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in the Death of Christ

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Unsearchable Riches

A BIMONTHLY MAGAZINE
FOR GOD AND HIS
WORD

VOLUME XCI

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The Will of God

The will of God will never take you
Where the grace of God cannot keep you,
Where the arms of God cannot support you,
Where the riches of God cannot supply your needs,
Where the power of God cannot endow you.

The will of God will never take you
Where the Spirit of God cannot work through you,
Where the wisdom of God cannot teach you,
Where the army of God cannot protect you,
Where the hands of God cannot mold you.

The will of God will never take you
Where the love of God cannot enfold you,
Where the mercies of God cannot sustain you,
Where the peace of God cannot calm your fears,
Where the authority of God cannot overrule for you.

The will of God will never take you
Where the comfort of God cannot dry your tears,
Where the Word of God cannot feed you,
Where the miracles of God cannot be done for you,
Where the omnipresence of God cannot find you.

Anonymous

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 2000
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-ONE

EDITORIAL

IN MANY CASES, we have made personal replies to questions which we have received, but have not published these exchanges within the pages of our magazine. It is our plan to make such Questions and Answers a regular part of the magazine during the coming year. Sometimes noteworthy questions arise over little-considered points. The questions which follow herein are good examples of such rarely-asked yet worthwhile thoughts.

Question: "Paul says not to engage in controversy for nothing useful (2 Tim.2:14). Is there, however, *useful* controversy?"

Answer: Good may sometimes eventually result from controversy, and in this respect alone, in retrospect, we may say that the controversy was useful. Paul's sense, however, seems to be that whenever the present results of any disputation simply are not useful and only upset those hearing, one should cease from any such involvement. Indeed, it is unwise even to enter in, much less to continue on, in any such arguments whenever it is evident that such consequences are a practical certainty.

Question: "We are to pursue fellowship with all who are invoking the Lord out of a clean heart (2 Tim.2:22). What, however, constitutes a clean heart?"

Answer: As the Proverb declares, "Preserve your heart, for from it spring the outflowings of life" (Prov.4:23). Figuratively, the heart is "the center and core of man's spiritual being," hence, the core of one's motives, understanding, and reason (*cf* Keyword Concordance, p.141). If one's motives seem honorable, one's understanding honest, and one's reasons for believing as one does sincere, we should pursue

the course outlined in 2 Timothy 2:22 with all such ones. Of course this is to be done *in whatever way and degree seems expedient*, to accord with each case.

Question: “Paul declared, ‘Herald the word. Stand by it, opportunely, inopportunely, expose, rebuke, entreat, with all patience and teaching. For the era will be when they will not tolerate sound teaching . . .’ (2 Tim.4:2,3). My question is, Just *who* or *what* should one expose, rebuke, and entreat?”

Answer: Where we are able to do so, we should “expose” (i.e., “shed light” on) that which is *contradictory* to truth (Titus 1:9), as well as expose the truth itself.

The Greek for “rebuke” is also translated “warn,” and covers the entire range of thought included in these terms. By its elements, it is ON-VALUE. The idea of the English “rebuke” is “reprimand” or “criticize.” We should be very cautious, however, in making personal rebukes of individuals; certainly it is only appropriate to do so in cases where the erring individual recognizes and accepts the position of leadership or the prerogative of the one who is constrained to rebuke the other party. We must be circumspect even in warning another, not to mention in rebuking him. Indeed, if to him we are, at most, a peer—not to mention, an inferior or subordinate—he may well reject or ignore what we say in such a way that shows that we were unwise in initiating our criticism of him. At least *as a rule*, we should confine our criticisms to principles, and not include persons. We ourselves simply do not sustain the same relationship to the other members of the body of Christ as that enjoyed by Paul or Timothy.

While we may, as seems expedient, attempt to entreat our fellow believers concerning most any points of truth and virtue, when it becomes evident that our services are not welcome, we should not press our views upon those who do not wish to hear them.

J.R.C.

DIVINE ILLUMINATION

¹⁴ **And Elohim 'said: Let luminaries come to be in the atmosphere of the heavens to separate ^{bt} 'day + ^{bt} 'from 'night, +that they may ^bbe for signs, + for appointed seasons, + for days and years. ¹⁵ + Let them ^bbe for luminaries in the atmosphere of the heavens to ^cgive light on the earth. And it came to 'be so. ¹⁶ + Elohim ^{ld}made 'two 'great 'luminaries, 'the 'greater luminary for dominating the day and 'the 'smaller luminary for dominating the night, and also 'the stars. ¹⁷ + Elohim ^{lg}placed 'them in the atmosphere of the heavens to ^cgive light on the earth, ¹⁸ + to dominate ⁱ the day and ⁱ the night, and to separate ^{bt} 'light + ^{bt} 'from 'darkness. And Elohim 'saw that it was good.**

¹⁹ **And it 'became evening, and it 'became morning: the fourth day.**

LUMINARIES

Corresponding to the section on light (Gen.1:2-5) we are informed as to the celestial light-givers (14-19). There is nothing said here as to the time of their *creation*, which was already indicated, when God created the *heavens* and the earth (Gen.1:1). We do not read thereafter of the *creation* of the earth, but of its disruption and restoration. So, also, we do not read again of the *creation* of the heavens, but of the making of the heavenly luminaries and their placement in the atmosphere, indicating their relation to the earth.

God's gift of these luminaries has many later parallels:

A PARALLEL WITH REVELATION 12:1

The first “sign” in the Unveiling, specifically so called, is that of the sun-clothed woman: “And a great sign was seen in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon underneath her feet, and on her head a wreath of twelve stars” (Rev.12:1).

In the restoration of the earth brought before us in the first chapter of Genesis, we are first introduced to the three heavenly features of this sign. There the sun and moon are set to be luminaries on the earth, the sun to rule the day and the moon to rule the night, as well as the stars (Gen. 1:14-18). These luminaries are said to be signs. They figure the spiritual illumination and rule of the earth. Only He Who called Himself the Light of the World can be suggested by the sun. He will rule when earth’s day dawns. The moon’s dim reflection of His glory was seen in the law, and the stars are beautiful similes of Abraham’s spiritual seed just as the seashore sand is of his physical progeny.

When is earth’s day? Hitherto we have had man’s “day,” but it has been very dark. The sun certainly has not been shining. Earth’s illumination waits until the Sun of righteousness arises. The light we have makes us sons of light and sons of the day, but we can never claim to disperse the darkness. Only in the day of Yahweh shall the knowledge of God flood the earth. Not till then does the sun arise. At that time we, the members of His body, will not be here. We will shine in other, celestial spheres. The illumination of the earth is Israel’s prerogative. She is clothed with Christ to enlighten and to rule the earth.

The stars speak of Abraham’s promised spiritual seed. The twelve stars, like the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem (Rev.21:14), can be no others than the twelve apostles who are Israel’s spiritual heroes. The number twelve is peculiarly and appropriately confined to the

twelve-tribed nation. The fact that Paul has no place in this wreath is sufficient to rule us out of the picture, for he is the apostle of the nations, the Uncircumcision. Here we are concerned only with the Circumcision. It may be that the twelve stars also suggest the patriarchs, and the twelve tribes, as in Joseph’s dream (Gen.37:9).

ILLUMINATION ON THE ROAD

The apostle Paul, before Agrippa, described his experience on the road to Damascus in terms of great enlightenment:

“I, indeed, then, suppose myself bound to commit much contrary to the name of Jesus the Nazarene, which I do also in Jerusalem. And besides, many of the saints I lock up in jails, obtaining authority from the chief priests. Besides I deposit a ballot to despatch them. And at all the synagogues, often punishing them, I compelled them to blaspheme. Besides, being exceedingly maddened against them, I persecuted them as far as the outside cities also. Among which persecutions, going to Damascus with the authority and permission of the chief priests, at midday, on the road, I perceived, O king, a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining about me . . .” (Acts 26:9-13).

The call of Saul is the most marvelous of all the manifestations of God’s grace. It is a pattern for us who believe in this day of grace. He was the foremost of sinners, yet God made him the foremost of His saints. The grace of the Lord overwhelmed him, with faith and love in Christ Jesus (1 Tim.1:12-16).

The twelve apostles were called by the Lord on earth, before His ascension. Saul was called by the ascended glorified Lord from heaven. They were called in the land. He was called outside the land. Their ministry was confined to the land and the Hebrews of the dispersion. Paul’s service was outside the land among the Hellenists and aliens.

They were concerned with the earthly life of our Lord before His ascension. Paul begins with the Lord in glory.

Only those acquainted with the glare of the Syrian sun at midday, can grasp the full significance of this scene. Nature's brightest light is eclipsed by the glorious grace into which Saul is ushered by his call.

ILLUMINATION OF GLORIOUS GRACE

Speaking of this glorious grace, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Now if the dispensation of death, by letters chiseled in stone, came in glory, so that the sons of Israel were not able to look intently into the face of Moses, because of the glory of his face, which was being nullified, how shall not rather the dispensation of the spirit be in glory? For if in the dispensation of condemnation is glory, much rather the dispensation of righteousness is exceeding in glory" (2 Cor.3:7-9).

The account of Moses' reception, after his forty-day session on Sinai, is found in Exodus 34:28-35. It is evident that they saw Moses' face even though they could not look intently at it. Moses did not hide the glory from them. He did not put the covering on his face *until* he had done speaking with them, but *when* he had finished (Ex.34:33). Later he put it on again "*until* he went in to speak with Him." He hid the *fading* of the glory, which indicated the transient, fading character of the law. As Paul says (2 Cor.3:13), it was done so that the sons of Israel should not observe the *consummation* of that which is vanishing.

Now, instead of a covering on Moses' face, there is one on Jewish hearts, which hides from them the true character of the covenant of Sinai. It had a glory once, but it has long since been eclipsed in Christ. This they will not discover until they turn back to the Lord.

A bright torch, which will illuminate the night, becomes black when held up to the noonday sun. So the law, a bright

exhibition of the righteous character of God, turns to blackness before the transcendent effulgence of grace which is now revealed. It had a glory but lost it all by contrast to the glory excelling. Since, then, the law's glory is darkened by a greater glory, how much greater must be the glory of this dispensation of grace!

"Now the Lord is the spirit; yet where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Now we all, with uncovered face, mirroring the Lord's glory, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the spirit" (2 Cor.3:17,18).

The ancient mirror was a burnished metal surface which reflected the light as well as the image of the one who used it. Paul did not climb the steeps of Sinai and bring back a transient reflection of the Lord's glory, as Moses did. He beheld Him continually, as we behold our faces in a mirror. The glory of the Lord irradiated him. It did not fade, but became brighter and brighter. Contemplation of the Lord led to likeness to Him.

This is a beautiful epitome of Paul's ministries. He began with grace on the road to Damascus. He dispenses justification at Pisidian Antioch. He reveals the conciliation to the Corinthians. He teaches the truth transcendent from his Roman prison. Grace upon grace and glory upon glory! His successive ministries led onward to the transcendent glories contained in his Perfection Epistles.

A PRAYER FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

With respect to the transcendent glories revealed to Paul, we would like to direct the hearts of our readers to the opening prayer of the epistle to the Ephesians. No petition can be presented which is so welcome to our spiritual welfare.

"Therefore I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving

thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened . . ." (Eph.1:15-18).

After having set forth the marvelous grace which culminates and transcends all previous revelation in the first fourteen verses, the apostle is burdened by the fact that all this is quite beyond human comprehension apart from a special enduement for its understanding. That this is actually the case has been amply proven in the history of the church. It is today not only unknown, but beyond the spiritual range of the vast majority of the Lord's dear saints.

To the ear not fully attuned to God, these words are as idle tales. They would ask, What *secret* was made known in Ephesians which was not revealed long before and known to all the apostles? Those whose hearts echo this question are the ones to whom I would appeal. They should join the apostle in his prayer for them, for they have not yet the spirit of *revelation* which is necessary for the apprehension of these, the highest and most blessed of all God's revelations.

Consequently, we urge our readers to read and ponder and pray the prayers of the apostle Paul, but most of all as in this prayer in Ephesians, for the spirit of revelation, a special enduement to *enlighten* the eyes of their hearts.

A. E. Knoch

EDITOR'S NOTE

The preceding article was compiled and adapted from several studies written by A. E. Knoch. The original thoughts regarding the theme of illumination, beginning with Genesis 1:14-19, appeared in *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 15, pages 257-259; volume 17, page 220; volume 42, page 62; and volume 43, page 57; and in *THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY*, pages 191, 221 and 269.

God and His Work

ELOHIM IS GIVING

THE ACTIVITY of Elohim on the fourth day is expressed by four verbs, *say*, *make* (literally, *do*), *place* (literally, *give*), and *see* (Gen.1:14-18). What God *says* introduces two luminaries which give light, the larger dominating the day, and the smaller dominating the night. What God *says* comes to be, and He *sees* it to be good. The verb *make* (literally, "do") was first used in Genesis 1:7. Like the other verbs used in this chapter to describe God's works, the verb *make* speaks of God as responsible for creation. It testifies especially to His power and knowledge. Altogether these verbs contribute to a picture of Elohim as supreme, fully involved in all that occurs and praiseworthy in His achievements.

As we have noted in previous studies these very basic works of God speak of fundamental truths concerning God. What He does is effective and is for good. We are not concerned here with scientific or historical details as might be found in a textbook, but with the significance of the language used in Genesis for the revelation of God. The passage does not deny that the creation of the luminaries had already occurred before this fourth "day." No doubt what is said here is from the standpoint of the earth, God's actions being described as they would have appeared from this viewpoint. But what we would learn from this account concerns the Creator and not some scientific explanation of laws and procedures involved in creation. Our concern is what this is saying concerning the ways and character of God as expressed by these accounts of His actions.

The common verbs *say*, *do* and *see* all contribute much

to our appreciation of God and His glories. But the verb *give*, which first appears in Genesis 1:17,¹ is especially rich in its implications. A specific *kind* of doing is in view, an action that reflects the nature of God's doing. The action of giving is not forced but is freely done for the Giver's own reasons and purposes. It is directed outward and expresses concern for a perceived need.

THE GREAT GIVER

The Scriptures are filled with God's givings. This first giving of God refers to His action of "giving" luminaries "in" the atmosphere, which is not the way English idiom would normally express the thought. Hence the CV uses the verb "place" with a superior "g" to indicate the Hebrew "give," and it uses a vertical stroke to indicate the Hebrew imperfect, or incomplete verb form. Literally verse 17 begins, "And He-is-giving, Elohim, . . ." The *-ing* form lays stress on the activity as action going on, rather than emphasizing the fact of the action. But the important thought for us now is that God's placing of the luminaries in the atmosphere and the appearance of the stars as well is a gift from God satisfying a real need within His creation.

The context shows us that God was giving [the appearance of] the sun and moon in the atmosphere for several specific purposes. They were for signs and appointed seasons. They were to serve as luminaries to give light on the earth. They were to dominate both days and nights. They were clocks and lights and provisions for order and direction. And still today we recognize the importance of these provisions from the hand of God.

1. The CV rendering "give light" which is used in verse 15 represents a Hebrew verb form which means literally, *cause light* (note the superior letter "c" before "give"); it is the causative form of the Hebrew verb to *light*, or *enlighten*, and does not include the actual Hebrew verb *give*.

GOD GIVES WISELY

Yet it is remarkable that the need of these great provisions of the Great Giver was not clearly evident when they first appeared in the atmosphere. God gave them before He brought forth living souls on the earth. It was the living souls, especially humanity itself, that would be served by these gifts. The diffusing of light through the waters and gases above the earth was sufficient for plant life, but the marking of time and organizing of activity in accord with the movements of the luminaries would become a great blessing for living *souls*.

Thus we see that God's activities on the fourth day are clearly activities of preparation. The account of God's works so far has taken us from light to water, air and land, and finally to plant life. But with the fourth day, God prepares the way for something more. The luminaries prepare the earth for higher forms of life, living souls, which are conscious of the creation of which they are a part, which see and hear and feel, smell and taste, and which can respond or react to these provisions for enlightenment and direction.

GOD'S GIFTS TO US

God's gift of luminaries announced in Genesis 1:14-19 reveals a pattern of God's giving to each of us personally. He has given us His Son as our Lord and Saviour, as the One Who becomes to us "wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance" (1 Cor.1:30). In each of our lives, in God's own time, we began to see the value of this Gift which was already there for us.

God is always way before us. Besides the gift of Christ, beyond compare in value, God had also given, through His glorified Son, the apostle Paul and his associates and pastors and teachers to make known this evangel (Eph.4:11,12).

This is brought forward to each of us personally. Hence

each of us can now look back to the men and women God placed in our path as luminaries, in word or in deed, who served as channels of enlightenment.

THE GIFT OF BEING A GIFT

If the apostle Paul is a luminary to us, given by God to reflect the light of the evangel in his letters, and if others who came later in our own times were given the privilege of illuminating the Word of God to our hearts, then, in God's grace, He may use us as well to reflect that light to others. This is surely what Paul was saying in Philippians 2:15 when he spoke of the believers "as luminaries in the world, having on the word of life."

This is not of ourselves even though there may be long hours of reading and meditating on the Word, and much schooling from experience at least. And certainly there will be toil and struggle involved in sharing the evangel with others. Yet to be appearing as a luminary in this world requires in all cases that *God is operating in us* as Paul recognized in Philippians 2:12. It is God Who "gives to each" of us any service in the faith, and it is God Who makes the service *grow up* and be fruitful (1 Cor.3:5-7).

OTHER GIFTS OF GOD

So also God gives us "an eonian consolation and a good expectation in grace" (2 Thess.2:16). He graciously grants to us, for Christ's sake, "not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also" (Phil.1:29). We are not all apostles and teachers, but God has given to us all, in some measure, those graces which are suited to transcendence: faith, expectation and love (1 Cor.12:29-31; 13:13). Even as death holds us down, we can still say in expectation, "Now thanks be to God, Who is giving us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor.15:57).

D.H.H.

Notes on 1 Samuel

THE SABBATH DAY

THE OPENING verses of the twenty-first chapter tell of David's flight to Ahimelech the priest. David was at loose ends. He had probably been without food during the three days of hiding near the departure stone, and he had nowhere to go. In his time of need he went to the tabernacle of God.

21 + David ^lcame to Ahimelech the priest at^d Nob. + Ahimelech was ^loveranxious ^lwhen he met⁻ David, and he ^lsaid to him, For what reason are you^l alone and no man is ^lwith you? ² + David ^lreplied to Ahimelech the priest, It was the king who ^mgave me instructions in a matter and ^lsaid to me, Let no^t one ^lknow anything ^labout the matter on which I am sending you, ⁺nor ^wwhat I instructed you. ⁺As ^lfor the lads, I ⁷appointed^{-Q} them to a ⁿplace so and so. ³ Now ⁺then, what ^{is}have you ^uon hand? Five loaves of bread? Do give them into my hand, or ^lwhatever is available^l. ⁴ + The priest ^lanswered ^lDavid, ⁺ ^lsaying, I ^{is}have no profane bread ^lon hand, ^t if but there is holy bread; if ^yonly the lads have kept themselves from women, ⁷=you may eat ^f it^Q. ⁵ + David ^lresponded ^lto the priest, ⁺ ^lsaying to him, But rather, women were restrained^l ^lfrom us, as heretofore; ⁱ when I went forth⁻, ⁺ ⁷all[~] the lads ^lwere hallowed ⁺even if it was a profane ^{way}mission. ⁺Yet ^t today indeed, ⁷they are ^lhallowed^{~c} ⁱwith their ^{all}vessels. ⁶ + So the priest ^lgave ^lhim holy bread, for there ^bwas no^t bread there save the bread of presence ^ltaken away^l from before Yahweh, in order to place warm bread ⁱon the day it was taken⁻.

⁷ **Now there** was a **man** ^fof **Saul's officials** ⁱon **that day, retained** before **Yahweh**; ⁺ **his name** was **Doeg the Edomite**, the **sturdiest of the ~runners** ^wbelonging to **Saul**.

Christ's reference to this incident is recorded in Matthew 12:1-8, Mark 2:23-28 and Luke 6:1-5. There the Pharisees criticized Christ and His disciples for rubbing a few handfuls of grain together that they might allay their hunger. This was legal. It was not considered stealing (Deut.23:24,25). But the Pharisees considered it harvesting, and it was the Sabbath when no work should be done. One wonders if the presence of the Pharisees betrays an effort to follow Christ so that they might measure the length of His walk and accuse Him of journeying on the Sabbath also.

There are many similarities between this day in David's life and the coming of his greater Son. When David came to the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant was absent, still residing at Kirjath-jearim. When Christ came to the temple, the glory had long since departed. David came to find an Edomite, Doeg, in the tabernacle. When Christ came, it was an Edomite, Herod, who had rebuilt the temple. David and Christ were both the rejected and persecuted kings of their nation.

HOLY BREAD

It may have been a Sabbath when David came to Ahimelech. Verse 6 mentions the removal of the bread of presence in order to replace it with warm bread. This was done on the Sabbaths (Lev.24:5-9). This bread was to be eaten by the priests in a holy place. It was a holy of holies for them.

Christ, like David, was of the tribe of Judah. That tribe has no rights in the priesthood of Aaron's order (Heb.7:11-14; 8:4). Yet David and those accompanying him were

permitted to eat of the priest's bread. Perhaps in David is foreshadowed some aspects of Christ as a Priest of the order of Melchizedek. In David are seen aspects of both king and priest. David inquired of God with the priest's ephod (1 Sam.23:9-12; 30:7,8), and even wore a linen ephod when the ark was brought to Jerusalem (2 Sam.6:14; 1 Chron. 15:27). Saul was rebuked for intruding into the priestly functions of sacrificing to and beseeching God—those things were to be performed by Samuel (1 Sam. 13:8-13).

It is satisfying to think that, though David was fasting in the field instead of enjoying the feast of the new moon in the king's palace (1 Sam.20:5), yet he went to the house of God and was fed with the holy bread of the priests. Christ hungered many times in the days of His service here, and yet He also had bread to eat of which those around Him were not aware (John 4:6-8, 31-34; Psa.40:8). Israel left Egypt to become the wandering Hebrews who ate the bread of heaven, and so David too received holy bread when he became a fugitive. God sustains His pilgrims. Yet how different the sustenance of the perfect Pilgrim!

LORD OF THE SABBATH

Christ knew no end to His work in His earthly life. "My Father is working hitherto, and I am working," He said (John 5:17). The hungry, the sick, the truth seekers, the curious, those seeking self-justification, the jealous—an endless and diverse stream of humanity flowed to Him for relief day after day. Sometimes He had to leave and hide just for a moment of peace or rest or prayer. But the work of that Life brought a completion to the work of God, so that we might enter into His stopping. In grace we may cease from all efforts to justify self, and rest in Him and His completed work.

David's life was typical of this. From the time of his anointing, his life became a struggle. Indeed, there were

difficulties when shepherding his father's flock. Yet, in those days, he had enjoyed simplicity, peace and freshness of faith. In contrast, life in Saul's household was continual turmoil. For David this simplicity was followed by a wearying life of wandering in the wilderness, searching for some fastness in which to take refuge. And, when he became king, there were still the final wars of liberation from the Philistines and of displacing the Jebusites and others. David's life was full of work and weariness.

But David's life was the means of preparing for the reign of peace and prosperity under Solomon. David established Israel as a powerful nation. He strengthened and united the nation. He brought the tabernacle to Jerusalem. He accumulated the wealth of materials needed for the building of the temple. In a sense, David brought Israel to a Sabbath.

THE CONTEXT OF CHRIST'S REFERENCE

Matthew's account, which especially emphasizes Christ's office as King, places this passage in which He identifies Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath, in a most appropriate setting. It is an "apricot of gold in a picture of silver" (Prov.25:11). In Matthew 11:28-30, Christ calls the weary and laden to come into His rest. They are to take His yoke, which doesn't chafe, and bear the burden of His purpose, which exhilarates the heart.

Then, in Matthew 12:1-8, Christ refers to this episode in David's life, and He declares to the Pharisees that they did not understand the nature of the Sabbath. And they certainly did not recognize that He was Lord of the Sabbath. And then in verses 9-13 Grace stoops to demonstrate once again what the Sabbath, the stopping, is about. On a Sabbath Christ healed the man with a withered hand. Yet even this demonstration is despised and misunderstood.

Those whose hearts revolted at Saul's injustices, those who were bankrupt, those who were burdened in some

way, gathered around David. And he became their leader. They bore his yoke and carried his burden, because they knew he was honest and right and they believed in him. In this way that motley bunch became his mighty men. They traded in their burdens for his, and they found purpose and peace and rest and glory, in the midst of many dangers.

WHAT THE PHARISEES MISSED

Christ employed a strong and forceful contrast to illustrate a truth to the Pharisees. In effect, He said to them, "You complain that the hungry men pick a few handfuls of grain to curb their appetite. What would you do if we went to the temple and took the holy bread and ate it? In fury and rage you would stone us! But that is what David did. You who teach the scriptures, have you not read them? What does it mean, 'Mercy am I wanting, and not sacrifice?'"

The Pharisees had misunderstood the Sabbath. They could only see what man does. They did not see that God is working even now, and they did not realize the nature of His work. To them the Sabbath was only a time to stop man's labor. They were obeying a command and imitating God by stopping like He did.

But the Sabbath was not a restriction on man; it was a blessing for man. It was meant to be an entering into what God has done. As long as we, like the Pharisees, think our salvation and peace as dependent upon what we do, we will never enter into the completed work of God.

The need of David, the needs of those who gathered to him, the needs of those who sought out Christ, the need of the man with the withered hand and all the other needs teach us something. The Sabbath cannot be truly enjoyed, nor can God be thoroughly honored in its observance, when those keeping it are burdened in heart, mind or body. It is in our entering into the completed work of Christ, resting fully upon what God has performed for us, that we find relief and God receives glory.

It is not man's work to provide the Bread of Life. That is God's work. He Who is the Bread of Life is also He Who accomplishes the work of God. And, because He finishes the work of God, there can be a stopping. And because He is the One Who completed the work of God, He is the Lord of the stopping.

LEARNING THE ROLE OF FUGITIVE

The twenty-first chapter of 1 Samuel shows a side of David not seen before. We relish thinking of him with stalwart faith, standing before the giant and the whole Philistine army, while Israel cowered in the background. But here he runs in fear and fabricates a false story to use in begging bread and weapons for protection. The sword he is given did not avail against himself, when he was strong in faith. But now he says, "There is none like it; give it to me" (verse 9).

But even the giant's sword failed to comfort and encourage David. He left his homeland and fled to Gath, the giant's home city. David probably hoped to be unrecognized and unnoticed in a foreign land. He was looking for a corner to hide in. But God would not allow him to hide. He was recognized there as slayer of the giant and the virtual king of Israel. This enflamed David's fear even more, and he feigned insanity to escape from the responsibility of who and what he was.

⁸ + **David** said to Ahimelech, + **Is** there nothing that you ^{is} have here ^u on hand, a spear or a sword? For I did not take ^{mr} my sword + or any ^{mr} other of my ^{all} weapons in my hand, ^t because the king's matter ^b was urgent!. ⁹ + **The** priest ^{sa} replied, The sword of Goliath the Philistine whom you smote in the vale of Elah, it is ^{bd} here, wrapped in raiment, ^{af} behind the ephod. If you are taking it for yourself, take it, for there is no other except it in this place.

+ **David** said, There is none like it; give it to me. ⁷ + **So** he gave it to him.^o

¹⁰ + **David** arose and ran away ⁱ on that day from the face of Saul. + **When** he came to Achish king of Gath, ¹¹ + the courtiers of Achish said to him, Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not respond about this one ⁱ with dancing in choruses, ^y saying-

Saul has smitten ⁱ his thousands,

+ **Yet** David ⁱ his myriads?

¹² + **David** ^{bp} took these words ⁱ to his heart, and he was very fearful ^f in view of Achish king of Gath. ¹³ + **So** he altered his sanity in their eyes and was raving while in their hand; + he was ^t tambourining on the doors of the gate and ^e let his spittle run down ^y on his beard. ¹⁴ + **Then** Achish said to his courtiers, ^{bd} Here you see a man presenting himself as mad. Why do you bring him to me? ¹⁵ Do I lack mad men that you bring this one to present himself as mad ^{-on} for me? Should this one enter ^y my house?

What happened to David? What caused this great change in him? This question is important to us, because, like David, we also experience this strange mixture of faith and flesh. Paul spoke of it in the seventh chapter of Romans. Like the days of creation, our lives show periods of light and order and increasing life. But these good times are interspersed with periods of darkness. Yet God's arm is not short to bring good, even through this, as each succeeding day brings life and order of higher form.

While shepherding the flock, David was free in his mind to meditate on God. The hours may have been long, and at times the work may have been difficult, but, in his heart and mind, David was able to focus on God. And when he was focused on God, his faith was strong.

When David entered a career of service to Saul, his life became increasingly complex. There may have been

many times when the work was not physically exhausting, but there was never a time when he was freed from the responsibilities and cares of his position. He became a great leader of Israel's army. He became son-in-law to the king. Saul's jealousy grew and he experienced fits of rage and insanity when he would try to kill David. David was forced to work closely with and serve someone who might at any time try to stab him in the back. It seems that all this pressure and stress caused David to lose the clarity of his focus on God.

PSALM 34

The superscription of Psalm 34 identifies it with David's flight to Gath. This Psalm and a meditation are found in *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 66, page 268. The Psalm is very helpful for understanding David's frame of mind during these events. And it also enlightens our understanding of how God uses these dark times in life to strengthen us.

David begins the Psalm with the exhortation to, ". . . bless Yahweh *in every season*" (verse 1). David had experienced the season of strength when he ran to meet the veteran warrior, Goliath with only a sling and stone. And David had also experienced the season of weakness and "shrinking fear" (Psa.34:4), when he fled from Saul. David's encouragement to others is very like Paul's to Timothy. ". . . God gives us, not a spirit of timidity, but of power and of love and of sanity . . . Stand by it, *the word of the evangel*, opportunely, inopportunely" (2 Tim.1:7; 4:2). Only by experiencing seasons of both strength and weakness was David enabled to realize that God was actually present with him always. And that is reason to rejoice, always.

*Yahweh is near to the broken of heart,
And He shall save those crushed of spirit.
Many are the evils on the righteous one,*

*But Yahweh shall rescue him from them all,
He Who is guarding all his bones
So that not one of them is broken. (Psa.34:18-20)*

David was deeply humbled by these experiences. His feigning insanity was the mortification of David as politician, military leader and son-in-law to the king. Once again he became just a son of Jesse, thrust upon God for help and hope.

EVILS ON THE RIGHTEOUS

"Many are the evils on the righteous one." David suffered many evils. These were not caused by his imperfections, but they were necessary for his perfecting. Many will be the evils on all righteous ones, but, like David's, these evils will be for good (*cf* Genesis 50:20).

Psalm 34:19,20 should also be considered with regard to Christ. "Many are the evils on the Righteous One." The One not knowing sin, God made to be sin for our sakes (2 Cor.5:21). Could there be a greater weight of evil than the sin of the world, which rested upon Christ when He was on the cross? "But Yahweh shall rescue Him from them all." Could there be a greater rescue and deliverance than to be raised from death to sit at the right hand of the Majesty in the heights of the heavens in immortality?

This Psalm describes Yahweh, the Rescuer and Ransomer, as the One "Who is guarding all his bones so that not one of them shall be broken." A broken bone in David's day was a serious injury indeed. To a fugitive, a broken arm or leg would be even more serious. To a fugitive soldier who must flee across the countryside and fight for his life, a broken bone would be nearly insurmountable. With these words David assures us that, even though the evils may be piled high upon us, God's protection is intact. And even while we are overwhelmed, He is guarding and protecting every delicate and vital part.

Christ is a literal and perfect example of these verses. Just as no bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken (Ex.12:46), so Christ's legs were not broken at His crucifixion (John 19:31-33). Resting upon Christ was the sin of the whole world and the judgment of that sin. Yet even under such a colossal weight of evil, the Father guarded each and every one of His bones. God limits the effects of the evil we endure according to the need.

Psalms 34 exhorts us to steadfastly rejoice in the Lord, regardless of circumstances. This message pervades the Scriptures. "A stabilized bent You shall preserve in peace, in peace, because it trusts in You" (Isa.26:3). The "bent" in this verse is the inclination or frame of the mind and heart. Genesis 8:21 makes this clear: ". . . for the bent of the human heart is evil from its youth."

EVERY FRAME OF MIND

The same encouragement is given to us by Paul in his letter to the Philippians. "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 [bent], shall be garrisoning your hearts and your apprehensions in Christ Jesus" (Phil.4:4-8).

Paul's exhortation continued with instruction to focus the mind and heart on things that are true, just, pure, agreeable and renowned, and to reckon, or meditate on those things. As believers, we need to focus on what is good and prevent the mind from always being busied with the things of the world. "The worry of this eon and the seduction of riches" will stifle the word (Matt.13:22). Rejoice in the Lord always!

J. Philip Scranton

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON GOOD AND EVIL

THE prevailing notion which stigmatizes Ecclesiastes as "the book of the natural man" roots itself in the dualistic creed of Christendom. It is the makeshift of pious men who think more of traditional theology than the truth of Scripture—an exigency demanded by creeds which foster pagan fables, creeds which make evil an interloper in a scheme of good, instead of a foreappointed means designed to *reveal* the good, and thus deny the omnipotence, traduce the character, and impeach the wisdom of the Creator. With interpretations such as this a study of the Bible resting on the sure foundation of grammatical connections and relation of parts to the whole of a book, is in uncompromising antagonism.

NOTES

The "notes" given in Ecclesiastes 9:16-11:6 sustain a relation to the preceding matter. At the end of the Fourth Book, the Assembler described a mournful incident where wisdom was able to achieve where strength failed, but the wise and provident man was not remembered (9:13-15). This leads to a series of reflections on how the efforts of wisdom may be neutralized by folly:

¹⁶ +**So I' said, Better is wisdom ^fthan mastery,**
+**Yet the wisdom of 'a provident man is despised^l,**
And his words are no longer hearkened^l to.

¹⁷ The ⁱ **restful words of wise men, hearkened^l to,**

Are better *f*than the outcry of a ruler^l
*i*among the stupid.

¹⁸ **Wisdom is better *f*than *all* weapons of attack,
 +Yet one sinner^l destroys much⁻ good.**

10 As dead gadflies cause a ⁷compound^{-c} of oil
 to ^lstink, to ^lbubble forth,

So a little frivolity outweighs *f* wisdom ^Mand^{cs} *f* glory.

² The heart of the wise man inclines to his right,
 +Yet the heart of the stupid man to his left.

³ + Even as ^w the frivolous man walks^l
*i*along the way, his heart betrays a lack
 And ^{sa}affirms to all that he is frivolous.

This calls up to mind the most formidable handicap to wisdom—the misconduct of rulers:

⁴ **If the spirit of a ruler^l ascends ^{on}against you,
 do not leave your ^{ri}place,**

For a healing time ^cgives rest to great sins.

⁵ There is an evil I have seen under the sun
**Like an inadvertent error ^wthat comes forth^l
 from before ^one in authority:**

⁶ **Frivolity is ^gput in high positions;
 The ^mgreat and the rich nobles ^lsit in low ones.**

⁷ **I have seen slaves on horseback
 And chiefs walking upon the earth like slaves.**

The next paragraph turns from the political to the common life. The favoritism of rulers results in relaxation of law and outbreaks of violence. Verses 8 and 9 exhibit various ways of encroaching, by removing boundaries, on the common land; in other words, violations of the commandment “You shall not move away the boundary marker of your associate” (Deut.19:14). In verses 10 and 11 the advantage of putting wisdom to use is stressed:

⁸ He who delves^l a pit-hole may fall into it,
 And he who breaches^l a stone dike,

a serpent may bite him.

⁹ He who quarries^l out stones
 may come to grief *i*by them;

He who splits^l timbers may be endangered *i*by them.

¹⁰ **If the iron tool has become blunt,
 and ^sone does not polish the surface,**

+Then he must be ^lmasterful with potency,
 +yet wisdom would succeed⁻ for advantage.

¹¹ **If a serpent should bite**

*i*when there was ^{no} snake-charm,

+Then there is no advantage to the possessor
 of a charming tongue.

The topics treated in 10:12-11:6 follow the same order. First wisdom and folly are contrasted in their effects (10:12-15). Then the misery of a land governed by an incompetent ruler and drunken nobles is contrasted with the happiness of a land whose king and officers are dominated by a sense of honor and discretion (10:16,17). Once again the evils of misgovernment call to mind the debasing effects of perverted judgment, and these in turn call forth a series of wise precepts (10:18-11:6).

The gluttony and drunkenness of the chief officials leads to a contemplation of a triplet of evils of which intemperance is the sire—slothfulness, misuse of money, and disrespect for lawful authority (10:18-20).

In 11:1-3 the thought is that as the seasons of prosperity (rain) and devastation (the storm uprooting the trees), so visitations of good and evil take place in accordance with God's plan and come alike to all. In what follows, the fact of providential dispensation is made a basis for conduct. Weather forecast founded on observation of winds and clouds is uncertain (11:4,5), but this should not paralyze fruitful exertion. Verse 5 focuses on man's ignorance of the laws governing the movements of wind and clouds

which are determined by God Who does the whole. We cannot know God's work, but knowing Him as the Doer of all encourages us in the doing of our tasks (11:6).

- 12 **Words** from the **mouth of a wise** man are **gracious**,
 +**Yet** the **lips of a stupid** man **swallow him** up.
- 13 At the **start** the **words of his mouth** are **frivolity**,
And at ^{af}**last** from **his mouth** comes **evil raving**.
- 14 + **The frivolous** man **multiplies words**;
 But ^a**man** does **not know what** ^w **shall** ^b**be**,
And ^w**what shall** ^b**come** ^f **after him**,
^a**who can** **tell** [>] **him?**
- 15 The **toil of the stupid** **wearies him**,
 Seeing ^w**that he** does **not** even **know** how **to go to**
 the **city**.
- 16 **Woe to you, O land, whose king** is a **youth**,
And whose chiefs ^{eat} **feast in the morning**.
- 17 **Happy are you, O land,**
whose king is a **son of notables**,
And whose chiefs **eat in season**
ⁱ**For mastery and not** ⁱ**for a drinking** bout.
- 18 ⁱ**Because of slothfulness the rafters shall sag,**
And ⁱ**because of laziness of hands,**
the house shall leak.
- 19 The ^d**making of bread** is **for mirth**,
And wine ^m**gives** **rejoicing to life**,
 +**While** **silver** **answers** ^{for} **everything**.
- 20 **Even in your thinking do not** **maledict** a **king**,
And do not **maledict** a **rich man in your bed chamber**
ⁱ**Because a flyer of the heavens may** ^{go} **carry**
^{the} **voice**,
And a possessor of **wings may tell** your **speech**.
- 11 **Send forth your bread on the surface of the water,**
For ⁱ**after many** **days you shall find it**.
- 2 **Give a portion to seven,** ^{yea} **even to eight,**

- For you do not know what evil**
may ^b**come upon the earth**.
- 3 **If the thick** clouds are **full** for a **downpour**,
They shall empty out upon **the earth**,
And if a tree **falls** ⁱ **to the south**, ^{or} ⁱ **to the north**,
 The ^{ri}**place** ^w**where the tree** **falls**,
there shall it ^b**rest**.
- 4 He who **observes** ⁱ the **wind** does **not** **sow**,
And he who **examines** ⁱ the **thick** clouds
 does **not** **reap**.
- 5 **Just as you** ^{is} **do not know**ⁱ
what the way of the wind may be,
 Or ^{as}**how bones** are formed **in the full womb**,
Thus you cannot **know** ^{the} ^d**work of the One**,
Elohim, Who **does** ^{the} **whole**.
- 6 **Sow your seed in the morning,**
and do not ^e**let your hand** **rest** ^{at} **evening**,
For you ^{is} **do not know**ⁱ **wherein**
this may succeed, whether **this or that**,
 +**Or** ^{if} **whether both of them** **alike** are **good**.

Thus the passage by successive gradations, spans the entire range of God's operations. We have: (1) the mystery of nature; (2) the mystery of generation; (3) God's work as a whole extending over nature and mankind. The idea is that man's uncertainty in regard to natural processes and the course of human history, instead of encouraging idleness, is—or should be—a stimulus to tireless effort. Since it is not possible to know whether one kind of labor or another will prosper, prosecute both with diligence. The sentiment expressed is equivalent to Paul's injunction to teachers of God's Word, "Stand by it, opportunely, inopportunely" (2 Tim.4:2).

Undertaking an investigation with a view of finding out what is good for Adam's sons, our thinker has arrived by

various processes and successive stages at some positive conclusions, doctrinal and practical.

ELOHIM DOES THE WHOLE

The characteristic doctrinal feature is insistence on the absolute supremacy of God, Who is Creator of both good and evil, and, as the Highest, watches over His creation and leads it through blood and strife to a golden age of peace. The unraveling of the universal plan is not complete; for the totality of things is pronounced incomprehensible:

“Just as you do not know what the way of the wind may be, Or how bones are formed in the full womb, thus you cannot know the work of the One, Elohim, Who does the whole” (Ecc.11:5).

Nevertheless, the sovereignty of God in nature and human events is the bedrock on which the Assembler’s faith is anchored. He has found that, in the practical matters of life, wisdom will direct man to do the tasks set before him despite uncertainties and frequent failures. He cannot know the work of God above and beyond his comprehension, but he is aware that, in the final analysis, all is the hands of the One, Elohim, Who does the whole.

The fact that the unfolding of the divine plan is imperfect casts no reflection on Ecclesiastes. He is shut up within the circle of God’s operations for Israel. In the very nature of things his field of expansion and range of vision is confined within the limits of Old Testament revelation, which is restricted to earth in point of sphere, and extends no further than the close of the Messianic age in point of time. It was reserved for the apostle to the nations, who also testified that all is out of God, to complete the Word of God and unravel the breadth and length and depth and height of the Divine purpose.

V. Gelesnoff

Questions and Answers

TESTING WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD

I am entreating you, then, brethren, by the pities of God, to present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service, and not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, for you to be testing what is the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect. (Rom.12:1,2)

Question:

“Please be so kind as to comment on Romans 12:2 in which Paul says for us to be ‘testing what is the will of God.’ How are we to be testing what is the will of God?”

Answer:

HERE “the will of God” has in view, not God’s decretive will, according to which He is operating all, but His preceptive will, according to which He instructs His creatures in the ways of righteousness.¹ Passages that are concerned with what has well been termed God’s “decretive” will, speak of that which God has determined should occur, according to His own will or decision. Such a usage of God’s “will” has in view God’s *intention* (though it speaks of it from the standpoint of His will or decision concern-

1. The theological terms “the decretive will of God” and “the preceptive will of God,” are valid and useful clarifying expressions. This is because, in the nature of the case, when speaking of the will of God, the Scripture in some cases has in view God’s will concerning that which He has decided should occur, while in other cases this same phrase refers to that which God has decided is constituent to man’s duty.

ing it). God's decretive will refers to that which God has appointed to occur, *even if it should be contrary to His preceptive will* (e.g., cf Matt.26:42; cp Acts 4:27,28; cf Eph. 1:11 cp Rom.9:19).

In Romans 12:2, however, Paul speaks of "the good and well pleasing and perfect [will of God]" (note that the phrase is an appositive, used to clarify the phrase "the will of God"; and, note the definite article before "good"). It is "the good and well pleasing and perfect [will of God]" which is associated with the entreaty to present our bodies a sacrifice, "living, holy, well pleasing to God, your logical divine service, and not to be configured to this eon, but to be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom.12:1,2a).

Paul's objective (it is the objective case, grammatically) in entreating us thus, is "for" us "to be testing what is the will of God, good and well pleasing and perfect."

"Testing," decidedly, is not "tempting" (AV), or rather, "putting on trial" (CV). We may not be putting God on *trial* (e.g., Matt.4:3-7), seeking to oblige Him to act in response to our situation or predicament in order to prove Himself.² Instead, "testing" means, "[to] form a careful opinion by subjecting the senses or mind to impressions" (Keyword Concordance, entry "test," p.300). By association, this definition has in view the activities in which we must involve ourselves in order to arrive at such "careful opinions."

This usage of "test" is a synonym for "prove," not so much in the sense of logical proof (though that is by no means excluded), but in the sense of a "proving ground," where, for example, an automobile might be tested out or "proved." The failure of humanity has been that of *not* "test[ing] God, to have Him in recognition" (Rom.1:28).

2. We must never attempt to oblige God to prove Himself to us; instead, it is we who are obliged to "have Him in recognition" (Rom.1:28), as a result of our own careful "testing."

Instead of *not* testing God (and therefore not having Him in recognition), we are to "*Taste and see* that Yahweh is good" (Psa.34:8a).

The reason that humanity fails truly to recognize (or "realize") God, even though in a very limited way they "know" Him (or have a [very limited] relationship with Him; Rom.1:21), is because "they do not *test* God." It is vital for us to recognize this common failure for the serious omission that it is, that we might be roused to action to *test* God through the practice of following His faithful ways.

Thus Paul would have us "test God," *by practicing those things which are His will, good and well pleasing and perfect*. We will then be growing in a realization of God (Col.1:10); and, by "the renewing of our mind," become "transformed."

Here, in Romans 12:2, "transform" is not literal; nor does it speak of our outward appearance, but of our inward "form," metaphorically, in our renewed mind. Others, indeed, may notice something different about us; but we, in any case, will notice something quite different about ourselves: as a result of testing God, to have Him in recognition.

Paul's words here are at the heart of the matter of the believer's walk. It is something that we must go back to, over and over again, for there are so many distractions which we encounter, so many pulls upon us in the wrong direction, of which we succumb to some.

These things are easy to neglect; and of course that is just what the flesh wishes to do. It is no great thing to fail, to withdraw from (or simply ignore) the faith and/or its faithful service. Nothing could be more common; it happens everywhere, continually. Therefore, if we would be pleasing to God, in His mercy and grace He must somehow lay hold of us, giving us a caring heart, one that desires to please Him and is serious to do so. If at times our walk seems more to approximate that of a utensil for dishonor

than for honor, we must “purge” ourselves from what is dishonorable. Then, we will, faithfully speaking, be “a utensil for honor, hallowed, and useful to the Owner, made ready for every good act” (2 Tim.2:20-22). Then, too, we will acclaim, “in the *grace* of God I am what I am” (1 Cor.15:10).

The ideal passage, it seems to me, in reply to your specific question, “How are we to be testing what is the will of God?” is Philippians 4:9: “What you *learned* also, and *accepted* and *hear* and *perceived in me*, these be putting into *practice*, and the God of peace will be with you.”

In the Greek, here (note the boldface “ing” on “putting” in the CV), “practice” is not a noun but a verb, in the imperative mood: “be *practicing*.” Like the elementary music student, whose “practicing” may leave much to be desired, thus also, our “practicing” of these ideals, may only be at quite an imperfect level. Even so, in our practicing, we would be “little children” who *care*, who are *serious*, who *wish to please* our Teacher, and who have a *heart* for the endeavor which we have undertaken.

How wonderful it is, sometimes, that we can truly be walking in good works, in those good works which God makes ready beforehand, that we should (i.e., would) be walking in them. For His achievement are we (Eph.2:10).

J.R.C.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4–9

“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. For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is grave, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is agreeable, whatever is renowned—if there is any virtue, and if any applause, be taking these into account. What you learned also, and accepted and hear and perceived in me, these be putting into practice, and the God of peace will be with you.”

If One Died For the Sake of All

INTRODUCTION

THERE are three compelling reasons for us to believe that all humanity will be saved. First and foremost God is truly what He reveals Himself to be in the Scriptures. Secondly, Christ died for sinners. And finally, we all are sinners.

I believe these claims are pivotal teachings of God’s Word. The first claim centers on God and His revelation of Himself in and through His Son, Jesus Christ. The second, focusing on God’s Son, and His death and resurrection, lies at the very core of our faith. The third claim, which deals with humanity, is clearly witnessed to in Scripture and by our own common experience. All three points are essential elements of the evangel of our salvation and vital to our appreciation of the grace of God.

Gathering evidence from God’s Word for these three claims, I propose to support the teaching that God is truly the Saviour of all mankind, in a series of articles under the general heading “If One Died For the Sake of All.” This phrase is taken from 2 Corinthians 5:14 which will be the leading, scriptural passage for the first study.

In the context of the opening chapters of 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul speaks very personally about his work as an evangelist, reminding us that the message he was commissioned to bring to the nations illuminates “the knowledge of *the glory of God* in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor.4:6). This glory of God is revealed in the love of Christ, in that *Christ died for all*. The result, according to Paul, is that the entirety of the sinful race of humanity, as a unit, is put to death.

To be sure, the thrust of Paul's message relates to the many blessings the death and resurrection of Christ brings to the believers, who are identified in 2 Corinthians 5:15 as "those who are living." I do not want to overlook this emphasis while concentrating on the relationship our special salvation has to the widely overlooked fact that God is the Saviour of all. For indeed, as it seems to me, a full appreciation of God's grace to *us* is hardly possible apart from a recognition of God's achievements for *all*.

This evangelical pattern of speaking of the ways the death of Christ reveals the glories of God by its achievements for sinners as a whole is supported by all of God's Word. But it is expressly developed in Paul's epistles. Besides 2 Corinthians 5:14-21, the following passages are especially relevant:

1. After his lengthy exposure of the irreverence and unrighteousness of all humanity, both Israel and the nations, Paul announces in Romans 3:21,22, that a *righteousness of God* is manifested through *Jesus Christ's* faith, for *all* as well as being on all who are believing. The problem is the fact that all are sinners, not simply that we, who now believe, are sinners. And it is *this* dilemma of human sinfulness, enmity and infirmity that God solves in the death of His Son (*cf* Rom.8:3,20,21).

2. Romans chapter 5 expounds on the *love of God* which is commended to us in the *death of His Son*, graciously gaining for us justification, conciliation and expectation of life (Rom.5:1-11). But along with this unfolding of the evangel, certain results of Christ's obedience are associated with all mankind. Having introduced the theme of race-wide mortality and sinfulness because of Adam in verse 12, the apostle completes his parallel showing race-wide justification through Christ in verses 18 and 19. "Consequently, then, as it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is *through one just award for*

all mankind for life's justifying. For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, *through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just.*"

3. In accord with Romans 5, Paul writes in 1 Corinthians that all, including specifically those who are Christ's when He is present, will be vivified *in Christ*. "For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, *in Christ, shall all be vivified.* Yet each in his own class; the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon *those who are Christ's in His presence;* thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father . . . Now, whenever *all* may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects *all* to Him, that *God may be All in all*" (1 Cor.15:22-24,28).

4. This subjection of all, including believers, is described in Philippians with words partly borrowed from Isaiah: ". . . being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto *death, even the death of the cross.* Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus *every knee should be bowing,* celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and *every tongue should be acclaiming* that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the *glory of God the Father.* So that, my beloved . . . be carrying your own salvation into effect" (Phil.2:8-13).

5. In Ephesians Paul blesses "the *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,* Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, *in Christ*" (Eph.1:3). Among these is that in Christ "we are having the deliverance *through His blood*" (verse 7). But beyond these special blessings of grace, we learn of the secret of *God's will* (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in Christ) "to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up *all in the Christ*—both that in the heavens

and that on the earth—in Him in Whom our lot was cast also” (Eph.1:10,11).

Here God's operations are found to be “in Christ,” which clearly must be related to His blood, and which reach a climax in the heading up of all in the heavens and on the earth. The glorious allotment God has given to us accords with this monumental goal involving the entire universe, *to the laud of God's glory* (Eph.1:6,12,14).

6. Colossians also tells of God's work of reconciliation *through Christ* which will embrace the universe even as it has begun to operate in our lives today. Here Paul prays for the realization of God's will which leads forward to the *realization of God* (Col.1:9-11). *Through Christ*, God intends “to reconcile *all* to Him (making peace *through the blood of His cross*), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens” (Col.1:20). It is in relation to this grand outlook that the apostle adds, “And *you*, being once estranged and enemies in comprehension, by wicked acts, yet now He reconciles *by His body of flesh, through His death*” (Col.1:21,22).

7. Such revelations are summed up by the faithful and welcome word of 1 Timothy 4:9,10, masterfully prepared for by earlier declarations speaking of Christ's death for sinners and God's will for their salvation (*cf* 1 Tim.1:15; 2:4-6): “Faithful is the saying and worthy of all welcome . . . that we rely on the *living God*, Who is the *Saviour of all mankind*, especially of *believers*.” Christ came to accomplish what God willed for all mankind. It seems clear to me from 1 Timothy 4:10 that the apostle Paul was convinced this mission was successful.

In this series of studies I intend to examine each of these portions of Scripture, noting other passages within and outside of Paul's writings that support this theme of God's wise, righteous and loving purpose for all mankind.

D.H.H.

If One Died For the Sake of All

**THE DEATH OF ALL
IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST**

THE EVANGEL of God concerns His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom.1:1-5), and it is God's power for salvation to everyone who is believing (Rom.1:16). In 2 Corinthians 5:14,15, we find this evangel stated in especially striking terms and see its powerfully saving effects on the apostle Paul and the believers to whom he wrote:

“For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died. And He died for the sake of all that those who are living should by no means still be living to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes.”

Here the evangel is presented in terms of Christ's love. To humanity in general it would seem odd, at the very least, to speak of the *death* of the One Who is loving and the *death* of those who are being loved as an evangel. Such might be a story of thwarted love as in some romantic tragedy, but it would hardly be called glad tidings, or good news. But the evangel brought by Paul always centers, as here, on death. Most essentially the evangel speaks of the death of Christ (e.g., Rom.5:6-9; 1 Cor.15:1-4; 1 Tim.1:15), but His death somehow involves the death of sinners, and in that often overlooked fact lies a blessing of matchless value.

A LIVING FAITH

From the context of 2 Corinthians 5 we perceive that Paul's life was constrained and shaped in every detail by the love of Christ as revealed in His death for sinners. He

lived what he believed. Paul endured affliction and sorrow and the slanders that continually seemed to plague his ministry in order to bring the evangel to the Corinthians and encourage their spiritual growth. "In everything being afflicted, but not distressed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not perishing . . . we also are believing, wherefore we are speaking also, being aware that He Who rouses the Lord Jesus will be rousing us also, through Jesus, and will be presenting us together with you. For all is because of you, that the grace, increasing through the majority, should be superabounding in thanksgiving to the glory of God" (2 Cor.4:8,9,14,15).

If the Corinthians thought he had some ulterior purpose for personal gain in any particular action (such as boasting over the Corinthians), they would be far off the mark (*cf* 2 Cor.5:12,13). Paul was motivated and directed by that love which led Christ to die for sinners like Saul of Tarsus and which embraced the entire human race.

Indeed it was more than the fact that Christ died for him that invigorated Paul to labor and suffer to bring this message of love to others. It was Christ's love in dying for everyone with the result that the entirety of the old, corrupt human race died in the death of Christ, that led the apostle in his toil and afflictions to love and encourage, admonish and commend people he formerly would have despised and shunned. Paul does not say here that if One died for *us* (who are the elect), consequently *we* died, though that would have been a true statement and even appropriate to the context. Yet it would not have sufficiently expressed the motivations and genuine concerns that were in the apostle's heart.

Therefore, in speaking of what constrained him in his actions, Paul had to point to the all-encompassing scope of the evangel of Christ's love. It is only after this associa-

tion of all sinners with the love of Christ in His death that Paul distinguishes the believers as "those who are living." All have been identified with Christ in His death, though only some, called out from the whole, are now being invigorated in new life by the evangel.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

It was soon before writing here of the love of Christ that Paul reminded the Corinthians that his message illuminated "the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God" (2 Cor.4:4). The glorious love of Christ is paramount in this evangel, and in loving us by dying for us Jesus Christ is illuminating "the knowledge of the glory of God" (4:6). As the Image of the invisible God, Christ is making known the glory of God, and as the One Who dies for all, Christ is making known the love of God.

The love of Christ, illuminating the love of God, is very real. It is not only an emotion of good will, affection and commiseration, but is also a preeminently wise and righteous and powerfully active seeking of good for its object. Christ's death would not illuminate the glory of God if it were merely a *picture* of the intensity of His love. The death of Christ is not a sort of ultimate gesture but is a desperately needed action leading surely and effectively to the desired good.

Therefore, it is love that cannot fail. Not only does it act in accord with its goal of good, but it is certain to achieve that goal.

Divine love faces the problem of human sin and death and does the very thing needed in order to solve that problem. It expresses the deepest of affection but does so by faithfully carrying out and gaining the good that is so direly needed. This is a love that could never envision nor ever allow defeat. It could never clash with God's power, for God's power is great enough to achieve what His love

desires. It could never be in competition with God's righteousness, for God's righteousness is revealed in the very evangel which declares His love. It can never stand in opposition to any aspect of the character of God, for He is love.

ONE DIED

The death of Christ was required by the terrible corruption that engulfs humanity. Nothing else could have ended this corruption, and no one else could have done it. The old humanity must be put to death, effectively and finally.

How was this to be done? The testimony of the evangel shows us it had to be done by the death of the *One* Who is responsible for humanity, in Whom we had our origin. Paul reminds us in Colossians 1:16 that "in Him, is all created." There is a vital connection between Christ and humanity that goes back to Genesis 2:7, before sin and death corrupted the race, when Yahweh Elohim formed Adam and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Hence we read in 1 Timothy 2:5,6, of Christ as the one Mediator of God and mankind, Who, as a Man, is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all.

In both 2 Corinthians 5:14 and 1 Timothy 2:5, Christ is referred to as "One" in contrast to "all." This is a reflection of the fuller development of this contrast in Romans 5:12-19. Like Adam, but in a greater way, Christ is *One* Whose actions affect *all* humanity, including Adam. In the final analysis, the destiny of the human race is dependent on the work of the One, Jesus Christ, rather than on all the various activities, good and bad, of the many individuals.

In accord with the principle of "sin for sin" ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"), the sin of the death of our sinless Lord puts to death the sin-corrupted human race. Christ was made to be Sin, or the Sin Offering, for the sake of sinners, as Paul expresses it at the end of our chapter (2 Cor.5:21). As the Sin Offering Christ died for

all humanity since all are sinners. He could not have died for me as a sinner unless He died for us all. But now, having done so, the way is opened up for my salvation, and of necessity for the ultimate deliverance of all.

The more we learn from Scripture concerning the death of Christ, the more firmly we understand what Paul meant when he wrote, "Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal.6:14).

The death of Christ on Golgotha, nearly two thousand years ago, is the darkest event of history. Yet it is our glory, our boast, because of what it accomplished.

We must be willing to acknowledge and prepare ourselves to exult in the fact that we would not have the blessings of faith, expectation and love in our lives if Christ had not died for sinners. The evangel tells us of something that has happened. It occurred long before we believed. Our believing that Christ died for our sins did not make Christ's death for our sins happen. Our believing does not make what we believe true. It has been true for nearly two thousand years. To be sure, our believing does bring the power of the evangel into our lives, and by its means God seals us with the holy spirit of promise to the deliverance of that which *has been procured* (Eph.1:13,14). This unique and special salvation for our present lives and into the oncoming eons is not promised to the unbeliever. Nevertheless, as important as our believing is, it does not in any measure take away from what Christ has done for all and must surely be realized by all in God's own time.

ONE DIED FOR THE SAKE OF ALL

We have come to know "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," that, being rich, because of us He became poor, that we, by His poverty, should be rich (2 Cor.8:9). The

difficulty, however, comes not simply in realizing that the death of Christ proves to be a good thing for us, vital to our present lives and our future salvation, but also seeing that it is a good thing for all and vital to the glory of God. This death of Christ on the cross, so shameful, so evil in itself, so base and miserable and abhorrent, has come to mean to us power for our present lives and the solid basis of our expectation for the future. But how much more is this so for us when we come to realize that Christ's death is for all.

This is stated twice in 2 Corinthians 5. "One died for the sake of all" (v.14), and "He died for the sake of all" (v.15). It is a matter to be emphasized. It should never be diluted by conclusions about human sinfulness and stubbornness that do not take Christ's death for sinners into account. Even less should it be qualified and altered by traditional ideas about divine wrath and judgment which place God's justice and love in separate compartments. What Christ has done for all must have the final say about the destiny of all. Our understanding of the words "One died for all" must correspond with the revelation of the love of Christ and accord with the evangel which we believe.

ALL DIED

Already the love of Christ has achieved something very important for the human race. When He died, all died. That is, the old humanity has been put to death. In saying this we are indeed speaking of what is objectively true and not yet of what is true subjectively, or experientially. We are pointing to an accomplishment that has not yet become realized subjectively, in experience. Even for the believer the old humanity is still with us, though in believing that we died we are spiritually strengthened to be putting away the acts of the old humanity. But the point we must make here is that what God has declared is objectively true must and certainly will become wholly, subjectively so. The death

of the entire old humanity in the death of Christ is a true and beneficial achievement and must ultimately lead to the salvation of all, truly enjoyed and appreciated to the glory of God.

How then, can the death of all be a good thing? Only as it represents a real and final end of the old dying and sinful race. Paul had been writing of the operation of death in our bodies in the preceding paragraphs of 2 Corinthians: "our outward man is decaying" (4:16); "we are groaning" (5:2); "... being burdened" (5:4). In love, Christ died, and He died for all so that their sinfulness and suffering and weakness and dying might be put to death. This was an act of supreme love, requiring drastic sacrifice and producing transcendent benefit.

The apostle Paul clearly apprehends *our* death in the death of Christ as beneficial. He uses much the same language as 2 Corinthians 5:14 elsewhere in speaking of the believer's involvement in the death of Christ. "We, who *died* to sin, how shall we still be living in it? Or are you ignorant that whoever are baptized into Christ Jesus, are baptized into His *death*? We, then, were entombed together with Him through baptism into *death* . . . planted together in the likeness of His *death* . . . our old humanity was *crucified* together with Him . . . we *died* together with Christ . . ." (Rom.6:2-11). "If, then, you *died* together with Christ from the elements of the world . . . for you *died*, and your life is hid together with Christ in God" (Col.2:20; 3:1-3). "With Christ have I been *crucified*" (Gal.2:20).

The involvement of all in the death of Christ must ultimately be beneficial to all, even as in such rich ways it has begun to benefit us.

THOSE WHO ARE LIVING

The passages just quoted show that identification with Christ in His death is to be followed by identification with

Him in His life. "Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet *living* to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom.6:11). However, it would be wrong to claim that the whole of humanity is now living to our Lord, even though all have died in the death of Christ. Nevertheless, we can surely say in accord with Romans 6:8 that if anyone died together with Christ, that one shall eventually be living together with Him also. The love of Christ cannot fail.

For the apostle Paul the conviction that Christ died for all, and that consequently all died, changed his life. Once full of bitterness and hate toward Gentiles and even toward those Jews who were less narrow minded than he was, Paul was now expecting good things of the fleshly Corinthians (v.11) and even boasting over them (v.12). This was the love of Christ in action in Paul's own life.

This sort of behavior is not something forced. It is not something motivated by a desire for commendation, nor even by a sense of obligation. It is simply the operation of the evangel of God's love within us. Paul genuinely sought the good of the Corinthians and found every opportunity to encourage them in their faith. This is the kind of living that is unto "the One dying and being roused" for our sakes.

The fact that Christ died for me, and that I died in the death of Christ brings love for Christ into my life, so that I am not living to myself but to Him (*cp* Gal.2:20). The further evangel that Christ died for those chosen in Christ, and that the old humanity of my fellow believers has been put to death in the death of Christ, increases my love for Christ and is reflected in my concern for these brothers and sisters in Christ. Furthermore, the revelation that Christ died for all, and that all died in the death of Christ can only multiply and widen this love for my Lord and become reflected in my outlook toward the human race of which I am a part. Of such an evangel, who could be ashamed? (*cf* Rom.1:14-16).

OBJECTIONS

There are a number of theories, all too popular within Christianity, that oppose this testimony to the love of Christ. Often these objections are mutually exclusive; they contradict each other as well as obscure the evangel.

One theory is that Paul is speaking only of a restrictive "all" in passages such as 2 Corinthians 5:14,15. This view sees Paul as thinking of believers only, of "all the elect" and of no other individuals. But, to their credit, those who take this view still acknowledge that what Christ has done, even though for a select few, cannot fail to be realized.

Another concept is that while Christ died for everyone, without exception, not everyone will enjoy the benefits of His love. This, it is explained, is because the human has the free and independent power to reject what Christ has done, and so His death actually gained nothing of lasting value for many sinners. In recognizing that God's Word teaches that Christ died for everyone, this evangel is drastically distorted by claiming that Christ's death for the sinner is not sufficient in itself for the sinner's salvation. Exactly what the sinner must do is in dispute and often kept vague. But the result is that in the final analysis salvation is dependent on us.

Certain terminology is used in order to give the impression that the evangel of 2 Corinthians 5:14,15, is not as glorious as it appears to be. We are to understand the word "all" as "all kinds of people," that is, "all without distinction" but not "all without exception." Or, alternatively, we must see the verb "died" at the end of verse 14 as speaking of a "potential" identification with the death of Christ. And this potentiality is to be understood as something that indeed will never become an actuality for all.

Such explanations are traitorous to the evangel. They constrict the love of Christ. They obscure the contrast

between the *One* and the *all*. They limit the value and effects of the death of Christ. They distort the character of Christ's life now in resurrection and exaltation, and in so doing they lessen the power of the evangel in the believer's present life. Above all else they hide the glory of God that is illuminated in the death of Christ for all.

AN APPEAL

No one would use these arguments unless there was a conviction that many sinners suffer everlasting condemnation. The idea of eternal hell is set against the revelation that all have been identified in the death of Christ. My appeal is to reverse this line of thought and set the scriptural teaching concerning the significance of Christ's death and resurrection against these traditional concepts of everlasting loss.

The Word of God does not contradict itself. It certainly does not oppose a portion of itself to its highest revelation of glory and victory in Christ. The evangel concerning our Lord Jesus Christ must be the final arbiter of all controversies concerning human destiny. The identification of sinners in the death of Christ is evangelical truth of the highest order. It does not eliminate the biblical revelations concerning God's wrath and judgment but helps make them meaningful as processes along the way rather than final goals. There have been mistakes in traditional interpretations and in the translation of certain scriptural terms. But there is no mistake in what the Scriptures say about the purpose and results of Christ's obedience to the death of the cross.

If Christ has died for the sake of all, and if the consequence of this is that all have died, then it must be true, as we read in 1 Corinthians 15:22-28, that all shall be vivified in Christ, and God shall become All in all.

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