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**UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 2001
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-TWO**

EDITORIAL

IT IS in light of these recent calamitous, tragic events of death and destruction here in the United States, in New York City, in Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania, that we are all brought to an awakened sense of our own vulnerability.

It is not that we are ignorant of the fact that horrible accidents and terrible diseases, even as criminal acts and violent deeds claim their victims all around us daily. Added to these are such recurrent, periodic “natural” disasters as floods, fires, hurricanes and earthquakes. The aggregate suffering and sorrow, misery and pain wrought by the collective evil inherent in the world is practically incalculable. No, it is not that we are ignorant of the evil extant in the world; it is rather, until it somehow touches our own lives, that, to a considerable degree, we tend to ignore its presence.

Indeed, in light of the sheer volume of evil in the world, if we were actually to give active, deeply heartfelt attention to a sizable portion of the evils even within our own communities, we would soon be overcome and utterly undone by the experience. It is not that we do not care about human suffering; it is instead, even in the case of the most caring of persons, that there are severe limitations upon our ability to be actively involved in the sufferings of others while still retaining sufficient will and fortitude for the accomplishment of our own duties of work and family.

Not only should we be caring of heart, but we should show our care by our deeds. Let us, then, help where we are *led* to do so, and in a way that seems feasible to us, according to God's direction. We cannot help every worthy cause; and, in deciding which ones we shall help, we should not respond to those which are the most demanding or intimidating, but to those which God simply lays it upon our hearts to assist, leaving it to Him to grant His overall benefactions through the men of His counsel, according as He is intending.

REJOICING, EVEN IN AFFLICTION

In seeking wisdom and understanding as to the existence of evil in general or as to the existence of any specific evil in particular, we must be careful not to exclude any certain explanation peremptorily, leaving no opportunity for its validation, on the grounds that it is contrary to the popular conscience, even as received ethics. We should act “apart from prejudice, doing nothing from bias” (1 Tim.5:21). One who fails to seek truth on this basis, who gives mere lip service to the need for impartiality, is not only unworthy of truth but is incompetent to judge concerning it.

We continually experience both good and evil. Hence it is important that we recognize the singular Source of each. Here, the Scriptures are explicit. It is according to their testimony that we affirm that God Himself, Yahweh Elohim, is the Maker of good and Creator of evil: “Former of light and Creator of darkness, Maker of good and Creator of evil. I, Yahweh Elohim, make all of these things” (Isa.45:7).

In accordance with this grand testimony to the deity of God over all, we would add the declarations of Job concerning “all the evil that Yahweh had brought upon him” (Job 42:11): “Yahweh, He gives, and Yahweh, He takes away. Blessed be the Name of Yahweh” (Job.1:21). “Indeed should we receive good from the One, Elohim, and should we not receive evil? In all this Job did not sin with his lips” (Job 2:10).

Similarly, “concerning all that is done under the heavens: it is an experience of evil Elohim has given to the sons of humanity to humble them by it” (Ecc.1:13). “Indeed though He afflicts, yet He has compassion according to the abundance of His benignities . . . Who is this who speaks and it comes about if Yahweh does not determine it? Do not both the evil and the good come forth from the mouth of the Supreme?” (Lam.3:32; 37,38).

To these we would only add: “Would there come to be evil in a city, and Yahweh not have done it?” (Amos 3:6b).

In consideration of our recent national tragedy here in America, I wrote to a friend, saying, “God is perfect in wisdom, even as in goodness and in love; so we may be certain that neither this recent tragedy nor any other evil, large or small, would

or could exist unless, at the deepest level, He deemed it best that it should exist, according to His good purpose. God makes the world, and all that is in it (Acts 17:24); so it becomes our privilege to believe that this is so, and to trust and rely on Him accordingly.”

It is not that God is the immediate, or proximate, cause, or the intermediate or otherwise to some limited degree even distant cause of that which obtains, but that He is the *ultimate* Source, Origin, and Cause of that which obtains, both of the good and of the evil.

This does not change the fact that everyone acts voluntarily, according to each one’s own will, in concert with each one’s own desires. Under all normal circumstances, we are not compelled to act as we do, forced to do that which we do not choose, against our own will. To the contrary, we not only do as we please, but choose according to our own pleasure as well. As popularly expressed, we are free to do whatever we want, and to choose whatever we please.

What we are not free from, however, is our own selves, our own constitutions, which are created by God. Specifically, we are not free from our own pleasures and our own immediate desires—whatever we may most desire at present.

Nevertheless, our greatest present desire, often, is for the immediate enjoyment of that which considered in itself is sin (*cp* Heb.11:25), not righteousness.

This is so even if in the abstract we would honor and choose what is right. The sinner’s lament, according to which he declares the painful truth is, “It is not the good that I will [abstractly speaking] that I am doing, but the evil that I am not willing [abstractly speaking], this I am putting into practice. Now if what [in this sense] I am not willing, this am I doing, it is no longer I who am effecting it, but Sin which is making its home in me” (Rom.7:19,20).

Of course one’s desires may well change, even from one moment to the next. But for so long as they remain the same, in the present moment, one cannot choose contrary to one’s desires but only according to one’s desires. To claim otherwise would be to claim that we can presently desire what we do not

presently desire, and presently choose what we do not presently deem choice, decisively speaking.

Our major premise needs to be that whatever God actually does is right for Him to do (*cp* Psa.145:17), and accords with that which He is, which is love (1 John 4:8). And, our minor premise needs to be that He is the Maker of good and Creator of evil, the One out of, through, and for Whom all is (Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor.8:6).

Then our conclusion will be that evil is purposed for good; hence its temporary presence is needful and will be justified in the end. Since God is perfect in wisdom, the amount and kinds of evil which exist, even as the amount and kinds of evil which become the portion of each individual person, must accord with His wisdom, which itself rests upon His goodness and love.

At the consummation (1 Cor.15:23,28), all will be saved (1 Tim.4:10), vivified (1 Cor.15:22), constituted just (Rom.5:18,19), reconciled (Col.1:20), and headed up in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Surely, in that day, then, the perpetrators of this recent evil of which we are presently especially mindful, will be embraced by the very ones who suffered at their hands.

This is in accord with the words of Joseph: “Do not be grieved or angry with yourselves that you sold me hither, because Elohim has sent me on before you to preserve lives . . . Elohim sent me on before you to set up for you a remnant on earth and to preserve lives for you in a great deliverance. So now, not you sent me here, but the One, Elohim . . . You devised evil against me, *yet Elohim devised it for good for me*, in order to accomplish, as at this day . . .” (Gen.45:7,8; 50:20,21).

Even so, during the current era, we are mindful that the “superior authorities,” to which we are subject (even as thankful for their protection), are set under God. And, “to accord with what must be” (*cf* Rom.8:26), they must do whatever they deem best. Concerning such authority, we say that “it is God’s servant for [our] good”; and, “not feignedly is it wearing the sword. For it is God’s servant, an avenger for indignation to him who is committing evil. Wherefore it is necessary to be subject, not only because of indignation, but also because of conscience” (*cf* Rom.13:1-5). J.R.C.

THE FIRST OFFENSE

(Part Two)

IN reporting Yahweh Elohim’s instructions to the serpent, Eve omitted terms which reflected God’s good will and added a thought which exaggerated His prohibition.¹ She did not directly deny what God had said. Indeed, she seemed to defend Him. But she departed sufficiently from the *spirit* of it to show how little she appreciated it, and that she was ready to entertain further doubts. The serpent takes due advantage of this and boldly denies the death that the Subjector had warned against. He ascribed the prohibition to jealousy on the part of Elohim, lest they become more like Him. But this is buttressed by a certain amount of truth, that they would know good and evil. This was implied in the name which had been given to the tree. Now that Eve’s confidence in the Subjector’s motive had been undermined, she abandons faith altogether, and decides to depend on sight.

GENESIS 3:4-24

⁴ **“But the serpent** ¹**said to the woman: Not to die** ²**shall you be dying;** ³**for Elohim knows** ⁴**that** ⁵**“on the day you eat** ⁶**of it your eyes will be unclosed, and you will become like Elohim, knowing good and evil.**

⁶ **“Then the woman** ¹**saw that the tree was good for food,** ² **that it brought a yearning to the eyes and that the tree was desirable** ³**for** ⁴**gaining insight.** ⁵ **“So she** ¹**took** ²**of its fruit and** ³**ate.** ⁴ **She** ⁵**also** ⁶**gave some to her husband**

1. *cf* our July issue, pages 155,156.

with her and he 'ate. ⁷ + Then the eyes of both of them were 'unclosed, and they 'realized that they were naked. + So they 'sewed fig ⁷leaves^{nc} together and ^{ld}made girdle skirts for themselves.

⁸ + Then they 'heard [\]the sound of Yahweh Elohim walking about in the garden [\]in the windy part of the day, and the human hid himself + with his wife from the face of Yahweh Elohim ^{i mid} among the trees of the garden. ⁹ + Yahweh Elohim 'called to the human and 'said to him: ⁷Adam^o, where are you? ¹⁰ + He ^{lsa}replied ⁷to Him^s: I heard [\]the sound of your ⁷walking^o in the garden, and I was 'fearful ^tbecause I was naked; + so I 'hid. ¹¹ + Then He ^{lsa}asked: ^aWho told [\]you that you are naked ⁷unless^o you have eaten from the ⁷only^o tree ^wthat I instructed you by no means to eat⁻ from it? ¹² + The human ^{lsa}replied: The woman whom You have given to be with me—she' gave [\]me ^fof ^tthat tree, and I 'ate. ¹³ + Yahweh Elohim 'said to the woman: What is this, you have done? + The woman ^{lsa}replied: The serpent—he lured me, and I 'ate.

¹⁴ + Then Yahweh Elohim 'said to the serpent:

'Because you have done this,
Cursed' shall you be
Away from every [\]domestic beast
And from every animal of the field!
On your torso shall you ^{go}crawl,
And soil shall you eat all the days of your life.

¹⁵ And I shall set enmity
Between you and ^{bt} the woman
And between your seed and ^{bt} her seed.
He' shall hurt you in the head,
And you' shall hurt Him in the heel.

¹⁶ ⁷And^{nc} to the woman He said:
I shall increase, yea increase⁻ your grief
And ⁷the groanings of^o your pregnancy.
In grief shall you bear sons;

+ Yet [\]by your husband is your ⁷restoration⁻.
And he' shall rule [\]over you.

¹⁷ And to Adam He said:

'Because you hearkened to your wife's voice
And 'ate from the ⁷only^o tree

^wThat I instructed you, [\]saying⁻,

You must not 'eat from it,
Cursed' is the ground [\]on your ^paccount;
In grief shall you eat of it all the days of your life.

¹⁸ + Thorns and weeds shall it sprout for you,

And you will eat [\]the herbage of the field.

¹⁹ [\]By the sweat of your brow

Shall you eat ⁷your^o bread,

Until you return⁻ to the ground,

For from it were you taken.

For soil you are,

And to soil you shall return.

²⁰ + The human 'called his wife's name Eve, for she' would become the mother of all the living. ²¹ And Yahweh Elohim ^{ld}made for Adam and [\] his wife tunics of skin and 'clothed them. ²² + Then Yahweh Elohim 'said: ^{bd}Since [\]man has become like one ^fof Us [\]in knowing⁻ good and evil, + now lest he should stretch out his hand and ⁻take ^{mr}also of the tree of life and ⁻eat and ⁻live for the eon—²³ + So Yahweh Elohim 'sent him ^fout of the garden of Eden to serve [\]the ground from where he was taken. ²⁴ + After He 'drove [\]the human out, + He ^cmade ⁷him^o [\]tabernacle ^fat the east [\]of the garden of Eden ⁷and He set^o [\]the cherubim and [\]the flame of the revolving sword to guard [\]the way to the tree of life.

FAITH FAILS, SIGHT PREVAILS

Had Eve believed and adored God for His goodness, she would never have eaten of the forbidden fruit. But, on the other hand, as long as she had not eaten, she did not

possess the knowledge of good. Consequently her faith failed, and she yielded in favor of sight. She saw the outward appearances that it was good for food, attractive, and producing intelligence. How she "saw" all of this is hard to see. Few have such good eyesight today! But when we seek for evidence against the Subjector's word, how easy it is to see what is not there, and fail to see what really is present! Before she ate her eyes were closed. Is that not true of all who do not believe? She not only saw, but *reasoned* from the evidence of her senses. She probably had eaten many kinds of fruit, and this *looked* to be edible and nutritious, judging from the others. This is one of the foremost foes of faith, for man is not able to see the inward essence. For that we must depend on the Deity and His word.

ESTRANGEMENT

At first, evil *further* estranged Adam and Eve from Yahweh, the Subjector, and separated them from Him. This is the greatest of all evils. Yet it prepares for the appreciation of His goodness and His grace, and a reconciliation in which there will be mutual love, and the adoration and worship which will not only bring the highest happiness to His creatures, but suffice to satisfy the Father's primal passion for responsive affection.

THE FIRST JUDGMENT

The first judgment is still in operation. It affects us today, hence we should be vitally interested in its every aspect. We should understand, not only the reason for it, but its object and its scope. It was not confined to Adam and Eve, but includes the race which springs from them, and which was in them when they first offended. We can look back and see ourselves there in a very practical way, for we are serving the sentence, even if we did not personally commit the offense. Many are embittered by this,

and claim it is not just, because they do not see that it was passed for Adam's sake, and for *our benefit*. Vindictive *punishment* breeds hate, but God's *judgments*, though bitterly hard to bear, are rooted in love, and will bear the blessed fruit of final filial affection.

HAD ADAM NOT SINNED

How many have wished that Adam had not sinned! Some have even gone so far as to assert that *they* would not have done so if they had been in his shoes! In this they are sadly mistaken, not only as to their conduct, but as to the desirability of Adam's sin. Even Adam, *after he had eaten of the tree*, and had the knowledge of good and evil, would not have eaten, and it is most likely that he did not do so again. But, if we had not such knowledge, we all would have done the same. The knowledge of good is one of our most precious assets. What a dreary life we would live if we appreciated nothing that is given us, and were utterly devoid of thankfulness! A few spoiled children are like that to some extent, and are a trouble to themselves and a trial to others. This might have resulted in endless misery, not only for the race, but for the Creator Himself.

How valuable, therefore, is the knowledge of evil! It may not be pleasant, or prized for itself, but it is the essential prelude to the enjoyment of good and the worship of the Supreme. Good, by itself, cannot be appreciated unless contrasted with evil. Children born to poverty and pain are often happier than those of the rich and noble.

JUDGMENT IS CORRECTIVE EVIL

Judgment is *corrective* evil. In judging, the Subjector does not inflict pain in order to deter from a repetition of the act, nor merely right the wrong, as is common among men. He adds another evil which will operate to produce the good for which the evil was originally intro-

duced. He does not simply stand by and allow the evil to fulfill His intention. He Himself steps in, in judgment, in order to emphasize the personal fear of Him, which precedes reconciliation. Otherwise it might be taken as blind fate, an impersonal and loveless operation of undirected force. It is most important that men learn that the judgments of Genesis three under which they live and suffer, are the direct effect of the counsel of Yahweh's will, and are *for their benefit*.

DYING BRINGS SHAME

The first effect of eating the fruit affected their feelings. They became *ashamed* of themselves and *afraid* of God. They realized that it was much more than a mere mistake, or sin, and even exceeded transgression. They now recognized the *evil* that they had done and the *good* that they had failed to appreciate. This is one of the great crises in the history of humanity. Hitherto they had experienced nothing but good, but had never enjoyed it or thanked the Giver for it. On the contrary, at the very first assault of the Adversary, by sinning and transgressing against their Benefactor, they offended Him. The remedy for this is evil, as many of us know from practical experience. Good cannot be recognized or appreciated apart from its opposite. That is the significance of the tree in the midst of Eden. As saints who know El, and realize His purpose in creating evil, we have the precious privilege of seeing the ultimate good in evil, and thanking Him for *both*.

ONE GOOD-EVIL TREE

A lesson of tremendous import lies in the fact that *both* good and evil were taught by the fruit of a *single* tree although it seemed to produce only evil. This could not be inculcated by means of separate trees. The knowledge of one is dependent on an acquaintance with the other.

Their Creator had been blessing Adam and Eve richly, above all the other creatures of the earth, yet they did not realize it and failed utterly to appreciate it and bless Him for it. As the prime purpose of creation is to draw forth the response of love from hearts overflowing with affection, so that, as Father, He becomes *All in all*, evil was introduced as a transitory, yet indispensable necessity for the accomplishment of the Subjector's will. For this reason the Adversary was created and the tree was planted in Eden. And this explains the part played by the serpent. Evil leads to the appreciation of good.

GIRDED NAKEDNESS

The first man-made covering for human shame and nakedness was only a girdle, made of fig leaves sewn together. It was found so unsatisfactory, even to them, that they hid themselves from the face of Yahweh Elohim, when next He came to them in the garden. How was it that the eating of the forbidden fruit robbed them of their primeval robes of light? This we will discuss more fully later when we consider the divine substitute for their fig-leaf costume. We should not miss the picture this presents to us, however. All human efforts to hide their mortal shame is no more effective, especially before the Deity, than that of the first sewing circle, and lasts no longer. We, however, find our robe of righteousness, although it was made at the cost of bloody death, not of animals, but of the suffering Christ, far more satisfactory.

EXPERIENCE AND JUDGMENT

More than a theoretical knowledge of evil is needed. It is the *experience* of evil that humbles the human heart, and *judgment* must follow in order to clarify and emphasize the lesson. Therefore, following the first offense, God *judged* all who took part in the evil, and intensifies rather than

heals it, so as to give it full force. That this is needed is evident, for all seek to evade their guilt by shifting the blame to another. The man accused the woman, and the woman passed it on to the serpent. But none of the excuses were accepted, and each was judged in such a way as to impress upon them the knowledge of evil, so as to prepare them for final restoration and the enjoyment of the abundant blessings still in store for them. Then they will be able to give Him the praise and adoration which His heart desires.

We need not, indeed, learn *all* we know of evil by suffering ourselves, for this also prepares us to perceive it in others, and to sympathize with them even if we are not ourselves involved. Many who are comparatively free from pain themselves have tasted enough of it to feel for others. Apart from this how could we apprehend the fearful sufferings of our Saviour which stir our heart to its depths, and move our lips to thankfulness and praise and worship? Is not the cross of Christ the greatest evil in the history of the universe? Yet it will bring about the greatest good!

CELESTIALS LEARN

Not only will mankind benefit by the evil introduced through Adam, but celestial beings also will profit by our experience. Not having blood, hence lacking sensation, physical suffering may be unknown to them. But the long record of evil in the history of the human race, as chronicled in the Scriptures, culminating in the crucifixion of Christ, is their textbook, which will enable them not only to apprehend His wisdom (Eph.3:10) but learn of His love, so that those that are estranged from God will be reconciled (Col.1:20).

THE JUDGMENT OF THE SERPENT

The serpent did not pass on the blame to anyone else. As a matter of fact, it fulfilled the function for which it was

created, like the Adversary which it represented. Nevertheless, for the sake of mankind it was necessary to put it in its proper place. Even to this day, most of us have an intuitive horror of serpents, but there is little intelligence as to the reason for this aversion. In contradicting the word of Yahweh Elohim, the serpent exalted itself, not only above all the animals and man, but also above its Creator. Eve should never have listened to it or acted on its word, but should have submitted to the Subjector and to her husband. Because it had usurped the highest place, the serpent is degraded to the lowest.

It has been suggested that the *nchsh* which spoke to Eve was not a serpent. Some say the word means *stranger*, and others something else. But the evidence for serpent is plentiful and conclusive, for it occurs about thirty times. In Genesis it occurs again in Jacob’s prophecy concerning his son Dan (Gen.49:17).

Dan becomes a *serpent* by the way,
A horned snake on the path,
That bites the horse’s heels,
So that its rider falls backwards.

The parallel, a horned snake, and the action, lying in the way and striking the lowest part of a horse, clearly indicates an animal of the serpent tribe.

This is confirmed by other occurrences. Moses’ rod was turned into a serpent which could be handled by its tail (Ex.4:3). The serpents in the wilderness were poisonous and bit the people. Moses then made one of copper, much the same color as a serpent. Indeed, the same stem, *nchsh*, is also used for this metal. Adam seems to have named it so because its color was the same as copper. The bite is often referred to (Prov.23:32; Ecc.10:8; Amos 5:19). Its close connection with the soil comes before us again

in Isaiah 65:25 and Micah 7:17. The fact that it can be charmed by whistling is conclusive evidence, added to all the rest (Ecc.10:11). Moreover, the verb denotes to *augur*, or use enchantment.

The Septuagint translates it by *ophis* (serpent) twenty-seven times and *drakon* (dragon) thrice. When we remember that these two are identified in the Unveiling (Rev.12:9), there remains no doubt that this is its meaning. Indeed, it is called the *ancient* serpent who is deceiving the whole inhabited earth. Literally, this is Satan, the Adversary, but the animal which represents him is a serpent.

The question arises, How did the serpent move about before it was degraded, to go on its torso? We do not know, but even yet, when it strikes, or moves the fastest, it has little more than its tail on the ground. I once encountered a snake coming out of a gopher hole in the wall of our cellar. It was almost out, yet retreated with such speed that I could not strike it, using only what might be called its tail. There is no reason to reject the natural explanation, that it went on its tail. This could easily be coiled on the ground and support the torso in an erect posture.

SATAN'S AUTHORITY

The fact that Satan showed our Lord the kingdoms of this world and their authority, and said to Him "it has been given up to me" (Luke 4:6), has led some to suggest that the serpent may have had a place of authority in Eden, and was not altogether wrong in using it at that time. But what Satan claimed to have and offered to share with our Lord was an entirely different matter. It was the *kingdoms* of the earth. In Adam's day there were no kingdoms.

This power was later promised to Abraham's seed, and should have been in the hands of Israel. But they forfeited it by their transgressions, so it was turned over to the nations in the days of Nebuchadnezzar. These are under the influ-

ence of Satan, the spirit that is now operating in the sons of stubbornness (Eph.2:2).

Even though the Adversary had been given this place when Christ was on earth, our Lord did not follow Eve's example and accept the kingdom from him. He knew that only the *suffering* Saviour would be fit to be the reigning King. He knew that the kingdom could come only after the head of Satan had been crushed.

Our place on earth today is different still, as we are not disposed to the terrestrial (Phil.3:19). We have no authority on earth, so must submit to the superior authorities, even though they are controlled by the Adversary. We look beyond them to the Subjector, Who is using them temporarily to fulfill His *intention*, if not His will, until we are called above, where we will be associated with Christ in His celestial reign, with Satan crushed under our feet (Rom.16:20). Thus will we have part in the fulfillment of the primeval promise.

THE ENMITY OF THE SERPENT

Instead of winning the thanks and friendship of humanity for the gratuitous advice given, which promised to make them like Toward-Subjectors (AV, "God"), and raise them higher in the scale of creation, the serpent won the enmity of the woman and of the race of which she is the mother. Intuitively women seem to hate the serpent tribe even more than men do. But even I, who find it hard to kill any animal, when I lived where serpents were numerous, had no compunctions about killing a snake, especially if it was poisonous. In a fine figure it strikes at the heel of the seed of the woman, in particular Christ, the greatest of them all, but its head is crushed by that very heel. As Paul says, "the God of peace will be crushing Satan under your feet swiftly" (Rom.16:20). Meanwhile, however, we are often wounded in our walk as Eve was by the delusive

craftiness of the serpent (2 Cor.11:3), even when we think we are opposing it.

THE ADJUDICATION OF THE WOMAN

Grief and groaning, specially suited to her functions in the perpetuation of the race, were allotted to the woman, corresponding to the part she played in the offense. So far as the record goes, she was not told to abstain from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil by Yahweh, the Toward-Subjector, but by Adam. So she was subject to neither when she ate the forbidden fruit. Nothing is said before this as to her subjection to Adam, but now this is definitely asserted, since, in disobeying him, she also offended his Subjector. But this experience of evil is accompanied by a promise of restoration, through this very function. With her husband the race will be perpetuated until the second Man, the last Adam (1 Cor.15:45,47), will bring about its *restoration*.

The revered Authorized Version says nothing of any restoration, but renders it "thy *desire* shall be to thy husband." Just what is intended by this is not very clear, but it does not seem to deal with the matter in hand. Another Hebrew word means *desire* (2 Sam.23:5). The Septuagint has *apostrophê* FROM-TURNING, restoration. The equivalent Hebrew would be *thshube*, which differs from the Hebrew text in one letter only. In place of the *b* the Hebrew has a *q*. Even as an English, *b* looks like *q*, and could easily be mistaken for it, so it is in the Hebrew also. There seems to be little question of the original reading in such a case, as the Septuagint was translated from much earlier manuscripts than any that we now possess, and has preserved for us many other similar passages. The same mistake was made in the case of Cain's sin offering (Gen.4:7).

When the earth became waste and vacant (Gen.1:2), God immediately gives us a record of its restoration by

His spirit. Strange to say, few have recognized this fact. They think He is still creating the earth. Corresponding to this, as soon as humanity was wrecked by sin, God not only starts their restoration, but actually announces it, and explains that it is to come through the seed of the woman (Gen.3:15,16). But not only are the saints blind to this great evangel, but it has been deleted from the record and anyone who would suggest such a thing is driven out of the camp of Christendom. Is there any worse heretic than a "restorationist?" Yet this is one of the most precious of the love tokens which light up this dark scene. In the midst of judgment God remembers the great object He has in view, for the judgment is only the first step in preparing the race for the appreciation of His love.

Adam should have decided that they would *not* eat of the forbidden fruit. He should not have obeyed an animal or his wife, especially as it involved insubjection to the Toward-Subjector, and was a serious affront to Yahweh. He should have been more thankful and obedient than Eve, for she was a love token to allay his loneliness. But even such a good present did not seem to heighten his appreciation, for he lacked the knowledge of evil. It made little impression on his mind or heart. He seems to have taken it as a matter of course. Unlike the serpent, he was not cursed himself, but the curse was laid upon the ground, *for his sake*, for it provided the food needed for his nourishment. Hitherto the trees of Eden had provided an easy and agreeable source of sustenance. But now the ground would demand arduous labor, toil and sweat, even as it does today.

SHAMEFUL MORTALITY

Mortality is a combination of living and dying, like constant creation and daily dissolution. The flesh which was taken from the soil to form Adam's body is continually

being renewed, and regularly returned to its source. The breath, which gave life, is incessantly being inhaled and expelled. The resultant soul, which is evident in conscious sensation, is dormant in sleep and active only when awake. Just as darkness acquaints us with the virtues of light, and evil gives the knowledge of good, and as enmity blesses us with an appreciation of love, so God has wisely provided us with a constant course of lessons in the understanding and realization of the luxury of *life*.

Our eyes are dimmed by dying. They no longer can see further than an eagle's. Our ears are not as acute as a dog's. Our smell is not as sensitive as a bloodhound's. Far worse than that, we have become positively disagreeable to ourselves and others. We exhale poisonous, death-dealing gas. Our bodies exude ill-smelling sweat. We turn our tasty food into foul, filthy manure. We may rest assured that this was not so in the beginning, nor will it be so in the consummation. It is the effect of decay and death. Not only do men die and their bodies decay, and become so offensive that they must be disposed of, but we are already dying and decaying. We never had an undying body like Adam, so cannot realize the contrast as he did, but we should know enough to be thoroughly ashamed.

A. E. Knoch

BRUCE AND LUCILE WIMMER

God gives each believer a place in the ecclesia as He wills (1 Cor. 12:18,27). We do not know our future places except that God will use us in the display of the transcendent riches of His grace. But looking back at their lives we can see how God displayed His grace in Bruce Wimmer, who died on May 13 at age 87, and his wife Lucile (Johnson) Wimmer who died on August 25 at age 82, in Baldwin, Michigan. Bruce was always eager to serve, and Lucile was ever ready to calm and cheer with a timely word of Scripture. Those who knew them will miss their strong testimony of faith, even as the encouragement in faith which they conveyed to others on so many occasions.

God and His Work

YAHWEH ELOHIM IN GENESIS THREE

OUR ATTENTION is more easily drawn in Genesis 3 to the actions of the creature than to those of the Creator. But God is still the First Cause of all that is and all that happens. His activities are primary, and theirs are secondary. The activities of God shape the activities of the human pair in a way that corresponds with the pattern of the first chapter of Genesis. The divine doing is unfailingly effective and unwaveringly purposeful. But unlike God's works of creation which were direct (God Himself speaks, and it is done), God's operations are now carried forward indirectly, as the results of His preparations in chapter 2 and the constitution of the human as well as of the serpent whom He had made. Nevertheless, God remains in charge, knowingly and intentionally and effectively directing all to the end He has in view.

What we have learned of God in Genesis 1 and observed of Him in chapter 2 remains operative and true in chapter 3. All is out of Him, and all is channeled through His counseled activities.

ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

To be sure, Yahweh's actions in Genesis 3 appear as *reactions* to the human acts of disobedience and the serpent's acts of deception. What the creature does is now viewed as producing a response from Yahweh. But that is not the whole truth. The actions of Yahweh Elohim in Genesis 2 make it evident that the actions of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 do not develop apart from Him. Fur-

thermore, the actions of the serpent reflect the spirit of enmity and opposition that God had given it (*cp* Job 26:13; 1 John 3:8), and the actions of the human beings are in full accord with their inexperience within the setting in which God had placed them.

The chain of activity starts with Elohim. He made the creatures and made them with the traits and character they exhibit. Yahweh Elohim prepared the garden and planted the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He instructed the human and then made the woman who was left alone to face the crafty serpent whom He had also *made* (Gen.3:1). It is in relation to what God had made them to be and the situation He arranged that the deception and sin occurred. Therefore, it is as a third link in the chain, that God reacts to what His creatures have done.

But even here the chain is not complete. The divine actions of exposure and judgment recorded in Genesis 3:8-24 are responses to the acts of the serpent's enmity and the human pair's offense. But within those verses of Scripture Yahweh Elohim speaks of good to come. His works of curse and separation are complemented by a work of clothing the human beings and by words of promise which look ahead to the future.

The promises of good to come are not divine reactions to human actions but issue directly from the heart of God, looking forward to actions of God which He had planned ahead of time, before humanity sinned. They stem from the divine purpose which had indeed been stated in the terse words of Genesis 1:26, "Let Us make humanity in Our image and according to Our likeness."

In order for this goal of the making of humanity in Elohim's image and likeness to be achieved, it was necessary that the human race come to *know* good and evil. The craftiness of the Adversary by means of the serpent involved a mixture of truth and false insinuation, and without the

Adversary intending it, what the serpent says in Genesis 3:5 ultimately glorifies God. "Elohim *knows* . . . you will become like Elohim, knowing good and evil."

Therefore, we can see that the first two verbs connected with God in Genesis 3 are very revealing. He *had made* the serpent (3:1), and (in the words of the serpent) God *knew* (3:5) that humanity would become like Himself in knowing good and evil. But what the Adversary did *not know* was that this experience of humanity will eventually lead to their appreciation of God as their Saviour and Subjector and their All. Indeed we may well say, adapting the highly significant words of 1 Corinthians 2:8, had the serpent known God's wisdom behind the human acts of Genesis 3, it would never have done what it did.

The actions of God in Genesis 3, His *making* of the serpent, His *knowing* of the consequences of the human disobedience, and His *saying* of words (and *doing* of deeds) of exposure, judgment and promise, all of these are directed to the consummation of glory He has purposed. When they are related finally to the revelation of God made in and through His Son, Jesus Christ, they will all be seen as wise and right and good.

THREE CATEGORIES

As suggested above, the acts of Yahweh Elohim in word and deed in Genesis 3:8-24 can be grouped under three headings: Exposure, Judgment and Promise.

(1) EXPOSURE

His *walking* in the garden, His *calling* to the human pair and what He *says* to them in the form of questions (Gen.3:8-13) are all for the purpose of bringing their sin and condition out in the open. The human hides, and God makes manifest. Knowing what we are is necessary for our appreciation of what God is. (Hence Paul speaks first of the

human irreverence of unrighteousness in Romans 1:18-3:20 before he presents the grace and glory of God in the evangel of Jesus Christ's faithfulness in Romans 3:21-8:39.)

(2) JUDGMENT

The words and deeds of exposure are followed by words and acts of judgment in Genesis 3:14-24. In this category are Yahweh's *cursing* of the serpent and the enmity He *sets* between it and the Seed of the woman. Regarding the woman, Yahweh speaks of grief and groaning. And regarding Adam, Yahweh tells of grief and sweat and the return of his body to the soil. Finally Yahweh Elohim *sends out* the human, *driving him out* with his wife from the garden, and He *makes him tabernacle* elsewhere, *setting* cherubim to guard the way to the tree of life.

Yet in certain words of verses 15 and 16 and in His actions of verse 21, God points ahead to future actions of His which bring all His activities of Genesis 2 and His works of exposure and judgment in chapter 3 to the level of Genesis 1:31. It will all ultimately be seen as *very good*.

(3) PROMISE

There is no distinct word in Hebrew for "promise," but the verbs *say* and *speak* convey that sense when they refer to future blessings. The promises of Genesis 3 foreshadow the evangel concerning God "sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin," thus condemning sin in the flesh (Rom.8:3).

First of all, in cursing the serpent, Yahweh Elohim spoke of the removal of its usurped authority by the Seed of the woman. "He shall hurt you in the head, and you shall hurt Him in the heel" (Gen.3:15). To the Adversary the first part of this prophecy was and continues to be the very opposite of good news. But when all the sovereignty and authority of all the spiritual forces of wickedness is nulli-

fied in the reign of Christ (which results from the cross), he will become subjected in the process by which God becomes All in all (1 Cor.15:24-28), and this will be good for all without exception. By "hurting" Christ at Golgotha, the Adversary will be defeated. But in this defeat he and all enemies will be brought to bow most willingly before Him, to the glory of God the Father (Phil.2:9-11).

In His words of promise here in Genesis 3:15 we have the assurance that God will bring about the good of nullifying the Adversary's authority through the death of the One Who would be born of the woman. This coming of the Seed and His great "hurt" at Golgotha has occurred. Therefore, the good end of subjection and glory will also come to pass.

A second word of promise relating to Christ is found in Genesis 3:16. Here in addressing the woman, Yahweh speaks of *restoration* which is to come by her husband. Eve is told she may look to Adam as her husband for a return to the blessings of access and life they had enjoyed in the garden. But as with the expression "Seed of the woman," which points most particularly to Christ many years later, the restoration will not be fulfilled immediately by Adam fathering a son for Eve. Rather it will come much later through One Who would come into the race of which Adam is the progenitor.

These *words* of promise which Yahweh Elohim "said," are complemented by an *act* of promise noted in Genesis 3:21. His *making* of a covering, and His *clothing* of Adam and Eve served a particular need at that time. But these acts also are types of what God would do later for sinners in the gift of His Son. God would *make* Christ to be not merely a covering, but the Sin [Offering] that would rid the human race of sin; by means of the death of His Son God would provide not clothes of skin but His own righteousness as our very constitution (2 Cor.5:21; *cp* Rom.5:19).

WHO BECOMES GOD'S ADVISOR?

A Bible teacher recently asked me, "Do you believe that Adam and Eve made a genuine choice to rebel? Or do you accept the Calvinist claim that it was God who predestined them to sin, caused them to sin and then punished them for sinning?"

The actions of God in the second and third chapters of Genesis make it clear that this "Calvinist claim" is on target. As much as we may suppose this is unjust and contrary to what God would do, the Scriptures say He did do those things which made it impossible for Adam and Eve not to disobey. We would probably have advised God not to make the human so soulish, not to plant the tree in the garden or not to place man where He had planted the tree or not to make the fruit of the tree so desirable, not to draw Adam's attention to the tree and not to make the crafty serpent. But we are not His advisors. And that is a good thing (*cf* Rom.11:33-36).

When we consider the revelation of God's love in the giving of His Son for us, how can we hesitate to see God as doing the right and wise and good thing in every action of these opening chapters of His Word? I cannot speak for Calvinists, but I would hope they would reply to the critic above, as I do, by pointing out that God's actions which led to the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and His actions of judgment on them for doing what they could not avoid doing, are followed by His predetermined actions of sending His own Son to die for our sins and of making Christ to be a Sin Offering for our sakes and of vivifying Him and exalting Him above every power in the universe. We may be sure that, entirely apart from human reasonings about "genuine" choices, Adam and Eve will ultimately praise God with genuine praise and love Him with genuine love. And so will we all.

D.H.H.

THE BATTLE OF MOUNT GILBOA

31 +When the Philistines foughtⁱ against Israel, + the men of Israel fled^f before the Philistines, and many fell slainⁱ on Mount Gilboa. ²+ The Philistines followed hard^h after Saul and^h after his sons, and the Philistines smote^j Jonathan, + Abinadab and Malchishua, the sons of Saul. ³+Then the fighting was heavy^h around Saul; + the shootersⁱ, the men with the bow, found him; and he⁷ was wounded[~] very severely^f by the shooters. ⁴+So Saul said to his all-gear-bearerⁱ, Draw your sword and stab me^w with it, lest these uncircumcised come and stab me and abuseⁱ me. +Yet his all-gear-bearerⁱ did not comply, for he was very fearful. +Then Saul took the sword and fell upon it. ⁵+When his all-gear-bearerⁱ saw that Saul was dead, + he^{mr} too fell upon his sword and died with him. ⁶+Thus Saul died, and his three sons and his all-gear-bearerⁱ, ⁱon that day, even all his men—~they died~ together.

⁷+When the men of Israel who were ⁱ across the vale and who were ⁱ across the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, +then they forsook⁷ their~ cities and fled. +So the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

⁸+ It^h was^f on the morrow +when the Philistines came to strip^h those slain, +that they found Saul and his three sons, fallenⁱ on Mount Gilboa. ⁹+ They cut off his head, + stripped him of his all-gear, and sent messengersⁱ to the

31:3 7-- was wounded: MT was in travail.

31:6 --- they died: *cf* 1 Ch 10:6.31:7 7-- their: Hb the, *cf* 1 Ch 10:7.

land of the Philistines round about to ^mbear the tidings to the house of their fetishes and [`]to [`]their people. ¹⁰ + They [']placed [']his ^{all}gear in the house of Ashtaroth and fastened [']his body [']to the wall of Beth-shan. ¹¹ + After the dwellers' of Jabesh-gilead had [']heard [']about him ([~]what the Philistines had done to Saul), ¹² + all men of valor rose up and ^{lg}marched all [']night; + they [']took down [']the body of Saul and [']the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan. + When they [']came back to ^dJabesh, + they [']burned [']them there. ¹³ + Then they [']took [']their bones and [']entombed them under the tamarisk^o ⁱ at ^dJabesh; and they [']fasted seven days.

A BATTLE LOST

The battle was located in the valley of Jezreel (1 Sam. 28:4; 29:1,2), in the land of the tribe of Issachar. Apparently Saul and his three sons led the central battalion, and Abner and others led flanking divisions. The Philistine thrust was so strong that the Israelites were forced back. Saul and his division were ascending Mount Gilboa in retreat. The Philistines overpowered Saul; and when the flanking divisions saw that their king was lost, they fled for their lives, evacuating the cities in the immediate area.

Evidently, the battle extended into the darkness of the evening hours, because the prize of Saul and his sons was not fully realized by the Philistines until the following day. In the meantime, an Amalekite found Saul, and stole the insignia from his head and his armlet (2 Sam.1:10). The Philistine campaign gained holdings for them extending to the Jordan valley, and particularly the city of Beth-shan, a walled city which may well have been the main fortress in northern Israel. The account is also recorded in 1 Chronicles 10.

31:13 tamarisk: or, terebinth (1 Ch 10:12).

SAUL'S REIGN ENDS

The first seven verses of chapter 31 stand in sharp contrast with David's recovery of family and possessions from the Amalekites. David recovered all—wives and children—while Saul and his sons were killed. David came back to Ziklag, and retained possession of it, but the Israelites under Saul fled from their cities, losing their homes and possessions to the Philistines who came and dwelt there.

So also is the end of the rule which seems right to man in the flesh. Saul was the king Israel had asked for. Saul is the personification of the king the flesh would always choose to rule.

1 Samuel gives three symbols of rule all of which pertain to the flesh, and all of which were beheaded. Dagon was a Philistine god, and represents false religion that would rule God's people in the promised land. The statue of Dagon fell on its face before the ark of the testimony, and after being righted, it fell again and the head broke off (1 Sam.5:1-4). Goliath, the giant warrior, represents all the strength and skill and armament the flesh can amass. He fell dead on his face before the shepherd boy, and then David beheaded him with his own sword (1 Sam.17:49-51). Saul fell prostrate before Samuel's prophecy of his death, and he fell on his sword (face down) in the battle. Later the Philistines came and beheaded him (1 Sam.28:20; 31:4,9).

The rule of the flesh by the flesh ultimately comes to death while trying to establish itself. It cannot succeed. The rule of the flesh by faith crucifies the flesh that it may live in the power of His resurrection.

Nothing remained of Saul for his entombment other than his bones. Like the works of our flesh, judged by fire, nothing remains. Saul's weaponry was satirically hung in the house of a female god, and his body taken to Beth-shan, "the house of quietness."

LOYALTY

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity” (Prov.17:17). “Greater love than this has no one, that anyone may be laying down his soul for his friends” (John 15:13).

Despite the many contrasts of Saul to David we should remember that he labored endlessly to deliver Israel from her foes. He was God’s anointed and the best the flesh could offer.

It was his deliverance of Jabesh-gilead from the cruel slavery of Nahash the Ammonite that established Saul as the chosen king for Israel (1 Sam.11). Now came the day when Saul’s reign ended. His body was abused and flaunted in mockery by the Philistines. Israel was infuriated, but too terrified to act. But those of Jabesh-gilead responded differently. Their gratitude and respect for their deliverer gave fear no place, but moved them with adamant resolve to give their king the dignity of honorable burial. A number of valiant volunteers from Jabesh-gilead marched all night, took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and brought the bodies back to Jabesh for burial. Then they fasted in mourning for seven days.

This act of respect and loyalty by the valiant of Jabesh brings to mind the day Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came out of the closet and confessed their belief in Christ by providing for His burial. It recalls the morning when Mary came to face the Roman guard of soldiers at the tomb, even before the security of daylight had dawned. There are times when love demands loyalty that is deaf to all our pleadings of self-preservation and self-respect. The love of those from Jabesh-gilead gave hands and feet to their loyalty to their king. May our love make us as loyal to our Lord. “Fear is not in love, but perfect love is casting out fear” (1 John 4:18).

J. Philip Scranton

All Scripture is Inspired by God

ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE WORD

IN THESE present days of perilous periods, days when all who want to live devoutly in Christ Jesus shall be persecuted, the need of encouragement or comfort is vital. When our trials seem beyond relief, when physical pain or anguish of soul seems more than we can bear, when our hearts are filled with despair, may we be still, recalling the apostle’s words:

“What shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? Affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? According as it is written, that ‘On Thy account we are being put to death the whole day; we are reckoned as sheep for slaughter.’ Nay! in all these we are more than conquering though Him Who loves us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor messengers, nor sovereignties, nor the present, nor what is impending, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord” (Rom.8:35-39).

Commenting on these words, Brother A. E. Knoch wrote, “God’s love never lets us go. The trials and tribulations we endure are not tokens of His displeasure. They are all tempered by His loving heart. A sense of His love hovering over us in the midst of our distresses is the most blessed of all balms and will enable us not only to endure them but to enjoy them. Here all the great forces of the universe are arrayed, and none of them, no, nor all of them together, can come between us and the unconquerable love of our God as displayed in Christ Jesus.

“Death will be swallowed up by life. Life may lead us far from Him, but not beyond the reach of His love. The present perplexes us, the future fills us with fear, but only when we lose the sense of His love. Powers, celestial or terrestrial, are subject to His sway. Nothing above or beneath, nothing at all has the power to break the bond that binds the humblest and most unworthy saint to the throbbing breast of our great and glorious God. This is more than salvation from sin! *This is reconciliation!*”¹

ALL SCRIPTURE IS INSPIRED

The warning of future apostasy and opposition is contained in the apostle’s last letter addressed to “Timothy, a child beloved.” How uplifting to note the tender love and concern. Realizing that his work is ending, and despite the terrible afflictions which he suffered in bringing the evangel, Paul now emulates the genuine compassion of his Lord: “. . . I have an unintermittent remembrance concerning you in my petitions, night and day, longing to see you, remembering your tears, that I may be filled full of joy, getting a reminder of the unfeigned faith which is in you, which first makes its home in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother Eunice. Now, I am persuaded that it is in you also” (2 Tim.1:3-5).

These touching reminders of former times of fellowship that Paul enjoyed with Timothy draw attention to Timothy’s unfeigned faith which is traced back to his mother and grandmother. The apostle speaks again in this letter concerning Timothy’s early acquaintance with the sacred scriptures which are able to make him wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Then Paul adds: “All scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in right-

¹ I. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.239.

eousness, that the man of God may be equipped, fitted out for every good act” (2 Tim.3:14-17).

We must not devalue the Hebrew Scriptures. They are both beneficial and relevant to our lives.

GOD’S GRACIOUS REVELATIONS

How often our Lord referred to these consoling words! Even as a young Boy He was found by His distraught parents in the sanctuary, seated in the midst of the teachers, hearing them as they taught from the Word, as well as inquiring of them. And all those hearing Him were amazed and astonished at His understanding and answers (Luke 2:46,47).

In the synagogue at the commencement of His ministry, Jesus read from a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Indeed, all the prophets declare His arrival. John the baptist called on the records of the prophet (Isa.40:3) to herald His advent.

Thankfully, there are so many examples in the fulfillment of God’s gracious provision of revelation. How often the Son of God’s love quoted from these. May we turn to the ones which directly guide into the understanding of God’s purpose. All such enlightenment must inspire and encourage.

GOD’S EVIDENT DELIGHT

As the ministry of Jesus progressed it swiftly became evident that, not only would His heralding of the kingdom be rejected, but soon His life would also be in jeopardy! Far from becoming frustrated, He perceived in this the unrevealed purpose of His Father. Without the encouragement and guidance of holy spirit His response and noble words would be completely enigmatic. However, for the ecclesia, they are words of life:

“At that season, answering, Jesus said, ‘I am acclaiming Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for Thou hidest these things from the wise and intelligent and Thou dost

reveal them to minors. Yea, Father, seeing that thus it became a delight in front of Thee.

“All was given up to Me by My Father. And no one is recognizing the Son except the Father; neither is anyone recognizing the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son should be intending to unveil Him. Hither to Me, all who are toiling and laden, and I will be giving you rest. Lift My yoke upon you and be learning from Me, for meek am I and humble in heart, and you shall be finding rest in your souls, for My yoke is kindly and My load is light” (Matt.11:25-30).

Again, Brother Knoch’s comments seem especially appropriate: “Though His ministry seems to be a failure, the Lord recognizes the fact that this is in accord with God’s unrevealed purpose. He acquiesces in God’s evident delight in hiding the truth from those who were wise and intelligent in the things of this life. He does not fret because He cannot reach them, because God’s work is apparently without the anticipated results, for He has the consciousness that, in the final analysis, it is God Himself Who is operating all for His Own purpose and glory. It is not that those who rejected Him were blinded by some act of their own for which God disclaims responsibility. They do not see because God positively hides it from them.

“It is this God-consciousness, this recognition of His hand in all things, and more especially in that which is opposed to His apparent will, which gives His slaves heart’s ease and rest in spirit. This is especially needed in days of apostasy. When we see the success of His enemies, the failure of His friends, when His own are enmeshed in the delusions of the last days, shall we blame those who must bear this load as they toil? How hard it is for their pride to be involved in failure! How great the temptation to throw off the yoke and insure success by methods of their own! O that they would learn to yoke themselves with Him, to bow humbly

beneath the failure that is according to God’s underlying purpose! Then they will acquiesce when He blinds, as well as when He blesses. Then the yoke will no longer gall, and the load will float from their aching shoulders.”²

THE PEACE OF GOD

In Scriptures there are many testimonies to the fact that Christ Jesus was the Firstborn of every creature. In the Colossian letter this is plainly stated without any equivocation (Col.1:15). Moreover, all is declared to be created in Him!

Thus in His sacred prayer Jesus declared, “Thou lovest Me before the disruption of the world” (John 17:25). The apostle Peter also was inspired to record that Christ was “as of a flawless and unspotted lamb, foreknown, indeed, before the disruption of the world” (1 Pet.1:19,20). Here is the One Who carries out the Father’s determination and delight that all be reconciled through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:20).

Presenting Christ in this way, the Scriptures strengthen and encourage us in reliance on God and enjoyment of His peace in all times. It is as we perceive God’s ultimate intention to be All in all, that we find all the satisfactory answers to the dilemmas of life. All of Scripture is powerful in fostering this endurance and peace.

“Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will declare, be rejoicing! Let your lenience be known to all men: the Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus” (Phil.4:4-9).

Donald Fielding

² A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, pp.25,26.

MARRIAGE AND THE BELIEVER

(Part Three)

PAUL'S WORDS REQUIRE WISE JUDGMENT

IN the case of the believer who has been forsaken by the unbeliever, since "a brother or a sister is not enslaved in such a case" (1 Cor.7:15), the forsaken believer may freely marry whomsoever he or she wishes. That is, such a one may do so "in the Lord" (*cf* 1 Cor.7:39b; *cp* 2 Cor.6:14). In so doing, not the slightest dishonor will come upon the name of God or upon any of His saints. Most particularly, no dishonor at all will fall upon the forsaken believer who now decides to marry someone else.

For that matter, even if the forsaken believer, regrettably, should fail in this and should marry an unbeliever, we should deal graciously and sympathetically with such a brother (or sister) with respect to any such disobedience. Indeed, God will surely deal graciously with any such offense, for He deals graciously with *all* of our offenses (Eph.1:7; Col.2:13b).

As we consider this theme further, let us not insist upon our own unwarranted suppositions, but seek to judge the words of the apostle *wisely*. After considering *all* Paul has to say bearing on the question, the reader may judge for himself whether the claim that death alone dissolves the marriage union is true or false.

The claim, as made by some, is that even those who are forsaken by their mates are *not* free to marry because such ones are married "for life" to their original partners.

Consequently, it is further claimed that any divorced believer whose first mate is still living must never even date, much less remarry. Also if it should be that any such person has already remarried, he or she must repudiate all such ties and live singly. It is insisted that such ones must do so no matter how awful their first marriage may have been or how excellent their second marriage may be, and even if the second marriage has brought forth children and resulted in a happy family.

It is said that while God will *forgive* all *sin* connected with such first marriages, nonetheless He will not *unbind* the marriages themselves; the only exception being if one or the other of the partners in the marriage should die. It is usually claimed as well, that unless the divorced believer (whose mate from a first marriage is still living) will live both singly and celibately, he or she cannot be saved.

Those who accept such teachings, yet fail to heed them, live under a terrible burden of misery and guilt. And even those who heed them, though finding satisfaction in their obedience, nonetheless nearly always experience much misery of their own, due to the deprivation and sorrow that results from their decision. This is especially true in those cases in which a good second marriage is destroyed and a happy family made miserable, all because either the father or the mother has become convinced that he or she, "for righteousness' sake," must now become a "spiritual eunuch."

The teachings about "being married for life" are propagated, primarily if not exclusively, because of an incorrect understanding of Paul's words in two passages, 1 Corinthians 7:39 ("A wife is bound by law for whatever time her husband is living") and Romans 7:2, 3a ("For a women in wedlock is bound to a living man by law. Yet if the man should be dying, she is exempt from the law of the man. Consequently, then, while the man is living, she will be styled an adulteress if she should be becoming another man's").

Perhaps the primary difficulty here, however, is in the Authorized Version's dreadful corruption of the Greek in Romans 7:2a, by its rendering, "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband *so long as he liveth*." It should be, as in the Concordant Version, "For a woman in wedlock is bound to a *living* man by law" (the sublinear ultraliteral is: "THE for under-man woman to-THE LIVING MAN HAS-*been*-BOUND TO-law"; CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT, p.463).

To approach the Word of God with no more in hand than the Authorized Version or some other all-too-frequently lawless and discordant translation, is totally inadequate, not to mention dangerous. We need much guidance and wisdom even with a faithful translation before us, and cannot hope to gain a sound understanding without an accurate, concordant version.

Scriptural statements are correctly understood only as they are properly related to their actual subject. Correct judgments concerning any certain text are strictly a matter of wisdom and discernment, of competency and enlightenment, according to our total knowledge of all relevant facts. True understanding is the product of the employment of pertinent facts in a valid way, with a view toward a correct conclusion.

It will hardly suffice merely to make bold claims as to the significance of a passage, especially when, if the truth be known, we may never have realized that such a thing as varied senses in which a passage may be taken even exists.

THOSE WHO ARE SEPARATED ARE UNMARRIED

Concerning the question of the forsaken believer, we have the explicit testimony of the apostle Paul: "If the unbeliever *is* separating, let him separate. A brother or a sister is *not* enslaved in such a case" (1 Cor.7:15). In the nature of the case, the unbelieving man, who *has sepa-*

rated himself, *is* separate and so *is no longer bound* to the believing woman. Likewise, then, neither is the believing woman from whom the unbelieving man has separated himself, bound to him. As Paul says, "A brother or sister is not enslaved in such a case." This can only be so because the forsaken believer is no more bound to the forsaking unbeliever than the forsaking unbeliever is bound to the forsaken believer.

What God yokes together, man is not to be separating (Matt.19:6); and indeed it is a sin when man makes such a separation. But when such a separation is made, it is made; *when* it is done, *it is* done.

The fact is that those who are *separated* are *unmarried*; they are "loosed" from their original mate, and so are no longer bound (*cp* 1 Cor.7:27). Let us take note of this fact in 1 Corinthians 7:11, a passage which we have already considered: "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)."

Plainly, even in the ecclesia, the believing woman who becomes separated from her believing husband *is* unmarried. Such a woman is not *married*, but *unmarried*! Therefore it is ridiculous to claim that even the woman who was *formerly* married to an unbeliever, is *still* married to him—even if he has forsaken her!—and that, "in God's sight," she will be "living in adultery" if she should now marry someone else.

Even so, many will continue on in their error, glibly claiming that, "There are a great many people who are divorced in *the eyes of man*, who are nonetheless married in *the eyes of God*"; and, "God does not 'recognize' second marriages which result from divorce as proper marriages but only as sinful unions." The truth, however, is that there is no more reason to say that God declines to "recognize" (that is, to accept as such, apart from any appraisal

of inherent sinfulness) the human act of a second marriage (while one's first mate is still alive) than there is to say that God declines to recognize the human act of a first marriage. All such claims are merely false assertions and illogical reasonings based upon twisted views of certain scriptural passages. No one should believe them, for they are not *of faith*; that is, they are neither a scriptural declaration nor a corollary of a scriptural declaration. Instead, they are both *non-scriptural* and *unscriptural*.

The Scriptures know nothing of any relationship between a man and a woman which remains a marriage "in God's sight," notwithstanding the fact that one or both parties have *separated* from the other. God sees things as they are, and inspires His apostle to speak of them accordingly, the apostle Paul, to whom it was granted to convey the Lord's charge that those who have *separated* are to *remain unmarried* (or be conciliated to one another).

If the apostle had stated the obvious, perhaps clarification among some would not be so needful as it is. Yet since Paul, according to the wisdom of God, did not find it necessary to state that which of necessity is true, those who seem incapable of the most rudimentary deduction, continue to find some degree of plausibility in their error. Yet that plausibility evaporates when one observes that, in order to *remain* unmarried, one must of necessity *be* unmarried. Therefore one who is separated *is* unmarried. This is final and completely settles the matter for all who believe God.

No matter how popular and persuasive any such slogans such as "divorced in man's sight, yet married in God's sight" may be, the fact remains that they simply are not true. Yet due to their appeal and tendency to facilitate or even induce memorization, such catch phrases are not only dangerous to faith but ruinous to faith as well.

To help us grasp the truth, let us picture a children's

puzzle of two intertwining metal rings. While they are entwined, they are "married," "joined" or "united." Now, even if he should be told not to do so, if a clever child should figure out how to *separate* one of the rings from the other and should then do so, the rings *will be* separated, or, to say the same thing, they will no longer be married, joined or united. This is as true of one ring as it is of the other.

Another illustration is that of a book, a *bound* volume. As long as a given page remains glued to the spine, the page remains bound to the book. But if the page should be *separated* from its binding and removed from the book, it is no longer bound but is now *unbound*. Similarly, then, if one or the other of the partners in a marriage should separate from the former marriage partner, *neither* party is bound to the other any longer.

"TO ACCORD WITH WHAT MUST BE"

In all cases of divorce and remarriage, the sin consists not in the state of being remarried, but in the prior acts of separation and divorce which produced the unmarried state.

That which is ideal for those who are separated, and thus now unmarried, is, of course, not to marry someone else, but either to remain unmarried or be conciliated to their original mates. Nonetheless, except where special *saving grace* (*cf* 1 Cor.7:7; Titus 2:11) is given in order that the ideal might truly be effected, the flesh can no more heed (*cf* Rom.8:7) any counsel to follow the ideal than the dead can walk or speak.

While we do well to hold (correctly) that *man* is not to be separating what God has joined, we also do well to reserve to God the right to dissolve any union He has made. The Potter is in charge of the clay. In accord with His own inscrutable wisdom, God uses our injustice to commend His righteousness (Rom.3:5), and to accomplish His purpose.

The wider problem concerning this whole matter of divorce and remarriage is not the dreadful sins of adultery and divorce in themselves, but the hideous sins of self-righteousness and pride by so many—ones who themselves have never been divorced—when considering the failings of those who have become divorced. Such *self-righteous* believers, *in fact*, do not *actually* thank God *alone* that they have not committed adultery or become divorced. They pridefully imagine that those who have sinned in these ways could have avoided their course, any conditions being as they were notwithstanding.

This proud notion, however, is a false notion as well, for it is evident that no one can avoid what he is somehow caused to do. Indeed, few would care to say that human behavior is due to nothing at all. Besides, even if a certain act were somehow exempt from all causality, this would not afford a power of contrary choice to such an act. This is simply because a man could no more prevent engaging in an act of sheer chance than he can avoid doing that which is the effect of a cause.

The one who judges wisely and accepts the truth will see that, “to accord with what must be” (Rom.8:26), ultimately speaking, *all*—and therefore all human failure even as all human success—is out of, through, and for God (Rom. 11:36). As a result, our blessed Creator and Saviour will be glorified precisely as He *intends* to be glorified, and His creatures will be blessed accordingly, not otherwise. During the eons, God’s wisdom dictates both the specific details concerning, as well as the precise degree of, both good and evil, according as He apportions them to each one of His creatures (*cf* Ecc.1:13; Isa.26:12). That is, God operates *all* according to the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11) toward a specific goal that otherwise could never be reached.

Men may indeed “mean it for evil”; even so, God “means it for good” (*cf* Gen.50:20, AV). As Joseph declared to his

brothers concerning their evil deeds against him, “Do not be grieved or angry with yourselves that you sold me hither, because Elohim has sent me on before you to preserve lives . . . Elohim sent me on before you to set up for you a remnant on earth and to preserve lives for you in a great deliverance. So now, not you sent me here, but the One, Elohim . . . You devised evil against me, *yet Elohim devised it for good for me*, in order to accomplish, as at this day . . .” (Gen.45:7,8; 50:20,21).

How glorious to know, as the apostle Paul declares, that, “Whatever was written before, was written *for this teaching of ours*, that through the endurance and the consolation of the scriptures *we* may have *expectation*” (Rom.15:4).

Adultery is a sin not because of some imaginary concomitant power of contrary choice, but because it *adulterates*, thus debasing a pure and holy union by the introduction of an unclean foreign element. Separation and divorce are sinful simply because they do indeed *separate* what God had originally yoked together.

We are not to commingle with one who is named a brother “if he should *be* a paramour, or greedy, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner” (1 Cor. 5:11). We may by no means, however, continue to refuse fellowship to any such person once he no longer engages in such sinful ways. What he once *was* is of no consequence to our present fellowship. In this matter, we are not concerned with what he *was* but with what he *is*.

A believer who is living uprightly in a second marriage, a believer who is faithful to his present mate, should no more be stigmatized or shunned because he once separated from and divorced his wife, than the now-sober believer who was once a drunkard should be stigmatized or shunned because of his former drunkenness.

Our Saviour, Christ, *died* for these sins of our brethren, even as for our own dreadful and unclean acts, of which

we are now ashamed (*cf* Rom.6:21). Let us rejoice that in Christ we *all* are having the deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in accord with the riches of His grace which He lavishes on us (Eph.1:7). Indeed, the one who has committed adultery or separated and divorced from his mate, is not only forgiven, but is now even being "*justified* in [Christ's] blood" as well; and he, like ourselves, shall be saved from indignation accordingly (*cf* Rom.5:9).

The work of Christ is unspeakably great and transcendently powerful. Let us not lose sight of its true glory through our ill-disguised self-righteousness with respect to the failings of our brethren in matters of marriage. Let us not forget that we have many offenses of our own that are in at least as much need of the grace of God as the sins of those who have failed in marriage.

Of course it is ideal to remain married for whatever time one's mate is living; even as it is ideal for all the members of the ecclesia, whether married or not, to present their bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, and to be cleansing themselves from *every* pollution of flesh and spirit, completing holiness in the fear of God (Rom.12:1; 2 Cor.7:1). Even so, we will be in a position to bring special criticism and contumely upon those who have failed to live ideally in matters of marriage only when we ourselves have consummated the fullness of our own obedience with respect to all other matters (*cp* 2 Cor.10:6).

Just as all believers need to be *bearing with* one another in *love* (Eph.4:2), husbands and wives must be especially conscientious in heeding this mutual duty. It is true that none of us can go beyond the bounds of our own disposition, according to the measure of faith granted us by God (*cf* Rom.12:3). Therefore we need to be praying for a spirit of power and of love and of sanity, that we might truly be useful and pleasing to our spouses, our beloved partners in marriage.

J.R.C.

If One Died For the Sake of All

**THE SAVIOUR OF ALL,
ESPECIALLY OF BELIEVERS**

WHEN CHRIST JESUS came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim.1:15) He carried out this purpose by becoming the correspondent Ransom for all of them (1 Tim.2:6). God's will that all mankind be saved (1 Tim.2:4) was thus carried forward with assurance of its full and exultant realization in God's own time. Paul expresses this assurance later in 1 Timothy by these faithful and welcome words: *God is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers.* These words are not obscure, nor are they trifling. What they say is as clear and as significant as it seems.

1 TIMOTHY 4:10

God is the Saviour of humanity, for He is the incorruptible, invisible, only and wise God (1 Tim.1:27), the One Who must save us if we are to be saved, and the One Who is willing to save us all (2:4). He Who is the Saviour of all mankind is the one God (1 Tim.2:5), the living God (4:10) and the happy God and only Potentate (1:11; 6:15), Who Himself offered up the gift of His Son for our approach in salvation to Him (*cf* Rom.8:32; Eph.2:8), Who will not fail in reaching His goal of good (*cf* Rom.8:28; 11:32-36; Eph.1:11). To Him be the honor and glory for the eons of the eons! Amen! (1 Tim.1:17).

God is the *Saviour* of mankind. From the beginning He has revealed Himself as Creator and Placer and the One Who chooses and blesses, judges and condemns. Through the ages, in His mercy, He has saved some of His chosen

from certain dangers and miseries and has spoken to them of future happiness and peace. But Paul speaks here of the salvation of sinners from sin (1 Tim.1:15), and a salvation into the realization of the truth (2:4). It is a salvation of sinful humanity, involving justification, vivification, subjection and reconciliation (*cf* Rom.5:1-9; 1 Cor.15:22-28; 2 Cor.4:6;5:21; Eph.1:7,15-23; Phil.2:9-11; Col.1:9-20). To be the Saviour where salvation is needed is God's way. He will not be content with the Title only.

God is the Saviour of *all mankind*, for there is no distinction among us when it comes to being sinners (Rom.3:23). The first revelation of God in Scripture is as Creator of all (Gen.1:1), and this is where we must begin our acquaintance with Him (*cp* Acts 17:23-25; Rom.1:20). But God has not made Himself fully manifest until all humanity perceives His saving grace and glory in the gift of His Son (Titus 2:11-14), and all are constituted righteous, vivified in Christ and reconciled to Him. This has been the major theme of these studies, sadly overlooked except to be disputed. But as witnessed by the important passages from Paul's epistles that we have examined, God's purpose to save all through the faithful obedience of His beloved Son is eminently scriptural and vitally evangelical.

God is the Saviour of *believers* in a *special* way, for He has already brought us into that experience of grace of which the apostle Paul was the pattern, overwhelmed with faith and love in Christ Jesus (1 Tim.1:14-16). And in the future, whenever Christ, our Life, should be manifested, then we also shall be manifest together with Him in glory (Col.3:4).

FAITHFUL AND WELCOME

It is a faithful saying which is worthy of all welcome that we may truly rely on the living God as Saviour. Who would doubt that? Even those who question the existence of God,

or who feel that if he exists he cannot be able (or willing) to save us, might still agree that what is said in 1 Timothy 4:10 would be welcome if the apparent meaning of the passage were true. Would it not be a good thing if every human sinner would be saved from sin? Wouldn't it be a convincing testimony to the power, wisdom and goodness of God as a living and active and victorious God if He saved all through the death of His Son? And wouldn't it give the believer increasing confidence in God and lead to a steadily growing reliance on Him in our current lives if we could believe these scriptures without qualification, accepting our God and Saviour as the Saviour of all mankind, Who will be manifested as such when He becomes All in all?

Yet here we are, nearly two thousand years after these words were penned, and this significant passage does not appear to capture much sustained interest among those who search and teach God's Word. For the most part, it seems to be shunned. If any passion is aroused over these words, more often than not it is negative, focused *against* any race-wide application of the words "all mankind" or sense of salvation from sin connected with the term "Saviour." Otherwise there is mostly a kind of subdued controversy over just what interpretation of these words will be most effective for showing they do not indicate the salvation of all mankind.

THE "POTENTIAL" SAVIOUR OF ALL

On one side of this dispute are those who connect 1 Timothy 4:10 with 1 Timothy 2:2-6 (surely correctly) where God is also spoken of as Saviour. They agree that Christ provided for the salvation of all in His death on the cross as the Ransom for all. Hence (so they maintain), God is to be seen as the *potential* Saviour of all, but (they insist) He is not and never will be the *actual* Saviour of all mankind. In this view, the divine potentiality will never be real-

ized, despite Christ's death on the cross for all sinners, and despite God's power and will and love.

Just why Paul would bring up a point that seems to say too much about the goodness of God and the achievements of the cross is difficult to perceive and explain. And why did he use the word "especially" if he meant "actually"? How did he happen to write in such a careless way that later generations of his "friends" would be kept busy putting the right spin on his words?

The melancholy effect of this reasoning is that a passage of Scripture speaking of the greatness and glory of God in the work of salvation is forced to indicate divine dependence on the sinner's will and faithfulness, both of which are weak and corrupt and lie at the very root of the calamity from which we need to be saved. In the work of salvation, what God is revealed to be ends up being highly qualified and dependent on what the human is thought to be.

THE "PROVIDENTIAL" SAVIOUR OF ALL

On the other side are those (relatively few) Christians who refuse to believe (surely correctly) that God can fail in achieving His purpose in the giving of His Son for sinners. Yet they also refuse to believe that God will save all mankind without exception through the death of Christ. In explaining 1 Timothy 2:4 they are generally satisfied with the claim that Paul was speaking of God willing the salvation of "all the elect" only. But that argument, unconvincing as it is even for the earlier passage, does not fit at all here because Paul adds that God, being the Saviour of all, is the Saviour of the believers (e.g., the elect) in a special way.

Nevertheless, because they are convinced the Bible teaches that, in God's sovereign counsels, some people will be damned to everlasting hell, these teachers doggedly fashion an explanation which will allow some sense to be found in the passage and still keep it from indicat-

ing the salvation of all human beings from sin. Consequently, it is somehow discovered that the passage speaks of God's merciful providence, His provision of life and sustenance for all humanity, or perhaps refers to a certain measure of divine protection from dangers and troubles that would otherwise occur.

This "general" salvation is not perhaps to be precisely defined, but it is associated with certain other passages of God's Word, such as Psalm 36:6 and Acts 17:25. The claim is that Paul brings in the idea of a saving Divine Providence at this point in order to encourage the believer who can expect a special measure of salvation of this sort in his or her life.

Again we may wonder why Paul would express such a point by the words of 1 Timothy 4:10 in the very epistle where he wrote of God as Saviour in direct association with the Ransom paid by Christ for all and with realization of the truth. Surely he has not forgotten the terminology he used in presenting the evangel both in this letter (e.g., 1:15 and 2:4,6) and throughout his ministry (*cf* 1 Cor.15:3, 22-28; Eph.2:8). Is not the believer's devoutness, spoken of in 1 Timothy 4:8, based on the "words of faith" and the "ideal teaching" (1 Tim.4:6) which Paul brought concerning Christ Jesus?

It is not Paul's intent to point to a general, divine provision of life and preservation as the basis for our reliance on God as Saviour. Paul's focus on God as Saviour centered on Christ Jesus Who came into the world to save sinners by His death on the cross, and so also should our reliance on God as our Saviour center wholly on His gift of His Son for sinners. All of us, believers and unbelievers alike are dying, and all of us face trials that are human (*cf* 1 Cor.10:13). But it is because Christ died for our sins that we can rely on God giving us endurance and patience and grace in our afflictions (*cf* Rom.5:3-5).

THE EVANGEL OF OUR SALVATION

The evangel which Paul brought is that Christ died for our sins, was entombed and has been roused the third day (1 Cor.15:1-4). This is an evangel of grace. Salvation from our sins is achieved by God in giving up His Son in His death for sinners. Our salvation is not *achieved* by our believing, but rather our believing is the channel through which God grants us that which has been gained for us. We are not asked to believe that our believing saves us from our sins, but that God saves us in the death of His Son.

We are not our own saviours. When we read in 1 Timothy 4:10 that God is the Saviour of all mankind, the whole theory of the eternal damnation (whether torment or annihilation) is shattered. Christ has already died for every sinner, and the sinfulness of any individual, no matter how great and strong, cannot change that evangelical fact.

The major loss to us in accepting that ours is a special salvation, not an exclusive one, is likely to be a loss of pride. Of course there will be many changes in our thinking about God and about the cross of Christ and about the details of future judgment and glory. This will not be easy for those who are well trained in traditional Christian doctrine. But the appreciation of the living God as the Saviour of all mankind is certain to enhance our appreciation of the goodness of our salvation and its power in our present lives. To know God as the Saviour of all mankind will strengthen our faith in God as our Saviour and our enjoyment and expectation of the special blessings He gives us in Christ.

In summing up the many passages of Scripture examined in this series of studies, 1 Timothy 4:10 can only increase our reliance on God as it explicitly verifies the wideness of His powerful and active work of salvation of sinners. Our Saviour is the Saviour of all mankind.

D.H.H.