

Contents:

- 193 Editorial
195 The Deity of God
203 Salvation and Judgment
 in the Book of Matthew
211 Enoch and Elijah
214 A Witness in the Heavens
226 “Through the Faith of Christ”
235 “Be Conciliated to God”

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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 1996
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SEVEN

EDITORIAL

UPON OCCASION, we are asked whether the believer ought to participate in such activities as voting or jury service. We are mindful that for some, such involvements are practically equated with patriotism. One may, as such, however, love and support his country, without necessarily appraising all of the public services of its citizens as being personally expedient for himself. Hence, while I hesitate to speak at all of such things, I would like to say this:

Even though neither voting nor jury service are my personal custom, it is not that I am “against” either of these practices; nor is it that I necessarily “disagree” with other believers who participate in them. I would never wish to make a law about such things; whether for myself or others. It is only that, in general and as a whole, I wish to minimize my own involvement with secular government, even as with human forms of justice. (If I were required to participate, I would not refuse to do so; but, privately, would seek to minimize my *involvement*.)

I do, however, see any such *active involvements* (when that is what they are) as counter-productive to leading a mild and quiet life in all devoutness (1 Tim.2:2). We cannot occupy ourselves with issues of civil or political injustice—much less engage in the practice of heaping contumely upon national leaders—while at the same time thinking on things above. Such ones may *be* a “whitewashed wall” (Acts 23:3), but we should not decry them thus, “for it is written that, ‘Of your people’s chief you shall *not* be declaring evil’” (Acts 23:5; cit. Ex.22:28).

I realize that others will feel that they should do their part to minimize evil in the world through their participation in

such very activities as voting and jury service. I would reply, however, that, for myself, my participation in any such activities—assuming that this would require my regular or active involvement as a prerequisite to proper service—while not making the world discernibly better, might well make *me* discernibly worse—to all who have eyes to see.

This is not to say that there may not be some spiritual ones who regularly participate in such things. Whether they might not be still more spiritual were it not for such distractions, is a separate question.

It is not the act of minor jury service, not to mention mere formal voting, that concerns me; it is rather the *spirit* attending human politics and civil justice—which the *active* participant therein cannot avoid—which I find spiritually enervating.

Of course for many believers, ones who are not sensitive to such considerations, it may be that their routine participation in such activities has little if any negative impact upon their lives, and in some respects even does them good. In any case, I certainly respect the service of all who participate in these activities, on behalf of societal good. And, I do not at all suppose that for any, mere abstinence from such service will make one either a better citizen or a more consecrated believer.

While I am persuaded as to what is best for me in these matters, I realize that this may not seem best—or even be best—for many others. I trust that for those for whom it is, in fact, expedient to avoid such involvements, this will become evident to them. And, I would say to all, that we should not be “*overweening*, beyond what [our individual] disposition must be.” Let each one of us, rather, “be of a sane disposition as God parts to each the measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3). May we all, then, seek to be faithful “where we are,” within our present level of maturity, rather than attempting to behave at a level quite beyond ourselves. J.R.C.

Reliance on the Living God

THE DEITY OF GOD

The many editorials written by A. E. Knoch for this magazine through the years contain a rich testimony to the deity of God. Reliance on the living God, His power, righteousness and love, as it is centered in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is a major theme throughout these brief writings. Starting with the following selections, slightly adapted for current needs, we propose to reprint some of these editorial thoughts as a series of meditations on the greatness of our God and His Word. We pray this will be helpful to many in the midst of their personal problems and struggles, directing their hearts into a growing confidence in God and the assurance of faith:



THE POTENCY OF TRUTH

THE fancied difficulties arising from a belief in the universal reconciliation are nothing compared with the traditional beliefs about fate of the “non-elect” dead. The millions who never heard the evangel and had humanly speaking not the slightest opportunity to believe—what of them? What of the character of God Himself, Who seems *unable* to bring His creation into harmony with His will and heart? What of the work of Christ as compared with the success of the Adversary?

There is no truth so potent as that of Colossians 1:20 in reaching those whom the traditional teaching has failed to touch. Nothing is so powerful in the case of the open infidel. Much of the gospel effort of today has lost its vitality and knows little of God’s sovereign grace. God grant that there may be a little reviving and that the recovery of these precious truths may rekindle the zeal of many, for the furtherance of the evangel!



GOD'S OWN PEACE

THE PEACE OF GOD, which is superior to every frame of mind, should preside in the hearts of all who have grasped the glories and grandeurs of our God, especially those who acknowledge Him as the only Creator and Reconciler of the universe. He commenced all, and He can bring it to its consummation. But, more than this, all is not only out of Him and for Him, but it is also *through* Him. Not only the past and the future, but the present is His concern. He is not unmindful of the stress and strain, the sorrow and the sighing, the confusion and the conflict which surround us now. Let us not be moved by these things, as though the reins had dropped from His hands, or His heart felt no concern in the tiny tribulations of this nether scene.

We have our trials in common with the world, from which we hear, above the din of the daily grind, above the hullabaloo of the medicine men who have remedies for all the earth's varied ills, above the roar of the cannon on the fighting lines, a despairing but persistent cry of "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace. We need not deceive ourselves as to this peace, or accept the marvelous fable that the pacific dove can only live and thrive in the iron hulls of dreadnaughts and tanks, and in the air perfumed with powder and poison and flame. Armaments are not a sure antidote against warfare. We know that the world can wish for peace, but it *must* prepare for war, for that is soon to appear on God's program. This is not our peace. Indeed, our peace depends, in measure, upon the world's lack of it, for it rests on God's Word, which predicts the opposite.

We have our trials in fellowship with those whom God has called out of the world. In some countries, many have lost their very lives merely because they belonged to Him. Many a believer in other lands has had to suffer severely

in seeking to gain a livelihood. Even in so-called Christian lands the strife in the nominal churches, or between the church and state, has led to much unrest.

Beyond all this there is a special danger to the peace of those whose privilege it is to learn a little of the deeper things of God. Their own fellow sufferers for Christ and for His Word are disturbed when we present for their faith truth long lost, and now not only unknown but despised. They remind us that these things disturb the peace of the saints and, therefore, cannot be of God. They exhort us not to make His glories known, lest we divide His own, and bring further strife into the household of the saints. They want no disturbance, for they fear that God cannot work in the midst of confusion.

How contrary is this to fact and truth? When has the greatest progress been made in the things of God? In times of stagnation, or in times of stress? In the upheavals of a reformation or in the stale sessions of an established church? Let us not be disturbed when God's glorious truth brings trouble in its train. So it has ever been. It should not disturb us. Nay, it should be our delight to see God's spirit at work convicting, troubling sinners, and convincing, distressing saints. These are but the pangs of progress, the precursory pains which must ever be the prelude to light and peace. Just as evil as a whole will eventuate in good, so also will these temporary and local ills lead to a knowledge of God, which is the only sure foundation of lasting peace.

We are reminded of the sons of Israel in Egypt, when Moses and Aaron came to lead them out. What was the first effect? Because they demanded that the people leave Egypt to worship Yahweh in the wilderness, Pharaoh increased their burdens, and they had to rake together their own straw for the bricks they made. Their superintendents were smitten, and they went to Pharaoh, without avail. Then they encountered Moses and said to him,

“May Yahweh see you, and may He judge, since you have caused our scent to stink in the eyes of Pharaoh” (Ex.5:21). Poor Moses, he was a trouble maker. Most of us can sympathize with him. So he went to Yahweh and said, “Yahweh, why have You done evil to this people? And why is this that You have sent me?” (5:22).

At first, the message of light and deliverance often makes matters far worse, and God does not step in to hinder it, for this evil is a necessary part of His purpose. But, in due time, God dealt with Pharaoh, and the people were delivered with a great deliverance. Let us take this to heart. We have a marvelous message for God’s dear people. In most cases it brings with it effects the very opposite of those which it promises. Our message brings unsurpassed peace—but it usually starts by stirring up strife. We have the true basis of unity—yet, at first, it may cause division. It displays and evokes in us the utmost grace and love. But its appearance may provoke exhibitions more nearly allied with detestation and hate. However, as in the case of Moses, God is only preparing for the display of His own glory by provoking its opposite at the start.

Let us not follow the example of Israel and berate God’s servants when their message seems to bear contradictory fruits at first. Nor let us be like Moses, and actually take God to task for not fulfilling His promises. God sent Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt, and who will deny that He did it? We usually forget the first disappointment. So let us not be disturbed by the effect of our endeavors to make known God’s glorious grace to sinner and to saint. Salvation through the blood is worth all the inconvenience it may cost. So also no amount of persecution or persuasion should keep us from proclaiming the grander glories of our God.

Just as, in the midst of the world’s unrest, we may be at perfect peace, so also, in the midst of the whirlpool of theological distress, we may rest serene and unafraid, con-

fidant that God’s hand is at the helm of our frail craft, and no current is too strong for Him to stem, no waves too violent for Him to pacify. He may seem to sleep, and have no care lest we perish, but how can He calm the storm if it does not arise? Let men rant and rage and roar! That is their part, and they must play it. All will subside when God’s time comes to calm the commotion. Some of His saints seek to keep the storm from coming. Others fill their lungs with air and blow with all their puny might against it. Let us sit by, unafraid, and see the salvation of the Lord. Let us at least come up to the standard of Job, and bless His Name for the evil we receive at His hands.

The preciousness of our peace springs from the surrounding turmoil. Let us look upon the trials and the tumults, the opposition and the persecution, the strife and the hatred as all from God. Let us not seek to keep Him out of it by lamely alleging that He allows it. It is, indeed, contrary to His will, but necessary for His purpose. Let us value it accordingly. We should not merely endure it, but thank God for it. Then, instead of disturbing and destroying our peace, it will contribute to it.

Peace is to be found only in God. He is the only stable and immovable point in the universe. Yet it is possible for all to be at peace in Him. As sinners we received peace *with* God through the blood of Christ. As saints it is our privilege to go far beyond this, and to enjoy the peace *of* God. God is not worried as to the outcome of His eonian travail with His creatures. He knows all beforehand. But that is because every single detail of the present is not only within His control, but it fulfills its microscopic mission in preparing for and bringing about the grand consummation He has in view. That will be a time of perfect peace, but it could never be enjoyed or appreciated without the preceding panic of the present. Israel must suffer in Egypt before she can sing on the shores of the Red Sea. And God could dwell among them only as among a redeemed race.

May the peace of God preside in our hearts, not *in spite* of the unrest in the world and the strife among the saints, but *because of it!* The God *out* of Whom all is, and *into* Whom all tends, now operates all, and especially the evil, so that, in the consummation, His creatures will know good because of their experience of evil and will be able to praise and adore Him in a degree worthy of His Name and satisfying to His heart. Let us live in the realization that *all* is *through* Him now. Only thus may we really share God's own peace—the peace *of* God.



OUT AND THROUGH AND FOR

WHAT DISTINGUISHES our position from that of many others is briefly summed up in a single passage of scripture, one of the simplest, yet by far the most comprehensive in the Word of God. It is this: "*All is out* of Him and *through* Him and *for* Him . . ." (Rom.11:26). We find the *source* of everything in God, the *course* of everything is according to His will, and He is the *goal* of all. The realization of this sublime truth gives comfort and stability and satisfaction, but above all it glorifies God and His Christ.

All Scripture (when properly translated) is in full accord with this majestic summary of God's course with His creatures. While this truth is so simple, it solves almost all of those knotty problems of theology which make the Bible so hard to understand for many people. If those new to these things will have a little patient perseverance they will be rewarded with such a grand and glorious conception of God and His purpose and grace as will turn their theological gropings into the brightness of the noon-day sun, and will not only illumine the glory of God, but the lives of those who step out of the shadows into His marvelous light.



OUT OF WHOM ALL IS

THAT *all* is out of God is the basic truth of divine revelation, yet who believes it? Almost all, even men who stand fearlessly for other truths, cannot break the bands of tradition, to acknowledge that evil as well as good is out of Him. The sad effect is that, not being able to glorify Him as *God*, they become vain in their reasonings, in their attempt to spare God the onus of evil. Almost all translators and expositors do their best to expunge this great truth from the Scriptures, so it seldom is allowed to reach our ears. When God says

See now that I, I am He!
And there are no other elohim beside Me.
I Myself put to death, and I keep alive.
I have transfixed, and I Myself shall heal. (Deut.32:39)

we listen politely, but do not think of believing what He says. God, we say, *allows, permits, bears with evil*, but of course He never began it! We are like the heathen, who usually have at least two gods, one good (whom we do not need to regard very seriously) and one evil (who is dangerous and needs to be propitiated). Yahweh Elohim Himself says:

I am Yahweh, and there is no other;
Except for Me, there is no Elohim . . .
Former of light and Creator of darkness,
Maker of good and Creator of evil,
I, Yahweh, make all these. (Isa.45:5,7)

The most incredible explanations are offered to keep us from the fundamental of all fundamentals, that there is only one God. Satan is usually made the creator of evil. How foolish to flatly oppose God's own words, and give His deity to another! Thanks be to Him that He alone is the Source of all, and has control of all, for only so could He bring His creation to its glorious goal! Let us revel

in one God, the Father *out* of Whom *all* is, even the evil which He will transmute into glory for Himself and blessing for His creatures!



THANKING GOD

WE HAVE the precious privilege of giving thanks at all times and for all things: not for good things only, but for apparently bad things; not in seasons of prosperity alone, but when all seems dark and dismal, even “when all further expectation of being saved” (*cp* Acts 27:20), seems taken from us. All things, whatever their appearance, are cooperating for our welfare, and the keener our realization of God’s supervising care and control, the more ready we are to rejoice, even in the midst of sorrow and suffering.

It is not the mission of this little magazine merely to teach the truth, but to put our readers into the most intimate relations with God, Who is Truth.

It is possible to talk about the omnipotence, omnipresence and immanence of the Deity, yet deny them in thought and action. The apostle Paul wished to attain, in his experience, to the resurrection life. So it is our privilege, not only to see the grand vision of God’s ultimate, but to allow its rays to illumine our lives even now.

Unless God retains the reins of the universe in His hands today, He can never guide it to the goal. And, since He controls all and cares for His own, we must not only trust, we may not merely acquiesce, we should tune our hearts to continual thanksgiving, unphrased, inaudible perhaps, but grateful to the heart of God. A.E.K.

“The Potency of Truth,” vol.13, p.133; “God’s Own Peace,” vol.26, pp.3-7; “Out and Through and For,” vol.15, p.5; “Out of Whom All Is,” vol.27, pp.257,258; “Thanking God,” vol.16, p.193.

He Shall Save His People

SALVATION AND JUDGMENT IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

WHEN OUR LORD came into this world He came to save. This was the meaning of the name given Him, Jesus, which according to its roots in the Hebrew language signifies: Yahweh-Saviour.

Therefore, when Mary “was found pregnant by holy spirit” (Matt.1:18), the messenger of the Lord said to Joseph, “Now she shall be bringing forth a Son, and you shall be calling His name Jesus, for *He shall be saving* His people from their sins” (1:21).

THE PROMISE OF SALVATION

This promise is a most important declaration of God’s intention. It forms a solid basis for all that is recorded throughout the book of Matthew. Indeed it must never be forgotten in the midst of stern warnings and fearful events, least of all in the account of the evil and darkness surrounding the rejection and crucifixion of this One Who came to save. The promise remains alive and true even though it is left unrealized at the close of Matthew’s account.

In fact, by the end of Matthew, even though unrealized, the great work of saving sinners from their sins had been made certain of eventual realization by the death and resurrection of Christ. This was the Lord’s own testimony at the passover meal, when He spoke of His blood “shed for many for the pardon of sins” (26:27,28; see also Matt.20:28). In addition, the truth was stated unintentionally at the very time in which it was being established.

While Jesus was being crucified the religious leaders of Israel scoffed at Him, saying, "Others he saves! Himself he cannot save!" (Matt.27:42). The first statement is absolutely true, and it is true because He *did* not save Himself. Thus the opening clause of their mocking is transformed in grandest irony into the greatest testimony to truth that they had ever spoken!

Behind every struggle and every sermon of warning and instruction recorded in Matthew's account lies the promise of salvation from sins. Behind every failure of Israel, the stubborn resistance to the testimony of the Lord and the scheming and the cries for His crucifixion, the promise still stands. "He shall be saving His people from their sins."

HIS PEOPLE

We recognize that "His people" refers to the nation of Israel in the book of Matthew (*cf* Matt.2:6; 10:5,6; 15:24). But the narrow viewpoint of Matthew's account does not restrict God in His operation of bringing salvation from sin to mankind. As Paul later testified, in words much like those of the messenger, "Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all welcome, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim.1:15). Indeed Paul uses the language of Israel's prophets to reveal that every knee shall bow in the Name of Jesus, and every tongue shall acclaim with the avowal of salvation: "Jesus Christ is Lord" (*cf* Isa. 45:23; Phil.2:9,10; Rom.9:10).

The promise of Matthew 1:21 focuses on one nation, but the point we wish to note now is that it is a promise of salvation from sins, and a promise from God. The scope of this salvation will eventually encompass all mankind (*cf* Rom.5:18; 1 Cor.15:22; 1 Tim.2:4; 4:10), but our concern here is the *force* of this promise. Is it possible that other words and events recorded in Matthew can reverse this great declaration of chapter 1?

No! this promise relating to our Lord and the purpose God had in bringing Him into this world remains in operation and can never be set aside until it is fully realized. Jesus will be known and praised by Israel as their Saviour, even as Paul also testified, "thus all Israel shall be saved" (Rom.11:26).

SAVED FROM SINS

The promise of salvation from sins can be traced through the Scriptures even as far back as Genesis 3:15,16, but clearly stated with regard to Israel in a passage such as Psalm 130:7,8. "And He Himself shall ransom Israel from all its depravities."

Ezekiel also prophesied Yahweh's new covenant with Israel: "When I save you from all your uncleannesses I will call to the grain and increase it . . . Then you will remember your evil ways and your actions which were not good, and you will be disgusted in view of yourselves on account of your depravities and your abhorrences. Not on your account will I be doing this, averring is my Lord Yahweh, let it be known to you. Be ashamed and be mortified for your ways, house of Israel. Thus says my Lord Yahweh: In the day I cleanse you from all your depravities, then I will cause the cities to be indwelt, and the deserted places will be rebuilt" (Ezek.36:29-33).

In pointing to Jesus as Israel's Saviour from their sins, the messenger was directly renewing the promise of salvation given in the Sacred Scriptures. The fact that Israel's depravities continued in the face of many serious warnings and clear instructions from Matthew 3 up to the crucifixion itself does not abrogate this promise. The reality of continued sin and its dire consequences in the very presence of the Lord and His ministry can only make the promise that much more marvelous and needed.

What is recorded in Matthew is that the promise of sal-

vation from sin is renewed in the Person of the Saviour, Jesus. But the fulfillment of that promise does not come about. Yahweh had said through Ezekiel, that *He* would cleanse Israel from all their uncleanness. But in Matthew we find Jesus telling Israel what they must do to cleanse themselves. Before the Lord Himself cleanses Israel, the fact that they are unable to cleanse themselves despite the very presence of their Saviour must be established. The time had not yet come for the salvation to be realized. But it will come, and when it comes it will be perceived and appreciated that it was due to the faithfulness of God and not to the obedience of the nation (*cf* Rom.3:3,4).

COMMANDS, WARNINGS AND JUDGMENTS

The promise was salvation from sins, but starting with John in the wilderness the message recorded in page after page of Matthew is one of commands for repentance and warnings of indignation and judgment to come. It is perhaps understandable, therefore, that the glorious promise of 1:21 has become overshadowed in people's minds by such stern and fearful words as the following:

"Progeny of vipers! Who intimates to you to be fleeing from the impending indignation? Produce, then, fruit worthy of repentance" (Matt.3:7,8).

"Yet already the ax is lying at the root of the trees. Every tree, then, which is not producing ideal fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire" (Matt.3:10).

"He will be scouring His threshing floor, and will be gathering His grain into His barn, yet the chaff will He be burning up with unextinguished fire" (Matt.3:12).

". . . whoever may be saying [to his brother], 'Stupid!' shall be liable to the Gehenna of fire" (Matt.5:22).

"Now, if your right eye is snaring you, wrench it out and cast it from you, for it is expedient for you that one of your members should perish and not your whole body be cast

into Gehenna. And if your right hand is snaring you, strike it off and cast it from you, for it is expedient for you that one of your members should perish and not your whole body pass away into Gehenna" (Matt.5:29,30).

"Enter through the cramped gate, for broad is the gate and spacious is the way which is leading away into destruction, and many are those entering through it. Yet what a cramped gate and narrowed way is the one leading away into life, and few are those who are finding it" (Matt.7:13,14).

". . . many from the east and the west shall be arriving and reclining with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens, yet the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness. There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth" (Matt.8:11,12).

"And do not fear those who are killing the body, yet are not able to kill the soul. Yet be fearing Him, rather, Who is able to destroy the soul as well as the body in Gehenna" (Matt.10:28).

"And you, Capernaum! Not to heaven shall you be exalted! To the unseen shall you subside, for, if the powerful deeds which are occurring in you had occurred in Sodom, it might remain unto today" (Matt.11:23; *cf* verses 20-24; 12:41,42).

"Every sin and blasphemy shall be pardoned men, yet the blasphemy of the spirit shall not be pardoned . . . neither in this eon nor in that which is impending" (Matt.12:31,32; *cf* verses 36,37).

"Even as the darnel, then, are being culled and burned up with fire, thus shall it be in the conclusion of the eon. The Son of Mankind shall be dispatching His messengers, and they shall be culling out of His kingdom all the snares and those doing lawlessness, and they shall be casting them into a furnace of fire. There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth" (Matt.13:40-42; *cf* verses 49-51).

"Now if the blind should be guiding the blind, both shall be falling into a pit" (Matt.15:14).

“For whosoever may be wanting to save his soul shall be destroying it. Yet whoever should be destroying his soul on My account shall be finding it” (Matt.16:25).

“Now if your hand or your foot is snaring you, strike it off and cast it from you. Is it ideal for you to be entering into life maimed or lame, or, having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the fire eonian? And if your eye is snaring you, wrench it out and cast it from you. Is it ideal for you to be entering into life one-eyed, or, having two eyes, to be cast into the Gehenna of fire?” (Matt.18:8,9).

“There shall be lamentation and gnashing of teeth. For many are the called, yet few are the chosen” (Matt.22:14; cp 24:51; 25:30).

“Serpents! Progeny of vipers! How may you be fleeing from the judging of Gehenna?” (Matt.23:33).

“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! who art killing the prophets and pelting with stones those who have been dispatched to her! . . . Lo! left is your house to you desolate” (Matt. 23:37,38).

“Then shall He be declaring to those also at His left, ‘Go from Me, you cursed, into the fire eonian, made ready for the Adversary and his messengers’” (Matt.25:41).

“And these shall be coming away into chastening eonian, yet the just into life eonian” (Matt.25:46).

THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE SAVIOUR

The bleakness increases after these fearful prophecies of Matthew 24 and 25, for the time of the crucifixion has come. Every reader of Matthew should ask now if the question has not arisen before, What has happened to the great promise of 1:21?

It has been shown in chapters 3 through 25 that God’s people Israel are sinners and need to be saved from their sins. Matthew 26 and 27 make this indisputable. But also, anticipating what is revealed later, this darkest of all events

recorded in this book becomes the basis for the full and glorious realization of 1:21.

Jesus came as the Saviour. His Name means Yahweh-Saviour. And every knee shall bow in that Name, and every tongue shall acclaim the avowal of salvation, that Jesus Christ is Lord. None of these warnings and none of the coming operations of wrath and judgment can keep Jesus from saving His people Israel, and indeed all the descendants of Adam, from their sins.

THE TEACHING OF EVERLASTING HELL

Inestimable harm has been done by taking passages like those above and stringing them together in such a way that Matthew 1:21 is submerged in our thinking. And this harm has been greatly increased by Bible translations which render the word “Gehenna” by “hell,” and the word “eonian” by “everlasting.” Few concepts have so effectively distorted the evangel of salvation, centered in Jesus Christ, as the teaching of everlasting hell.

The book of Matthew provides an especially good testing ground for this whole controversy concerning the ultimate fate of mankind. It is filled with statements and phrases, most of which are the Lord’s own words, which have been used to adjust radically the meaning of the promise of salvation from sins given at the beginning of the book and long before in the Old Testament. What the Lord speaks is so. But because He speaks of human sinfulness and failure and the certainty of judgment does not move His great Name, Saviour, into second place behind Judge or Condemner. It is necessary that He speak of indignation and judgment upon the wickedness of Israel and the nations and all mankind, but salvation from these very things must have the last word, because Jesus *is* the Saviour.

Is it possible that One Who came to save sinners should end up saving but a few and becoming the great Stumbling

Stone for the rest to their eternal condemnation? All His roles, as Judge, as Condemner, even as Stumbling Stone (*cf* Rom.9:32,33), can only serve to the end of His manifestation as the Saviour.

It is proposed here to examine the many passages in Matthew which are used so often in support of an unending hell, whether of conscious torment or hopeless annihilation, considering them carefully in their context and in the context of the whole of Scripture. It is especially pleaded that the opening promise of this book, the words of Matthew 1:21, never be forgotten. Let these words from a messenger of the Lord help shape our understanding of the many severe and fearful warnings and predictions of the book.

This is necessary, for not only future times of indignation and condemnation but also present evils pressing on us from every side, easily distract our thoughts from the good news of salvation in Christ. The very real dangers spoken of by the Lord and the very actual troubles in our own lives must not turn our eyes from the One Who saves from them. The dangers and troubles and failures, the sins and their judgment as well, all these must be, for otherwise there is no reason for Him to be the Saviour. The fact of human sin and divine judgment on wicked thoughts and words and acts should make the good news of salvation continually more welcome and glorious to us. But to view the condemnation of sinners as beyond the power and province of the Saviour is most shameful and exceedingly harmful to our lives and growth in faith.

Everlasting hell cannot be so if Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!

D.H.H.

(To be continued)

Note: We always regret typographical errors that are missed in proof-reading, but one in the July issue calls for special mention. Please change the word "Uncircumcision" to "Circumcision" on page 170, line 10.

ENOCH AND ELIJAH

MANY claim that neither Enoch nor Elijah ever died, and that they remain alive today. It is said that both were "taken to heaven," and that they remain there even at present, living in the very presence of God Himself. Various Jewish and Christian legends, some of them quite ancient, have been handed down in support of these traditions. The scriptural record itself, however, does not substantiate such beliefs.

Very little is known concerning Enoch. He was the son of Jared and the father of Methuselah (Gen.5:18,21; not to be confused with Enoch, son of Cain, mentioned in Genesis 4:17). He was a member of the line of descent through Seth by which the knowledge of God was preserved. The expression "walked with God" is used only of Enoch (Gen. 5:24) and Noah (Gen.6:9) in the early chapters of Genesis.

Elijah was the ninth-century B.C. prophet of Israel, the northern kingdom of the divided monarchy during the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram. The episodes recorded in Scripture in the life of Elijah, are basically concerned with the clash between the worship of Yahweh and Baal. Ahab fostered a Phoenician variant of Baal worship (which was the nature-religion of Canaan) after his marriage with the Tyrian princess Jezebel; but it was Jezebel who was chiefly responsible for the systematic extermination of the worship of Yahweh and of the propagation of the idolatrous worship of Baal in Israel (1 Kings 18:4,13,19; 19:10,14).

Since the word "heaven" is used in reference to Elijah's removal, it is important that we note which usage of this word is in view in 2 Kings 2:1, concerning Elijah. But since in the case of Enoch, nothing at all is said of "heaven," it is foolhardy to claim that since God somehow transferred

him somewhere, for a period of unspecified duration, He therefore doubtlessly transferred him into the celestial realms themselves, so that he might remain in the divine presence even unto today.

In approaching this theme, may we, first of all, intensely believe the words of the Lord Jesus in which He declares: “And *no one* has ascended into heaven except He Who descends out of heaven” (John 3:13). Our Lord’s statement is explicit and correctly rendered; hence it must stand. Heaven, in this case, must be defined according to the preceding context (John 3:12), the celestial regions which are in contrast to the earth.

In the Scriptures, “heaven” is sometimes applied to the vast regions of interstellar space; and, it is used as well in reference to the atmosphere immediately surrounding the earth.

Concerning Enoch, we will do well to believe that “*all* the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty-five years” (Gen.5:23), while noting as well that Enoch is included among the “*all these*” who *died* in faith, as recorded in Hebrews 11 (*cp vs.5 and 13*).

Earlier, God had “taken” Enoch (Gen.5:23), and “transferred” him, so that he would not “be *being* acquainted with death” (Heb.11:5; note the incomplete verb form, as indicated by the superior vertical line in the CV). Yet eventually he died; for all of his days were 365 years.

We are not told where Enoch was taken, or transferred to. But we are informed that God’s purpose in transferring him was in consideration of his having pleased Him well, and so that he might not be being acquainted with death (Heb. 11:5; *cp Gen.5:22b*). It may be that God transferred Enoch from one place to another so as to put him beyond the reach of wicked men who were seeking his soul. The environ to which he was relocated is not specified in Scripture. But there is no reason to suppose that he was transferred even to the ends of the earth, much less to the celestial sphere.

Since Elijah ascended heavenward in a *tempest* (i.e., a violent storm, 2 Kings 2:1,11), it is evident that the atmospheric heavens are in view. For that matter, this would be clear enough from the AV rendering “whirlwind,” since such a disturbance is as much an atmospheric phenomenon as is a tempest. The atmospheric heavens are the heavens in which birds fly over the earth, “on the face of the atmosphere of the heavens” (*cp Gen.1:20*). Indeed, the word “into” (“into heaven,” AV, 2 Kings 2:1) is added; there is no preposition in the Hebrew. It is simply that thus, by a tempest, Yahweh removed Elijah “heavenward.”

This was done so that Elisha might assume the office of prophet which Elijah had formerly held (2 Kings 2). From a consideration of the nature of the case in the letter which Elijah wrote which is recorded in 2 Chronicles 21:12-15 (concerning events which themselves had not yet occurred at the time of Elijah’s removal from the earth by means of the tempest), it seems clear that this letter was written, on earth, some ten years after the time of that occurrence. Thus we would conclude that after having been removed from the presence of his associates by means of the tempest, Elijah was evidently transported to some other locale, for further divine service, though no longer as a prophet.

Thus, though Elijah’s death is not specifically recorded, there is no more reason to suppose that he never died at all and remains alive today, than there is to suppose this of any other biblical figure whose death is likewise not recorded in Scripture.

Moses’ death is recorded in Deuteronomy 34:5,6. When Moses and Elijah are “seen” by the disciples on the mount of transformation (Matt.17:3), their visage is presented as part of a *vision* (Matt.17:9), which is a “mental sight” not a true or actual occurrence (*cp Acts 12:9*). Thus we may be further assured that Christ “*alone* has immortality” (1 Tim.6:15b).

A WITNESS IN THE HEAVENS

THE SECOND series of exchanges between his associates and Job increase in intensity and harshness as the issue of God's place in a world of suffering and sin becomes more pressing. In chapter 15 we find the fear and horror of Eliphaz growing in response to Job's apparent impiety.

Eliphaz, however, judges impiety solely by traditional thinking and fails completely to take the known facts in front of his face into consideration. He stands on principles for right behavior such as given in the book of Proverbs, taking for granted that God does not operate beyond such "rules." Hence he jumps to the conclusion that Job must have indulged himself in great wickedness, even though there was absolutely no evidence of this, but rather just the opposite.

Earlier in the book we saw how serious the sin of scorning God was taken in that day. It was what Job feared his sons might have done, even unknowingly, in their hearts (1:5). It was what the Adversary suggested the impoverished Job would do (1:11). And it was what Job's wife urged her suffering husband to do so that his misery might end in his death (2:9). Now we may suppose that Eliphaz has reasoned that Job has all along been scorning God and sinning most severely in secret by ascribing that which is improper to Elohim (*cf* 1:22). Eliphaz is certain that Job has reversed his spirit against El (15:13).

Rather than readying himself to become better acquainted with God in view of Job's sufferings, Eliphaz much prefers to focus on human sinfulness. "What is a mortal that

JOB 15-17

15 ⁺Then Eliphaz the Temanite [']answered, ⁺ [']saying:

² **Should** a wise man answer with windy knowledge?

⁺Or should he fill his belly with the east wind?

³ Ought he to plead ⁻ [']with speech that is [']unprofitable,
And with declarations that [']have no [']benefit in them?

⁴ Yet you, indeed you [']quash devout fear,
And you [']deprecate pious meditation before El.

⁵ For your depravity [']trains your mouth,
So ⁺that you [']choose the tongue of the crafty.

⁶ Your own mouth [']condemns you, ⁺ not I,
And your lips [']answer [']against you.

⁷ Are you the first human ever [']born?
⁺ Were you travailed in birth before the hills?

⁸ Do you [']hear [']the deliberation of Eloah,
⁺Or do you hold a [']monopoly for yourself on wisdom?

⁹ What do you know ⁺that we do not [']know,
Or [']understand, and it is not with us?

¹⁰ [']Among us are ^{mr}both the greyhaired[']
^{mr}and hoary headed,

More abundant in days ^fthan your father.

¹¹ Are the consolations of El a little thing ^ffor you,
⁺Or the word [']gently shared with you?

¹² ^{wt}Why does your heart [']take you away,
And ^{wt}why do your eyes [']scowl,

¹³ That you should reverse your spirit [']against El
And [']send forth these declarations from your mouth?

¹⁴ What is a mortal that he should be cleared,
⁺Or that one born['] of a woman should be justified?

he should be cleared, or that one born of a woman should be justified" (15:14). Looking at Job, Eliphaz says in effect, "Job, you are abhorrent and spoiled and are drinking iniquity like water" (v.16).

But that is not the issue before us in the book of Job. Nor does it accord with the evidence. The issue is God's wisdom and purpose and responsibility in light of the evil of human enmity and pain and sorrow and infirmity.

As he did in 4:18, Eliphaz speaks in 15:15,16 of human insignificance in God's eyes. In the face of evil, Eliphaz wishes to distance God from the human situation. This is wrong, and indeed makes Eliphaz one who "deprecates meditation before El" (cf 15:4). If ever Job (and Eliphaz too) needed to set his heart upon the power, wisdom and righteousness of God it is now in the midst of these terrible afflictions.

Again, as in 4:12-16, Eliphaz builds up the suspense in 15:17-19 with a dramatic introduction to a platitude concerning the fate of the wicked. We may well say this is no time for histrionics, but how very like humanity, not only the actor, the lawyer, the politician, but like us all when we really have nothing to offer on a serious matter. "I shall disclose," and "let me recount" what "the wise can tell," who have openly shared their wisdom and are worthy of our respect as evidenced by their prosperity. We almost hear at this point the blare of trumpets and the rolling of drums. What profound truth is Eliphaz about to utter?

This is it: The wicked man suffers. This is what Eliphaz has to say, though it takes him the rest of chapter 15 to say it.

But this is what Job's associates have been saying all along, and Eliphaz's elaborate way of saying it again does not make it any more relevant to Job's situation. We are all sinners and enemies, and we all suffer, not necessarily in direct accord with our wickedness. And in any case, Job's sufferings do not match up with his sinfulness in any way

- 15 ^{bd}**If** even ⁱon His holy ones, **He** ^cputs no^t ^lreliance,
And the heavens are not purged in His eyes,
16 **How much less** ^l man,
Who is **abhorrent^l and spoiled^l,**
Who is **drinking iniquity like water.**
17 **I shall disclose** it to you; **hear** ^g me;
+ **This** which **I have perceived,** + **let me** ^lrecount it,
18 That **which** the **wise** can ^ltell,
And they suppressed nothing received
from their fathers,
19 **(To them, to them alone was given the countryside,**
And no^t alien^l passed in their midst):
20 **All** the **days** of the **wicked** man, **he** is **travailing,**
⁺**Even** throughout the **number of years** that **are stored up**
for the terrifier.
21 The **sound of alarming** things is **in his ears;**
ⁱ**When** at **peace,** the **devastator^l** ^lcomes against **him.**
22 **He** cannot ^lbelieve in **restoration** [~] from **darkness,**
And he must be on **watch^l** for the **sword.**
23 **He** is **wandering** about ^gas **bread** ⁷for the **falcon** [~];
He knows that the **day of darkness** is **ready^l** ⁱat **hand.**
24 **Frightening him** are **distress** and **constraint;**
It shall overpower him like a **king equipped**
for onslaught.
25 **For he** has **stretched his hand out** ^gagainst **El,**
And he makes himself an arrogant ^lmaster
^gagainst **Him Who-Suffices.**
26 **He** ^lruns ^gagainst **Him** ⁱwith **neck armor,**
ⁱ**With his thickly bossed shields.**
27 ⁱ**Indeed he** has **covered his face** ⁱwith **his fat,**
And he ^{ld}gathers **fat pads** on his **hips.**
28 ⁺**Yet he** shall **tabernacle** in **suppressed^l** **cities,**
Houses ^gin which **no^t** one shall later **dwell,**
^w**That are destined to** become **mounds.**

that corresponds with the sufferings of obviously wicked human beings in the world of his day. To leave God out of the picture in Job's misery and to focus alone on the human dimension (as we call it today) is cruel to Job and fatal to any understanding of God.

Eliphaz thinks he is putting the matter gently (15:11). He does not come right out and say that Job is outstandingly wicked, but he gets that point across nevertheless. Job is the wicked one who has been caught in his wickedness (15:20-24). Job is the one who has stretched out his hand against El (v.25). Job is the one who has fought against God (v.26), having protected himself with the power of his ill-gained wealth (v.27).

By such attacks Eliphaz effectively increases Job's agony. It is Job's property that has been suppressed and turned to mounds (v.28). All his influence over society (his shadow stretching over the earth) has gone (v.29). His world is one of darkness and loss (v.30), full of futility (v.31), with all his assets snipped off (v.32). In 15:33 Eliphaz, in effect, attributes the loss of Job's wealth to Job himself who by his wickedness has cast it down and flung it off. Such is the word that Eliphaz "gently" shares with Job.

JOB ANSWERS ELIPHAZ

Once again Job begins a reply by lashing out at his associates. He has gotten their meaning. But if they sometimes disguised the viciousness of their attacks by speaking indirectly and in enigmas, he speaks plainly. "Miserable comforters are you all" (16:2). Eliphaz may speak generally about the foolishness of "windy knowledge" (15:2), but Job refers directly to the pain he receives from the "windy words" of these three men (16:3).

However, soon in thinking about how he would speak to one of them if the situation were reversed (16:4,5), Job is convulsed anew by his pain (v.6). Because of the personal

- 29 **He shall not be enriched;**
+ **His estate shall not rise,**
And ⁷his shadow~ shall not stretch out ⁷over the earth.
- 30 **He shall not be taken away from darkness;**
The **blaze shall dry up his young shoot,**
And his ⁷bud~ shall be taken away ⁱby the wind.
- 31 **Let him not ^lrely ⁱon futility;**
He will be led astray,
For his ~palm tree~ shall become futility.
- 32 **ⁱWhen not yet its day, it shall be ⁷snipped off~^c,**
And its fronds shall not be flourishing.
- 33 **Like a vine he shall cast down his unripe grape,**
And he shall fling off his blossom like an olive.
- 34 **For the congregation of the polluted is stark,**
And fire devours the tents of bribery.
- 35 They engender~ misery and beget~ lawlessness,
And their belly, it ^lprepares deceit.
- 16 **+So Job ^lanswered, + ^lsaying:**
- 2 **I have heard many things like these;**
Miserable comforters^l are you all.
- 3 Will there be an **end to such windy words?**
Or what is so ^lpainful to you that you should answer?
- 4 **I myself ^{mr}also could ^lspeak like you;**
O that your soul were ^uin the place of my soul:
I would indeed ^ljoin ⁱdeclarations together ^{om}against you,
And I would indeed ^lwag ⁱmy head over you.
- 5 **I could ^lmake you ^lresolute ⁱwith my mouth,**
And the ^lcondolence of my lips would ^lkeep back grief.
- 6 **ⁱWhen I do ^lspeak, my pain is not being kept back,**
+Yet when I do ^lforbear,
what pain is going away from me?

15:29 ⁷-- his shadow: Hb ^lwhat is theirs.
15:30 ⁷-- bud: Hb mouth.
15:31 --- palm tree: Hb remuneration.
15:32 ⁷--c snipped off: Hb filled.

nature of his experience Job has an advantage over his associates. Job knows his severe agony is something unique and traceable only to the Supreme, and so he is forced to direct his thoughts of God Who is ultimately responsible for his sufferings as well as the desolating effects of Job's company (v.7).

WITNESS AGAINST JOB

What human beings witness is twisted by preconceptions and prejudices. Job's pain was visible, but this was a witness *against* him (16:8). Job was "arrested," which is a word appearing only one other time in the Hebrew Scriptures, in Job 22:16 where it apparently refers to the effect of the deluge in Noah's day upon the lawless. Job was stopped in his tracks. And this is to be traced to God. It is El Who assails Job, Who assumes the role of Opponent and surrenders Job over to iniquitous men (16:9-11). Job had been at ease, but El quashed him, holding him by the nape of his neck, shattering him as His target (v.12).

With words similar to Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53, and thus foreshadowing the agonies of the cross, Job speaks of his sufferings and traces them in no uncertain terms to Deity. "He thrusts through my kidneys and does not spare . . . He breaches me, breach adjoining breach . . ." (16:13,14). In this Job is not saying that his sufferings testify "against" God rather than against himself, but God is their Source, and that must not be papered over.

As for Job, his own testimony is clear. He is full of sorrow and in dark despair (16:15,16), but he has not committed violence, and his pleas are spotless (v.17).

A WITNESS FOR JOB

Is there no one to take Job's part? Is there no one to testify on behalf of this man named "Enemy," who keeps

- ⁷ **Surely, now it has ^cmade me tired;
You have ^cmade all my company desolate,**
- ⁸ **And You ^larrest me.
This has become ^g a witness,
And it ^rises ⁱagainst me:
That is, my emaciation ^lanswers ⁱagainst my face.**
- ⁹ **His anger has found a prey and ^lassailed me;
He gnashes ^{on}at me ⁱwith His teeth.
My Opponent ^hones His eyes ^gagainst me.**
- ¹⁰ **Men gape ^{on}at me ⁱwith their mouth;
In reproach they smite my cheeks;
They ^lmass themselves together ^{on}against me.**
- ¹¹ **El ^lsurrenders me over to iniquitous men,
And He ^lprecipitates me ^{on}into the hands
of the wicked.**
- ¹² **I ^bwas at ease, and He ^lquashed me;
+ He held me ⁱby the nape of my neck,
And He ^lshattered me;
+ He ^lset me up ^gas His target.**
- ¹³ **His multitudes ^lsurround ^{on} me;
He ^lthrusts through my kidneys and does not ^lspare;
He ^lpours out my bile ^gon the earth.**
- ¹⁴ **He ^lbreaches me, breach adjoining breach;
He ^lruns upon me like a master of war.**
- ¹⁵ **I sewed sackcloth over my hide,
And I plowed down my horn^o into the soil.**
- ¹⁶ **My face is swollen out from weeping,
And on my eyelids is the blackest shadow,**
- ¹⁷ **^{on}Although there is no^t violence in my palms,
And my prayer is spotless.**
- ¹⁸ **O earth, do not ^lcover my blood,
And let there ^lbe no^t ^{ri}place for my outcry to rest.**
- ¹⁹ **Even now, behold, my Witness is in the heavens,
And my Guarantor is in the heights.**

16:15 horn: i.e., strength.

crying out, pleading that his outcry and his pain not find a place to be covered over (16:18)?

The answer is bold and resounding: “Even now, behold, my Witness is in the heavens, and my Guarantor is in the heights” (Job 16:19).

Job 16:19-21 is a pivotal passage. It is to be joined to earlier thoughts concerning an “arbiter” in 9:33 (where Job is despairing of such a one) and the coming of his “relief” which Job envisions in 14:14.

There *is* One Who can testify to the truth, a Witness Who can serve as Job’s Guarantor so that the charges against him will be proven false and the testimony may be in his favor rather than against him. Somehow Job is convinced of this, but he realizes that such a Witness cannot be found on the earth. Thus He must be “in the heavens,” away from the human realm, “in the heights.”

With weeping eyes, Job turns away from his associates who mock him by their gentle words, and he directs his thoughts to Eloah (16:20), “that *He* may plead between a master and Eloah” (v.21). The divine title *Eloah* which means *Toward-El* (*cp* John 1:1,2), is especially appropriate in a context speaking of the divine Witness and Guarantor, Who serves as the Mediator. The title “Eloah” at the end of verse 20 refers to Him as Job’s Pleader, and this title at the end of the first line of verse 21 refers to Him as the One Who judges and determines human experiences. With such revelations of divine activity Job is becoming acquainted with God in a way that he had not been able to know Him before (*cf* Job 42:2-5). Job is being led in his understanding *toward* God.

SURETY FOR JOB

Chapter 17 is filled with discouragement and dwelling on death, but even here not wholly without hope. Job’s spirit has risen to the high level of confidence in Eloah as

²⁰ **My associates are my mockers!**

My eye weeps forth to Eloah,

²¹ **+That He may plead ’between a master ^{wi}and Eloah,**

+As between a son of humanity ’and his associate.

²² **For the years few in number have ’arrived,**

And I shall go on the path where I shall not return.

17 My spirit is devitalized;

My days are extinct;

The tombs are ready for me.

² **Assuredly, captious men are all ^{wi}around me,**

And my eye ’lodges all night ^tupon their bitterness.

³ **^{pl}Lay down, I pray, ~surety for me^c with Yourself;**

’Who is he that would ’clasp ’ my hand in pledge?

⁴ **For You have secluded their heart from intelligence;**

Therefore, You shall not exalt them.

⁵ Such a one **’denounces his associates for a portion,**

+While the eyes of his own sons are ^{all}failing.

⁶ **+ He has put me down ’as a proverb to the people,**

So ⁺that I ’become one spit at to the face.

⁷ **+ My eye grows ’dim from vexation,**

And my features, all of them, are like a shadow.

⁸ **Upright men are ’appalled ^{on}at this,**

And the innocent man ’rouses himself

^{on}against the polluted man,

⁹ **+But the righteous one ’holds to his way,**

And the one of clean hands ’continues in resoluteness.

¹⁰ **+ Nevertheless, all of ^Myou^c,**

+ come forward ’again, I pray;

+Though I shall not find a wise man ^tamong you.

¹¹ **My days have passed;**

My plans are pulled apart,

Even the ~proposal~ of my heart.

17:3 --c surety for me: MT be my surety.

17:10 M--c you: Hb them.

17:11 --- proposal: Hb tenancies.

- 12 **They** ^{1pl}convert night into day,
 Making **light** seem **near** ^fin the **face of darkness**.
- 13 *if* **Since I** ^lexpect the **unseen** as **my house**,
I will strew out my berth in darkness;
- 14 **I will call out to the grave**, **My father** are **you**,
To the maggot, **My mother and my sister**.
- 15 + **Where indeed** is **my expectation**?
And ⁷my good hope^o, *“who shall regard it?”*
- 16 **Shall they descend** ⁷by **my side**^{-Q} to the **unseen**,
if **Or** will our **rest** be **together** ^{om}in the **soil**?

17:15 7-0 my good hope: Hb my expectation.
 17:16 7--Q¹ by my side: Hb to components of.

his Witness and Guarantor, and though the evil afflicting his flesh and burdening his soul has devitalized his spirit (17:1), Job's reliance on God is still alive.

Job is crushed by the “captious men” around him and the bitterness of their accusations (v.2). Nevertheless, his physical exhaustion does not wholly deflect his attention from God, and he cries out, “Lay down, I pray, surety for me with Yourself” (17:3). No human will “clasp hands in pledge” with Job, but Eloah Himself will provide secure support. That is the bottom line.

Job is even able to see that the lack of intelligence manifested by his associates must be traced to God (17:4). But he is not able to sustain this high view of Deity. The end of his struggle has not yet come, and we find him falling back into despair and vexation through the remainder of this speech.

Yet we see that, though Job has not yet reached the consummation of his experience of evil, much good has already been wrought through his afflictions. Even death itself cannot eternally put an end to Job or his good hope, for Eloah is the Witness, the Guarantor and the Surety.

D.H.H.

We have been asked if Job's response to his wife's remarks in 2:9,10 could be rendered, “Yes, we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and not evil.” Such a translation (which has been proposed by some) would convey quite the opposite sense of the Concordant rendering: “Indeed, should we receive good from the One Elohim, and should we not receive evil?”

While the Hebrew sign of a question is absent here, it is implied by the construction of the Hebrew, just as it is in 1 Samuel 20:9, for example. There, the question, “Would I not tell you about it?” is clear even though the sign of a question does not appear in the Hebrew. In addition, rendering the Hebrew adverb at the beginning of this sentence by the affirmative “Yes,” is misleading. The Hebrew term literally means “more-over,” and is used by Job to introduce an explanatory addition to his remark about his wife speaking as “some decadent woman speaks.” He is rejecting her advice here, not agreeing with it.

This is supported by the force of the verb “receive” which Job uses in direct response to his wife's advice, “Scorn Elohim and die.” Even though he pleads for God to take his life from him, Job steadfastly keeps on receiving the evil God sends his way. James calls this “endurance” (James 5:11), and the Greek word used in the Septuagint translation of Job 2:10 implies “patient endurance.” Indeed throughout his speeches with his associates Job maintains that his troubles must be traced to God (*cf* 6:4; 7:20; 9:15-18; 10:2,3; 12:9; 13:24-27; 16:11-14; 19:6-11; 23:14-16; 27:2; 30:20-22).

Most notably, at the very outset of the book we read that in response to the reports of the loss of his herds and herdsmen, and even of the tragic death of his own children, Job fell to the earth, worshiping and declaring, “. . . ‘Yahweh, *He* gives, and Yahweh, *He* takes away. Blessed be the Name of Yahweh.’ In all this, Job neither sinned nor ascribed anything improper to Elohim” (Job 1:20-22).

Of course Job's associates were horrified by such thoughts, and would not accept them. Yet at the end of the book Yahweh says to them, “You did not speak concerning Me what is rightly so as My servant Job has done” (42:7). The great testimony of Job is his readiness to receive whatever God sent him, whether good or evil, and that is certainly Job's thought in 2:10. D.H.H.

“THROUGH THE FAITH OF CHRIST”

(Galatians 2:15-21)

We, who by nature are Jews, and not sinners of the nations, having perceived that a man is not being justified by works of law, except alone through the faith of Christ Jesus, we also believe in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by the faith of Christ and not by works of law, seeing that by works of law shall no flesh at all be justified. (2:15,16)

As Paul herein explains to the Galatians, those who are truly enlightened believers in Christ—even if “by nature” they are Jews (and so inherently zealous for the law; *cp* Acts 21:20)—recognize that a man is *not* being justified by works of law, but through the faith of Christ Jesus.

Those who know the truth, even if they, like Paul, should be Jews from birth, and from their youth fully mindful of all that the law has to say as to the central place of *seeking* justification by works (*cp* Rom.2:13; 10:3), realize that, nonetheless, a man is not *being* justified by works of law—no matter how zealous he may be in his quest for attaining such a goal.

Yet as those who have been enlightened to perceive the evangel, Paul explains that “we” not only become aware of how justification does *not* occur, but of how it *does* occur as well. We perceive, says Paul, that it is through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24), which is to say that it is through the *faith of Christ Jesus*.

Such ones, then, may “also” believe “into Christ Jesus”—thus to restate the case more positively and boldly—that (1)

they may be justified by the faith of *Christ*; and (2) *not* by works of law, seeing that, according as it is written, “no living one at all can be righteous before [God]” (cit. Psa. 143:2; *cp* Rom.3:20).

Of course, this declaration that no living one at all can be righteous before God, is a relative statement, made in relation to law. That is, no living one at all can be righteous before God *by works of law*. But, *by the faith of Christ*, we may be justified! *This* is the evangel; and this, Paul would have us know.

That justification is by the faith of Christ, is the answer to the age-old question, “. . . *how can* a mortal be righteous *before El?*” (Job 9:2). It is one thing to be righteous before men, but quite another to be righteous *before God*. It is one thing to be classed as “just,” comparatively speaking, in contrast to those who are abjectly defiled; but it is quite another to be just *before God*, and thus to be declared righteous by God Himself.

In this respect, the words of Job’s friend, Eliphaz the Temanite, are true enough: “What is a mortal that he should be cleared, or that one born of a woman should be *justified?* If even on His holy ones, He puts no reliance, and the heavens are not purged in His eyes, how much less man, who is abhorrent and spoiled, who is drinking iniquity like water” (Job 15:14-16).

Noble men often have sought righteousness before God on a basis of their own deeds; and, since compared to their fellows, at least they have approached more closely to the ideal, it is the custom among men to term such ones “righteous.” But even such exceptional personages have fallen far short of the ideal. They too must be included among the “all” who not only have sinned but who have *also* been found wanting of *the glory of God* (Rom.3:23), which alone is the standard of true righteousness.

Though God has indeed graced such commendable ones

with an uncommon measure of virtue, still, it is a virtue that is neither comprehensive nor constant. Even the noble, then, are themselves extensively corrupted; and, even as the rest, hopelessly lost apart from a Saviour. They too, on a basis of “works of law,” can never be just “before God.”

“NOT BY WORKS OF LAW”

The 1976 edition of the Concordant Version, in Galatians 2:16, renders the phrase which in the paragraph above I present as “*but* (through the faith of Christ Jesus),” as “*except alone* (through the faith of Christ Jesus)” (2:16). This was an attempt to clarify the 1930 edition of the CV which read, “except it be through . . .” even as the 1966 CV which was translated, “if it should not be through . . .”

The problem here is that if the phrase in question, which follows the words “a man is not being justified by works of law,” is taken as an exception under the circumstance of which a man *is* being justified by works of law, the truth is lost and the context itself is contradicted.

An attempt was made to circumvent this by the addition of the lightface “alone.” Yet the undiscerning reader, upon noting that “alone” was added by the translator, may declare that he is not obliged to accept any such “additions.” Such a one may then conclude—albeit contrary to the entire tenor of the passage—that Paul’s thought is that while ordinarily a man is not being justified by works of law, when these, however, are coupled with faith in Christ, a man *is* being justified by works of law!

Since the Greek is IF-EVER NO (*ean mê*), our translators endeavored to reflect this fact in the English, while still providing a readable translation. Yet their renderings remained obscure, at least to the ordinary reader. We have noted that “but” (as in, “but for the grace of God, there go I”) can serve well for this Greek phrase; in fact the Authorized Version renders *ei mê* (IF-NO) thus 53 times, includ-

ing in this passage. We now propose to do the same, with a superior prefix “ex” (for “except”) preceding in small type. Thus, in a future edition, the verse would simply read: “a man is not being justified by works of law *but through the faith of Christ Jesus.*”

Though because of the idiosyncrasies of idiom, the sense of this text may be difficult to convey when rendered more strictly, in principle, the thought here accords with that of 1 Corinthians 12:3, where we read, “No one is able to say, ‘Lord is Jesus’ except by holy spirit.” That is, “No one is able to say ‘Lord is Jesus.’ *Except by holy spirit*, (this cannot be done).” Similarly, then, “A man is not being justified by works of law. *Except through the faith of Christ Jesus*, (this cannot be done).”

JUSTIFYING THE IRREVERENT

To be “justified,” is to be declared righteous; and, it is God Himself Who is our Justifier (Rom.8:33). Through the benefits afforded to us through the faith of Christ, even now, *God* declares us righteous.

We are justified both in a vindicatory sense, as well as in an anticipatory sense. In the vindicatory sense, through the work of Christ, God is able to “justify” us in the sense of “show sufficient reason why” such sinners even as ourselves not only should exist, but should also be saved. It is because it is only through sin, and, the deliverance therefrom, that God’s love and grace through the blood of Christ, may be made known. God has need of irreverent sinners, to glorify His own name in their salvation (Rom.4:5).

In the anticipatory sense, God justifies us through Christ, thus, even now, calling what is not as if it were, because, in that day, the day of Christ’s glorious advent, we will then actually be *constituted* just. Then, we *will* be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom.8:29). In the day of our vivification, we *will* enjoy immortality and incorruption, even

as great power and glory (1 Cor.15:42,43). We are awaiting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who *will* transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory (Phil.3:20,21). Surely, then, in an anticipatory sense as well, it should not surprise us that, even today, God *already* declares us *righteous*.

Yet this is only so, “through the faith of Christ Jesus” (Gal.2:16). In Christ, “we have boldness and access, with confidence, through *His* faith” (Eph.3:12). Accordingly, like Paul, we wish “to be found in Him, not having [our] righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through *the faith of Christ*, the righteousness which is from God for faith” (Phil.3:9).

Paul intimately associates “the faith of Christ Jesus,” with “the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom.3:24). He uses both of these phrases in identifying the means through which our justification is effected. It is through Christ’s own faith, then, which became His *faithfulness*, that our justification is achieved. Our Lord’s trust in God concerning the cross, which led to His faithful obedience unto death, is the sole instrumentality of our justification.

LIVING UNTO GOD

Now if, while seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ, consequently, a dispenser of sin? May it not be coming to that! For if I am building again these things which I demolish, I am commending myself as a transgressor. (2:17,18)

Though a trivial act in itself, Cephas’ refusal to eat with those of the nations (2:12), was fraught with serious consequences. Thus he affirmed that the uncircumcised believers were “common and unclean” (*cp* Acts 10:28; 11:3), and set up again the barrier of law. If we should put ourselves under law, by claiming that this is what Christ would have us do, we imply that, effectually, He is the dispenser of sin.

This is because, if He indeed would now have us take up the very agency through which Sin revives, gets an incentive, and produces in us all manner of coveting (*cf* Rom.7: 8-10), it is impossible to disassociate Him from our failures. Such, through works of law, was the nature of the old covenant under which God displayed man’s failure in all its horror. Such is not the nature of the Pauline evangel, which is, so to say, “a *new* covenant” indeed (*cp* 2 Cor.3:6).

If Paul were to once again establish a policy of law-righteousness, which he had previously discarded (*cp* Phil.3:7), in so doing he would be “commending” himself as a transgressor. That is, thus he would be providing himself with the very means by which he would now have the “standing” of a transgressor. Where no law is, there is no transgression (Rom.4:15). Yet under law, sinners become *transgressors*. Paul refused to put himself in any such jeopardy ever again.

Submitting to public pressures (as Cephas did, and as the Galatians were doing) in a way that suggests we think the law has some force in justification is a sin and may give the impression that justification in Christ encourages such sinful hypocrisy. Yet the Galatians were making law-justification (Rom.2:13) an acceptable thing, at least in relation to circumcision, and so were rebuilding what they had demolished. Were they actually “under law” (in relation to Paul’s evangel), their taking up with the law would have been a transgression! (There is perhaps some irony here.)

Under grace we have a “right” to do anything: “*All* is allowed me” (1 Cor.8:9; 10:23). But Paul was very jealous of the evangel and was sensitive to the effects our behavior will have on others. The saving grace of God trains us to act in accord with what we believe, that is out of love and with the glory of God always in view.

This can only be done by the saving power of the evangel itself. This is the message of Galatians 5:25, how it is that “*living* in spirit, *in spirit*, we may be observing the ele-

ments [of the law] also.” The essential meaning of the law (love for God and then for our fellow humans) is observed by those who are “living in spirit” (which means living in accord with the evangel; cf Gal.3:5).

For I, through law, died to law, that I should be living to God. With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ. Now that which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me. (2:19,20)

“We have endeavored to transcribe this marvelous compendium of the faith as nearly as possible as it is in the Original, for even the order of the words is exquisite. The sentence opens and closes with *Christ*, and a negative *I* occupies its center. It may be shown graphically thus:

<p style="text-align: center;">‘WITH CHRIST HAVE I BEEN CRUCIFIED, YET I AM LIVING— NO LONGER I, BUT LIVING IN ME IS CHRIST.’¹</p>

FAITH’S LAW OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

God has ordained a law for us! It is not a law of works; it is instead, “faith’s law; for we are reckoning a man to be justified *by faith* apart from works of law” (Rom.3:28). This law states that: “through Jesus Christ’s faith . . . [we are] being justified gratuitously in [God’s] grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom.3:22,24). It is through this law of faith that we have died to all law concerned with sin and death. Christ died for our sins! Our sins have been died for, “that we should be living to God.” Our living to God depends upon our having died to

¹ I. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.281.

condemnatory law. Hence, as Paul declares, “With Christ *have I been crucified.*” Yet the wonder of it is that though it is true that in this respect we have “died,” it is as a result of this very death, together with Christ, that in our spirits we now are living! So in saying “I” am living, Paul must add that it is “no longer I, but living in me is Christ.”

It was not the power of the flesh, which is weakness, which was vitalizing Paul, but the power of Christ’s spirit in him. As he said, “that [life] which I am now living in flesh, I am living in faith that is of the Son of God, Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me” (2:20b).

I am not repudiating the grace of God . . . (2:21a)

To “repudiate” something is to reject its validity, or to refuse to acknowledge it. It is to have “no place” for it, which is the meaning of the elements of the Greek word we translate “repudiate” (*atheteō*, UN-PLACE).

The apostle Paul, decidedly, was not repudiating the grace of God; he was rather exalting it, and giving it its rightful place.

. . . for if righteousness is through law, consequently Christ died gratuitously. (2:21b)

The Galatians, however, in seeking justification through law instead of through the faith of Christ, *were* repudiating the grace of God. “For if,” as they fondly imagined, “righteousness *is* through law, consequently Christ died gratuitously” (2:21). A gratuitous act is an uncalled for or unwarranted act, such as that of the hatred of the Jews for Jesus, whereby, in hating Him, since He had done nothing but good, they necessarily hated Him gratuitously (John 15:25).

The Galatians’ repudiation of the *grace* of God was their main mistake; indeed, it was the essence of their apostasy. Their error did not simply consist, since they were not called to be proselytes of Judaism, in attempting to put themselves under law (Gal.4:21). The believers of the Circumcision, though under law, were in the true grace of

God (*cp* 1 Peter 1:10; 5:10,12), which all who were faithful to that calling freely acknowledged. The presence of law need not entail the repudiation of grace. Under the Circumcision evangel, while those who are chosen (i.e., “the elect”) must qualify for entrance into the terrestrial kingdom by the performance of lawful deeds (*cp* Matt.7:21-23), it is to the *grace* of God alone that they may ascribe the faithfulness of their service (*cp* Rom.11:5,6; Isa.26:12).

Let us note well that the Galatians’ chief wrong was just one thing: their *repudiation* of the *grace* of God. They had been *transferred* from the evangel of the *grace* of Christ, to a different “evangel” (Gal.1:6), which, according to truth, was no evangel at all.

Everywhere in Scripture, especially within the Pauline epistles, “grace” is of the nature of a favor, or gracious gift. It is not granted “out of works,” or in return for “services rendered” (*cp* Rom.4:4; 11:6). It is the very antithesis of a reward or compensation. We cannot qualify ourselves for it, nor disqualify ourselves from it. It not only knows nothing of “requirements,” but precludes that very notion.

Having presented one’s understanding of the nature of the evangel, it will hardly suffice merely to use the word “grace,” as a summary term thereof, if one’s understanding of the nature of the evangel itself, is not of the nature of *grace*. To do so would be as illegitimate as to describe a thorn and yet call it a rose.

If righteousness *were* through law, there would have been “no just cause” for Christ to have died. Then His death would have been both uncalled for and unwarranted. But since His death was *not* a gratuitous event, it follows that righteousness is *not* through law and that the Galatians and all their imitators are *not* correct in seeking it on that basis.

May it be our privilege and portion, not to be imitators of the “foolish Galatians” (3:1), but of the apostle Paul, the apostle of the nations (Rom.11:13). J.R.C.

Forgetting the Things Behind

“BE CONCILIATED TO GOD!”

“BRETHREN, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing—forgetting indeed those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:13,14).

As ambassadors for Christ we are graced with the most glorious and privileged position in the universe. How shall we express the happy evangel of our embassy? What words might we summon to describe adequately this astounding declaration: “For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreating through us. We are beseeching for Christ’s sake, ‘Be conciliated to God!’ For the One not knowing sin, He makes to be a sin offering for our sakes that we may be becoming God’s righteousness in Him” (2 Cor.5:20,21).

In every denomination of Christendom, incompetent evangelists are striving to “bring men to Christ,” when our loving Father would have us all “bring Christ to men.” This, rather than the fearful, threatening uncertainty of repentance is the real gospel, or good news.

“How grand it is to fall back upon God Himself! He will see to it that everyone whom He has selected will be invited and justified and sanctified. And He does it in spite of all the stumbling blocks we put in the sinner’s way. Some preach law outright, some regeneration, some the spirit’s work, some baptism, some repentance—but none of these are *good news*; indeed *there is no good news apart from Christ*.

“Let it be our precious privilege to preach Christ cruci-

fied to those who know Him not; and to those who know Him, Christ glorified. Let Christ be first and Christ be last and Christ fill all between. Let us not look back and vaunt ourselves with, 'I prayed, I repented, I was baptized, and I . . .' but let us rather shout with the Apostle 'no longer I, but CHRIST!' If I had a hand in my salvation it must needs contain a flaw, for I find failure fills everything I do. But if Christ *alone* deserves the crown, then all like Him is perfect and immutable."¹

This loving evangel of conciliation is not the first gratuitous gift from God. It follows upon His complete settlement of the sins of His enemies! Justified by the blood of Christ we can now, in growing appreciation, be conciliated by the death of God's Son. Reconciliation is possible only after our sins have been dealt with. "If God is for us, who is against us? Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?" (Rom.8:32).

When God calls out His ecclesia, members of the body of Christ, beloved in the Lord, there are so many variables in each individual circumstance. Common to all in the process is thankful reliance. How may any repulse the love of God which is lavished so unstintingly?

In our various paths to maturity there will inevitably be many grievous memories which will certainly distress. In Paul's case it was how he ". . . inordinately persecuted the ecclesia of God and ravaged it" (Gal.1:13). Recognition of this painful emerging from the slavery of sin prompted the apostle to request a further spirit of wisdom and revelation into the realization of God's loving provision.

Rescue alone, or mere restoration can have no part in God's grand and glorious purpose in creation. Through the loving sacrifice of His own dear Son, He has deter-

1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.10, p.275.

mined to be, universally, All in all! The declaration that He is ". . . *not reckoning offenses* . . ." and that this is the *day of salvation*, is more than our doubting spirits, disabled through the corrupting and baneful evil antagonism of our adversaries, may comprehend. Holy spirit patiently escorts us into maturity, yet still there is nervousness, and in some cases, a little awkwardness. The following was composed by the writer during these early, maturing years:

RECONCILIATION

When you speak of the love of Christ Jesus
With words which are simple and plain,
You claim that I'm free from chains which bound me,
But, dear friend, I yet feel their pain.

Now you insist that still I am doubting,
And that God has erased the blame,
But molded by years filled with guilt and fears,
This clay is a vessel of shame.

You describe once again our Lord's anguish,
And my spirit is shocked, dismayed.
Oh, how may I face this amazing grace,
Believe that the price has been paid?

All these years I have sought God's forgiveness,
For the sin, the shame of the past.
I thought I could pay in mankind's own way,
Be rid of this burden at last.

Now my spirit stirs, trembling within me,
Beseeching the truth of this grace.
God's love shall increase though sin may not cease
In This weak flesh so vain and base!

Ah, such wonderful, blessed assurance
Of glorious love so divine!
Christ Jesus has bought the justness I sought.
From this moment, Lord, I am Thine!

"GOD'S DESIGNATION"

Initially, we can scarce wait for some opportunity to

share this good news. Naively, we assume that everyone, especially those who are privileged to acclaim our Lord as Saviour, will be only too delighted to discover the peace which such glad tidings impart. Now we may shake our heads and smile at such exuberance. But how it grieves our hearts to be scorned. We heed the apostle's words, and we herald the word, opportunely, inopportunely. We bear with much evil. God's love trains us in meekness and patience.

There is no way for us to know whom God has chosen and is calling. From our individual experience we must conclude that our own case was quite hopeless, yet how we were tenderly led, in grace, to acclaim His beloved Son as Lord!

"Almost all who have attained to maturity have had to put aside some childish and mistaken beliefs. If we, like the man in Thessalonica, had died before we could have learned the later truth unfolded by Paul, would we not, like him, respond to the call of our Lord when He comes to the air? It is a question of God's designating us in love for sonship, not of our understanding or appreciation, or response. Rather, it is in accord with His own purpose, and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian (2 Tim.1:9).

"Paul prays for those who are sealed with the holy spirit of promise, the earnest of our allotment, for a *further* spirit of wisdom to perceive what is the expectation of their calling and the riches of their allotment and the power at the rousing of Christ (Eph.1:14). This makes it evident that they *lacked* this added endowment, and that the earnest of the spirit, which is the portion of all, does *not* include a knowledge of the higher truths for today.

"Yet this does not invalidate our pre-expectancy. Under the law, and even in the Circumcision evangel, some response is necessary, or the blessing is withdrawn. *Not so in grace*, apart from law. Grace operates even better in the

midst of failure and opposition than otherwise, for these provide a background for its display."²

"TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!"

With heartfelt gratitude and praise we embark on our ministry of conciliation here, long before we are snatched away to proclaim this among the celestials. But in this administration humanity spurns the gracious gift of our Lord's loving sacrifice. Again and again our good news is treated with indifference and even contempt. The suffering we experience is bearable, for only thus may we know Christ and the power of His resurrection.

We esteem it a privilege to share in His sufferings, but when the vile opposition is directed against Him then this is so painful that our spirits suffer. We listen to saints in Christendom earnestly sing of amazing grace, but in the next breath they roundly condemn us and our proclamation of conciliation! "This is dangerous!" they charge. "We agree that in grace we are saved, but it just cannot be as simple as that. By your teaching you imply that all our sins are of little consequence! That they are not important!" Sometimes, like the scoffers at Golgotha who sneered, "Others he saves! Himself he can not save" (Matt.27:42), they cynically conclude, "This is just too good to be true!"

When did we ever teach such a thing? When did we ever subscribe to the heresy that God is not judging the world? "Now let God be true, yet every man a liar" (Rom.3:4). We are justified gratuitously. We have God's own righteousness *through the faith of Jesus Christ*, and now, beyond all condemnation, no longer His enemies, we may be having peace.

A great deal has been written concerning the love of God. Well might the apostle Paul stress the paramount grandeur of love. Above all else this deep, unchanging

2. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.45, pp.167,168.

affection of the Creator for His creatures is such, that He yearns toward us and provides us with the most gracious means of comprehending the nature of this love, by granting the tenderness and intimate relationships of parent and offspring. Hence He presents Himself as Father for all the vast numbers of His children. Shall He casually lose one, even one? Would we? Is there any real offense which would irrevocably turn us away from our own beloved?

When attempting to understand the deep significance of what it meant for our Father to turn away from His Firstborn, then we must call on the sacred filial ties of our own dear ones. Corrupt and calloused reasoning or philosophy, resulting from the base influences without and within, can never help us in this understanding. Here, we are on the rare ground of love and faith, which alone will ensure that vital and precious trust.

“May we prayerfully grasp the necessity of evil as a background for the display of God’s grandest glories and our perpetual praise of Him. Only then will we be prepared to endure with thankful hearts all the trials and tragedies in the present which He sends to us.

“All of mankind must learn to realize what God is to them by an actual experience of what it means to be without Him. Then they will be able to give Him the unforced outflow of their hearts. Then they will appreciate it when His judgments permanently right all wrongs and eliminate all evil, through the suffering Sacrifice He has provided.”³

“My faith has found a resting place, not in device nor creed;
I trust the ever-living One, His wounds for me shall plead.
I need no other argument, I need no other plea;
It is enough that Jesus died, and that He died for me.”

Donald Fielding

3. A. E. Knoch: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD, p.7.