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**UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 2001  
BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-TWO**

**EDITORIAL**

WHEN David fought Goliath or other idolatrous enemies of the true God such as the Amalekites (see p.187), Yahweh gave him visible victory. God made Himself evident throughout Israel's history in His protection and blessings and most powerfully in the displays of His indignation against the persistent human tendency to turn from Him to idols.

In our day, in that God is conciliated to the world, not reckoning their offenses against them (see p.173), God does not bring Himself before people's consciousness in dramatic ways as He did in ancient times. We do not have these visible evidences of God's operations, but it is our privilege to believe that God is truly operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, and that He will bring all into the righteousness and subjection and reconciliation He has gained through His Son.

Indeed the secret of lawlessness continues to operate (2 Thess.2:7), and human beings turn to modern ways of idolatry. More and more, mankind tends to place its greatest hope in and give its highest praise to itself, or rather to those among us who best demonstrate ability and intelligence for providing what is wanted. And they change the glory of God into that of the creature (Rom.1:23).

It is especially sobering (and would seem despairing if we did not know these things must be and will be brief) to find some who claim to believe in the God of the Bible teaching that he is like us in not knowing the future and is doing "the best he can" under circumstances he cannot fully control (see p.157). This is a further enlargement of what had begun in Paul's day with distortions of the evan-

gel of Christ (Gal.1:7). There is a distrust of divine grace and a turning to human endeavor for salvation, which leads forward as in 1 Samuel 30:22 to expectations of special rewards at the expense of others who did not contribute. That God is our Saviour is both necessary and wise.

Perhaps not many who think they are defending God would deny God's Deity so boldly as the theologians mentioned above, but how few of those who profess faith glory in relying on God as the living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind (see p.179)! As well, there seems to be less and less appreciation of the significance of the evangel of God's grace in practical problems of our present lives (see p.162).

Brother Knoch's warning on page 256 bears repeating here: If an idea set forth by a teacher "does not give God His proper place as Supreme in wisdom, power and love, or is contrasted to the gracious conduct which accords with His present operations, take care."

We are aware of this growing spirit of lawlessness and offensiveness. But we, who, in His grace, are loving God, are also aware that God is working all together for good (Rom.8:28). We see that we are few and weak, but we are believing with Paul, that our Lord's grace is sufficient, for His power is being perfected in infirmity (2 Cor.12:10). The immediate future is uncertain except that it will not all be just what we want. Yet we are not worrying, letting our requests be made known to God, Who provides His peace (Phil.4:4-7).

To testify this way is not to claim that we are always right in disputes about the details of God's Word. But it is to affirm again that God is faithful and true, strong and wise, righteous and loving, and that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all. To Him be the glory!

May He increase our faith and that of each one reading these words.

D.H.H.

## THE FIRST OFFENSE

THE FIRST HUMAN OFFENSE followed right after the first display of Divine affection. Adam's first recorded act after Yahweh, the Subjector, had kindly provided a complement for him, so that he was no longer lonely, was to wound his Benefactor's heart by questioning His fondness and disbelieving His word, and acting contrary to His wise warning. It was a mistake, a *sin*, to eat the death-dealing fruit. It was a *transgression* to disobey His word. But, far deeper and more malignant than these, it was a frigid, frightful *offense* to hurt His *feelings*, when He had just manifested His *affection* in a most marvelous manner. Except it be to reveal His own love to His creatures through it, the main motive in building the woman was to fill the void in the heart of Adam with happiness. It should have called forth the most thankful obedience and heartfelt trust.

The fact that Adam's sin and transgression was an *offense* against God's feelings, due to the surrounding circumstances, is clearly conveyed by the record, yet it is but dimly discerned by the saints, even though the Authorized Version always uses this term when referring to it in the fifth of Romans. This rendering is excellent, yet it would have been even better if the AV had used the same English term, *offense*, elsewhere when the same Greek word occurs in the original. This is especially true in 2 Corinthians 5:19 where God is dealing with the descendants of Adam at the present time. Instead of not imputing their *trespasses*, to make them immune from *judgment*, He is not reckoning their *offenses*, which frees them from His *displeasure* in the present period of superabundant grace. It is an affair of the heart, rather than of the hand or head.

Because, at the present time, God is more concerned with the display of His *grace* than His justice, with *love* than judgment, it is important that the other occurrences in Paul's epistles be correctly rendered. Galatians 6:1 should read, "if a man should be precipitated . . . in some *offense*," rather than overtaken in a fault. In Ephesians 1:7, "the forgiveness of *sins*," and 2:5 "dead in *sins*" should be *offenses*, as *forgiveness* deals with *feelings*, and these offenses separate men from God in figurative death. In Colossians 2:13 we have both of these thoughts in one sentence ("dead to the offenses . . . dealing graciously with all our offenses"), but the AV renders it "dead in your *sins* . . . having forgiven you all *trespasses*." God is *love*, and the clearer this appears on the pages of His revelation, the better it will be for us. This should govern the underlying motive of all our dealings with Him and with one another.

It is exceedingly helpful to note that the beneficent attitude Yahweh Elohim had toward Adam, in whom the whole race was hidden, was very much the same as at the end, when humanity is once more on friendly terms with Him. But here it is followed by the first offense, and then by final reconciliation. The *feelings* play the principal part in the tragedy of the eons, especially at these prominent points in human history. This throws much light on the present, which began very much the same, with a new creation in which the old is passed by, and all is new in the spiritual sphere, as it was then in the material. Now again we learn to know evil, and are dying. Yet the way to life is not barred.

Satan, also, is present, not in a serpent, but in humanity itself. He needs no intermediary, and can speak all languages to and through the descendants of Adam. His enmity is greater than ever, and his stratagems much more refined. Most of humanity, like Eve, hearken to his voice and are used as his mouthpiece. Even many who are saved

and justified through the sacrifice of Christ hearken to his blandishments and are wounded by his fiery arrows unless they wear, not fig leaves or even furs, but a panoply of truth, righteousness and peace, and hold up the large shield of faith, with which to quench his fiery darts, for now he has gone on the offensive. There is a new creation, and few of the saints have heard of it and they try to live in the old!

#### ALL VERY GOOD

A question which stumbles many students of the Scriptures is this: If all was "very good," how could there be a bad serpent? We read that the light is good (Gen.1:4), the land and sea (10), the verdure (12), the luminaries (18), the monsters and the souls in the water and air (21), the earth life, the beasts and moving animals of the ground (25), and finally, that all that He made is *very good* (31). This must include the serpent. But things can change. We are not told that the serpent *was* more subtle, as commonly rendered, but it *became* so. Its craftiness was due to an evil spirit by which it was obsessed *after* its creation. Such seemingly slight mistranslations may be a serious stumbling block to sincere faith.

#### FIELD LIFE

It is a significant fact that the *animal of the field* is omitted in the list of those subjected to Adam (Gen.1:26), although it is specifically mentioned twice when the animals are brought before Adam when a complement was sought for him (Gen.2:19,20). This suggests that he needed the opposition of the Adversary to round him out as well as the companionship of the woman. Indeed, how could the final reconciliation come about apart from the previous enmity here introduced? This is one of those exquisite touches which reveal to the spiritual mind the divine authorship of the Scriptures. There can be little doubt that

all the animals were put under Adam's dominion, or that he understood this to be the case. But its usurpation by one species of field life was not only foreknown, but fore-ordained, for it was a part of God's purpose as much as the planting of the tree of the knowledge of evil in the garden. Its omission opens the door to the subjection of mankind to the dragon, the ancient serpent, who is the Adversary and Satan (Rev.20:2).

#### THE SERPENT

Any departure from divine order is certain to lead to disaster. This is especially true of *subjection*. Man was made to *sway* over all life moving on the land (Gen.1:28). In this he is made in the Subjector's image and likeness. Man should not tyrannize over the lower creatures simply to display his own superiority and supremacy, but he should illustrate God's paramount position as the Subjector of all. How great is the contrast between the failure of the first human to subject one of the lowest of the animals, a mere serpent, in the beginning, and the success of Christ at the consummation, when He subjects all to the Subjector, and, in conformity therewith, is Himself subjected! Here we have humanity's first offense, the sin primal: *subjection to the serpent* instead of swaying over it, and obeying God's word.

The question has often been raised, "How could Eve converse with an animal?" If we remember that conditions on earth before sin came in were ideal, and that we have only faint vestiges of our former state today, such a query would never arise. How could Adam talk with Yahweh Elohim, his Subjector, never having learned? Because humanity was created with *intuition*, only remnants of which remain. In its perfection Adam was the greatest zoologist of all time, able to give an appropriate name to all the animals. Even today the animals themselves are able to communicate with

one another without any scholastic training. Yes, they are able to understand much without it. Just now a large dog was about to sneak into our garden. All I needed to say was "Home!" in the proper tone of voice, and he obeyed. When living at Eden, California, I was resting in the open, under a bush, when a rattlesnake warned me it was about to strike, so I moved swiftly out of its way. There is still a vestige of the language of Eden. Even I knew that much of the rattler's language, but I was not bitten, like Eve. As the subjector of the animals, Adam had to be able to talk to them; and they to understand.

We should remember that Adam was created a full-grown man, not only physically, but mentally and spiritually as well. Had he been an infant, who would have taken care of him? Had he lacked knowledge, who would have taught him? Creation is an entirely different matter from generation. In matters mundane he was perfect and complete, fit to sway over the realm which was confided to his care. Language before Babel was a natural thing, not the confused jabber which is in the world today. It was like the speech of the animals is yet. Some of the most comforting sounds heard by the traveler in foreign lands, where the people speak a strange tongue, is the bark of a dog, the crowing of a rooster, or the cackle of a hen, for they still speak the language of Eden.

Many a domesticated animal has acted as if "possessed by the devil." And, indeed, many a mortal *has* been entered by Satan, as Judas was, and had power to do things quite beyond the power of a human, including the speaking of foreign languages. In Eden this was much simpler, for there was only one nature language, understood and used by all. Even inanimate things like a bottle mentioned its own name, buq-buq, whenever a liquid was poured out of it! In this case it was Satan, not a serpent, who was speaking, and that was nothing worth mentioning for so subtle a spirit.

Adam must have been able to communicate with the animals in order to subject them and sway over them. Even today those domestic animals which are still somewhat subject to man, as the horse and the donkey and the elephant and the camel and the dog, as well as others, must learn to obey his voice, or they are practically useless. So also the masters of these animals must understand them to some extent, by their cries or actions in order to keep them in subjection. But it is all only a vestige of the edenic state.

Had the Adversary appeared to Eve in the form of a messenger of light, who had *not* been put in subjection to Adam, she would have had some excuse for hearkening to him. By using an animal over which humanity was to sway, her offense was magnified. If it had been one of the higher animals, it would not have been quite so bad. In order to effect His purpose, El, the Subjector, made use of one of the lowest forms of field life, over which Eve had full authority and power. She could and should have judged it severely for its deviation and contradiction, as El did later. Yet she could not have dictated to Satan, had he appeared in the form he later took to tempt our Lord (Matt.4:1-11).

Before God put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, it was, doubtless, quite as harmless as the rest of the animals. But, just as the human is the visible deputy of God to the animals, so the serpent is the symbol of Satan, the Adversary of humanity. This is quite enigmatic in the Hebrew Scriptures, but is clearly revealed in the Unveiling, where the ancient serpent, called Adversary and Satan, deceives the whole inhabited earth, not merely the mother of mankind (Rev.12:9), and is bound in the abyss a thousand years (Rev.20:2). Here in Genesis 3 is the first conflict between the representatives of the Subjector and the Adversary on the earth.

From this it is evident that sinister spirit powers were already rampant in the universe. Adam was not given the

rule over them as Christ and His body will be. That would not have suited God's purpose. Had Satan appeared as the dreadful dragon that he is, she might not have been deluded. The Subjector had not pronounced the celestial realms good, though He did call the atmospheric "heavens" good (Gen.1:8). Under the Subjector these sinister spirits are used to produce *eventual* good by means of *immediate* evil. That there was evil in the world even then is enforced by the function of the tree that God planted in the midst of Eden, which gave the *knowledge* of good *and* evil. Indeed, the evil was necessary, to impart the *knowledge* of good. Judging by their actions, Adam and Eve had failed in this very matter. If Eve had *known* of the good that she already possessed, she would never have been lured to commit the first offense.

GENESIS 3:1-3

**3** <sup>+</sup>**Now the serpent became more crafty <sup>f</sup>than any other animal of the field <sup>w</sup>that Yahweh Elohim had <sup>d</sup>made.**  
<sup>+</sup> <sup>7</sup>**The serpent<sup>n</sup> <sup>l</sup>said to the woman: <sup>i</sup> Did Elohim say <sup>'</sup>indeed, You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?**  
<sup>2+</sup> **The woman <sup>ba</sup>replied to the serpent: We may eat <sup>f</sup>of the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> <sup>+</sup>yet <sup>f</sup>of the fruit of the tree <sup>w</sup>that is in the midst of the garden Elohim said, You shall not eat from it, and you shall not touch <sup>i</sup> it lest you should die.**

SATAN'S STRATAGEM

At first sight it seems that Satan, in the serpent, quoted the words of the Subjector quite closely. But a keener look will show that his deviations though few and apparently trivial, utterly departed from Yahweh Elohim's kindly and conciliatory *spirit*. Satan alters the positive instruction into a negative prohibition. Yahweh Elohim had said, "From every tree of the garden, you may eat, *yea eat*" (Gen.2:16).

This is degraded into the negative command: “Did Elohim say indeed, You shall not eat from every tree of the garden?” (Gen.3:1). Besides he leaves out the repetition of the word “eat” which lays emphasis on the divine provision and its freeness. This was designed by the Adversary to make them discontented and resentful.

#### EVERY—NOT . . . NOT

This is, perhaps the best example of what a change in the *emphasis* and the *order* of words can do. Yahweh Elohim began with *every*. Satan started with *not*. “From *every* tree you may eat, yea eat. But . . .” “You shall *not* eat from every tree.” These express the same thought. The ordinary reader hardly notices the emphasis unless it is called to his attention. Satan makes much use of this device. Indeed, the most terrible doctrine of Christendom, which stamps God with a character infinitely worse than even Satan did in this first expression we have from him, depends on false emphasis. Many are the passages which agree with the final reconciliation of all (Col.1:20), but these are ignored, and the few places concerning God’s temporal and local judgments are *over-stressed*, so that He is transformed from a Friend of unlimited love to a fiend of everlasting hate.

Two points in Eve’s conduct should be brought home to us today. That is, she *altered* and *added* to the words of Yahweh, the Subjector. He had emphasized the generous provision of eating of every tree, with a single exception. She also neglected to quote the repetition of “eat”. This is often essential to the *spirit* of a statement, even if it does not alter the meaning. Here she began to offend, for she omitted to note how *heartily* they had been invited to partake of the fruits of the garden. On the other hand, she *added* “and you are not to touch it,” to the prohibition, which makes it appear needlessly harsh and distrustful. Touching a poisonous tree will not kill. She made a pre-

tense of believing and obeying, but was taking the first steps toward disaster, by misrepresenting the Subjector’s *loving attitude*. She certainly knew nothing of the good which had been their portion, the Edenic bliss, to which all mankind has looked with mistaken longing ever since.

#### EVE SUBTRACTED FROM GOD’S WORD

Eve failed in two ways. First the sin of omission, and then of commission. Both are typical of her descendants today, so deserve careful consideration. She left out two significant words, *every* and the repeated *eat*. The original pair needed food. They probably could have managed to exist by eating the fruit of a few of the trees, possibly only one. Yet Yahweh Elohim did not restrict them to a bare subsistence, but provided for an “Edenic,” which means a *luxurious* life. The pulp of fruits does not merely nourish. Seed-food is better for that. But tree fruit has the most delightful flavors of any.

The fruit provided should have given them pleasure and awakened thankfulness. The word *every* should not only have led Eve to repeat it in her reply to the serpent, but to indignantly repudiate the implication that God was withholding something good from them. Moreover, she should have emphasized the genial goodwill of Yahweh, in giving them the fullest freedom in selecting from the many luscious, life-lengthening trees, and warning them against the one, death-dealing specimen in the midst of these. In this she reveals the vital fact that the first sin was due to their lack of appreciation, and alienation from Yahweh, and ignorance of evil, even as the final consummation will be based on humanity’s knowledge of evil and appreciation of God’s love, and reconciliation. The end will be the counterpart of the beginning.

The first offense has many helpful lessons. The fact that it was an offense against the *feelings* of Yahweh Elohim,

should teach us to look at the *spirit* shown by those who speak of His revelation, as well as the sense. It may be that what they say seems quite right and convincing to us, but if it is presented in a way that does not give God His proper place as Supreme in wisdom, power, and love, or is contrasted to the gracious conduct which accords with His present operations, take care. Examples abound. The average scientist turns his back to the Deity. The theologian omits and adds to His Word. Even those who apparently seek to defend the truth, if they are harsh and contentious, are very likely to be in error.

Worse even than Eve's omissions is the one addition to God's words. By exaggerating His prohibition He is made to appear unduly harsh. First of all, God had not said that *touching* the tree would lead to dying, and it was probably untrue. But it is important in revealing her attitude, and the stratagem of the Adversary, for he uses it still. How many things in theology are merely exaggerations, due to alienation from God, even when apologizing for God! We should be on our guard against this subtle attempt to misrepresent His loving heart interest in His creatures, especially humanity, which is His image and likeness, through whom He desires to reveal Himself to the rest of His creatures.

In these days of divine conciliation and transcendent grace, it is especially helpful to note the character of Eve's omission, for it expresses the loving attitude of Yahweh Elohim toward humanity. Almost all "gospel preaching" today omits the conciliation. The very word and thought is almost unknown. Nearly all the emphasis is laid on the opposite, the certainty of vindictive judgment in an eternal hell, of which God has never spoken. This is due to the suggestions of the Adversary, who has nearly all of Eve's descendants listening to him, even those who, in spirit, live in a garden more gracious than Eden.

A. E. Knoch

## GOD SEES

SEVEN TIMES in Genesis 1 we read that God *sees* the effects of His words in relation to creation (Gen.1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31). These are all pronounced good, the last being "very good." Once in Genesis 2 we find God seeing the effects of His acts in relation to the human. This occurs in Genesis 2:19 where having Himself *formed* the animals and birds, God *brings* each of them to the human "to *see*<sup>1</sup> what he would call it." In Genesis 3 we read of the woman *seeing* the desirability of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (v.6), but nothing is said there about God seeing the critical events of deception and disobedience that are recorded; in fact, Yahweh Elohim speaks rhetorically to Adam and Eve as though He had *not* seen what had occurred (Gen.3:9-13). Here in these opening chapters of the Scriptures God's act of seeing is associated only with the good effects of His works.

God sees all things, including human wickedness (*cf* Gen.6:5) and righteousness (*cf* Gen.7:1), but the opening chapters of Genesis relate divine sight solely to the good achievement of divine purposes. In God's seeing that the effects of certain of His actions are good we are assured God will eventually see good results to all His actions.

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1. I overlooked this act of God in my list of divine activities in Genesis 2 on page 137 of our May number, although I noted that this passage treats of "happy conditions and good effects" of God's actions (p.142). The verb "see" here is an infinitive form ("to see"), but this does not make it any less a specific reference to an act of God Himself.

Ultimately, God's actions in creating the human as he was and placing the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as He did and settling the human in the garden and instructing him as He did will all contribute to the good outcome He has purposed. This accords with Isaiah 53:11 where we read concerning the suffering Christ, "From the toil of His soul He shall *see* light, and He shall be satisfied by His knowledge."

#### GOD'S SEEING IN GENESIS ONE

The lessons of Genesis 1 must not be forgotten when we come to the second chapter. What is revealed about God in the first chapter remains *true* throughout the rest of Scripture, and, of equal importance it remains *relevant*. All of God's activity of creating and separating and calling will ultimately be followed by His act of seeing and being satisfied with the great goodness of it all.

It was not a surprise to God when He saw that the light was good (Gen.1:4). He knew that light was good and intended that light would be a good thing for the earth. To see that this was so was for God a matter of experiencing the goodness He had purposed and brought upon the earth by the power of His word. What God had envisioned was now actually activated; its goodness was now enjoyed in experience and not simply in anticipation.

The lesson about God is that His works result in a real good, a good that will surely be fully appreciated and sensed with pleasure and satisfaction. This is the significance of the verb "see" in the two opening chapters of Genesis.

#### GENESIS 2:19

But the wording of Genesis 2:19 has led some to conclude that in this particular incident God's seeing was a matter of learning something previously unknown. This passage is taken to suggest that God did not know, even in

mind, what Adam would name the animals; He brought them to the human to find out what the human would call them. From this, it is further reasoned, God did not know ahead of time the outcome of His other actions in Genesis 2. God made humanity and the tree and the serpent, and He made them as they were, but, it is insisted, God did not know ahead of time what would happen when He put these elements together and turned His back.

God's purpose in forming and then bringing the animals to the human was indeed *to see*. But this seeing was connected with God's prior actions just as surely as God's seeing the goodness of the light was connected with God's declaration of Genesis 1:3 and His seeing of the great goodness of the finished creation was connected with all His acts noted in the first chapter. God's forming of the animals and bringing them to the human are important and very influential elements in man's naming of the animals. In addition, God had revealed that humanity (also created and formed by God) was to sway over the animals (Gen. 1:28). All that God did shaped the human act of naming the animals, including the particular names given.

When God saw Adam give each animal its distinctive name and heard that particular name God was not learning something that had been outside of His counseled will (*cf* Eph.1:11). There is no reason to doubt that the human acted willingly, but his will was not independent of God; it was part of what God had made in forming the human. The human did not name each creature arbitrarily, apart from causation. He was influenced, even directed, by what the animal was as formed by God and by his entire environment both inner and outer as prepared by God. What God saw was what God had intended for the human. And, knowing what we have learned about God in Genesis 1, we can be sure that each name the human gave was *the* good and right name for each creature. Indeed, we would infer

that the particular name given to each animal drew forth the right response of subjection to the human which was ideal and beneficial for all.

#### DIVINE PURPOSE

Why do the Scriptures draw attention to this particular incident? Why is it important to relate God's actions of forming birds and animals and bringing them before humanity with the human work of naming these lower creatures? The record in Genesis 2:19 is certainly not to indicate some sort of human independence. But it does focus attention on the intended place of humanity on the earth, a principal function of mankind and one of real value in God's plan. God prepared and directed the way for the human to name the animals (not capriciously, but intelligently and appropriately) as an essential and effective beginning of human sway over the animals.

Each name given established a relationship between the human as the subjector and the animal willingly responding, as is dimly seen even today between domestic animals and their owners. This initial step was successful for the time being. God "saw" with satisfaction what names were given. He enjoyed the realization of this initial step of human subjecting that He had planned.

As previously indicated, this incident stands as a witness to the success of God's operations. The pattern that we find in Genesis 1, of God acting, His actions being effective and the effects being seen with satisfaction is repeated in Genesis 2 on this one occasion. Genesis 2:19 testifies to us that God will achieve the entirety of His purpose. Eventually all of His creatures will willingly take the part that God has prepared for them.

For sinful humanity, this place in the image and likeness of God as subjectors (Gen.1:27,28) is assured because of the death of Christ on their behalf. There will come a

time when God will see the appropriate names once again being given to the animals by humanity, and He will see their sway over the lower creatures being righteous and effective and good. This will be for God's glory, for it is all out of Him and through Him.

(As for us who are called today in God's transcendent grace, the words of Ephesians 2:7-10, accord with the lesson of Genesis 2:19. We may be sure that in the oncoming eons we will be doing the good works which God Himself makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking in them. God will see it so.)

#### HUMANITY'S PRIVILEGED POSITION

Far from trying to denigrate the human's work in naming the animals by pointing out God's place of supremacy in this operation, I am saying that Genesis 2:19 underscores the importance of humanity. But this importance is there exactly because God remains the God of Genesis 1. God is the First Cause. He is operating all together for good (Rom.8:28). The human works, but he does not work independently. He does not work apart from causes, and those causes are centered in God.

It was humanity's privilege to hold this important function of naming the lower animals. It accorded with the place God had assigned humanity on the earth. We might reason that the privilege is restricted in measure as it is influenced by God. But this would only show that we do not yet know the real horror that independence from God would be. The animals are not to be independent of humanity, and none of God's creatures are outside of His purposeful and operative and effective doings.

God acts in order to "see" the good results, not in the sense of learning, but in the sense of experiencing. We also shall see these glorious effects of God's operations. How great and wise He is!

D.H.H.

## MARRIAGE AND THE BELIEVER

(Part 2)

THERE are so many misconceptions about what the Scriptures in general, and the law of Moses in particular say about marriage, divorce and remarriage that it seems best, in examining this issue, to review the instructions and teachings given to Israel through the law, and later by our Lord, before we look into the teachings given us through Paul. What God has to say to us with respect to the believer's walk today is the critical issue, and this will be found in Paul's epistles. But it is well for us to have a clear concept of the scriptural usage and meaning of such terms as "adultery" and "prostitution" as well as what exactly was said to Israel concerning these matters.

In this present article we will continue this background examination of scriptural teaching on this topic. But we will also begin our consideration of God's word to us today given through the apostle Paul.

### DISMISSAL BECAUSE OF PROSTITUTION

Contrary to popular claim, the phrase, "for prostitution," does not at all refer to an instance in which *divorce* is *justified*, but to a situation in which *adultery* is *not* committed. The words "for prostitution" refer to a situation in which dismissal of a wife has occurred under circumstances in which prostitution had first occurred; that is, a case in which a man's wife had become joined to a "paramour." It is loose and misleading (as well as incorrect) to say that these words constitute "Christ's justifiable grounds for divorce." That is a base explanation indeed. Instead,

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the words "for prostitution," merely explain that dismissal, under such circumstances, in so doing, will not entail an act of *adultery* on the part of the one who thus dismisses.

It is far from the truth to say that whatever is not a transgression of the law of Moses is not a "sin." Conversely, it is equally far from the truth to say that whatever does not accord with Moses' words is sinful. Immanent sin is neither comprised in nor confined to whatever may "transgress" the law of Yahweh, which was given through Moses. "Sin" is by no means necessarily committed where that law is not heeded. Sin is *not* "transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4, AV), notwithstanding the fact that the single Greek word, *anomia*, is so poorly and confusingly rendered thus in the Authorized Version, by means of this lengthy four-word phrase. Instead, sin is simply "*lawlessness*." 1 John 3:4 is correctly translated accordingly, "sin is lawlessness," in not only the Concordant Version, but in the American Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, and the Revised Standard Version.

Even though ancient Israel, in the wilderness, never heeded a single entreaty of the apostle Paul, this omission did not constitute sin. Likewise, neither do believers today sin in not observing either the precepts of Moses, Christ's entreaties to Israel concerning those precepts, or any related instructions through those associated with Him in that ministry (viz., "the twelve"; cf 1 Cor.15:5; cp Gal.1:9; 2:7).

To "sin" is to "miss the mark" (*hamartonō*, UN-MARK; cf Judges 20:16). To sin is to err; to make a mistake. Sin is not sin in itself but as it is related to a "target." It is a relative term; an expression which must be related to a standard or criterion.

For example, under the law of Moses, with respect to its precepts, it was not a "sin" for a man to have multiple wives or concubines (secondary or inferior wives). The

institutions of Moses related to polygamy, even so, were not to justify the practice, but to deter excess and abuse (Ex.21:7-11; Deut.21:10-17).

Indeed Moses *permitted* the people to dismiss their wives. “Yet from the beginning, it has not come to be thus” (Matt. 19:8). Such practices and their toleration were not a development based on God’s original, ideal design for humanity, but were mere civil expedients for a fleshly people.

As the Lord declared, “Did you not read that the Maker from the beginning makes them male and female, and He said, ‘On this account shall a man be leaving father and mother and shall be being joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh’? So that no longer are they two, but *one* flesh. What *God*, then, yokes together, let not man be separating” (Matt.19:6; Gen.1:27; 2:24).

In the beginning, the Maker, having made them male and female, on this account, instructed that a man shall be *being* (i.e., *continuing* to be) joined to his *wife* (not to his wives) and that the *two* (not “the three” or “the thirteen”) shall be *one* flesh. Similarly, the man, having become *one* flesh with his *wife*, was by no means instructed to divorce his wife and become “one flesh” with some other woman, whether a second *wife* (whether concurrent or consecutive) or a first *prostitute*.

#### MARRIAGE IS A UNITING

A “prostitute” is any woman with whom a man *unites* (or becomes “married”), even though she is not *considered* to be or *treated* as the woman to whom the man is *married* (that is, she is not treated as a *wife*; as a woman who is *accepted* and *recognized* as one’s mate in marriage). However, the fact is, that one *is* “married” to the one to whom one *is* *married*. This is so whether one leaves his father and mother in order to accomplish this (Gen.2:24), or leaves his or her mate and does the same (*cf* 1 Cor.7:12,13; *cp* 1 Cor.6:15,16).

As Paul says, “Are you not aware that he who *joins* a prostitute is *one* body? For, He is averring, the two [i.e., regardless of which two] *will be one* flesh” (1 Cor.6:16). In the Scriptures, and in fact, neither *marriage* nor *divorce* is actually effected either by a wedding *ceremony* or by a *legal* divorce. In such cases, both marriage and divorce are thus effected merely incidentally.

By way of illustration, when someone opens the shutters of a tightly-shuttered room, the sun is the actual cause of illumination (modern scientists call it the “sufficient” cause), and the opening of the shutters the incidental or “necessary” cause of illumination.

Even though a “necessary” cause is “essential to the case” (i.e., to a *particular* case in which a certain thing occurs), it does not follow that it is essential to all cases in which that same thing occurs or comes into being.

For example, in another case, in which the windows in a room are without shutters (or, certainly, in a case in which one leaves a building and stands outdoors), the sun, the sufficient (i.e., actual) cause of illumination, will produce its illuminating effect just as surely as in the former case in which the incidental cause of the opening of certain window shutters was “necessary,” incidentally speaking.

Therefore, practically and actually, with or without any attendant formality (whether ecclesiastical or civil), once a man and woman join together in sexual union, they are “married” (even if one should be joined to a “prostitute”), and, unless one or both should *separate* the union, they will remain united for the rest of their days.

There may be many things that, under the law of Moses, man is not *prohibited* from doing; but this does not mean that such things *should* be done. Nor does it mean that any such acts are pleasing to God, *or that they are not sin with respect to a higher law*. Love is “*forgoing* all” (1 Cor.13:7). That is, Love refrains from doing what, by a lower standard,

it may well be “permitted” to do, because, by its own higher (indeed highest) standard, it is constrained to do not what it *may* but what it *should*, to accord with what is ideal.

So much for the self-justification of those who put away their mates, “on account of prostitutions,” having falsely imagined that since they are believers in Christ, they are therefore subject to Christ’s teachings to Israel with respect to marriage. They do so as well, having noted that, for those under such teaching, under the circumstance of prostitution, one *may* put away one’s mate without committing adultery oneself in so doing. Yet it does not seem to occur to them that in thus avoiding adultery, they have by no means fulfilled love.

In speaking of these things, we are not speaking of what, under such circumstances, we ourselves *might* do, *would* do or *could* do, but of what all *should* do, ideally speaking. Let us not lower God’s perfect standards (nor diminish our esteem for them) through the frenzied failure of the flesh to repudiate these very principles, and to justify itself in the process.

#### WE, BEING MANY, ARE ONE BODY

Now let us turn to the writings of the apostle Paul, to consider what we can find in his words concerning this matter of separation and divorce. As we begin, let us note that the *untraceable* riches of Christ were made known through the apostle Paul alone (Eph.3:8) well after the time of our Lord’s ministry. The untraceable riches of Christ are those revelations concerning Christ which were formerly undisclosed; they were hid in God and kept secret prior to being revealed by Paul. These revelations are the words of Christ as well, as much so as the declarations personally spoken by the Lord to Israel, whether to and through His disciples or to the throngs at large.

Our Lord’s teachings through Paul are not directed

toward the *nation* of Israel at all; nor were they directed to those believing Israelites during the Acts period who remained under law, in anticipation of the terrestrial kingdom according to the prophets.

Instead, Paul’s teachings are the teachings of Christ for “the ecclesia which is [Christ’s] *body*” (Eph.1:22), to whom “the evangel which [Paul was] heralding among the nations” applies (Gal.2:2). This is the glorious calling which obtains even today, during the current era in which the nation of Israel continues in darkness, having rejected her Messiah.

While there is considerable accord between Paul’s ministry and that of the twelve, nevertheless, his teachings are by no means identical to theirs. Indeed, there are many vital differences between these two bodies of truth, even as in the corresponding economies which result from them. One of these distinctives with respect to Paul’s ministry concerns his teachings on the theme of marriage.

#### WALK IN ACCORD WITH OUR CALLING

By means of his writings, the apostle Paul provides those who are blessed according to the glorious Pauline evangel not only with a complete unfolding of that glorious revelation, but with an entire complement of practical instruction for their walk. This includes specific instruction related to marriage; instruction that accords with and typifies the unparalleled union which the believers enjoy with Christ as the very members of His “*body*” (*cp* 1 Cor.12:12,13).

The ancient scroll of divorce under Moses is no rule for us today. Simply because the civil government under which we live may make provision for divorce, is no indication that we should avail ourselves of this provision. Ideally, even as in all situations, the believer should always be kind and gracious (let the offense of another be what it will), thus also, in marriage, the husband and wife should always be forgiving and conciliatory, regardless of the offense com-

mitted by the other mate. All sorts of reasonings offered in an attempt to justify wrongdoing, concerning “worst-case scenarios,” will not change this fact.

We must be careful not to switch issues. The commission of an offense against us by another, affords us no “circumstantial license” to commit offense against the offender. We may not *lie* to someone else because they have *stolen* from us. Neither, then, may we be *ungracious* to our mates (much less utterly “divorce” ourselves from all association with them) because they have committed *prostitution*.

Let the husbands be loving their wives according as Christ is loving the ecclesia (Eph.5:25). Let the wives attend to their duty to be *fond* of their husbands (Titus 2:4); being subject to their own husbands, as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is Head of the ecclesia, and He is the Saviour of the body (Eph.5:22-24). Yet if we would approximate these ideals, God must *give* us such a disposition and response; for His achievement are we (Eph.2:10).

The omission of righteous acts (not to mention the commission of unrighteous acts) is simply *wrong*. The fact that our own shameful behavior may well have been induced by the egregious deeds of another, neither changes its nature nor warrants its performance. What is right is right; what is wrong is wrong. There is no such thing as “grounds for wrongdoing,” *including sins of omission, not merely commission*. Nor are there any “excuses” which *justify* our failure to do what is right, even if they should fully *account* for it.

We should be deeply sympathetic and understanding concerning all who fail; even so, we realize that recompense and suffering must ever attend all evil. That is, they must do so until the day when God completely removes evil from His universe and replaces it with good. We do well to exhibit unfeigned love and pity toward all. Even so, we must never seek to justify sin for that is not our province.

Scripturally speaking, where both are believers, there is no proviso for divorce in this economy. This should not be surprising; for we are the body of Christ and no one *can* be separated from His own body! “Our union with Him is unbreakable. This should be reflected in our earthly relationships.”<sup>1</sup>

Indeed our union with Christ *should* be reflected in our earthly relationships. Consequently, and especially in the marriage relationship, the members of the ecclesia will do well to reflect their union with Christ by their union with one another—enduring all, bearing with one another in love.

#### TRUTH AND UNWARRANTED INFERENCES

It is certainly true that to married believers who are also themselves married to believers, the Lord’s own charge is: “A wife is not to be separated from her husband. Yet if she should be separated also, let her remain unmarried or be conciliated to her husband. And a husband is not to leave his wife” (1 Cor.7:11). This is clear indeed. *Nonetheless*, it by no means follows, if any today should fail to heed this imperative, that any subsequent second marriages are themselves sinful relationships. Much less does it follow that God will neither forgive nor deal graciously with those who fall or that peace, joy, reconciliation with God and even salvation itself can never be the portion of any such, so long as they do not renounce their second marriages and live in celibacy as some would demand.

In light of this grave charge of the Lord addressed unto married believers, any *counsel* of our own to such ones can only accord with His charge. In order to heed this charge, however, one’s faith must be strong enough to believe it and one’s will sufficiently inclined to act accordingly.

<sup>1</sup> I. A. E. Knoch: CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.254.

It is ideal for a husband and wife not to separate in the first place (“A wife is not to be separated from her husband . . . a husband is not to leave his wife”). Yet where separation has occurred, it then becomes ideal for the parties either to remain unmarried or to be “conciliated” to one another, thus becoming mutually reconciled.

“Conciliation” speaks of that which is “down” (i.e., “in accord with”) “change” (*katalassō*, DOWN-CHANGE); it refers to the gracious act of one party toward the other, where estrangement has occurred. In this case (1 Cor. 7:11), since it is used in reference to one who is separated, it refers to a change from the unmarried state to the married state, once again.

#### “BECAUSE OF PROSTITUTIONS”

It is clear, then, where separation has occurred, that the separated believer *should* either remain unmarried or remarry his or her first mate. However, even where there has been strong resolution to follow this course, if one should find himself or herself becoming incontinent (*cp* 1 Cor.7:5), no longer having authority over his or her own will (*cf* 1 Cor.7:37; Rom.7:15-23), Paul’s explicit word to such ones who are unmarried, even as to widows (1 Cor.7:8), is, “if they are not controlling themselves, *let them marry*, for it is better to marry than to be on fire” (1 Cor.7:9; i.e., to be aflame with lustful desire). It simply is not true that such a one must continually struggle with such passions, continually failing, perhaps even engaging in “prostitution” (1 Cor.6:15-18), yet, as one who must not marry, ever attempting to live celibately.

To those who are separated, the Lord’s *charge*, is either to remain unmarried or to be conciliated to one’s former mate. Nonetheless, if any, lacking continence, should find themselves failing to heed this charge, Paul’s *imperative* is, “*let them marry*” (1 Cor.7:9). Under such conditions,

not only *may* they marry, but they *must* marry. The Lord’s charge is one thing; Paul’s imperative is the other.

One who is unmarried is “loosed” from a wife, and does not sin in marrying again. “You have been loosed from a wife? Do not *seek* a wife. *Yet if ever you should* be marrying, *also* [i.e., if ever you too should do so, the same as anyone else who marries], *you did not sin*” (1 Cor.7:27,28). Except for those who have the *gracious gift* of celibacy, granted to them by God (1 Cor.7:7), since every believer must “flee from prostitution” (1 Cor.6:18), Paul declares, “if they are not controlling themselves, let them marry” (1 Cor.7:9). “Because of prostitutions, let *each* man have a wife for himself and *each* woman have her own husband” (1 Cor.7:2).

One is either married or unmarried. There are many today who are unmarried. Some of them were never married; others were formerly married, but are now unmarried. All such considerations, however, are beside the point. The point is this: if one is unmarried and continence is lacking, Paul’s imperative applies.

#### HOLD FAST TO THE FAITH

Those who, through their own reasonings and unbelief, deny these clear words and are “forbidding to marry” (1 Tim.4:3), are withdrawing from the faith (i.e., from the genuine body of truth; 1 Tim.4:1). They are giving heed to deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons; doing so in the hypocrisy of false expressions, their own conscience having been cauterized (1 Tim.4:1,2).

In our society today, such a full separation so as to produce the unmarried state, includes a legal divorce as well. Very often, at least one of the parties soon marries someone else. In any case, considerable estrangement usually continues to exist indefinitely between the original partners. Even where this is not the case, only in rare instances do both wish to remarry one another.

Where the remarriage of one of the original partners to a new partner has occurred and so long as such a second marriage continues, even if the remaining, now single, partner of the original marriage should wish to do so, there is no longer any possibility for him or her to remarry his or her original mate. Nor should the single party from the original marriage seek to win back his or her original mate now that that former mate is married to someone else.

If such a divorced, unmarried person, out of a sincere sense of moral obligation to an original, possibly unconditional, “lifetime” marriage vow should choose to remain unmarried the rest of his or her days, we could only honor such a decision. But where, in such a confusing world and wicked eon as that in which we live today, any such “stranded” individual should himself or herself decide to marry another (any original “vows” which may have been made notwithstanding), we may be certain that any offense unto God which might result from such a course will be dealt with by Him in the utmost grace.

What many have overlooked is that sexual continence, like all “self-control,” is a *fruit* of the spirit (*cf* Gal.5:23). That is, it is the *result* of discrete, spiritual empowerment, according to God’s own purpose and grace. While it is true that Paul wanted all to be as himself with respect to all such matters of self-control, he was swift to add: “*But* each has his own gracious gift from God, one indeed, thus, yet one thus” (1 Cor.7:7; *cp* John 3:27).

For example, one person might have the gracious gift of self-control while lacking the graces of kindness and meekness; yet another might enjoy these graces, while nonetheless lacking the grace of self-control.

May God grant us grace to accept the word of His grace, that it might be ours to be boasting not in ourselves, but solely in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

J.R.C.

## SALVATION IS A JOURNEY

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

“This loving epistle reveals an aspect of the evangel which is well-nigh lost. This is the *conciliation*. God is love. He will not rest satisfied in merely justifying us. He wished to clasp us to His heart. To restore His creatures to righteousness may indeed erase the stain of sin, but offers no valid reason or excuse for sin’s intrusion into the universe. But if the entrance of sin is to bear the precious fruit of reconciliation, if it is to bring us infinitely nearer to God than is possible without it, if it is the means of revealing God’s love to us, then may we give thanks even for the sin which is the source of our sorrows . . . .

“This is but another example of the function of evil. Had the Corinthians been exemplary in their conduct, this marvelous interchange and expression of affection would never have found occasion. Men cannot bring good out of evil: that is God’s prerogative. But God can, and does, control all the evil in the universe, so that its ultimate result will be blessing far beyond what could have been had evil never entered and marred His perfect creation.”<sup>1</sup>

We perceive the anguish of the apostle prior to welcoming his fellow worker, Titus, in Macedonia (2 Cor. 7:6,7). The news which he brought from Corinth would

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I. A. E. Knoch: CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.266.

have brought tears of thankfulness from Paul as they both knelt in prayers of joy. What wonderful love is here, that, completely distraught with anxiety, he now learns that far from causing resentment, the discipline contained in his former letter had resulted in stirring the hearts of the saints to sorrow and repentance.

#### ENLIGHTENMENT

The apostle Peter declared that much of Paul's wisdom was "*hard to apprehend*" (2 Peter 3:16). In Peter's case we clearly understand that this was due to considerable deviation in their respective evangels. But at present, whenever we hear this same opinion expressed, it is a cause of profound sorrow. For example, what is more apparent in the above epistle than the inexpressible relief afforded by the news which Titus brought? We fully comprehend and rejoice in the exultation of this praise of the apostle:

"Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of pities and God of all consolation, Who is consoling us in our every affliction to enable us to be consoling those in every affliction, through the consolation with which we ourselves are being consoled by God, seeing that, according as the sufferings of Christ are superabounding in us, thus through Christ, our consolation also is superabounding" (2 Cor.1:3-5).

Through the revelations entrusted to the apostle, we have come, slowly, and often painfully, to maturity. Yet even this is but a subjective condition. As indicated in the former epistle to Corinth, we also have been led by the spirit to recognize that which was out of an instalment (1 Cor.13:12). Issues once considered vital were identified as rungs in a virtual ladder of progress from confusion to enlightenment. They served their purpose, and, as the focus of our limited vision was gradually widened to perceive God's ultimate goal, these were thankfully discarded.

Now we correctly partition the word of truth which gloriously culminates in every creature acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father.

Deeply impressed upon our hearts is the truth that salvation is a journey, not a destination! Ours is a "logical, divine service." In all ministries of faith there will be crises or disappointments, but these should not divert us from eager anticipation of the gracious consummation which our loving Father has assured. The consummation will reflect the nature of our God, Who is love.

#### VULNERABLE

Many years ago, Pastor George L. Rogers, in his studies in the Roman epistle, wrote as follows, "Had God not forbidden Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the serpent would have had no weapon against them, and no transgression would have demanded the death which had been threatened. That precept was for the preservation of their lives, but it turned out to be for death. In the same way sin now uses the precept to fix attention on and create the desire for the forbidden object, and to desire adds her solicitation. Sin whispers that the prohibited objects are desirable and beneficial and thus *deludes me*."<sup>2</sup>

Hence we discern that our *ancient, innocent parents*, knowing neither good or evil, were helpless. Vulnerable to a degree unthinkable! Deprived of any *lever*, or means of influencing Adam or Eve, what could the Adversary have done? In every sense of the word, they were really immature! How intriguing though to note that Satan was unable to comprehend!

#### LOCKED UP IN STUBBORNNESS

"To speak like a human, God is the embodiment of love

<sup>2</sup> *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.24, p.305.

as well as wisdom. He was not satisfied with conditions in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve lived in Luxury, for this is the meaning of Eden. Without any background of evil this was taken as a matter of course, which generated no feeling of thankfulness, no response of love in their hearts, for this could not be produced directly. There had to be a counter irritant. This He had already implanted in them at their creation. They were *stubborn*. To give them occasion, He planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and warned *them* not to eat, even though He *intended* that they should do so.”<sup>3</sup>

Inevitably, confused and bewildered, humanity, stricken by conscience at the shame of disobedience and sin, becomes preoccupied with all the weary aspects of estrangement from God. For many, if not most, this results in despair, leading to apostasy, atheism, even nihilism. Sincerely, we have to acknowledge that the homing of God's spirit, leading to revelation of His choice, calling and justifying, is the one and only way in which we ourselves have emerged from such misery. Truly, “. . . out of Him and through Him and for Him is all; to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!” (Rom.11:36).

#### PERILOUS PERIODS

In these present days, described by the apostle as perilous periods, there is greater need to become aware of the acute despair which will afflict the ecclesia. More than ever then, there is urgent need of loving consolation. God provided the apostle with support through the ministries of many fellow workers. Prominent among these of course, are young Timothy, Titus, Epaphroditus, the beloved physician, Luke, and others, who were dear to the heart of God's great ambassador. How ill-equipped they were to

3. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.49, p.215.

embark on so great a task. Yet it is not until the apostle is restricted in chains, that God proclaims His great revelations of love! Now, at last, the mighty secrets are revealed. Now, as last, God provides the superabounding consolation for His beloved.

We began this study with a due consideration of *the intrusion of sin*. The false belief that Satan and his cunning deceptions are out of control or beyond the Creator's purpose dishonors God. Despite the testimony of Scriptures that this one is bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3), sadly, many cannot, or will not accept that in like manner to the raising up of Pharaoh (Rom.9:17), so this one serves in providing the essential contrastive gloom of sin. Unmoved by the rousing and glorious exaltation of Christ Jesus, apprised of God's great consummation, he yet remains obdurate! But God will abolish all such enmity and bring all under the feet of Christ (*cf* 1 Cor.15:25-28).

“What if mankind had never become acquainted with evil? Then we would have been neutrals, unable to really enjoy anything. All of God's goodness and grace and love would be wasted on us. Not only the present, but the future also would be a monotonous apathy, without pleasure or affection, with no appreciation, for this depends on contrasts. But when we rejoice in Christ Jesus as Saviour from *sin*, and as Redeemer from *enmity*, then our hearts overflow in the knowledge of His goodness and His grace”<sup>4</sup>

#### DID GOD SUFFER?

It would be most reprehensible for any to assume that the prohibition, penalty, and, most important still, the suffering, were all detached and dispassionate. We pose the question: Did God suffer? For answer, our eyes and hearts look up at that cruel stake on which His loving Son

4. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.49, p.207.

died, *“Thou art My Son, the Beloved; in Thee I delight”* (Mark 1:11).

“Eloi! Eloi! Lema Sabachtani?”

In what grievous strait He framed that plea, with speech  
once shared by His mother’s knee.

Now, spirit-led in loving grace, with broken heart, to Calvary  
I grieve before His anguished face, and hear His, “Why  
abandon Me?”

Mine all the bleak words which cursed His name; mine  
the confusion, the sin and shame.

“Others He saves” rebuke the crowd, beneath a sombre,  
midday sky.

“But not Himself!” I challenge loud; then silent, watch  
the Saviour die.

Donald Fielding

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#### REPOSING IN CHRIST

**Rosemary Lounsbury**, of Wiarton, Ontario, died suddenly on July 22, at age 63. Her husband Richard, and family, and brothers and sisters in the Lord, are comforted to know as she did, that she will be vivified when the Lord returns. She rejoiced in 1 Timothy 2:4 because it told her that all mankind would be saved and come into a realization of the truth.

**Barbara Gaw Mullen**, formerly of East Sound, Washington, was put to repose in December, 2000. Her unshakable faith in God’s eonian purpose and the truth and scope of His grace brought her great peace in her hard life, right up to her passing. Though she knew much suffering, she also knew much grace, including the recognition that our suffering is purposed of God and is according to His wisdom.

Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving us to be tried above what we are able, but, together with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable us to undergo it. Hence we are anticipating that happy expectation, even the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who gives Himself for us. Surely, then, we may confidently declare that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us.

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#### *If One Died For the Sake of All*

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#### GOD, THE SAVIOUR

GOD is the Saviour. He saves sinners, not just from the consequences of sin, but ultimately and in the final analysis from being sinners. His work of salvation is a work of love, power and righteousness, a work of great cost to Himself in the death of His Son, a work of deliverance into righteousness (*cf* Rom.3:21-24; 5:18,19) and life (*cf* 1 Cor.15:22-28) and reconciliation (*cf* Col.1:20) carried out against enormous opposition, and a work achieving excellent good for all.

For the believer this salvation has already begun to operate in our present lives with joy and peace, in faith and expectation and love (1 Cor.13:13) and the earnest of the spirit (Eph.1:13,14). We who have heard and accepted and who retain the evangel are being saved (1 Cor.15:1-4), so that our salvation is not only a matter of the future, when it will be full and complete (1 Thess.5:8-10; Col.3:4), but, in accord with our response to the evangel, of the present as well (Phil.2:12,13).

This salvation is God’s grace and achievement (Eph. 2:8-10). But it is not for the believer alone. Ultimately it embraces all mankind because that is God’s will and Christ died for all.

#### 1 TIMOTHY

God’s work of the salvation of sinners is presented with special clarity in Paul’s first letter to Timothy. God is our Saviour (1 Tim.1:1), for, when Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners in grace, with faith and love (1 Tim.

1:14,15), He was revealing the heart of God. It was in light of the fact that our Saviour, God, *wills* the salvation of all humanity along with their realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4), and in accord with the truth that our Saviour, God, is the *one* God, that the one Mediator of God and humanity, the Man, Christ Jesus, gave Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (1 Tim.2:5,6). Therefore, God is the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers (1 Tim.4:10).

These things are to be charged and taught (1 Tim.4:11).

#### THE THEME OF SALVATION

These words on the great theme of salvation are faithful and welcome (*cf* 1 Tim.1:15; 4:9). They are good news, and they are true. They are “gospel truth,” evangelical, enlightening and edifying for the believer, and glorifying to God. They tell us God is our Saviour and the Saviour of all mankind. They tell us He saves sinners by means of Christ Jesus giving Himself for them. They tell us the salvation of all sinners is God’s will. They tell us that the will of God is the will of the One; there is no power in heaven or earth that can successfully or eternally impose its will against His. They speak of Christ, in His giving up of Himself for all, as perfectly positioned and fully able to carry out God’s will for the salvation of all, for He is the one Mediator of God and humanity Who came into this world of human sinners as a Human, getting to the root of the problem that infects the entire race. They assure us that God is reliable as the living God Who is fully involved in this work of salvation. These are powerful and glorious revelations, and they should be taught by every teacher of the Word.

The theme of salvation throughout this letter is centered on God and the faithful work of Christ, but it is deeply concerned with the believer and his thinking and action; it is for our lives. What it says about all mankind

is important for that small portion of humanity who, like Paul, have had their lives overturned and overwhelmed by God’s grace (1 Tim.1:14-16). It is exceedingly beneficial for those who enjoy God’s special (1 Tim.4:10) work of salvation for now and the oncoming eons. It is a revelation from God that endows the believer with a disposition of devoutness and opens up for us a mild and quiet life. Hence it has promise “for the life which now is,” as well as that which is impending (*cf* 1 Tim.2:2; 4:8).

False teaching, such as the idea of eternal hell, or concepts of God as one who wants to save all but can’t, or one who can save all but won’t, have just the opposite effect. They do not encourage reliance on God; they do not bring quiet and devoutness into our lives; they do not honor God fully as the Saviour or the work of Christ in accord with its true value.

#### GOD IS THE SAVIOUR

As *our* Saviour (1 Tim.1:1; 2:3) God is made known to us in a unique and joyful way. Here we see His power and wisdom and love in their vast measure and wealth, their perfect goodness and righteousness and their matchless glory. As the Saviour of *all mankind* (1 Tim.4:10), He cannot be finally manifested as anything less than what He is manifested to be to us now as our Saviour.

The teacher or evangelist brings the good news that God is the Saviour, and in doing so such a person may be said to save himself and others (*cf* 1 Tim.4:16). But the human can only save in a figurative way, as God’s instrument in conveying the message of God’s great work of salvation to sinners. The salvation is still God’s work in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It continues as God’s work in His provision of evangelists and teachers; it remains God’s work in the gracious granting of faith to the chosen; and it does not cease continuing as God’s work until

all receive and believe the testimony in God’s appointed eras (*cf* 1 Tim.2:6).

There are few passages of Scripture that express the will of God for humanity as succinctly as 1 Timothy 2:4. The mass of unsatisfactory and conflicting arguments against its plain statement, accumulated through the centuries, testifies to its clarity. It is extremely difficult to explain away. The context speaking of Christ’s coming to save sinners and His giving up of Himself for the sake of all, the immediate association of salvation with realization of the truth, and certainly the identification of the salvation of all mankind with the will of God, all of these features leave little room for maneuvering.

We have read and heard the arguments. There is the old gloss dating back to the days of Augustine: “The all mankind in this passage are not all without exception, but all without distinction. It refers to ‘all the elect’ only.” But this makes many people who know what the Scriptures say about God’s love uncomfortable, so we are more likely to find commentators taking another tack nowadays: “God’s will is His wish, and what He desires does not always come about.” There are even those who combine these explanations and end up teaching that God wants all kinds of people to be saved, but this desire may not necessarily be fulfilled. These are desperate attempts to preserve the doctrine of everlasting hell in the face of the glory of God presented in the evangel and highlighted in this passage.

The “all mankind” spoken of in 1 Timothy 2:4 are the “sinners” of 1 Timothy 1:15. These include blasphemers like Saul of Tarsus, who now writes this letter as a pattern of the power of God’s grace in those who are believing, but also these sinners include “kings and those in a superior station,” few, indeed, of whom are believers at present. The “all mankind” of the context are “all without exception,” for all are sinners. Concerning God’s will, it will be

done, for He is the *one* God. He is the living God, Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). His desire to save all and bring all into a realization of the truth will be realized!

#### A RANSOM FOR ALL

Christ is first presented in this letter as “our Expectation” (1 Tim.1:1). It is our great blessing that we have been made aware of this. But He is also the Sure and Certain Hope for all humanity, whether or not they are aware of it. We believe this because we believe the faithful and welcome evangel that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And we also believe that in giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all, in dying on the cross, Christ was doing what He came into the world to do, establishing the basis for the salvation of all sinners.

What He came to do has been done even though the salvation gained has not been experienced by all. Because God has not yet brought all into the enjoyment of their salvation (and in fact the majority do not presently have any idea of this salvation) does not mean Christ did not succeed in doing what He came to do, or that God will never *actually* be in experience what He is said to be as a result of Christ’s faithfulness.

The figure of “ransom” is used in 1 Timothy 2:6. It speaks of the high price paid for the deliverance of sinners, the death of Christ. It was in the giving up of Himself for all humanity that our Lord is identified as the correspondent Ransom for all. His death was the ransom price paid by our Saviour, God for the salvation of all.

The Greek preposition, *anti* (meaning “instead”) which is suffixed to the word for “ransom” in this passage signifies that the provision corresponds precisely to the need. The death of Christ fully and exactly meets the need for the salvation of every sinner.

We are speaking about our Lord Jesus Christ. What He has done for all cannot ultimately be found to have been in vain for any.

It also should be noted that Christ is referred to here as the “one Mediator of God and humanity” Who gave Himself as a “Human.” We have used the English words “humanity” and “Human” here to reflect the association of the original Greek terms. Christ Jesus is not being spoken of as a Male, but as a Human. He stands between God and estranged humanity in intimate association with the entire race, male and female of every era and ancestry. The meaning of His death cannot be separated either in intent or result from any member of the human race. We do not yet see “all for One,” but in the evangel we do indeed see “One for all.”

If there are doubts about this salvation being realized, they ought not to come from anyone who believes that Christ’s death was sufficient for his or her salvation in grace and apart from boasting.

#### PROMISE FOR THE BELIEVER’S LIFE

These various aspects of God’s work of salvation, of course, are not immediately connected together in I Timothy as I have arranged them above. The various passages quoted are all true, but they do not all lead directly to one another *except by association of language and theme*. The revelation of God as the Saviour is not developed point upon point as the evangel of God’s righteousness and His work of justification is developed in the opening chapters of Romans. Here in a personal letter to the young evangelist and teacher, Timothy, Paul has no need to instruct in the particulars of the evangel of our salvation and its revelation of God as the Saviour. But he brings out certain of these particulars concerning the purpose of Christ’s death and the will of God and His reliability as Saviour,

as they relate to Timothy’s service and the lives of those to whom he ministers.

These are practical matters. The truth affects our lives. The evangel shapes our behavior and thinking. God’s will to save all mankind is the strong and effective basis for concern and prayer for all mankind, including civil authorities who so often seem to make our lives difficult, and who seldom have any appreciation for the evangel. We pray for their welfare, for intelligence and justice and sanity in their thinking and acting, so that we may live a mild and quiet life even in these troubled times.

How could we be led to such a disposition of prayer and quietude if we thought that most of those who are presently unbelievers will end up being tortured, or annihilated, for ever and ever? What are the practical effects in our lives of these twisted concepts of God’s will that we hear so often? If the destiny of certain sinners is divine wrath (despite God’s will, or in accord with His hidden will) for all eternity, how can men pray “apart from anger” (1 Tim.2:8) for those who trouble them, and women become quietly occupied with “good works” (2:10) within the corrupt societies of our world?

#### DEVOUTNESS

The mind set and the behavior that Paul encourages in this letter is that which accords with and develops from the evangel he is bringing. This is what is meant by “devoutness.” The great importance to us of believing that God is the Saviour of all mankind is not the satisfaction of being right where others are wrong but the satisfaction, the joy and peace and spiritual growth that comes with this reliance. We are dismayed at the distortion of the evangel that is found in traditional glosses on these passages. But this dismay includes not only a sense of horror but of sorrow over the loss of happiness (*cp* Gal.4:15) that surely must

be experienced both by those who teach these distortions and those who are swayed by them. The benefit of believing that God is truly the Saviour of all mankind is a growing reliance on God and confidence that all the hate and greed and cruelty that infects humanity will ultimately be completely removed from the universe because of the price paid in the death of Christ.

In that it is addressed to the *teacher*, Timothy, we see that this theme of race-wide salvation by God through Christ should be taught and defended today by faithful teachers of the Word. This is not only because it is true, but because it is vital as a driving force for ideal acts and sound thinking in the believer's present life. What is taught here about God's will and Christ's faithfulness and love is critically connected with the believer's progress in enjoying and manifesting the character of life for which we are saved. In Paul's expressive terminology, it is a matter of *getting hold* right now of *eonian life*. "Now you, O man of God, . . . pursue righteousness, devoutness, faith, love with endurance, suffering, and meekness. Contend the ideal contest of the faith. Get hold of eonian life, for which you were called" (1 Tim.6:11,12, cf also v.19).

What is explicitly stated about the extent of salvation in 1 Timothy 2:4 and 4:10 is firmly supported by the revelation of God given in those passages and throughout the epistle. It is clearly implied by the good news concerning Christ given in 1 Timothy 1:15 and 2:5,6 and again throughout the epistle. Finally, it vitally accords with the patterns for ideal living and devoutness in disposition and behavior which Timothy was to exhibit and teach.

"On these things meditate. In these be, that your progress may be apparent to all. Attend to yourself and to the teaching. Be persisting in them, for in doing this you will save yourself as well as those hearing you" (1 Tim.4:15,16).

D.H.H.

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Notes on 1 Samuel

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NOT BY VIGOR

30 + It <sup>lb</sup>was <sup>i</sup>on the third day <sup>i</sup>that David and his men came<sup>-</sup> to Ziklag. +As for the Amalakite, they had ransacked<sup>></sup> the Negev and <sup>></sup>Ziklag. + They had <sup>'</sup>smitten <sup>'</sup>Ziklag and <sup>'</sup>burned it <sup>i</sup>with fire. <sup>2+</sup> They had taken <sup>'</sup>captive <sup>'</sup>the women <sup>7</sup>and <sup>'</sup>all<sup>o</sup> who were in it, from the smallest + unto the greatest. They had not <sup>'</sup>put anyone to death; <sup>'</sup>rather they had <sup>'</sup>driven them along and had <sup>'</sup>gone <sup>></sup> their way. <sup>3+</sup> When David and his men <sup>'</sup>came to the city, + behold, it was <sup>'</sup>burned<sup>i</sup> with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. <sup>4+</sup> David and the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>w</sup>with him <sup>'</sup>lifted <sup>'</sup>their voice and <sup>'</sup>lamented until <sup>w</sup> there was no more vigor in them to lament. <sup>5+</sup> As for David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite, and Abigail (former wife of Nabal) the Carmelite, they had been taken captive too. <sup>6+</sup> It was very <sup>'</sup>distressing to David, for the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>sa</sup>spoke <sup>></sup>of stoning<sup>-</sup> him <sup>'</sup>because all the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers were bitter in soul, each man <sup>on</sup>for his sons and <sup>on</sup>for his daughters.

+Yet David <sup>'</sup>encouraged himself in Yahweh his Elohim. <sup>7+</sup> David <sup>'</sup>said to the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech, Do <sup>pr</sup>now <sup>'</sup>bring the ephod close to me! +So Abiathar <sup>'</sup>brought <sup>'</sup>the ephod <sup>'</sup>close to David. <sup>8+</sup> Then David <sup>lask</sup>inquired <sup>'</sup>of Yahweh, <sup>></sup> saying<sup>-</sup>, Shall I pursue after <sup>'</sup>this <sup>'</sup>raiding party? Will I <sup>'</sup>overtake it? + He <sup>lsa</sup>replied to him, Pursue, for you shall overtake, yea overtake<sup>-</sup>, and you shall rescue, yea rescue<sup>-</sup>. <sup>9+</sup> So David <sup>'</sup>went forth, he and the six hundred men <sup>w</sup>with him; and they <sup>'</sup>came <sup>fr</sup>to the Wadi Besor <sup>'</sup>where those stayed <sup>'</sup>who were left<sup>'</sup> behind. <sup>10+</sup> While David <sup>'</sup>pursued, he and his four hundred men, + two hun-

dred men <sup>l</sup>stayed behind who were too fatigued <sup>f</sup>to cross<sup>-</sup> over <sup>l</sup>the Wadi Besor.

<sup>11</sup> + They <sup>l</sup>found an Egyptian man in the field and <sup>l</sup>took <sup>l</sup>him to David. + They <sup>l</sup>gave <sup>l</sup>him bread and he <sup>l</sup>ate, and they <sup>c</sup>gave him water to <sup>l</sup>drink. <sup>12</sup> They <sup>+</sup>also <sup>l</sup>gave <sup>l</sup>him a slice of pressed dried fig cake and two clusters of raisins; and as he <sup>l</sup>ate + his spirit <sup>l</sup>returned to him, for he had neither eaten bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. <sup>13</sup> + Then David <sup>l</sup>asked <sup>l</sup>him, To <sup>a</sup>whom do you belong, and from where are you? + He <sup>l</sup>replied, I am an Egyptian lad, the slave <sup>l</sup>of an Amalekite man. + Yet my lord <sup>l</sup>forsook me <sup>l</sup>because I had become ill; today it is three <sup>M</sup>days<sup>c</sup>. <sup>14</sup> We' had ransacked the Negev of the Kerethite and <sup>on w</sup>that <sup>l</sup>of Judah and <sup>on</sup> the Negev of Caleb. + <sup>l</sup>Ziklag we burned <sup>i</sup>with fire. <sup>15</sup> + Then David <sup>l</sup>asked <sup>l</sup>him, Can you <sup>c</sup>lead me <sup>l</sup>down to <sup>l</sup>this <sup>l</sup>raiding party? + He <sup>l</sup>replied, Do swear to me <sup>i</sup>by Elohim, you assuredly shall not <sup>c</sup>put me to death, + you assuredly shall not <sup>c</sup>surrender me into the hand of my lord, and I shall <sup>c</sup>lead you down to <sup>l</sup>this <sup>l</sup>raiding party.

<sup>16</sup> + So he <sup>c</sup>led him <sup>l</sup>down <sup>l</sup>there<sup>o</sup>; and behold, <sup>l</sup>they<sup>o</sup> were <sup>l</sup>deployed<sup>l</sup> all over the surface of the countryside, eating and drinking and celebrating <sup>i</sup>because of all the great <sup>l</sup>loot <sup>w</sup> they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. <sup>17</sup> David <sup>l</sup>came upon them<sup>o</sup> and <sup>l</sup>smote them from the morning gloaming + until the evening <sup>l</sup>of the morrow; + none <sup>f</sup>of them escaped <sup>t</sup> <sup>i</sup>except four hundred youthful men who rode on <sup>l</sup>camels and <sup>l</sup>fled. <sup>18</sup> + Then David <sup>l</sup>rescued <sup>l</sup>all <sup>w</sup>that Amalek had taken. + Even <sup>l</sup>his two wives David rescued. <sup>19</sup> + Nothing of theirs was <sup>lag</sup>missing, from the smallest + <sup>f</sup>to the greatest, + including <sup>fr</sup> sons and daughters. + From the <sup>l</sup>loot and <sup>f</sup>from all <sup>w</sup>that they had taken for themselves, David restored <sup>l</sup>everything. <sup>20</sup> + Then David <sup>l</sup>took <sup>l</sup>all the <sup>l</sup>flocks and the herds, which they drove before <sup>l</sup>that other

<sup>l</sup>livestock; and they <sup>l</sup>said, This is David's <sup>l</sup>loot.

<sup>21</sup> + Then David <sup>l</sup>came to the two hundred men who had been too fatigued <sup>f</sup>to go<sup>-</sup> along, following after David. + So they had been <sup>c</sup>left <sup>l</sup>seated <sup>i</sup>at the Wadi Besor. + Now they came <sup>l</sup>forth to meet David and to meet the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers <sup>w</sup> <sup>l</sup>with him. + As David <sup>l</sup>with <sup>l</sup>his <sup>wi</sup>soldiers came <sup>l</sup>close, <sup>l</sup>they<sup>c</sup> <sup>l</sup>asked <sup>l</sup>after their well-being. <sup>22</sup> + But all the vicious and worthless ones <sup>f</sup>among the men who had gone with David + <sup>l</sup>spoke up + in <sup>l</sup>response: Because <sup>w</sup> they did not go with <sup>l</sup>us<sup>c</sup>, we shall not give <sup>l</sup>them any <sup>f</sup>of the <sup>l</sup>loot <sup>w</sup>that we rescued, save to each man <sup>l</sup>his wife and <sup>l</sup>his <sup>in</sup>children. + They may lead them off and go. <sup>23</sup> + David <sup>l</sup>replied, You shall not do so <sup>l</sup>after<sup>~</sup> <sup>w</sup>what Yahweh has given to us. + He <sup>l</sup>guarded <sup>l</sup>us and <sup>l</sup>delivered into our hand <sup>l</sup>the raiding party <sup>l</sup>that had come<sup>l</sup> <sup>on</sup>against us. <sup>24</sup> + So <sup>a</sup>who would <sup>l</sup>hearken to you <sup>l</sup>in <sup>l</sup>this matter? For, as his <sup>l</sup>portion is <sup>l</sup>who goes <sup>l</sup>down<sup>l</sup> into the <sup>l</sup>battle, + <sup>as</sup>so shall be the <sup>l</sup>portion of the one <sup>l</sup>sitting <sup>on</sup>by the <sup>all</sup>gear; they shall <sup>l</sup>apportion alike. <sup>25</sup> And it <sup>w</sup>came about from <sup>l</sup>that <sup>l</sup>day + onward, + that he <sup>pl</sup>constituted it <sup>l</sup>as a statute and <sup>l</sup>as a custom for Israel until <sup>l</sup>this <sup>l</sup>day.

<sup>26</sup> + When David <sup>l</sup>came to Ziklag, + he <sup>l</sup>sent some <sup>f</sup>of the <sup>l</sup>loot to the elders of Judah, to his associates, <sup>l</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, <sup>bd</sup>Here is a blessing gift for you from the <sup>l</sup>loot of the <sup>l</sup>enemies<sup>l</sup> of Yahweh. <sup>27</sup> He sent to <sup>w</sup>those in Bethel, + to <sup>w</sup>those in Ramoth-negev, + to <sup>w</sup>those in Jattir, <sup>28</sup> + to <sup>w</sup>those in Aroer, + to <sup>w</sup>those in Siphmoth, + to <sup>w</sup>those in Eshtemoa, <sup>29</sup> + to <sup>w</sup>those in <sup>l</sup>Carmel<sup>~</sup>, + to <sup>w</sup>those in the cities of the Jerahmeelite, + to <sup>w</sup>those in the cities of the Kenite, <sup>30</sup> + to <sup>w</sup>those in Hormah, + to <sup>w</sup>those in Bor-ashan, + to <sup>w</sup>those in Athach, <sup>31</sup> + to <sup>w</sup>those in Hebron, + to all the <sup>ri</sup>places where David had <sup>g</sup>roved, he and his men.

The theme of new life wends its way throughout this chapter. It begins with reference to “the third day,” which

carries with it the thought of resurrection. David and his men returned to find their families carried away captive as good as dead, but they received them back again. They lamented till even their strength to mourn was depleted, and many of them spoke of stoning David; then David received the strength to lead them into pursuit and battle. They found an Egyptian slave who was sick and left for dead, and revived him.

#### THE RETURN FROM APHEK

An Amalekite band had pillaged their city while David and his men were away. Not only were their families gone, but their city had been burned. It is hard to imagine the despair that gripped them. They were weary from carrying their battle armor and marching for six days. There was no shelter or food, and they could only imagine what their wives and children had experienced, and what they might still be enduring.

God had promised in the law of Moses that Israel's families and homes would be safe when their men traveled to His feasts in Jerusalem. But David and his men were not even living in the land of promise. And they had not traveled to a feast of the Lord, but to do battle with God's chosen people! Even if they secretly planned to fight the Philistines, the appearance of their actions was that they would fight God's people. It is doubtful that either David or his men could escape the thought that God was punishing them for their actions.

#### NOT BY VIGOR

"For not by vigor has man the mastery" (1 Sam.2:9). This line from the song of Hannah provides an interesting key word for drawing a comparison between Saul and David. In 1 Samuel 28:20 Saul fell to the earth and had no vigor to stand up, due to the terror of Samuel's words

to him and also due to his fasting. In 30:4 David and his men lamented the loss of their families till there was no vigor in them to lament any longer.

When Saul had reached the point of having no strength, he was coaxed and encouraged by his courtiers and the woman with a medium, and food was prepared for him. When David had reached the point of having no strength he received no encouragement or sustenance from his men; instead, they spoke of stoning him. But David encouraged himself in Yahweh, his Elohim. Saul came to the point of weakness disguised in strange clothing, but when David reached the point of weakness, he called for the ephod, to inquire of God. He would be found before God with priestly garments rather than a disguise. Saul met the trial of his circumstances with self-pity, and God's word to him was one of death. David responded to his chastening circumstances with humility and a turning to God, and God's word to him was one of victory and restoration.

#### GRACE IN PURSUIT

David and his men started their pursuit, but at the Wadi Besor (generally understood to mean "good news") one third of the men were so exhausted they could not continue. There David and the 400 who continued lightened their load to the bare essentials, leaving their gear with the weary.

At this point the Egyptian slave was found. A traveling band such as these Amalekites would maintain a set order to their camp. This slave would know the organization of the camp. He could tell David and his men where the leaders would be located, where the guards would be stationed, where the camels and horses would be penned, where the most valiant soldiers were camped and where the captives were held. All this would be vital information for a successful overthrow, especially by such an undersized troop.

The “third day” is mentioned twice again (vs.12,13). The thought of resurrection is present, not only in the details regarding the Egyptian slave, but also in the group of David’s men who stayed behind. One commentator translates their condition saying they were “corpsed,” which was a figure of speech for exhaustion. Those who figuratively died at the stream termed “good news” shared in the spoils of victory from a battle they did not fight.

There is a great similarity between the events here and the parable of the Lord in Matthew 20:1-16. There, some laborers toiled all day while others toiled only a short time, but all received the same pay. Eonian life is a great treasure. Some will receive it after years of faithful service, and some will receive it as a gracious gift bestowed near the end of their life. The Beloved would not have us be overtaken with a self-righteous, Pharisaic spirit. Instead we should realize it is a gracious gift that enables some to serve long, just as it is a gracious gift that gives life at the eleventh hour. As Paul said, it is God Who places the members in the body according to His will and purpose (1 Cor. 12:18), and it is God Who makes us competent for whatever measure of service we are privileged to perform.

Grace is the keynote of the chapter. Saul, the rule of the flesh, commands such things as “None shall eat anything till I am avenged of my enemies.” David, the “beloved,” the rule of faith, commands that those who stayed with the gear shall share alike with those who bore the heat of battle.

And faith is seen rewarding those it will rule. David sent gifts of the booty to all the areas where he and his men had stayed when running from Saul in Judah. This helped prepare them to receive him as their king. Saul lost the kingship because of failure to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15). David’s accession to the throne commences with victory over the Amalekites.

J. Philip Scranton