

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 116th Year
(1909–2025)

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WORD

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Founding Editors

V. Gelesnoff (1877-1921)

A. E. Knoch (1879-1965)

CONCORDANT PUBLISHING CONCERN
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EDITORIAL

THIS is a time of transition and adjustment for this magazine. I am no longer involved actively in its production and have requested that my name be withdrawn from the title page. Nevertheless I am writing this editorial. As has been so for many years, there are several workers involved in the production of this instrument of the Concordant Publishing Concern. And so it continues.

Yet I am grateful for this opportunity to speak personally here at the beginning of volume 116. What I wrote about “listening” and “joy” and “should” in the last issue keeps running through my head, and I would very much like to add a few words on these matters of the evangel.

My concern is mainly that what Paul writes with clarity in Romans 5 not be diluted by what he writes in chapters 6-8. We have already seen that the properly grammatical rendering of the phrase “faith *of* Jesus Christ” (not “faith *in* Jesus Christ”) in Romans 3:22 opens up the harmony of the opening four chapters with chapter 5. When Paul speaks of Jesus Christ’s faith he is saying the same thing as the words stated more plainly in Romans 5:8, “Christ dies for our sakes.” The faith of Jesus Christ in dying for our sakes is God’s evangel concerning His Son which is for our faith. Similarly, this evangel is worded in Romans 5:19 as “the listening [UNDER-HEARING] of the One,” and it is this which is for our listening as a slave listens to the words of his or her master (Rom.6:16-18). The English word “obedience” no longer conveys a sense of attentive hearing as it once did. It is true that a slave is obligated to carry out instructions, but first it is critical to listen carefully to such

instructions. To do what is not instructed and fail to do what is instructed is actually to be disobedient and may have harmful consequences. But what God says to us is "apart from law" (Rom.3:21), that is apart from instruction of what we are to do or not do. Rather we hear a message of revelation of what God has done through His Son and what this reveals about God. It is a message of joyous achievement. Our Lord, however, heard a message of what He was to do, or rather more exactly, what was to be done to Him. His listening was most attentive and submissive, first as His faith which was of the highest and purest quality. Our listening (or paying attention) to God's evangel of joy and peace concerning the death and rousing of Jesus Christ is, by comparison, more flawed (for we are sinners who are dying), but nevertheless Paul urges us to present ourselves as slaves of listening from the heart to the type of teaching to which we are given over.

This type of teaching is one of joy and peace. To be sure, the joy is undeserved and gratuitous, so it differs from the joy we give to God in the form of abundantly deserved thanks and praise for not sparing His own Son but giving Him up for us all. But in both cases the Greek word used (*charis*) conveys the sense of joy.

Accordingly I believe we must see that Paul's use of the subjunctive "should" in Romans 6:4 does not convey a sense of "ought," but a sense of certainty concerning the future, as in Romans 3:4 where "should" exactly matches "shall."

All of this calls for testing. A list of all the passages where a form of the Greek word UNDER-HEAR appears would be helpful with some form of the English word "listen" used. I am not opposed to obedience, but as that word is understood today the sense of the original term, UNDER-HEAR, is in danger of getting lost. As listening slaves we are to be listening attentively to God's evangel concerning His Son.

Dean H. Hough

THE “MYSTICAL” BODY OF CHRIST

“For even as, *in one body*, we have many members, yet all the *members* have not the same *function* . . .” (Rom.12:4).

“God blends the body together . . . that there may be no schism *in the body*, but the *members* may be mutually *solicitous for one another*” (1 Cor.12:24).

“Making *peace* . . . *reconciling both* [groups, Uncircumcision and Circumcision] *in one body*” (Eph. 2:15,16).

TO GET AT THE VERY HEART of the secret unfolded in Ephesians is a great spiritual achievement, far beyond the soulish man (1 Cor.2:14) and impossible to minors in Christ (1 Cor.3:1-4). It has become so mysterious that it is well called a “mystery.”

Even among those well advanced in truth, who have not shaken themselves entirely free of the shackles which once bound them, there is much misapprehension on this matter. Well do we remember the notable series of articles on this subject by Dr. Bullinger. But even he made the Ephesian secret the body of Christ, as many spiritual divines, especially among the Puritans, had done before him. That position is well crystallized in the phrase “the mystical body of Christ.” My own suspicions were aroused by the fact that no such phrase is found in Scripture. This led me to inquire what “the mystery” really is.

After much study, I found the answer to my quest in the categorical statement of Ephesians 3:6. There it is defined for us so clearly and concisely that we need never be at a

loss as to its precise provisions. There we are told that, *in spirit*, the nations are to be

joint enjoyers of an allotment,
and a *joint* body,
and *joint* partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus,
through the evangel of which Paul became the
dispenser.

That the nations were to be *heirs* or *allottees* was no secret. Long before this Paul had written to the Roman believers: "For you did not get slavery's spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, 'Abba, Father!' The spirit itself is testifying together with our spirit that we are children of God. Yet if children, enjoyers also of an allotment, enjoyers, indeed, of an allotment from God" (Rom.8:15-17). Similarly he expostulates with the Galatians: "Now, seeing that you are sons, God delegates the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying 'Abba, Father!' So that you are no longer a slave, but a son. Now if a son, an enjoyer also of God's allotment, through Christ" (Gal.4:6-8).

That the believers among the nations were members of the body of Christ was no secret either, as we propose to show.

THE BODY AS A FIGURE

The word "body" is frequently used as a *faded* figure for any group of people, as we say of a crowd, "They went to the place in a *body*." We wish, however, to consider particularly those passages where the body is used in a definitely figurative sense in the Scriptures, and see if we cannot correct our thoughts and expressions to accord therewith.

ISRAEL FIGURED AS A BODY

Before considering the special figures usually associ-

ated with the ecclesia of the one body it may be well to consider the word “body” as figuring other things. When our Lord was explaining to His disciples how it would be when the Son of Mankind is unveiled, they say to Him, “Where, Lord?” In reply He speaks this enigmatic parable: “Wherever the *body* is, there the vultures also will be assembled” (Luke 17:37). In the parallel passage (Matt. 24:28) the body is called a *corpse*. The most probable interpretation makes the body to be Jacob, as the victim of the nations in his time of trouble. As the vultures assemble about a dead body, so will the nations of the end time be drawn together to destroy Israel. Here the word *body* is used of those whom we usually *exclude* from “the body.”

THE BODY OF JESUS

Our Lord used His physical frame in a figurative way frequently. He would have them eat His flesh (John 6:51). To this they took violent exception, because they did not recognize His meaning. Our life depends on food and drink. Just so our spiritual life depends on Christ. Unless we get nourishment from Him we will die.

The figure used in the Lord’s dinner is different. There we have emblems, which we may literally eat and drink. And here it is His broken or given body and His shed blood, tokens of His sufferings and death, which are brought to our recollection, not merely to our minds, but to our feelings, by this figure.

HIS BODY IS A TEMPLE

He also compared His whole body to a temple (John 2:21). The Jews asked for a sign, and He answered, “Raze this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” They should have realized that the literal pile of stones before them did not really house the Deity. God lived in His body, hence

it was well worthy of the figurative appellation, "temple." They razed it and He raised it.

THE BODY AND BLOOD OF THE LORD

Those who delight in the exquisite diction of the Scriptures, and especially in the marvelous way in which the titles of our Saviour are varied to agree with the context, will enjoy the change from the *communion* of the blood and the body of *Christ* (1 Cor.10:16), to eating and drinking *unworthily* of the body and blood of the *Lord*. It is precisely the same body and the same blood, but the viewpoint in one case is privilege, in the other conduct. The passage follows (1 Cor.11:27,29):

So that, whoever should be eating the bread or drinking the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be liable for the body and the blood of the Lord. . . . For he who is eating and drinking unworthily is eating and drinking judgment to himself, not discriminating the body of the Lord.

The Corinthians seem to have made a literal meal of this figurative memorial. They ate when hungry, instead of waiting to partake of the memorial in common with the rest. To set this right, they were disciplined. That which *figures* sacred spiritual realities must not be made a means of physical and literal satisfaction.

THE BODY OF CHRIST

The body of *Christ* is literally, of course, the same as the body of *Jesus*, or of the *Lord*. But, in figures of speech, the title used indicates a vast difference, which must be noted, or its force will be lost. Perhaps we should vary the title "Christ" occasionally for its equivalent, "Anointed," to show its *official* character. The main need, however, in these days, is to distinguish the various figures in which the body of Christ is employed. The thoughtless accep-

tance of these as one and the same has created much confusion, which need not continue if we will only test each context carefully for the *literal interpretation*. In figures, each usage stands by itself, and cannot be transported into another context. The word "body" here may figure one thing, yet quite another picture may be presented there. This is exceedingly important in concordant study. The *meaning* of a word is constant. It is the same everywhere. *On the contrary, the figurative usage is special*. It may occur nowhere else.

The first occurrence of the phrase, "the body of Christ," has been largely overlooked, because the figure does not fit well with so-called "body truth," which deals with the believers of this administration as a whole, not as individuals. But the individual saint has a relation to the body of the Anointed quite apart from his place in the one body. In dealing with the law, the apostle writes, "*you* also were put to death to the law through *the body of Christ . . .*" (Rom.7:4). Here we have the *death* of the body, and *through* that death all who are in Christ and under law, die to law. The important point for us, in this study, is to see that there is an *individual* relationship to the literal body of the *individual* Christ.

Let us foolishly try to carry over the "one body truth" into this passage, as is sometimes done with other texts. Then the "body of Christ" *dies*, literally, and through that death those in it who were under the law of Moses are dead to it! But when did it die? And how could the death of its members, in any sense, provide a release from the law? Is it not clear that "the body of Christ," though usually used figuratively of a company of saints, can also be used literally of His actual body of flesh and bones?

THE PERSONAL BODY OF CHRIST

To clear the way, let us first consider those passages in

which the personal body of our Lord is referred to. When He said "This is My body" (Matt.26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor.11:24), the bread was not transmuted into flesh, hence His words are not true as to fact. The figure is explained to us by Paul by the words *communion* and *partaking* (1 Cor.10:16):

The cup of blessing which we are blessing, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we are breaking, is it not the communion of the *body* of Christ? . . . all are partaking of the one bread.

That the one body of the saints is not in view here is evident from the parallel with the blood. The believers have in common both the blood and the body of Christ. By the figure of *Association* (usually called *Metonymy*) we partake of the benefits *associated with* the sufferings by His sheltering blood and the sustenance suggested by the bread and body.

THE BELIEVERS TODAY AS A BODY

We should seek to draw a clear line between those figures already presented, in which we partake of Christ and He comes to be *in us*, and those to which we now turn, in which we are *in Christ*. In these alone we have what is intended by the phrase "body truth." The blessings in store for Israel were shadowed by food and drink and festivals and sabbaths, but our blessings are in Christ, and are illustrated by various points which are literally true of His physical body.

MANY MEMBERS WITH DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS

Paul uses the body as a figure first in Romans 12:4,5:

For even as, in one body, we have many members, yet all the members have not the same function, thus

we, who are many, are one body in Christ, yet individually members of one another.

Let us note carefully just what the picture here really illustrates. It is not the relation of Christ to the saints which is uppermost, but of believers to one another. There were many different kinds of persons, with varying functions among them, yet all are in Christ, hence, like the members of the human body, all cooperate and are dependent on one another, and make one complete whole, because all have the same spirit.

If we are accurate in our statements we will not refer to this as the body of *Christ*. The literal is *our* body, not necessarily that body which He has in glory. The emphasis is on the individual members, as is fitting in Romans. They are spoken of as *members of one another*. The point is not their relationship to Christ. They are “in Christ,” but the figure does not illustrate that. The emphasis is laid on the *variety of functions in many members*, which make up one body. Literally, it may be interpreted thus: The believers in Christ form a single organism, although they are given different gifts. These graces are complementary, so that the whole makes one complete organism. Let us carefully keep this figure distinct from similar ones in Corinthians and Ephesians. These are not “different bodies” but *different figures* concerning the *same* company of believers. In Romans we may take our own body as the basis of the figure, but in Corinthians the picture varies. In some connections it is *our* body (1 Cor.12:23), but it begins and ends with the body of *Christ* (1 Cor.12:12,27).

THE FIGURATIVE BODY OF CHRIST

In order to explain the spiritual endowments of the believers, the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians uses a figure almost identical with that used in Romans. There it is

illustrated by any body. Now the figure is expanded and enriched. As all the saints are anointed by God's spirit, the ecclesia is compared with the body of the Anointed. It is called "the Christ" or "the Anointed" (1 Cor.12:12). In Romans, the emphasis was placed on the *diversity* of the members. In Corinthians it lies on their *unity*. This unity is brought about by the baptism of the spirit. See how the figures are mixed! We can baptize many "bodies" and thus unite them, but you can hardly baptize the members of one body to unite them! But the literal is clear. All who enter the sphere of God's spirit are incorporated into one body.

The fullest unfolding of this figure is found in this passage. The object is to illustrate the relation of the believers to one another, especially in regard to the spiritual endowments which obtained at that time. It will be worth our while to study the occurrences of this figure very carefully, hence we will give the full text of this passage.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-31

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

For the body also is not one member, but many. If the foot should be saying, "Seeing that I am not a hand, I am not of the body," not for this is it not of the body. And if the ear should be saying, "Seeing that I am not an eye, I am not of the body," not for this is it not of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the scent? Yet now God placed the members, each one of them, in the body according as He wills. Now if it were all one member, where were the body?

Yet now there are, indeed, many members, yet one body. Yet the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," or, again, the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." Nay, much rather, those members belonging to the body supposed to be weaker are necessary, and which we suppose to be a more dishonored part of the body, these we are investing with more exceeding honor, and our indecent members have more exceeding respectability. Now our respectable members have no need, but God blends the body together, giving to that which is deficient more exceeding honor, that there may be no schism in the body, but the members may be mutually solicitous for one another. And whether one member is suffering, all the members are sympathizing, or one member is being esteemed, all the members are rejoicing together with it.

Now *you* are the body of Christ, and members of a part, whom also God, indeed, placed in the ecclesia, first, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers, thereupon powers, thereupon graces of healing, supports, pilotage, species of languages. Not all are apostles. Not all are prophets. Not all are teachers. Not all have powers. Not all have the graces of healing. Not all are speaking languages. Not all are interpreting. Yet be zealous for the greater graces. And still I am showing you a path, suited to transcendence.

First let us note that it illustrates a temporary condition. It is suited to the grace then shown to the nations, but this was far below that which was revealed later. But, when the path suited to transcendence led to maturity, the figure of the body was not abandoned. It was used over again seven times, but always with a different point. The human body is not merely a composite unit, as here set forth. It may be looked at as needing food, or as being cherished, as executing the will of the mind, etc. In these and other relationships the ecclesia is also called a body.

In order to keep from confounding this figure with that of Christ's headship, let us note carefully that the *growth* and *subjection* of the believers is quite foreign to the theme here. The saints are the complete body of Christ, head included. The ear, the eye, the scent, are all *members* even though they are in the head. The relation of Christ to *this* body is *not* that of Head. He is *All*. Just as His literal body in glory consists of feet and hands and head, so His figurative body is a complete organism, and His spirit gives life to *every member*, whether it is the lowest (the feet) or the highest (such as the eyes in the head). And He is full grown. No growth is possible on the part of His literal body, so that it cannot be used to illustrate growth or increase. *Growth* is true only where He is the figurative *Head* (Eph.4:16).

The literal truth so graphically set forth under the figure of the body (in 1 Cor.12:12-31) should be clear to each one. It is the spirit they receive which unites all who are in Christ, and which gives them the power of *cooperation and mutual sympathy*. The more this spirit fills us the more this will be apparent. The less there is of it the less we will see of the cooperative unity and sympathy which should be the most marked feature of the church.

It is seldom, indeed, that a figure is so detailed as in this example. There are many points of contact. There are *many members* in one organism, and mutual dependence, helpfulness, and sympathy.

THE BODY IN THIS SECRET ADMINISTRATION

Ephesians does not repeat all that Paul gives us in his previous epistles, even if it is included in the truth for today. It simply incorporates what was already revealed by referring to it under some clear designation. Thus, little is said of our expectation in this epistle, yet the subject is based upon what had been made known before.

“Those who are in a state of prior expectancy” clearly recognize what he had written to the Thessalonians and Corinthians (Eph.1:12); then follows the prayer that they should be able to perceive the prospect now revealed (Eph.1:18), and the exhortation to keep the unity made by the one expectation (Eph.4:4).

So also with the truth of our spiritual union in Christ. No detailed illustration is needed, since it has already been given, and the saints associated with Paul’s ministry have come to be called “the ecclesia which is His body” (Eph.1:23). It is the special designation for them when their relation to *Christ* is before us, as the expression “body-church” is with some today. Since, in fact, the same believers and the same unity are shown by the same figure we are hardly justified in making different bodies of these.

THE JOINT BODY

At this point I hope to help our friends by freely confessing my own failure in confusing the figure used in Ephesians with that in First Corinthians. Even though there is a basis in fact, as we shall see, the two figures are too different to form a direct contrast. More mature reflection has led me to see that the *joint* body of Ephesians and the *one* body of Corinthians must not be mixed in our minds. They were made by different methods and cover distinct areas of truth, which may, indeed, overlap, but are not identical. The one body was brought about by spirit baptism, and unites its many *members*, Jews and Greeks, but also slaves and free, and those who vary in the scale of respectability and honor. It leads to *sympathy in suffering*, and *rejoicing in esteem*. It is concerned with the *mutual care* we should exercise *for one another* while in weakness and insufficiency and shame in this nether sphere (1 Cor.12:13,26).

This joint body, however, is the result of *vivifying* and *rousing* and *seating* two *groups* of believers, those among the nations *together* with an election out of Israel, among the *celestials* (Eph.2:5,6), both groups being dead to their offenses. The action is literally true of Christ's body. In this view it is not composed of *many members*, but of only *two groups*, which have been dealt with *together*, or *jointly*. It is not concerned with their sympathetic exercise, but with the display of God's grace in the coming eons. The words *joint* and *together* are the same in the Greek, and mark a distinction between this aspect (*two groups* brought together) and that of a body with *many members*, though, of course, both describe a *unity*, and may be called *one* body.

Yet the fact that this joint body does away with the prerogatives and preeminence of Pauline Jews and gives them the same place among the celestials as believers among the nations, in Christ, has its effect on the constitution of the one body of Corinthians. This is clearly indicated by the different lists of the gifts. Those in Corinthians were suited to the time. Ephesians does not discard them all, and start fresh. It continues those suited to the new grace, drops those which are not in line with it, and adds two new ones. Apostles and prophets continued in the foundation (Eph.2:20). Teachers are still with us, as well as evangelists and pastors. As we also are baptized in one spirit, and have gifts, we, as many individuals, are one body, as in Romans and Corinthians, composed of various degrees or ranks with different functions, which are figured by the differently esteemed members of the body in all of these epistles.

Thrice, in Ephesians, the nations are addressed in order to *explain their jointure* with some believers out of Israel, which constitutes the secret. First, in relation to God and their celestial allotment, we read in 1:13: In Whom *you* also . . . are sealed with the holy spirit . . . which is an earnest of . . . *our allotment*. The nations are joint enjoyers of

an allotment with select Israelites *because they, too, have been sealed* with the spirit of promise, which is its earnest. In relation to Christ the joint body is explained in 2:1-5: And *you* being dead . . . *we* also . . . God . . . vivifies *us together* . . . and rouses *us together* and seats *us together* among the celestials, in Christ Jesus. The nations belong to the joint body because *they, as well as those of Israel* whose lot was in Christ among the celestials, are vivified, roused, and seated jointly. In the coming eons our bodies will be literally raised together and He will display His transcendent grace through us. The nations form a joint body with Pauline Jews because they are vivified, roused and seated together.

In relation to each other, their joint participation is set forth in 2:11: once *you*, the nations in flesh, and 2:13-18: now . . . *you* . . . far off . . . near . . . *our* peace . . . *both* one . . . the *two* . . . into one . . . into *one* new humanity . . . *we both* have had access. The nations participate with selected Israelites *in spirit* because they are no longer shut out from access to God on account of their *physical* relationship.

BOTH BLESSED TOGETHER IN A JOINT BODY

Let us, then, confine the figure of the joint body to our union with the Circumcision, and let us revel in the transcendence of the grace which is thus revealed. It would have been a great mercy had we been blessed as subordinates of Israel, on the earth. Quite unthinkable would be the favor had we been made their equals in the Kingdom. Much higher than this would have been our blessing had we been put beneath them among the celestials. But how unsurpassable is the grace that blesses us *together* and makes us a *together* or *joint* body in the highest sphere in all the universe!

THE EVANGEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

Galatians 2:6-14

IN Galatians 2:3, Paul refers to the time when “not even Titus, who is with me, being a Greek, is *compelled* to be circumcised.” This was during the period of Paul’s second visit to the holy city, after the lapse of fourteen years, when he again went up to Jerusalem together with Barnabas, taking Titus along with him (2:1). Yet while not even Titus, who was with Paul, being a Greek, was *compelled* to be circumcised, Paul adds that nonetheless, “it was because of the false brethren who were smuggled in, who came in by the way to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they shall be enslaving us—”(2:4). That is—and the sense is so evident that Paul breaks off his words without actually expressing his thought—it was because of the claims (*cp* Acts 15:1,2,5) of certain “false brethren” that Titus *was* then *pressed* by some to be circumcised, even though even these could not well *compel* him to undergo the rite, contrary to the counsel of the pillars of the Jerusalem ecclesia.

Now from those reputed to be somewhat—what kind they once were is of no consequence to me (God is not taking up the human aspect)—for to me those of repute submitted nothing. But, on the contrary, perceiving that I have been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision (for He Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision operates in me also for the nations), and, knowing the grace which is being given to me, James and Cephas and John, who are supposed to be pillars, give to me and

Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we, indeed, are to be for the nations, yet they for the Circumcision—only that we may be remembering the poor, which same thing I endeavor also to do. (2:6-10)

In speaking of the twelve as “those reputed to be somewhat,” Paul should not be understood as disparaging them. Paul does not refer to any exalted claims which the twelve made for themselves, but to those advanced in favor of the twelve by the circumcisionists, in the interests of their own legalistic devisings.

Those who were apostles before Paul “submitted nothing” to him. The twelve acknowledged the message and ministry of Paul as sufficient unto itself. Paul's evangel needed no *addition*—and received none—from the twelve. But on the contrary, since God was *operating* in Paul for the apostleship of the nations, as well as in Peter for that of the Circumcision, the twelve *perceived* that Paul had been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision. Hence, James, Cephas, and John “knew” the grace which was being given to Paul. As a result, they gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, acknowledging that Paul and Barnabas were to be for the nations, yet they themselves for the Circumcision. The only word they wished to add was a request that Paul and his fellow workers may be remembering the poor among the Jews, which same thing, as Paul assures us, he endeavored also to do.

Considered in itself, it is possible to understand the phrase “the evangel of the Uncircumcision” as a metonymy for “the evangelization of the Uncircumcision.” But it is not translation but interpretation to render this phrase, as in most modern Bibles, “the gospel *to* the Uncircumcision.” Such a rendering supports the popular claim that in all respects Paul's gospel is the same as that of the twelve. It gives credence as well to the related common assertion

that by the words “the gospel of Christ,” we are to understand a *singular* message of good news which, in all particulars, applies to all who are in Christ.

Both “Uncircumcision” and “Circumcision” are in the genitive case. As will be explained later in this article, the sign of the genitive in English is OF- not TO-. Ideally, objective translation requires the former and precludes the latter. There may be a few cases where, due to the idiosyncracies of English, good diction may be strained if the genitive should be represented by OF. Nearly always, however, and certainly in this case at hand, it makes perfectly good English to say “the evangel of the Uncircumcision,” as much so as to say, “the epistles of the apostle Paul.” They are not the epistles *to* the apostle Paul, but the apostle Paul’s epistles. Similarly, Paul does not speak of the evangel *to* the Uncircumcision, but of the Uncircumcision’s evangel.

No one claims that the phrase “the apostleship *of* the Circumcision” (2:8), ought to be translated “the apostleship *to* the Circumcision.” Further, it should be noted that by the words which follow in verse 9, “we, indeed, are to be *for* [lit., “into”] the nations, yet they *for* [i.e., “into”] the Circumcision,” any general thought of evangelization directed, respectively, to both the nations and the Circumcision is thereby adequately expressed. Hence it becomes all the more untenable to render verse 7 as “the evangel *to* the Uncircumcision.”

We are plainly told that the One Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision, is the One Who operates in Paul also for (the apostleship of) the nations. And, the word to us also is, that *Paul* has been entrusted with the *evangel of* the Uncircumcision, according as *Peter* (with the evangel) *of* the Circumcision. Let us accept the Scripture for what it says, while adjusting our faith accordingly.

Paul speaks explicitly of “the evangel *which* I am herald-

ing among the nations" (2:2); "the evangel *which* is being brought by me" (1:11); *which* he neither accepted from man nor was taught by man, that instead came to him "through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:12). The apostle himself will inform us as to its particulars. If we *believe* and *understand* both the revelations of Paul's evangel, according to Christ Himself, as well as the teachings of the twelve according as the Lord instructed them, we will soon know whether Paul's evangel "of the Uncircumcision" is a fresh revelation, distinct in various respects from the teaching of the twelve, or is, however expressed, essentially merely a restatement of their teaching.

It is not that the evangel of the Uncircumcision is the exclusive province of those of the nations; nor is it that the evangel of the Circumcision debars all but those who are Israelites by nature. It is rather that the evangel of the Uncircumcision is the evangel which is primarily for those of the nations, as brought to the nations through the ministry of the apostle Paul, who is the apostle of the nations (Rom.11:13; *cp* 1 Tim.2:7; 2 Tim.1:11; Eph.3:8).

Certain Israelites (such as Paul himself) are also called and blessed according to that evangel which, characteristically, is the evangel of the *Uncircumcision*. Similarly, certain non-Israelites were themselves called and blessed according to that evangel which, characteristically, is the evangel of the *Circumcision*.

In the former case, any such descendants of Jacob lose their standing as Israelites and forfeit the advantages of the law—while concomitantly gaining the even greater benefits of the evangel of the *Uncircumcision*. If they are faithful, like Paul, they gladly forfeit all such benefits of flesh, while deeming them mere refuse (*cf* Phil.3:4-8).

In the latter case, like those of old who sojourned in Israel, any such non-Israelite believers who were nonetheless called and blessed according to the evangel of the *Cir-*

cumcision, were required to heed the law of Yahweh, which attended that evangel. Any such ones must become proselytes (*cf* Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43); that is, they must “come toward” Israel and observe the “one law,” which applied not only to the native-born, but to the naturalized citizen as well (Ex.12:49). Initially, such ones had to undergo the rite of circumcision; subsequently, they would make a pass-over to Yahweh. They would then be deemed “natives of the land [of Israel]” (Ex.12:48,49). As naturalized Israelites, they would also be required to keep from violating the sabbaths, as well as to keep their hand from any evil, according to the law of Moses. Only thus could they hold fast to Yahweh’s covenant (Isa.56:1-7; *cp* Acts 15:21) and be *worthy* of the resurrection of the *just* (*cf* Luke 14:14; 20:35; *cp* Matt. 5:17-20; 7:21-23).

Thus it is fitting for Paul to declare that God will be justifying the Circumcision “*out of faith*” and the Uncircumcision “*through the faith*” (Rom.3:30). In each case, the faith which justifies is “Jesus Christ’s faith” (Rom.3:22); “the faith of Jesus” (Rom.3:26). As in Romans 11:36, where it is revealed that all is not only *out of* God, but *through* God as well, here too in Romans 3:30, it is certainly likewise true that under God, both the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision owe not only the origin but the agency of their justification as well to the faith of Christ.

Yet in the case of the Circumcision believers, who must center much of their attention upon their own observance of the law, it is not so obvious that even so, their justification is solely out of Jesus Christ’s faith. After all, this truth, as such, is not even a part of the evangel of the Circumcision, even though it is certainly true concerning them, even as Paul declares.

However, in the case of the believers of the Uncircumcision, who are not under law at all (Rom.6:14), for whom Grace reigns even where sin increases (Rom.5:20,21),

whose very evangel *brings to the forefront* the fact that their justification is not only out of (the faith of) Christ but is *through* (the faith of) Christ as well, it becomes fitting for Paul to emphasize that God will be justifying them “*through the faith [of Christ].*”

FEAR AND HYPOCRISY

Now when Cephas came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, for he was self-censured. For, before the coming of some from James, he ate together with those of the nations. Yet when they came, he shrank back, and severed himself, fearing those of the Circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also play the hypocrite with him, so that Barnabas also was led away with their hypocrisy. (2:11-13)

Cephas was “self-censured” concerning his hypocrisy; he knew he was wrong and experienced guilt. Before the coming of “some from James,” he had eaten together with those of the nations. “Yet when they came, he shrank back, and severed himself *fearing* those of the Circumcision.” Then the rest of the Jews joined in, and they too played the hypocrite, together with him. They were all aware that even though the believers of the Uncircumcision did not observe the law, this was no reason to decline their fellowship, much less to sever themselves from them. It was those who came “from James” who were in the wrong, not Paul or the believers of the Uncircumcision. In supposing that those of the Uncircumcision must be circumcised and keep the law if they would be saved (*cf* Acts 15:1,2,5), or at this juncture, at least in imposing their own opinions as to practical holiness and perfection upon others, these unnamed men behaved most improperly. Yet to have such a profound influence not only upon Cephas but upon the rest of the Jews and even Barnabas besides, they must have been highly esteemed men of renown. Yet even so, they

were in fact but self-appointed authoritarians engaging in shameful (albeit highly effective) fear tactics.

But when I perceived that they are not correct in their attitude toward the truth of the evangel, I said to Cephas in front of all, "If you, being inherently a Jew, are living as the nations, and not as the Jews, how are you compelling the nations to be judaizing?" (2:14).

It was not that they were wholly ignorant of the evangel heralded by Paul, but that they were incorrect in their *attitude* concerning it. They failed to give it sufficient honor and recognition. Thus under the duress of circumstance, their remarkable fear of these Circumcision authoritarians became the decisive influence in determining their behavior.

Cephas was "inherently" (i.e., originally, by right) a Jew; it was not that he had become a naturalized citizen, but that he was a Jew "by nature" (*cp* 2:15). Even so, in acknowledgement of Paul's evangel, Cephas properly *had been* living "as [those of the] nations" live, and "not as Jews," who commonly had little or no association with non-Jews. This is simply to say that in respect of free intercourse with those of the nations, Cephas, hitherto, had behaved as if he himself were one of the nations. Yet when some formidable ones from James came, due to his fear of these men of the Circumcision, he shrank back and even went so far as to sever himself from those of the nations.

How is it then, Paul asks, that *you*, Cephas, are *compelling the nations to be judaizing*? *It was by no means Peter's teaching*, in word, that judaizing was compulsory for those of the nations; in fact earlier, he had spoken against any such claim (*cf* Acts 15:7-11). Even though Cephas did not verbally affirm that it was compulsory for the nations to be judaizing, nevertheless, by his actions, he *effectually* did this very thing. That is, in light of Cephas' own behavior, the non-Jewish believers might well conclude that the

only way for them to be accepted as faithful at least by their Jewish fellow believers if not by God Himself as well, would be by their taking up with Judaism. How inconsistent it was of Cephas to behave as he did, in light of the strong, negative influence that this would bring to bear upon the believers of the nations.

THROUGH FAITH *OF* CHRIST,
OR FAITH *IN* CHRIST?

In the next article in this series, we intend to consider Galatians 2:16, which is centered in the revelation that “we may be justified through the *faith of Christ* and not by works of law.” But in preparation for that study, we first need to consider the translation itself, “faith *of* Christ.” This becomes a special need since most modern translations, even as they render “the evangel *of* the Uncircumcision” (2:7) as “the gospel *to* the uncircumcised” (e.g., the NASB), translate “faith of Christ” similarly, as “faith *in* Christ.”

This question as to the sense of the phrase, “the faith *x* Christ,” is by no means solely a question of grammar; yet it is indeed a question in which grammatical issues are an important consideration. Grammatically, the question as to what is to be understood by *pistis Iesou Christou* (i.e., “faith *x* Jesus Christ”), is a question of the usage of the *genitive* case. Grammatical *case* is the syntactical relationship of a noun, pronoun, or adjective to other words in a sentence, generally indicated by declensional endings in inflected languages (such as Greek), or by prepositions and word order in non-inflected languages (such as English).

The Greek genitive case includes the English possessive case. The genitive’s presence is indicated in the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT’s sublinear by *OF-* (when no connective is present; e.g., “son *of* David,” Matt.1:20). *OF* is intended as a neutral means by which to indicate the genitive (that is, to indicate that in some respect “this is *of* that”).

Though the Concordant Version sometimes renders the genitive as an adjective (e.g., “His messengers **OF-POWER**” as “**His powerful messengers**,” 2 Thess.1:7), otherwise, the CV nearly always represents the genitive case by the English “of.”¹

The genitive case is the case of genus or kind. It is the *specifying* case; the case of appurtenance. The function of the genitive is largely adjectival (e.g., “the day of preparation,” was the preparation day; Luke 23:54).² Indeed, the Concordant Version renders “[after] the exile **OF-BABYLON**,” as “[after] **the Babylonian exile**” (Matt.1:12). Similarly, “the blasphemy of the spirit” (Matt.12:31), in the Greek syntax, is “**THE . . . OF THE** spirit blasphemy.”

The usual claim, however, is that the genitive “**OF-Christ faith**” is nonetheless translated true to sense as “faith *in* Christ,” since, we are told, this phrase is an “objective genitive.” It is said that as the phrase “faith of God” in Mark 11:22³ concerns man’s faith God-ward, the Pauline phrase

1. An exception is the genitive “faith **OF-TRUTH**” in 2 Thessalonians 2:13, which the 1976 edition renders “**faith** in the **truth**.” Perhaps the idiom is along the lines of the thought that the Thessalonians’ faith partook of the nature of truth. Thus it was “of-truth faith.” Truth indeed fosters confidence in itself. Like ourselves, the Thessalonians found faith growing in them as they received truth; hence, “faith **OF-TRUTH**.”

2. *cp* A. T. Robertson, *A GRAMMAR OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH*, p.493; Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1934.

3. “And answering, Jesus is saying to them, ‘if you have *faith of God*, verily, I am saying to you that whosoever may be saying to this mountain, ‘Be picked up and cast into the sea,’ and may not be doubting in his heart but should be believing that what he is speaking is occurring, it shall be his, whatsoever he may be saying.” It should be noted that *genuine* “**OF-God faith**” (as opposed to mere fleshly credulity in its name), necessarily incorporates the ablative sense of faith which is *from* God, according as He has spoken. Only then, in turn, does it become faith that is also God-ward.

“faith of Christ” concerns man’s faith Christ-ward.

The answer to this, of course, is that it does not follow that if, in the nature of the case, “faith of God” in the preceding text involves man’s faith God-ward, “faith of Christ,” as Paul uses this expression, refers to man’s faith Christ-ward. By such faulty logic as this, nearly anything can be “proved.” Yet beyond such fallacious arguments, there is little to commend the claim that “faith of Christ” means *man’s faith in Christ*.

In fact, the main reason for the acceptance of this interpretation (which is made a part of the translation itself in most modern Bibles) is the age-old tradition that affirms that one is saved by his own believing. Such a notion is then read into the text. In turn, it is further claimed that through such very passages, Paul himself sets forth the self-same teaching. Thus, through such circular reasoning, the rendering “faith *in* Christ” is justified by its advocates.

All that the Greek says is: OF-Christ faith; that is, faith that, in some respect, has reference, or relates to Christ. The translation “faith *in* Christ,” then, is not really a translation at all, but an interpretation. And, as popularly understood, it is certainly a mistaken interpretation as well.

Even on grammatical grounds the case here for an “objective” genitive (i.e., for a faith that is directed Christward) is very weak. Yet if one insists on such an interpretation, it would then become necessary to refer this “faith in Christ” *to God*, not to man, in order for this expression to accord with the evangel itself, the revelation that justification is gratuitous and in grace, through the deliverance *which is in Christ Jesus*.

In the Pauline epistles, apart from the disputed cases in which the genitive is “Christ” or its equivalent in every case (approximately twenty-four instances) in which “faith” is followed by a proper noun or pronoun in the genitive case, the genitive is unmistakably subjective. Twenty instances

refer to the faith of believers; one to the faith of anyone who believes; two to the faith of Abraham; and one to the faithfulness of God.

When Paul wishes to speak of the believer's faith in (i.e., "into") Christ, he does so not by means of a genitive noun apart from a preposition, but by means of an accusative (i.e., objective) noun together with an accusative preposition: "... rejoicing and observing your order and the stability of your faith *in* (i.e., "into") Christ" (Col.2:5).

A parallel expression to the *faith* of Christ is that of the *grace* of Christ: "*grace* which is *of* the One Man, *Jesus Christ*" (Rom.5:15). It would never occur to anyone to translate this text as "grace *in* Christ," much less to claim that it speaks of the *believer's* grace! Yet the only real difference between the genitive "of Christ" here and those which we have considered elsewhere, is that here the phrase is appended as a modifier of grace, while in the others (as in Galatians 2:20) the same phrase functions as a modifier of faith.

Similarly, just as Romans 3:3 speaks of "the faith(fulness) of God" Romans 3:22,26 speaks of the "faith(fulness) of Jesus Christ," the "faith(fulness) of Jesus." Further, the phrase "the faith of Abraham" in Romans 4:16 forms a precise formal parallel to the phrase "the faith of Jesus" in Romans 3:26. Thus, as these parallels between the faith of Abraham and the faith of Christ make clear, "the faith of Christ" refers to His faithful obedience unto death; our Lord's trust in God concerning the cross.

The very notion that those texts which say "faith of Christ" nonetheless have in view faith *in* Christ—*namely the believer's own faith in Christ*—is but the stepchild of the long-standing tradition that affirms that "justification *by* faith" means man's justification not by his performing works of law, but by his acceptance of Christ and assenting to faith in Him. The idea is that man saves himself, or

if it is preferred, qualifies for God to save him, not by a former method, that of performing righteous deeds, but by a new method, that of acquiescing in faith.

Traditional theology is not merely saying that salvation comes upon believing in Christ, and not apart from or prior to. What it is also saying (even if more implicitly than explicitly) is that salvation is of the nature of an exchange, a reward, requital, or compensation. When preachers say that salvation is “by faith [i.e., man’s faith],” they are using “by” in a transactional sense, according to the meeting of a requirement (as in, “by doing your work, you are entitled to your wages”).

The phrase faith *OF*-Christ however, is parallel to and must agree with the essence of the evangel itself, the revelation that we are “being justified gratuitously in [God’s] grace, through the deliverance *which is in Christ Jesus*” (Rom.3:24). The deliverance is not said to be through *our faith* in Christ Jesus, but through Christ Jesus Himself. Similarly, it is not revealed that we were conciliated to God through *our faith in* the death of His Son, but that we were conciliated to God *through the death of* His Son (Rom.5:10). Further, it will not do to attempt to avoid this truth by artfully claiming that while this is so, it is only so on the “condition” (i.e., based upon a requirement) that we accept and believe on Christ. Any such claim is spurious; for we are not justified on a “conditional” basis that we meet some sort of requirement. Instead, we are justified apart from law, on a gratuitous and gracious basis, which precludes any and all requirements.

Therefore, all passages which declaim “the faith of Jesus Christ,” out of which we are justified, must be understood to be referring to a faith which is His own: Christ’s own perfect faith—not man’s faulty faith in Him.

Of course we ourselves can only *speak* of our justification by means of our own faith, since it is by faith that we

apprehend what God has achieved through the work of the cross, even as what He will yet achieve in the eons ahead, when His promises are fulfilled. Still, the saint's own faith only gains for him a recognition of the justification which God has already established for him—through the faith of Christ (*cf* Rom.4:25-5:1; 5:9).

James R. Coram

THE GENDER OF PRONOUNS

GREEK nouns are usually masculine or feminine, quite apart from personality or sex. *Logos*, word, is masculine, *alêtheia*, truth, is feminine. How little this means may be seen in the statement "Thy word is truth." The word "truth" can have only a formal gender. Yet the relative pronoun, in referring to these words, must be *he* and *she*. Our Lord is the Truth *feminine* and the Life *feminine*. Shall we therefore refer to Him as *She*? That is one of the problems which perplexed the compiler of the sublinear in the Concordant Version. There are times when the literal is misleading. Let us suppose that John's account had opened with the word Truth in place of Word. Then our Lord would be continually referred to as *She*! Truth is always *she*, and word is always *he*—*but not in English*.

Few understand figures of speech. Our Lord is not literally a word. He is like a word, in that He conveys to our ears the thoughts of God. If He is called a word, however, we must refer to Him as *It* in English, to preserve the figure, just as the Greek calls Him *She* when He is the Truth. The pronoun must correspond with its noun grammatically in both languages, no matter what the actual gender may be. The same confusion has been introduced when speaking of God's spirit. The fact that it is referred to *in a figure* as *he* has been made the false foundation for one of the main items in the creed of Christendom. The plain evidence is ignored and a rule of English gender is ignorantly used to interpret the Greek, which is vastly different. Spirit is always *it* in Greek and English. When it is called a paraclete *masculine* it must be referred to *grammatically* as *he*. As a dove, the spirit is *she* (Matt.3:16).

(A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, v.21, p.272)

AN EVANGEL IS BROUGHT TO THE DEAD

“AN EVANGEL is brought to the dead.” This statement is found in 1 Peter 4:6. Many are the imaginative interpretations regarding these words penned by Peter close to two thousand years ago. It is often thought that this phrase is referring to 1 Peter 3:18-20, which is: “seeing that Christ also, for our sakes, once died concerning sins, the just for the sake of the unjust, that He may be leading us to God; being put to death, indeed, in flesh, yet vivified in spirit, in which, being gone to the spirits in jail also, He heralds to those once stubborn, when the patience of God awaited in the days of Noah while the ark was being constructed, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were brought safely through water.”

We should note concerning the above passage, that Christ was *first* vivified out of death, *then He went to the spirits* (not humans) in jail (not “Hell”). “Therefore those who suffer for doing good will also be exalted in due time. With this in mind, it is evident that it is not the evangel which is proclaimed to the spirits in prison, for that would be entirely out of line with the argument. It would imply that, as a result of their sufferings, their enemies will be evangelized. Such grace is foreign to Peter’s epistles. The word here used is not evangelize, but herald or proclaim. It tells us, not that they were blessed, but that He was exalted. And what is more likely than that, after His ascension, He should be proclaimed the universal Suzerain to all creation, obedient or rebellious?”¹ In order to correct the

1. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.360,361.

common misconceptions related to the phrase in 1 Peter 4:6, it would be helpful to first look at its context.

“Christ, then, having suffered for our sakes in flesh, you also arm yourselves with the same thought, for he who is suffering in flesh has ceased his sins, by no means still *to spend the rest of his lifetime in the flesh in human desires, but in the will of God*. For sufficient is the time which has passed by to have effected the intention of the nations, having gone on in wantonness, lusts, debauches, revelries, drinking bouts, and illicit idolatries, while they are thinking it strange of you not to race together into the same puddle of profligacy, calumniating you; who shall be rendering an account to Him Who is holding Himself in readiness to judge the living and the dead. For for this an evangel is brought to the dead also, that they may be judged, indeed, according to men in flesh, yet should be living according to God, in spirit” (1 Peter 4:1-6).

The one who “spends the rest of his lifetime . . . in the will of God” (verse 2) is alive *to God*. The one doing the things of the flesh mentioned in verses 3 and 4 is dead *to God*. The evangel is brought to those who were dead *to God* in Peter’s day. Though they were physically alive to sins, lusts, etc., they were, at the same time, “dead to God.”

FIGURATIVE AND LITERAL USE OF “DEAD”

In the following conversation Jesus had with a scribe and a disciple we can see two ways in which “dead” is used in the same sentence.

“Approaching, one scribe said to Him, ‘Teacher, I will be following You wheresoever You may be coming away.’ . . . Now a different one of the disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, permit me first to come away and entomb my father.’ Yet Jesus is saying to him, ‘Be following Me, and leave the dead to entomb their own dead’” (Matt.8:19-22). The

first usage of “dead” is figurative and the second is literal. Jesus said: “. . . Be following Me, and leave the *dead* to entomb their own *dead*” (Matt.8:22). He was saying, let those who are dead *to God* be entombing those who are literally dead. He told the disciple, “Be following Me.” If he would have followed Christ, he would have been *alive to God*. He would not be like those who were dead to God.

JUDGING OR SETTING RIGHT IS BENEFICIAL

Verse 5 of 1 Peter 4 is concerning the judging of those who are living *to God* versus those who are dead *to God* by their living in debaucheries etc. Those who were dead to God while they were alive, who were evangelized, were running to the puddle of profligacy. “Profligacy” according to the KEYWORD CONCORDANCE is “unsafe action.” So these folks were racing together into the same puddle of unsafe action. I am reminded of little children who, upon seeing a puddle, run to it and jump into it, splashing muddy water everywhere. They get their nice shoes, socks and attire all muddy and think it is fun. Then they are judged, or set right, by their parents taking them home and cleaning them. An evangel was brought to those who were dead *to God*, who raced to the puddle of profligacy [so] “*that they may be judged,*” or set right, as to their improper, sinful lives. *Their being judged or set right is for the purpose that they “should be living according to God, in spirit.” This judging will have a salutary effect upon them!*

TWO WIDOWS, ONE LIVING, ONE DEAD

“Now one really a widow, and alone, relies on God and is remaining in petitions and prayers night and day. Yet she who is a ‘prodigal, though living, is dead” (1 Tim.5:6).

Notice the widow who relies on God and remains in petitions and prayers night and day? She is *alive to God*.

And what of the widow who is considered to be dead? In 1 Timothy 5:9 Paul speaks of widows being listed to be cared for by the ecclesia. If a woman has widows living with her, she should be relieving them and they are not to be a burden to the ecclesia (5:16). These widows would not be on the list for the ecclesia to relieve their living expenses. This widow who is “dead” *to God* should not be on the list of care. Her prodigalling takes her off the list. If she was “attested by ideal acts: if she nourishes children, if she is hospitable, if she washes the saints’ feet, if she relieves the afflicted, if she follows up with every good work” (1 Tim.5:10) she would be alive to God and on the list.

In the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT there is a vertical line in front of the word “prodigal.” On page 608 in “Instructions for Use” of the CV under the subhead ‘ACT FORMS we have this: “1. ACT (or ACTION) forms are *incomplete, with action going on.*” If we take this information and apply it to the prodigal widow, we will see her life is characterized by the ongoing act of *prodigalling*. In the KEYWORD CONCORDANCE under “prodigal” we are told to see “squander.” For squander, *spatalaō*, we have “spend freely and foolishly.” Concerning the widow who is prodigaling her wealth, she has no need for God. She is spending freely and foolishly. Though she, by all outward appearances, acts as if she is living *to God*, she is actually dead *to God*. Therefore, when we see the word “dead” in relation to the widow and those to whom an evangel was brought by Peter and others, we are not to see them as literally dead.

DID JESUS PREACH TO THE DEAD WHILE HE WAS DEAD?

Another passage is often brought forth to promote the idea that when Christ died He went to some sort of “Hell” and preached to the dead. This passage supposedly proves

Jesus died, went to “Hell” and preached an evangel to the dead. As tradition goes, He preached the evangel to the lost suffering dead souls to give them a chance to “get out of Hell and go to Heaven.” Here is that passage:

“Wherefore He is saying, Ascending on high, He captures captivity And gives gifts to mankind. Now the ‘He ascended,’ what is it except that He first descended also into the lower parts of the earth? He Who descends is the Same Who ascends also, up over all who are of the heavens, that He should be completing all. And the same One gives these, indeed, as apostles, yet these as prophets, yet these as evangelists, yet these as pastors and teachers, toward the adjusting of the saints for the work of dispensing, for the upbuilding of the body of Christ” (Eph.4:8-12).

“The sooner the English reader realizes that he has but a translation of the word of God, and that the idiom is not English nor even Greek so much as Hebrew, the sooner will he make solid progress in the knowledge of God. There is no doubt but that the phrase ‘in the heart of the earth’ (Matt.12:40), means in the *center* of the earth, in *English*. But it matters not how we understand it. The real question is, how did those to whom it was spoken understand it? That they did not apprehend it to mean the *center*, but referred it to the *surface* is clear from other instances of its use.

“We have the similar phrase, the ‘heart’ of a tree, meaning the innermost part of the trunk. Absalom was left dangling from the branch of an oak. Yet we read that Joab took three darts and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while yet alive in the *heart* of the oak (2 Sam.18:9:14). The two words we have rendered ‘heart’ are the same in the Hebrew.

“But more conclusive is the phrase ‘heart of the sea.’ It is applied to the place at which the Israelites crossed the Red Sea (Ex.15:8). It describes the way of a ship upon the surface of the sea (Prov.30:19). But the most striking and instructive example is its fourfold reference to the city of Tyre, which was partly on an island on the coast of Canaan. Indeed, the island

was so near the shore that Alexander the Great, in order to conquer it, built a mote out of the ruins of the shore city and thus connected it with the mainland. Tyre was far, indeed, from being in the center of the sea in any sense. And if Tyre might be described as being in the heart of the sea, what difficulty can there be in speaking of our Lord's tomb as 'in the heart' of the earth? It may sound strange to *us*, but most natural to those who heard Him.

"The same principle applies to the phrase 'the lower parts of the earth' (Eph.4:7-10). Neither the Psalm which is quoted nor the context in Ephesians give any color to a subterranean visit. The contrast is between Sinai (Psa.17), when our Lord did not condescend to the lower parts of the earth, but came down only to a high, inaccessible mountain, and the captivity to the law which was thus prefigured, and the humiliation of His earthly life, when He, literally as well as figuratively, condescended into the very vales and depths, bringing gifts, and, through His death, resurrection and ascension, leading captive the captivity which Sinai had brought. The rendering 'multitude of captives' has no foundation in fact" (A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.6, pp.272,273).

IN CONCLUSION

Based upon the foregoing, it is safe to conclude that Peter was not informing anyone concerning the literal dead when he stated in 1 Peter 4:6 that "an evangel is brought to the dead." Jesus was not alive while He was dead. Jesus was so dead that He had to be vivified by the glory of the Father.

Just as a living widow can be dead while she lives and that the dead, while living, can entomb their literal dead, so also we can see that when an evangel went to the dead, that such ones, *while living*, were dead to God by their sinful living. Their being judged will have a salutory effect upon them so they "should be living according to God, in spirit."

Tony Nungesser

WHO RECEIVE THE SECRET?

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus . . . to all the saints . . . who are pre-expectant in Christ (Eph.1:1,12). I do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him . . . for you to perceive . . . what the riches of the glory . . . (Eph.1:16-18)

THE SECRET that, in spirit, the nations are to be *joint* allottees, and a *joint body*, and *joint* partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel of which Paul was the dispenser (Eph.3:6) was not made public until after he was a prisoner at Rome. It is evident that it was neither sent to the twelve apostles nor received by them. The epistles of James, Peter and John, although they may have been written afterward, do not acknowledge it at all. Peter may have hinted at it, since he found "some things" in Paul's epistles "hard to apprehend" (2 Peter 3:16).

It is quite evident that those to whom Peter wrote did not receive the secret. The salvation which they received was that which the prophets had foretold (1 Peter 1:10). This was by no means a secret. They prophesied concerning the grace which was for them. They were a "chosen race," a "royal priesthood," a "holy nation" (1 Peter 2:9; Ex.19:4-6). Every one of these expressions is a direct negation of the truth of the secret. In the present administration there is no chosen race. All races are on the same footing. There is no royal priesthood. We need no priests, for we all have access to the Father. There is no holy nation. All nationalities are equally blessed in Christ.

Peter, in his epistles, is upholding the prior place of Israel over the other nations, in flesh, on the earth. Paul reveals the equality of the nations with them, in spirit, in the heavens. Not only Peter, but all of the Circumcision epistles, from Hebrews to Jude, and including Revelation, are saturated with Israel's superiority and base almost all blessing on a physical relationship to Messiah. Paul himself, in his earlier ministries, had "known Christ according to flesh" (2 Cor.5:16). It was not until the conciliation was revealed that the physical was entirely removed from his ministry. In his epistles—not in Acts—we find his distinctive message.

FAVOR CONVEYED THROUGH PAUL'S EVANGEL

Who, then, received the secret? If it was not meant for all, what were the distinguishing characteristics of those to whom it came? As might be expected, the answer is plainly given by God Himself, but men have dimmed its clearness by a defective version. The third item of the secret should read: "*in spirit* the nations are to be . . . *joint* partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the evangel of which I became the dispenser . . ." (Eph.3:6). It would be very trite, indeed, to say that this grace came through the evangel. It would be still more trite for Paul to inform the Ephesians that he was a minister of the gospel. But to assure them that this new favor is conveyed through *his evangel* (and not that of the twelve) is most instructive and needful.

It is not true that the nations are, or ever will be, *joint* partakers of the promises contained in the gospel which Peter preached. Almost every promise in that evangel, apart from personal pardon, is based on the very opposite. The believers among the nations cannot be incorporated in the holy nation, the chosen race, or the royal priesthood, for these are dependent on the presence of faith-

ful gentiles for their existence. Priests must have people in order to officiate. For some time the apostle Paul fulfilled this function in relation to the believing gentiles (Rom.15:16), but, now that the nations are joint partakers, priesthood is impossible.

We have the choice of two distinct lines of ministry, one for the Circumcision and one for the Uncircumcision. To one the very thought of copartnership is repugnant. To the other it is the logical and necessary sequel. Only those who had received the evangel Paul proclaimed were prepared for the reception of this secret. To them it was sent and to no one else. There are many considerations which confirm this. Let us see if we cannot discover the points of contact between Paul's previous preaching and the secret as revealed in Ephesians.

THE PROMISES OF THE EVANGEL ARE IN CHRIST JESUS

There is much significance in the titles of our Lord. "Jesus Christ" lays the emphasis on His humiliation and physical relationship. "Christ Jesus" is the title of His exaltation. As Paul was first introduced to Him in glory, his ministry is associated with His celestial dignities rather than His rejection on earth. The fact that the promises of his evangel are in Christ Jesus clearly cuts out the Circumcision evangel. The twelve apostles seldom used this title, for they were well aware of its significance. Until the Kingdom comes they must proclaim Jesus Christ, the lowly One, the suffering One, and now still the rejected One, so far as the Kingdom is concerned.

The refusal and increasing failure of the Kingdom proclamation was accompanied by the gradual introduction of Paul's evangel, which is based on His exaltation at God's right hand among the celestials, hence is associated with

the title Christ Jesus. The significance of the title is in fullest accord, not only with Paul's preparatory evangel, but especially with its sequel, the secret now revealed. We do not wait for the Kingdom to be set up on earth. Our Head is already glorified in heaven. He is not despised or rejected there as He is on earth. And our destiny is that celestial realm, where He is exalted as Christ Jesus.

The promise in Christ Jesus included such transcendent blessings as justification, reconciliation, and glorification, and all flow from unforced favor. It also includes a future salvation from coming indignation (Rom.5:9), and our assembling to Him before the day of indignation should set in (2 Thess.2:1; 1 Thess.1:10; 4:13-18; 5:9). The Circumcision were never promised such immunity, but some of them will be carried through the time of trial. The hundred forty-four thousand will be protected in it.

WE ARE PRE-EXPECTANT

Thus the expectation set before those who receive Paul's evangel is to be fulfilled prior to that held by the Circumcision. They expect the Lord to come to the air before He descends to Olivet with His holy ones. This is referred to in the twelfth verse of the first of Ephesians, where the Authorized Version reads, "That we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ." The Revisers changed this to "who had before hoped in Christ." This is still ambiguous, but much nearer the truth. Rotherham is much the same, "we who had hoped beforehand in the Christ."

The statement is not true as it stands in these versions. It is contrary to the facts. Paul and those with him were by no means the first to trust in Christ. Peter and those with him trusted in the Messiah long before Paul was called. The change from "trust" to "hope" does not help much. It would be more in accord with the records to put Paul

among the *last*. He was the last to see Christ after His resurrection (1 Cor.15:8). Paul had not preceded the other apostles in either trust or hope. This cannot be the meaning of the passage.

The CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT reads, "who are pre-expectant [in a state of prior expectancy] in the Christ" (Eph.1:12). The sublinear has it THE *ones-HAVING-BEFORE-EXPECTED IN THE ANOINTED*. The Greek verb form is *proêlpikotas*. It is in what is called the "perfect" tense. It does not denote a specific act, but the state or condition resulting from an act. The state of those associated with Paul was one of expectancy. As they looked for the fulfillment of it before the return of the Lord to rescue His people Israel, it was a prior expectancy, in the sense that it was to receive a prior fulfillment. The "before" refers to the future, not the past. They were to be snatched away in clouds, for meeting the Lord in the air before the Circumcision would meet Him on the earth.

THE NATIONS HAVE A CELESTIAL ALLOTMENT

To such as had received this prior expectancy the message now comes that, not only was their immediate expectation to be different from that foretold for Israel by the prophets and our Lord, but their subsequent destiny also was to be changed. They were not to come back to the earth to receive an allotment down here, after meeting the Lord in the air. The gentiles among them were not to take a subordinate place to the holy nation on the earth. Instead, they were to be joint enjoyers of the celestial allotment with a few of the Circumcision who also had received Paul's evangel and who had this prior expectation.

It is evident, then, that, speaking broadly, the mystery was received by the nations, the Uncircumcision, and that remnant among the Jews, the Circumcision, who had become associated with Paul. Most of the Circumcision

did not receive it, but followed the fortunes of the Kingdom. They either died in faith, not having received the promises, or drew back and apostatized. Almost all gentile believers did receive it, for the Circumcision reached only a few, such as Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch, who became proselytes of Judaism. The division between the two classes was clearly marked by their future outlook. Those who held to the Kingdom expectation could not receive the secret; those who held the prior expectation could not do otherwise.

The entire context confirms this interpretation. Not merely are our blessings to be among the celestials (Eph.1:3), but Christ Himself is given the place preeminent. He is to be the Head in the heavens as well as on the earth (Eph.1:10). And this exaltation of His is the basis of our blessing, just as His suzerainty of the earth is the source of Israel's sovereignty.

The full force and special significance of "Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1:11) is lost if we do not see its peculiar application to the Pauline Jewish remnant. They are certainly entitled to a place in the millennial earth. Paul deserves the best place in the earthly Kingdom. What excuse has God to offer for changing his allotment to heaven and thus causing him to forfeit his place in the Kingdom administration on earth? It is this, that He is operating the universe, not only in accord with His revealed counsel, as proclaimed hitherto, but according to the counsel of His will, which includes the secrets now made known.

NO ONE CAN COMPLAIN

Of course, none of the Israelitish remnant can complain. The change is such a marvelous promotion, such a tremendous advance, so much grander and more glorious than the allotment they lose, that they not only acqui-

esce but exult. They do not murmur in disappointment but rejoice in His appointment. There is much to admire in what we may call the arbitrary graciousness of God. He gives, not merely what is expected, but what accords with His high intention.

The Uncircumcision had no promises, no allotment in the land. Yet they also had received the spirit of promise, which was the earnest received by the Circumcision. They had received this spirit, under Paul's preaching, simply on hearing and believing, without baptism or repentance (Acts 2:38) or the laying on of hands (Acts 8:17). Since they had the same pledge, they are entitled to the same possessions, hence are joint allottees.

THE SECRET HAD NO APPEAL TO THE TWELVE

It follows, then, that the secret was received by a special company who had been prepared for its message by Paul's previous epistles, or by his personal ministry in accord with them. It had no appeal to the twelve apostles, no place in their public proclamations or epistles. It does not even make contact with Paul's Kingdom ministry as detailed in the latter part of Acts, which clears the ground, but does not lay the foundation. This is laid in his epistles to the four ecclesias in Thessalonica, Galatia, Corinth and Rome. On these the secret is erected.

To put the matter briefly, we may say, then, that the key to this question is contained in the *written* name *Paul*. Those who received his written ministry also received the secret. Paul, separated from the rest by the spirit (Acts 13:2), learning nothing from them (Gal.1:12; 2:9), receiving added revelations (2 Cor.12:1-4, etc.), the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the nations (Eph.3:1), the fullest expositor of the secret of Christ (Eph.3:4), and the only one who can enlighten us as to the present secret administration (Eph.

3:9)—the name PAUL is the open sesame to the treasures of transcendent truth.

The Circumcision, represented by Peter, found these things “hard to apprehend” (2 Peter 3:16), not because they lacked intelligence or spiritual understanding, but because the secret is outside the sphere where their own blessings are found. If it needs a special spiritual endowment (Eph.1:17) for *us* to perceive these great truths, how difficult and well-nigh impossible is it for those beyond the bounds of its operation to get more than a glimpse of the greatest of all of God’s revelations!

GOD’S WISDOM IN A SECRET

Paul knew this secret when he wrote to the Corinthians. It seems that he even made it known in a private way to those who were mature (1 Cor.2:6-10). What else could he refer to when he says, “but we are speaking God’s wisdom in a secret, which has been concealed, which God designates beforehand, before the eons, for our glory”? He plainly predicts its public revelation in the twelfth and fourteenth chapters, when not merely individuals would be mature, but the era of maturity should arrive.

It is more than probable that he had received the revelation of it fourteen years before (2 Cor.12:2), when he was snatched away to the third heaven. He knew this secret before he had penned any of his epistles. Hence they were written with it in mind, and with the object of preparing the readers for its reception. God was ordering all of Paul’s acts and words in view of the impending deluge of grace, which could not come until the full apostasy of Israel. Then, after the apostle warns the Jews that the salvation of God is dispatched to the nations, and that they will hear (Acts 28:28), he commits the secret to writing.

While, therefore, we are plainly warned that some matters in these epistles are temporary and some would cease,

the great controlling themes, like faith, expectation and love, abide. This is the point in the thirteenth of first Corinthians. Many have been imagining that the maturity there alluded to referred to the resurrection glory of the individual. It is concerned with the great administrative change which is impending. Faith and expectation will not engage us in the glory. They will be replaced by sight and fulfillment. Love alone lingers there. But now, in this secret economy, the signs of immaturity vanish, and the tokens of maturity abide.

SAINTS NEED ADJUSTMENT

The question may arise as to what authority there is for believing that the faith of early believers was modified by later revelations. Can we be sure that the saints themselves are the same, and that the teaching changed? This is evident from Ephesians itself. Teachers were specially given for the *adjusting* of the saints to the new revelation (Eph.4:12). The Authorized Version rendering, "perfecting," contains only a part of the thought. They themselves, however, have rendered it *mend*, *fit*, and *restore*, elsewhere. The saints needed more than perfecting. They needed to be adjusted to these later disclosures. Some doctrines were dropped and others took their place. All matters were modified by the change in administration.

The same adjustment is needed today, and should be the chief function of a teacher who knows the truth, for many believers have not only failed to understand the secret, but they cling to that which has been discarded by it, and even to that which never had a place in any of Paul's writings or ministry. Indeed, the word "adjusting" seems quite inadequate for some, who are almost wholly occupied with matters pertaining to Israel and the twelve apostles. But this does not affect their right to the blessings brought by the secret, though, of course, they cannot

enjoy them until they recognize and appreciate their transcendent treasures.

The question is often asked: "If the Acts does not deal with the body of Christ, who are those of whom James speaks, when the subject of the nations comes up at the apostolic counsel (Acts 15:14)? Is not God visiting the nations now, to take out of them a people for His name?" James is speaking of the place accorded the nations in the prophets. He refers especially to the preaching of the Kingdom by Peter, who was the first to go beyond the Jewish pale in his proclamation. The passage that he quotes has a specific fulfillment at the time of the end, when the tabernacle of David is rebuilt. After the nations are almost destroyed by the judgments, the *rest* of them will seek the Lord.

James and the other leaders of the Circumcision had then no inkling of the secret. The nations themselves took the place of subordination to Israel. For the time being, they occupied the position which would have remained theirs permanently if Israel had repented and the Kingdom had come. The Pauline believers come before us in Acts only as they are related to the Kingdom with which the book is concerned. Therefore, while most of the *persons* immediately concerned probably later became identified with the present grace, they were not so then. They may, even then, have been members of the body of Christ, but it was not then a joint body, which was not known until the close of the Acts activities.

At such times of transition, we should not ask what "class" each company is in, as though that were fixed and changeless. Paul himself was probably in three different "classes" during his career. At first, though called for special service in an entirely different sphere, he was identified with the Circumcision. Later, in his ministry among the nations, he was separated from the Circumcision and

in the one body, in its transitional aspect. Later, he lost his standing in the flesh entirely, and becomes a member of the joint body. There is, to speak accurately, no "body class" now. All are in the "joint body." The "body class" existed only during Paul's pre-prison ministry, and was merged into the present. Now there is only one "class," for grace has unified all who believe, by the Spirit of God.

ALL BELIEVERS ARE RECIPIENTS OF THE SECRET

The secret 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 gospel 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 arro-

gant, 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 secret, 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.

Other administrations call for conformity in faith or practice as a condition of participation. The coming era of indignation will have different "classes" to accord with degrees of faithfulness. But in this economy of purest grace, where the only requirement is to admit a lack of all deserts, the most elementary faith is the key which opens the portal to all of God's treasures. Having Christ, we have all. We can enjoy more as we explore what is ours in Him, but we can do nothing to add to our possessions. Hence we are all in the same "Class," we are one in Christ Jesus.

If, however, we press the present aspect of our question, and ask "Who receive the secret?", that is, who accept it, and enjoy it, and exult in its transcendent glories, the Scrip-

tures give us a very clear answer. Two qualifications are necessary, according to Paul's Corinthian letter. He made this secret known to those who were *mature* (1 Cor.2:6,7), and could not reveal it to the fleshly (1 Cor.3:1). Spirituality, as well as "dispensational" maturity, is a necessary condition for the enjoyment of the secret.

Maturity is manifested in the rejection of human wisdom and philosophy, and a recognition of the rudimentary nature of the Kingdom activities. Those who follow a philosophy of human origin, though dealing with the Scriptures, effectually shut themselves up where they cannot receive God's secret. And those who, like the Corinthians, are occupied with the manifestations of minority, the affairs of spiritual childhood, will find it impossible to enjoy the secret in its plenitude and preciousness.

Carnality is chiefly manifested in sectarian divisions, and in walking as men in the flesh comport themselves. In my own experience I have found the futility of even trying to teach the secret to anyone whose heart cleaves to the confusion of man-made divisions, or even claims to be a follower of Christ in a sense peculiar to his own party. Sectarianism effectually destroys the possibility of delving into the secret. It is an impervious coating which truth cannot penetrate. The secret is only for the unsectarian and spiritual.

Indeed, so marvelous is this secret that Paul prayed for the believers of his day, who may not have been either immature or unspiritual, for a *special spirit of wisdom and revelation* for its realization (Eph.1:16-18). I join with Paul in praying for all who wish to enter into the enjoyment of this surpassing secret, the summit of divine knowledge, wisdom and love, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father glorious, may indeed enlighten the eyes of their hearts, that they perceive its call, its allotment and its power.

A. E. Knoch

Unsearchable Riches

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FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 116th Year
(1909–2025)

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EDITORIAL

"ALMOST all of us are short-sighted. We see part of the way, but we do not see the end. We confuse the going with the goal." This observation by A. E. Knoch (p.75) might well serve as the theme of this issue of *Unsearchable Riches*. Yet also it is a truism to keep in mind day by day as we live our lives in the present state of things.

Things are not as they shall be. Yet they are in accord with the purpose of God Who is operating all.

So it is that the first two articles here are concerned with the unity of the body of Christ in the midst of disunity. The unity is of the spirit and thus cannot be seen, while the disunity is very visible. "The days in which we are living are days of dissension and discord and division" (p.55). Nevertheless, there is a true unity which "is a *spiritual* one and *still exists* in spite of all the apparent divisions" (p.56). This is the situation at present, but it is not the goal of God. It is part of the process toward the goal, which is a visible and wholehearted unity of all those who are members of the ecclesia which is the body of Christ. But even that is not the final goal and is indeed but part of the process toward that unity encompassed in God becoming "All in all" (1 Cor.15:28).

Backing up to the theme of the present unity of the spirit, which A. E. Knoch discusses in our opening article, we present as our second article, James Coram's thoughts on the same subject which concludes, "Our common quest is, in God's own time, that we should all attain to the *unity of the faith* (Eph.4:13)" (p.74).

Perhaps uppermost in this "quest" is that "the knowledge of God's Word is good, an acquaintance with the ways is better, but a realization of Himself is best" (p.78).

A future process which seems to be soon to commence is an adjustment of the eons (*cp* Heb.11:3) in which God's promises to Israel concerning a terrestrial kingdom will be carried out. Tony Nungesser writes on a certain feature of that kingdom in which select Israelites will be set up as *preservers* of an orderly system of government and society (pages 89-96). That will be a welcome improvement on the present. But it will last only for a thousand years (for it involves human works of law) and will be succeeded by a new creation in which all are headed up in the Anointed One.

Such in brief are some of the processes toward God's goal of becoming All in all. But what is the basis of all this? It is that sparing not of His own Son, and the Son's listening of faith unto the death of the cross (*cf* pages 83-88 for some partial meditations on this great and glorious evangel).

Therefore, listen! God's evangel for which Paul was severed from the Jerusalem apostles and from his birth heritage is promised throughout Scripture. Listen! God's evangel is concerned with His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Listen! God's evangel concerning His Son (not the law of God given at Sinai) is God's power for present salvation to those who are believing it. Listen! it is in God's evangel concerning His Son that God's own righteousness is being revealed. Listen! God's righteousness is being revealed out of (i.e., it is sourced in) the faith of the Righteous One, that is, manifested through Jesus Christ's faith. Listen! this evangel out of and through Jesus Christ's faith is for our faith. Listen! Jesus Christ's faith is that He dies for us while we are still sinners, which not only makes God's righteousness known, but also commends God's love. Listen! Jesus Christ's faith is His listening to the will of His God and Father unto the death of the cross. Listen! this evangel is for our listening as slaves listen to the words of their master, that is, listening to the teaching to which we are given over, the teaching that through the listening of the One, all will be constituted righteous.

D.H.H.

THE SPIRIT'S UNITY

GOD begins with Himself and ends with Himself. Before the eons God sits in His solitary majesty. With the eons comes the revelation of His Christ. Then we are called upon to consider His dealings with His creatures. As soon as the climax of the eons has been reached, history will recoil upon itself. Each former phase will be rehearsed on a vaster scale, until once more we find all beneath the rule of Christ, its earliest Head. Then comes the consummation, and God becomes All once again. Then, however, He becomes not All in Himself, but All in all His creatures.

The same course is followed in revealing the structure of the tabernacle in the wilderness. First He describes His own throne. Then He reveals the various excellences of Christ as displayed within the holy places, and later leads us without to the vessels of the court, and the outer gate. In practice, the priests reversed this order. They began outside the enclosure, and passed the altar and the laver before coming to the holy place.

Our meditations on Ephesians have been somewhat like this. Beginning with God in His inmost secret affections, conceived before creation, we have traced our relationship to Christ, as His members, and have considered the mutual relationships of His saints. We have come out from God, through Christ, to our fellows. The rest of the epistle reverses this order. We will now retrace our steps, and consider the present practical effect of these marvelous unfoldings. First we will take up the conduct consequent upon our relationship to one another; second, our responsibilities as members of the body of Christ; third, the war-

fare which awaits those who enter our celestial allotment by faith in anticipation of that day.

We wish to impress our readers with the helpfulness of the literary structure of this epistle. The exhortations which follow are not only based on the previous half in general, but apply to particular portions. Our deportment has the same three aspects as the doctrine. What we believe of God, and of Christ and of the saints, to the saints, and to Christ, and to God must be lived. It is instructive to read the epistle parenthetically. After considering our allotment among the celestials (Eph.1:3-19) we may skip to our heavenly warfare (Eph.6:10-20). From the first section which deals with the body of Christ (Eph.1:20-2:10), we may turn to the second (Eph.5:21-6:9). To understand the "new man" (Eph.2:11-22), see what is said about the new humanity (Eph.4:17-5:20). These remote contexts are corrective checks on our interpretation which may be easily undervalued.

The first half closed with a summary and a petition. Before entering on the three main themes of the epistle, we are given an exhortation and another summary, both dealing with conduct. The first six verses of chapter four present a plea of the utmost importance to all who wish to please God in this secret administration. Let us note that these are the first words which God gives to regulate our conduct, after making known the riches of His grace. At the same time they are a test. If we have really received the great revelation which goes before, this should be the fruit. If, for instance, we find a brother endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit, we may be assured that he is living in the power of the previous unfoldings.

We must not fail to note Paul's new title—the prisoner in the *Lord*. In order to present *truth* he is the prisoner of *Christ Jesus* (Eph.3:1). To enforce it, he is the prisoner in the *Lord* (Eph.4:1). We have been considering Christ

Jesus and our place *in* Him. Now we are called upon to acknowledge Him as our Master and consider what conduct is pleasing *to Him*. Christ serves out blessing.¹ [The Lord seeks a worthy walk. The key to all good conduct may be condensed into a single phrase, “Christ, my Lord.”]

All worthy conduct must be the unforced fruit of the former part of this epistle. It is utterly useless to enter Ephesians by the back door. No one can walk in accord with any of these exhortations, except through the power generated by the grace glorious. Anyone who seeks to enforce the exhortations in Ephesians apart from the enabling favor on which they are founded, degrades them to the level of the law. Let us not render a forced, unwilling compliance, but let each act be the outgrowth of God’s most glorious grace.]

Who can *walk worthily of a calling* which he does not apprehend? Let us not strive to be what we are not. All God asks of us is to live up to what He has made us. The preparation for such a walk, the power for such deportment, lies in a consciousness of our high social standing among God’s nobility. Among men we readily recognize a nobleman by the superficial niceties of his conduct. We ought to be the true nobility, known by the deeper and more enduring virtues which adorn the teaching we profess.

The rarest and most precious gem found in the field of human conduct is true humility. In these days it is derided and condemned. It is considered a weakness, if not a disease. The greatest hindrance to “success” is an “inferiority complex,” to use the up-to-date philosopher’s phrase. Even in the religious sphere, humility is at a tremendous discount. Aggressive self-assertion seems necessary for preferment. How far have we fallen from the great ideal! How little do we see of that genuine meekness which springs

1. The section between brackets has been edited to accord better with the viewpoint of *exhortation* to worthy walk.

from a profound realization of the truth! The sunlight of God's favor has not only revealed our exaltation in Christ, but our degradation in ourselves. Though perfectly righteous in Him, we have lost all self-righteousness. We may glory in God and His Christ, but this involves the utter repudiation of all merit of our own.

Only one who has a low estimate of himself is in a position to bear long with the failings and shortcomings of others. Patience is the rare and precious virtue which follows humility and meekness. We are to bear with one another in love (Eph.4:2). All of this is based upon the unfathomable affection which God lavishes upon us and on all who are His. We cannot respond to His love without, at the same time, including those who are embraced by it. We can manifest it best in practice, by a becoming conduct toward His saints. When the apostle first gives us a glimpse of the transcendent path which we now tread, he summed it all up in one word—love (1 Cor.12:31-14:1). He begins his eulogy by saying "Love is patient" and he ends by affirming that it endures all (1 Cor.13:4,7). This is the greatest of the abiding trinity—faith, expectancy, love—and love shall never lapse.

Now we have a foundation for peace. The warring factions of Christendom are seeking peace by compromise. Real peace between God's saints is based on humility and meekness, patience, and forbearance, and a recognition of the spirit's unity. Apart from this there can be no real reconciliation. The peace and unification which is proposed today is based largely on indifference to the vital values of God's revelation. It is human in its method and its object. We can really unite with all who are hallowed only by ignoring the sects and parties and schisms to which they belong. Let us have fellowship with all, irrespective of their church affiliations. Do they belong to the body of Christ? Then they belong to us, and we to them.

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

The days in which we are living are days of dissension and discord and division. There is a continual and persistent effort for unity, but it seldom bears any fruit but schism. One of the saddest features is the fact that truth itself is made an excuse for further division. Every "movement" rapidly degenerates into a sect. And so fertile are the seeds of schism that it is only a short time until the division itself is divided into dozens of fragments.

The only *human* method of arresting this disintegration is to set up some human head, such as the patriarchs of the eastern churches, the pope of Rome, or the bishops and councils of the western churches. There must be some human authority. Leaders find that they cannot keep their followers together unless they assume jurisdiction over their faith and decide for them just what they must believe.

A very practical and searching question arises at this point. We have learned some great and precious truths, notably the reconciliation of the universe. Shall we allow this truth to separate between us and our fellow believers? Shall we let it be the nucleus of a sect? Shall we confine our fellowship to those who see as we do on this important point? Shall it create a division, another breach in the unity which God intends shall characterize His saints in this administration?

That this is its natural tendency no one will deny. And no one can help having more intimate fellowship with those of like faith than with those who are otherwise minded. To human wisdom a strong separate organization would be the surest method of promoting a successful propaganda. The answer to all these questions is found in the opening entreaty of the Ephesian epistle (Eph.4:1-6). There we have a unity—the unity of the spirit. We are not called upon to *make* this unity but to *keep* it.

This is most vital. All efforts toward Christian unity

today are like the patching together of broken fragments. They are all directed toward restoring the outward semblance. The true unity is a *spiritual* one and *still exists* in spite of all the apparent divisions. *All that is needed is to recognize this unity* and ignore the other so-called unities and alliances and associations which are trying to create a superficial communion, but which are really the greatest hindrances to the display of the God-made unity which embraces all His own.

The unity which we are to keep with diligence is based upon seven fundamental truths. Its keyword is *one*. There is *one* body—and *only* one—*one* spirit, *one* expectation, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father. The apostle is not revealing to the Ephesians that there is a God, or that there is a body. He is insisting that there is *only one*. The church of today repudiates every one of these divine unities.

When we read of “the protestant *bodies*,” or “the Methodist *body*,” what is it but a denial that there is *one* body? But is it not still more sad to hear of those who meet “on the ground of the one body” yet exclude all who do not meet upon this ground? The body of Christ is no organization of our manufacture. It is an organism whose members are placed in the body as *He* wills (1 Cor.12:18). It has but one Head, even Christ. It is our duty and privilege first of all to acknowledge His headship and, in doing this, we must also recognize every member that He has. We are all members of the same body. We are not divided. We are one.

The lack of visible unity among God’s saints is a source of the utmost shame and confusion to those who seek to please Him. To mourn over the many organizations which have marred the manifestation of this unity to the world is the constant exercise of all who know the truth. Not only are the castes of Israel revived, so that we have clergy and laity, but we have a hundred sects for every one of theirs.

There is only one body in Christ, but there may be a thousand in the world. There is but one faith, but creeds are numberless. There is only one Lord, but how diverse are the disciplines which have replaced Him!

Many attempts have been made "to get back to the ground of the *one body*," but each has resulted in another organization, another division. Every effort made to unify God's people seems to be but another means of further schism. A new truth is proclaimed. Some believe. Some do not. One faction leaves, and there is another "body." Unbelief creeps in, and such a movement as "Modernism" invades a congregation or a pulpit. Those who wish to be faithful revolt, and there is still another body. The tragic truth is that it is indifference and compromise which are tending to organize Christianity into one great dead body, and it is the sincere and faithful spirits (who ought to preserve the unity of the spirit) who are continually causing further disintegration. What are we to do? We cannot compromise nor do we dare divide.

The difficulty is that men are making their own unity while ignoring the unity of the spirit. The moment we *make* it we are sure to *break* it. *It does not need making. It needs taking.* Negatively, all that is necessary is to ignore all other unities, however fair they seem, however godly the saints that they include, however indispensable they appear. Positively, let us acknowledge all who are sealed by the spirit, all who know God and are members of the body of Christ. Let us acknowledge only *one* body, *one* spirit, *one* expectation, *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, and *one* God.

Unity is one of the controlling thoughts of Ephesians. It is not confined to this exhortation. Each item of the secret consists in joining together those who have been far apart. The first chapter gives the nations the *same* allotment as an election among the Circumcision, because they have

obtained the *same* spirit. In the second chapter Jew and Gentile are roused and seated *together*, and later on, the two are made *one* and He creates the two into *one* new humanity. Physical distinctions are all repealed. The distressing divisions of the past are done away. One of the principal aims of all our lives should be the preservation of the oneness which actually exists between us and all the other saints of this era. Let us resist every effort to divide and sunder what God has joined together.

ONE BODY

In Israel, apart from the various sects, there were several "bodies" of divine appointment. The anointing oil was confined to a privileged class of men, the priesthood. They formed a distinct body, separated from the Levites, their brethren, and the rest of Israel. The priests were, in a special manner, God's christs, or anointed ones, in Israel. They had the oil, a sign of the spirit. All, in this administration, have the anointing of the spirit itself, and all today have access into the very presence of the Father. No one in the body of Christ is like a common Levite, or a mere Israelite of another tribe. There were at least three distinct bodies in Israel, determined by their distance from the Deity. Outside of these there were distinct "bodies" even among the nations. There were the proselytes, and others who believed, making two or three "bodies" among the Gentiles, though each had few privileges of any kind.

In contrast with these there is only *one* body today. It is a joint body in which all the members are of equal rank. Not only are the Circumcision, priests, Levites, and others, on the same level, but the proselytes and devout believers among the nations are not distinguished from one another or from the three bodies in Israel. The most uncouth and unlearned saint in far off Thessalonica ranked just the same as Barnabas, the Levite, in the body of Christ. There is no

temple curtain, barring out the priests, no holy place into which the Levites cannot come, no court to which an Israelite has no access, no wall to shut out the nations, no ceremonies to mark off the proselytes from inferior ranks of Gentile believers. All are *one* body, for all are in Christ, so near and dear to God that distinctions are impossible.

Let us insist that the characteristic truth for today is not merely that we are the body of Christ, but that this is a *joint body*, and *there is only one*. There are differences between saints. There are degrees of knowledge or ignorance. There is variety in service, and in the rewards to which it leads. But let us remember that we are not in the body of the *Lord*, but in the body of *Christ*. Attainment and service are not necessary to membership. The most ignorant saint is entitled to a place in the joint body. No service whatever is needed to become a member. Faith alone is all that is necessary. Only thus can there be but one body.

Christendom today has many organizations. Yet in all of these, and outside of them as well, are those who are living members of that one great spiritual organism whose Head is Christ. This is the true "catholic," or universal, church. It is the only one worthy of our thought or serious consideration. Its membership is based solely on the possession of God's spirit, not on any man-made bonds whatever. God alone can put men in it, and no one can put men out of it. It is divine. It is the work of God's spirit. Let us recognize His handiwork and acknowledge His achievement. Many a saint is awed by the religious atmosphere of some great cathedral, but does not realize the solemn sanctity of God's real dwelling place, the church of Christ. It alone is hallowed. Let us make much of it.

ONE SPIRIT

We have so long been accustomed to reading "spirit" with a capital "S" and referring it to God's spirit exclusively

that, to many, the small “s” seems offensive and derogatory. But the word spirit is by no means confined to God’s holy spirit. It would be trite indeed to insist that God’s spirit is only one. We have a spirit. Each act of our lives is characterized by a spirit. Each administration has its own peculiar spirit. The spirit of the Mosaic administration was legal. It has no place today. When the disciples desired to draw down fire upon their enemies they were told that they did not know what spirit pertained to them. The spirit of Elijah’s ministry was quite different from that of our Lord’s, though both were actuated by the same holy spirit.

The “spirit” speaks of the temper of the mind, the key to which life’s activities are pitched. In every divine administration this is dependent on God’s assumption and the nature of the work which engages Him. Elijah’s attitude toward his enemies could not be duplicated by our Lord. Neither can we duplicate the spirit of our Master’s day. Gentiles were treated as outsiders, deserving almost no consideration. The same spirit was not shown them which obtained in the churches in Israel. Only when a Jew was obstinate and would not bow to the decision of the congregation, then he also was to be treated like a man of another nation. Today no such distinctions may be maintained. Jews and Gentiles are on one common ground, and this a spiritual one. We deal with one another on the one high plateau of His exalted favor.

Those of the Circumcision who died in their faith never entered into this truth. Even after this letter was sent forth, Peter wrote to the dispersion, telling them to behave themselves ideally “among the nations” (1 Peter 2:12) where they found themselves. This is not an isolated statement, but one of many which show the double spirit which he and the surviving Circumcisionists showed to the end of their days. Nowhere in his letters, or, indeed, in any epis-

tles except Paul's latest, does the truth of the one spirit receive acknowledgment.

Christendom has almost utterly missed the spirit which should distinguish it from all previous administrations. It has lived in the atmosphere of Sinai or Jerusalem instead of in the prison house of Paul at Rome. In the bondage of the law, or seeking to fit into the earthly kingdom, it has imbibed and manifested a spirit foreign to the truth. It should display such boundless grace and love, in accord with God's own attitude, that all men everywhere would recognize its every act by its delicious Christ-like spirit. Instead, it has become the opposite, and is described by God Himself as an unearthly monster, more ferocious than the beasts of the earth.

ONE EXPECTATION

The earliest written record that we have of Paul's peculiar ministry is stated thus: "... you turn back to God from idols, to be slaving for the living and true God *and to be waiting for His Son out of the heavens*, Whom He rouses from among the dead, Jesus, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation" (1 Thess. 1:9,10). The wrath impending on Israel and the earth, of which Peter spoke at Pentecost, which is detailed in Revelation, will be endured to its close by the saints who survive for the kingdom. If our place were in that kingdom and we hoped to enter it alive, our future outlook would be one of terror and dread. At any moment the portals of Yahweh's day might open and we would enter its terrible trials and suffer its terrific tribulations. Only those who endure to the end will be delivered.

This is the key to Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians. This is what they dreaded, and this is the predicament into which they supposed that they had fallen. It seemed very real to them. Paul expresses the matter in a most realistic figure, in anticipation of their mistake. He puts it all into

the *present*, notwithstanding the word “waiting” demands the future. Our Lord is presented as the One *delivering* them—not who *will* deliver them. In line with this they are delivered *out* of the indignation—not *from*—as though they had already entered it. Paul uses the same figure of himself when he speaks of being rescued *out* of the mouth of the lion (2 Tim.4:17). He was never in it. But such dangers impress themselves vividly on the mind, and it is more fitting to state the feeling rather than the fact.

A word of warning to close students of the Scriptures is called for here. It is well to be exact and to insist on the literal meaning whenever possible. I have great sympathy with those who point to the connective *out of* to prove that the Thessalonians will be in the coming indignation, for, they say, “How can they come *out* of it if they never were *in* it?” But there is a higher logic than this. It may be stated thus: *Every word, in the Scriptures, must be interpreted in accord with its context and the entire production of which it is a part.* Now it is the main burden of the Thessalonian epistles to prove that they were *not* appointed to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation (1 Thess.5:9,10). No single word in the epistle must be forced to teach otherwise, especially when its figurative use lends life and force, and is found elsewhere in the same sense. Let us *feel* that the Son of God is delivering us out of the coming indignation which might, at any moment, close its maw upon our helpless heads.

Israel’s expectation in the kingdom finds no fulfillment until *after* the time of tribulation. Hence Paul gave the Thessalonians and the Corinthians a *prior expectancy*. This is what especially distinguished the Circumcision who followed Paul’s teaching from the rest. Peter’s words still held with the latter. The heavens must receive Christ until the restoration of all spoken by the prophets (Acts 3:21). They knew nothing of His previous descent to the

air. When Paul seeks to identify those of the Circumcision who had received his revelations he falls back on this fact. They looked for Christ to come before the affliction. They had a *prior expectation*. The celestial allotment of Ephesians is for them (Eph.1:12). It is the mark which identifies Pauline believers among the Circumcision, hence the Ephesian revelation is limited to them.

Unlike the kingdom expectations, our outlook is the same for all. All will have a celestial allotment, all will be with Christ, all will go at the same time. There is only *one* expectation! This is the fruit of grace transcendent. It ignores the distinctions of flesh and makes favorites of all. In the kingdom almost all the promises and privileges are for Israel. The nations have no expectation worthy of the name. If the Gentiles of this era were to be with them in the kingdom we would soon discover that there was more than one expectation. Our outlook would not compare with that of a Jew, no matter what our spiritual attainments might be.

This gracious truth is being assailed from all sides. It does not seem possible to leave grace unadulterated. Some imagine that our expectation is only for the watchful, when the apostle distinctly declares that it is also for the drowsy (1 Thess.5:10). Others think He comes only for those who look for Him (Heb.9:28), and thus limit it to those who believe in His advent. Hebrews speaks of His coming to Israel, not to us. A few make it a matter of attainment or knowledge. For those who have gone to repose this expectation is necessarily an eclectic, or out-resurrection, for it occurs before the saints of Israel are roused, and leaves them in their tombs. The apostle's desire to conform his experience to it has led to the idea that he hoped to be raised immediately at death, and thus precede other saints into Christ's presence. All such departures deny this unity.

There is one, and only one expectation common to all the saints of this most gracious administration.

ONE LORD

There is *one* Master, or Lord. How this strikes at the very root of the ecclesiasticism of today! With the Ephesians the contrast would consist in the repeal of the decrees issued from Jerusalem, which were the token of their subjection to the twelve. But now decrees are issued, not only from Jerusalem, but from Rome and Petrograd, from London and Berlin, and from a thousand councils and conferences and synods, and so voluminous as to fill whole books with rules for the discipline of the saints. And at the very same time the inspired exhortations of the prison epistles, which are the real rule of conduct for today, are forgotten or ignored.

The kingdom will be administered by many masters. The whole nation of Israel will be a royal nation with the rest of the world as their subjects. The twelve apostles will sit on twelve thrones, ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. If this were such an administration, we should have Paul and Timothy and all the rest of the apostles, or their successors, ruling over us today. It is well that the Roman pontiff does not claim to be Paul's successor, for Paul himself would refuse to take the place he occupies. Such delegated authority is a necessity in the kingdom. Christ will rule through His representatives, and men must be subject to them, as to under-lords.

But for us there is only *one* Lord. When men step in and dictate to us what we are to believe, how we are to behave, and assign our tasks, they usurp *His* place, and deny His headship, and underrate His capacity. Before the present status of the saints had been made known, and the nations were still supposed to be subject to Jerusalem, a convention could be called to make decrees, and James could set-

tle matters by saying “I decide.” Not so now. God has not replaced the deposed Circumcision by other lords, taken from among the Gentiles. Those who have risen to reign over the saints have usurped the place of Christ. He needs no earthly vicar, Catholic or Protestant. Nor Jerusalem, nor Rome, nor Council, nor Synod, nor any Diotrophes (3 John 9) has any right to stand between us and our Lord!

There is dire need that the people of God realize the fact that they are not only saints saved by Christ but slaves serving their Lord. There is much religious work today, but how little of it is under His direction! How much will merit His approval? How little effort is being made to discover His will! In most cases some man has made himself a master, and the lordship of Christ is lost.

ONE FAITH

It seems almost ironical to say that there is *one* faith. Whence, then, are the thousands of divine “faiths” which challenge us with the assurance that they are all taken from the Bible? And many of them *can* point to proof texts for their doctrines and thus found all, as they fondly believe, “on the Bible.” Some go to the law, in spite of the fact that the nations never were under the law. Some refer us to the “gospels,” forgetting that Jesus Christ was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Some stake all on John’s or Peter’s ministries, not heeding their own words that the gospel of the *Circumcision* was committed to them, but that of the *Uncircumcision* to Paul.

There is only one true creed today. The many confessions and statements of belief are all fragmentary and faulty. They divide rather than unify. Christendom contains a thousand beliefs. Each is stoutly defended as the only one! They are all buttressed by “the Bible.” Have we not discovered the key to this confusion? Once the truth is correctly apportioned, once the last great revelation—

the secret administration—is given its due place, then only one belief is possible. All prior revelation is glorified by its transcendent truths. Practically all of the creeds ignore it. Their dogmas are derived from previous administrations. They base their beliefs on passages which have no present application.

We must remember that, before the current administration, there was more than one body of truth. What was true of the Jew was not by any means to be taken of the Gentile. This was especially the case in the transitional period between Pentecost and the present. This is the background for the statement that there is but one faith now. It is not selective, predicating of one class what is not true of another. When those of the Circumcision who were with Paul received a celestial allotment, they had no monopoly of it. It was for the Gentiles also. When a new humanity was created, the superiority of the Circumcision vanished. So long as the churches seek to establish themselves on the shifting scenes of Acts there will be many conflicting faiths.

ONE BAPTISM

The so-called “Great Commission,” at the close of Matthew, must have been given but a short time before Pentecost. Yet there is no record that it was obeyed in a single instance during the period covered by the book of Acts. This shows the great confusion into which the truth as to baptism has fallen. While claiming the support of primitive practice, the attempt is made to fulfill the Matthew commission, baptizing in the name of the so-called “trinity,” *which the disciples never did!* The early disciples were right. That commission waits for the day when all earthly power is in the hands of the great King. It is not the one baptism for this era.

Peter, on the day of Pentecost, conditions the reception

of the spirit upon baptism in water (Acts 2:38). Conversely, in Cornelius' case, he conditions baptism in water on the reception of the spirit (Acts 10:47,48). The tendency was away from water to spirit, especially in regard to the Gentiles. Under Paul's ministry this is carried much further. Of baptism in water he said: "Christ does not commission me to be baptizing but to be preaching the evangel . . ." (1 Cor. 1:17). Though so vehemently denying the practice of baptizing *in water*, he insists, in the same epistle, that "*in one spirit* we all are baptized into one body" (1 Cor.12:13).

Spirit baptism is essential to membership in the body of Christ. Water baptism is not. During our Lord's life water baptism was the only one. During the Pentecostal era spirit baptism was added, so there were two. Now there is a return to one. Either water or spirit baptism is no longer in force. Can anyone hesitate which one to drop! Spirit baptism is vital. Without it we have nothing. We are not cleansed. We are not united into one body. Not so water baptism. Paul had practically dropped it long before. It was nothing but a ceremonial, of no efficacy in itself, a type of spirit baptism. One was the shadow, the other the reality. Spirit baptism is the one baptism for today.

Perhaps some of those who first received this epistle had known two baptisms. Some in Corinth had been dipped in water. Since that time there has been a constant change from the physical to the spiritual. This epistle finally sets aside all fleshly prerogatives. Nothing depends on the physical and everything is based on the spiritual. The very unity of which this is a part is made by *spirit*. How could such a oneness come from the superficial contact of water with the flesh? In a catalogue of spiritual unities it should be unnecessary to insist that the one baptism is that of God's spirit. All to whom this was written had been baptized in spirit. It is the vital basis of unity.

The popular view of the baptism of the spirit is far

astray. Like its type, water baptism, it *cleanses* and *unifies*. *It does not impart power*. That is done by the *coming on* of the spirit, a manifestation which must not be confused with it. After the Pentecostal era, which paraded the powers of the coming eon, this *coming on* of the spirit ceased. In its place we have the homing of the spirit. We are not promised power, but weakness such as may be used as a foil for God's strength. The manifestations popularly connected with spirit baptism are usually the work of deceiving spirits, promising powers which have no place in this administration.

ONE GOD

The "proofs" of trinitarianism all flow from false inferences founded on passages which do not deal with the subject. The texts which actually and definitely decide the question are either ignored or "explained," notwithstanding the vehement emphasis put upon the word *one* and the denial of more than one. The Scriptures plainly teach that there is one God, the Father, but orthodox Christianity upholds a form of apologetic polytheism, in which Satan, as well as the so-called persons of the godhead are invested with the attributes of deity.

Postulating a good and beneficent God, eternal torment is unreasonable and insane. By a reversal of the logical process, it demands a monstrous deity, partial, cruel, vindictive.

The doctrine that good proceeds from God and evil from another source is the basis of an ancient Persian religion, founded by Zoroaster. It was later embraced by the Gnostic philosophy, against which Colossians warns us. It is impossible to teach that evil originated in any being, independent of God, without destroying the basic truth of the Bible, that there is only *one* God. Monotheism becomes

a cloak to disguise the doctrine of dualism. God is defied and Satan deified.

It is this false and pagan philosophy of the genesis of evil which bears fruit in the further falsehood that evil has always existed and always will exist. No one not equally powerful and divine could have introduced evil against the will of God, hence the god of evil must be as great as, or greater than, the god of good. Hence this evil god is a proper deity with divine attributes. He can have neither beginning nor end, and his work is as eternal as himself.

But this is not all. If there is more than one god, and these two are not in accord, then, as an inevitable consequence, there is no real God at all, with any of the theological "attributes." A good god would not allow an evil god either place or power if he could help it. He could not be "omnipotent." He could not endure the presence of his rival, hence could not be "omnipresent." In short, two gods are no God. There is One or none.

THE PANTHEON OF CHRISTENDOM

The Christian pantheon consists of four distinct deities. No being that successfully contests the power of the divine Creator can be denied omnipotence. Such is Satan of Christendom. He occupies practically the same place that Zeus, or Jupiter, did in Greek mythology. Saturn was first supreme, and Zeus succeeded in overcoming him. The same fable is foisted upon us by orthodox theology. God has been overpowered and cannot prevent the evil in the world, or He would. Satan has the upper hand!

A few facts will show how unfounded is the explanation of the "trinity"—three "persons" in one "godhead." These expressions are not found in the Scriptures. Is it not significant that we must go outside God's Word entirely to explain its most important truth? The holy spirit is not a distinct "person" from God Himself. Both are given as the

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was generated by the holy spirit. His Father was God. Surely we have only one "person" here! Christ did not have two fathers! The only spirit is God's spirit, and in no sense a separate personality.

Christ, as the Son of God, is divine as to His spirit and human as to His body. He is the Image of God and the Word of God, by means of which we hear and see the invisible deity. As such He is called God. But His entire work is to manifest Another. He has a will, but prefers His Father's. He has all power, but it is given Him by His Father. He carries out God's purpose, not His own. He rules as God's Executive. And when His work is gloriously finished and He hands over a reconciled universe to God, He Himself becomes subject. None of this is proper to absolute deity. He is the one *Lord*, not the one God and Father, of this passage.

But the special thought which is called for by the context, has to do with the present grace. Now, as never before, the one God is the one Father also. In preceding eras Israel had almost a monopoly of His covenant care. For them He took a special title. Yahweh was their special deity. He did not belong to the other nations. They were shut out of His temple, and kept at a distance from His habitation. All of this is past. We know Him as our God, in the most intimate and blessed of all His characters. He is our Father.

In this regard we come very close to God's ultimate. We anticipate the time when He will become All in all His creatures. He, as the Father of all who believe, is over all and through all and in all. Toward us He does not assume the role of a distant deity, to be approached only through His appointed people, by means of a forbidding ceremonial. He bids us draw very near to an affectionate Father, Who is involved in all that we do and are. Again, He is this to all, not to a special class. May our hearts be enlightened to appreciate this culminating grace! May its blessedness

be ever fresh and may it be enjoyed with an increasing sense of its preciousness!

Perhaps no better test of our interpretation of Ephesians, or of our understanding of the truth for today can be found than this sevenfold spiritual unity. Happy is he who can say with a true heart that he acknowledges but one body, one spirit, one expectation, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God! Who cannot look back to the time when he recognized at least two of each? Christendom, with its trinity, its various baptisms, its multitudinous faiths, its many lords, its hazy expectations, its conflicting spirits, and its organized bodies, presents a spectacle to make angels weep and sadden every saint who gets a glimpse of God's ideal. Man has multiplied every unity God has made.

The point in all that we have been considering lies in the word "one." No one doubts that there *is* a body, a spirit, an expectation, a lord, a faith, a baptism, a God. It would have conveyed the sense to say that there is one body, spirit, expectation, Lord, faith, baptism, God and Father. But the Author of this epistle was solicitous on this point. So He repeats the word "one" before each item to give it extraordinary emphasis. We have printed it in italics in the first edition of the CV. In view of the prevailing refusal to believe and keep this unity, we feel like printing it in italic capitals, with all the force that type can convey. There is only *ONE* body, *ONE* spirit, *ONE* expectation, *ONE* Lord, *ONE* faith, *ONE* baptism, *ONE* God and Father!

Of course, there *are* many gods (1 Cor.8:5), two baptisms and many modes, many faiths, mostly false, many lords, a multitude of mirages beside the one expectation, many spirits, for we are warned against them, and bodies too numerous to mention. But for us there is only *ONE* of each of these. To acknowledge this is to keep the spirit's unity.

What closer links than these can there be to bind us to

one another? We are members of a joint body. The spirit that animates it is undivided. We look forward to the same glorious future. We heed the directions of a single Master. We believe the same truth. We are cleansed by a baptism which fits for a common membership in God's great family, knowing Him as our Father. Even in this earthly scene we know the unifying power of family ties, the clannishness of priests cleansed at the laver, the ecclesiastical bond of a common creed, the community of interests which flows from working under the same master, the ties of mutual expectancy, the fellowship of spiritual affinities, and the marvelous unity of the human frame. There is oneness of life, oneness of spirit, oneness of hope, oneness of work, oneness of faith, oneness of worship, oneness of affection!

We are one in spirit! O that each would do his utmost to preserve this unity! Strife has exploded its manifestation into a million fragments. We beseech you, gracious reader, nay, *God* beseeches you to guard this precious ideal. The breach between Jew and Gentile no longer cleaves the saints in twain. But in its place we find a thousand factions, all ignoring this great exhortation. But the unity still is there. We need not make it. Let us keep it! When we stand before His dais, may it be our joy, and His, that we have ever striven, by word and deed, to keep the unity of the spirit with the tie of peace!

A. E. Knoch

GEORGE HYDE

We have received a letter from our dear friend, Margaret Hyde, concerning the passing of her husband, George Hyde. She writes: "He died at home on April 21, 2025, at the age of 81. He studied the Word of God for several years using sermons from the Concordant Publishing Concern. We were so thankful that God led us to understand His glorious truth. Thanks to all who helped provide this for us."

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

IN the following restating of Ephesians 4:1-4, while the text remains the same, I have added some words in brackets. The careful reader will note that these additions are relevant, and true in the nature of the case; ideally, even self-evident. While they do not change the sense of what Paul says, hopefully the reader will find that they do help to clarify the sense of what is actually stated:

“I am entreating you, then [in consideration of all the foregoing in this epistle], I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called. [Thus, I declare,] with all humility and meekness, with patience, [be] bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to *keep* the *unity* of the spirit with the tie of peace [thus—which is, according to truth, whether recognized or not, that there is but]: *one* body and *one* spirit. [This is so, as you are aware, though the infirm in faith may not agree] according as you were called also with *one* expectation of your calling, [it being true, in fact, even as, again, *you* are aware, that, for us, there is but] *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father of all, Who is over all and through all and in all.”

Thus we see that Paul herein provides us not with a means by which we may justify ourselves in excluding others from our circle of fellowship (or still worse, even from our acknowledged circle of sainthood), but with the *one* true foundation upon which we may rest, becoming “settled, unmovable” (*cf* 1 Cor.15:58), *growing* in maturity ourselves, while *bearing with* one another in *love*.

The unity of the spirit which God has made and we, in our practice, are to endeavor to keep, is that God has made it so that there is, in truth and faithfully speaking, but *one* body and *one* spirit.

Be the organized church bodies all around us ever so numerous, and the many false spirits abounding among those who are deceiving others, being deceived themselves (*cf* 2 Tim.3:13), there remains but *one* body of believers, through which they are enlightened by *one* spirit, the holy spirit of God (Eph.4:30).

The *one* body is the ecclesia, which is the “body” of Christ: “the ecclesia which is His body” (Eph.1:23), its members being so closely identified with Him as to be, in a figure, the very members of His body.

In 1 Corinthians 12:11-13, these two intimately related themes of the *one* body and the *one* spirit, are brought together in a single passage: “Now all these *one and the same spirit* is operating, apportioning to each his own, according as He is intending. For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the one body, being many, are one body, thus also is the Christ. For *in one spirit* also we *all* are baptized into *one body*, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and all are made to imbibe *one spirit*.”

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

It is unnecessary to be very widely acquainted with the many theologies and theological systems of Christendom, whether present or past, to realize that over the course of more than two millennia, “every wind of teaching” (Eph.4:14) has indeed circulated and prevailed among some, whether among only a few or a great many.

Concerning every vital subject as rehearsed here by Paul, concerning which he assures us that there is but “*one*,” the theological world effectively has cried out saying, “No! there are *many*.” Yet this is only to be followed by each one of its representatives, bickering among themselves, wishing to add, “the only true one, however, is mine.”

It is vital to note that here in Ephesians 4, Paul’s by no means *defines* the parameters of truth, the truth concerning the one body, the one spirit, the one expectation of our calling, the one Lord, the one faith, the one baptism, the one God and Father of all. That is not his purpose. Instead, his purpose is to assure us that there is indeed but *one* of each, and that that true *one*, in every case, may be discovered through an enlightened reading and study of the collective whole of his epistles, complemented to be sure by the rest of the sacred scriptures as well.

Our common quest is, in God’s own time, that we should “*all* attain to the *unity of the faith*” (Eph.4:13). In the meantime, let us all, “with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, [be] endeavoring to keep the *unity* of the *spirit* with the tie of *peace*” (Eph.4:3).

James Coram

THE APPRECIATION OF GOD

GOD HAS A GOAL. He intends to become All in all His creatures (1 Cor.15:28). He will accomplish this by way of reconciling all His enemies by the blood of Christ's cross, by justifying, vivifying, and saving all mankind at the consummation (Col.1:20; Rom.5:18; 1 Cor.15:22; 1 Tim2:4; 4:10). But before this there is a long and painful preparatory process, a weary way which leads His creatures to this consummation, much of which is as dark and distressing as the goal is bright and filled with blessing.

Almost all of us are short-sighted. We see a part of the way but we do not see the end. We confuse the going with the goal. Our translations are partly to blame, for they fail to clearly mark the fleeting nature of the process, as it is in the Original. And if an honest attempt is made to carry this across in a concordant version, it clashes with our conventions and our hard hearts. God grant that we may faithfully witness, in our renderings, when God reveals a *fact*, and when it is only a temporary *process*, for this He has clearly indicated in the Original.

Judgment is God's strange work. He uses it on the way. Men make it the end. No matter how an unbeliever is dealt with, whether he dies as a result of sin, or by the direct intervention of God, whether he be cast into outer darkness or into Gehenna, *this is not his end*. All who do not belong to Christ will be roused from the dead and judged before the great white throne. There they are not forgiven, or saved, but judged. *But this is not their end*.

All these will be cast into the lake of fire, to suffer the second death. *Even this is not their end.* God does not reach His goal in any of His disciplinary measures. These only prepare His creatures for it. Let us not confuse the going with the goal.

Very little is said to us about God's goal until Paul completes the orbit of God's Word with his later revelations. Hints there have always been by which hearts in tune with God have been filled with high hopes. But it is not until the meridian sun of God's grace has come from behind the clouds of sin and law to reveal the deepest recesses of God's immanent love to the most undeserving of the race; it is not until the truth for the present was made known that God tore aside the veil of the future completely and gave us a clear and unclouded view of His ultimate. Once we revel in this we will never go back to previous revelation on this theme, for like the curtain of the tabernacle, it seems to hide, rather than reveal the full blaze of the Shekinah glory.

The usual way is to view the goal in the darkness of the way. We go back to passages which deal with judgments and allow them to throw their dark shadows across the consummation. We should *believe* that *God* will *justify all* mankind (Rom.5:18,19), and view the previous judgments in the light of this final achievement. We bring up passages which tell of death, to darken God's declaration that it will be abolished. We should *believe* that *God* will make death inoperative at the *last*, and view the previous passages in this glorious light. We turn to texts which prove that unbelievers will be lost or destroyed, and, with these passages, dim the great declaration that God wills the salvation of all. We should illumine them with the later and higher revelation. We find God's enemies in the fiery

lake at what seems to be the close of revelation, and misuse this fact to deny God's declaration that all will be reconciled (Col.1:20). We should not take one to destroy the other, but believe *both*, for reconciliation *follows* estrangement, and it alone accords with God's final goal.

How perverse and blind have we often been! When God says *all*, we have said *some*. When God speaks of a very small fraction of mankind, such as the living nations who stand before Christ to be judged according to their treatment of Israel—a mere handful as compared with all mankind—then we extend their sentence to *all*! Faith has almost fled from the earth. What calls itself faith is mostly a masquerade, for it refuses God's Word for the traditions of men, yet insists that it is genuine.

Let us allow the light of the latest revelation to illumine the earlier, partial unfolding, and let us not use the earlier to eclipse the latest, the highest, and the only complete unveiling of God's mind and heart.

MULTIFARIOUS WISDOM

The past eons seem to be replete with failures on God's part. Adam sinned and offended, and brought the whole human race into the service of sin and the doom of death. Could not God have prevented this by prudent provision? Thereupon the race that sprang from him became so wicked that they had to be almost wiped out by a deluge. Why did not God foresee this and prevent the evil? Thereafter the nation of Israel was segregated to be a blessing to the balance. But they became worse than the rest and even crucified God's Christ, so seemed to utterly fail to fulfill their function. Failure! Failure! Failure! All that God did seemed to end in futile failure. Both creation and revelation were full of evidences of God's infi-

nite wisdom, yet His dealings with mankind apparently showed the reverse. He seemed to pyramid one failure upon another.

To the human, unanointed eye the present operations of the Deity are the greatest failure of all. In almost every avenue of life the mortals that He made fall short. They excel principally in evil and death-dealing devices. But the greatest of all failures is Christendom, His avowed representative on earth. Notwithstanding its immense privileges, its tremendous advantages over Israel, it has sunk even lower than the favored nation. Only the eye of faith on earth can see the multifarious wisdom of God in these apparent failures, for only those whose hearts have been opened to the secret which He concealed from the eons hitherto, are able to apprehend the vastness of the wisdom therein displayed.

THE REALIZATION OF GOD

The knowledge of God's Word is good, an acquaintance with His ways is better, but a realization of Himself is best. Faith accepts His sayings, confidence acquiesces in His ways, love rests in His essence. Let us believe what He says, and we will not only delight in what He does, but exult in what He is. How few of His saints are found with even the first of these favors! Faith they have, but so scant, so adulterated with credulity, and so faltering, that God's ways are dark and inscrutable, and He Himself is hid behind a thick curtain of ignorance and tradition. Alas! even to His children, He is the great Unknown and Unknowable.

The attitude of scant faith is clearly revealed when its own welfare is at stake. It does not deem it safe to leave the future in God's hands, without some definite prom-

ise, some written bond, that will hold Him to His Word. It is this trembling unbelief which changes God's eons into eternities, for it rightly reasons that, if the eons end, there is no certainty of future bliss, unless they leave their fate in the hands of a God Whom they do not fully trust! It is true that God has made no "promises" beyond the eons. As He gives us deathlessness and incorruptibility, why should we be concerned about "eternal" life? Where there is no death, such a "promise" would only reflect upon His character, and our future welfare is far more dependent on His integrity than on His declarations.

It will be seen in the Scriptures that the abundance of promises decreases rapidly once the millennium is past. Not many refer to the new earth and the new heavens. There is hardly a specific engagement on God's part beyond the eonian times. Why should there be? There is no need for many promises when all men are vital with life and where sin has been repudiated, where faith is replaced by sight, and all are subject to God. Where there is no sin there can be no salvation, where there is no enemy there can be no rescue. With God the All of all hearts, the present is bliss and the future felicity, and there can be no concern, no anxiety as to either.

There are saints who would be in despair if the promises in the Bible should suddenly be revoked, and they should be left entirely at the mercy of God, without any recorded document to which they could hold Him. But can they hold Him? If He is not to be trusted without a definite promise, can we be sure that He will stand by His Word? Promises are expedient and gracious, a help to confirm faith, and we would not be without a single one of them. Yet our confidence should not rest in the promises but in Him Who made them. We should be more

than willing to trust Him when and where His promises do not reach.

Scant faith is afraid of the consummation. Israel's promises on earth and ours in the heavens come to a conclusion when Christ abdicates the throne. We will no longer reign, for all rule will be abolished. Our eonian mission will be fulfilled, for all will be reconciled. True, there is no death, so we cannot die. Deathlessness indeed is ours, yet we have no written assurance of peace or happiness or glory in that consummation. To the average saint it looks like a leap in the dark, or into an abyss without a bottom. There is nothing on which faith can fasten—except God! And is not this precisely what He wishes? Then He will be All in every one. Faith, promises and all such crutches will be past. They would only mar the perfect and mutual confidence which will exist between God and His creatures. It is not a leap in the dark, but a serene entrance into light and love unlimited.

The overwhelming glory of God's grand ultimate has been utterly wrecked by current unbelief, and the substitution of such a fearful future *for God* as the annihilation of the bulk of His creatures, or their far more heartless and hideous torment for all eternity. Let us for the time consider these only as they affect God's glory, not human welfare. If He is a real God, then all destiny is the deliberate fruit of His efforts. Even if He is the subordinate deity of Christendom, Who has lost control of His creation and cannot do what He would, these destinies are foreseen and allowed by Him, and He makes no adequate effort to prevent them. Say what you will, they make it impossible for even His saints to trust Him as they should.

If He is such a God, the thought will arise, Could He not save the bulk of His creatures in the past, how can

He preserve His saints in the future? If sin came in and ruined His fair creation against His will, what will hinder a repetition in the eternity to come? Even if we believe His promises, can we rely upon His love and power when they have been fulfilled, and there is no further guarantee? The more closely one considers the false doctrines of annihilation or eternal torment, the more it will be apparent that they make it utterly impossible for God to gain the full confidence of His creatures. The usual result is His dethronement by the doctrines of free will and divine irresponsibility in the past and present, and by the utter eclipse of His ultimate goal in the future. An annihilator and tormentor eternal cannot become All in all, not even if we make the all a tiny residue.

Here we have the secret source which supplied the mis-translations *everlasting* and *eternal*. And this shows why saints are so slow to give them up. They cannot trust their God, and must have a public record to bind His actions in the future. He has promised them eonian life. If this is not eternal, they are not sure—in fact, they are afraid—that He will take life from them when it comes to its end. Can we not see how the promise of “eternal” life really defeats its own purpose? It is given that the saints may get to know God, yet, being endless, it implies that they never attain this goal. As it denies the possibility that He shall be All in them, it totally defeats the object for which it is given, of making them so utterly content with Him that they not only are willing but eager to leave themselves in His heart, without a single assurance from His lips. What He *is*, is enough!

It is the office of faith to transfer us, in spirit, to this consummation, even in the midst of our present career, while everything visible still seems the very reverse of

God's ultimate. Perhaps never, in the history of mankind, has there been such marked distrust, between men as well as toward God. Confidence is going or gone. Faith is vanishing. And I, for one, freely confess that, without a knowledge of the consummation, when God will reconcile all and become All in all, I could not have confidence in a deity who allowed the world to work itself into such a mess, and who can do little more for most men than to sweep them into destruction, extinction or torment. I, too, would fear that such a god must be put under bond to perform His oaths, and even then—? But now, how can I distrust Him? Mankind is just where He has brought it. The effect of all the present evil and distress will be salutary. God will get glory out of it, and men will be prepared by it to appreciate the gifts He has in store for them.

Here we have the great contrast between man's miserable self-made destinies and God's grand and gracious goal. Man's not only destroys God's creatures, but undermines His deity and robs Him of the appreciation of His heart's handiwork. God's goal not only upholds His deity but gives His creatures such confidence in Him that all concern as to His love and power disappears. They willingly, yes eagerly, leave themselves in His hands without any assurance whatever on His part as to His intentions. Faith and hope are no longer needed, so they vanish, and only love remains. Knowing Him as God, limitless in power and wisdom, and as essential Love, they prefer to remain in fond anticipation of that which the ear hears not, to which the heart of man cannot ascend, that which God makes ready for those who are loving Him. They rely on His Word, they delight in His ways, and they revel in the appreciation of Himself.

A. E. Knoch

LISTENING TO “LISTEN”

IN the last issue of this magazine I ended my editorial with a call for a testing of the use of the English word “listening” for the Greek words built on the elements UNDER-HEAR. The particular test I had in mind was a list of all the passages using some form of UNDER-HEAR and rendering these with some form of “listen.” Since that time I have been working on such a list along with my comments on how such a reading might be understood and be an improvement on the usual use of some form of “obey” as presently understood. The task has been a challenging one to me, and is not finished, but always rewarding. And now I receive a list of all thirty-nine passages done in concordance form, traditional book order, on one sheet of paper with the change of wording I was urging. (Thank you very much Jeff Bohlender!).

The following is his list with some adjustments in wording (the substituting of “disregarding” for “disobedience” is also indicated.)

Testing “listening” for UNDER-HEARING

Ro 1:5	grace and apostleship for <i>listening</i> of faith
Ro 5:19	through the <i>listening</i> of the One
Ro 6:16	presenting yourselves for <i>listening</i> , his slaves you are
Ro 6:16	to whom you are <i>listening</i>
Ro 15:18	effect through me for the <i>listening</i> of the nations
Ro 16:19	your <i>listening</i> reaches out to all
Ro 16:26	made known to all nations for <i>listening</i> of faith
2 C 7:15	having a recollection of the <i>listening</i> of you all
2 C 10:5	every apprehension into the <i>listening</i> of Christ
2 C 10:6	avenge every <i>disregarding</i> , whenever your <i>listening</i>
Phn 21	Having confidence in your <i>listening</i>
Hb 5:8	learns <i>listening</i> from that which He suffers
1 P 1:2	in holiness of spirit, for <i>listening</i> and sprinkling

- 1 P 1:14 *listening* children, not configuring to the former desires
 1 P 1:22 having purified your souls, by the *listening* of truth

Testing “listening” for UNDER-HEARD

- Ac 7:39 our fathers are not willing to become *listening* ones
 2 C 2:9 that I may know your testedness, if you are *listening* ones
 Ph 2:8 He humbles Himself becoming One *listening* unto death

Testing “listen” for UNDER-HEAR

- Mt 8:27 the winds as well as the sea *are listening* to Him
 Mk 1:27 enjoining the unclean spirits, and *they are listening* to Him
 Mk 4:41 even the wind and the sea *are listening* to Him
 Lk 8:25 the winds as well as the water, and *they are listening* to Him
 Lk 17:6 be planted in the sea, and *it would listen* to you
 Ac 6:7 a vast throng of the priests *were listening* to the faith
 Ac 12:13 a maid approaches *to listen*, named Rhoda
 Ro 6:12 reigning in your mortal body, for you *to be listening* to
 its lusts
 Ro 6:16 his slaves you are to whom *you are listening*
 Ro 6:17 yet *you listen* from the heart to the type of teaching
 Ro 10:16 But not all *listen* to the evangel
 Ep 6:1 Children, *be listening* to your parents, in the Lord
 Ep 6:5 Slaves, *be listening* to your masters
 Ph 2:12 as *you always listen*, not as in my presence only
 Co 3:20 Children, *be listening* to your parents, in all things
 Co 3:22 Slaves, *be listening* in all things to your masters
 2 Th 1:8 those who *are not listening* to the evangel of our
 Lord Jesus Christ
 2 Th 3:14 if anyone *is not listening* to our word
 Hb 5:9 the cause of eonian salvation to all who *are listening*
 to Him
 Hb 11:8 By faith Abraham, being called, *listens*, coming out
 1 P 3:6 to their own husband (as Sarah *listens* to Abraham)

When the Lord calms the storming winds and sea those human beings with Him who had been in danger of perishing exclaimed, “What manner of Man is this, that the winds as well as the sea are UNDER-HEARING to Him” (Matt.8:24-27). Indeed the winds and the sea did exactly what was instructed to them by way of rebuke. But that is not exactly what the text says. The mariners were greatly

impressed by the fact that the winds and the sea heard the words of the Lord's rebuke with such exactitude and submission that they became calm.

The Lord's words were words of instruction. The wind's and the sea's response was immediate, attentive hearing. That is, they listened.

How important is listening? In communication listening is vital. So it is that a teacher will say to an unruly class of students, and a parent to arguing children, and a boss to the workers, "Listen to me!"

God's word, however, is not always one of instruction, but in its highest and final character is one of revelation of goodness and glory. God's Son, Christ Jesus, our Lord, heard words of instruction which He did not want to carry out, but He did not set them aside. Instead He submissively and attentively kept them before Him, saying to His God and Father, "Not as I will, but as You [will]!" (Matt. 26:39). The listening was vital to the desired doing.

The above list of thirty-nine usages of some form of UNDER-HEAR is for testing. I do not feel able to examine every passage here and now accordingly. What follows are a few comments on certain of the passages in Paul's epistles. I urge others to test for themselves the use of "listening" in these passages. It may be (as some others have claimed) that "pay attention" is better (or "attentive hearing," even "attentive listening").

THE LISTENING OF CHRIST

In this matter Romans 5:19 is perhaps the most important text. Together with verse 18, the proposed CV rendering is presently as follows:

- ¹⁸ **Consequently, then, as it is through one offense**
^{io}**for all human beings** ^{io}**for condemnation,**
Thus also it is through one righteous response
^{io}**for all human beings** ^{io}**for life's justifying.**

- 19 **For even as through the disregarding of the one
human
the many are constituted sinners,
Thus also through the listening of the One
the many shall be 'constituted righteous.**

To me this passage stands with Genesis 1:1 and 1 Corinthians 15:28 as the bedrock of my faith. Yet it is so glorious and so astounding as to transcend in value and importance over all other words of scripture. I am not claiming the translation is perfect. But I am claiming that the word "listening" brings out the original meaning much better than "obedient" as presently used.

In the first place what was set before our Lord was not so much what He must do as what He must not do, rather what must *be done to Him*, contrary to all His previous doings. And all through this ordeal He kept in view what was said to Him, never turning from it, never listening to others who would have Him do what He wanted to do.

You say, "Well that was His obedience in the sense of doing what He was instructed to do." And I agree. But the scripture says it was His listening, His unwavering paying attention to what He heard from His God and Father, that was absolutely necessary for His faithful doing. At any point He refused to let any detail of the instruction slip away from His attention.

OUR LISTENING TO THE TEACHING WE HAVE OBTAINED

Once more let us listen to Romans 6:14-18:

- 14 **For sin shall not be lording it over =you,
For =you 'are not under law, but under ^{JOY}grace.**
15 **^aWhat, then? Should we sin, seeing that we 'are not
under law, but under ^{JOY}grace?**
**May it not ^bcome^o to that! ¹⁶Are =you not ^oaware that to
whom =you are presenting yourselves as slaves ^{io}for listening,**

his slaves =you¹ are, to whom =you are listening, whether of sin¹⁰ for death, or of listening¹⁰ for righteousness? ¹⁷ *y*Now *JOY* thanks be to God that though =you¹ were slaves of the sin, yet =you listen⁰ from the heart to the type of teaching¹⁰ to which =you are given over. ¹⁸ *y*Now freed from the sin, =you are enslaved to the righteousness.

We have been sadly misled due to faulty translation of this passage. Yet despite that, God has made His evangel concerning His Son known. The passage is filled with the pronouns “you” and “we,” and there is no direct reference to Christ such as we find in chapter 5 and 6:1-11. But the evangel concerning Him is the solid foundation of what is said concerning us here. Even more so, Christ is there in the words “grace” and “righteousness” as He listened to His God and Father, Who is operating all.

So it is that Paul opens the path of listening before us, that of enslavement in listening to the message of Jesus Christ’s listening. We are not under the message of law which puts the spotlight on the actions of human beings, but under the message of grace and righteousness that puts the spotlight on God’s grace and God’s righteousness as they are seen in the listening of Christ Jesus unto the death of the cross.

The word “obedience” no longer conveys what Paul says here, as it once did. It needs to be removed from the translation, and “listening” or “paying attention,” or “attentive hearing” put in its place.

Furthermore, as to translation, the word “though” should likely be supplied in Romans 6:17, as others have suggested. This accords with the “while” of Romans 5:8. Our giving of joy to God by means of thanksgiving and praise is for the gift of listening from the heart to His message of gratuitous joy which manifests His righteousness in “righteousifying” us through the listening unto the death of His Son.

"The" sin of disregarding God's words which reigns over us all in our flesh is no longer over us in God's reckoning and our position before Him. We have died to it in spirit (though not yet in flesh). Hence Paul's own personal testimony is, "I myself with the mind indeed am slaving for God's law, yet with the flesh for sin's law" (Rom.7:25). By a play on the word "law" Paul speaks of God's rescue through Jesus Christ (which perhaps was originally encompassed in the word "Grace," which immediately fell out of the text due to haplography). God's law is His sending of His Son, in the likeness of sin's flesh for the condemnation of sin in the flesh (Rom.8:3).

Joy (not gratuitous joy, but well deserved joy) be to God for His gratuitous joy to us.

LISTENING IN PHILIPPIANS

In Philippians, as in Romans, Paul speaks of Christ's under-hearing first and then of that of believers. If we understand the act as one of obedience as presently understood it is a matter of *doing* on the part of both. But if we understand Paul to speak of *listening*, the point of the two passages is enhanced considerably.

Christ was a listening Christ unto the death of the cross (Phil.2:8). He never let His God and Father's will leave His mind and heart. He never set it aside.

The Philippians as well listened to Paul's teaching even in his *absence* (Phil.2:12). Whether it was entreaty ("Let this mindset be in you which is in Christ Jesus also") or revelation ("Christ Jesus . . . empties Himself . . . [and] humbles Himself becoming a listening One unto death), they kept on attentively hearing what the apostle had said. With fear and trembling over such a message their salvation became effective in their lives as God operated in them (through their listening) to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight.

D.H.H.

THE FIGURE OF SALT

THE DISCIPLES ARE THE SALT OF THE LAND

“You are the salt of the earth. Now, if the salt should be made insipid, with what will it be salted? For nothing does it still avail except to be cast outside, to be trampled by men” (Matt.5:13).

FIGURES of speech, when they are understood, help to add interest when communicating both orally and when writing. The writers of the Old and New Testaments employed them. Jesus especially used them when speaking to the crowds using parables. They evoke imagery and emotion when stating phrases such as, “salt of the earth,” “furnace of fire,” and “salted with fire,” as well as “outer darkness.” By their use, richness is added when communicating with others. They make what we say or write much more interesting. Complex ideas are conveyed using figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, personifications, hyperbole, and so on. For instance, writers of the Bible employed anthropomorphisms when trying to convey certain aspects about God. Examples are when God is described as having hands, a heart, and a soul. When plain language is not enough to convey ideas we employ figures of speech.

When explaining to the disciples that they are the salt of the land, Jesus employed the *figure of likeness*. He spoke of the salt becoming insipid. But what did He intend to convey by “insipid”? It would be helpful to take a trip back two thousand years ago to Israel to see how they procured salt, how it was used, and how it could become insipid. Concerning Matthew 5:13, in Christ’s day, in Israel, salt was usually procured from the Dead Sea (Sea of Salt). This salt

has bitter impurities such as gypsum and carnallite, and, when dried, is colorless and resembles salt. If these impurities are not removed, the sodium chloride can leach away by water and what still looks like salt would lose its saltiness because the small amount of sodium with gypsum and carnallite would not be very good tasting. Also, what is left over, having lost its salt, would not have very good preserving effects. The disciples can lose their preserving qualities as well as their savor. Such impure salt would be cast out into the street because it was not fit to be put on the land or mixed with manure for crop production.

In the Greek, in verse 13, "insipid" is *mōranthê*. *Moron* comes from the Greek word *mōron*. In the Keyword Concordance, in the back of the CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT under *mōrainō* we have, "**stupid** (make)." According to Webster's Dictionary, a person who is *insipid* is *weak*. If we join the dictionary's idea with that in the Keyword Concordance we could come up with "weak minded"—one who is made stupid or moronic. Let us look deeper into this verse and expand on it so it makes more sense.

You [disciples] are the *salt* [preserver] of the earth [Greek *ge*, land]. Now if the *salt* [disciples] should be made insipid [made stupid, weak], with what will *it* [the disciples] be salted [preserved]? For nothing is *it* [*it* being the disciples] still availing except [for the disciples] to be cast outside, to be trampled by human beings.

Therefore the disciples are the salt (preserver) of the land. If any of the disciples, (the twelve and thousands of other disciples) should be made stupid, or weak, they will lose their preserving qualities. Due to this, the people of the land will rise up and cast out those disciples, and will trample them under foot. In Luke 14:25-33 Jesus was talking about what it takes to be His disciple. Then He ends with this: "Ideal, then, is salt. Yet if even the salt should be made insipid, with what shall it be seasoned? Neither is it

fit for the land nor for manure. Outside are they casting it. Who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 14:34-35). This being the case, if the salt/disciple is made insipid, it is not fit for the land nor even for manure since, if put in with manure, it would kill the plants the manure is put on. This is due to what looks like salt which has lost its saltiness and what is left is gypsum and carnallite. These minerals, when mixed in with manure, are poisonous to the plants. Jesus is telling them they will be cast out into the streets to be trodden upon should they become insipid.

Consequently, Jesus is telling them they need to be vigilant in looking for weakness in themselves, and be preserving the kingdom order so insubordination of the populace is kept in check. They (the twelve and many other disciples) will be *preserving* the societal structure which they are to be presiding over. Otherwise it will end badly for those disciples as well as the society they are ruling over. The people will rise up and cast them out of their position of rulership and trample them under foot.

In Matthew 25:19-23 it is said of the ones faithful over what "the lord of those slaves" gives them, when he returns, he will be placing them over many. So the twelve preside over the twelve tribes (*cp* Matt.19:28, Luke 22:30), and there will be many disciples placed over cities and humans. For example, in Luke 19:17, one faithful servant will be placed over ten cities.

Jesus was not made stupid but He was made weak. He wanted to gather Jerusalem's children as a hen gathers her brood but they would not. Instead, they said "we do not want this man to reign over us" (Luke 19:14). They cast Him out and trampled Him under foot. "For even if He was crucified out of weakness, nevertheless He is living by the power of God . . ." (2 Cor.13:4). Had He exhibited power—He could have called twelve legions of messengers (*cf* Matt.26:53)—they would not have been able to cast Him out to trample Him.

JESUS LEADS BY EXAMPLE
AS THE SALT OF THE EARTH

When Jesus returns to reign over Israel and the nations, lawlessness and insubordination will be dealt with swiftly. He will rule with great power and authority. Prior to setting up His millennial reign He must do battle and be victorious over all opposition. We see this in Revelation 19:15: “And out of His mouth a sharp blade is issuing, that with it He should be smiting the nations. *And He will be shepherding them with an iron club.* And He is treading the wine trough of the fury of the indignation of God, the Almighty.” Notice the figures employed in the above verse: “out of His mouth a sharp blade is issuing,” and “shepherding,” also, “iron club” as well as “treading the wine trough.”

“Yet who will endure the day of His coming? And who will stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner’s fire, and like the soap of launderers. And He will sit like a refiner and a cleanser of silver. And He will cleanse the sons of Levi, and purify them like gold and like silver. And they will come to be for Yahweh, bringing close the approach present in righteousness” (Mal.3:2,3).

“Cupellation is a refining process in metallurgy in which ores or alloyed metals are treated under very high temperatures and subjected to controlled operations to separate noble metals, like gold and silver, from base metals, like lead, copper, zinc, arsenic . . .” (WIKIPEDIA).

We are not told exactly *how* Jesus is going to purify or cupel the sons of Levi *like* a refiner and cleanser of silver. The end result of the refining or cupelling process is that the Levites will bring the approach present in *righteousness*. So the cupellation must separate the base things of unrighteousness from the precious substance of righteousness which remains for proper service in the temple. The refiner of silver knows when the refining is completed when he sees his image reflected in the silver.

SALTED WITH FIRE AND SALTED WITH SALT

When explaining to the disciples concerning sins associated with the hands, feet, and eyes, and the consequential threat as to the fires of Gehenna, Jesus stated:

“And if your hand should ever be snaring you, strike it off. It is ideal for you to be entering into life maimed, rather than, having two hands, *to come away into Gehenna, into the **unextinguished fire** where *their worm is not deceasing and the fire is not going out.** And if your foot should be snaring you, strike it off. For it is ideal for you to be entering into life maimed or lame, rather than, having two feet, to be *cast into Gehenna, into the **unextinguished fire**, where *their worm is not deceasing and the fire is not going out.** And if your eye should be snaring you, cast it out. It is ideal for you to be entering into the kingdom of God one-eyed, rather than, having two eyes, to be cast into the **Gehenna of fire**, where *their worm is not deceasing and the fire is not going out*” (Mark 9:43-48).

Gehenna, the fire, and worm are literal. The fire and worm, during the millennial reign are useful for dealing with the garbage of the city throughout the time of that future eon. Concerning the fire not going out, why would the inhabitants of Jerusalem even try to extinguish the fire in Gehenna? It serves a useful purpose. Their constant burning of refuse in Gehenna is testimony to the great blessings the inhabitants of Jerusalem will be enjoying. With a largess of blessings comes an unrelenting disposal of waste by fire and worms.

THE FIGURE “SALTED WITH FIRE”

“For **everyone** will be salted with fire, and every sacrifice will be salted with salt. Ideal is the salt, yet if the salt should be becoming savorless [UN-SALT], with what will you be seasoning it? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:49,50).

“All of your approach presents shall you salt with salt; and you shall not cause the salt of the covenant of your Elohim to cease on your approach present. On all of your approach presents shall you bring salt near to Yahweh your Elohim” (Lev.2:13).

Notice “one” in **everyone**” in Mark 9:49 (quoted above) is in lightface in the CONCORDANT VERSION. It is literally “EVERY for IN FIRE-WILL-BE-BEING-SALTED.” Could it be every person in Israel who commits these egregious sins listed in Mark 9:42-48 will be salted (preserved in their sinful state)? Prior to Mark 9:49,50 Jesus admonished over and over concerning the worms, the unextinguished fire, and the Gehenna of fire, and which sins will cause an Israelite to receive the death penalty. They will then have their dead body cast into Gehenna rather than receive a decent entombment. Then He used the conjunction “for” to start verse 49. By using this conjunction, the connection is made between Gehenna and every(one) being salted with fire. He is telling the disciples, I am explaining to you disciples concerning the fires of Gehenna, *for* (or the reason why this is so, is), every (failing of the flesh I recently spoke of) will result in that person being cast into Gehenna and shall be being salted (shall be being preserved) in their sins in fire, in Gehenna. The twelve will need to keep these standards concerning the eyes, hands and feet when they sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes. I wonder how many thousands of Israelites will enter the kingdom of God with one eye and one hand, hobbling along on one foot so as to avoid the Gehenna of fire? Of course, we know Gehenna is not their final, so-called “eternal” preservation or fate as some wrongly claim. We know God eventually will save them as well due to Christ giving Himself a ransom for all per 1 Timothy 2:4-6. Also, He was not explaining this only to

the twelve disciples for there were many disciples. (In 1 Corinthians 15:6 Paul says, "He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once.")

THE LITERALNESS OF "SALTED WITH SALT"

Jesus continues His discourse in Mark 9:49: "and every sacrifice will be salted with salt." *Sacrifices salted with salt* is in the law of Moses, specifically Leviticus 2:13. It is of great interest to note Jesus appending to His explanation related to Gehenna and what it takes to receive such a judgment, "For, . . . every sacrifice will be salted with salt." He is detailing to the disciples that the law of Moses will be stringently followed during His reign. Israel, to a great degree, will be preserved from failures of non-law compliance due to the threat of Gehenna. Also, the sacrificial system will be stringently enforced.

The Greek word *pas* (used in Mark 9:49) is also translated "entire" in Matthew 3:5, "Then went out to him Jerusalem and *entire* Judea, and the *entire* country about the Jordan." Similarly Mark 9:49 could be: "For **entire** (Israel) in fire will be salted (preserved)," thus showing the preserving effect which the salting with fire of Gehenna will have on holding the majority of Israelites back from committing grave sins recently enumerated.

"Since the kingdom has been rejected, entrance into it is necessarily a path of judgment. Salt is a preservative. During the kingdom era corruption will be stayed. The salt that counteracts the corruption of that day will be fire, a judgment. As already elaborated, nothing that offends can enter that kingdom. It must be judged. If not, it will drag down those who harbor it into Gehenna and its fires" (A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.74).

In the above two passages salt is used both literally and figuratively. During the millennial reign, every sacrifice

will literally be salted with salt. It is helpful to understand that salt was used to preserve sacrifices prior to bringing them to the temple to be offered up by the Levites. Being *salted* with fire obviously is a figurative usage of salt since one does not sprinkle fire on a person like one sprinkles salt on a sacrifice of meat.

SALT REPRESENTING SAVOR

After explaining to the disciples the determining factors that result in one being cast into Gehenna, encouragement is given the disciples by using the figure of salt to represent seasoning: “Ideal is the salt, yet if the salt should be becoming savorless, with what will you be seasoning it? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another” (Mark 9:50). Savorless, *analon* is literally “UN-SALT.” One who is savorless is a pungent, bitter person; one who cannot coexist in peace with others. What is remaining when salt loses its savor? The bitter gypsum and carnallite is left. Savor is recognized by scent, taste and a pleasant inner quality. In this usage of salt, Christ is employing it as a figure representing an inner quality rather than preservation. If salt loses its savor, with what can they make it savorable again? If the salt becomes un-salt, what remains is the unusable bitter impurities such as gypsum and carnallite. The disciples are encouraged to not lose their peaceful, sweet demeanor, which results in being at peace with one another.

When the Lord returns to Israel, His disciples will become the salt of the land. As salt, they will be the preservers of the law-based system Christ will set up during His millennial reign. The fires of Gehenna will have a preserving effect on Israel and the disciples’ reign with Christ will have a preserving effect on the entire planet.

Tony Nungesser

(To be continued)

Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 116th Year

(1909–2025)

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Netherlands Agent: Andries Van der Wal, E-H Depot, P.O. Box 85111, 3009 MC Rotterdam. Phone 010-420-6260.

United Kingdom Agent: Mr. Malcolm Ferries, Flat 5 Redholme Court, Red Hill, Stourbridge, West Mids DY8 1ND. Phones
landline: 01384-379531; cell: 07763-187876

EDITORIAL

THIS issue of *Unsearchable Riches* begins with an emphasis on joy and peace (pages 99-108), and ends with passages of scripture which speak among other matters of lamentation and gnashing of teeth (pages 135-144). In this the need to be correctly cutting the word of truth is certainly called for. To be sure, Christ's millennial reign is certainly "glorious" (as noted at the end of Tony Nungesser's article). But it lacks the glory spoken of in God's evangel concerning His Son.

Yet in order to see more clearly the glory of God's evangel of joy and peace concerning His Son there needs to be an adjustment at several points in our translation, followed by an adjustment in understanding. Even as the transcendent riches of Christ (Eph.2:7) call for an adjustment in the spiritual endowments given to us in the present administration (see A. E. Knoch's article, "Adjusting the Saints," pages 109-123), so the evangel calls for adjustment in our appreciation of God.

An adjustment in translation, such as "God's righteousness" instead of "a righteousness of God" in Romans 3:21, 22, calls for a recognition of God's own attribute of righteousness being manifested here before we go forward with the subject of the justification of the sinner. Then, in the same passage, we are to see that Paul is speaking of the manifestation of God's righteousness in His joyous achievement of justification as coming about through Jesus Christ's own faith rather than the believer's faith, as widely claimed.

Now that at least the critical matter of the faith of Christ

Jesus rather than our faith in Him has been recognized (and indeed done so successfully) by numerous scholars, much adjustment in translation and commentaries as well as preaching is called for. Whether or not this will happen is uncertain. It is certainly resisted.

For instance, I would adjust Millard J. Erickson's discussion of justification in his book, *CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY*,¹ as follows:

"[*Our*] justification is something completely undeserved [*but it is righteous and reveals God's righteousness*]. It is not an achievement [*on our part, neither by works of law nor by our faith*]. It is an obtainment, not an attainment [*on our part, but an achievement on God's part, through the giving up of His Son, and on Christ's part Who gives Himself in fullest and purest of faith*]. Even [*our*] faith is not some good work [*while Christ's faith is the greatest of good works*] which God must reward with salvation. [*Christ's faith is the good work which reveals and manifests God's righteousness in justifying and saving sinners which must be fully brought about in all being constituted righteous.*] It [*the salvation of the justification of sinners*] is God's [*righteous*] gift [*of joy*]. It [*our faith*] is not the cause of our salvation, but the means by which we receive it."

Yet we all need adjustment from time to time in our believing as we listen attentively to God's evangel concerning His Son, and as this message is translated in accord with the way in which it was originally understood (as such is possible). God is operating all things, and is doing so through the Son of His love, Whom He spares not, but gives up for the sake of sinners. This is for all, and it is on all, already reckoned to all who are believing it, to whom the consummations of the eons have attained in spirit.

D.H.H.

1. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1983, p.959.

GOD'S EVANGEL

³² **Surely He Who spares^o not His own 'Son, but gives Him up^{ov} for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also be ^{JOY}graciously^o granting us 'all?** (Rom.8:32)

GOD's evangel is set before us in Romans 1-8 and applied to Israel and the nations in chapters 9 through 11, and summed up as it affects our walk now, in the world in which we live, in chapters 12 through 16.

Using two fact verbs, "*spares not*" and "*gives up,*" followed by a future tense, "*shall be graciously granting*" (with the "graciously" being taken in the sense of "joyously"), Romans 8:32 condenses God's evangel in plain words, and should ever be kept in view.

CONCERNING GOD'S SON

That which God does, His act of sparing not but giving up concerns His Own Son and what He does. God spares not His Own Son, Who *dies*. Thus we hear:

⁸ **yet 'God is commending this love of ^{sf}His ^{io}to us, seeing that, while we are still being sinners, Christ dies^{ov} for our sakes.** (Rom.5:8)

We also have come into the picture. *God* spares not *His Own Son*, but gives Him up for *us all*, and *Christ* dies for *our sakes*. Consequently:

For even as through the disregarding of the one human the many are constituted sinners, thus also through the listening of the One the many shall be 'constituted righteous. (Rom.5:19)

In these three verses there may be enough to make

God's evangel known. What is said in them is but repeated in one way or another through eight chapters, but with many other important revelations added to enrich our understanding and increase our joy and peace. Therefore, keeping in mind what is said about God, His Son and us in these marvelous passages, we may go forward through all that is said from the beginning.

Without anywhere near covering all that is said (who indeed could do that?) I am proposing here to share some of what I have come to see at least in the opening passages as they first set God's evangel before us.

THE ENSLAVED AND SEVERED APOSTLE

Paul, "a sign in every epistle" (2 Thess.3:17), presents his credentials as an evangelist in three respects: 1. **Christ Jesus's slave . . . for God's evangel**, 2. a **called apostle . . . for God's evangel**, and 3. **severed for God's evangel**.

(The phrases "slave of-Christ Jesus" and "evangel of-God," as expressed in Greek, are anarthrous, that is without "the's." Our minds are taken immediately from the first term to the second, giving it an emphasis that is at least equal to the first term. This seems to be well expressed by the English possessive case: "Christ Jesus's slave" and "God's evangel." (There are numerous other such anarthrous, genitive phrases to be noted as we go along.)

CHRIST JESUS'S SLAVE

It is as Christ Jesus's slave that Paul directs his attention to (literally **into**) God's evangel. We are apt to think of this slavery only in terms of what Paul does in bringing the evangel, such as the list he presents (quite reluctantly) in 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 and his plans for coming to Rome and then going on to Spain as set forth here in this letter to the saints in Rome. But as Paul writes of slavery in Romans 6:16,17, there is a mental aspect that takes

precedence over the physical aspect, and that is described by the Greek word, [*h*]upakouō (UNDER-HEAR). Here is a matter of attentive listening which has become sadly lost (though originally dominant) in the English word "obedience." It is as Christ's slave that Paul makes known the evangel, "that it is not in accord with a human. For neither do I accept it from a human, nor am I taught it [at the *side* of a human teacher], but it comes through Jesus Christ's revelation" (Gal.1:10-12). To this revelation he is an attentive slave, enslaving his *mind* to God's "law," which is God's evangel as distinguished from the law of the God given at Sinai as well as from "sin's law" (Rom.7:21-25).

A CALLED APOSTLE

Although "the least of the apostles" as to competency in record (1 Cor.15:9), Paul knows firsthand the joy of God's grace which he is heralding to irreverent and unrighteous humanity, most distinctly as the apostle to the nations (Rom.11:13). In this his competency in his apostleship is his incompetency in his reputation. He *was* what he *was*. "Yet," he exclaims, "*in God's grace* [JOY] and His grace, [JOY], that which is in me, does not come to be for naught, but more exceedingly than all of them [the other apostles] toil I—yet not I, but the grace [JOY] of God which is together with me" (1 Cor.15:10).

SEVERED FOR GOD'S EVANGEL

Paul is severed from all that was gain to him by birth. For "... it delights God, Who severs me from my mother's womb and calls me through His grace [JOY], to unveil His Son in me that I may be evangelizing Him among the nations" (Gal.1:15,16). Those things which were gain to him in birth and in relation to the law, those he has deemed a forfeit because of Christ (Phil.3:4-9). Jeremiah was hallowed, that is, set apart, for service as a prophet,

even before Yahweh formed him in his mother's belly and he came forth from the womb (Jer.1:5). But Paul is severed for making known God's evangel as an adult as pictured metaphorically by his birth and the cutting of the umbilical cord. It is a very keen and settled separation, so much so that he can rightly call that evangel, "my evangel" (Rom.2:16; 16:25).

GOD'S EVANGEL

Paul is writing to us as Christ Jesus's slave, and as a called apostle, having been severed from all that was gain to him by birth, and all of these positions are being directed **into** the making known of **God's evangel**.

God is speaking. And it is well for us to listen. Once again we turn to Romans 6:16; "Are you not aware that to whom you are presenting yourselves as slaves for listening his slaves you are, to whom you are listening . . . ?" If someone has something to say, he or she wants others to listen. God has a message for us that is altogether good. Listen to it.

It is **God's evangel (which He promises before through His prophets in holy scripture) concerning His Son . . .**

God's evangel is promised in holy scripture. It gives cohesion to God's Word because it concerns **God's Son** Who is the central character of Scripture, as it speaks of good. What scripture says about humans and what they are to do tends to take our attention away from what it says about God's Son. Only by giving attention to what it says concerning God's Son can we hear exactly what God is saying in His evangel.

First of all, then, Paul evangelizes God's evangel as it concerns God's Son in dealing with two primal evils afflicting the earth, chaos and vacancy (*cf* Gen.1:2): God's Son **^bcomes^o out of David's seed according to the flesh**, and He

is **designated God's Son** ⁱ**with power, according to a spirit of holiness, ^oby dead ones' resurrection.**

Chaos is put to an end by God's Son coming "out of David's seed" as prophesied in 2 Samuel 7:12. There Yahweh speaks to David through the prophet Nathan, saying, "I will raise up your seed after you that shall come forth from your internal parts; and I will establish his kingdom." Now in Romans 1:3 Paul identifies this seed of David's as God's Son, the central figure of God's evangel. The apostle makes much the same connection again in 2 Timothy 2:8, saying: "Remember Jesus Christ, Who has been roused from among the dead ones, is out of David's seed, according to my evangel . . ." God's Son will reign as One Who descends according to flesh from David. And this is so as His reign is expanded in 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 (by the holy prophet, Paul): "For He must be reigning [as One Who is in the line of a *human* king] until He should place all His enemies under His feet . . . (see also Ephesians 1:10 and Philippians 2:10,11 and Colossians 1:16-20.)

Only as He empties and humbles Himself is God's Son exalted above every name with the Name Jesus (Yahweh-Saviour) and all chaos be put away in permanence.

This is one great, future good of God's good message concerning His Son.

But Paul follows it (again, only briefly) with another great, future good: God's Son "is designated God's Son with power, according to a spirit of holiness, by dead ones' resurrection."

This puts an end to the horrible vacancy of death. God's Son is designated God's Son, not by His resurrection from among the dead, as most translations and commentaries indicate (although His own resurrection is critical), but by powerful and distinctively holy spirit which He is given for resurrecting dead ones. It is as Paul puts it in 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, "For since in fact through a human comes

death, through a Human also comes the resurrection of the dead ones. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ shall all be vivified.”

PAUL AND US

Now in Romans 1:5-14 we return to the matter of Paul's distinctive apostleship as Christ Jesus's slave, severed for God's evangel. Now also those being addressed are particularly in view. But all that is said about Paul (and other apostles) and us is viewed as channeled **through One** only and in view of His place in God's evangel, **Jesus Christ, our Lord**.

We must not lose sight of that. The “concerning” God's Son has become “through” Jesus Christ our Lord, which is repeated in verse 8 where Paul is thanking God “through Jesus Christ” and in the parenthesis of 2:16b where Paul associates the evangel (as his evangel) with the words: “through Jesus Christ.” The same wording comes before us again in Romans 3:22 (God's righteousness has been made manifest “through Jesus Christ's faith”) and again in 3:24,25,30, and at such important evangelical points as 5:1,9,10,11,17,19,21. (See also Galatians 2:16 and 3:22 and Ephesians 2:8 where “through faith” must certainly be Christ Jesus's faith, as in Ephesians 3:12, and as in Philip-pians 3:9 where righteousness sourced in God is “through Christ's faith”).¹

JOY AND PEACE

It is at this point that Paul greets us as he does in all his letters:

JOY **Grace to =you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Paul first spoke of grace in verse 5 as something of joy

1. In some similar passages, the “through” is replaced by “out.”

which he (and other apostles) obtained along with the position of apostleship. In verse 7 he greets God's beloved ones, called by Jesus Christ as saints. They are the "you," but a group of "you" who are among those to whom Paul is commissioned, among all nations, "for listening of faith." Now if we are listening to what Paul is saying and listening with faith (for there is no perceptible proof of what he is saying), we have joined the "you" in Rome and the "you" to whom he was commissioned, among all nations. And we have joined the "you" he greets in verse 7.

GRACE AS JOY

The word "grace" has the essential meaning of JOY as indicated in the CVNT. In both 1:5 and 1:7 it is certainly undeserved joy, and this is so in most occurrences. But it is not so in Romans 6:17, 1 Corinthians 15:57 and 2 Corinthians 9:5 (as well as Romans 7:25 as in the CVNT). The Latin translation as published by the United Bible Societies uses *gratia* or *gratias* in all these passages. But the early English translations all used a form of *thanks*. This was followed by the CV and most other English translations. This situation has led to the suggestion by some scholars that there are two distinct words here in Greek with the very same spelling.

Yet if we understand that JOY is the denotation of this word to be heard whenever it appears, and that the idea of something undeserved is a connotation, applying only in certain usages, the whole problem is solved, and God's word is opened up. Paul greets us with joy and peace. Both are undeserved, but they are what they are, matters of joy and peace.

At this point at least, I do not see that we can discard the word "grace," for in the evangel the joy is gratuitous, bestowed apart from human contribution. But we must always hear that this is a matter of joy.

Thus Paul says to us first of all “Joy to you from God, our Father,” and then he says, “Peace to you from God our Father. And then he says, “Joy to you from the Lord Jesus Christ,” followed by, “Peace to you from the Lord Jesus Christ.”

These are words of evangel, indeed of God’s evangel concerning His Son, and they are directed to “you” who are sinners. For “all sin and are wanting of the glory of God, being justified gratuitously in God’s joy” (Rom.3: 23,24). And it is that while we are still sinners that Christ dies for our sakes as we read in Romans 5:8. This is joy and peace for sinners who do not deserve such blessings. And this is from God, our Father, Who spares not His own Son but gives Him up for us all. Furthermore this is from the Lord Jesus Christ Who dies for us. And so we say to God, “Joy to You!”²

THANKING GOD

It is in view of joy and peace from God, our Father, and [from] the Lord Jesus Christ that Paul now says:

⁸ **First indeed I am thanking** [well-joying] **my ‘God through Jesus Christ** [Who dies] **concerning all of ‘you** [including us who were not yet born] **that ‘your ‘faith** [not that “you have faith” but “the faith itself which you have”] **is being announced^o in the whole world** [the *system* of things as they are].

We may say here that in Romans 6:17 Paul directs joyful appreciation to God for the joy God gives to us in “sending His own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh” (Rom.8:3). That is, we direct joy to God for such an evangel. Now in Romans 1:8 Paul is giving God an even richer, joyful recognition of

2. And so also God “rejoices” His Son with a Name that is above every name (Phil.2:9).

the joy from Him Who spares not His own Son. And this is the way he puts it "first" of all.

God's evangel concerning His Son is the faith of the Roman saints (the message they are believing), both theirs and Paul's (Rom.1:12) and ours today.

PAUL'S PRAYERS

Paul's thanksgiving is thus for the fact that God's evangel concerning His Son is being announced in the whole world. This evangel is our faith to which we are to be listening. It is the evangel of God's Son.

⁹ **For** [Paul adds] **'God is my Witness, to Whom I am offering divine service in my 'spirit in the evangel of His 'Son, how unintermittingly I am making^o mention of =you always^{on} in my 'prayers** ¹⁰ **beseeching^o if somehow, some-time at length I shall be 'prospered in the will of 'God to come to^d =you.** ¹¹ **For I am longing to ^psee =you that I may share ^asome spiritual gift of ^{JOY}grace with =you ^{io}for =you 'to be established** (Rom.1:9-11)

We may listen to this beseeching prayer of Paul's which he was praying in all his prayers as one that is still being heard by God as having us in view as it had the saints in Rome in view when this was written so long ago. But now Paul's coming and sharing is by means of what he writes and says in this epistle. It is in this way that God is hearing Paul's prayers as making mentioning of us whom Paul never saw in his flesh as he did the Roman saints. Nevertheless Paul is sharing spiritual joy with us in his presentation of God's evangel concerning His Son. God is seeing to it that Paul is with us in spirit as we listen to what Paul is saying to the Roman believers here in this epistle sent to them, for them to be established.

We are thus brought into the "you" of Paul's prayers.

D.H.H.

ROMANS 1:1-12

1 Paul, Christ Jesus's slave, a called apostle, having been severed[°] *io* for

God's evangel

2 (which He promises[°] before through His 'prophets in holy scriptures)

3 concerning His 'Son

('Who ^{*b*}comes[°] out of David's seed according to the flesh,^{2 S 7:12; 1 C 15:25-28}

4 'Who is designated God's Son ^{*i*}with power, according to a spirit of holiness, ^{*o*}by dead ones' resurrection),^{1 C 15:20-24; 35-57}

Jesus Christ, our 'Lord,

5 through Whom we obtain ^{*JOY*}grace and apostleship ^{*io*}for listening of faith among all the nations, ^{*ov*}for His 'Name's sake,

6 among whom 'are =you' also, Jesus Christ's called ones:

7 to all 'who 'are in Rome, God's beloved ones, called saints: ^{*JOY*}Grace to =you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First indeed I am thanking my 'God through Jesus Christ concerning all of =you that =your 'faith is being announced[°] in the whole world. **9** For 'God 'is my Witness, to Whom I am offering divine service in my 'spirit in the evangel of His 'Son, how unintermittingly I am making[°] mention of =you always ^{*on*}in my 'prayers ^{*10*}beseeking[°] if somehow, sometime at length I shall be 'prospered in the will of 'God to come to^{*d*} =you. **11** For I am longing to ^{*p*}see =you that I may share ^{*a*}some spiritual gift of ^{*JOY*}grace with =you ^{*io*}for =you 'to be established: **12** yet this 'is to be consoled together among =you through ^{*i*}one another's 'faith, both =yours and mine.

ADJUSTING THE SAINTS

THE transcendent nature of the present outflow of God's favor corresponds with the exaltation of Christ among the celestials. Because He is "up over all who are of the heavens" (Eph.4:10), we are raised to the heights supreme. It is not, indeed, as the English may suggest, that He is located in space at a point outside of and beyond the universe, for that is a palpable absurdity. As to space, the universe is made up of the earth and the heavens. The more accurate Greek makes it *of* the heavens, for He is the highest *of* the celestial hosts, not as to space, but as to dignity and glory. There can be no higher exaltation. He completes the universe (Eph.4:10).

He Who descended into the lower parts of the earth has now ascended to the highest heavens. Just as the celestial aspect of the secret of Christ is the basis of the secret economy, so now also, the completeness of Christ's sweep of all creation is the basis of our maturity. A complete revelation raises us to the plane of adults. Being associated with Christ in His headship of the whole universe the believers now have attained their majority.

The inauguration of the present administration of God's grace brought many changes with it. This called for an *adjusting* of the saints, in the language of inspiration (Eph. 4:12). It is figuratively presented as the change from minority to manhood (Eph.4:13; 1 Cor.13:10). The new celestial destiny severed the saints from earthly, physical blessing, which they had enjoyed as guests of Israel's covenants. The new status of the nations demanded that their spiritual growth be completed, so that they may truly be the complements of Christ among the celestials.

The spiritual manifestations of so-called "gifts" give us a graphic illustration of the changes involved. The twelfth chapter of first Corinthians shows what the nations had before the secret was revealed. The fourth of Ephesians tells us what gifts are ours today. There are great changes. Most of the early gifts were dropped in this adjustment. They are no longer needed. Two new ones were added. Three are carried over. Of the gifts which enter this administration, apostles, prophets, and teachers were known before. They link us with the past. Evangelists and pastors are unique, for they had not been classed as gifts before.

SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS

1 Cor.12:7-10	1 Cor.12:28-29	1 Cor.13:8	Eph.4:11
<i>By the spirit</i>	<i>By God in the</i>	<i>Abrogated by</i>	<i>Given by Lord</i>
<i>for expedience</i>	<i>ecclesia</i>	<i>maturity</i>	<i>for adjusting</i>
wisdom	1. apostles	prophecies	apostles
knowledge	2. prophets	languages	prophets
faith	3. teachers	knowledge	evangelists
healing	powers		pastors
powerful deeds	healing		teachers
prophecy	supports		Eph.2:20
discrimination	pilotage		<i>In the</i>
of spirits	languages		<i>foundation</i>
languages	(future tran-		apostles
translation	scendence)		prophets

The accompanying lists of the spiritual endowments given in Paul's ministry will help us to compare and study these "gifts." First we have the nine gifts which were temporary expedients during the transitional era between the pentecostal administration and the present. These are individual manifestations of the spirit. Next we have eight corporate endowments, connected with membership in the body of Christ. These are arranged in the order of their rank. Note particularly that the first three—apostles, prophets, and teachers—are found again in Ephesians.

Then we have a special list of those which were to be discarded by the incoming of maturity. The last column gives us the facts in Ephesians. First we have the list of those given for adjusting the saints. Finally we find that two of these are confined to the foundation. This leaves three spiritual endowments today—evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

It is worth every effort needed to clear up the relation between the gifts in first Corinthians and Ephesians. Two extreme and opposing positions are based on untenable views of this relation. A large number of zealous believers claim that all of the gifts may still be appropriated by faith and that many are in exercise today. As in Corinth, they emphasize the gift of “tongues.” Healing is also pressed. On the other hand, some cut off Corinthians entirely, claiming that we have absolutely no connection with them. We are told that the dispensation of the secret is unique, and is neither a blend nor a development of Corinthians, but a newly *created* thing, far above all. In contrast with both of these positions, the Scriptures, both in Corinthians and Ephesians, illustrate the relation between the two by the figures of *minority* and *maturity*. This is the key to the subject.

This figure avoids both extremes. It is in harmony with the fact that some of the gifts were present in the past which are ours today. It agrees with the setting aside of the lesser gifts and the retention of the greater. It accords with the character of the gifts which have been retained and those which have been repudiated. Paul and others were apostles and teachers in Corinthians and remained such in Ephesians. They were not reappointed, as though their previous services were not recognized. The figure of a new creation is not in point here. A man is not recreated when he reaches maturity. Some things remain as they were. Others are dropped because they are suited only to minority.

The believers among the nations had been enjoying some things, as the guests of Israel's promise covenants, which find no appropriate place among the spiritual, celestial blessings which characterize the present grace. Perhaps if such a change should be brought about in these days we would call it a reorganization. If a great business should change the sphere of its operations and the character of its products, some of its machinery would become useless and be discarded. Its system of doing business would be revised to suit the new conditions. So it was when this charter of our faith was first given. Some things were entirely dropped, others merely modified. Physical benefits vanished. Earthly disabilities disappeared. In Paul's preparatory epistles the believers are seen in the period of adolescence. They verge upon manhood. Some of the gifts given them at that time were the relics of childhood. Others were intended to develop them into manhood. The youth learns to talk and to care for his physical frame. These are represented by the gifts of healing and "tongues." The principal task of adolescence is the schooling and training for the duties of life. It is concerned with self-development, not with the care of others or the duties of maturity.

GIFTS FOR EXPEDIENCE

The manifestations of the spirit, given to the Corinthians, were *expedients* (1 Cor.12:7). Let us not miss this inspired characterization, which assures us that they were not ideal, permanent endowments, but only temporary measures to fill a lack which has since been supplied. "Now to each one is being given the manifestation of the spirit, *with a view to expedience*." The Authorized Version rendering, "profit" is misleading, though of course it is not untrue. Expedients are resorted to because they are profitable or helpful for a time. This word, *sumpherō*,

they translate *profit* seven times, and seven times *expedient*. Another word, *oninêmi*, means *profit*. The loss of an eye or a hand can hardly be called *profitable*, though it may be *expedient* (Matt.5:29,30). It was *expedient* for the Lord to go away (John 16:7). Absence is not His permanent condition. All is allowed us, but not all is *expedient* (1 Cor.6:12). In every occurrence there is but a transient advantage gained by expedience.

This is confirmed by the fact that *none of these endowments are reaffirmed in Ephesians*. They are suited to the times of transition which introduced the present grace. It is put beyond all question by the further fact that *all three of the gifts which are definitely discarded are found in this list of expedient spiritual endowments* (1 Cor.12:7-10). These are prophecy, languages, and knowledge (13:8). They were necessary at that time, but such expedients are no longer needed since the present administration has been fully established. Instead of giving a few individuals supernatural fragments of information, God has completed the whole circle of knowledge in His latest revelation. This is open to all. Now each believer has access to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in Christ.

The more we know of the transitional era which accompanied Paul's early ministries, the more we see the necessity of temporary spiritual manifestations to tide the believers over into the present grace. Although we now have a record of this period in Paul's earlier epistles, as well as the full revelation which closed it, how few of the believers are really clear about it! Since early times the church has found this period prolific in confusion, for few understood that it was not a permanent part of the present. If this is so, how difficult must it have been for those who lived in those changing times to keep step with God's operations! There was no finally formulated system of truth, as we now have it in Ephesians. God was still occupied with Israel. If

we lived in an era in which God was winding up one system of truth while He was unfolding another, there would be more excuse for confusion than there is. They needed temporary help to tide them over the time of transition.

The expedients are of two different kinds. Some linked them on to the kingdom and the powers of the coming eon. These were *powerful deeds, healing, languages and translation*. These will find their fullest fulfillment in the millennium. Humanly speaking, if Israel had not rejected the Messiah in Acts, these gifts would have flourished more and more, yet they would be exercised only in subordination to Israel. They had nothing to do with Israel being set aside. The other gifts linked them to the approaching change, when Israel should be rejected. Without knowing what was in store for them, they would naturally fall into folly and ignorance. Hence some were specially endowed with knowledge and wisdom. Their faith would fail, as did that of so many in Israel, as the kingdom receded. There was need of the gift of prophecy, to receive direct word from God. Spirits must be discriminated, lest they be led contrary to God's intention. All of these gifts are displayed in Paul's epistles to them. All of the other group were found exemplified in the narrative of Acts, which begins with a special exhibition of "tongues" and ends with a notable example of healing (28:8).

But do we not need all of these things today? As our blessings are spiritual, among the celestials, we cannot claim the physical endowments of the coming eon. Instead of healing we are given grace for our infirmities. Instead of power we are promised weakness (2 Cor.12:9). Languages are directly denied to an era of maturity (1 Cor.13:8). Wisdom and knowledge, faith, and prophecy, and the discrimination of spirits may be greatly needed today, but they are no longer individual gifts. All the wisdom and knowledge we need is found in the secret now revealed. That is God's

final word to us. No gift of prophecy is needed (1 Cor. 13:8). And by this completed revelation we may test all spirits. The dispensation in which we now live abrogates all of the spiritual manifestations which the apostle so carefully labeled *expedients*.

We are not aware that this point has been pressed before. Hence we wish to urge it upon all who believe God. Many lines of reasoning may be developed to show that these gifts are no longer with us, but none should appeal to the man of God as the word here used by the holy spirit. Before we are even told that these gifts existed, their temporary character is asserted. This will be enough for everyone who wishes to believe God. We do not doubt that there are spiritual manifestations today which seem to correspond to the lesser gifts. Such there were even in those days. A special gift was needed to discriminate the spirits. If this endowment existed today it would unhesitatingly class all of these as the work of deceiving spirits. It is an effort to engross the believers with the things of minority in order to keep them from attaining majority, which is the primary object of the real gifts we have today.

Let us note carefully the opposite effect, the direct contrast, between the modern “gifts”—healing and tongues—and those given us by God. The former drag us back to childhood; the latter bring us to manhood. Pastors, evangelists, and teachers are given “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, to the measure of the stature of Christ’s complement, that we may by no means still be minors, surging hither and thither and being carried about by every wind of teaching . . .” (Eph.4:12-14). Languages are listed by God as the least of all the gifts of minority. True pastors, evangelists, and teachers lead in the contrary

direction, toward maturity. That is their special function if they are faithful.

There are many methods of testing God's servants today which are without warrant in the Word. Success sometimes signifies failure in God's sight. Here, however, we have God's standard. Here He tells us what He expects. The test we should apply is found in this passage. Do they dispense that which edifies the body of Christ, so that all have one faith and realize their sonship and maturity in Christ? Alas! the very idea of maturity is unknown to many and their ministry is more calculated to make infants out of full-grown believers than to make mature saints out of minors. Let us note that *the prime object of the gifts we now possess is to lead the saints beyond the lesser gifts which characterized minority*. We are mature in Christ! Let us not relapse into infancy!

The eight spiritual endowments placed in the ecclesia by God are not introduced as expedients, hence we find that three of them enter the present administration. The notable point is that these three are expressly put at the head of the list and numbered, lest they should be misplaced. "*First*, apostles, *second*, prophets, *third*, teachers, thereupon . . ." (1 Cor.12:28). Furthermore, the other gifts are discounted by the exhortation, "Be zealous for the greater graces." This is followed by a statement which practically repudiates the lesser gifts. In confirmation of this we read that the last and least—languages—is to *cease* (1 Cor.13:8). The five unnumbered gifts, powers, healing, supports, pilotage, languages, are not suited to the present era of transcendence (1 Cor.12:31).

ABROGATED BY MATURITY

Prophecies, languages, knowledge are the gifts which are expressly discarded in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians. All three are found in the first series which

are expedient, and one—languages—is also the last of the second group, which is arranged according to rank. The gift of “tongues,” therefore, is the least of all the gifts. But the path of transcendence which we now tread does not merely discard the signs of the coming eon, as languages and powers and healing, but also abrogates prophecies and the gift of knowledge. The reason given is that these were but installments and, in the impending era (in which we now dwell), such fragmentary revelations will be unnecessary because God will have given a full-orbed prophecy embracing all knowledge. Such we have in this Ephesian epistle.

The fact that the gift of prophecy has been abrogated is evident from the many modern attempts to supplement God’s revelation. All who have sought to add to God’s Word have only manifested their ignorance of what He has already revealed. I would advise those who imagine that they have a direct message from God to get a grasp of the Ephesian letter. They will find His Word final and complete. It is sufficient for every present need. The gift of prophecy, or the power to speak as the mouthpiece of God, has been abrogated. The only prophets in this administration are in the foundation, and all that they might reveal is already spread out before us in the epistles of Paul, the greatest prophet of them all.

A distinction should be maintained between the gift of prophecy, as one of the spirit’s manifestations, which was given for individual exercise in the ecclesia, and the office of prophet, as given to the ecclesia to *complete the Word of God*. Paul was the great apostle and prophet through whom the truth was given in permanent form and incorporated in the Scriptures. The fragmentary prophecies were temporary expedients, but the gift of prophecy remains with us, in spiritual form, in the sacred scrolls. The prophet is found in the foundation. His prophecies, unlike those

earlier manifestations of which we have no record, are written for all to read.

In the Corinthian letter we notice that some gifts are discounted, though not forbidden. The gift of languages, or “tongues,” together with interpretation is last on the lists, and is discouraged. The apostle declares he would rather speak five words with his mind, to instruct others, than ten thousand in a language which they could not understand (1 Cor.14:19). He gives notice that it is only a temporary endowment, for it would *cease* (1 Cor.13:8). It is not included in the latest list, given in Ephesians (Eph.4:11). It is beyond question that the “gift of tongues” is the least adapted to maturity.

The testimony of the Scriptures is sufficient, and I am not adding what follows to confirm it. It may, however, be helpful to those who do not clearly see that this gift has ceased, and who appeal to its presence as a fact. I have lived for about a score of years at the very center of the tongues movement and have had ample opportunity to hear it exercised. I have listened most carefully, each time I have heard, in order to determine if the utterance had the characteristics of language. It never has. There is usually a tell-tale repetition of sounds, such as one who is imitating a foreign tongue would use, after a slight acquaintance with it. No one who has a knowledge of a variety of languages has any reason to suppose that the “gift of tongues” today is a real language at all.

We do not need to turn to Ephesians to prove that most of the gifts were temporary and unsuited to the present administration. That is the burden of first Corinthians. Not only does the thirteenth chapter definitely name some which were to be abrogated, or cease, but the twelfth chapter, in which they are cataloged, just as definitely labels them as expedients, or turns us from some of them to a path suited to transcendence (1 Cor.12:31). Is it not

remarkable that these two warnings, one before and one immediately following the lists of the gifts, should have been so insistently ignored or obliterated by mistranslation and misinterpretation, that the object of God's spiritual endowments has been actually reversed? Almost everywhere the believers are enticed back to babyhood instead of being built up into Christ.

It is commonly supposed that the thirteenth of first Corinthians contrasts our present experience with our future glory in resurrection. Now we are supposed to see in a glass darkly, but then face to face (1 Cor.13:12). Then we shall know as we are known. This popular and erroneous interpretation has practically robbed us of the true teaching of the chapter. The apostle is not comparing our experience in this life with that in the next. He is comparing the dispensation before it with that of the present. That was minority. This is maturity. Then matters were dimly seen which now are clear and plain. Now knowledge is not being doled out in installments. We have a full revelation since the secret has been revealed.

The fourth of Ephesians gives us the gifts for the present. The mere fact that most of the endowments listed in Corinthians are not repeated here does not prove that they are abrogated. That would not be sufficient ground for discarding them. We must intelligently consider what is said about them in Corinthians. We must recognize the fact that the time of maturity has come. Then we will see why it is that the lesser gifts cannot enter this era of transcendence. Then we will exult in their disappearance. We will thankfully take our place as mature men, and refuse even the appearance of immaturity.

APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

Of the five gifts which belong to this administration, three have continued and two are in the foundation. Apos-

tles and prophets were imperative needs for its inauguration. God's mind must be made known by His spokesmen, and it must be accompanied with all the authority of God's commissioner. Since Paul, the greatest of all the prophets and apostles of this administration, has made a permanent record of the new revelation in his epistles, these have served the purpose of prophets and apostles. *They remain with us, in spirit, in these writings.* The evidence for their absence among us is not merely the lack of accredited men, but the statement that these gifts are confined to the foundation (Eph.2:20). A prophet who could not add to Paul's epistles would be useless. All who have tried it have proven to be false.

EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, TEACHERS

God's gifts today are three in number: the evangelist to preach to the world, the pastor to care for the saints, and the teacher to edify the body of Christ. The great weakness in Christendom today lies in the attempt to combine all three in a single cleric, who must entertain and shepherd saint and sinner alike, who seldom is gifted in more than one way, and often in none. With a rising tide of spirituality there has usually followed a separation of these ministries. Evangelists leave all else for their message to the unbeliever, and teachers arise and conventions are held for the one purpose of edifying the saints. In seasons of spiritual refreshing these divine manifestations come to the front.

In these last days the special need is for teachers who are themselves mature and who can establish the saints by dispensing the grace which has come to them by the revelation of the secret. Alas! most of those who are giving religious instruction today are bringing their hearers into the bondage of law and ceremony, or occupying them with the affairs of minority, and are thus dragging the believers

down when they should be building them up. Here we have the divine test of the true teacher. Does he correspond to Ephesians 4:12-14? Is he adjusting, dispensing, upbuilding, unifying, giving the realization of sonship, maturity, and adulthood? These are the seven signs of the ideal teacher.

Most of the believers today need adjusting quite as much as those to whom Ephesians was addressed. Their doctrine and experience is limited to the teaching of our Lord while on earth, or his apostles in the book of Acts. Under the false impression that "the church began at Pentecost," they seek to utilize the varying presentations which follow it to determine their creed and practice. Others go further and seek to include some of the teachings of Paul's earlier epistles, notwithstanding the grave differences between the two. How few go to Paul's final presentations and modify even his previous ministries to accord with these transcendent truths! This is the task of the true teacher today. He must, first of all, be an adjuster.

He must also be a dispenser. Much of the teaching we hear fails to emphasize the grace of God and the gratuitous character of His gifts. He is not running a bargain counter or a commercial enterprise, but a free dispensary. Very few believers even know what He has for them. It is the duty of the teacher to put them into possession of their riches in Christ Jesus.

He must edify, or build up, the body of Christ. This is a vastly different matter from entertaining the members of a church or the adherents of a denomination. The teacher who merely recognizes the fact that there is a spiritual organism to which all believers belong, irrespective of creed or affiliation, is edifying or building up the body of Christ. The teacher who ignores it or displaces it by human organizations is demolishing the one body. He who discounts human associations, and presses upon the believers their place in that marvelous organism of which Christ

alone is Head, is a God-given gift, fulfilling the work of building up the body.

Many are the attempts which have been made to unite the saints. The true basis of such a unity is the one faith which we have today, which is set forth in this epistle. The cause of the divisions is the multiplicity of beliefs resulting from ignorance of this consummating revelation. If it were God's intention to make us all one before Christ comes again, He would probably call for teachers to make known the truths of this administration. This is a test of the ideal teacher. Does his message lead to the unity of all in Christ? Or does it divide the believers into classes? Especially, does it form a special, superior clique of all who heed his teaching? Let us remember that, if we all believed God we would be one in fact as we are in truth.

Sonship is a much higher thought than that conveyed by the figure of the new birth. Indeed, Paul leaves that illustration to the kingdom proclamation. He makes us a new creation, rather than a regeneration. Sonship is not necessarily based on birth. It may be obtained by adoption. It does not figure mere relationship, but the honors granted only to the heir when he comes of age, and is invested with the highest dignities which his father can bestow. It is vastly more to be a son of God than a child. A teacher in this administration should press this point, so that the saints may realize their sonship (Eph.4:13).

The crowning result of true teaching today has already been elaborated. It brings the believers to mature manhood, to the adult stature of Christ's complement (Eph. 4:13). This can be accomplished only by showing them the immature character of previous economies, and the fullness which is theirs in Christ in this transcendent administration. It is only as they realize that they have outgrown much that God once gave, and that, in Christ, they have attained their full stature, that they are fitted to stand steadfast in

the midst of the turmoil in which they find themselves. False teaching carries them about (Eph.4:14), the true establishes them in grace.

The phrase "systematizing of the deception" (Eph.4:14) is a most apt description of modern methods of maintaining error. Isolated departures from truth are difficult to promulgate. They must be worked up into a philosophic system in order to become popular. The great theologies are systematized to agree with their main position, which may be a half-truth. Many of the movements of the day which appeal to the Bible for support, have so systematized their deceptions that they appear to rest on divine revelation. They seem to have enough contacts in the Scriptures to give them the appearance of truth. However, the mature believer will not be deceived by them.

The path of transcendence is the way of love, as the apostle shows in the thirteenth of first Corinthians. So it is in Ephesians (4:15,16). It is further figured by the human frame, all parts of which are in loving sympathy with all the rest, through the head. Christ is Head of the body now, and the believers are its members. There is a vital union, which makes us one with Him and with every other member. All real growth and service in the church today has this for its basis. Its motive is love. Its impulse is from the Head. Its end is the upbuilding of the body.

In this meditation we have found that the revelation of the Ephesian secret was accompanied by the incoming of maturity. Minority prevailed before, even among the Pauline ecclesias. Hence many of the gifts are discarded and only a few enter this administration. Teachers are specially given to lead the believers into a realization of the fact that they have outgrown the immaturities of past eras, and are now mature in Christ. It is our privilege to tread the path of transcendence. May God grant that many who read these lines will enter that path in conscious appreciation of the privileges of their majority.

A. E. Knoch

THE NEW HUMANITY

THE saints of this secret economy are related in three different directions: Godward, Christward, and manward. If these are kept distinct it will add much to the clarity of our comprehension of this administration. We are now about to resume the consideration of these three aspects, but in the reverse order. A glance at the framework¹ of the Ephesian epistle will show that we have dealt with the three items of the mystery: first, our allotment in heaven, next, the body of Christ, then our participation with other believers. Following these there was a parenthetical interlude, consisting of two summaries and two petitions. Now we are about to take up the three aspects of the mystery again: first, “The New Humanity,” or non-participation with unbelievers, then “The Body in the Lord,” and lastly “The Heavenly Warfare.” As will be seen in the framework, we reverse the subjects of the first part of the epistle.

As this letter is the highest revelation in Holy Writ, the most difficult for our dull intellects to grasp, we should welcome every aid to its understanding. Next to a concordant rendering, the literary structure is calculated to keep us from the confusion so common among expositors. Some inject the thought of the one body everywhere, whereas it is confined to two corresponding sections (Eph. 1:20–2:10 and 5:21–6:9). It is especially bewildering when forced into the section dealing with the new humanity. Many utterly confuse the figures, and take “the new man” as merely another name for the body of Christ, to their great loss. It makes the language quite unintelligible, for the body

1. volume LIX, p.64; Concordant Commentary, p.288.

cannot be put on or taken off, as is the case with the two humanities. It robs Christ of one of His dignities, for He is not only the Head of the body, but He is also the Head of a new race, and displaces Adam in the new creation.

We implore our readers to note carefully the distinctions in these figures. To begin with, each dominates two entirely separate sections of this epistle. They are not mixed. The body is in those sections which deal with our relationship to *Christ* (1:20-2:10 and 5:21-6:9). The new humanity is found only in those sections which discuss our relationship to *mankind*, to saints (2:11-22) and to unbelievers (4:17-5:20). In one we are likened to the members of the human body. In the other we are compared to the individuals of a race. A human body and the human race are very different symbols. There is an old, as well as a new, and a young humanity. There is no old body, or new body, or young body. These thoughts are quite confusing, when thus misapplied. The Greek word *anthrōpos*, in the singular, may mean a human being of either sex, or it may denote mankind as a whole. Such is the case here.

In a previous chapter on the era preceding the present, we dealt with this subject from the doctrinal standpoint (Eph.2:11-22). We found that the physical distinctions of the old humanity, especially circumcision, have no place in this new era. We who once were far off are become near by the blood of Christ. The barrier which kept us out of God's presence, typified by the "soreg," or "middle wall of partition," the central wall of the temple enclosure, has been razed. The decrees formulated by the Jerusalem council, in which the Circumcision laid down the law for the Uncircumcision, are now abrogated. Jew and Gentile believers are now created into one new humanity. This does away with the previous enmity between them. Christ is our Peace. Through Him we both have access, in one spirit, to

the Father. This is the basis of the section now before us. The conduct which becomes this new race is our theme.

THE OLD HUMANITY

The old humanity has become so decayed that we are warned against wearing it any longer. This is the divine thought with regard to these two divisions of mankind. They are like two suits of clothes which may be donned at will. The "old humanity" is so worn out, disreputable, and filthy, that we are exhorted to put it off, and to put on the new (Eph.4:22,24). The only way of getting rid of the "old man" is to strip off every item of conduct which characterizes it. In Christ we are created a new humanity. In the Lord we are exhorted to conduct ourselves accordingly. The rejuvenation is in the spirit of our minds.

The old humanity is described for us in order that we may not conform to it in our conduct. We are told that the nations are walking in the vanity of their mind, their comprehension being darkened, having been estranged from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the callousness of their hearts, leading to wantonness and uncleanness (Eph.4:17-19). It is the old story, more fully set forth in the opening chapters of the Roman epistle. Mankind did not want to retain God in their knowledge, and the inevitable result is that its heart is darkened, men become vain in their reasonings and they sink into dishonorable and destructive sins.

The first charge is that their mind becomes vain. Many may rise to challenge this in the pride of present human scientific achievement. But if we judge human mental progress by actual results, we will confess that it has accomplished nothing satisfactory. It has utterly failed to solve the great elementary questions of human existence. It is surrounded by impenetrable veils. Not a single unbeliever, no matter how learned, can answer the simple question of

his own being. He does not know why he is or whither he is bound. He reasons in a circle, unable to find any goal. With all his intellectual brilliance he gets nowhere. All mentality that is not God-centered is useless and degrading in essence, no matter how fine its phraseology or how profound its philosophy.

Being ignorant of God, they are estranged from the life of God. There is a vital Power in the universe which can give men eternal youth and fulfill all the aspirations which stir their breasts. They are continually groping in this direction. How hard they try to suck satisfaction out of the husks they have! How vainly they seek to make the world, and the present life, a thing worth while! But they will not brook the interference of the Deity. They are alienated and at war with every force that emanates directly from Him. They are ignorant of His plans and of His purpose, and are seeking to carry out their own, which run counter to His. There is no ignorance so fatal as ignorance of God, no life so vain as that which is out of harmony with His heart.

As a man thinks in his heart, so is he. The mind is the key to conduct. It is not the direct suggestions of Satan which lead men into injurious excesses and debauchery. It is due rather to his indirect influence in leading them away from God. Out of the human heart, alienated from God, arise the ill-smelling and foul vapors of a decaying race.

HOW TO PUT ON THE NEW MAN

How are we to array ourselves in the new humanity? It will not do to make the exhortation of Ephesians (4:17-5:20) another law. We cannot work ourselves into a new humanity. The power lies in the gracious fact that we have been created anew. This must vitalize the spirit of our mind, before it can affect the conduct of our members. The power to strip off the old humanity and to don the new depends on our apprehension of the truth that Adam's offense and

the physical divisions and disabilities which our relationship to him entailed are gone in Christ. Adam is no longer the head of our race. His place has been taken by the last Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us then be renewed in the spirit of our minds. We are not called upon to conform to the earlier ethical standard of the law. It is far beneath this new sphere of conduct and in a lower key. Anger usually leads to sin. Yet there are times when it would be wrong not to be indignant. Such occasions call for especial care, for righteous indignation easily degenerates into wrongful anger and smouldering resentment, which would shatter the new humanity into antagonistic fragments like the old (Eph.4:26,27). There should be no grudges, no prolonged feuds, no continued vexation, no extended slander. Let no flare of indignation start a conflagration which must burn itself out.

Restitution, single, double, fourfold, or five-fold, is the righteous requirement of Sinai (Ex.22:1-15). This is far more just than the laws of the nations, for they lay almost all stress on the punishment of the thief, and very little on righting the wrong done to the victim. But grace goes far beyond justice or restoration. It is not enough for a thief to stop stealing and restore what he has stolen. That is merely corrective. In this new humanity sin is to be prevented. Those in need are to be provided for so that they will not steal. How ideal to have the erstwhile thief charged with the duty of sharing the fruits of his labor with the destitute! He who once stole now forestalls stealing.

Some day we may be able to trace the corruption of humanity in the degeneration of human language. Words, like their users, tend to descend the moral scale. It seems unreasonable to suppose that there would be tainted speech apart from the presence of sin. Here, again, we are not merely exhorted to shun the bad, but to cultivate the good.

No tainted word should issue from our mouths but there should be gracious words of edification (Eph.4:29).

The power that produces this fruit in the new humanity is the spirit of God. It is quite possible for us to fail to put on the new man, and do that which is displeasing to God. We may cause God to sorrow, by His spirit. This will react in us and cause doubt and distress. The question will arise, "Has His holy spirit left me?" The answer is supplied by comparing the spirit to a seal (Eph.4:30). It is a permanent pledge of final deliverance. Its presence is a practical guarantee that we will not be comfortable in the old humanity. It is an absolute assurance that we will be done with it forever in the future day of deliverance.

The old humanity bears bitter fruit. Its solidarity is shattered by antagonisms in all its divisions. Between nations and peoples this is most evident in time of war. What insane bitterness and fury and anger and clamor and calumny and malice is stirred in the hearts of belligerents! All this is absent in the new humanity. These destructive vices are replaced by constructive graces. Tender compassion, gracious dealing, should characterize our deportment in the new humanity. God's treatment of us, in Christ, is the standard set before us (Eph.4:32).

God Himself is the Example for our imitation (Eph.5:1). When we were sinners He gave Christ for us. When we were enemies He conciliated us to Himself through the death of His Son. As a pet child copies the ways of its father so should we imitate the loving acts of our God, in our contact with others. How much higher is this than the law! How far beyond the mere struggle for our own salvation! Nor is it only concerned with the happiness of others. It introduces us to the normal sphere of the highest of God's creatures, who should delight in Him and be His delight, who should manifest and magnify the depths of His affection.

The sacrifice of Christ has many aspects. The opening chapters of Leviticus deal with five of these. They fall into two classes, those concerned with sin and those which deal with nobler sides of His sacrificial work. The latter is of three kinds, the ascending offering, also called the "burnt offering," the present, or approach offering, also called the "meat offering" (Lev.2:1), and the peace offering (Lev.3:1). All of these are "oblations," which express the worship and homage of God's creatures even when sin does not sever them from Him. Christ was made sin for us on Golgotha. As such He suffered God's wrath. But He was also an odor of rest, a sweet smell, a delicious satisfaction. He gave Himself, not only for our sins, but as an Oblation, to win God's favor and delight (Eph.5:2).

Perhaps there is no more powerful deterrent from sin than a knowledge of this aspect of Christ's sacrifice. As the Sin and Trespass Offering He suffered for our sins, thus satisfying the demands of justice. But we are not mere neutrals, saved from indignation. He was our Approach Offering, or Present, which gives us access to the divine Presence. He was our Oblation, which secures to us God's favor when sin no longer bars our entrance. Let no one suppose that righteousness alone is sufficient to give access to God's presence. As with an earthly potentate, we must pave our way with costly gifts. Christ, as our Oblation, did this for us. Hence our walk should not merely lack sin, but should be fragrant with acts which transcend righteousness.

The gratification of the flesh, the filth of the flesh, and selfishness stand in marked antithesis to the exalted service and adoration offered to God by Christ in His sacrifice. Our conduct is not an imitation of His behavior during the years of His ministry to Israel. The Circumcision are exhorted to follow in His footsteps. We are to imitate God's grace in our dealing with others, and walk in love. The highest example of a course pleasing to God is

that aspect of Christ's sacrifice which was typified by the "burnt offering," or ascending offering. It was wholly for God, apart from all benefits to His creatures. In this day, this is deemed utterly useless. All work for God must be, first of all, philanthropic. It must benefit man. Such was not the first aim of our Lord. The act which brings the greatest good to humanity was, primarily, for God alone.

No consideration can convince me that there are any limits to God's grace. Sin is not its superior. Where sin increases grace superexceeds. But I deplore the perversity which makes this an excuse for sin. Grace is not a theological theory. It is a vital power. It is not in word only, but in deed. Let no one delude himself into the belief that it gives license to sin. It imparts power to overcome sin. I cannot acknowledge anyone to be His who talks of grace and lives in sin; however, God knows those who are His. God's indignation has been revealed against those who persist in offending Him. With grace comes light. We once were darkness, and could not keep from stumbling. Now we are light, and need not miss the way. Without in the least tarnishing the glory of grace we must insist that it bear fruit according to its kind, or it will degenerate into sentimental lenience.

God is Light as well as Love. We are the offspring of Light. In the natural realm there can be no fruit without light. In regions where daylight is lacking for half of the year, vegetation ceases to grow, and there is little life of any kind. In regions where the sun is always overhead there are luxuriant plants, dense jungles, and an abundance of animals. Darkness bears no fruit. It breeds disease. It hides evil. It decrees death. We belong to the realm of day; why, then, walk in the shade of night?

RECLAIMING THE ERA

It is evident to all that this is an era of futility. An appar-

ent gain in one direction is balanced by a loss in another. Men are riding a merry-go-round. They get nowhere. The same mirage looms up before them as in all previous eras, but it moves onward when it is approached. Some are not certain but that mankind is moving backward. We know that they are riding to a fall. The era of God's indignation is impending. Shall we participate in this futility? That would be most unwise. We are exhorted to reclaim it (Eph.5:16). God's purpose is being carried out in this era as in all others. Our wisdom is to fall in line with His plans, and avoid vain human devices for man's amelioration apart from God. The days are wicked. We cannot alter that. They will become more so, until Christ comes. But this very condition is fruitful soil for God's gracious activities. Business depression may cause spiritual prosperity. Human extremity is our opportunity.

UNDERSTANDING THE WILL OF THE LORD

The will of the Lord is the key to conduct. If we were to anticipate the bema of Christ, and investigate the lack of real efficiency in so-called Christian service, we would be astonished to find how little of it is in accord with the will of the Lord. A vast proportion of the efforts of God's servants is based on ignorance of His intention, and utter disregard of His administrations. Let no one imagine that such service will receive His approval, or that it will count in that day. The motive underneath it may be recognized and rewarded, but it is better to slave one hour in accord with His orders than to minister a whole lifetime disregarding His [commands]. Ignorant as we are of the process by which God's goal is to be gained, it is the utmost imprudence to ignore His mind in seeking to serve Him.

This section, concerned with our contacts with mankind, and the failure of humanity, closes with a glimpse of Utopia. The saints sing to themselves, give thanks to God for

all through Christ, and are subject to one another. What more would be needed for an ideal existence? We should be overflowing with happiness, glorifying God, and serving our fellows. If all men did this the problems of this era would be settled. But, alas, only the Spirit of God can occasion such a condition. Therefore, let us be filled with that Spirit, through God's Word, and, in some measure at least, we will realize the ideal of which men dream.

Some have supposed that instrumental music is not spiritual or scriptural. Some even go so far as to prefer discord to harmony. But that is not in accord with this passage. Psalms are not prose. Hymns are the highest expression of formal poetry. Songs must be measured and metered, or they are not sing-able. Misery may demand discord, but happiness must have harmony. If the instruments God has given us are unqualified or untrained, we may increase our satisfaction by artificial aid. Only, it must be from the heart. Well may we object to the abuse of instrumental music. When mind and heart are cold, it is futile to substitute a mere machine. God will not listen to it. But let us not insist on inflicting our dissonance on our fellow saints. That, alas, would quench the Spirit. Let us strive to utter our heartfelt happiness in words and notes harmonious to the sense and sound.

The operation of the Spirit in filling the believer may be most clearly traced when God graciously grants fresh light from His Word, such as is unfolded in these meditations. The heart overflows with joy and seeks expression for its new-found pleasure. The old songs fail to fully satisfy. New wine must have fresh wineskins. A theme suggests itself, which gives utterance to some phase of the truth. It develops into verse, and arranges itself into rhymes. But it should be sung! It must be music! So some notes are adapted to the thought, a movement emerges, the melody is made, and soon a song is sent forth to aid others to express their

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sentiments, and the surge of the spirit within them. Some of the numbers in “Scriptural Songs” have been the fruit of this investigation of Ephesians.

GIVING THANKS FOR ALL

The unbeliever gives thanks for nothing. The infant saint is grateful for good. The mature man of God gives thanks for all things, bad as well as good, for he realizes that all is of God, and is destined to contribute to His beneficent end, however unfortunate its present aspect may seem. A conviction of God’s deity, of His power to attain the goal He has set before Him, of His ability to use the evil as well as the good in His designs, of the great truth that He is operating the universe in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11), is of the utmost value in determining conduct and in harboring happiness. The saint who cannot take the ills of life from God’s hand with thankfulness has hardly begun the life of faith. Job had attained to this even before he was tested by his sufferings. No one who understands that the present grace is the result of the greatest misfortune this world has ever had—the rejection of Messiah by His people Israel—will fail to find in every failure another occasion for thanksgiving and for praise.

A. E. Knoch

ELWOOD WINTER

Elwood Winter found repose in the Lord on September 20, 2025 at the age of 94. On March 27, 1954 he married the former Pauline R. Schultz, and together they celebrated 70 years of marriage until her passing in January.

We first made our acquaintance with Elwood and his wife, at the Bible conferences held in different states. They were always so happy and rejoicing over the truth of the evangel. Elwood would often call the office with words of encouragement. We will surely miss him and Pauline but we have the wonderful expectation of meeting them in the air when our Lord returns.

DARNEL, FIRE, FURNACE, OUTER DARKNESS

OUTER DARKNESS, FURNACE OF FIRE

“Now I am saying to you that many from the east and the west shall be arriving and reclining with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens, yet the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth” (Matt.8:11,12).

“He also will be declaring: I am saying to you, I am not acquainted with you! Whence are you? Withdraw from me, all workers of unrighteousness! There will be lamentation and gnashing of teeth, whenever you should see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, yet you cast outside. And they will be arriving from east and west and from north and south and will be made to recline in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:27-29).

IN Matthew 8:11, Jesus says that individuals will come from the east and west to recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, highlighting the remarkable faith of the Roman Gentile centurion. In contrast to “east and west,” Luke 13:27-29 adds “north and south” and “all the prophets” when Jesus addresses the Israelite workers of unrighteousness as shown in the above quoted passage.

Luke, writing to the Gentile leader Theophilus (Luke 1:3, Acts 1:1), presents a slightly different narrative than Matthew’s account due to his audience. In Luke’s account, the scope broadens to include those arriving from the four corners of the earth to be seated with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob *and all the prophets*. However, the fate of the sons of the kingdom remains the same in both accounts: they will be cast out into outer darkness, a realm of severe hardship.

“Outer darkness” is a figure of speech. The kingdom of the heavens, which Christ will set up in Israel will be the antithesis of the realm of outer darkness. The workers of unrighteousness are to be cast out of Israel to live among the kid nations (*cf* Matt.25:32). Such nations are to experience divine discipline of “the fire made ready for the adversary class and its messengers” (*cf* Matt.25:41), also known as *eonian chastening* (Matt.25:46). Jesus stated in Matthew 8:12, “the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness.”

IS “OUTER DARKNESS” “ETERNAL SPIRITUAL SEPARATION FROM GOD”?

Many theological works explore the concept of “outer darkness.” Such works do not normally interpret this phrase to be concerned with countries or regions, but rather an “eternal spiritual separation from God.” However, Jesus is speaking concerning those *in* Israel, who are lawless, who are to be culled *out of the kingdom of Israel, which kingdom is Christ’s*: “The Son of Humanity shall be dispatching His messengers, and they shall be *culling out of His kingdom* all the snares and those doing lawlessness” (Matt. 13:41). When Christ *cast out* demons, He did not leave the demons inside the person and somehow spiritually separate the demon from the spiritual side of the individual. When Christ *cast out* of the temple all those selling and buying (Matt.21:12), He did not let them remain inside the temple by merely spiritually separating them from the others in the temple. This being the pattern, Christ, upon culling the lawless *out* of His kingdom, would not allow them to remain *in* the kingdom in some sort of sequestered living condition. Rather, they are expelled by force out of Israel into countries figuratively called “a furnace of fire,” which is also, “outer darkness.” The *outer darkness* represents the countries of the kid nations which are, of course, out-

side of Christ's kingdom. These lawless ones surely would not be deported to the sheep nations who receive life pertaining to the eon which will be emanating from Christ's kingdom. Any residency in Israel is disallowed them.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "SNARES"?

What are the snares Jesus alluded to in Matthew 13:41 which His messengers must cull out of Israel upon His arrival? A good usage of "snare" is to be found in the dialogue between Peter and the Lord: "And taking Him to him, Peter begins to be rebuking Him, saying, 'Propitious be it to You, Lord! By no means shall this be for You!' Now being turned, He says to Peter, 'Go away behind Me, satan! A snare are you to Me, for you are not setting your mind on that which is of God, but that which is of humans'" (Matt. 16:22,23). Peter unwittingly was trying to snare Jesus. The Greek word for "snare" is *skandalon*. In the **KEYWORD CONCORDANCE** snare is defined as "a means of tripping or a cause of falling." Peter was trying to cause Jesus to fall away from the goal He was listening to which His Father had given Him to do. The snaring ones whom the messengers will cull out of Israel are the ones who, if they remain in Israel, will cause Israelites to stumble or fall from what Christ will achieve while He is ruling in Israel.

"Even as the darnel, then, are being culled and burned up with fire, thus shall it be in the conclusion of the eon. The Son of Humanity shall be dispatching His messengers, and they shall be culling out of His kingdom all the snares and those doing lawlessness, and they shall be *casting them into a furnace of fire*. There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth" (Matt.13:40-42).

"And they shall be *casting them into a furnace of fire*. There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth" (Matt.13:50).

THREATENINGS DO NOT CHANGE
THEIR INCALCITRANT HEARTS

The evil hearts of these lawless ones make them impervious to the threatenings Jesus levels against them. Those threatenings such as: “furnace of fire,” or being “cast into outer darkness,” or “lamentation and gnashing of teeth,” could not change their hearts. Most likely these intransigent evil ones mocked and jeered Him when threatened. Why? Because their origin is not “ideal seed” (Matt.13:24), sown by the Son of Mankind (Matt.13:37). Rather, their origin was that of “the enemy . . . the Adversary” who sowed them as figurative darnel (v.25). Jesus told them their father was the Adversary: “Wherefore do you not know My speech? Seeing that you can not hear My word. You are of your father, the Adversary, and the desires of your father you are wanting to do. He was a human-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. Yet I—seeing that I am speaking the truth, you are not believing Me. Who of you is exposing Me concerning sin? If I am telling the truth, wherefore are you not believing Me? He who is of God is hearing God’s declarations. Therefore you are not hearing, seeing that you are not of God” (John 8:43-47). They were the seed planted by the Adversary. It is impossible for darnel to produce good fruit. Likewise, these ones sown by the enemy, the Adversary, imitate the character of the Adversary who sows them. Such ones must be culled and figuratively burned in a furnace of fire. They must be driven away to what is termed “outer darkness” in order to keep the righteous seed pure within Israel.

In the above parable of the darnel, we have fire used literally as well as figuratively. The farmers in Israel would cull the darnel and then destroy it with literal fire. The fig-

ure “furnace of fire” into which these lawless ones are to be cast represents a literal condition of living under hardship meted out by the iron club of Jesus.

DARNEL, SEED OF THE WICKED ONE
GRAIN, THE IDEAL SEED

The darnel plant in Israel resembles wheat¹ in its *early* stages prior to its fruiting stage. Distinguishing the difference in the early plant growth of the two plants is difficult. Darnel is considered a weed. It is poisonous to humans and livestock. Jesus rightly uses a toxic plant, such as darnel, to describe the seed (unrighteous ones) planted by the Adversary. *Once both the grain (wheat), which represents the righteous ones of the kingdom and the darnel, which represents the sons of the wicked one, mature, it is then* that the reapers can tell the difference in order to cull the darnel and then dispose of it properly by fire. This is why Jesus said: “Now, *when* the blade germinates and produces fruit, **then** appears also the darnel” (Matt.13:26). Therefore, once the wheat and darnel produce fruit, the difference of the fruited grain between the two plants is distinctively different and it is then seen for what it is and the darnel can be properly culled.

Just as the two plants are indistinguishable until their fruit appears, thus also the “sons of the wicked one” in Israel will be indistinguishable from the “ideal seed,” i.e., the righteous ones, *until* they both begin bearing fruit—the one group bears unrighteous fruit (the snares and doing lawlessness) and the other group produces righteous fruit. It is then that the harvest occurs. This understanding enables the messengers to distinguish between the

1. It is taken for granted that “wheat” is the grain Jesus spoke of when He used the word *siton* (grain), in Matthew 13:29 since darnel is so similar to wheat prior to bearing fruit.

two groups in order to harvest them. The darnel group is figuratively cast into a furnace of fire which is literally eonian chastening. In other words, to reiterate, they are cast out of Israel to live among the kid nations who are under duress by the chastening eonian during the thousand years. This culling ensues at the conclusion of our current wicked eon (Matt.13:39).

Lawless ones who were formerly in Israel will exist in the figurative fire prepared for the adversary class and its messengers. The furnace and fire, though figurative, are representative of something very literal. Such ones will undergo harsh living conditions during the thousand years.

THE FURNACE OF FIRE

“The Son of Humanity shall be dispatching His messengers, and they shall be culling out of His kingdom all the snares and those doing lawlessness, and they shall be casting them into a furnace of fire. There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth” (Matt.13:41-42).

The phrase “culling *out* of His kingdom” tells us the snaring ones and lawless ones are *rounded up inside Israel* which is “in his own field” and then *cast out of Israel* into a figurative *furnace of fire*. Just as Egypt was once an iron furnace when the Israelites were held captive there four-hundred some years, now, once again, these people must enter the furnace to be tried as if by fire for one thousand years. These lawless ones will not be cast into the sheep nations. If that were the case, they would receive all the blessings of eonian life of those nations. Being *cast out* of Israel, the only place they can live is among the kid nations who are under a curse of eonian chastening. This is the figurative fire prepared for them and their emissaries. There they will lament and gnash their teeth.

EGYPT WAS AN IRON CRUCIBLE OR FURNACE

According to some theologians, the furnace of fire

spoken of in Matthew is “Hell” and is eternal. What about Egypt being an iron furnace² (“crucible” in CVOT)? Was Egypt “Hell” and were the figurative fires in that iron furnace eternal? Surely, the throngs Christ spoke to would know what He meant when He used the term, “iron furnace.” Unless one was a Pharisee or an ardent learner of their traditions, the phrase surely did not, in their minds, conjure up some sort of Dantean Hell with eternal torment in fire.

“for they are Your people and Your allotment whom You brought forth from Egypt, from the midst of *the iron crucible*²” (1 Kings 8:51).

“... In the day I brought them forth from the land of Egypt, from *the iron crucible*², ...” (Jer.11:4).

Yahweh put the sons of Israel, small in number, in the iron crucible and later brought them out, great in number to be His people. Was the entire land of Egypt literally an iron furnace? Was all of Egypt literally on fire? No. The iron furnace is representative of the slavery and hardships Israel endured while in Egypt.

In the future, at the return of Jesus, all of the representatives of the nations are brought before Him to be judged as to how they treated His brethren during their great tribulation. They are divided into two groups, the kid nations and the sheep nations. Just as Egypt was a figurative iron furnace which held Israel, the kid nations will enter the figurative furnace of fire. This will make more sense as we go along. The kid nations in that future judgment are separated from the sheep nations due to how they treated Jesus’s brethren which caused His brethren’s great tribulation. In our day all member nations meet at the building in

2. iron furnace: for “furnace” Matthew 13:42 has Greek: *kaminos*. LXX has *kaminos* for Deut.4:20; 1 Kings 8:51; Jer.11:4 and Ezk. 22:20. Hebrew has *kûr* H3564, *pot* or *furnace*. Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries.

New York called The United Nations Headquarters. Representatives there of each member nation attend to represent their nation. In the judgment of the kid and sheep nations, every nation will send representatives and Jesus will stand them on His left and right. Just as the *kids* and *sheep* are figurative, thus also is “the fire” the cursed kid nations must endure.

Then shall He be declaring to those also at His left: ‘Go° from Me, you °cursed°, into the fire °eonian, °made °ready° for the adversary class and its messengers’³ (Matt. 25:41, revised CVNT).

If this fire the nations enter into is the fire prepared for “the devil and his angels” as so many translations wrongly state, or even “the Adversary and his messengers,” which likewise makes one think it is Satan and his messengers or angels, then these nations must go into the lake of fire at the beginning of the thousand years in which they will enter unconscious death rather than chastening eonian. This is so if the lake of fire and sulphur really was prepared solely for the Adversary, i.e., Satan and his demons. Why does it not say “the fire prepared for the wild beast and false prophet”? Or why does Matthew 25:41 not say “the fire prepared for all those not found written in the scroll of life”? There is not one verse in all the Bible informing us “the devil and his angels will be cast into fire.” We are told the Adversary will be cast into the lake of fire and sulphur a thousand years after this judgment. However, no mention is made of “his angels” being cast in with him. This is the only fire the devil, a.k.a. “Satan,” i.e., “the Adversary,” goes into after being released from his jail

3. “Editor’s note: Although the present CV uses ‘Adversary’ with a capital ‘A’ in Matthew 25:41, A. E. Knoch’s suggestion that the passage refers to the ‘adversary *class of nations*’ and its messengers has much merit and should be considered in future editions of the Version” (Dean Hough, footnote, vol.89, p.153).

of the abyss (*cf* Rev.20:7), at the *ending* of the thousand year eon. A. E. Knoch, in past Unsearchable Riches magazines, has stated the judgment for humans at the Great White Throne Judgment occurs one thousand years *after* this judgment of these nations. The fire of the lake of fire burning with sulphur is a literal fire. However, the fire the nations enter into is a figurative fire which represents a literal chastening eonian (Matt.25:46). Being a figurative fire, it is representative of the very harsh living conditions the kid nations will endure during Christ's thousand-year reign. For humans, the lake of fire is death. This being the case, if these nations enter into death, how is it possible for them to enter eonian chastening which is chastening for one thousand years? Also, how does a nation, such as Iran or the United States, enter the second death? Is it possible for an entire nation to not be written in the Lamb's scroll of life? Of course anything is possible. But improbable for a *nation* to be cast therein.

This judgment of Matthew 25:31-46, which occurs at the beginning of Christ's thousand-year reign, cannot be the great white throne judgment, nor are the kid nations cast into the lake of fire at the beginning of the thousand years. If that were the case, such nations would cease to exist and Christ would not rule over them with a rod of iron (*cp* Rev.2:27) for a thousand years. For humans the great white throne judgment takes place when the thousand years are finishing (not fully finished). Only the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire and sulphur prior to Christ's millennial reign. The Adversary is bound and locked up in the abyss (not the lake of fire) for a thousand years. *It is only as the thousand years are in the process of finishing* that he is loosed out of the abyss to deceive the nations (*cf* Rev.20:7), and then, prior to the final eon, he is cast into the lake of fire and sulphur. This Adversary is not the adversary nation spoken of in Matthew 25:41.

The adversary nation is not locked up in the abyss at the beginning of Christ's thousand-year reign.

Another important point to make is this: If the "furnace of fire" the nations are to endure and the unrighteous and snares of Israel are to enter is the lake of fire, this would result in the death of those nations. In such a case who would be left of the kid nations for Satan, when loosed from his jail, to deceive of the nations in order to come against the holy citadel according to Revelation 20:9? Fire from God will, in that future day descend to devour them. Is Satan somehow going to resurrect these nations out of the second death in order to lead the revolt? If so, the inhabitants of the second death would have to be vivified beyond the reach of death and so the fire descending from God would have no effect upon them.

When Jesus tells the kid nations to "go from Me," He means those nations are to leave the realm of His blessings within Israel and enter the realm of the curse of chastening outside Israel. Rather than be ruled by Christ with the protective Shepherd's staff or crook, they will be ruled by with a club of iron.

"Ask of Me, and I shall give the nations as Your allotment, and as Your holding, the limits of the earth. You shall smash them with a club of iron; like a vessel of a potter, You shall shatter them" (Psa.2:8-9).

The sheep nations, who most likely suffered greatly for resisting the demands of the man of lawlessness, beast and false prophet, and resisting the demands of the adversarial kid nation(s) who sent out couriers with letters to persecute Christ's brethren, will now enter into the realm of life emanating from Christ's glorious millennial reign. They will be guided and protected with His staff. He will repay their sufferings with great blessings.

Tony Nungesser

The Problem of Evil

and

the Judgments of God

How can we explain the presence of evil? Is there a purpose for evil, and will it come to an end? Can there be two independent opposing forces in the universe? If God alone is supreme, what is the purpose of judgment? Surely there are answers to these troubling questions in the Word of God.

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Unsearchable Riches

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS WORD

Our 116th Year

(1909–2025)

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EDITORIAL

IN the August 1916 issue of *Unsearchable Riches* (vol.7, pages 266-268) A. E. Knoch writes: "The faith of Christ is brought before us in the otherwise enigmatical statement 'from faith *into* faith.' There are two faiths in view. The latter is our faith; the former is Christ's. Justification is founded on His faith; it is conferred on our faith. Abraham was [reckoned]¹ righteous for his faith; Christ makes all men righteous because of His faith. Hence we find the statement (which is so often referred to us who believe) 'the Just One shall live by His faith,' . . . His faith is the foundation upon which God will finally justify all mankind (Rom.5:18)."

Forty-two years later A. E. Knoch wrote in the November 1958 issue of this magazine (vol.49, p.252): ". . . we may look beyond the picture presented by Abraham and Isaac, to the *Inaugurator and Perfecter* of faith, Who, for the joy lying before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of God (Heb.12:2). Isaac was only a type, a dim shadow of the One Whose faith led Him to descend from the highest heights of glory to the lowest depths of shame, and has called us to share the fruits of His faith, by blessing us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials (Eph.1:3)."

There is a grand harmony between these two meditations and the translations suggested. Of course I am prejudiced, for I was taught from my youth that all blessing are based on the *faith of Jesus Christ*. So many of my teachers made it clear to

1. A.E.K used the verb "constituted" here, but Romans 4:3, citing Genesis 15:6, uses the verb "reckoned" ("counted" in the AV). The verb "constituted" is fitting in Romans 5:19 where, not only Abraham, but all humans are in view.

me, that in A. E. Knoch's words, "[Christ] believed God even when He smote Him for our sins. It is out of His faith for our faith (Rom.1:17)."²

Yet especially in his earlier writings, A.E.K. seems to have backed away from his comments of 1916 concerning Christ's faith by taking Romans 1:17 as a reference to our faith only, as apparently taught by Martin Luther. This was a loss, which very much needs to be corrected. It is important, accordingly, that the "out of faith" in Romans 1:17 be seen as referring to the Righteous One's ("Just One's") faith in the revised Concordant Version. So also in Galatians 3:11 and Hebrews 10:38, the faith of the Righteous One is in view as the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith.

In the meantime it is important whenever we read or hear the words "justified by faith" that we mentally take it to speak of Jesus Christ's faith, as it does in the CV of Romans 3:22.

The same is true of the term *obedience*, which has practically lost its sense of *submissive hearing*. Christ listened fully and exactly to the instruction He heard from His God and Father, so that what He did was in perfect accord with what He heard. We need to listen to the *revelation* of what Christ's listening achieves, despite our desire to have some credit in this achievement of Christ's. Accordingly, in a few cases, we have changed the words built on the verb *obey* to words built on the verb *listen* in the first article in this issue.

A. E. Knoch's final articles in his early studies on Ephesians follow, one on our celestial conflict and the other on Paul's imprisonment in this period of God's conciliation. My own thoughts on the opening chapters of Romans are then repeated.

We close with Tony Nungesser's timely reminder that God's blessings do not come out of judgments, but rather out of the cross of Christ.

D.H.H.

2. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY on Romans 3:22, p.233.

THE JOINT BODY—IN THE LORD

WE are now to consider the more intimate relationships of life, husband and wife, parent and child, master and slave. The figure of a new humanity is not an adequate basis for conduct in these contacts. If the “church” were the “bride of Christ” today, as is sometimes supposed, then this would furnish an excellent ground of exhortation for the marriage bond. But, as Christ, in His official capacity, our Lord has no bride or wife, and the bride of the Lambkin is Israel, the Circumcision. Therefore, nothing could be more fitting than that the close communion of these relationships should be governed by that most intimate and precious of all spiritual ties, the joint body of Christ. Membership in that body is the clue to conduct toward those near to us and dear to us (Eph.5:21-6:9).

“In Christ” there are no physical relationships. “In the Lord” these are recognized and controlled. In Christ the master and the slave, the mature and the minor, the male and the female, disappear. The master is subject to the Lord, the slave is free in spirit. The aged father is in his prime and the youth is fully matured. Sex is not recognized. None of these physical distinctions disturb the absolute equality of every participant in the spiritual unity. But let us not abuse this precious truth by applying it outside the spiritual sphere.¹ Let us not infer that when a slave believed, he became a freeman. That would have caused untold trouble. A believing child is not freed from the authority of its parents. On the contrary, it is more obliged to listen. The act of faith does not make a female mascu-

1. Nevertheless Paul is entreating those in Christ (not humans in general) as to *their* conduct in the Lord. D.H.H.

line, and give her the place of a man and a husband. She is still to be subject. Our place in Christ does not set aside subjection in the Lord.²

These simple facts are of surpassing importance in a day when all subjection is derided and when faith in God's actual utterance is largely superseded by inference from His words on a different subject. Both socially and theologically the tendency is away from the wholesome [entreaties] which are given us for our guidance in Paul's latest epistles. Independence, rather than subjection, is set before us as the ideal. As a result we see insubordination everywhere. The employee seeks to control the employer's affairs, and business is obstructed. The child scoffs at parental monitions, [disregards] without a qualm, and reaps a harvest of dissipation and crime. Marriage is no longer a bond, but an experiment, and brings the blight of divorce and parentless children, and moral corruption. This one sentence would solve most of our social evils: *Be subject*.

We are not only "in *Christ*," but "in the *Lord*." We are not capable of reasoning out the conduct which befits a saint from our position in Christ. This is done for us by relating us to Him as our Lord, and by giving us specific guidance to suit each sphere in which we may be found. Let us note that we are not referred to the law, which was given to govern the flesh before. Our physical affairs are not to be regulated in accord with that administration. They are to accord with the transcendent truths of our spiritual state. The prime ingredients of that revelation—love, grace, spirit—are to be mingled with our conduct toward our relatives, and should control the mutual attitude of master and slave. Let us acknowledge the lordship of Christ. It will be especially pleasing in these days

2. Nor does our subjection in the Lord set aside our place in Christ. D.H.H.

when subjection is derided as a weakness, and despised as if it were a crime.

As Christ is our Lord, or Master, there is a clear parallel to enforce obedience to masters in the flesh. Since slavery scarcely exists, these exhortations may be appropriated, in measure at least, by those who serve though not bound. In fact, much as we may abhor slavery, the ownership of one human being by another, there is not so great a gulf between it and other forms of service. Now our employers buy our time, our effort. They pay for a fraction of our life. It is a form of limited bondage, which absolutely [entreats] subjection, no less than slavery. Hence we are to conform the quality of this subjection to that which we render our spiritual Lord. "Fear and trembling . . . singleness of heart . . . not with eye-slavery, as man-pleasers . . . with good humor . . ." (Eph.6:5-8). How gladly will employers accept such service! How well it would be if servants would give it! There would be no loss of self-respect, as men vainly imagine.

He who is in service must serve. Not merely to hold his position or to increase his pay, but because of his similar relationship to Christ, he should *obey*, with fear and trembling. That is the normal, the appropriate posture of the creature. God is the only One Who should not obey. Christ obeys Him. We obey our Lord. Our obedience to masters in the flesh is only a miniature of these higher relationships, and is intended to teach us the absolute sovereignty of the Deity. It is no disgrace. Let us always remember that we serve the Lord Christ, in serving others, and the quality of our service will rise to the heights that no mortal man can inspire. Let us wear His livery, and the most menial task will assume a robe of royal dignity.

In these democratic days we work for wages and measure our hire by the amount of material for which we are able to exchange it. Few feel that they are properly re-

quited. How many would refuse a raise in salary? Happy are those who can look beyond their paychecks to the Lord they serve, with the confident expectation that their good will be requited! They may not be appreciated now. They will probably serve better than their wages require. Let them rest in perfect assurance that all they do will receive its just compensation, not necessarily from their earthly master in this era, but from their heavenly Lord, when He reviews the lives of all His slaves and awards to each his just deserts. Then shall all have praise from God, for all of His, in some measure, will merit His approval.

Masters also must make their heavenly Master a pattern of their part. Though they seem to have a high place, they are themselves but underlings. The subjection which they demand from those beneath them is due to Him Who is their Lord. Let them not imagine for a moment that they are supreme. Let them not abuse the power placed in their hands. Let them be gracious as they themselves desire the favor of their Overlord. One thing especially is debarred, and that is threatening. It is utterly at variance with the spirit of this economy. God prays and pleads, but He does not threaten. This is the resort of the weakling who is not fit to be trusted with power. Our Lord does not threaten us. There is a requital for the good slave, but no threat for a bad one (Eph.6:9).

It is sometimes supposed that these last days are the only ones in which children do not mind their parents. There is no doubt that it has gone to extremes never known before, but the mere fact that the Spirit of God found it necessary to pen an exhortation to this effect shows the universality of the sin. Apart altogether from the spiritual appeal which the apostle makes, it is evident that the place of immature offspring is subjection. Age should teach wisdom, and experience understanding. These are sorely needed in a world so full of pitfalls and of walking in darkness. Yet the great-

est lesson they should learn, the most important that parents should impart, is that obedience is *in the Lord*. The father has a right to demand it because he has authority from the Lord. If he is not himself obedient to his Master, that authority is weakened and invalidated.

The law was full of prohibitions. A welcome contrast is the promise to the fifth precept (Ex.20:12). The first to the third are negative. Thou *shalt not* have other gods before Me. Thou *shalt not* make any graven image. Thou *shalt not* take the name of Yahweh thy God in vain. The fourth is positive as well as negative. Remember the sabbath day . . . Six days shalt thou labor . . . but the seventh is the sabbath . . . thou *shalt not* do any work The fifth is the first and only one without a prohibition and with a promise attached: Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou *shalt not* . . . Thou *shalt not* . . . Thou *shalt not* . . . Thou *shalt not* Thou *shalt not*

We are not under law, but under grace. Does this mean that we are free to murder?³ By no means!³ Does it mean that the benefits accruing from obedience to its precepts will be withheld from us? Far from it! Those under law were in a state of minority and tutelage, corresponding very closely to the condition of our children according to the flesh. The rules and regulations for such a state are given in the law, and cannot be improved upon. If obedience to parents obtained a physical reward under the law, it will operate just as well under grace. Indeed, this precept comes nearer the administration of grace than any other, as indeed, it ought to do. If the present tide of disobedience could be stemmed, there is no more potent power to effect it than this simple word: "*Honor your father and mother, that it may be well with you!*"

3. See the endnote, p.156.

This may seem a selfish appeal. But what stronger motive exists in the breasts of the immature? Now selfishness finds an outlet in a feverish pursuit for present pleasure or insane seeking for sordid gain.

Again, as with the masters, fathers are enjoined from taking undue advantage of the position which is theirs from the Lord. A little brief authority is a temptation to most men. To use power with moderation, to temper it with kindness, is the mark of true nobility. Parental authority should always be just, never manifestly high-handed, never vexatious, never the result of capricious tyranny rather than wise lenience. In this passage the father's true place is indicated. The discipline and admonition of his children is in his hands. God will hold him accountable, even if he shirks his duty.

THE SUBJECTION OF WIVES

The fact that God's Spirit has indited two precepts for the regulation of the wedded state of His saints is sufficient to give us the key to the present deplorable condition. The family seems to be dying out. The whole social structure seems doomed to destruction. The crusade for women's rights seems to have caused a crop of women's wrongs. Men and women are hunting for happiness along illicit lines. They boldly refuse to use a marriage ceremony which embodies God's declarations of the relations of husband and wife. Women will not obey their husbands. To merely mention such a thing is deemed an insult to the sex. The story of Eden is said to be a myth; no intelligent person dares to accept it today. But the fact remains that the law is graven deep in the human constitution, and its infringement has wrought havoc. The emancipation of woman has made her a miserable slave. Her true happiness lies in subjection, not merely to her husband, but to

God, Who has given her this place, not in anger, but in wisdom and love.

In Eden's garden Eve took the initiative, and without according Adam a place in her counsels, took of the forbidden fruit and gave to him. In the judgment scene that follows every sentence is in exact accord with the nature of the sin. She had been insubordinate. She had scorned the command of God, "You shall not eat" (Gen.2:17). She had been lured by the evil one, and she had involved Adam in her offense. He did not transgress of himself. He was not deluded. His love for Eve alone involved him in the trespass. Hence the sentence: "He shall dominate over you" (Gen.3:16). Eve's daughters may do as Eve did, and listen to the lure of evil, and refuse to serve the sentence God has imposed. But, like all of God's laws, its infringement is fraught with inescapable retribution.

Every condition has its compensations. Many an emancipated slave has wished for the good old days when he had no cares, no responsibilities. His food and shelter were secure. The future did not worry him. His master did his worrying. Subjection is not an unmitigated evil. Ideally, it provides a safe, sheltered existence, which relieves him of many of the austerities of life. As a matter of fact subjection is the normal sphere of the creature. If he is not intelligently obedient to the Creator he must be subordinate to his environment, the physical elements or the social institutions. Lawlessness is always foolish and hurtful. There can be no comfort or happiness without subjection of some sort. God's laws are immutable. He has decreed that subjection shall be one side of the marriage bond. And who shall question the wisdom and the benefit of His arrangement?

In this connection we are given a hint which clears away much confusion. It is common to connect the headship of Christ to the figure of the one body. We are asked to

believe that none of the saints, as members of this body, are in the head, for that is reserved for Christ. The functions figured by the eyes, the ears, and the nose belong alone to Him. Since these are distinctly attributed to the members by the apostle in writing to the Corinthians, it is supposed that Christ has two bodies, notwithstanding the emphatic assertion to the contrary. That Christ is not a separate member of the body, even the head, ought to be evident, for the whole is His body. His headship is a distinct figure. It is over the whole body, including the head. All is clear when we read that "the husband is the head of the wife *even as* Christ is Head of the ecclesia." The wife, though subject, is not without a head of her own. The husband's is not her physical head. There is only one body of Christ in which some of the members are in the head and some in the feet, but now, in the joint body, all are of equal rank.

Love is the greatest thing in the universe, and it should find its fullest expression in the affection of a husband for his wife. A man is not charged to be her head, but to exercise his heart on her behalf (Eph.5:25-31), "Husbands, be loving your wives, according as Christ also loves the ecclesia . . ." How tempting, here, to introduce the figure of the bride! How simple it would be! Yahweh does love Israel as a bridegroom his bride, and were we members of that nation, such an exhortation would be most apt. But we are not the wife of Yahweh or the bride of the Lambkin. We are the body of Christ. A man's own body is the figure of this relationship. Therefore, the apostle interjects the argument that husband and wife are one flesh. "Husbands ought to be loving their own wives as *their own bodies*. He who is loving his own wife is loving *himself*. For no one at any time hates *his own flesh*, but is nourishing and cherishing it, according as Christ also the ecclesia, for *we are members of His body*" (Eph.5:28-30).

THE SECRET OF MARRIAGE

If we were “the bride of Christ” there would be no necessity for bringing in the secret of marriage, in order to prove that the two are one flesh, and so, in a sense the wife is the husband’s own body, thus forming a parallel with the relation of Christ to the ecclesia. All the members of His body are one *spirit* in Christ. The husband and the wife are one *flesh*. As Christ loves the ecclesia, His own body, so should the husband love his wife, not as such, but as *his own* flesh. This is based on the facts of creation, as recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis. Adam and Eve actually were one flesh at first.

“Male and female He creates them” (Gen.1:27) is the brief statement of the first record of man’s creation. In the fuller account that follows we find that Adam was created bisexual. God did not build Eve out of a “rib.” Out of more than forty occurrences *tzlo* is never rendered *rib* elsewhere. It is called a *beam*, a *board*, a *chamber*, a *corner*, a *leaf*, a *plank*, a *side*, and a *side chamber*. When we see that the leading idea is a *vault*, or *cell*, the creation of Eve may be intelligently understood. The female “angular [organ]” (Gen.2:22) was taken from him, as the basis for another individual. Man lacks no ribs, but he does lack the female functions which were incorporated into the body of Adam before the separation of Eve. It now takes two individuals to make a complete human being, as God created him. Hence in marriage, each is but part of a human, as to flesh, and, together, they are but one. This is the secret on which Paul bases his exhortation.

We may, with delightful delectation, dwell upon the fact that no man ever hated his own flesh. No exhortation is needed there. It is instinctive, inevitable. *So is Christ’s love for us*. We are joined by bonds unbreakable. In loving us, He loves Himself. We need not implore Him to favor us, nor must we merit His affection. Within our own

breasts we have a continual reminder of the love of God's Anointed for the members of His body. We do not ask our members to earn our regard. Indeed, if an arm is hurt, we give it added concern. If a foot is lame, we do not discard it, but favor it all the more. So is the love of Christ. Let us not imagine that our weakness, our unworthiness, will make Him weary of us. That can never be. A man may weary of his wife, a woman of the child she bears, but Christ will never cease to love the most unworthy member of that celestial company who come to Him in the day of His rejection, before the time of His return.

A. E. Knoch

ENDNOTE

I believe Brother Knoch would have commented on the last three chapters of Ephesians in his later years quite differently at certain points than he does in these early meditations. He would not use the verbs "demand" or "command" where Paul uses the verb "entreat," and he would not suggest a separation of what we are "in Christ" from our present position "in the Lord," where Paul connects them by the conjunction "then" (Eph.4:1) which indicates a conclusion to what is said in the first three chapters. Here on page 151 where he brings in Romans 6:14 (quite appropriately) he would not refer to the sin of murder in terms of law, but would instead direct attention to our conduct in our human relationships in terms of grace, as grace is presented to us in Ephesians chapters 1-3.

Perhaps most relevant to Ephesians chapters 4-6 is the grace brought forward in Ephesians 2:4-8, first the transcendent riches of God's grace and then the grace of our salvation which is through Christ Jesus's faith.

Although there is no evidence that Brother Knoch saw the "through faith" in 2:8 as "through *Christ's* faith," as in the CV of Romans 3:22 ("through Jesus Christ's faith"), his testimony in the November 1958 issue of Unsearchable Riches, as cited in my editorial, concerning Christ's faith points us in that direction. The bottom line is: What did Paul say on the matter of grace and its authority over us in our conduct? Is not grace an authority of God's power far more vibrant than law (*cf* Rom.1:16)?

D.H.H.

THE CELESTIAL CONFLICT

STAND! This is the thrice repeated watchword for those who occupy the celestial allotment which is ours in Christ Jesus (Eph.6:10-17; 1:3-14). In case of attack by the cohorts of the heavenly hosts, *withstand!* (Eph.6:13). God has granted us an allotment among the celestials. It is only as we tenant the tract entrusted to us that we have a place to stand. It is only when we hold this ground that the enemy will seek to dislodge us. Then alone will there be warfare. This is not the rest we have at God's right hand, neither is it a war of aggression. Those who find the faith of Ephesians will have to fight to hold the ground they have gained. There are unseen strategists who will seek to dispossess them. There are powers of darkness who will assault their position and drive them from it.

When Israel was in the wilderness, *Forward!* was their watchword. The wilderness warfare, however, was, in a sense unnecessary. It was the result of their refusal to hearken to Yahweh. Once the land had been conquered, after they had taken possession, their aggressive warfare was at an end. Then it was their duty to stand upon it and withstand the onslaughts of all who sought to drive them from it. When faith was low and valor scarce, the people fled, and left their allotment to their enemies. On occasions such as these the mighty men of David gained their fame by defending their fields against the Philistines. We have no earthly allotment to hold, but we have a heavenly inheritance. No forward move is necessary now, for the fields are ours by faith. But there is need abundant to stand firm on the ground we have gained and withstand every effort to dislodge us from our allotment.

To those who confuse contexts, God's Word is full of contradictions. One of the great truths of a previous portion of Ephesians is that we are *seated* together among the celestials (Eph.2:6). There is relaxation and rest. Now this seems to be denied for we are exhorted to *stand*, clad with all the accouterments of conflict. There is vigilance and warfare. Both are true, *in their contexts*. Both are false *out of their contexts*. As related to Christ Jesus, as members of His body, we have no work to do, for He has completed it all Himself. But, as related to *God*, as *enjoying an allotment* among the celestials, we need to be invigorated with God's mighty strength, and to stand in His protective panoply. The allotment is ours. We shall enter upon its tenancy in fact when we are called above. But now we need to hold it by *faith*. There is where the danger lies. There failure may be found. There the saints have practically forfeited the enjoyment of their celestial blessings.

This warfare is almost unknown in Christendom today for the simple reason that few have even heard of the territory on which they are supposed to stand. The Adversary's stratagems have been so successful, the sovereignties and authorities, the world might of this darkness, the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials have so outmaneuvered the saints that they are running around in circles on ground that does not belong to them, rather than standing firm on their own patrimony. Our enemies scarcely need to fight. They have outwitted us. How many saints are enjoying their celestial allotment? How many have appropriated the territory by faith which is theirs in this administration? One of the great Christian bodies has territorial sovereignty on earth. Most of them are possessed of plots of land down here. But few indeed are standing on celestial soil and defending it from spiritual foes.

We talk of apostate Israel, but, in all their apostasy, they have not utterly lost their bearings. They know where their

allotment is. True, they are foolish to fight for land that Yahweh will give them in due time, but their folly shows that they know His mind concerning them in a minute measure. They are ready to meet every effort which opposes their claim. Woe to the nation which will not concede it! O that the joint allottees of the celestial realms had a tithe of their intelligence and a fraction of their fervor. They would not come into conflict with the Arabs, as the Jews in Palestine, but with far craftier foes in the celestial sphere.

Israel's warfare is with blood and flesh. Their allotment is the land. Our holdings are in heaven. Our strife is with wicked spirits. One of the hardest lessons for us to learn is the fact that we do *not* fight with our fellows. There must be no close conflict, no grappling with men, no wrestling with those within our reach. This negative injunction has never been heartily heeded. Even Protestant princes have not hesitated to use the arm of flesh in forwarding the fight of faith. Saints have seldom worn the sandals of the evangel of peace, in their earthly contacts. The great truth of the conciliation of mankind was not recovered at the Reformation. There was only a blurred vision of Romans three and four, and a refusal to enter the fifth chapter.

Neither is the fight with our own flesh. It is a fatal mistake to seek to subdue the flesh. It is futile to strive against our physical propensities. The disposition of the flesh is death, so let us put it in the place of death. It cannot be subject, so let us cease to expect anything from it, or seek to improve it. The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. The only successful solution is to starve the flesh, to put it in the place of death, to nail it to the cross. Those who are of Christ crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts. The flesh is not on a par with the spirit. We have power and authority over the flesh, so that we should never condescend to strive as equals. We must condemn it to the ignominious stake.

Much the same is true of the old humanity, which we receive from Adam. If we realize the great truth that we are a new humanity in Christ, and that the old was crucified with Him, we will not disgrace ourselves by entering the lists against the decaying and decrepit humanity to which our bodies still belong but which we should put off, by the power of the spirit, just as we discard garments too worn and filthy for further use. Let there be no conflict with the old humanity. With men we are at peace, even as God is conciliated toward them now. For them our feet are sandaled with the readiness of the evangel of peace, for our feet alone are in contact with the earth. Our very panoply provides for a truce with mankind (Eph.6:15). Only as we mount, by faith, to our celestial allotment, will we wage war.

OUR CELESTIAL STRIFE

As soon as we seek to enjoy our allotment among the celestials by faith we enter a scene of unceasing strife, carried on with skillful strategy and spiritual force. If the marvelous revelations of the previous portion of this epistle have been apprehended, two matters of much moment have emerged. On earth we have no interests which conflict with any man. We have no allotment here to form the basis of a quarrel. Palestine is not for us, hence we have no clashes with the Arabs who claim it. But, just as the dispossessed Palestinian Arabs resent and resist the presence of the Jews, to whom God has promised the land of Palestine, so the celestial powers oppose our appearance on their possessions. Moreover, no world power has been given a mandate over the celestial territory to help us retain our rights. Each one must hold his own ground, and defend the plot which is allotted to him single-handed and alone.

In the coming administration of God's indignation, the Adversary will come down to earth to be a roaring lion to

the remnant of Israel. Why does he single them out for his prey? Because he is well aware that earth's sovereignty, which he has held for more than seven millenniums, has been given to God's Anointed, and that His people Israel will administer His government when He ascends the throne. The same motive impels now the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials in their opposition to the ecclesia which, some day, will displace them in their celestial sovereignty. They know far better than the saints what our presence implies. It is a plain intimation that their sovereignty is succumbing to the assaults of Christ. It heralds the hour when their hold on the heavens will cease. They will do their utmost to keep us from the enjoyment of our allotment.

How well they seem to have succeeded! Few, indeed, of the saints even know that they have a celestial allotment to defend. They are like a Jew who has never heard of Palestine. Some deny our title to any celestial allotment. They are like those Jews who prefer the Argentine or some other place to the patrimony of their fathers. A few, very few, in spirit, hold celestial property. Even these are not well equipped, and suffer for lack of armor suited to the conflict. It is to these that we address ourselves. If, by faith, they have acquired the celestial homestead which is presented in the first chapter of this epistle (verses 3-19), then they have also come into the possession of a feud which will cost them many a defeat if they are not prepared for its defense. Do not let the stratagems of the Adversary shift your stand to earth. Do not allow his fiery darts to slip past the shield of faith. Remember, though you have been saved from your sins, and are being saved from sin, you still need salvation in the celestial spheres.

THE ADVERSARY

A good general sends out scouts to get all possible infor-

mation as to his enemy. It is wise that we should be well acquainted with our foes. It is essential that we should recognize our chief adversary. In the future, on the earth, he will resemble a roaring lion. He will openly attack the saints. No one will mistake him then. Not so now. To all appearances he is "an angel of light." His ministers are transfigured as dispensers of righteousness. Let us suppose that some radiant, angelic messenger graced the earth with his presence, teaching men to forsake the wrong and cleave to the right, disclosing marvelous secrets of science for the betterment of mankind, adding to our store of knowledge, harnessing the forces of nature for our use, the patron of education, philanthropy and religion. Suppose he consummated a movement for the federation of mankind, a congress of the nations, the brotherhood of man. Suppose he was able to suppress those vices which mar men's schemes, and bring them to fruition. Let him be their guardian angel, their guiding star. Let him ask no pay for his pains except the appreciation and the worship which his work inspires. On the surface he seems to have no fault but this, the acceptance of divine worship, which belongs to God alone, or to His Anointed. This is a true picture of Satan, the Adversary, the adversary of God and His Christ, and all who worship Him. He it is who seeks to cure humanity's mortal wound apart from the presence of Messiah.

Today he is the great deceiver. He employs a satyr with horns and hoofs, who delights in torturing men and dragging them down into the gutter, to mask his real occupation. Most men imagine that he is the monarch of an imaginary underworld, that he is enthroned in "hell." But from God's Word we know that he never was, nor is, nor shall be there. When death and "hell" are cast into the lake of fire he is already in that dreadful place, not its monarch, but its most miserable victim. In that day Christ alone will

rule throughout the universe. But in this era Satan holds sway in secret on the earth.

It is only by stealth and deception that he holds fast the homage of humanity. If men knew that the serpent of Eden had been transformed into a messenger of light in order to better carry on his early work of weaning men's hearts away from God, if they knew that the angelic glory hid the serpent's heart, would they so blindly do his bidding? Our adversary is the god of this eon. He is worshiped in Christendom as well as among the heathen. Everywhere is found his worship, except among the feeble few who to Christ are true. He it is who blinds the minds of unbelievers, so that the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God, does not irradiate them (2 Cor.4:4).

THE ADVERSARY'S STRATAGEMS

Satan could never blind men to the evangel by torturing them with miseries. That would drive them to Christ as a Refuge from his hands. He has learned far better than that. He can lead them on by filling their vision with a promise of prosperity. He does not gain their allegiance by siding with wrong. By propaganda for justice and peace he finds multitudes to applaud his measures and support his pretensions.

Such is his course with the unbelievers, especially with the self-righteous, church-going religionist. How does he behave toward the saints? Here also the danger lies in his strategy. The heart fails as we see multitudes of Christ's members become Satan's eager instruments for the reformation and moral uplift of mankind. Not only are they involved in sanitary politics and fleshly philanthropies, but the very "gospel" which is preached glides over the blood of Christ to a promise of bread and butter, better clothes, a cleaner and more prosperous career, and a respectable

standing in the community, all of which Satan will gladly give to those who will worship him. Christ's gospel bears no promise of temporal advantage in the world today. Instead, it may mean nakedness and poverty and ignominy. It brought all of these to the great apostle who is the example of its power.

But still more subtle are Satan's schemes to deceive the saints. With ingenious art he misplaces truth and presses the most precious portions of Scripture beyond their proper sphere. This passage will afford a good example. All saints acknowledge the power of the blood of Christ. In *God's* presence the blood is everything. But has it a place in this conflict? Does it avail in the sight of the Adversary? Is the blood our shelter from his arrows, our deliverance from his devices? For our protection in this warfare God has given us a spiritual armor. It consists of truth, righteousness, peace, faith. This is not the place for the blood. If these are lacking, the deepest appreciation of the potency of Christ's sacrificial death will not deliver us from the assaults of the powers of darkness.

This illustration will help to explain why some, who seem to give the blood a place we do not accord it now, fall in line with the Adversary's program and are deceived by his consummate imitations of physical and spiritual endowments. These are all latent in the sacrifice of Christ, but the time for their realization has not yet arrived. These graces are connected with an earthly allotment, not with the celestial holdings which belong to us. They are the Adversary's stratagem, intended to lure the saints from their celestial allotment.

OUR DEFENSIVE ARMOR

To correspond with our weakness, our panoply is composed of five pieces, truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation. These are figured by a girdle, a cuirass, sandals,

a shield, and a helmet. Let us remember that all of this is "in the *Lord*," not "in *Christ*." Our destiny is not at stake. It is altogether a matter of conduct and the present life. We have all of the spiritual graces which make up this armor in Christ. In Him we are righteous and justified. In Him we have peace with God. But this is not in view here. To win in this defense we must know the truth, we must act justly, we must practice peace with our fellow men, we must exercise faith, and then we will enjoy a present salvation from the assaults of the powers of darkness.

GIRDED WITH TRUTH

We need to know but little truth to be saved from sin. We need a thorough realization of God's revelation to be saved from Satan during our present life. Truth is first in this warfare. In these days truth is not only ignored but belittled. Satan's ministers are transfigured as dispensers of righteousness, but they oppose the truth. Without a certain measure of truth we will not even know of our celestial allotment. A mature grasp of God's present plans will give strength and readiness for action. It will give us assurance and steadfastness. Only this will keep us from being pushed from our position. It is the lack of truth which has left the heavenly allotment almost deserted. The saints are thieving Israel's physical and spiritual belongings instead of defending their own. Hence they lack the helmet of salvation.

THE CUIRASS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Righteousness in word and deed is our chief protection from the assaults of the spiritual forces of wickedness. It is figured by a complete covering for the thorax, not only a breastplate, but a backplate as well, so that the vital organs are well encased in a coat of mail. Wrong doing not only incurs the condemnation of men, but the accu-

sation of the spirit world, not to speak of the loss at the dais of Christ. The heavenly allotment cannot be enjoyed by those who act unjustly, and thus leave off this cuirass, and leave themselves open to the attacks of their malignant spirit enemies. It is only as we don this cuirass that we may receive the helmet of salvation from their attacks.

THE SANDALS OF PEACE

This is the most remarkable part of our panoply. Peace is not usually a part of conflict. Sandals are not armor. Yet, even among men, many a war was decided by peace. In World War I the outcome was largely influenced by the fact that Germany did not remain at peace with the United States. A country which is already fully engaged in battle is not fit to fight another enemy. If we engage in strife with mankind we will be unfitted for the fight with our real enemies. Sandals figure our contact with the earth, with humankind. To be saved in this warfare it is of the utmost value to know the truth of the conciliation, and to imitate God in His attitude toward the race.

The sandals of the readiness of the evangel of peace give us the positive side of the apostle's warning that it is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh. It is a most difficult lesson to learn. There is so much friction with our fellow men; they are so blatant in their enmity to God, that it is difficult to maintain His attitude toward them, and refuse to antagonize the unbeliever. Yet this is essential to our celestial warfare. When this economy ends and the next begins the scenes will all be shifted. Then our celestial foes will be dislodged, and God will change His dealings with men. Peace will be replaced by indignation. Until then, let us not jeopardize our warfare by antagonizing those with whom He is at peace.

THE SHIELD OF FAITH

In ancient warfare two kinds of shields were used. A

small buckler parried the blows in a hand-to-hand conflict. A large shield, called a "door," fended the flying missiles of the enemy. Such a shield is ours, to protect us from the arrows of our enemies. One of the devices of ancient warfare was the use of elephants to dismay the enemy by their onslaught. For this a counter measure was invented. Arrows were fitted with combustibles, lit, and shot into the thick hide of the animals, who became so terror stricken by the blazing darts and maddened by the burning wounds that they stampeded, doing more damage to their own side than to the enemy. Our spirit foes use such fiery arrows to wound and torture us. Only faith can fend us from them. Those engaged in this warfare for long will find their shields studded with the charred stumps of arrows which would have rankled in their flesh if faith had not caught their force and quenched their fire.

To sight and sense men seem to be our enemies, who cause us untold suffering and agony of spirit. It is not so. Faith insists that men are merely the instruments of unseen spirit forces which impel them, of which they are not aware. Faith refuses to fight with men because it believes and receives the conciliation. No part of our faith is more helpful in defeating the fiery shafts of our foes than this great truth.

We have insisted, and rightly so, that this passage does not affect our position in Christ, but deals with our conduct in the Lord. Our behavior, however, is always dependent on what is ours by faith. If we had no celestial allotment we would have no heavenly conflict. With the large shield of faith we take refuge behind that which is ours in Christ, apart from our own doings. One blazing arrow may be the certainty that our sins and offenses are such that we have no right or title to any allotment on earth or in the heavens. Only faith in God's declarations can quench this rankling insinuation.

RECEIVING THE HELMET OF SALVATION

Do not *take* the helmet of salvation! We should take the panoply and the shield, but it is only after we have taken the rest that we may wear the helmet. The girdle and the cuirass must be put on. The shield must be held aloft. Only then, and not till then, may we *receive* the helmet, which is salvation. It is God's award to those who are girded with truth and protected by righteousness, and shod with peace, and sheltered by faith. Without these, our heads must be bared to the assaults of our adversaries. With them we wear the helmet which proclaims us invulnerable.

This helmet is not salvation from our sins or ourselves, but from the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials. If all this were needed to save us from sin, would anyone be saved? This salvation is confined to our contacts with unseen spirit forces. It is limited to the defense of our celestial allotment. It is deliverance from the mighty powers of darkness which seek to rob us of the enjoyment of our allotment among the celestials. Let us remember that this is the Godward aspect of the secret. It does not deal with our relationship to Christ as members of His body, or our place in the new humanity. Those are the Christward and manward aspects of the secret. Here we have a special salvation from the malignant world of celestial spirits.

OUR OFFENSIVE WEAPON

Only as thus accoutered are we ready to wage offensive warfare. The sword, like the helmet, is to be *received*, not taken. Only those should handle it who are measurably qualified. With God's declarations we can rout all our foes who trespass on our allotment. Israel, even under Solomon, never conquered all the land God gave to Abraham. The saints today hold hardly any of the ground which is theirs according to God's Word. There is no other means

of regaining our lost heritage. The first chapter of Ephesians is the unbroken sword which will clear our allotment of all intruders.

This sword is not for saints or sinners, but for spirits. Let us not use it to cut and slash our fellow believers. Let us not wage war against our fellow men. Our enemies gain a great victory when they introduce sedition into the citadel of the saints. They acquire a vast advantage when we turn its edge against our fellow men. It is utterly devastating to take the phrase "the sword of the spirit" away from its context and use God's Word as a blade to destroy all and sundry. Its cutting and killing power is only for those whom God accounts His enemies.

THE CELESTIAL WARFARE

To sum up, our warfare is not with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world-mights of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Eph.6:12). The celestial allotment (Eph.1:3,11) which characterizes the present secret administration is still in the hands of opposing spiritual forces, who will not be finally dislodged until the day of deliverance. These enemies of ours are active in opposing every effort of faith to grasp its patrimony and maintain its heavenly stand. Conduct conforming to this truth, any measure of attaining to the out-resurrection, as the apostle puts it in Philippians, will meet sore opposition from sinister spirit forces. To withstand them we are provided with the panoply, the shield and the sword. So may we stand.

Our conduct toward these dark spirit powers should be the opposite to that of our behavior toward our fellow men. There is a sword for the former, an olive branch for the latter. Men may be used by these spirit forces to antagonize us, but let us always look beyond the human agents. The

sword is not for them. If we wish to be saved from these foes let us furnish our armory with the girdle of truth, the cuirass of righteousness, the sandals of peace, and God will furnish the helmet of salvation and the sword of the spirit. Let us then stand, like Shammah (2 Sam.23:11,12) one of David's mighties, with all our armor on, with shield and sword in hand, and defend our celestial fields from the dark spirit powers which seek to rob us of the enjoyment of our heavenly lot.

A. E. Knoch

2 Corinthians 10:4-6

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful to God toward the pulling down of bulwarks; ⁵ pulling down reckonings and every height elevating^o itself against the knowledge of God, and leading into captivity every apprehension [MIND-effect] into the listening of Christ, ⁶ and having all in readiness to avenge every disregarding, whenever =your listening may be completed.

In accord with Romans 5:19 and Philippians 2:8 "the listening of Christ" is His listening unto the death of the cross. It is "the evangel of the glory of Christ" (2 Cor.4:4). We are to be listening to His listening and as we complete our listening, we are made ready to avenge every disregarding of Christ's listening, that is, of every disregarding of "our evangel" (2 Cor.4:3).

Let us, then, be listening to the listening of Christ in His suffering and death and to what it accomplishes. Such bulwarks as the teaching of a "limited atonement" and the idea of an "eternal hell" are pulled down by the evangel of Christ's love, "judging this, that if One dies for the sake of all [in His listening to the instructions of His God and Father unto the death of the cross], *consequently* all die [as to what they are in Adam]" (2 Cor.5:14; Rom.5:12-19). "For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified" (1 Cor.15:22).

D.H.H.

A CHAINED AMBASSADOR

WHAT a change from the mailed and weaponed warrior of the preceding passage is this chained ambassador at Rome, the capital of much of the world! At one stroke of His graphic brush God gives us a picture of the conciliation. Following so closely on the celestial conflict, it displays the startling contrast between our strife with spirits and our truce with men. At the same time that Paul stands, armored and armed, ready to repulse any encroachment on his celestial allotment, he also allows the Roman power to load his limbs with chains, although no act could be more defiant and provocative of war than such degradation heaped upon God's representative.

Paul was an ambassador from the high court of heaven. The treatment accorded him is an index of the attitude of men toward the government of God. Rome, the political center of their controlled empire gives God's plenipotentiary a chain. Any earthly power would have declared war. All the resources of a government are pledged to protect its officials in a foreign land. The very first announcement of hostilities demands that the ambassador be safely withdrawn. Any indignities to his person are an affront to the court from which he came. Paul's chain is an outrage, a challenge, a gauntlet thrown down to the God of heaven to provoke Him to hostilities. Will He not declare war? Will He not at least deliver His ambassador from his fetters?

He is for peace! All their maltreatment of His ambassador does not shake Him from this resolve. Nothing that they can do to Him or to the saints can alter God's settled attitude toward all mankind so long as the present administration is in effect. They are His enemies, and they neglect no

occasion to express their enmity. The peace is not mutual, except in those who have received the evangel. All that men can do to show their defiance of God only serves to emphasize His unalterable attitude. No provocation can rouse His wrath. No insult can wake His anger. His Son has died, and He is conciliated whether men respond or reject. His chained ambassador is the graphic illustration of this secret evangel.

The secret of the evangel is not the special subject of this epistle, but, like much of Paul's previous ministry, it is recognized and incorporated into this secret administration by brief allusions. In the previous paragraph it is specifically described as "the evangel of peace" (Eph.6:15). Here it is called "the secret of the evangel." One phrase connects it with the fifth of Romans, where it is fully set forth, and the other refers to the last paragraph of that epistle, in which its secret character is emphasized. Here Paul is merely mentioning it as the subject of their prayers for him, since he still continued to make it known. He does not need to explain it to those who had been under his ministry. Nor do we need to elaborate upon this marvelous evangel, as it is fully treated in the book, *The Mystery of the Gospel*.

In presenting the secret economy in this epistle, Paul is seen in a variety of characters. In general, the revelation is made by an *apostle of Christ* in the first three chapters, and the exhortations come from a *prisoner of the Lord* in the last three. He dispenses the secret as a *steward* (3:2) who makes the necessary arrangements for the household of faith. In the previous economy, while the nations were still at a distance from God, he was a *priest* in order to bring them nigh (Rom.15:16). Now they are so near they need no mediation. It is only in relation to the secret of the evangel, that he is called an *ambassador*. And such are we also, who pray men to be conciliated to God.

This title indicates the change in the apostle's attitude toward the world. At first he went forth as a *herald*, to *proclaim* the evangel of the kingdom. This demanded freedom to fare forth among all nations. Now that he is bound, such a message is impossible even if the Kingdom had not been rejected. Now that he is a bound *ambassador*, all that is left is *prayer*. This is the essence of the evangel today. We are to *pray* men to be conciliated to God. And the apostle beseeches the saints to pray for him. In the corresponding section of this epistle we have Paul's prayer for them (1:15-19). Now he desires their prayers in his apparently hopeless dilemma. His body is bound. That should not be changed. But the evangel must not be fettered. It must be free.

PAUL'S PRAYER ANSWERED

It soon became apparent that chains were no hindrance to the spread of the evangel. The petitions which arose at Paul's request were speedily answered. In writing to the Philippians, not long afterward, he said, "Now I am intending you to know, brethren, that my affairs have rather come to be for the progress of the evangel, so that my bonds in Christ become apparent in the whole Pretorium and to all the rest, and the majority of the brethren, having confidence in the Lord as to my bonds, are more exceedingly daring to speak the Word of God fearlessly" (Phil. 1:12-14). His own audience came to him, and his example spurred on the preaching of others.

No other part of the Scriptures is so suffused with prayer as Ephesians. While the opening strain may not be an actual prayer, it is a lengthened benediction: "Blessed be the God and Father . . . Who . . ." Then Paul gives thanks and prays (1:15-17). When does he cease? There seems to be no definite stop until, in chapter three, he begins again! He resumes his direct petition in the fourteenth verse

(3:14). In chapter four he beseeches the saints. This continues until these concluding paragraphs where he pleads that they pray for him. In no other epistle is the spirit of petition more prevalent. It is heartening, therefore, to know that this prayer was answered. Is it not prophetic of the time when all of these petitions will be fulfilled?

Now that the great apostle has poured out his life, the prayer for him is no longer needed. Yet the necessity for such a petition is much more urgent today than when it was first dictated by the spirit. The *secret* of the evangel is practically unknown. It certainly is not preached. It is shackled with the chains of ignorance and tradition and unbelief. The darkness is dense. Let the reader quietly consider the basis on which present day evangelism is carried on by the more enlightened and faithful preachers. The commissions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are given as their marching orders. Even the twelve apostles never followed Matthew's commission, for they knew that it awaits the day when the King is on His throne. Mark's commission is definitely said to be fulfilled. Luke's was continued in the Pentecostal period, and is set aside along with the ministries of Acts.

It was the *rejection* of the Lucan ministry by the nation of Israel, as detailed in the Acts account, which opened up the opportunity for the new and distinct revelation, hitherto hidden. It is subversive of all sense to go back to the previous commissions or to inject them into the later unfolding. Once this is acknowledged, and the secret is grasped, its distinctness from all previous evangels is so pronounced that it seems impossible we should have mixed them all together. We cannot help following Paul's example, and implore the saints to persevere in prayer and supplication that expression may be given to the secret evangel which God has specially given to reveal His grace in this

secret administration. It is only because He is dealing in pure grace that anyone is saved.

TYCHICUS' COMMISSION

Tychicus' name is apt, for it is formed from the root **HAPPEN**. He it is who observes the things that happen to Paul, and who is sent to inform the saints of Paul's affairs in order to keep up the bond of affection which bound them to him. In Christ he was a "brother beloved." In the Lord he was a "faithful servant." What higher praise could be accorded him? It is a rare combination. Many a brother is loving, but lacking in faithfulness. Others are faithful, but lacking in love. But Tychicus was balanced, a splendid specimen, such as Ephesians should produce when it is apprehended by the heart and practiced in the life.

THE CLOSING BENEDICTION

What a balm this benediction brings! To float calmly on life's troubled sea needs anchorage well grounded in God and in His Christ. The Father's affection and provision for His family can only be appreciated by the faith which luxuriates in His love. All saints of all time have known a measure of God's beneficence. It remained for us, who deserved it least, to reach the pinnacle of His grace, and so discover the zenith of His love. Let us revel in it, so that this benediction may find a satisfying fulfillment in our experience.

Love is the keynote of this epistle, and on this it closes. Grace and love. Grace is for those who love. Some have thought that God's special favor rests on those who know, and surely God greatly values intelligence and will give it due reward. But knowing is not an end. It is a means. It leads to love. The realization of the surpassing love of Christ cannot fail to kindle a kindred emotion in our breasts. Those who have followed the unfoldings of this

epistle to this point should be lavish in their love for Him. The deeper we explore His fathomless affection the more our love becomes like His.

Have we drunk so deeply of His grace that we can echo the apostle's closing words? Some saints may have slandered us. Some may have done us serious wrong. Most of them would refuse our fellowship. What is our response? If they love our Lord in incorruption, *may grace be theirs in unstinted measure!* It is not the attitude of His beloved saints to us that counts, but their heart for Him. This is the supreme test. Let a man love Christ and I am for him, no matter what he thinks of me! Love incorruptible is the precious fruit of God's primeval purpose, the end and object of all creation, the crown of redemption and the very aura of God's glory.

CONCLUSION

The secret administration which is revealed to our hearts in Ephesians is dominated by one controlling thought, which is expressed in the Greek by the prefix *sun*, and in English by the term *joint*. The elect among the nations are associated with a chosen remnant of Israel for equal, ineffable, celestial glory. This is presented from three standpoints, according as it expresses our relationship to God, to Christ and to the saints. God, in His absolute deity, selected some out of the apostate nation for a celestial allotment, giving them the earnest of His spirit. The believers among the nations receive the same pledge, and are therefore *joint allottees*.

Christ forms this Israelitish remnant into His spiritual body, for the administration of His universal empire. The spirit had already incorporated believers among the nation and individual Israelites into that body, but now all physical distinctions are further emphasized as *joint members* from the beginning of Paul's calling.

A new humanity is begun in Christ, in which the saints among the nations are made fellow citizens, members of God's family, and a part of the temple in which He dwells. In these we become *joint partakers*.

Each of these three aspects touches another "mystery" from which we must carefully distinguish it. The celestial allotment flows from the full revelation of the mystery of *Christ*. His earthly sovereignty had been revealed. His heavenly headship gives Him a universal throne. "As it is now further revealed," Christ's celestial domains are our allotment.

Faith has already seated the members of Christ's body on their heavenly throne. But His vivification, ascension, and rest shall yet be our portion in fact as well as in faith. Our present bodies are not fit for that celestial scene. They must undergo the change which the *secret of the resurrection* sets forth. They will be changed from miserable, mortal, soulish, soilish bodies to imperishable, glorious, spiritual, celestial bodies like His.

Following Israel's defection Paul proclaims the conciliation, the *secret of the evangel*, by which all mankind is conciliated to God and the priestly supremacy of Israel is set aside. In Ephesians this is not only true for the world, but it applies to the saints as well. We who do not belong to the favored nation are fellow partakers with all the saints.

To fully enjoy the message of Ephesians and revel in the grace which it reveals, we should apprehend these previous secrets. The exaltation of Christ to universal dominion, in the heavens as well as on the earth, is essential to a realization of our celestial destiny and high heavenly honors. This is equally true of the change wrought by vivification as set forth in the secret of the resurrection. If Christ were not exalted to the highest heaven we would not care to make it our abode. If our bodies were not changed, we could not share it with Him. These secrets should be our delight before we enter the portals of Ephesians.

Love underlies it all. All was created in the Son of His love. The eons will not cease to unfold until all shall respond and satisfy the longings of His heart. To display His love and create a response in the breasts of His creatures is the purpose of the eons. Does not this explain the pain, the sorrow, the despair, and the death which seem to have blighted all His efforts? These are but the background, the contrast so essential for the revelation of their opposites. They are the bitter ingredients without which we cannot know the balm, the joy, the ecstasy, the ineffable delight which God has prepared for us. Adam would never have known good if he had not eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We can never know grace unless we first experience sin.

In Ephesians we see man at his worst and God at His best. There is the deepest degradation and the greatest grace. It is an epistle of superlatives. The last become first, the lowest highest. The dregs of earth become the elect of heaven. We are His achievement, a special and permanent display to exhibit to an admiring universe the multifarious wisdom and the immense wealth of grace there is in Him. He has made us an essential feature of His glory. He needs our worthlessness to reveal His wonders to the whole creation.

The infinite wisdom, the excessive power, the fathomless love which this secret administration displays will forever set God's name at the very pinnacle of fame, not only in the coming eon and the eon of the eons, but in the ceaseless cycles which follow the consummation, not only for the sons of Adam, for all their generations, but in the spirit world as well, with its myriads upon myriads, from the meanest messenger to the mightiest monarch, throughout the stellar universe. Such glorious grace, such boundless favor, appalls, prostrates, and overawes. Silence and adoration can only whisper:

*Blessed, blessed, blessed be the
God and Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, Who has blessed us so.*

AND THERE WILL BE

NO END

A. E. KNOCH

PEACE AND GRACE

As noted above, Ephesians ends as it began on the high note of God's blessedness. As this blessedness was built first on grace and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, so it points at the close to *peace* (joined by love with faith) from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, with a final salutation of *grace* to those who are loving our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus God's blessedness begins and ends with grace, which is JOY.

This is wholly appropriate for an epistle so filled with grace. Passing by 1:6-8 for the present let us listen attentively again to 2:4-10 as translated in the proposed CV revision as follows:

- 4 **Yet 'God, being rich in mercy**
 Because of His vast 'love with which He loves us
 5 **(we also being 'dead to the offenses and the lusts),**
 Vivifies us together in 'Christ
 (in ^{JOY}**grace 'are ones having been saved!)**
 6 **And rouses us together**
 And seats us together among the celestials
 in Christ Jesus,
 7 **That in the oncoming° 'eons He should display°**
 the 'transcendent riches of His 'JOYgrace
 in His kindness ^{on}to us in Christ Jesus.
 8 **For in 'JOYgrace 'are 'you ones having been saved**
 through His faith,°
 And this is not out of 'you;
 It is God's 'approach present,
 9 **Not out of our works, lest anyone should boast°.**
 10 **For His achievement are we being,**
 Peace and joy be with us all.

D.H.H.

2:8 His faith: as in 3:12, cp Ro 3:24; Ga 2:16, the faith of Christ Jesus.

THE EVANGEL OF WHICH PAUL IS NOT ASHAMED

“For not being ashamed am I of the evangel: For it is being God’s power for salvation to everyone who is believing it—to the Jew first, and to the Greek as well. For in it God’s righteousness is being revealed out of faith, for faith, according as it is written: Now the Righteous One, out of faith shall He be living” (Romans 1:16,17).

IN Romans 1:16,17, Paul is evangelizing God’s evangel concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, as it presently applies to us who are believing it. But he does not begin with this evangel itself. Rather he jumps immediately into its present happy ending. The evangel is continually being God’s power for salvation to us.

Note that this happy ending does not relate to everyone, but only to those who are presently believing it. Paul will relate it to everyone soon enough and make it clear that the happy ending is for all, but right now he has only those to whom he is writing (and that includes us) in view—only those who are believing it while living in the present administration of God’s conciliation. Consequently the happy ending here in Romans 1:16 is not the full happy ending. Still, this salvation anticipates that glorious ending of salvation which embraces all humans and brings everything to real and lasting good.

(I have to admit I like to read fiction which has a happy ending and generally look at the end before starting to read the story. I do not care to read those accounts which reflect present reality of outcomes because there is enough of that without reading about it for relaxation. But God’s evangel is not fiction, and it has a happy ending in every respect, in truth and glory.)

NOT BEING ASHAMED

The apostle Paul, who is severed from all that was gain to him at birth, severed for God's evangel, is well aware that he has his critics. To make matters worse, these were his former friends, who see things as he himself formerly saw things. They were telling him that he ought to be ashamed of bringing such a message as he was bringing. This is clearly brought out in Romans 6:1 and 6:15 where we hear the gist of the criticism which was that what Paul was saying encourages sin.

APART FROM LAW

The foundation of this supposed criticism, of course, is that the evangel Paul was bringing is "apart from law" (Rom.3:21; 6:14). Law was seen as necessary for dealing with sin. Hence Moses says to Israel in presenting the words of law to them:

"Do not fear, for in order to probe you the One, Elohim has come, and in order that the fear of Him should come over your faces, that you may not sin" (Exodus 20:20).

But no one was able to stop sinning. Paul himself testifies: "For we are aware that the law is being spiritual, yet I am being fleshly, having been disposed of under sin. For what I am effecting I am not knowing, for not what I am willing, this I am putting into practice, but what I am hating, this I am doing. Now if what I am not willing, this I am doing, I am conceding that the law is ideal. Yet now it is no longer I who am effecting it, but sin making its home in me" (Rom.7:14-17).

Yet here the critic might point to Jeremiah 30:31-34 concerning "a new covenant" in which Yahweh promises for Israel: "I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their heart . . . And I shall not remember their sin any longer." So also the critic might remind him (quite unnec-

essarily) of the Lord's words in Ezekiel 36:27, "I will make it that you shall walk in My statutes and observe My ordinances, and you will do them." But this lasts only for a thousand years because human works of law are an important factor in their salvation.

However, the evangel Paul is evangelizing is *apart from law*. For indeed it reveals God's righteousness in all He does including making it so that sinful Israel will not sin for a thousand years by giving them what He did not give Adam or other people. That certainly does not reveal God's righteousness and needs itself to be justified. The only way it can be justified is by God not sparing His Son but giving Him up for the sinner's sake, and that entirely apart from the sinner's doing, and wholly through the rescue of that gratuitous joy which comes through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom.7:24,25).

THREE EVANGELICAL POINTS

Paul is not ashamed of this evangel which is apart from law, and with intense passion he lists three reasons for this:

1. "It is being God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing it—to the Jew first and to the Greek as well" (Rom.1:16).

2. "In it God's righteousness is being revealed out of [the Righteous One's] faith, for [the believing ones'] faith" (Rom.1:17).

3. "God's indignation is being revealed from heaven on all the irreverence and unrighteousness of humans . . . not one [of whom] is being righteous—not even one . . . [so that] because out of works of law no flesh at all shall be justified in [God's] sight" (Rom.1:18-3:20).

Paul presents these points in reverse order to their development. The first is the present happy ending. The second is the glorious solution to the problem. And the third is the problem. (This is the order in which I like to

read fictional stories. But God's evangel concerning His Son is not fiction.)

There are at least two points of relief within the long account of the very disturbing problem presented in Romans 1:18-3:20. The first is that parenthetical outburst of Romans 2:16b, and the second is the declaration that despite the unfaithfulness of "some" Jews God will remain faithful to (keep *faith* with) His covenanted promises to that nation (Rom.3:3,4). The first employs the only usage of the word "evangel" and only reference to Jesus Christ in this long presentation of the problem, and the second brings up the question, "How can God do this righteously?"

In an attempt to translate as much as possible in accord with Paul's intended meaning as understood by those who received this letter, the CVNT makes 2:16b a *parenthesis*, and (while keeping 3:3,4 as in most other translations) we may take these verses as a puzzle that will be solved in 3:21-28.

In Romans chapter 2, Paul intensifies the problem of human irreverence and unrighteousness because of which in His indignation, God gives them over to the lusts and dishonorable passions and a disqualified mind, by bringing in the matter of God's righteous judgment. How does God judge the situation? He must judge righteously which means He must respond to it righteously in accord with their acts and grant eonian life to anyone who endures in good acts, and He must express His indignation and fury in continued ways against those who are being persuaded to unrighteousness. And already when he reaches 2:16, where Paul notes that even the hidden acts of humans are to be taken into account, it is made evident that no one can be judged as enduring in good acts. No flesh at all shall be justified in God's sight by doing works of law because no one endures in such acts, for not one is righteous—not even one. In 2:16 Paul has not finished this account of the

problem but intends to show indisputably that the Jew is included in it. But at this point he interrupts his argument by shouting out the solution. According to Paul's evangel, which is God's evangel concerning His Son for which Paul is severed, God's righteousness is not revealed through God's righteous judgment but through the faith of Jesus Christ, that is, through His listening to His Father's instruction unto the death of the cross. God's righteousness is manifested *through Jesus Christ!* And that results in the happy ending of all humans being constituted righteous (Rom.5:19). Paul could not wait until he gets back to the evangel and tells us of this solution and happy ending for all. But still he must make it clear that the problem is one that involves everyone including the Jew. And so he continues with Romans 2:17-3:20.

In this, however, he claims that God remains faithful to all His promises despite that fact that not one (Jew included) is righteous. How can God do that righteously? It seems unrighteous. Thus we are led to the solution of this entire problem starting with Romans 3:21 where Paul begins all over again with what he said in 1:17, but with an addition: In Romans 3:21,22 the solution is “for all.” It still is a revelation (manifestation) of God's righteousness by means of the Righteous One's (that is, Jesus Christ's) faith, and it still is for (that is “on” but not yet “in”) all believers. But, it is on us because it is for all. For all sin and are wanting of the glory of God.

With the problem of 1:18-3:20 and its solution of 3:21-28 in view we may now return to 1:16,17 where the solution and happy ending as it relates to believers at present is presented.

A NEW WAY OF SEEING THINGS

Whether or not the “out of faith” in Romans 1:17a refers to Christ's faith, (the Righteous One's faith of 1:17b), or to the believer's faith in Him, makes a great deal of difference.

Furthermore, whether the “for [into] faith” refers to the believer’s faith focused on the Righteous One’s faith, or it is meant to emphasize the “out of faith” (with both prepositional phrases referring to the believer’s faith in Christ) is of utmost importance. Either Paul is evangelizing justification as God’s achievement through His Son’s death on the cross, or as our achievement by our believing in Christ. It is one or the other, not partly one and partly the other (no matter how little our part may be). Either justification reveals God’s righteousness in making all humanity right by not sparing His own Son but giving Him up for the sake of all humanity (both sinners who presently listen and sinners who do not yet believe) or there is no evangel whatsoever.

There is Adam [“human”] and there is Christ Jesus [“Anointed Yahweh-Saviour”], and there is the God and Father of Christ Jesus and of us all. He speaks to us with a message that says “It is well.” All is well because God, Who is altogether good, is operating all, and One Who sends His own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh and does so concerning sin so that He condemns sin in the flesh (Rom.8:3) to a death that puts it entirely out of existence. Yet also sin itself is found to have been beneficial to the glory of God the Father in that it makes His righteousness and love known.

This is God’s evangel [“well-message”] concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. It is apart from law placed over us, and it is in every respect a message of joy.

Now joy be to God for it all.

Paul brings us this evangel in the first eight chapters of Romans. It is being God’s power for salvation to everyone who is believing it, day by day and hour by hour, in every circumstance, for in it God’s righteousness is being revealed day by day and hour by hour and minute by minute and second by second in every circumstance. This revelation of God’s righteousness comes out of the Righteous

One's faith unto the death of the cross, and it is for our faith. That is why Paul is not ashamed of it.

For if the revelation of God's righteousness were sourced in our faith, the message would be nonsense, and there would be no solution to death and sin, and no joy for us or to God.

Let us, then, not insert ourselves into the revelation of God's righteousness where Jesus Christ, our Lord, belongs. Let us listen with faith to what God is saying in His well-message concerning His Son. "Are you not aware that to whom you are presenting yourselves [day by day and minute by minute] as slaves for listening, his slaves you are being, to whom you are listening . . . ?" (Rom.6:16).

GOD'S POWER FOR SALVATION

To Paul's critic and to Paul as Saul of Tarsus, and to Israel and those of the nations associated with them, and to most reasonable and wise and noble ones among humanity, what is required for a measure of order and a good life and peace is law. That seems the best that can be expected under present conditions.

But Paul says that the evangel he is bringing is apart from law, and those who obtain its joy and peace are not under law. For its joy and peace are gratuitous. Instead of law, the evangel itself is God's power for present salvation from wretchedness and meaninglessness and ignorance of what is going on in God's operation of all. What God says to Moses is presently replaced by what He says in His evangel concerning His Son.

What Paul says in Romans 1:16 he repeats in 1 Corinthians 1:18, as follows:

**For the word of the cross is being stupidity indeed
to 'those who are perishing',
Yet to us 'who are being saved'
it is being God's power.**

And again in 1 Corinthians 15:1,2, our apostle says:

"Now I am making known to ¹you, brethren, the evangel which I evangelize^o to ¹you, which also ¹you accept, in which also ¹you ^ostand, ²through which also ¹you are being saved^o, if ¹you are retaining the word ^awhich I evangelize^o to ¹you, outside and except ¹you believe feignedly.

To be believing and retaining the evangel, listening with faith to it, brings a continual spiritual power (God's power) for present salvation to us. This is a tremendous change from God's message of law and its demands imposed on Israel and those associated with that chosen nation—a change that seems dangerous and powerless to anyone who is acquainted with "human nature."

THE EVANGEL ITSELF

Nevertheless, Paul is not ashamed of the evangel he is evangelizing. And as with Romans 1:17, so with 1 Corinthians 15:3,4, this evangel leaves out demands on the human and places all on Christ:

For I give over to ¹you among the first things what also I accept, that Christ dies for the sake of our 'sins in accord with the scriptures ⁴and that He is entombed, and that He has been roused^o the third 'day in accord with the scriptures

Concerning what Christ does the apostle uses two fact verbs (one active, and the other passive) and a final verb which tells of a completed state: Christ dies. Christ is entombed. And Christ has been roused.

It is not misleading to read the fact verbs as *past* facts (Christ "died," and He "was entombed"), but that does not bring out the simple force of the act unencumbered by any inflection. The "when" of the act is not expressed by the verb, but only the shocking truth that Christ, the Anointed One of God, *dies*. This is God's evangel concerning His Son. It is a fact infused with divine power for

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those who are retaining it and believing it, and listening to it over and over again.

That is Romans 1:16. It is the believer's special blessing. The believer is perceiving that God is working all together for good. But He is doing so by means of the faith of the Righteous One, Who dies for the sake of the sinner.

We are thus led to Romans 1:17, which needs all the listening we can give it.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ONE

Paul is not ashamed of the evangel: "for in it God's righteousness is being revealed" In this evangel, which is a message of God's power for present ongoing salvation to those who are believing it, is a revelation. Here we come to the solution to the third evil of Genesis 1:2, that of darkness. Darkness is replaced by light. Yet more than that: Darkness is put to an end by the revealing light of God's righteousness.

This is not righteousness *from* God, but rather the righteousness *of* One, and that One is God.

God's righteousness is not revealed in God's righteous judgments, for they are based on law, and no flesh at all can be justified by works of law. If no flesh at all shall be justified by works of law, then by human works of law God's righteousness cannot be brought to light. And darkness remains.

For the evangel to be God's power in the lives of the believers it must reveal God's righteousness. Paul speaks here of what the theologian calls "theodicy." But we do not need a Greek word. What we need is to know that Paul speaks of God's own righteousness in all that He does.

So after bringing out the inability of law works to justify ("make righteous") irreverent and unrighteous humans (Rom.1:18-3:20), Paul says "Yet now, apart from law, God's righteousness has been made manifest" (Rom.3:21).

Again, Paul is not speaking of righteousness *from* God given to us, but of “righteousness *of* God” being brought to light in the evangel. Let us not jump ahead and prematurely relate this righteousness to our justification. We will get to that when Paul brings us to that. But now we are concerned with God’s righteousness and His justification. And that is revealed in the evangel.

At this point we must listen very carefully and undistractedly to what is written. What does the evangel say that brings God’s righteousness to light?

God’s righteousness is being revealed “out of faith, into [in the sense of “for”] faith.”

If we take Paul as speaking here only of our faith (as he does in verse 5 and 12, and also in verse 16 where he uses the participle form of the verb form of “faith,” that is, “faithing”) we have already lost our way. Paul immediately cites Habakkuk 2:4 from the Septuagint: “Now the Righteous One, *out of faith* shall He be living.” To repeat what needs often to be repeated, the faith here is the Righteous One’s faith. God’s evangel concerning His Son concerns His Son’s faith, for God’s Son is the Righteous One, and it is His faith that is the source of the revelation of God’s righteousness.

FOR FAITH

We come, then, to our faith. The believer’s faith is focused on the Righteous One’s faith—or rather, as Paul presents it, the Righteous One’s faith is directed into our faith. We are believing that the Righteous One, Jesus Christ, our Lord, listened in flawless faith unto the death of the cross. While we are still sinners He dies for our sakes. We are believing that we are spiritually baptized into His death (Rom.6:4), so that in that He was given up because of our offenses He was roused because of our justifying which was secured in His death (Rom.4:25).

Now, as brought out in Romans 1:17 (where Paul expounds a matter he has tremendous eagerness to bring), we are believing that *God's righteousness* is being revealed "out of" *the Righteous One's faith*. This is a priority in our faith.

God, Who is operating all, is righteous in all that He does, and this is revealed by means of the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

That is my understanding of this passage, but the test is in the scriptural text itself as translated as closely as possible to its original meaning. Here, then, is such an attempt:

ROMANS 1:13-17

¹³ **Now I am not wanting ⁼you to be being ignorant, brethren, that often I purpose^o to come to^d ⁼you (and am prevented hitherto) that I should have ^asome fruit among ⁼you also, according as ⁺ among the rest of the nations.**

¹⁴ **To both Greeks and barbarians, to both wise and foolish, a debtor am I being.** ¹⁵ **Thus ^{this} eagerness ^{ac}of mine to bring the evangel^o to ⁼you also, ^{who} are in Rome.**

¹⁶ **For not being ashamed^o am I of the evangel:**

For it is being God's power ^{io}for salvation to everyone ^{who} is believing it—to the Jew first, and to the Greek as well. ¹⁷ For in it God's righteousness is being revealed^o out of faith, ^{io}for faith, according as it is ^owritten^o: ^{io}Now the Righteous One, out of faith shall He be living^o.

D.H.H.

THE METAPHOR OF GOD BEING A CONSUMING FIRE

Hebrews 12:25-29 addresses Hebrew believers who entered into a covenant with God emphasizing the gravity of adhering to this covenant. *God's response to lawbreakers is likened to a consuming fire*, symbolizing His jealousy

and judgment. Note the similarities in the Deuteronomy passage below. Note also that God, being a consuming fire, *is not concerned with purifying sinners*. Rather, that consuming fire is adversative judgment on lawbreakers. God being a consuming fire is an echo of this passage:

“Guard yourselves lest you forget the covenant of Yahweh your Elohim that He contracted with you, . . . for Yahweh your Elohim, He is a devouring fire, a jealous El” (Deut.4:23-24).

“Beware! You should not refuse Him Who is speaking! For if those escape not, refusing the One appraising on earth, much rather we, who are turning from the One from the heavens, Whose voice then shakes the earth . . . we may be offering divine service in a way well pleasing to God, with piety and dread, for our God is also a consuming fire” (Heb.12:25-29).

Over the years, quite a number of Universalists have written articles on the internet message boards concerning, “Our God also is a consuming fire.” From this statement they contend that God is the lake of fire. They rework the idea of *God being a consuming fire* into stating that God is *purifying* all the sinners in the lake of fire to make them presentable to Himself. Such a theological concept detracts from the outcome of what Christ accomplished for all mankind in His one act of listening to what God had Him do (Romans 5:18,19). Christ’s one act guarantees the justifying of every human’s life and guarantees that every human will be made righteous! *fire excluded*. Not only that, but, Christ giving Himself a ransom for all humans per 1 Timothy 2:6, is the basis of God saving all humans (1 Tim.2:4), *fire excluded*. Not to mention that all in the heavens and on earth will be reconciled to God, *by the blood of Christ’s cross* (Col.1:20), *not by fire*. We must never detract from what Christ has accomplished for all mankind and the entire universe.

Tony Nungesser

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