doctrine.

This, it seems, accounts for the special admonition to receive Mark. Why should they not receive him? His failure as a servant (Acts 15:37-39) was no ground for refusing fellowship. It seems clear that the rest of the Circumcision were hardly welcome among the saints to whom Paul wrote. They were continually stirring up strife and contending for the observance of the law of Moses, and could not grasp the grace which gave the despised aliens a place of equality with them (*cf* Titus 1:10; 1 Tim.1:7; Gal.5:12). In Philippians he bids the saints beware of the *maim-cision* as he contemptuously calls the Circumcision, who based their prerogatives upon a mutilation of the flesh.

THE PHILIPPIAN EPISTLE

It is always essential to note the *character* in which Paul writes, and to interpret accordingly. Epaphroditus is the only apostle mentioned in the Philippian epistle. He was their commissioner to Paul. Paul never speaks of himself as an apostle in this letter, hence it is wise to rigidly exclude this thought and all that flows from it. When a fresh revelation of truth is presented, as in Ephesians, a divine commission is necessary to enforce his words. We call for his authority and demand his credentials. None of this is needed in Philippians. So he writes in the character of a *slave*.

Service is the subject of the Philippian epistle. Paul is presented as a slave; Christ takes the form of a slave; the Philippians themselves are slaves. This should color and control the interpretation of every passage. While Ephesians and Colossians contain no examples for us to follow, after which we should fashion our conduct, Philippians affords four. These are living expressions of the evangel. "Holding forth the word of life" is, literally, "having on the word of life" or a *living expression*. Like the four examples, the Philippians are exhorted to preach by means of their lives as well as their lips. It is not the works of Christ which are presented for our imitation, but His humiliation from the heights to the death of the cross. Likewise Paul is presented in his descent from a fancied superiority in flesh to a place in Christ Jesus. Timothy's service and the sufferings of Epaphroditus complete the fourfold picture presented for our emulation.

It is evident from the whole tenor of the epistle that the *experience* of the believer in Christ Jesus is in point. Paul details his own experience, rather than definite doctrine and we are to copy his life as well as believe his words.

All this is suggested by the opening words, "Paul and Timothy, *slaves* of Christ Jesus."

This important position is much strengthened by the inclusion of supervisors and servants in the salutation. These are those who are especially responsible for the conduct of the ecclesia. Some of them may have taught, but that was not their function.

The old translation, "bishops and deacons," is misleading. The control of each ecclesia was in the hands of a number of overseers or supervisors, all of whom were directly concerned with the individuals under their eye, not, as now, an official over many churches, or rather, over many "ministers." The "minister" of today has no counterpart in the picture of an ecclesia as set in order by the apostle Paul.

Neither was a "deacon" anything more than a *servant* or, better, *servitor*. The same term is translated "servant," "minister," "deacon." It denotes, not an office of honor, above the rest of the ecclesia, but a place lower than those who are served. It is used of those who waited on the guests at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (John 2:5,9). This illustrates the basic meaning of the word, for it carries the thought of *serving out, dispensing*. It is not so much *doing* things for others, as supplying their needs. The low place of the servant is shown when our Lord advises His ambitious disciples who wanted to be foremost, to take the lowest place. "Whosoever should be wanting to become great among you, let him be your servant, and whoever may be wanting to be foremost among you, let him be your slave" (Matt. 29:26). We know of no translation which renders this passage "will be your *deacon*," because it would reverse the sense, for a deacon is a position of honor above the rest when it should be a place of servitude below them.

The spirit or true service pervades the Philippian epistle. There is no desire for self-exaltation. All humble themselves and are exalted by God. Christ descended from the place supreme to the cross of shame. Timothy and Epaphroditus were true servants, unmindful of themselves but devoted to the saints. Paul's case is especially instructive, for he, like his Master, stoops to serve. Because of the superiority found in Christ Jesus, he casts to the dogs all his physical advantages through Judaism, which were of no mean value.

The prison epistles of Paul present the truth for the present. The key to their correct interpretation lies in the title used of our Lord. The teaching of the epistles themselves is tinged throughout with the truth that they are not designed for the Circumcision, but only for those chosen out of both Circumcision and Uncircumcision whose blessing and destiny is linked with Christ exalted in the heavens.

A.E.K.

EON AS INDEFINITE DURATION

(Part One)

FROM THE EARLY TIMES OF CHURCH HISTORY, the words *aiōn* and *aiōnios* ("eon" and "eonian" in the Concordant Version) have been the subject of much controversy. This is because the question of their meaning is central to the issue of "eternal punishment."

Many holding our essential position will say that *aiōn* means "age," not "[for] ever." While this is a step in the right direction and in a loose sense is even correct, it is problematic, and leaves some legitimate room for objection.

For example, were we to use "age-" as our basis for representing *aiōnios*, it would depend on what we have in mind by "age" whether we should say "age-pertaining," or "age-lasting." In any case, uniform translation would be impossible and interpretation would be unavoidable. This is because some usages of *aiōn* are for only a portion of one of the scriptural, epochal eons. Yet it is true that *aiōn* itself is often used in reference to the entire duration of whatever "age" may be in view in any certain context. "Age-pertaining," besides being awkward, assumes that the notion of "time-periodness" is *inherent* to *aiōn*, which is incorrect; "age-lasting," adds the further problem of affirming that that which is eonian, always obtains for the entirety of an eon, which is also incorrect.

It is best to use or at least conceive the word "duration" instead of "age" (or even "eon") when we are considering these things, even if, in translation, "duration" would be too awkward. It is true that for most readers, the English "eon" confines the idea signified to a period of time. Yet

even those who differ with us in our teaching, even from their own perspective, can make no legitimate objection to the rendering "eon," itself, since more comprehensive dictionaries include among their definitions for this word not only the idea of a period of time, but of "everlastingness" as well.

"Eon" seems to be the only practical and objective word to use in translation. However, to be objective when considering this word in Scripture, with a view toward establishing its essential meaning, one must conceive of it non-interpretatively, simply as an anglicized transliteration of *aiōn*, similar to "baptize" for *baptizō*. Yet, after determining its meaning, in considering further its varied usages, one must also recognize that it is no more true that this word exclusively refers to the *epochal* eons of Scripture, than that it sometimes speaks of the notion of boundless eternity. Nonetheless, we have found that nearly all of the usages of *aiōn* in the Greek Scriptures do refer to the epochal eons of history (i.e., the "eonian times," 2 Tim.1:9; see the Keyword Concordance entries "eon" and "eonian"). Only a few New Testament *aiōn* texts concern some other briefer period (e.g., not washing feet [John 13:8], or not eating meat [1 Cor.8:13], "for the eon").

LEXICOGRAPHY, THE CLASSICS, AND THE SEPTUAGINT

Scriptural usage alone is authoritative. Yet since many will appeal to lexicography (inasmuch as many lexicographers claim that *olam*, together with *aiōn* and *aiōnios*, "sometimes" means "everlasting" or "eternal"), we would only point out that lexicographers differ in their opinions; and, even where they concur, this is no proof that they are correct. The words of the apostle Paul ever remain good advice, "let no one be boasting in men" (1 Cor.3:21).

"Now lexicography must always be consulted, especially

on disputed words, *cum grano salis*. A theologian, in his definition, is quite certain to shade technical words with his own belief, and lean one way or the other, accord to his own predilections. Unconsciously and necessarily, the lexicographer who has a bias in favor of any doctrine will tincture his definitions with his own idiosyncracies. Very few have sat judicially, and given meanings to words with reference to their exact usage; so that one must examine dictionaries concerning any words whose meaning is disputed, with the same care that should be used in reference to any subject on which men differ.”¹

In our consideration of lexicography, we should note that the primary usage of *aiōn*, both in early and later Greek, is that of the duration of one's life. “The oldest lexicographer, Hesychius (c. 400-600 A.D.), defines *aiōn* thus: ‘The life of man, the time of life.’ At this early date, no theologian had yet imported into the word the meaning of endless duration. It retained only the sense it had in the Classics, and in the Bible John of Damascus (c. 750 A.D.) says, ‘The life of every man is called [his] *aiōn* The whole duration or life of this world is called *aiōn* The life after the resurrection is called the *aiōn* to come’

“But in the sixteenth century, Phavorinus was compelled to notice an addition, which subsequently to the time of the famous Council of 544 had been grafted onto the word. He says: ‘*Aiōn*, time, also [by association] life, also habit, or way of life. *Aiōn* is also *the eternal and the endless as it seems to the theologian*.’ Theologians had succeeded in using the word in the sense of endless, and Phavorinus was forced to recognize their usage of it. His phraseology shows conclusively enough that he attributed to theologians the authorship of that use of the word.

1. John Wesley Hanson, *Aiōn-Aiōnios*, p.12; Chicago: Northwestern Universalist Publishing House, 1875.

"Alluding to this definition, Ezra S. Goodwin, one of the ripest scholars and profoundest critics, says, 'Here I strongly suspect is the true secret brought to light of the origin of the sense of eternity in *aiōn*. *The theologian first thought he perceived it*, or else he placed it there. The theologian keeps it there, now Hence it is that those lexicographers who assign eternity as one of the meanings of *aiōn* uniformly appeal for proofs to either theological Hebrew or Rabbinical Greek, or some species of Greek subsequent to the age of the Seventy [i.e., the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures], if not subsequent to the age of the apostles, so far as I can ascertain.' The second definition by Phavorinus is extracted literally from the 'Etymologicon Magnum' of the ninth or tenth century. This gives us the usage from the fourth to the sixteenth century, and show us that, if the word meant endless at the time of Christ, it must have changed from limited duration in the Classics, to unlimited duration, and then back again, at the dates above specified! [Yet] from the sixteenth century onward, the word has been defined as used to denote all lengths of time from brief to endless"²

In considering the usage of *aiōn* in the Greek Classics (the literature with which the authors of the Septuagint were familiar), Hanson says further concerning Goodwin, that, earlier in the nineteenth century, he "patiently and candidly traced this word through the Classics, finding the noun frequently in nearly all the writers, but not meeting the adjective until Plato, its [apparent] inventor, used it. [Goodwin] states, as the result of his protracted and exhaustive examination from the beginning down to Plato, 'We have the whole evidence of seven Greek writers, extending through about six centuries, down to the

2. *ibid.*, pp.12,13; cit., *Christian Examiner*, vol.10, p.47; Boston: Gray & Bowen.

age of Plato, who make use of *aiōn*, in common with other words; and *no one of them ever employs it in the sense of eternity.*' When the Old Testament was translated from the Hebrew into Greek by the Seventy, the word *aiōn* had been in common use for many centuries.

"It is preposterous to say that the Seventy would render the Hebrew *olam* by the Greek *aiōn* and give to the latter (1) a different meaning from that of the former, or (2) a different meaning from *aiōn* in the current Greek literature. It is self-evident, then, that *aiōn* in the Old Testament means exactly what *olam* means, and also what *aiōn* means in the Greek Classics. Indefinite duration is the sense of *olam*, and it is equally clear that *aiōn* has a similar signification I do not know of an instance in which any lexicographer has produced the usage of *ancient* classical Greek in evidence that *aiōn* means eternity. *Ancient classical Greek rejects it altogether*' (by 'ancient' he means the Greek existing anterior to the days of the Seventy).

"Thus it appears that when the Seventy began their work of giving the world a version of the Old Testament that should convey the sense of the Hebrew Bible, they must have used *aiōn* in the sense in which it was then used. Endless duration is not the meaning the word had in Greek literature at that time. Therefore the word cannot have that meaning in Old Testament Greek. Nothing can be plainer than that Greek literature at the time the Old Testament was rendered into the Greek Septuagint did not give to *aiōn* the meaning of endless duration."³

THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

An objective consideration of the facts of Scripture shows that the essence of *olam* (and therefore of *aiōn* as well, its equivalent, whether in the Septuagint or in the New Tes-

3. *ibid.*, pp.20,21,26,27.

tament) is simply *duration*. As Vladimir Gelesnoff wrote, "The Hebrew *olam* is derived from a primitive root meaning to veil from sight, to conceal. A conspectus of the passages proves that *olam* expresses *duration*, the whole time during which a person, thing, or state, exists It may, therefore, be rendered [correctly as to interpretative sense if not to essential meaning] by any term expressing the duration required.

"Mankind began with Adam. As at present constituted, it will have an end. Hence, if *olam* is used of persons, it expresses their whole life, or life-time; if a succession of generations, or the state of a people, mankind, or creation, then a period of time, an extended period of time, commensurate with the specific application (e.g., Prov.22:28; Gen.6:4; Psal.77:5, 143:3; Joshua 24:2)

"The Hebrew servant whose ear was bored became a bondman 'for ever,' that is, *for life* (Ex.21:6) 'For ever' in 1 Chronicles 22:10 covers the forty years of Solomon's reign; in 1 Kings 8:13 and 9:3, it is the time when the temple was in existence Further passages such as Ecclesiastes 1:4 and Psalm 78:69 which speak of the earth abiding 'for ever,' when compared with passages such as Matthew 5:18, 2 Peter 3:7-10, Revelation 21:1, make evident that the 'for ever' of both the Psalmist and Ecclesiastes is coeval with the continuance of the present earth, from its making in Genesis 1:3-31 to its dissolution in Revelation 21:1

"The crowning proof that the idea of endlessness is foreign to *olam* is afforded by the phrase 'for ever and ever.' The English reader may suppose the second 'ever' to be the same word as the first. But it is not. The Hebrew is *va-ed*. As the Septuagint translates it, 'and still,' and as the translators have so rendered it in scores of places, we will translate it 'beyond' or 'further.' Now, if *olam* meant endlessness as some say it does, why reinforce it by adding 'beyond'? Nor is this all. Further study discloses that even

olam va-ed ('for ever and ever') does not refer to infinitude. The Psalmist says: 'I will keep Your law continually, forever [i.e., 'for the eon *and beyond*'; CV, Psa.119:44].' Now, as our Lord plainly indicates the passing away of the law (Matt.5:17,18), it follows that law observance is over once the law is done away. The terminal point of the Ages is hid from the ancient prophets. Beyond the era of Israel's restoration they see dimly a farther stretch. But it is too distant to discern the faintest outline or catch a feeble glimmer of its glory. As a huge orb of light appears to a spectator myriads of miles away a mere tiny speck, remote futurity to the Hebrew seers is a far-off, vague, indistinct something which they style *beyond*. It was reserved for the apostle to the nations to observe the age of ages at close range and unveil its consummative glory in his own marvelous unfoldings."⁴

"Yahweh, He shall reign for the eon *and further*" (Ex. 15:18). The reign of Yahweh, in the Person of Christ, will continue not "for ever," but until the consummation, when He gives up the kingdom to His God and Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Similarly, the mercy of Yahweh is "for the eon *and further*" (Psa.52:8). The Scripture discloses a sinless past and anticipates a flawless future. Hence the provision of mercy "for the eon and further," makes it coextensive with the existence of offense while circumscribing the time during which it will be needed.

The Hebrew *olam va-ed*, and its Greek equivalent "for the eons of the eons," then, convey the idea of terminable, though chronologically indefinite and unrevealed duration.

The idea of the nouns (*olam*, or *aiōn*) is always "[for the] duration" *of that which is in view*. The duration which is in view must always be judged from the context, or from the nature of things, otherwise known. Therefore, the adjectival idea is, "*of or pertaining to the duration* (of that which

4. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.2, pp.238,239,243,244.

is in view)." In some cases, especially in the Hebrew Scriptures, the duration which is in view (whether used of the past or future) is not at all referring to the epochal eons (i.e., those eons which, abiding for long periods, correspond to the system [or world] which, during any certain time, prevails on earth; e.g., Eph.2:2).

Often, the references are only to a much briefer duration, such as the length of time when a people lived in a certain region (Joshua 24:2); the brief duration of Jonah's experience inside the great fish (Jonah 2:6); or the duration of the remainder of a slave's lifetime in which he would serve his master (Deut.15:17). Yet no such usages or any others affect the meaning of *olam* itself; they only show that it is used in reference to many diverse durations.

There does not seem to be anything in the word itself that would *definitively* preclude at least the possibility that it *could* be used in reference to an unending duration (since, after all, all the word says is "duration"). Nonetheless, as Brother Gelesnoff's article points out, when *olam* is used *epochally* (i.e., of long-continuing duration), its references are still governed by the words "and further," even as by the subjects to which both these phrases ("for the *olam*" and, "and further") refer, namely, the millennial kingdom, and the new earth which follows it.

The primary epochal usage of *olam*, points to the Messianic kingdom, which, as we later learn, is of one thousand years' duration. Yet when the words "and further" are added, we are brought to the period of which Isaiah prophesies (Isa.66:22), the period which Peter confirms (2 Peter 3:13) and John sees in vision (Rev.21, 22), the *epochal* new heavens and new earth.

We know that the apostle John's vision is, indeed, of an epochal period, not of endless duration. We know this simply because while John, in Revelation 21 and 22, speaks of the reign of Christ, of saints, and of kings of the earth, while affirming the presence of the second death, Paul, in

1 Corinthians 15, speaks of Christ reigning until He gives up the reign (the kingdom); indeed, of the time when *all* sovereignty and authority is nullified (which therefore includes that of both the saints and the kings of the earth), and even of the time when death itself is abolished, the glorious day when all will finally have that life of which Christ is the Firstfruit, all unto the end that God may be All in all (1 Cor.15:28). Just as surely as the abolition of slavery entails freedom for those formerly enslaved, the abolition of death entails life for those formerly dead.

Indeed, no sane and unprejudiced mind will claim otherwise. A sane and unprejudiced mind, however, is the gift of God. *All* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are *concealed* in Him (Col.2:3). We cannot enlighten others, though *God* may enlighten others through us. If most cannot accept our testimony, we can only assure ourselves that we are simply believing what the Scriptures actually say.

CONFUSION CONCERNING WORD MEANING

The fact is that God will one day abolish death and become All in all (1 Cor.15:26,28). Such a glorious consideration itself precludes any legitimate claim that these words in question, *olam* and *aiōn*, may sometimes refer to an unending duration of punishment.

Yet nothing is more common than for theologians and professors to rehearse a variety of passages in which these words in question appear, which, to the popular mind (including that of most scholars), indeed, seem to refer to endlessness. Then the claim is made that *olam* (or *aiōn*) "has a wide range of meaning," which is to say a plurality of meanings, including the idea of endlessness, whether in reference to the past or future.

Scholars are correct when they stress that meaning must be determined by context; yet they err when, failing to distinguish special usage from essential meaning, they claim that word meaning may well be plural and is to be deter-

mined by "the context," or, more accurately, by the presuppositions which they bring to the context. Since ordinary believers have no idea what the truth may be about such things, they simply accept the scholars' word. Yet if the scholars are either bound by tradition, or simply do not think fully logically on these questions, they will be confident that they are correct, and will dismiss our views merely as the suppositions of "heretics."

Yet it is according to the *presuppositions* of most that truth is determined, presuppositions which make it seem correct that these time words sometimes refer to endlessness (hence the confused claim that they sometimes "mean" everlasting or eternal).

On the other hand, if we can show that *olam* and *aiōn* never *mean* "endless," we ourselves need to realize that it does not follow from this that it is simply impossible for these words ever to *refer to* the endless past or future. Yet even so, neither does it follow that even if there is nothing that intrinsically precludes these words themselves from being used to make such a reference, that they are ever, in fact, so used.

Indeed we are far from suggesting that they are ever so used. Any exegesis in favor of such a claim is but the reflection of a failure to recognize that the notion of "eternity past" is not a scriptural theme, and that, with reference to the future, the Scriptures do not use these expressions of any time extending beyond that of the period of John's vision of the new earth. Such false claims concerning *olam* and *aiōn* as well are but the fruit of the foundational error of everlasting punishment, of a failure to see that, in soteriology (the doctrine of salvation), while the Arminians are correct as to the compass of those for whom Christ salvifically died (namely, all mankind), just as surely, the Calvinists are correct as to the gracious nature of the evangel, how it is that the sacrifice of Christ effects salvation for all for whom it was designed.

J.R.C.

ADVERSARY

IN this examination of the Adversary and his role in God's purpose, it is imperative to clearly understand his origin, the reasons for his existence, and finally, his judgment. All this is undertaken with great care, for the basic reason behind this enquiry is to establish the wisdom, might and righteousness of Satan's Creator.

It has been declared, somewhat vehemently, that one might compare Satan to "a chained dog" who, during the term of his confinement, is not permitted to interfere during the thousand years of glory when the nation of Israel will reign with Christ. Rejoicing in the declaration that "... the God of peace will be crushing Satan under your feet swiftly" (Rom.16:20), nevertheless, such emotive language is unwise. We have not the least bit of sympathy for this one, and we are not unconscious or indifferent to the suffering which he has wrought among humanity. But, if we exercise the spiritual perception granted to us through the spirit of God in understanding why he exists, then we will be guarded most effectively against his lies and deception.

Speaking plainly in the sanctuary concerning Satan, our Lord declared; "He was a man-killer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, for truth is not in him. Whenever he may be speaking a lie, he is speaking of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

There was no hatred in our gracious Lord as He spoke these words. Such a consideration is unthinkable and most unworthy among any of the ecclesia who are called in grace. He was stating a fact! Who could possibly know more of Satan?

In the following thoughts, three aspects concerning the origin, purpose, and conclusion of the need for an adversary are presented for earnest consideration. Whatever else we may learn of Satan, let it not be fear, but respect for one placed by God for a necessary purpose. Michael, the chief messenger fully understood this when, not daring to bring on a calumniating judgment on Satan, said, "May the Lord rebuke you" (Jude 1:9). Above all else, let us recognise the status of Satan. In opposing the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, he must be very mighty indeed!

ALL OUT OF GOD

"From the beginning is the Adversary sinning" (1 John 3:8). Even this statement does not trace Satan's origin. for this we must turn to Paul's declaration that God "... is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11). further, "... that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be glory for the eons!" (Rom.11:36).

The origin of the Adversary is traced clearly for us in the words of Isaiah 45:6-9,

*I am Yahweh, and there is no other.
Former of light, and Creator of darkness,
Maker of good, and Creator of evil,
I, Yahweh, make all these things.
Drip down from above, O heavens,
And let the skies distil righteousness.
Let the earth open up,
Let salvation bud,
And let righteousness sprout together with it.
I, Yahweh, I create it.
Would anyone contend with his Former?
Earthenware of the ground with its artificer?*

"The basic truth of divine revelation, that *all is of God* (Rom.11:36) is so severe a strain on the faith of Christendom, that men instinctively reject it, excusing their unfaith

on the ground that it is repulsive to their spiritual natures. They seek to shelve it by making the devil the source of all evil, yet they fail to tell us how the enemy could originate it, unless the power or capacity were given him by his Creator.

"We sympathize heartily with the motive of those who shrink from associating evil with God, because we find that their conception of evil and sin is such that they cannot believe God's plain statements concerning them. There is dire need, therefore, of further searching the Scriptures on this subject."¹

When we seriously accept that Satan's origin, as adversary, is in the counsel and foreknowledge of God, then this should cause us to rely on the satisfactory and glorious outcome of the consummation, when God is "All in all" (1 Cor.15:28). We should also reflect on the degrading fable of that much-vaunted, arrogance of "free will," or "self-determination." To all proponents of such heresy and those who, helplessly confused and bewildered, repeatedly beseech, "Why does God Allow . . . ?" we soberly point to the apostle's indictment:

"For God's indignation is being revealed from heaven on all the irreverence and injustice of men who are retaining the truth in injustice, because that which is known of God is apparent among them, for God manifests it to them. For His invisible attributes are described from the creation of the world, being apprehended by His achievements, besides His imperceptible power and divinity, for them to be defenseless, because, knowing God, not as God do they glorify or thank Him, but vain were they made in their reasonings, and darkened is their unintelligent heart.

"Alleging themselves to be wise, they are made stupid, and they change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of a corruptible human being and fly-

1. A. E. Knoch: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD, p.13.

ing creatures and quadrupeds and reptiles. Wherefore God gives them over, in the lusts of their hearts, to the uncleanness of dishonoring their bodies among themselves, those who alter the truth of God into the lie, and are venerated, and offer divine service to the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for the eons! Amen! (Rom.1:18-25).

In determining Satan's origin, we must expose the lie that he was created an angel of light. As a woman travails in pain, just so, God's hand travailed in His forming this one (Job 26:13):

*By His spirit the heavens are made seemly,
His hand travailed with the fugitive serpent.*

Finally, when our Lord was led up into the wilderness to be tried by the Adversary, this and the subsequent accounts, clearly indicate that here was no trial of the superiority of our Lord over the Slanderer, but rather was it a demonstration of God's loving provision of His Son, "... the Beloved, in Whom I delight" (Matt.3:17).

WHY A NEED FOR OPPOSITION?

In the sylvan perfection of Eden our ancient parents lived in a superb state. Everything around them was described by God Himself as being "good." Never hungry, never ailing, and privileged to walk and talk in such beautiful surroundings with their Maker! Yet in all this splendor there is no record of any expression of thankfulness! But this is now quite understandable, for without contrast there could be no appreciation.

What may the celestials learn from mortality? A great deal! Witnessing the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, some of these hailed His humanity with exultation and could not contain their joy! With the briefest glimpse, they learn that through the birth of this Babe, God's great purpose of blessing will flow to the utmost bounds of creation!

During His ministry, our Lord came to realize that the

kingdom was rejected. Instantly, He rejoices! "In this hour He exults in the holy spirit and said, 'I am acclaiming Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for Thou dost conceal these things from the wise and intelligent and Thou dost reveal them to minors. Yea, Father, seeing that thus it became a delight in front of Thee'" (Luke 10:21).

Thus far, we have not even remarked on the influence of Satan! To what extent is he necessary? The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was created by God, but was used by Satan to achieve God's purpose! God's judgment was plain. "Yahweh Elohim instructed the human, saying, From every tree of the garden, you may eat, yea, eat. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you must never eat from it, for on the day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying" (Gen.2:16,17).

In consequence of a disobedience which the humans could not possibly avoid, all humanity are thus disabled and dying! With one stroke, Satan has crippled his victims! But, is that strictly accurate? Many of his deeds were, in keeping with his character, evil, and opposed to God's *revealed* will. *But what of God's intention?* As stated above, many are loathe to associate God with any evil, but as previously noted, God is the Maker of good, and Creator of evil!

The point being made is that while Satan is *used* on many an occasion, we must never lose sight of the fact that his is almost a minor role in God's purpose! For example: God creates evil! God ensures that humans learn the knowledge of good and evil! God purposes that Israel reject the kingdom! As the apostle Peter perceived, Christ was, "... given up in the counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23).

Directly, Satan is *used* by our Lord during His ministry. "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Do not I choose you, the twelve, and one of you is an adversary?' Now He said it of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, for this man was about to give Him up, being one of the twelve" (John 6:70,71).

It is extremely important to note that this is the one and only recorded occasion when Satan possessed a human! How profound to note that Jesus, Who had commanded demons practically every day of His ministry, is heard to declare to Judas, "What you are doing, do more quickly," and this, when He knew that Satan had entered into that man (John 13:27).

Our Lord subjected Peter and the disciples for discipline to Satan (Luke 22:31). Paul urged the Corinthians to give up one of their numbers to Satan, "... for the extermination of the flesh" (1 Cor.5:5).

Through a horrifying persecution of the Jewish nation, millions have perished! The motive was ruthless extermination! Genocide! But this same dreadful crime has served to drive the people back to the land which God has promised. Now, it would seem that prophecy is about to unfold the final chapter in preparation for the promised fulfillment of their glory! Yet, there is so much more suffering in store for this people!

As stated, the celestials have so much to learn concerning God's love. The greatest example of this has been provided at Golgotha. The full meaning of so great a sacrifice has yet to be unfolded. We are those who are entrusted with this privilege, for, "... in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Eph.2:7).

MESSENGERS OF SATAN

"All the opposition of Satan's messengers will be transmuted into blessing. It is the background for the revelation of God's grace and love. In the case of Paul, and in the present spiritual dispensation, *evil* 'angels' are needed, and physical infirmity and distress, and outrages and necessities and persecution for Christ's sake, as a background on which to display God's power (cf 2 Cor.12:7-10)

"There is great comfort in the thought that Satan's career seems to be nearly concluded. He will have his greatest triumph in the great tribulation, but the time will be short. Again, at the end of the kingdom, he has a brief season. But these are concerned with the terrestrial sphere. We will be above that when we are with the Lord. He is aware that his season is brief after he is cast out of heaven (Rev. 12:12). He may do us much apparent harm now, but it will all be of eventual benefit. Moreover, as judges of messengers, the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet swiftly (Rom. 16:20). But at the consummation, he, as well as all the messengers, will be included in the great peace proclamation, and God will be All in *all*."²

In Scripture it is declared that during the thousand years, Christ will rule, not with a shepherd's crook, but with an iron club (Rev. 2:27). A glimpse into the stern measures of that day may be gained from the incident concerning Ananias and his wife, Sapphira. In the kingdom, justice will be swift and precise. These conditions clearly illustrate that while Satan is bound for a thousand years; and while humanity will enjoy a glorious time of peace and plenty, there is still stubbornness.

Even at the conclusion of those blissful years, when Satan is released, he has no difficulty in mounting the greatest deception of all. Mobilizing nations from the four corners of the earth, "... their numbers being as the sand of the sea," this mighty army is crushed by God, and Satan and the wild beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire for the eons of the eons (Rev. 20:7-10).

"If Satan, created to oppose God, were doomed to eternal torment, then we may indeed question the justice of God. If the Adversary, formed to destroy, is finally annihi-

2. A. E. Knoch: *Unsearchable Riches*, vol. 50, pp. 73, 74; 75, 76.

lated, then indeed we may wonder if God has done right. So long as we are held by either of these alternatives, we are almost forced to shield the character of God by falling back on the assumption that He is not responsible for the creation of His adversary, and thus we unconsciously drag Him from His throne. The doctrine of the deity of the devil is the rational recoil from God's supposed inability to bring His creation to a successful consummation"³

THE DIVINE INTENTION

It has already been stated that God's hand *travailed* in forming Satan, but it must not be inferred from this that there was any imperfection! From the incident concerning Job or Judas Iscariot, we can plainly discern that his role in opposition was certainly not out of control. By no means! Since we are not told of his reactions at the conclusion of these incidents, we may only assume that he was not one bit affected. He must have witnessed the exaltation of Christ Jesus among the celestials, yet there is no evidence that this impressed him or changed his bitter opposition.

Yet all subscribes to God's intention. None but God and His beloved Son is able to transform every opposing effort into that which is essential to the purpose of the eons.

When all, both in the heavens and on the earth, are headed up in Christ (Eph.1:10), and all enemies are brought into the reconciliation established through the blood of Christ's cross (Col.1:20), then Satan also will join in the joyful acclamation, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" (Phil.2:10,11). This ends all need for an adversary, and every opposer will be included in the second "all" of those exultant words, "God . . . All in all!"

Donald Fielding

3. A. E. Knoch: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD, p.222.

THERE WAS A DAY

THE DAY of Job 1:6-12 and that of Job 2:1-6 were to have profound effects. Other days play important parts in Job's life, such as the feasting days of his own sons (1:4,5) and the day of disaster (1:13-22). The day of Job's birth commands much of his attention in his initial outcries (*cf* 3:3-6). But the days when the sons of Elohim stationed themselves before Yahweh, with the Adversary in their midst, were especially significant in the process of the shaping of Job.

The Hebrew word for *Adversary* is, in its English transliteration, *Satan*. This one is seldom recognized as a son of God who has to report to Him in heaven at stated times, just as evil is not acknowledged as a servant of God which is carrying out His purpose. Neither Job nor his associates realized this, because they were ignorant of these celestial sessions. But we, and all the readers of this book, have a tremendous advantage because we are led behind the scenes at the start. The usual idea of Satan is quite the reverse of this. He is supposed to be the unchallenged lord of "Hell," the one who thwarts God's plans, and, indeed, wins away from Him the great majority of mankind, whom he will torment eternally after death. But here he is seen mingling with the sons of God and subservient to Yahweh.

Twice, the Adversary stations himself before Yahweh on a certain day (Job 1:6; 2:1), with the routine repeated point for point. First Yahweh asks about Job, and commends him. Satan slanders Job and is allowed to test him within certain limits:

There was a day when the sons of Elohim would come to station themselves before Yahweh, and the Adversary came

also in their midst. Yahweh said to the Adversary, From where are you coming? Then the Adversary answered Yahweh, and said, From going to and fro in the earth and from walking about in it.

Yahweh said to the Adversary, Have you set your heart on My servant Job? For there is no one like him on earth, a man flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil. Then the Adversary answered Yahweh and said, Does Job fear Elohim gratuitously? Have you yourself not hedged him about, and about his house and about all that is his all around? The work of his hands you have blessed, and his cattle breach forth throughout the countryside. Nevertheless, now put forth your hand and touch all that is his. He shall assuredly scorn you to your face.

Hence Yahweh said to the Adversary, Behold, all that he has is in your hand, but you must not put forth your hand upon himself. Then the Adversary went forth from Yahweh's presence (Job 1:6-12; cf 2:1-5).

The first part of both sessions is practically the same. In response to the formal question, "From where are you coming?" the Adversary reports that he had gone to and fro in the earth and walked about on it (1:7; 2:2). Then Yahweh asks if he had set his heart on Job, whom He commends highly as without an equal on earth for flawlessness and faithfulness and uprightness, besides fearing God and withdrawing from evil.

Then there is a change. In the second session Yahweh adds, "And he still is holding fast to his integrity, though you would incite Me against him to swallow him up gratuitously" (2:3).

The word *gratuitously* is taken out of Satan's previous accusation, when the Adversary had said, "Does Job fear Elohim *gratuitously*?" (1:9). This first term in Satan's charge is the key to his opposition, as well as vital to the whole discussion. It comes from the stem GRACE. The AV renderings,

though unnecessarily numerous, are suggestive: *without a cause, causeless, to cost nothing, without cost, free, freely, innocent, for nothing, for naught, in vain, without wages.*

The Adversary's question amounts to an accusation that Job fears God for what he gets out of it, for the profit there is in it, because he earns God's blessing by means of it. In other words, Job's self-interest is the motive, rather than a regard for the Deity Himself. This is a deadly defect in human character. It behooves each one to discover his deepest motive and see that self is not usurping the place of the Supreme.

Satan himself develops his charge, and gives us the contrary of *gratuitous*. He insists that God protects Job and his family, and prospers his doing and his acquiring, and *that* is the reason why Job fears God. To test it, let Yahweh "touch," or destroy, what Job has, and his reverential fear would turn to the reviling of open scorn.

This is the work for which the Adversary was created, and he seems to be very clever at it. Note that he did not make the mistake of Job's associates and charge Job with failure in his relations to his fellows, for God Himself had testified to Job's uprightness in that account. Satan does not even deny that Job *fears* God. He simply insinuates that his *motive* is mercenary.

Job's attitude Godward is comprehended in the one word *fear* (1:1). This is confirmed by the testimony of God (1:8; 2:3) and the Adversary (1:9). Moreover, Job's acts showed how extraordinarily fearful he was. Even when there was no evidence that his sons had done anything amiss, Job is afraid that they may have offended God in their hearts, and so he offers sacrifices for suppositious, hypothetical sins. This may usually be looked upon as a proof of Job's perfect piety. And, indeed, it was far, far better than indifference or callousness. But it was not the spontaneous, heartfelt, fearless adoration which becomes the consummation.



THE COUNCIL OF HEAVEN

The outstanding feature of the Prologue to Job is the two sessions of the Council of Heaven. The Lord is surrounded by "His ministers who do his pleasure" (*cf* Psa. 103:21). The sons of God are powers attending upon God as a council of officers upon a king. They are functionaries through whom God's government is carried on, and they come to report. Among them came the Adversary.

The word "Adversary" is a title of an office, not the name of an individual. This officer comes with the other sons of God, and there is nothing to support the idea that he "crept" in. His office is that of opposition and accusation; the word implies that he is adverse to the saints in a way similar to the responsibility of an officer or supervisor toward those under his charge.

In the present case the Adversary describes his office as the inspection of earth; the words "From going to and fro in the earth and from walking about in it" are in themselves descriptive of such an office. That they do not imply restlessness is evident from the fact that the same phrase is used of the "eyes of Yahweh" (2 Chron. 16:9), and are similar to the words in Zechariah 1:10, 11 and 6:7, which refer to the spirits which carry out the divine mandates.

The Adversary's action against Job, though malign in its effect, is not prompted by malignity. To be suspicious is the function of an inspector; and he only does his duty in suggesting a possible flaw in the apparent piety of Job. The position of the Adversary is much like that of the "Devil's Advocate" in the usage of the Roman Church, who has the function of making opposition to the canonization of a saint, lest any flaw should be overlooked.

When the council reassembles and the Adversary proposes a yet more implacable trial (Job 2:1-5), he acts in

the spirit of a prosecutor who concentrates his energies to make a trial intensely searching lest it should prove one degree short of being exhaustive. Neither do the Lord's words, "you would incite Me against him" (2:3) imply malevolence. They are just the remark one would expect from a superior to a subordinate officer when investigation has shown the suspicions of the latter to be unfounded.

DISASTERS

Armed with the Divine decree, the Adversary went forth on his errand, and by concerted action of the varied forces at his disposal brings upon Job a series of disasters, succeeding one another with bewildering rapidity:

Now the day came when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their brother, the firstborn. And a messenger came to Job and said, The oxen were plowing, and the jennies were grazing at their sides, when the Sabeans swooped down and took them. Then they smote the lads with the edge of the sword, yet I escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you.

This one was still speaking when another came and said, The fire of Elohim, it fell from the heavens, it consumed the small cattle and the lads, and it devoured them, yet I escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you.

This one was still speaking when another came and said, The Chaldeans, they formed three bands, and they merged on the camels and took them. Then they smote the lads with the edge of the sword, yet I escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you.

This one was still speaking when another came and said, Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their brother, the firstborn, when behold, a great wind came from across the wilderness, and it assaulted the four corners of the house. It fell upon the young people, and they died, yet I escaped, but I myself alone, to tell it to you (Job 1:13-19).

V. Gelesnoff



JOB'S RESPONSE

Then Job arose, tore his robe and sheared his head. He fell to the earth and worshiped. And he said, Naked I came forth from the belly of my mother, and naked I shall return there. Yahweh, He gives, and Yahweh, He takes away. Blessed be the Name of Yahweh. In all this, Job neither sinned nor ascribed anything improper to Elohim (Job.1:20-22).

The day came when the Adversary executed the decree concerning Job's estate. Four rapid blows fell, the news of each being quickly brought to Job. First, through the agency of captors, the oxen and jennies were taken, and the lads smitten with the sword. Immediately upon this, the fire of Elohim consumed among the small cattle and lads assigned to their care. Overtaking this situation were raiding Chaldeans who took the camels, smiting the lads charged to them. Suddenly a great wind swept across the wilderness striking the house in which Job's children were feasting. Thus all that Job had been given was gone.

Job received the reports of these evils almost simultaneously. His reaction is one of great sorrow, yet accompanied by worship, blessing the name of Yahweh and acknowledging and accepting the glory of His authority, both to give and to take away as is good in His eyes.

Job was most moral and religious. Yet even in this outstanding response to the disasters brought upon him, we must conclude there were deficiencies. At heart he had not yet a full acquaintance with God and His ways. This lack will become more evident as the account proceeds and the days assigned to him (cf Job 42:17) unfold.

E. H. Clayton

SAMUEL AT GILGAL

IT WAS AT GILGAL, "on the eastern fringe of Jericho," where the Israelites encamped after they had crossed the Jordan. "And those twelve stones they had taken from the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal," so as to remind future generations, "saying, On dry ground Israel crossed over this Jordan, for Yahweh your Elohim dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, just as Yahweh your Elohim did to the Sea of Weeds, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of Yahweh, that it is steadfast, and that you may fear Yahweh your Elohim all the days." And it was at Gilgal that "the manna ceased . . . when they ate of the yield of the land" (Joshua 4:19-24; 5:12).

Thus this site, hallowed by venerated associations, had become a shrine for Israel; as a national center, it was farthest from the Philistine power. Gilgal was situated in the rift valley, a thousand feet below sea level; so Samuel literally "descended to Gilgal" whenever he went there, year by year, as a circuit judge (*cf* 1 Sam. 7:16; 15:12).

THE KINGSHIP RENEWED

After Yahweh had given the victory over the Ammonite, "Samuel said to the people, Come and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingship. So all the people went to Gilgal, and there at Gilgal they confirmed Saul as king before Yahweh. Then they sacrificed there sacrifices of peace offer-

ings before Yahweh; and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced there very much" (1 Sam.11:14,15).

At Mizpah, Saul had been selected by lot and had thus been designated as Yahweh's choice in a public confirmation of the secret anointing of Saul by Samuel (*cf* 1 Sam. 10:1,17); however, he was not supported by all (10:27). But for his battle against the Ammonite, the spirit of Elohim had prospered over Saul and had transformed him into a real leader and commander of men (11:6).

Now at Gilgal, Samuel's words, "Let us . . . renew the kingship," show unanimous support for Saul; he was accepted by the whole nation of Israel. The ceremony at Gilgal with its sacrifices of peace offerings implies reconciliation. There is no more opposition, so "all the people went to Gilgal . . . and confirmed Saul as king *before Yahweh*." Everyone knew that what had happened had been Yahweh's work and had not been done by human strength or ingenuity, and so they all rejoiced very much.

WITNESS IS YAHWEH!

"Samuel said to all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened to your voice in all that you said to me, and I have given you a king to reign over you. Now here is the king walking before you while *I* am old and greyhaired, and my sons, here they are with you. As for me, I have walked before you from my youth until this day. Here I am; answer [i.e., testify] against me in front of Yahweh and in front of His anointed. Whose bull have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I exploited, or whom have I maltreated? From whose hand have I taken a sheltering gift that I should obscure my eyes with it. Answer against me, and I shall restore it to you.

"They replied, You have not exploited us, and you have not maltreated us, and you have not taken anything from any man's hand. Then he said to them, Witness is Yahweh

among you, and witness is His anointed this day, that you have not found anything in my hand. The people replied, Witness is He!" (1 Sam.12:1-5).

When Israel's tribal elders had asked Samuel, "Appoint for us a king," he had warned them about the customary rights of a king: "He shall take your sons . . . he shall take your daughters . . . he shall take your fields . . . he shall take the tenth . . ." (1 Sam.8:4,5,10-18). Samuel had used the verbs "take" and "take the tenth" in order to describe the social changes that would occur in Israel, due to conscription, forced labor, and taxation to support royal pomp and extravagance.

Now, at the meeting in Gilgal, Samuel used the verb "take" as a keyword in order to emphasize that *his* period of rule had been marked by justice and equity. So he asked his audience: "Whose bull . . . whose donkey have I taken? From whose hand have I taken a sheltering gift that I should obscure my eyes with it? Whom have I exploited . . . or maltreated?" Samuel was now old and greyhaired, and he had walked before Israel from his youth until this day. So he asked them to testify against him [if they could], and he would restore anything that he might have taken. But the people replied: "You have not exploited us, and you have not maltreated us, and you have not taken anything from any man's hand."

In his capacity as a judge, Samuel had been entirely just, never favoring the rich and the powerful by taking a bribe from them. His strict uprightness was established before Yahweh, as the divine Witness, and before the king, as the human witness; and so Israel acknowledged Samuel's innocence, saying, "Witness is He!" By referring to Yahweh's anointed in this context, Samuel was laying stress on the king's responsibility now to represent Yahweh as an obedient and faithful servant.

THEY CRIED OUT TO YAHWEH

"Then Samuel said to the people: . . . And now stand by; let me enter into judgment with you before Yahweh and tell you all the righteous deeds of Yahweh that He has performed *for you and your fathers*" (1 Sam.12:6,7). Here Samuel was calling each person to identify himself by faith with his ancestors who had experienced Yahweh's deliverance.

In Egypt "*your fathers cried out to Yahweh*. Then Yahweh sent Moses and Aaron; and He brought your fathers forth from Egypt and made them dwell in this place. Yet they *forgot Yahweh* their Elohim" (1 Sam.12:8,9). So "He sold them into the hand of their enemies round about" (Judges 2:14).

"Then they cried out to Yahweh, saying, We have sinned, for we forsook Yahweh and served the Baalim and the Ashtaroth. Yet now, *rescue us* from the hand of our enemies, and we shall serve You. So Yahweh sent Jerub-baal [Gideon], Barak, Jephthah, and Samson; and He rescued you" (1 Sam. 12:10,11).

"Yahweh raised up judges who saved them from the hand of their robbers; yet at the death of a judge it occurred that they backslid and became even more corrupt than their fathers, going after other elohim" (Judges 2:16,19). Thus, during the centuries of the judges, Israel's history was continually repeating itself: Time and again they forgot Yahweh; He let them suffer from the hand of their enemies, until they cried out to Him, "Rescue us!" After Yahweh had saved them from their constraints, they would serve Him until the judge died; and then they would backslide again.

So, in the vicissitudes of his life, each Israelite could find rescue from his own constraints by pondering over the righteous deeds of Yahweh that He had performed *for him and for his fathers*; he might remember the words of Psalm 107:

"Acclaim Yahweh, for He is good,

For His benignity is eonian

They strayed in a wilderness, in a desolation . . .

Famished and thirsty . . .

And *they cried out to Yahweh* in their distress.

From their constraints, *He rescued them* . . .

Because they had rebelled

Against the sayings of El,

And had spurned the counsel of the Supreme,

He brought their heart into submission with toil.

They stumbled, and there was no one to help.

Then *they cried out to Yahweh* in their distress:

He saved them from their constraints;

He brought them forth from darkness

and the shadow of death,

And He pulled away their bonds

Let them acclaim Yahweh for His benignity

And His marvelous works to the sons of humanity.

And let them sacrifice sacrifices of acclamation

And recount His deeds with jubilant song.

Those going down to the sea in ships . . .

[In] a tempestuous wind . . .

Then *they cried out to Yahweh* in their distress,

And He brought them forth from their constraints

He recast the tempest into stillness

Let them acclaim Yahweh for His benignity . . .

And let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people,

And in the dwellings of the elders,

let them praise Him

Then He shall bless them

The upright see it, and they rejoice . . .

Whoever is wise, let him observe these things;

Let them consider the benignities of Yahweh."

SAMUEL'S WARNING

In his address to the people at Gilgal, Samuel contin-

ued, saying, "When you saw that Nahash king of the sons of Ammon advanced against you, you said to me, No, for a king should reign over us—though Yahweh your Elohim is your King. And now, behold the king whom you have chosen, for whom you have asked. Here Yahweh has appointed a king over you. If you fear Yahweh, serve Him, hearken to His voice, and do not defy the bidding of Yahweh, then you will be following Yahweh your Elohim, both you and the king who reigns over you. But if you should not hearken to the voice of Yahweh and rebel against the bidding of Yahweh, then the hand of Yahweh will be against you and against your king, as it was against your fathers" (1 Sam.12:12-15).

When all the tribal elders of Israel had come to Samuel at Ramah and had asked for a king, they had said to him, "*You* are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways" (1 Sam.8:4,5). We may assume that the elders had been well aware of the oppression of the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuben by the Ammonite king Nahash who later encamped against Jabesh-gilead (*cf* 1 Sam.11:1,2). So the request for instituting a monarchy was also a response to foreign military pressures.

In his speech at Gilgal, Samuel accepted the fact of the monarchy; but he urged obedience to Yahweh on the part of the king and the people: "If you fear Yahweh, serve Him, hearken to His voice, and do not defy the bidding of Yahweh, then you will be following Yahweh your Elohim, *both you and the king* who reigns over you." And Samuel added that the hand of Yahweh would be *against them and against their king*, if they should not hearken to His voice and rebel against His bidding. The ominous words of this last sentence implied the possibility that both the people and their king might be swept away (*cf* 1 Sam.12:25).

A THUNDERSTORM AT WHEAT HARVEST

Samuel wanted to make sure that his warnings were heed-

ed with all the solemnity they deserved. So he asked Yahweh for a sign of thunder and rain, since such weather conditions were almost unheard of at the time of the wheat harvest in Palestine (i.e., in May and June). He said to the people:

"Now then, stand by and see this great thing that Yahweh will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today? I shall call upon Yahweh that He may send thunderclaps and rain. *Then give thought* and see that your evil deed which you have done, is too great in the eyes of Yahweh, when you requested a king for yourselves. Then Samuel called upon Yahweh, and Yahweh sent thunderclaps and rain on that day, so that all the people feared Yahweh and Samuel exceedingly" (1 Sam.12:16-18).

The divine sign of thunder and rain at harvest time was a demonstration of Yahweh's support for His servant, Samuel the prophet. Now all the people were so struck with fear, both of Yahweh and Samuel, that they acknowledged their wrongdoing and asked Samuel to pray for them. "The people all said to Samuel, Pray about your servants to Yahweh your Elohim that we must not die, for we have added to all our sins the evil deed of requesting a king for ourselves" (12:19), thus implying: We have been ignoring the fact that *Yahweh is our King* (cf 12:12).

YAHWEH SHALL NOT ABANDON YOU

"Samuel replied to the people, Do not fear! You yourselves have done all this evil; only do not withdraw from following Yahweh; rather you must serve Yahweh with all your heart. Do not be taken away by the service to ineffectual idols which neither benefit nor rescue since they are ineffectual. For the sake of His great Name, *Yahweh shall not abandon His people*; for Yahweh is disposed to make you His people" (1 Sam.12:20-22).

Samuel's warning, reinforced by the divine sign of thun-

der and rain, had brought the people to repentance; and they "feared Yahweh and Samuel exceedingly" (12:18). Now the prophet's words brought reassurance: "Do not fear! . . . Do not withdraw from following Yahweh!" (i.e., Beware of idolatry; cf verse 21). And Samuel added: "Serve Yahweh with all your heart!" Although Israel was a fickle, backsliding nation, Yahweh would not abandon them, since He was disposed to make them His people.

Samuel promised: "I will serve Yahweh and will direct you in the good and upright way." His commitment was so strong that he suggested, "Far be it from me to *sin against Yahweh by forbearing to pray about you*" (1 Sam.12:23). And he added: "Then devoutly fear Yahweh; you must serve Him faithfully with all your heart, for consider what great things He has done for you" (verse 24).

Samuel the prophet concluded his speech at Gilgal with the words: "But if you do evil, yea evil, both you and your king shall be swept away" (1 Sam.12:25). Yet Yahweh would never abandon them, even when they finally lost their land and their monarchy and spent seventy years in the Babylonian exile (cf 2 Chron.36:21).

BE PRAYING UNINTERMITTINGLY!

We may ask ourselves, do *we* fail of the ideal (i.e., do we sin) by forbearing to pray for one another "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving [us] a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him . . ."? "Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!" (Eph.1:17; 3:20,21).

H.H.R.

(To be continued)

FAITH AND RECOGNITION

IN seeking righteousness and being ever zealous [in the things] of God, Israel has acted apart from faith in Christ and has failed in a recognition of God. This is Paul's testimony and the basis of his sorrow of heart over the nation of his birth:

"... Israel, *pursuing a law of righteousness*, into a law of righteousness does not outstrip. Wherefore? Seeing that it is not out of *faith*, but as out of law works, they stumble on the stumbling stone Indeed, brethren, the delight of my heart and my petition to God for their sake is for salvation. For I am testifying to them that they have a *zeal of God*, but not in accord with *recognition*" (Rom.9:31-10:2).

PURSUIT AND ZEAL

The good works of pursuing righteousness and maintaining zeal for the word and law of God have not brought Israel into salvation. This is because pursuit and zeal give first place to the human. They direct attention to the people who are striving and disciplining themselves, and whether or not it is given outwardly and audibly, they receive the honor, at least for the attempt. God is seen as the Definer and Demander of righteousness, but not as the faithful Provider.

Yet the fact is that the law calls for this pursuit of righteousness and zeal for the things of God. We must not blame Israel for taking this pathway of works and regimented reverence. It was the pathway laid out for them by God, but indeed it was a pathway which they could not successfully follow because they were deficient and blind.

They lacked faith in Jesus Christ, and they were ignorant of the glory of God.

The law, given as it necessarily was, apart from the evangel of God's gift of His Son, spoke of what Israel must do and must not do, with no effective enabling. The attention was always focused on the human, who was required to do that which was impossible for him to do.

This is where Israel stood in Paul's day. From Romans 9-11, however, we learn that Israel's pathway of pursuit and zeal will be enlightened by faith and recognition. Faith in Jesus Christ as the One Who died and was roused on their behalf, and a recognition of God's saving mercy in Christ, will bring Israel's commendable activities of pursuit and zeal into true perspective where God is rightly glorified.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

Romans chapter 10 is usually taken as a "How To Do It" section of Scripture. It is far more of a "Who Did It" (without a question mark) section. It is about God, about His power and wisdom and faithfulness.

As far as human actions are concerned, the tenth chapter of Romans offers little hope. It ends with Israel being termed "a stubborn and contradicting people" (Rom.10:21). It is true that much is said, and clearly put, concerning what Israel needs to do. They need to hear. They need to believe. They need to avow what they believe. But the fact remains that they are not believing and are not entering into salvation. This directs attention Godward and to His provision of the Saviour.

It is somewhat ironic, then, that Romans 10:9-13 is seen as a guide for successful evangelization, setting forth a step-by-step procedure for salvation. Heralding, hearing, believing and avowing the good news that Jesus is both Saviour and Lord are great and worthy acts. But the evidence shown by the case of Israel is that the critical factor in salvation is the dependability of the Saviour.

In Romans 10 we are brought to see the relationship of the evangel to the fate of Israel. There is no salvation for anyone apart from the death and resurrection of Christ. Israel will never be saved *by* pursuing the works of righteousness set out in the law, but they will be saved *into* such a pursuit by Christ, Who, because He has died for them, will rescue them and bring about the fulfillment of the promises concerning them.

Hence Paul speaks of "the righteousness [which is out] of faith" (Rom. 10:6). This is the righteousness that God has established through the faith of Christ, as presented in the earlier chapters of Romans. It is this righteousness that will bear the fruit of righteousness (both pursued and grasped) in the lives of those who believe, whether of the Circumcision or of the Uncircumcision.

JESUS IS LORD

The truth that Jesus, the Saviour, is Lord, is particularly powerful for anyone who is zealously pursuing salvation on his own. It is the great sigh of relief for those who have been flailing their arms in desperation. Rather, we may say more appropriately, it is the cry of joyful surprise of those who discover they are rescued not only from danger but from their own self-defeating efforts to save themselves.

Believing and avowing that Jesus is Lord and that God rouses Him from among the dead are steps in the appreciation of salvation. But believing and avowing do not save in themselves, any more than pursuing righteousness and being zealous for God save in themselves. What saves is the work and faith of Jesus the Saviour and the triumph of God in rousing Him from among the dead. The believing and avowing bring this salvation into their consciousness. Then when it comes as God's gift, the faithful pursuing and the zeal are evidence that the salvation is there in their lives. And the glory is clearly displayed and realized as God's.

Israel's avowing that Jesus is Lord does not *make* Jesus their Lord. They avow that which is true. Jesus *is* their Saviour. Their Saviour *is* their Lord. Israel's declared faith that God rouses His Son from among the dead does not make it so. God *has* roused Jesus from the dead, and if Israel as a nation is brought into the living, vital, active state promised by God, as they surely will be, it will be realized that God has done it.

ONE LORD, TWO CALLINGS

What a simple message it is! At its very foundation it is the same for both Circumcision and Uncircumcision. "There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same One is Lord of all" (Rom.10:12). We place our faith in Jesus as our Saviour. There is no difference as to the Saviour.

This lack of distinction between Jew and Greek extends into the basic human response to the finished work of Jesus Christ. For both Circumcision and Uncircumcision there is a centering on the Saviour and His Lordship. Yet the believing and the invoking are not set forth here as challenges to the human but as the characteristics of one who has been given faith in the Saviour as his Lord. To invoke the name of the Lord is not something dependent on the independent decision and action of the human, whether of the Circumcision or Uncircumcision. It is what occurs when God opens the eyes and grants faith.

Nevertheless, throughout Romans 9-11, the nation of Israel is distinguished from the other nations as those who were given "the sonship and the glory and the covenants and the legislation and the divine service and the promises; whose are the fathers, and out of whom is the Christ according to the flesh" (Rom.9:4,5). With respect to Christ, the One Lord of all, there is no distinction. But with respect to God's calling, there are clear differences.

Israel received and remains under the *covenant* of cir-

cumcision, which is a physical sign given to them through Abraham (*cf* Rom.4:11). The law given at Sinai also comes under the designation of "covenant," and certainly under the heading of "legislation." Even though Israel has been unfaithful, yet God's faithfulness to the oracles He Himself gave to Israel cannot be nullified (Rom.3:3). Hence, in being saved, Israel will indeed be "putting the law into practice" (Rom.2:25). The promises of the land, the kingdom, and certainly the promise that in the nation of Israel all the nations of the earth will be blessed are not discarded by the fact that there is One Saviour Who is rich for all invoking His name.

There is no distinction regarding the Saviour and His Lordship, but the distinctive blessings promised to Israel are not nullified by this oneness of salvation. In Romans 10 Paul is still concerned about his relatives according to the flesh and the unfulfilled blessings promised to them (*cf* Rom.9:1-5). They remain stubborn, but God has their salvation in view in provoking them to jealousy and in vexing them by His present operations among the nations (Rom.10:19,20).

This is shown also by Paul's choice of words in Romans 10. What Paul writes here is given in terms that are most appropriate for Israel. In particular, the acts of avowing and invoking hold special association with that nation in their history. It is not that these have no place in our calling, but they have a most important place in the testimony of that people who will serve as channels of blessing to the rest of earth's inhabitants. As with the matters of visible signs and physical blessings, the matter of audible faith is marked out for them throughout the Scriptures. What is spoken and declared is the same as what is shown by actions. Consequently when God puts faith into their hearts and they declare that faith, they will be living in accord with what they believe and say.

The point is that there is no distinction in the basis of salvation. This is God's faithful work in the gift of His Son. It is His gratuity through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus. The way in which it enters into human hearts and lives differs from case to case, but the one Lord is rich for all.

HOW THEN?

If it is all so uncomplicated, all so undemanding and straightforward and merciful, what is the problem with Israel? Why are they not believing and avowing so that their pursuing and zeal can truly be for God's glory and their good? Why are they not entering into that salvation that Jesus Christ has gained for them?

Perhaps it is that they have not heard of Jesus and what He has done for them. But no! the problem is not that they have not heard, or that no one has informed them of God's saving work in Jesus Christ. The evangel has been heralded in terms like those of Psalm 19:4, "Into the entire earth came out their utterance, and into the ends of the inhabited earth their declarations" (Rom. 10:18).

The question must go beyond whether or not Israel has heard. It must now become a question of whether or not God will grant them *faith* in the saving work of Jesus Christ and *recognition* of His wisdom and power and love in the giving of His Son. We cannot help but be impressed by the desire of Israel today to do the right things. What they lack is faith in their Saviour and Lord and a genuine recognition of the love and mercy of their God.

They will be saved both in faith and recognition. This is assured in Romans 11, which will be considered in the final installment of this series of studies. But we must anticipate that answer with these assuring words of Romans 11:29, thinking particularly now of God's calling of this nation so many centuries ago: "Unregretted are the graces and the calling of God!"

D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 1995
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SIX

EDITORIAL

"KEEP LOOKING UP!" I can hear my preacher friend saying this even today, although he was put to repose many years ago. To borrow from one of Paul's lists, "in afflictions, in necessities, in distress . . . in patience, in kindness, in holy spirit, in love unfeigned" (2 Cor.6:5,6), in whatever situation of life, whether painful or happy, our brother always seemed to sum up our thoughts, and always fittingly, with this reminder. "Keep looking up!"

This is good advice. And it is scriptural too (which is why it is so good). We are to *note* the things that are not seen by our eyes of flesh but are eonian (2 Cor.4:18). "In prayer be persevering, *watching* in it with thanksgiving" (Col.4:2). The great opening prayer of Ephesians is for the enlightenment of the *eyes* of our hearts, and for *perception* of the glorious and *celestial* blessings unfolded in this epistle (Eph.1:15-19).

Job, as he suffered extreme loss and deep pain, looked above to God, crying out for a word from Him and the assurance that He knew what He was doing. Paul follows this same pattern, but with greater insight because of the revelations given him, when he suffered sorrow over the nation of Israel (Rom.9:1-3). The apostle looked to God and the truth that He locks up all together in stubbornness that He should be merciful to all To Him be the glory! (Rom.11:32,36).

Regarding our current thoughts and activities we are to "be *seeking* that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be *disposed to* that which is above" (Col. 3:1,2). In expectation "we may not be drowsing, even as the rest, but we may be *watching* and be sober" (1 Thess.5:6).

So as we close this volume of *Unsearchable Riches*, we are keeping at this privilege of looking up. We pray for our brethren in every place for this same grace. D.H.H.

PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

THE ZENITH of divine revelation, this heavenly epistle, leaving the earth, where the Christ is repudiated by His own people Israel, seats us among the celestials, where He is enthroned at God's right hand (1:20). His saints, blessed with every spiritual blessing in Him (1:3) among the celestials (2:6), are an object lesson to manifest God's manifold wisdom to celestial beings (3:10), so that the purpose of the eons (3:11), which embraces Christ's headship over the heavens as well as the earth (1:10), may be effected through the transcendent riches of grace (2:7) which has come to the nations through the offense of faithless Israel, until their salvation and reception (Rom.11:12).

TRANSCENDENT RICHES OF HIS GRACE

The dimensions of the present grace are not constricted as with Israel. It reaches back to a time prior to the entrance of sin and forward to its exit. It includes not only all mankind who believe today, but is intended to affect the heavens as well. It takes men far below the plane of privilege on which Israel dwelt, with no claims whatever on God's mercy, and seats them far above the highest in heaven. May He help us to learn something of this grace! This knowledge leads us into the realm of the unknowable, for it reveals to us the transcendent love of Christ which we will never be able to fathom fully and which will always yield new delights.

As to time, it reverts to a period prior to the disruption of the first of Genesis (Eph.1:4; Gen.1:2) and leads to the

exaltation of Christ, not only in the coming eon (1:21), but in the eon of the eons, too (2:7, 3:21), which is the administration of the complement of the eras (1:10).

Being addressed to those who believe in Christ Jesus, this letter was intended for those who had received Paul's previous ministries and were expecting to be with Him *before* His coming to the earth (1:12).

The omission of "in Ephesus" (1:1), the lack of the slightest local allusion, and the very general character of the epistle, all tend to show that it is the charter of the church of this economy, a treatise on present truth—the touchstone and standard by which all truth for today must be tested.

In this epistle we find four secrets:

- The Secret of Christ (1:9; 3:4),
- The Secret Administration (3:3, 6-9),
- The Secret of Marriage (5:32),
- The Secret of the Evangel (6:19).

The Secret of Christ is but briefly touched. The Secret of Marriage and of the Evangel are but references, one to Genesis, the other to Romans. The Secret Administration is categorically set forth in the summary given in the sixth verse of the third chapter. It is that believers of the nations are, in spirit,

- (1) joint enjoyers of an allotment,
- (2) a joint body, and
- (3) joint partakers.

The letter proper is an elaboration of this definition of the secret relating to "the promise in Christ Jesus" through the evangel of which Paul became the dispenser.

An analysis of the Ephesian epistle will show that this is not only a summary of the secret, but also of the whole letter which is an elaborate and extended exposition of the secret, under these three divisions.

Thus the joint allotment of the nations is set forth in Ephesians 1:3-19, and enforced in 6:10-20.

The joint body seats both Jew and Gentile together (2:6) among the celestials in Christ Jesus. This is detailed in 1:20-2:10 and in 5:21-6:9.

The joint participation is seen in creating the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision into one new humanity (2:15). It is fully discussed in 2:11-22, and is applied to our deportment in 4:17-5:20.

A summary of the new revelation is given in 3:1-13, which is reviewed as to its results in 4:7-16.

The heart of the epistle is filled with two petitions, one to the Father, and one to the saints to preserve the spiritual unity which is founded on the transcendent truths and fathomless favor and limitless love which are revealed in this lovely letter.

LITERARY FRAMEWORK

Paul's commission—salutation (1:1,2)

The allotment—in heaven—blessing (1:3-14)

Paul's prayer for them (1:15-19)

The body—in Christ, The members (1:20-2:10)

The new humanity (2:11-22)

Summary of grace *now* shown (3:1-13)

Petitioning the Father (3:14-21)

Beseeching the saints (4:1-6)

Summary of grace *having been* shown (4:7-16)

The new humanity (4:17-5:20)

The body—in the Lord, The Head (5:21-6:9)

The allotment—in heaven—warfare (6:10-17)

Their prayer for Paul (6:18-20)

Tychicus' commission—salutation (6:21-24)

It will be seen that the bulk of the epistle is occupied with an orderly exposition of the three aspects of the secret. First we have its relation to God in the celestial allotment, then its connection with Christ, as joint members of His body, then its bearing on other saints. There are two sum-

maries on the same subject, and two appropriate petitions, besides the introduction and conclusion. Thus the entire epistle is practically dedicated to the task of enlightening all as to this secret administration.

This simplifies our task very much. There is no need of any arrangement of our own, of gathering material together from various parts of the Scriptures. The framework is the best possible analysis of the subject, and we can do no better than to follow the divine Author's divisions.

THE PRAYERS OF EPHESIANS

Believers should often direct their hearts to the prayers of this epistle. No petitions can be presented which are so welcome to the ear of God. None are so necessary to our spiritual welfare. Let us read them and meditate upon them until the longing expressed in them becomes our own and prepares a way for their realization.

As noted in the framework, the first is Paul's prayer for the believers (Eph.1:15-19), which is matched by the closing request for their prayer on Paul's behalf (6:18-20). In the center position is the grand petition to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (3:14-21).

After having set forth the marvelous grace which culminates and transcends all previous revelation (Eph.1:3-14), the apostle is burdened by the fact that all this is quite beyond human comprehension apart from a special endowment for its understanding. This is the more remarkable because the apostle had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God to the Ephesians when he ministered among them (Acts 20:27). But that referred to the traceable riches of Christ, and in Ephesians 3:8 he assures us that he is speaking in this epistle of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations. Hence Paul prays for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the first prayer, and petitions

the Father for staunchness and power in the man within in the second prayer.

Every lack in the universe is filled by Christ. He is God's Complement, Who supplies every deficiency. We, as members of His body are His complement. To fit us for this place He wishes us to grasp the grace which this involves, as expressed in the second Ephesian prayer (3:14-21). This, in turn, will reveal the transcendent love of Christ. Thus we will be filled or completed—brought to that finished state which fits us for our future destiny.

No epistle in the Scriptures is so full of harmonies as Ephesians. There is a continual assurance that each phase of our blessing is in accord with all the rest. Our sonship suits the delight of His will (1:5). The "forgiveness" of our offenses is raised on the scale to harmonize with the riches of His grace (1:7). The secret of His will is consonant with His delight (1:9). Our predestination is in unison with His purpose (1:11). Paul's dispensation agrees with God's grace which, in its turn, is attuned to His powerful operation (3:7). The insight of the celestials is in line with the purpose of the eons (3:11). So, now, power is desired such as will harmonize with His glorious riches (3:16). Paul prays for a power which will accord with the wealth of glory which has become ours through this new revelation.

The closing prayer is for boldness in making known the secret of the evangel, the message of conciliation. This is not the boldness of declaring war but of proclaiming peace, and this from an ambassador in a chain! Let us read and ponder and pray these prayers of Ephesians often. And as we delve into the depths and scale the heights, and consider the length and breadth of the marvelous unfolding in this epistle, may it enlarge our hearts, and so fill them with praise and adoration that God will receive a rich response of overflowing affection.

A.E.K

EON AS INDEFINITE DURATION

(Part Two)

THE CONCORDANT VERSION has been adversely criticized in many particulars. Most, having misunderstood its principles (having failed as well to grasp the importance of its principles), have been unable to recognize the Version's actual high degree of accuracy and faithfulness to the Word of God. By far the Concordant Version's greatest perceived errors, however, in the eyes of nearly all its orthodox critics, are its renderings "eon," "eons," and "eonian," instead of "[for] ever," "everlasting," and "eternal."

Orthodox ministers commonly claim that all scholars worthy of the name recognize that the original Hebrew and Greek words in question, when used in reference to punishment or judgment, signify endless duration. Evidence from various scholarly works is given which shows that their authors' findings indeed have been—and at least in part on philological grounds—that the Scripture reveals the punishment of the lost to be both endless in duration and horrific in nature.

Accordingly, it is claimed that the true gospel is the message which affirms that, by meeting certain required conditions, one may at once, and for all eternity, qualify himself for exemption from hell and inclusion in heaven. It is added, however, (1) that salvation is to be gained now (i.e., in this life) or never; and (2) that any who fail to obey and meet its requirements, will surely spend eternity in hellfire.

Many would even add the further claim that those who continue to disbelieve (or, some will say, even those who

continue to doubt) "what the Bible says" concerning eternal punishment, will, for that very reason, be subjected to eternal punishment. It is claimed that such unbelief is inexcusable, and would never be countenanced by any *truly* regenerate person, inasmuch as the Bible is "so plain" concerning this subject. The reasoning is that any who deny eternal punishment, only do so because—any appearances to the contrary notwithstanding—they have *not truly* accepted Christ as their Saviour. Why, if they truly *had* done so, they would not deny eternal burnings!

Even by those who may not affirm these latter most extreme claims as well, it is nearly always insisted that, in any case, besides those who are unquestionably unbelievers, any who would stoop so low as to deny eternal punishment, are either apostate Christians, unconverted liberals, or non-Christian cultists.

The idea is that no one who is truly consecrated and enlightened, would think of doubting the claims of orthodoxy, since, we are told, these very claims are so manifestly correct. And, the idea is very much as well that anyone who would dare to *make known* his repudiation of the teaching of eternal punishment, cannot expect to find acceptance much less popularity among his orthodox brethren.

At some point along the way, those who have obtained, or are considering obtaining, a copy of the Concordant Version, often learn that its translators, together with its publisher, the Concordant Publishing Concern, believe and teach, not eternal punishment, but universal reconciliation! Yet most who become aware that this is so, have been taught (or soon are taught) that all such translators and teachers are at least dreadful apostates, if not more likely unregenerate cultists. This puts the Concordant Version at a great disadvantage in the eyes of those who thus are prejudiced against it.

Consequently, the ordinary believer who had previously

welcomed the Concordant Version due to its seeming excellence, now finds himself being constrained to be full of suspicions concerning it, even as to seriously doubt its worth. Under the delusion of the twin fallacies of Guilt by Association and Poisoning the Well, not to mention the baneful influence of orthodox authoritarianism and intimidation, even the sincere believer is often led to set aside the Concordant Version, with little or no further consideration.

Few, in the confusion of their own minds, are able to judge the Version on its own merits, let the beliefs of its translators and the teachings of its publisher be what they will. Yet when it is insisted by those of high position and renown that the CV renderings "eon" and "eonian" were made by unscholarly and unbelieving men for the express purpose of promoting the awful heresy of universalism, fewer still remain capable of any further objective consideration of the facts.

UNSPECIFIED DURATION

Yet the fact remains that the Hebrew "*olam*" (even as its Greek equivalent, *aiōn*) only says, "duration," not endless duration. It is derived from "*alam*," which means "hidden," or more precisely, "obscured."¹ Common to all its occurrences is the idea of duration (or "on-goingness"), together with inherent inspecificity (i.e., *intrinsic* "obscurity") as to the duration at hand.

Wherever *olam* appears in Scripture, it *says* nothing as to the *specific length* of the duration with which any certain passage may be concerned. Indeed, as is acknowledged by

1. e.g., Job 42:3: "Who is this who *obscures* counsel without knowledge?" Psalm 90:8: "You have set our depravities in front of You, our *obscured* deeds in the full light of Your face." Ecclesiastes 12:14: "For the One, Elohim, shall bring every deed into judgment concerning all that is *obscured*, whether good or whether evil."

all scholars, in a great many of its occurrences, it is impossible for this word even to refer to (much less speak of) any notion of endlessness, but only of limited time.²

Olam does not denote any particular duration; the scope of time which any certain usage of *olam* may entail, is not conveyed by the word itself.³ Therefore, to say that *olam* should sometimes be *translated* even by "age," not to mention by "everlasting" or "eternal," is to say that *olam* should sometimes not be translated at all, but should instead be interpreted and its interpretations *represented as* translations, within a certain version of the Scriptures.

Such a notion, however, is quite mistaken; for a translator is not to tell us what he thinks is in view, or otherwise involved, but simply *what is said*. If, in faithfulness to his task of conveying God's Word to us, a translator cannot always speak as smoothly as we might wish, or even as clearly as he might desire, we would gladly bear with him. It is vital that he only tell us what God has said, not what he supposes God's sense to have been. If a translator should persist in presenting us with his own opinions about God's Word instead of God's own Word itself, and if, more seriously still, he should represent to us what is

2. e.g., Lev.6:18; 24:8; Psa.48:8; 77:5; 143:3; Prov.22:28; 1 Chron. 22:10; Ecc.1:4; Jer.5:22; Ezek.37:26.

3. In commenting on *aiōnios*, the Greek adjectival equivalent of the Hebrew *olam*, THE VOCABULARY OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT states, "Without pronouncing any opinion on the *special* meaning which *theologians* have found for this word, we must note that outside the NT, in the vernacular as in the classical Greek (see Grimm-Thayer), it *never* loses the sense of *perpetuus* . . . the spirit of [which is illustrated in] Job 19:24 ['With iron pen and lead, that they should be hewn in rock for the future!'] . . . In general, the word depicts *that of which the horizon is not in view*, whether the horizon be at an infinite distance . . . or whether it lies no farther than the span of Cæsar's life" (James Hope Moulton and George Milligan; London: Hodder and Stoughton, Limited, 1949, p.16).

merely the former as if it were the latter, we must reject his renderings, deeming them to be at least incompetent and erroneous *translations*.

The truth is, then, that rather than the Concordant Version having been "gotten up" in order to teach "universalism," and only presenting a "false interpretation" instead of a "true translation" as to the duration of the punishment of the lost, the Concordant Version does not present an interpretation at all, whether false or true, or even a translation, but simply a transliteration, in anglicized form. Its various "eon" and "eonian" expressions, considered as they are intended, as *non-interpretative equivalents* of the Original, should simply be understood as signifying "[intrinsically unspecified] duration," or that which pertains thereunto. Rather than the Concordant Version being guilty of *interpreting* instead of objectively translating the Scripture on this august theme, the fact is that it is perhaps the only modern version that is *not* guilty of this charge.

TRANSCENDENTLY TRANSCENDENT EONIAN BURDEN OF GLORY

It is often claimed that in 2 Corinthians 4:18, "eonian" (*aiōnion*) must mean "eternal" because it is set in contrast to the word "temporal," meaning pertaining to time as opposed to eternity. The Greek word, however, translated "temporal" in the AV (*proskaitra*) has no connection with the word for "time" (*chronos*); in English form, the Greek is literally TOWARD-SEASON, and means "temporary" or "for [only] a *part* of a season."

Contrastive terms need not be antithetical in meaning. Our Lord deemed it sufficient contrast to compare *temporary* (i.e., a *part* of a season) with a single season—less than a year (Matt.13:21). Yet here, in 2 Corinthians 4:18, while the contrast is far greater, it does not follow that it is therefore infinite. The contrast is between our afflictions,

which last, so to say, but for a brief "partial season," and our promised, long-enduring "*eonian*" glory which lasts throughout the oncoming eons, until the consummation, when God is All in all. The *eonian* life and glory which is our special portion (*cp* 1 Tim.4:10b; 2 Tim.2:10,11), no more debars the endless life and glory in which we shall participate as well (*cp* Luke 1:33b; 1 Thess.4:17b; 1 Cor. 15:28), than youthful happiness precludes the happiness of maturity. Hence, in considering the "*eonian*" punishment of Matthew 25:46, none who are wise will make the claim that since we will be immortal, therefore the *eonian* life of which this passage speaks is to be understood as "life eternal," and, in turn, the *eonian* punishment which this passage entails is to be judged to be "everlasting."

Even if it should be conceded that "eon" signifies "duration" and never *signifies* "everlasting," and even that it is always used, in itself, to refer to terminable periods, some might still claim that it, nonetheless, in certain instances concerned with judgment, is used to *refer* to an infinite series of eons (the terminable periods themselves) *of which* the interminable future will consist. This ingenious claim seems to be the argument of the ancient Eastern church. It is important to note that this is a disputation concerning interpretation between early Greek-speaking believers; not an argument among scholars as to essential word meaning or translation.

While some of the early Greek believers held to *eventual* universal reconciliation, they also believed in *eonian* punishment. Certainly, those Greeks who believed in universal reconciliation did not claim that *aiōn* or *aiōnion* meant everlasting or eternal. Indeed, in affirming the doctrine of *endless* punishment, even the Byzantine Emperor Justinian did not contend that such ones had misunderstood the meaning of *eonian* hitherto. Instead, he simply claimed orthodoxy's divine investiture for deciding

truth in matters of interpretation (similar to the "papal infallibility" of Rome). His point was that since *they* (the so-called "holy church of Christ") taught the *ateleutêtos* (i.e., unconsummating [a non-scriptural word]) punishment of the wicked, *therefore* such a doctrine was true. Evidently, thus it was claimed that *a never-consummating series of eons* lay ahead for the lost during which their frightful torments would never cease.⁴

"The Emperor Justinian (540 A.D.), in calling the celebrated local council which assembled in 544, addressed his edict to Mennos, Patriarch of Constantinople, and elaborately argued against the doctrines he had determined should be condemned. He does not say in defining the Catholic doctrine at that time, 'We believe in *aiōnion* punishment,' for that was just what the universalist, Origen himself taught. Nor does he say, 'The word *aiōnion* has been misunderstood; it denotes endless duration,' as he would have said had there been such a disagreement. But, writing in Greek with all the words of that copious speech from which to choose, he says, 'The holy church of Christ teaches an endless [*ateleutêtos*] *aiōnios* life to the righteous, and endless (*ateleutêtos*) punishment to the wicked.' *Aiōnios* was not enough in his judgment to denote endless duration, and he employed *ateleutêtos*. This demonstrates that even as late as A.D. 540, *aiōnios* spoke of limited duration, and required an added word to [convey the thought] of endless duration."⁵

THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH

Most scholars today, in presenting their interpretations of *kolasin aiōnion* in Matthew 25:46 ("eonian chastening," CV), will say words to the effect: "We must remember that

4. cf Alexander Thomson, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.26, p.283.

5. John Wesley Hanson, *Aiōn-Aiōnios*, p.74; Chicago: Northwestern Universalist Publishing House, 1875., p.74.

most men die in unbelief; and, following the day of judging, will enter the second death. Therefore, on hermeneutical if not philological grounds, we must conclude that *kolasin aiōnion* must here be understood as tantamount to if not expressive of an endless series of eons, each one comprised of unspeakable torments."

We would respond to such claims by saying that, first of all, any such assertions are wholly undiscerning as to the theme in view in Matthew 25:31-46.⁶ But even apart from this, in any case, no such conclusion follows from the two premises stated above, assertions with which, in themselves, we wholly concur, apart from their misuse in such a faulty syllogism. And, we would add that any claims, lingering in the background of such premises, to the effect that today is the only day of salvation or that death will never be abolished, are false claims.

Salvation, ultimately speaking, is a gracious gift, not a reward. It is achieved in the grace of God through the work of Christ. Monotheism is true; dualism is false. Monergism is true; synergism is false. *Sola gratia. Soli Deo gloria.*

God wills all mankind to be saved and to come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). All His counsel shall be confirmed, and all His desire He will do (Isa. 46:10). Christ is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (1 Tim.2:6). If One died for the sake of all, consequently all died (2 Cor.5:14). One who dies has been justified from Sin (Rom.6:7b).

6. For an extended treatment of this and related texts, see the studies, "The Judgment of the Nations," and "Eonian Fire and Judging," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.84, pp.29-40, 71-82. See also the related U.R. writings, "The Living God and the Eons" (vol.79, pp.171-180); "For the Repudiation of Sin Through His Sacrifice" (re., Heb.9:26; vol.82, pp.17-22); and, "The Consummations of the Eons" (re., 1 Cor. 10:11b; vol.82, pp.269-280).

God made Christ to be a sin offering (2 Cor.5:21). Sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, God condemned sin in the flesh (Rom.8:3). Christ died for our sins (1 Cor.15:3); hence our sins have been died for. Christ is the propitiatory shelter concerned with our sins, yet not concerned with ours only, but concerned with the whole world also (1 John 2:2). Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim.1:15). For the repudiation of sin through His sacrifice, was He manifested (Heb.9:26). Lo! The Lamb of God Which is taking away the sin of the world (John 1:29). *All* is out of, through, and for God, to Him be the glory (Rom.11:36)!

Salvation is not ultimately granted in reciprocity, or according to libertarian free will, but in the *grace* of God. Faith and good works are the fruit of our salvation, not a requirement for our salvation. Even, under law, where faith and good works are immediately conditionally enjoined, they are ultimately graciously granted (*cf* Rom.11:1-6). Since salvation is a *gracious* provision and is designed for *all*, it will therefore be granted to all. Hence, endless punishment is simply impossible. Consequently, any claims to the effect that "eon" sometimes refers to the eons of the endless future during which punishment will never cease, are utterly false.

LIVING FOR THE EONS OF THE EONS

A related theme is that of God's "living for the eons of the eons" (Rev.4:9,10; 10:6; 15:7; the AV rendering "liveth," i.e., "lives," is misleading). It is only because this emphatic expression is unfamiliar to us that it seems awkward or difficult. The sense is that the One Who *is* living today, will then, in the oncoming eons, *make it known* that He is the *living* God. He Who *is* living *today* (but not only today), *will* especially be "living" as well *tomorrow* (but not only tomorrow), in the scriptural morrow of the oncoming eons. Even as His living

"today" by no means precludes His living tomorrow, neither will His glorious manifestation in the eons ahead as the *living* God, bar Him from life beyond the consummation.

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 usage of *aiōn* as "eon," in the sense of a period of time. 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). Yet this declaration is hardly presented as a mere informative disclosure as to the scope of the Deity's longevity, but as a glorious unfolding concerning a *particular time* during which God will be *living* ("God, Who is *living* for the eons of the eons," CV), and so vitally *operating* accordingly.

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* these coming 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.

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 not come to 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. For the living God, Who is living today, will be *living* on 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 vigorous figure of speech (metonymy, i.e., 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).

THE EONIAN GOD

Finally, let us consider the phrase "the eonian [*aiōnion*] God," found in Romans 16:26. "The eonian God," speaks of the God of the eons, even as "the French language" speaks of the language of France. He Who is the King of the eons (Rev.15:3), is the eonian King. Similarly, as the supreme God of the eons, He is the eonian God. Even as God is the God of Israel, He is also the God of all the earth. And, even as He is the *eonian* God, He is also the God of all duration, whether past or future. The titles "the God of *Israel*" and "the *eonian* God," do not confine the Deity to these relations; instead, such titles simply *speak of* such relations, drawing our attention to them accordingly.

The notion of "lastingness" is neither expressed nor entailed in the Greek adjectival ending. *Aiōnion* (or *aiōnios*) no more means eon- or ever-*lasting*, than *ouranion* ("heavenly") means heaven-*lasting*.⁷ Hence the rendering, as in the Authorized Version, "[ever]*lasting*," is quite wrong.

7. Accordingly, the expression "the eonian God" no more means the eon- or ever-*lasting* God, than "the American President" means the America-*lasting* President, or even "the yearly report" means the year-*lasting* report.

The thought, then, is not at all that God merely exists (much less, only exists) for some certain duration. Instead, what is expressed by the words "the *eonian* God," is that God is the "of the [epochal] duration God." In this usage, the epochal duration in view accords "with a secret [which is] hushed *in times eonian*, yet [which is] manifested *now*" (*nun*, i.e., "from now on"; Rom.16:25). This usage of "eonian" obviously has in view the entire duration ("eon") comprising all the previous epochal durations ("eons") of Scripture, namely, the entire duration from Genesis 1:1 until the time of Paul's writing.

God is *of* the entire grand duration from the beginning to the consummation not in some lame sense that He merely manages to stay alive during this period, *but in the sense that He is its God!* He is the Almighty, the Supreme, the All-Sufficient One. Yahweh Elohim is the *God* Who, through the course of the eons, becomes the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10). Through Christ, He is placing and subjecting all, according as He is intending. Thus the *eonian* God is the *eonian God*. That is, through the eonian times (Titus 1:2b), God, the King of the eons (1 Tim.1:17), Who makes the eons (Heb.1:2), achieves His purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph.3:11). In consummating His purpose, God will abolish death, and will finally become All in all (1 Cor.15:26,28).

It is this evangel itself, that finally settles the question of the duration of eonian judging and death. Through our acceptance of the evangel, we gain the realization that all eonian adversity and suffering is temporary adversity and suffering. To those of us who have been given this awareness, in spirit, "the *consummations of the eons* have attained" (1 Cor.10:11) even today.

"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).

J.R.C.

GOD PLACES AND BLENDS

BEING sealed with the holy spirit of promise: a precious seal which God has forged, and which moreover is a seal that Satan, the Adversary *cannot* break, it further pleases our wise and loving Father to grant a clear perception of His purpose, *but not in all is there this immediate, special blessing*. As many of the ecclesia will attest—often with aching hearts—such a grasp of God's choice and calling is not always gladly accepted, *even by His chosen*. Yet there is consolation in His Word. Just as God designates beforehand, so He calls, justifies, *and then He places and blends each member*, in the body of His beloved Son (1 Cor.12:11-26).

Such parental care calls forth from our hearts and lips an acclamation of praise. *Glory, honor, and adoration be Thine, dear Father, in our Lord's precious name*.

My song is love unknown; my Saviour's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown, that they may lovely be.
O, who am I, that for my sake,
My Lord should take frail flesh, and die?

Initially, as the grace of God's love dawns on our comprehension, our hearts are so full of wonder that it is almost impossible to contain the joy and happiness. After suffering for many years through the sad influence of soulish wisdom and intelligence, no small part of our delight is the confirmation of God's loving purpose. Our excitement with such revelation, especially concerning His amazing choice, in grace, of those who are the least worthy, is such that we can hardly wait to share our rejoicing with all and sundry. How heartbreaking then to have these revelations

received with indifference, and our witness dismissed as mere conceit! Still, it is not given us to know the full details of those whom God is calling. In this there is great wisdom, for we live in a day of salvation, and God's conciliation embraces all.

There is consolation, comfort of love, and communion of spirit in Christ, and we are strengthened through reading in God's Word of the eventual, all-embracing acclamation of every creature, that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father. But, insistently, the personal ties which are so precious to our hearts, constrain us to share the deep and precious love of Christ which has been poured out into our hearts through a perception of the expectation of our calling.

The following words are lovingly submitted, together with an earnest prayer that they may serve to soothe any anxiety or comfort any loneliness

LOVE BUILDS UP

"The mystery embraces all who belong to Christ today. Whether Jews or Gentiles, Circumcision or Uncircumcision, now all who believe God, are the recipients of its far-flung favor. We are well aware that the evangel of the Circumcision is more often proclaimed than the conciliation. We may almost affirm that the secret is never made known. But this is a day of *grace*. And it is not the way of grace to withhold what is not apprehended or appreciated. Men may proclaim pardon now, but God gives justification. They may insist on a new birth, but He makes a new creation. They get what He gives, not what they believe He is dispensing.

"It is the fashion today to make God's gifts a matter of reward for service, or knowledge, or some fancied superiority. We trust that all who read these lines will enter into an exultant understanding of the secret we are unfolding. But

may He ever shield us from the assumption that a grasp of His truth will give us a place superior to our brethren! As individuals we will receive rewards. But there are no divisions in the body of Christ, even though some, because of special enlightenment, will claim a different or a higher destiny. We are all one! In Christ the most ignorant and useless believer, by grace, has access to all of the treasures which the most intelligent and useful can enjoy.

"Knowledge puffs up. Love builds up. Almost every advance in the knowledge of God has resulted in an arrogant, self-assertive division among His saints. We witness the sad spectacle of the followers of Christ divided into hostile camps, each proclaiming its own superiority and relegating the rest to an inferior position. Each claims a monopoly of His grace, because of some fancied attainment in faith or faithfulness. Let no one imagine that a knowledge of the secret is requisite in order to receive its benefits. If that were so, how few would ever find the place prepared for them by God?

"We trust that many will be led into the enjoyment of this marvelous mystery, and open their heart's eyes to apprehend this, the highest revelation given by God to mortal man. It is not only the grandest in glory, but also the greatest in grace. It is our earnest prayer that such a knowledge will be suffused with love. It is our fervent petition that no one will arrogate its benefits to himself and exclude others because they have not yet apprehended its message. *All who believe now* 'receive' the secret in the most potent and precious sense of the word. They may never have heard of it, they may not understand it, they may even reject and oppose it. Yet it is theirs, and they will receive it in due time, as determined by the despotism of grace."¹

For emphasis, we repeat: "*Let no one imagine that a*

1. A. E. Knoch; *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.59, p.252.

knowledge of the secret is requisite in order to receive its benefits. If that were so, how few would ever find the place prepared for them by God."

HALLOWED

Members of the ecclesia in Corinth were exposed to the influences of a city which was noted for its immorality and decadence. Perhaps some had been at one time involved in the deplorable practices. Hence the apostle Paul was required to advise them on temporal behavior. That he did so with great delicacy, is typical of his loving compassion. Touching upon many aspects of a gracious behavior which should reflect the grace in which each had been called he further assured them regarding their loved ones:

"Now to the rest am I speaking, not the Lord. If any brother has an unbelieving wife, and she approves of making a home with him, let him not leave her. And a wife who has an unbelieving husband, and he approves of making a home with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is hallowed by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is hallowed by the brother, else consequently, your children are unclean. Yet now they are holy" (1 Cor.7:12-14).

In their immaturity these early believers must have presented a sore challenge to the apostle. Among their many unwise and unloving excesses we may trace much of similar misconduct among present day believers. On every hand we witness the same sectarianism, immaturity, immorality, and injustice. He observed the Corinthians taking childish delight in the many graces associated with the kingdom which was still being heralded, yet becoming involved with so much that was reprehensible.

"Most of the graces were transient, suited to immaturity; hence the apostle seeks to lead them up to those which will remain in the impending transcendent economy, in which

we find ourselves today. The 'gift of tongues,' even when it was a reality, was nothing but a noise unless impelled by the power of love. Even those high endowments, such as prophecy and knowledge, amount to nothing unless love regulates their exercise. Yes, and every personal sacrifice, even martyrdom itself is without value apart from the spirit of love."²

Realizing that the apostle had received the full revelation of God's wisdom fourteen years earlier when he was snatched away to the third heaven (2 Cor.12:2), we might better comprehend his sorrows. This same wisdom enabled him to discern how the misconduct among those whom he addressed as saints would prove to be an essentially somber contrast to enhance the glorious wonder of these same transcendent revelations. Furthermore, he also understood that at the appropriate time these revelations would swiftly endue them with power for maturity and the establishment of their faith. They would indeed see no longer in an enigma, but "face to face" (1 Cor.13:12).

Small wonder then that he encouraged with such precious words as these: "Or are you not aware that your body is a temple of the holy spirit in you, which you have from God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a price. By all means glorify God in your body" (1 Cor.6:19,20).

Recalling the illustration of the need for contrast to enhance the wonder of God's love, it surely must be stressed that in the midst of shadows cast in these sad records, there is glorious illumination of a disclosure which is so precious to our hearts. It is the wonderful declaration of God's purpose to become All in all! (1 Cor. 15:28).

Members of the ecclesia in both Corinth and also in Thessalonica required patient encouragement. With gentle forbearance, the apostle lovingly provided the longing

2. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.260.

for increasing strength and stability. His constant prayers were that they, being "... rooted and grounded in love... be strong to grasp, together with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ as well which transcends knowledge—that you may be completed for the entire complement of God" (Eph.3:14-19).

Dare any suggest that during the gradual and often painful emergence of the early members of the complement, there was the slightest danger of a single one being left behind in the "snatching away"? Indeed not, for our calling is thoroughly one of grace. There are degrees of faith parted to each of us by God (*cf* Rom.12:3), but there is one body, blended together by God. "We all shall be changed Now thanks be to God, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.15:51,57).

Donald Fielding

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THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

For the monthly Fellowship Gatherings in Michigan and Ohio this past year our theme has been, "All is *Through* our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.8:6). This glorious pattern is especially underscored in the fifth chapter of Romans where we learn that God channels His blessings of grace and peace *through* our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom.5:1,2,11,21). But this is not for us alone: God achieves the supreme blessing of reconciliation for all in the universe *through* the Son of His love (Col.1:20).

GOD DOES NOT THRUST AWAY HIS PEOPLE

GOD'S FAITHFULNESS to Israel is brought forward once again in Romans in chapter 11, "Does not God thrust away His people?" The answer is a resounding No! "May it *not* be coming to that!" (Rom.11:1).

For us who are believing, this should be enough. We walk by faith and not by perception, and even though most evidence that we can *see* points to the conclusion that God is done with Israel as a distinctive people for Him, we accept God's word for it that His faithfulness to them cannot be nullified. "God does not thrust away His people whom He foreknew" (v.2).

But it is fitting that Paul offers some empirical evidence, small though it be, of divine faithfulness to the promises concerning this people. "Jews, signs are requesting" (1 Cor. 1:22), and in harmony with this, Paul points to a clear sign that God has not abandoned this nation. "For I also am an Israelite, out of Abraham's seed, Benjamin's tribe."

THE PATTERN OF PAUL

God's choice and call of Paul is unassailable evidence that God has not discarded His plans for Israel. Paul's own deliverance from prideful confidence in his religious zeal and personal righteousness into an astounding career of evangelization and divine service to the glory of God is surely one of the greatest displays of God's ability to save the stumbling nation He has chosen. Although Paul himself had been severed from his Jewish heritage, God's mercy to him is a pattern of what God will do for Israel,

just as it is a pattern for us today who are called irregardless of nationality and are believing (*cf* 1 Tim.1:16).

Like Saul of Tarsus, the nation of Israel wishes to be anathema from Christ (*cf* Rom.9:3). Like the zealous Saul they seek to establish their own righteousness (*cp* Phil.3:6; Rom.10:3). But, as with Saul, this is done in ignorance (*cp* 1 Tim.1:13; Rom.10:3), by those with calloused hearts, having been given a spirit of stupor (Rom.11:7,8).

But the positive side of the example of Paul is the evidence of *God's* determined operation of mercy. That not all out of Israel reject Christ is not some kind of basis for self-congratulation among those who believe, but rather a fact that leads to the praise and glory of God.

ASSURANCE FOR ELIJAH

It is, as Paul explains, like God's preservation of a few who did not bow down to Baal in Elijah's day. The evidence was indeed so small that Elijah had to have it pointed out to him, but it was there. "Or have you not perceived in [the account concerning] Elijah what the scripture is saying, as he is pleading with God against Israel? Lord, Thy prophets they kill, Thine altars they dig down, and I was left alone, and they are seeking my soul, But what is that which apprises saying to him? I left for Myself seven thousand men who do not bow the knee to the image of Baal. Thus, then, in the current era also, there has come to be a remnant according to the choice of grace" (Rom.11:2-5).

"Thus," in the same manner, there was a remnant of Israelites, including the apostle Paul, who were believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and invoking His name. Again the emphasis is not on the people but on the God Who preserved them. It was a matter of grace, even as it was in the choice of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So also it will be God's achievement when the entire nation is brought into faith and shall be invoking the name of the Lord.

This remnant of Elijah's day consisted of those who did not bow the knee to the image of Baal. *Thus* in Paul's day the remnant consisted of any Israelite who was not bowing to the idol of self-righteousness nor wished to be anathema from Christ. God left for Himself some who manifested "the righteousness of faith," avowing that Jesus is Lord and believing that God roused Him from among the dead (*cf* Rom.10:6-13).

Does this evidence of God's faithfulness to Israel still exist today among us? We may be sure at least that any believer today who, according to flesh, is of the Circumcision, is, like Paul, evidence that God does not thrust away His people whom He foreknew.

ACCORDING TO THE CHOICE OF GRACE

We sometimes overlook the importance of grace in God's dealings with Israel. Terms such as *mercy* and *benignity* are used more frequently in the scriptures in connection with this nation. But at times, especially when Israel's dependence on Yahweh is clearly manifest, God's *grace* comes to the fore. The helplessness of Israel in the wilderness brought out this need of divine grace most decisively, as we read in Jeremiah (31:2; *cp* Exodus 33:12-19):

Thus says Yahweh:

The people, survivors of the sword,
Found grace in the wilderness,
When Israel journeyed to find his respite.

So also will it be in the future when Israel once more is brought into God's favor, as we read in Isaiah (30:19):

For a holy people shall dwell in Zion;
In Jerusalem you shall not lament,
 nay lament;
He will show you grace, yea grace
 at the sound of your outcry;
As soon as He hears He will answer you.

In God's choice of Israel there was grace. In the wilderness there was grace. In God's rescue of Israel there will be grace. In all these instances the people are found to be completely dependent on Him. They can offer nothing of themselves.

When God shows His grace there is no question of its source. It is all of God. It is not a matter of human and divine cooperation, where the people make their contribution and God responds with His. It is wholly seen and appreciated for what it is, a free and loving giving of God, wholly of Him and to His glory.

This is why Paul is such a good example of what we should understand concerning what is meant in Romans 11:5 by the word "remnant." There is no room for human boasting. Everything depends on God. If God does thrust away Israel, the only conclusion that could be made is that He had to do it because of their failures. But if He does not thrust away Israel, the only conclusion that can be made is that this is due solely to God's grace.

THE RESCUER OUT OF ZION

Paul's sorrow concerning his relatives according to the flesh was not removed by his awareness that God continued to call out some Israelites in grace. It gave him consolation and expectation concerning them, but the remnant was not the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. That is still to come, as described by Paul later in Romans 11.

From Paul and Elijah who in their own ways drew attention to God's mercy and faithfulness, we turn now to the great Channel of divine faithfulness, our Lord Jesus Christ. God's promises to the nation of Israel will begin their fulfillment with that climactic rescue effected by Christ from the holy city of Jerusalem (Rom. 11:26,27).

"And thus all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written,

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

Prophet after prophet had spoken of this deliverance, but these words are taken from Isaiah (59:20,21 and 27:9), who was given extraordinary insight into the days of Israel's future salvation.

Zion, which means "arid," was the name originally used of the City of David on the ridge of Jerusalem extending south from Mount Moriah (cf 2 Sam.5:7,9; 1 Kings 8:1). The Lord will descend upon Zion for His work of protecting and rescuing the city and the nation (Isa.31:4,5).

So Yahweh of hosts shall descend
To rally His host on Mount Zion
And on its hill.
Like birds flying,
So Yahweh of hosts shall protect Jerusalem;
Protecting, He will rescue,
And passing over, He will make a way of escape.

Isaiah 4:2,3, gives a similar description:

In that day the shimmering of Yahweh
shall come to be for stateliness and for glory,
And the face of the land
for augustness and for beauty,
For the delivered of Israel and Judah.
And it will come to be that the remnant in Zion
And the rest in Jerusalem,
It shall be said of them: Holy,
All who are written for life in Jerusalem.

Again we read in Isaiah 59:20, one of the passages cited here by Paul:

Then there will come to Zion the Redeemer,
And He shall turn back transgression from Jacob,
Averting is Yahweh.

The terms are very specific. Zion is an actual, geographical location. Jacob is a name of a distinct people who descended from this grandson of Abraham and exhibit his shortcomings and will be delivered into the blessings promised them even as Jacob himself. The term "covenant" also is related to the physical nation of Israel in a unique way. "As for Me, this is My covenant with them, says Yahweh: My spirit which is on you and My word which I place in your mouth shall not be removed from your mouth" (Isa. 59:21; cf Jer.31:31-34).

Will this actually happen to this very people in and from this very place in the specific way described? Yes it will. How do we know? There is some evidence of God's faithfulness to Israel in the fact that some out of the Circumcision are believers today, but the determinative foundation of our assurance is the word of God and the revelation of divine faithfulness in the giving of His Son for sinners.

SUMMARY

In our study of the word concerning the nation of Israel and its future in the book of Romans we have found:

1. There is such prerogative for the Jew and benefit for the Circumcision that it is described in Romans 3:2 as "Much in every manner." The primary benefit is that they were entrusted with the oracles of God, which indeed would seem to be no benefit at all because of their disbelief and failure to put the law into practice (Rom.2:25). Nevertheless, the oracles will be fulfilled by God, for their unbelief cannot nullify His faithfulness (Rom.3:3).

2. The righteous basis for God's faithfulness to all His oracles is not human righteousness but the faithful obedience of Christ in His sufferings and death. Hence we learn that God "will be justifying the Circumcision out of faith" (Rom.3:30), that is, "out of the faith of Jesus" (3:26).

3. The Circumcision share with the Uncircumcision

this great happiness of justification based on Christ's faith (Rom.4:9). They will enjoy the fulfillment of all the promises given to Abraham before he received the covenant of circumcision, including the land and the privilege of being a channel of God's blessings for the other nations. Here we see that the benefits of the Circumcision are wholly based on the work of Christ. The act of circumcision as well as the putting of the law into practice are not the basis of righteousness but, in themselves, benefits given to this people, the one a physical sign and seal of the justification declared by God on the basis of Christ's faith, and the other the honor of living the life summarized by the ten "words" written on the tablets of stone.

4. Paul writes once more of God's faithfulness to His oracles given to this nation in Romans chapters 9 through 11. As in Romans 3 and 4, what Paul has to say is related to the evangel he was severed to announce. Even as God grants the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision justification as His faithful achievement in Christ, so also He faithfully maintains and manifests His love apart from any human deserving.

5. God's word speaks of the full realization of Israel's sonship and glory, of their perfect obedience to the covenants and legislation and divine service. The culminating blessing of Israel is that the very One Who has gained these blessings for them and will administer these benefits in the future kingdom is the Christ Who comes out of them "according to the flesh." Israelites have failed, but the promises of God concerning Israel's blessings have not lapsed (Rom.9:4-6).

6. God's love for Jacob cannot be altered because it is not based on human works or faithfulness but on the work and faith of God's beloved Son. The Rescuer will come out of Zion, and all Israel shall be saved by the faithful God.

THANKS BE TO GOD

As for us, we can only be strengthened in reliance on the living God as we contemplate God's faithfulness to His oracles of old. If there is great benefit in every way for the Jew in circumcision, there is transcendent benefit also for us today where circumcision is not a factor (*cf* Gal.5:1-6). This is because the benefits we have, whatever our calling, are based on God's grace and achievement in Christ. If the covenants of circumcision and the law remain as distinctive features of Israel's future (and they do), established and maintained by God's implanted spirit within them, these will be part of the benefits themselves and not at all human contributions for the gaining of the benefits. All prerogatives and all benefits and all blessings granted His chosen ones are out of God and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus we also await our Lord, the Son of God, as our Rescuer (1 Thess.1:10). For us He does not come out of Zion but rather descends from heaven itself (1 Thess.4:16-18). But for the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision the same One is the Rescuer and the same God is the faithful Fulfiller of His Word.

For unregretted are the graces and the calling of God. For even as you once were stubborn toward God, yet now were shown mercy at their stubbornness, thus these also are now stubborn to this mercy of yours, that now they also may be shown mercy. For God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all.

O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! (Rom.11:29-36).

D.H.H.

SHOULD WE NOT RECEIVE EVIL?

(Job 2:1-13)

THE FIRST day of calamity that came upon Job (1:13-22) ended with Job's declaration, "Blessed be the Name of Yahweh" (v.21). The nature of Job's observations, immediate to being overtaken by disaster and bereavement, are most excellent. Even so, we must not conclude that Job had a full and matured grasp as to what was involved in the rights of El.

CHAPTER TWO

The loss of his acquisitions, servants and children was severe, but there was more to come both in calamity and in the need of endurance.

The day came around again when the sons of Elohim came to station themselves before Yahweh, and the Adversary came also in their midst to station himself before Yahweh. Yahweh said to the Adversary, From where are you coming? Then the Adversary answered Yahweh, saying, From going to and fro in the earth and from walking about in it.

Yahweh said to the Adversary, Have you set your heart on My servant Job? For there is no one like him on earth, a man flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil. And he still is holding fast to his integrity, though you would incite Me against him to swallow him up gratuitously.

Then the Adversary answered Yahweh, saying, Skin in behalf of skin, for all that a man has would he give in

behalf of his soul. Nevertheless, now put forth your hand and touch his bone and his flesh. He shall assuredly scorn you to your face.

Hence Yahweh said to the Adversary, Behold him in your hand; only keep his soul alive (Job 2:1-6).

A further session brings the Adversary before Yahweh. There is a repeating of the initial formalities, followed by Yahweh's questioning as to His servant Job. In this, Yahweh repeats the details of the character of His servant, yet He adds that Job holds fast to his flawlessness despite the loss of his estate. The Adversary then suggests that a man will give value for value in ordinary matters, but to preserve himself from hurt he will give all. If his bone and flesh be touched, then Job would scorn Yahweh to his face. Yahweh accepts the Adversary's proposition and gives Job into his hand, yet with the reservation that Job himself be kept alive.

THE SMITING OF JOB

Then the Adversary went forth from Yahweh's presence, and he smote Job with evil boils from the sole of his foot unto his scalp. So he took for himself a potsherd to scrape himself with it as he was sitting in the midst of ashes (Job 2:7,8).

Though briefly stated, yet the severity of the smiting is such that it puts Job in the midst of the ashes outside the city, scraping himself with a potsherd. Truly Job himself has become the center and object of evil circumstances. The reason for the situation which has arisen around Job is, of course, quite unknown to him. This eventually becomes the crucial revelation, for it would have explained all to those who were engaged in the debate. Indeed every problem in the book finds its reference to the events behind the scenes regarding the Adversary and Yahweh.

Then his wife said to him, Are you still holding fast to

your integrity? Scorn Elohim and die. Yet he said to her, As some decadent woman speaks are you speaking. Indeed should we receive good from the One, Elohim, and should we not receive evil? In all this, Job did not sin with his lips (Job 2:9,10).

Job's endurance is now obvious to those around him and especially to his wife. Her intimate position gives her the privilege for freedom of comment. In the Septuagint Version there is an extended passage, detailing his wife's reaction and remarks, and in these she points to the way in which the calamities involve her and her life.

In reply, Job rebukes his wife, asking if we are to receive good only from God, and not evil. Hence we are told that amid all that has befallen Job he does not sin with his lips before Elohim.

Here again we see Job's fear and piety. He seriously accepted the general view and understanding of God's operations, regarding the experiences of good and evil as measures for keeping a balance to the circumstances in the world; in addition, no doubt, Job saw such operations as forces for restraint for effecting subjection. But it is evident that Job did not perceive the ways of God from the standpoint of revealing Himself and of pointing to a consummation of rectification.

LAMENTATION AND SILENCE

Now three associates of Job heard about all this evil coming on him, and they set out, each one from his place, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite. They made an appointment together to come and condole with him and comfort him. When they lifted their eyes from afar, they did not recognize him. Then they lifted their voice and lamented, while each one tore his robe, and they sprinkled soil toward the heavens on their heads.

They sat with him on the earth seven days and seven

nights. And there was no one speaking a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great (Job 2:11-13).

Tidings of the calamity which had befallen Job circulate to his associates. They visit him to condole with him. By appointment they meet together and journey to him so as to comfort him. Arriving they do not recognize him and are so shocked at his condition that they give way to lamenting.

This, however, gives place to silence, a clear admission of their inability to achieve anything on Job's behalf. Job's silent endurance continues during seven days and nights, in which his associates are present, baffled in the desire to comfort.

At length the point will come when Job breaks the silence by deploring that life was ever granted to him. This will furnish an opening for the associates to try to dissuade and advise Job. And in turn, Job's complaints will lead to continued debate over why the evils have overtaken him. In the blankness of this situation, none will find a solution. Nor is this possible until there is a larger degree of perception as to the *objective of God* in His activity.

E.H.Clayton



SOUND WORDS IN JOB

The vast value of keeping a *pattern* of sound words (2 Tim.1:13) was powerfully impressed upon me in seeking to understand the book of Job. Early in the century I found great help from a series of articles in Dr. Bullinger's magazine, *Things to Come*. Through this I learned much of the literary structure of this book and the interrelation of its parts.

At various times since then I have worked on a concordant version. We made a uniform sublinear, with the special object of connecting each expression with its stem

and showing the Hebrew grammar. Then I made a version as close to this as English idiom would warrant. But so many passages were without any definite meaning that I compared the whole throughout with the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew. This greatly improved it by changing many words that evidently had been miscopied. As I still felt the need of help, I read the best commentary, but all of its elaborate and labored explanations somehow did not satisfy. The words were too vague, too jumbled, too lacking in decisive clarity. My only hope, apart from an inspired commentary, was to *consider carefully the introduction of the book itself and note the exact significance of the words, their occurrence, and cut out everything else.* This is what I did.

CONSUMMATION

A divine commentary on the book of Job is given in James' epistle (James 5:11). The concordant key there is the word *consummation*. The AV word "end" fails to direct our thoughts to the other occurrences of the same word. "End" speaks of cessation rather than accomplishment. James tells us that the Lord achieved the object He had in view through Job's endurance, so that the patriarch, who at first feared Yahweh, finally found that He is very compassionate and full of pity. There can be no better summary of the whole than that.

Instead of simply reading the introduction, I wrote down my findings, as this necessitates not only close observation, but accurate expression, and involves a search for the salient features which constitute the key to the whole book. An intense examination of the sound words in the introduction, their order, their arrangement, as well as what is *not* said, has given clearer light than the many pages which I had read in explanation of them.

In seeking to get right to the heart of the controversy,

I noted that God Himself gives Job a character of the highest kind *so far as his relations to his fellow men are concerned*. This shows that the long arguments of his associates are beside the mark. But *Godward* there is a great lack. True, he *feared* God and *withdrew* from evil. As is evident from 2:10, Job even knew that the evils he suffered were from God. But he did not *love* God and *thank* Him for evil. Here lies the vital issue in the whole book. Satan saw this, so he did not charge Job with any wrongdoing to his fellows, but questioned Job's motives in regard to God. Strange to say, the friends of Job failed to understand or help him by their well-meant words, while Satan, by his opposition and by the infliction of evil, is used, in the wisdom of God, to bring about the desired consummation. Job now knows God, not merely as One to be feared, but to be loved for His tender compassion.

GRATUITOUSLY

One of the most helpful leads in discovering the very core of Job's trouble I found in the word *gratuitously* (1:9; 2:3). How little this word conforms to any pattern in our Bibles is seen in the AV renderings: *without a cause, causeless, to cost nothing, without cost, free, freely, innocent, for nothing, for nought, in vain, without wages*. According to the AV Satan said, "Doth Job fear God *for nought*?" And God later said to Job, "thou movest me against him, to destroy him *without cause*" (1:9; 2:3).

The importance of this word is seen from its emphasis in the Hebrew. Satan said, "*Gratuitously* does Job fear Elohim?" That is, he fears him only because it pays. And Yahweh takes up this expression: "you would incite Me against him to swallow him up *gratuitously*." That is the real point of the whole tragedy. God sent evil upon Job, not because of misconduct, but to bring him into closer fellowship with His heart.

A. E. Knoch



THE SUFFERINGS OF JOB

The severe experiences of Job have proved a source of perplexity to many. Their perplexities, we are persuaded, arise from attempting to separate process from aftereffect, which are inseparable in the very nature of things, and to consider them by themselves. The process is mysterious and inscrutable; the aftereffect is patent and palpable. If therefore the end is certain and beneficent, the process—however perplexing and apparently incongruous—is justified from the results achieved.

We have learned by experience and observation that processes are indispensable, and so judge of their value in the light of aftereffect. We ask, then, if this principle is widely recognized, and acted upon, with respect to the affairs of this life, why should it not be equally recognized in dealing with spiritual problems?

Seen by itself, from the ordinary point of view, Job's "captivity" is meaningless; considered in the light of the "consummation," it is full of purpose. The way was rugged, the consummation happy; the process painful, the issue wholesome; the pathway dark, the goal glorious.

V. Gelesnoff



IN ALL THIS

The comments on the first two chapters of Job which have appeared in the last few numbers of *Unsearchable Riches* have focused attention on what must surely be the key issue of the book. Our brothers, A. E. Knoch, V. Gelesnoff and E. H. Clayton, have pointed behind the scenes

of the earthly events and beyond Job and his associates, to the activities of God and the revelation of Himself.

"In all this" that Job did and said, he did not sin (Job 2:10). Consequently, the book is not concerned simply with human sin and divine judgment, but with something deeper concerning God's motivations and goals. "In all this" that happens to Job, there is a divine purpose for good and toward the realization of Deity.

Our three teachers have all noted the "divine commentary" on Job given in James 5:11. The severe sufferings Job had to endure were given with a particular "consummation" in view, an outcome rather than simply an end, the aftereffect rather than simply cessation. This consummation is a revelation of the Lord's heart, that He is very compassionate and full of pity.

At the beginning, and even after the severe losses and sufferings had come upon him, Job is found to be unusually devout toward God and flawless in his relationship with others. But, as our teachers have noted, there was a lack in Job that will not be filled until the consummation is reached, when Job declares (Job 42:5,6):

With the hearing of the ear I had heard of You,
But now my eye sees You.
Therefore I recant and repent
On soil and ashes.

We may well ask, What higher wisdom and greater maturity could anyone be given than that shown by Job in chapter two verse ten? "Indeed should we receive good from the One, Elohim, and should we not receive evil?" But to trace all, both good and evil, to the One God is not enough. In seeing that all is out of God, we need to be led also to see that all is for the greatest good. The appreciation of God in His wisdom, power and, above all, His love, is the consummation God has in view for Job, and ultimately for all.

D.H.H.

SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE

CHAPTER 13 OF FIRST SAMUEL begins with a statement where numbers have dropped out. The literal translation of verse one reads: "Saul [was a] year old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel two years." The Jewish historian Josephus wrote about him: "Now Saul reigned eighteen years while Samuel was alive, and after his death two." Yet in another statement, Josephus gave Saul a forty-year reign.

We may assume that Saul was about forty years old, and his son Jonathan about twenty, when the latter was commander of 1,000 men and smote the Philistine garrison at Geba (1 Sam.13:2,3). "As for Saul, he had the trumpet blown throughout the land, saying . . . Saul smote a garrison of the Philistines . . . Thus the people were summoned to follow Saul to Gilgal. As for the Philistines, they were gathered to fight with Israel. And they came up against Israel with 3,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They came up and encamped at Michmash, east of Beth-aven. When the men of Israel saw that there was distress for them since their force was hard pressed, then the people hid in caves, in holes, in crags, in vaulted tunnels, and in cisterns. Some even crossed the fords of the Jordan, to the area of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still at Gilgal with all the force trembling behind him" (1 Sam.13:3-7).

DIVINE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO SAUL

Samuel had given Saul a basic instruction how he, as king, should deal with general matters that demanded his

decision or action: "Do for yourself whatever your hand shall find, for the One, Elohim, is with you" (1 Sam.10:7). Thus Saul was to undertake whatever tasks presented themselves, being aware of the divine promise that Elohim would be with him, i.e., that the presence of Elohim would both assure and guide.

We may assume that Jonathan acted in accord with this general instruction when he smote the Philistine garrison at Geba. Saul claimed this victory for himself, and *he summoned the people* to follow him to Gilgal, while the Philistines were gathered to fight with Israel (13:4,5).

When we read of Saul's precipitous action, we realize that Saul badly needed a prophet like Samuel alongside him, ready to give guidance, instruction and, if necessary, rebuke. Samuel knew Yahweh's mind, and saw prayer answered; he would indicate the right way, and all that Saul would have to do was to follow. Saul could have leaned hard on Samuel and would thus have found divine reassurance in settled confidence before Yahweh. Yet this was exactly what Saul could not bring himself to do.

For any time of *crisis*, Samuel had given Saul a special divine instruction: "You must go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will be coming down to you to offer up ascent approaches and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace offerings. *Seven days shall you wait until I come to you; and I will inform you what you should do*" (1 Sam.10:8). (Jonathan had not been bound by any such commitment, obviously because his action had not been full-scale war.)

When Saul fought the Ammonites (ch.11), the Israelite soldiers had come forth as one man (11:7); they were bold and filled with energy, for the awe of Yahweh had fallen on them. Yet here (in 1 Sam.13:3-7) they were distressed, they hid like cowards, and they trembled. This contrast in their attitude serves to demonstrate that Saul is no longer on the ascendancy, but rather moving toward his demise. In 11:6,7 the spirit of Elohim had prospered over Saul,

when he spoke of "following Saul *and following Samuel*" after he had heard of the Ammonite atrocities committed against the sons of Reuben and Gad. In chapter 13, however, no divine spirit prospered over him. Morale was low in Saul's volunteer militia; and the volunteers began to scatter (13:11), that is, to drift toward home.

Saul was obviously trusting in his army, small as it was, and perhaps too, he was trusting in military strategy, planning in some way to wrest the initiative from the Philistine invaders. Yet Saul was insensitive on spiritual issues, and so he was now challenging Samuel's spiritual authority and therefore that of Yahweh, Who would give instructions through His prophet Samuel, when to start an all-out war.

SAUL OFFERING UP THE ASCENT APPROACH

We may assume that Samuel undertook always to come within seven days in any time of crisis; and he may again have given Saul the special instruction to this effect. Hence Saul "waited seven days, the appointed time that Samuel had set; yet Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the force was scattering . . ." (1 Sam.13:8).

Saul obviously felt that he was in a dilemma, from which he could see no escape. He could very well have besought the face of Yahweh privately and could have asked for guidance and assurance. But he had no settled confidence in the Elohim of Israel. Hence he did not wait for Samuel who would come to offer the sacrifices that preceeded battle, and who would inform him what to do.

So Saul was disobedient when he acted independently and said: "Bring close to me the ascent approach and the peace offerings; and he offered up the ascent approach. Now it came to be, as soon as he finished offering up the ascent approach, behold, Samuel was coming. And Saul went forth to meet him and bless him [i.e., greet him]. But Samuel said, What have you done? Saul replied, When I saw that the force scattered from me, and you, you did not

come within the appointed days, and the Philistines were being gathered at Michmash, then I thought, Now the Philistines shall come down against me to Gilgal, and I have not yet beseeched the face of Yahweh. So I felt compelled to offer up the ascent approach" (1 Sam.13:9-12).

Since Saul was not a priest, he had no right to officiate in sacrificial rituals. Yet he evidently thought that, as king, he could in an emergency offer proper sacrifices in order to stop the demoralization of his troops. They would regain fortitude to encounter battle, when they would see the offering up of sacrifices.

"Samuel replied to Saul, You acted unwisely! O that you had observed the instruction of Yahweh your Elohim that He enjoined on you! Then Yahweh would now have established your dynasty over Israel for the eon. Yet now your dynasty shall not be confirmed. Yahweh has sought out for Himself a man in accord with His own heart; and Yahweh shall commission him as governor over His people, for you have not observed what Yahweh enjoined on you. Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal and went his own way" (1 Sam.13:13-15).

Saul had acted unwisely in that he had failed to realize the essential difference between Israel's monarchy and that of the nations. In Israel Yahweh was King, and obedience to Him must be paramount; hence Saul's independent action led to his disqualification. So Samuel informed Saul that his kingship [or dynasty] would not be confirmed.

YAHWEH CAN SAVE BY MANY OR BY FEW

"Jonathan son of Saul said to his lad, his gear-bearer, Do come, let us cross over to the detachment of the Philistines who are over on that side. Yet he did not tell his father . . . Perhaps Yahweh shall act for us, for there is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few . . . Here we are crossing over to those men where we expose our-

selves to them. If they say thus to us . . . Come up to us, then we must go up, for Yahweh has given them into our hand. That shall be the sign for us" (1 Sam.14:1,6,8-10).

Jonathan concluded that the sign from Yahweh would be in how the Philistines greeted them; and he chose the least likely response: "Come up to us!"

When Jonathan and his lad moved in view of the Philistine garrison, they heard words of contempt: "Here the Hebrews are coming forth from the holes where they had hidden themselves" (14:11). But then the Philistines added: "*Come up to us*, and we shall let you know something. Then Jonathan said to his gear-bearer, Come up after me, for Yahweh has given them into the hands of Israel.

"Jonathan crawled up on his hands and on his feet, with his gear-bearer behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan when he smote them . . . about twenty men . . .

"Then a trembling occurred in the Philistine camp, in the field and among their whole force; the detachment and the raiding contingent, they also trembled. The earth was disturbed, and it became a trembling from Elohim" (14:12-15).

"Saul's watchmen saw how the [Philistine] throng was dissolved" (14:16), and Saul himself and all his militia-men joined in battle. "Thus Yahweh saved Israel on that day" (14:23).

DOOM AMALEK AND ALL THAT IS HIS

Chapter 15 reports another act of disobedience on the part of Saul, after Samuel had told him: "Hearken to the voice of Yahweh . . . you must smite Amalek and *doom* him and all that is his" (15:1,3).

The Amalekite were a nomadic tribe who had attacked the Israelites during their migration from Egypt (*cf* Deut. 25:17-19). Joshua defeated Amalek at Rephidim (between the wilderness of Sin and Mount Sinai; *cf* Ex.17:8-15); and Moses said: "Yahweh has a war with Amalek from

generation to generation" (17:16), because of their perpetual hostility.

"Then Saul smote the Amalekite from Havilah as far as Shur, which is adjoining Egypt. While *he apprehended Agag king of Amalek alive*, he doomed all the people Saul and his soldiers spared Agag and the best of the flock and the herd

"The word of Yahweh came to Samuel, saying, I regret that I caused Saul to reign as king, for he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My commands" (1 Sam. 15:7-11). Yahweh did not "regret" His choice of Saul (*cf* 1 Sam. 10:24) in the way Samuel may have regretted it when "he cried out to Yahweh all night" (15:11). Yahweh had chosen Saul, knowing that he would be a disobedient king and thus provide the background for David's monarchy.

In the meantime, Saul had gone to Carmel where he erected a monument as a signpost to himself.¹ Then he had turned about and passed on and descended to Gilgal. Samuel came to Saul, just when he had offered up an ascent approach to Yahweh of the first of the loot that he had taken from Amalek. When Samuel came near to Saul, then Saul tried to explain why he had again officiated in sacrificial ritual. "Samuel replied to Saul, Hold back and let me tell you what Yahweh spoke to me last night" (15:12-16).

"So Samuel apprised Saul: Is it not true that though you were small in your own eyes, you became head of the tribes of Israel? Yahweh anointed you as king over Israel, and Yahweh sent you on a mission, saying, Go and doom those sinners, the Amalekite; fight against them until you have finished them. Then why did you not hearken to the voice of Yahweh? Why did you pounce on the loot and do what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh?" (1 Sam. 15:17-19).

Saul replied: "Because I hearkened to the voice of the

1. 15:12; i.e., his victory sign over Amalek.

soldiers" (15:20); thus the best of the herd had been spared in order to be sacrificed to Yahweh at Gilgal.

"But Samuel said,

Does Yahweh have as much delight

in ascent offerings and sacrifices

As in *hearkening to the voice of Yahweh?*

Behold, to hearken is better than sacrifice,

To pay attention than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is like the sin of divination,

Insubordination, like the lawlessness of teraphim.²

Because you rejected the command of Yahweh,

He has also rejected you from being king over Israel"
(15:22,23).

"Saul replied to Samuel, I have sinned, for I have transgressed the bidding of Yahweh and your instructions, because I feared the soldiers and I hearkened to their voice. Now I pray, bear with my sin and return with me, so that I may prostrate myself before Yahweh your Elohim So Samuel turned back, following after Saul, and Saul prostrated himself before Yahweh" (15:24,25,31).

Yet Saul's response was too late. He had alienated himself from both Yahweh and Samuel who went to Ramah. Saul would remain king as long as he lived; but Yahweh would give the kingship to an associate of his (15:28).

INTO THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST

As in Samuel's days, God has much delight in our hearkening to His words, when we are leading into captivity every apprehension into the obedience of Christ, so that our obedience may be completed (*cf* 2 Cor.10:5,6). Then the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning our hearts and our apprehensions in Christ Jesus.

H.H.R.

(*To be continued*)

2. 15:23; teraphim, or household gods.

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