

- 193 Editorial
- 195 The Forming of Adam
- 207 Questions Concerning Grace
- 217 Pledge of Our Allotment;
- 222 All Vivified in Christ
- 229 God Takes and Gives

SEPTEMBER, 2000

Volume XCI

Number 5



UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, volume 91, number 5, September, 2000, Portable Document Format (PDF) Edition, for use with Acrobat® Reader. Copyright © Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91387, U.S.A. This publication may be reproduced for personal use (all other rights reserved by copyright holder).

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 2000
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-ONE

EDITORIAL

OUR EXPERIENCE in the flesh in this present life stands in contrast to our faith. What we *perceive* is not what we *believe* (cf 2 Cor.5:7). I was reminded of this again in preparing comments on 1 Corinthians 15:19 for this issue (see page 225). Paul was exposing the error that said “There is no resurrection of the dead,” pointing out that “if we are having an expectation in Christ in this life only, more forlorn than all men are we.”

The believer has accepted a message of justification in the blood of Christ, of conciliation through the death of God’s Son, of victory and reigning and membership in the body of Christ which is the complement of the One Who is completing the all in all. These blessings in Christ are ours now in spirit, and certainly, as we believe them, they affect our present life with joy and peace, with assurance and thankfulness to God. But the full realization and experience of what we have in Christ must await the future. They are a matter of expectation for the life ahead.

Paul does not deny that we can expect blessings in Christ in this life. The evangel is God’s power for salvation right now from ignorance and fear and despair and countless evils that plague humanity in general. But the measure of salvation we presently enjoy is by no means the full measure of salvation that Christ has gained for us and which we will be given in the coming day of deliverance. Today the blessings of faith and spiritual enlightenment are given in the midst of many troubles and weaknesses. In the oncoming eons the realized blessings of glory and grace will be enjoyed in vivified bodies conformed to the image of God’s Son (Rom.8:29; Phil.3:21).

It is present salvation to realize the grace of God in truth (Col.1:6; see p.207). How much anxiety and despondency in present experience is left behind when we learn and believe that Christ died for our sins! But we also expect this appreciation of God's grace and the pleasure and strength arising from this appreciation of grace to be even more keen and true and joyful for us when we are always together with our Lord.

Similarly, acceptance that all is out of God and through Him and for Him (see p.229) fills our present lives with peace and assurance in accord with the measure of our awareness of this rich revelation. Surely that confidence in God will not only remain but become more pervasive and potent when our expectation is fully realized.

The present power of God's spirit in our lives, implanting faith and enlightening us as to God's ways and purposes, and reassuring us concerning His revelations will only give way to full and fully active realization when we are vivified, immortal and incorruptible. (I trust the reader will find much help concerning the operation and effects of God's spirit in the articles beginning on pages 195 and 217.) All that we have now in limited measure we will have and retain in fullness and perfection in that future day which God has prepared for us.

Consequently we would enjoy the blessed effects on our lives today of believing that Christ died for our sins and was roused from among the dead. How we need this evangel! How we need its encouragement in this life full of harassing discouragement! May the present appreciation of the joy, the peace and the power of the evangel of our salvation be increasing. But also let us not suppose that the value of the evangel stops here. The glory of the evangel will multiply to perfection in that day when its saving effects will constitute our very being.

D.H.H.

THE FORMING OF ADAM

2 ⁺ Thus the heavens and the earth were ^{all} finished, and all their host. ² ⁺ On the ⁷ sixth^{uc} day Elohim ^{all} finished His work ^w that He had ^d made; and He ^l ceased ⁱ on the seventh day from all His work ^w that He had ^d made. ³ And Elohim ^b blessed ^t the seventh day and ^h hallowed ⁱ it, for in it He ceased from all His work ^w that Elohim had created ^b by ^d making⁻ it.

⁴ These are the **chronological** records of the heavens and the earth ⁱ when they were created⁻.

In the day that Yahweh Elohim ^d made⁻ earth and heavens, ⁵ ⁺ there ^w was not yet any shrub of the field ⁱ on earth, nor had any herbage of the field yet been ^s sprouting, for Yahweh Elohim had not ^c made it rain on the earth, and there was no human to serve ^t the ground. ⁶ ⁺ But mist ^a ascended from the earth and irrigated ^t the whole surface of the ground. ⁷ ⁺ Then Yahweh Elohim ^f formed ^t the human out of soil from the ground and ^b blew into his nostrils the breath of life; and the human ^b became [>] a living soul.

⁸ ⁺ Yahweh Elohim ^p planted a garden in Eden, ^f in the east, and there He ^{pl} put ^t the human whom He had formed. ⁹ ⁺ ⁷ Furthermore^o Yahweh Elohim ^c made ^s sprout from the ground every tree desirable^l to the sight and good for food, ⁺ with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

¹⁰ ⁺ There was a river flowing forth ^f out of Eden to irrigate ^t the garden; ⁺ from there it ^p parted and became [>]

four headstreams. ¹¹ The name of the first one is Pishon; it is the one surrounding the whole land of Havilah where the gold is. ¹² + The gold of that land is ^svery good; pearls are there and onyx stones. ¹³ + The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one surrounding the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴ + The name of the third river is Hiddekel, it is the one going east of Ashur; and the fourth river ^{it} is the Euphrates.

TWO VIEWS

The forming of Adam (Gen.2:7) differs from the making or creating of humanity (Gen.1:26) in four principal particulars. The first deals with his beginning from the celestial side, the second from the terrestrial. He is made a subjector like God (1 Cor.15:27); then he is made a living soul like the animals. That is why the title, Elohim alone is used of his creation, while Yahweh is introduced in the later account of his formation. First humanity is one. Later the sexes are separated when the woman is formed. Subjection, at first, is over the lower animals. In the second it relates to the woman, and, by implication, includes the family. It is of a very different character. It will be well to consider all of these contrasts at some length.

The first division of Genesis (Gen.1:1-2:3) uses only the title God (Elohim, the Subjector or Placer), because it is confined to the origin and subjection of creation. In the second (Gen.2:4-50:26) the name Yahweh (Who is and Who was and Who will be) is added, because in it man is formed to be a living soul, which experiences the course of events, and the woman is built in order to generate the race as a basis for its history.

The object of the Scriptures is to reveal the Deity. In doing so, they gave Him titles appropriate to each character He assumes, to each position He takes in His relation to His creation, or action in which He is engaged on

its behalf. That is why the opening section of revelation is dominated by the title Elohim, the Subjector, for He it is Who creates the heavens and the earth, and the life upon the earth, culminating in humanity, which, like Him, is the subjector on the earth. All of this is closely connected with the idea of space, for it has to do with the objects which occupy the world.

YAHWEH ELOHIM

When both space and time are in view, the Scriptures combine the title, Elohim, with the Name, Yahweh. The concise, condensed, consecutive account of the earth's creation and restoration (1:1-2:3) gives place to a detailed, extended, involved record of the beginnings of human history, which occupies the rest of the scroll, and especially with the incidents and time connected with the first human. Instead of the earth or land as a whole, we consider the ground and the soil and the garden. Instead of the waters beneath and above and in the seas, we are concerned with the rivers and the humidity that irrigates the surface. More particularly we are informed that man is made of these parts of the earth. Instead of the atmosphere we are concerned with the breath which man must have in order to live.

The close association of the name Yahweh with the eons and the generations is seldom fully appreciated. To Moses He said, "This is My Name for the eon, and this the remembrance of Me for generation after generation" (Ex.3:15). The day of Yahweh coincides with Israel's thousand years of ascendancy. In the day of God this retires.

SOIL AND BREATH

The elements of which Adam was formed are worthy of close study. He was a composite of earth and heaven, the ground and the atmosphere, soil and breath. His body

is soil, his life is in his breath. The soil is a compound of the solid ground with the fluid water, and his breath of the atmospheric gases. So he is really a regrouping or formation of the same elements which were mingled together in the abyss of the ruined earth, which were subsequently separated into air, water and land on the first three days of restoration. But there was more than this. It was a *vital* combination. This is partly concealed in our popular translations.

The *vital* element in mankind comes, not from the earth, but from the *heavens*. Not only does the sun supply us with light and warmth, but it furnishes us with vitamins in foods which our organs can assimilate, and which sustain life. We not only see this and feel it and inhale it directly as we live, but our flesh and bones are made, not merely of inert minerals, but of sun-drenched ground, the surface of the land, disintegrated and vitalized by rays of sunshine and the oxygen of the air. This is hid from us by the usual rendering "dust" (Gen.2:7). Dust is composed of fine, dry particles of matter so light that it may be wafted away by the wind. It is not suited even to sustain verdure, unless combined with water to form *soil*. In fact it is harmful when breathed by the lungs.

SOILISH FLESH AND BLOOD

Not only was the first human *formed* of the soil, but he and all the rest of us continue *to build* and *renew* our bodies from the soil. As Paul says, the first man was *soilish*, the second Man is the Lord out of heaven. We now wear the image of the soilish, but we shall be wearing the image of the celestial. He goes on to characterize the soilish man as "flesh and blood" (1 Cor.15:47-50). The flesh is the substantial part of our frames which is built up and renewed by elements taken from the soil, mostly through the medium of plants, their roots and stalks and fruit and

seeds. The blood is the carrier of these substances from the digestive organs to the tissue of the flesh.

Plants are more soilish than animals. Their roots must be in immediate contact with the soil in order to live. Cut off from their native habitat and transferred to heaven would mean decay and death. In a lesser degree this is true of humanity as at present constituted. The ecclesia which is figured by Christ's body has a celestial destiny, but we could never live apart from the soil with our present bodies. They must be changed. The soilish must be transformed into celestial. We must derive our sustenance, our life, through other channels than the soil. As this is not the ultimate source, but only an intermediary, our life must come through the sun or direct from God Himself, through His spirit.

THE BREATH OF THE LIVING

The body unites humanity with the earth, but the spirit links us with the heavens. The flesh is tied down to the soil, which gives it substance; the breath associates it with spirit, which gives it life. When breathing ceases the spirit of life departs. The flesh remains, but gradually returns to the soil. The fact that a perfect body can be put to death, with all its parts intact, by merely shutting off the air, shows that the breath supplies the life. This is further confirmed by the fact that life can be restored to such a body if breathing can be renewed, as in the resuscitation of the drowned. Moreover, in miraculous resurrections, the decaying body can be restored, as in the case of Lazarus (John 11-12). The overwhelming proof is found in the death of our Lord, Whose mortally mutilated body saw no decay, and was resumed in resurrection, *without* the blood.

LIFE NOT IN THE BLOOD

Were the life in the blood (AV Gen.9:4), as is generally

supposed, we would expect our Lord, in resurrection life, to have a superabundance of blood. On the contrary, He had flesh and bones, but *no* blood whatever (Luke 24:39). His hands were pierced by the nails and His side by the spear, so that the blood flowed forth (Matt.27:49; John 19:34). It seems that all the blood was withdrawn, otherwise He could not have gone about with such open wounds. He showed them to His disciples, and, a week later, invited Thomas to thrust his hand into His side (John 20: 20,27). He had life, abundant life, without any blood. Since He had no blood, His body was not dependent on the soil for its sustenance. It was not soilish. It was celestial.

CHRIST EXHALED VITALITY

Our exhalation is poison now, but it will not be so in resurrection. Our Lord, though He had no blood, so could not derive His life from the atmosphere, nevertheless could *exhale life!* By this means it was that He imparted holy spirit to His apostles, and empowered them to fulfill their commission (John 20:21,22). This shows clearly that vital spirit power may be dispensed by God directly without the usual intermediate agencies such as the sun and the breath. It is His *spirit* that is the ultimate source of all life. At present it vivifies our *mortal* bodies by making its home in us (Rom.8:11). In the future it will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory (Phil.3:21). Then it will no longer be a *soilish* body but a *spiritual* one.

THREE FORMS OF LIFE

Three distinct forms of life were created on the earth, plant life and soul life and spirit life. They are alike in that they depend upon the soil for substance and upon the atmosphere for life. But plant life is fixed and motionless, without sensation. It is able to transform the soil into

organic food, containing vitamins, fit for the consumption and sustenance of soul life. Soul or sensation is in the blood. It is an intermediate form, dependent on plant life and the atmosphere. The blood is also a medium for carrying nourishment and oxygen to the organs of the body and for removing the waste. Spiritual life needs neither soil nor air nor blood, but depends on a direct, though intangible, connection with God's spirit, the source of all life. The body and the blood are like the wiring, the spirit like the electricity of a light.

BLOOD AND SENSATION

The inspired assertion that the soul is in the blood (Gen.9: 4) may be readily confirmed by experience. Cut off the supply of blood from any part of the body and it becomes numb. Feeling vanishes with the blood, even if the nerves, which some suppose are the seat of sensation, are not cut or impaired. Sensation returns as soon as the blood courses freely once more. This is the basis for the part that the blood plays in the sacrifices of Israel, and the death of the great anti-typical sacrifice. It explains why the carcass of a slain animal was to be drained of the blood (Lev.17:13). Once the blood is gone, physical suffering is impossible.

Sensation and *suffering* are essential factors in the revelation of God's grace and love. Relief from the experience of evil is cause for great thankfulness. It was with this in view that the first human was formed a living *soul*. Physical pleasure and pain are needed to acquaint us with the heights of happiness and the depths of despair. We would not be able to fully appreciate one without an experience of the other. Even then we could not respond to the love of God apart from the sufferings of Christ. When He came in the likeness of humanity and was found in fashion as a human (Phil.2:7,8), it was in order that He might *suffer*.

The blood of animals had to be poured out immediately in order to prevent suffering. Not so with the anti-typical Victim. He suffered to the end, for he retained His blood until after death. They could not take His life from Him even by crucifixion (John 10:18). He had to yield it up of Himself. We need not waste our sympathy on the animals slain in sacrifice on Jewish altars. They suffered little, if at all, for the first duty of the priest was to drain away the blood. After that suffering was impossible.

HUMAN LIFE

Since both animals and man are soul life, wherein does man differ from the other animals? So far as the soul goes, there seems to be nothing to distinguish them. Animals can feel and see and hear and smell, even as we can. In some cases they are not as sensitive as we are, but in others more so. An eagle can see further, some insects seem to have a wider hearing range, and bloodhounds certainly excel us in scent. Man and the lower animals are *alike* in respect to the *soul*, in nature as well as in revelation. The animals themselves are a higher expression of life than the plants, because they also have the breath of the spirit of life in a lower degree, than mankind.

Let us remember that, essentially, God is spirit. He is not merely *a* spirit, limited in place and power, but the life of all that lives. Hence He is the Source and Supply of spirit wherever it is found. Thus it is easy to see why all life and power is utterly dependent on Him and the impartation of His spirit. And the measure of this dispensation determines the nearness to Himself and the elevation above the balance of creation. Figuratively we might say that the measure of Himself that God has imparted to us fits us for our place in His universe. In Him we are living and moving and are (Acts 17:28).

In Scripture the distinction between humanity and the

animals is in *likeness* to the Subjector, so that man is to *sway* over the lower order of living souls, and is empowered by the act of Yahweh Elohim, when He Himself introduced the breath into his nostrils, which gave him a *spirit direct from the Creator*, beyond and superior to that possessed by his subjects. Man has a somewhat different physical form from other animals, but the difference between them as to size and shape and internal structure is not nearly so great as there is between the various classes of animals themselves. The vital distinction is *spiritual*, not physical. It consists in an extra endowment of spirit, which makes him more like the Creator, Who is spirit, and gives him his name Adam, or human, that is, Likeness.

BREATH OF THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Later on the phrase "breath of life" is amplified by inserting the word *spirit*. All soul life that expired in the deluge of Noah is described as having "the breath of the *spirit* of the living" in its nostrils (Gen.7:22 CV). This shows the close relation between *breath* and *spirit* in living souls, and their vital connection with life. So far as is revealed, the *bodies*, the flesh and blood of those drowned in the flood, were not mutilated in any manner, as is the case in strife or war, nor was death due to gradual decay. The water cut off the supply of air. It made breathing impossible. With the air the spirit left the body, and death ensued. In souls life is directly dependent on breath. The oxygen of the air is indispensable as fuel for feeding the life process, and preserving the spirit.

BREATH LIKE BLOOD

The breath is not literally the spirit, even as the blood is not actually the soul. As the soul of the flesh is dependent on the blood, so, perhaps, we may consider the breath as the carrier, the medium used by the spirit in soul life, such

as the animals and man possess on the earth. It is not necessary in a bloodless, spiritual body. Now, it cannot function without the blood to intervene between it and the flesh. Moreover, a special lung tissue is needed to transfer its oxygen to the blood and return the carbon to the air, for the outer skin is not fashioned for this purpose. As the digestive organs prepare the food for assimilation into the blood so the lungs bring the breath into contact with it and vitalize it so that it provides us with sensation.

MAN'S SWAY OVER ANIMALS AND SPIRITS

In this we can dimly perceive, not only the place of humanity, but God's purpose in regard to it, and the method He uses to prepare it for its final function at the consummation. Then will be perfected, not only its rule over the living souls on the earth, but a selection out of mankind will reign in the heavens. If we seek to seize and hold fast to the sequel that God has set before us, it will help us to endure the hardships of our present training period. Not only will the experience of evil humble us, but the sufferings we are called upon to bear will prepare us for a place of authority in the celestial kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Head of all sovereignty, not only on earth, but in the heavens also.

The vivification of Christ's mutilated, bloodless body, is one of the greatest exhibitions of the life-giving power of God's spirit. Not only was He alive, but, like Yahweh Elohim when imparting life to Adam and the race in Eden, He imparted holy spirit to His disciples by *exhaling* upon them (John 20:22). At Pentecost they received power by the spirit *coming upon* them by means of a violent *blast* (Acts 2:2,3). In the manifestations of the spirit *in connection with the earth*, it is usually associated with the air, the breath, a blast, for this is essential to soul life, and is the best illustration of God's vital energy which produces

life and provides power. But, apart from its physical manifestation in soul life and the special endowment given to humanity to raise it above the animals, it was not a permanent possession, but was present on special occasions, and for particular purposes.

In explaining the operation of God's spirit with Israel to Nicodemus, our Lord compared it to a blast of air. This is probably the best illustration that can be given, especially when we connect it with *begettal*, as He did, for it is not only a powerful, intangible *force*, but imparts *life*. Ezekiel's prophecy concerning Israel's regeneration uses a similar figure (Ezek.37:9). He says, "Come from the four winds, O spirit, and blow into these who were killed, so that they may live." They were no longer dry bones, but were covered with flesh and sinews, and encased in skin. But they had no life. This was figuratively imparted by *wind*. Literally, they began to *breathe*, even as Adam, when he first became a living soul.

The life imparted to Adam by means of the breath could not suffice our Lord in resurrection, for He had no blood, and, even if He had, He could never have ascended into the heavens, where there is no air. Neither can we live among the celestials equipped only with our present breath of life. So we find, in Paul's epistles, a much greater and more permanent supply of holy spirit than ever before. Even as the priests and prophets and kings and apostles and disciples were distinguished from the rest of mankind by special dispensations of God's spirit, so we are distinguished from them by becoming the *permanent home* of the holy spirit. At present we have only the earnest, but it is, at the same time, the seal of the fullness that is to follow.

So we see that "the breath of life" imparted to Adam was almost the last and lowest of a series of dispensations of life and power through God's spirit. This, however, was not sufficient for carrying out God's operations, so priests

and kings, prophets and apostles were empowered by the spirit to work His will. This raised them above the rest even as Adam was above the lower creation, for they are not only like God in respect to them, but are used by God to reach the God-like human race. And now He is imparting His spirit permanently, and will even transform our soulish bodies, such as Adam had, into spiritual frames so that we may become His intermediaries to the celestial hosts. Thus we, as the body of Christ, being most vitally and spiritually united to Him, will be the highest achievements of His holy spirit, to the glory of His grace.

Resurrection, the return of the spirit to the body is, perhaps, the greatest of all the miracles wrought by our Lord during His ministry. Dead and decaying Lazarus was called back to life by the spirit of His voice. But how much greater will it be when all of Israel's saints, long since returned to the soil, will be roused from their tombs after His advent? They will not return to mortal bodies, doomed to die again, but receive life eonian, until death itself is abolished. Their bodies will not continually decay and cause them to sin against their inclination. They will enjoy a perfect and perpetual life. In a word, they will be *vivified*. Yet we will not only be made *alive* beyond the reach of death but *transformed*. Our soilish, soulish bodies will become celestial and spiritual. Our infirm, mortal frames will become powerful and immortal. Not till then will we realize what it is to be *like* Him and *beloved* by Him. To Him be glory for the eons of the eons!

A. E. Knoch

It was with confidence in God and the work of His Son that **Frances Grifhorst**, of Marne, Michigan, endured long months of weakness and suffering, without complaint. She left her family and friends a rich testimony of faith, succumbing to death on September 6 at the age of 49. Yet, as she fervently believed, she will be vivified in her Lord's presence, and death itself will ultimately be abolished that God may be All in all.

Questions and Answers

QUESTIONS CONCERNING GRACE

*

Question:

I have noted that, in various places within his writings, A. E. Knoch makes the claim that only the apostle Paul taught an evangel of "pure grace." But since Peter taught that the believing Jews were believing "through the *grace* of the Lord Jesus . . . [and were] to be saved in a manner even as they" [those in association with Paul] (Acts 18:11), how can this claim of Mr. Knoch's be correct?

Answer:

BROTHER KNOCH coined the expression "pure grace" (with respect to Paul's evangel alone) in an attempt succinctly to refer to several important points which relate to Paul's evangel.

Perhaps it would be best, first of all, to state what Mr. Knoch did *not* mean by this expression. He did not mean that the grace by which the Circumcision saints were saved was somehow impure or, alternatively, was not actually grace. Instead, he meant that, since, under the Circumcision calling, *to all appearances*, the basis of the believer's entrance into life was his own obedience to the law, many might well mistakenly conclude that such ones were not saved by grace at all.

In an attempt to contrast the Circumcision evangel—where works are essential to life eonian—to the Uncircumcision evangel—where works are *not* essential to life

eonian, Brother Knoch spoke of the latter message as a message of “*pure* grace.” By this he meant that under the evangel of the Uncircumcision, eonian life is a matter of grace *alone*—grace *apart from* human obedience.

Throughout the Circumcision writings, however, eonian life is presented as a reward, a reward to be granted solely to those who are “*doers* of the word”; “everyone who is not *doing* righteousness is not of God” (1 John 3:10); “he who is *doing* the will of God is remaining for the eon” (1 John 2:17). Indeed, the Lord Himself declares to the “workers of lawlessness,” “Depart from Me!” (Matt.7:23).

Nonetheless, with respect to those who were obedient, since all things are of God, we must realize that such ones only qualified themselves because of God’s own operations in their lives, according to His *grace* (*cp* Rom.11:1-6). Since the basis of their obedience was the grace of God, this very grace—*not* the obedience which it produced—was the actual basis of their salvation.

Under Paul’s evangel, however, insofar as membership in the body of Christ and the allotment of eonian life is concerned, human obedience has no place at all. In this respect, such questions as precisely which scriptural instructions apply to ourselves or what is the true nature of human volition, are entirely beside the point. Concerning our subject at hand, the point is this: “where sin increases, grace superexceeds . . . for life eonian” (Rom.5:20,21).

Consequently, it is evident that the most fundamental *difference* between Paul’s evangel and the Circumcision evangel with respect to salvation from indignation and into life eonian, is that under Paul’s evangel these very blessings *themselves* are gracious gifts, where under the Circumcision evangel they are rewards for obedience.

Conversely, the most fundamental *likeness* between Paul’s evangel and the evangel of the Circumcision, is that under both of these callings salvation is solely for the *chosen*, and

is entirely a matter of the *grace* of God. The apostle’s words are ever true: “It is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful” (Rom.9:16).



Question:

I believe that the time of the rapture is very near, and that it is important that we make ourselves ready. I notice that you don’t put much emphasis upon current events, unlike the prophecy teachers I am familiar with. They say that those who aren’t living for the Lord will be left out, while you seem to be saying that even backslidden Christians will be saved. I appreciate your ministry, but admit that I am somewhat troubled by the teaching of unconditional grace.

Answer:

Actually, since grace is not out of works (*cp* Rom.11:6), therefore, there is no other kind of grace than “unconditional grace.” I realize that the very idea of actual *grace* is foreign to most believers today. So I would like to suggest that to better familiarize ourselves with the grace of God, we give special attention to the words of Colossians 3:1-4: “If, then, you were roused together with Christ, be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Be disposed to that which is above, not to that on the earth, for you died, and your life in hid together with Christ in God. *Whenever* Christ, our Life, should be manifested, *then* you also shall be manifested together with Him in glory.”

How wonderful it is to know that we are so identified in the saving work of Christ, in His death and resurrection, that the apostle Paul speaks of us as *already* having been roused from among the dead ourselves. This is because our future vivification is absolutely *certain*. Hence, in a

figure, it is spoken of as already having occurred—that which is not, being affirmed as if it were (*cp* Rom.4:17). The likeness consists of this: Just as it is now impossible for any past event not to have already occurred, likewise, it is equally impossible for this particular event not to occur in the future, in God’s own appointed time.

Let us not be distracted from the glorious and yet simple thought of Christ’s actual appearing, by the extravagant claims of those who would insist upon its imminency, some even setting specific dates for the occurrence of the rapture. It is not that we believe that Christ will *not* return within the next few years, or are even inclined toward such an opinion. It is instead that we find *no vital identity* between current world events, including those in the Middle East, and those key events of Matthew 24 which will truly comprise the conclusion of the eon. Therefore, we find the great majority of popular, prophetic teachings to be more sensational than sound; more inciting than insightful. At best, these prognosticators are a distraction, if not a positive deterrent to faithful service.

Those who gratefully recognize and happily perceive the *grace* of God in all aspects of their own salvation—being justified “apart from law” (Rom.3:21)—do not need to be “stirred up” unto obedience by fearful warnings of impending judgment. Indeed, no such warnings apply to them, and it is a serious corruption of the evangel to claim otherwise. Instead, they need to be reminded of, and so invigorated by, the *grace* which is in Christ Jesus.

Besides, in a practical sense, in any event, the Lord’s appearing *is* imminent, for all those who are put to repose in Him! Regardless of the time of the believer’s death, whether many centuries ago, today, or in times ahead, *all* will be roused from the dead simultaneously. Then, the living believers, those who are surviving into the presence of the Lord, will all be snatched away at the same

time, together with those who until now had been dead, to meet the Lord in the air and thus always to be with Him (1 Thess.4:17).

Then “the dead” will no longer be dead; instead, they will be vivified! They will be immortal and incorruptible, conformed to the image of God’s Son, their very bodies having been transfigured so as to conform to the body of Christ’s glory. It will seem that the moment of death was the very moment of His appearing, even though, for the vast majority, this was not actually so. Let us not be robbed of (or even distracted from) the joy and certainty of this great truth by the reasonings of mere speculative chronologists. Indeed, in nearly all cases, such ones do not truly believe in either the resurrection of *the dead*, or in salvation by *grace* anyway. Yet it is the wonder and majesty of these revelations themselves—not mere matters of “timing”—which constitute the primary glory of the scriptural teaching concerning the presence of our gracious Lord.

Let us simply be “slaving for the living and true God, and . . . *waiting* for His Son out of the heavens, Whom He rouses from among the dead, Jesus, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation” (1 Thess.1:10). “For God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for our sakes, that, *whether we may be watching or drowsing*, we should be living at the same time together with Him” (1 Thess.5:9,10).



Question:

For years I have been associated with prosperity teachers, who also put much emphasis on good health. While many in the movement are not prosperous or even very healthy, still, I think it is important to be “prospering and sound” (3 John 2). It seems to me that

even if this is “Circumcision teaching,” you should put greater emphasis upon it, stressing that *we* need to *let* the word of Christ on this subject dwell in us richly (Col.3:16).

Answer:

I too think that it is important for us to be prospering and sound. But, I also think that the popular notion of what constitutes true prosperity and soundness is generally far from the mark.

In accord with what is ideal, John writes to his fellow Circumcision believers, that he is wishing that *they* “be prospering and sound, *according as your soul* is prospering.” In English, the elements of “prosper” (*euodoō*) are WELL-WAY. It is wrong to practically equate “prosperity” with financial prosperity or wealth. This is merely common English usage; financial prosperity is not the central idea even of the English term “prosper,” and it is certainly not the signification of the Greek *euodoō*. One who “prosper” is one who is in a state of “well-wayness” with respect to that which is in view.

It is important to note that John practically identifies prosperity and soundness here with “walking in *truth*,” adding that, “I am having no greater joy than this, that I am hearing of my children walking in *the truth*.”

Many whose *soul* is prospering as the result of good physical health and financial security, are by no means prospering as to truth. Yet prosperity in the truth of God is that true prosperity for which the apostle John longed on behalf of his fellow believers; and, that is the prosperity as well for which we should long. With respect to those whose principal plans and primary desires are, in fact, centered upon the acquisition of financial wealth, we can only say with Paul, “Now those intending to be rich are falling into a trial and a trap and the many foolish and harmful

desires which are swamping men in extermination and destruction” (1 Tim.6:9).

It is certainly true that we do well not only to wish for soundness and health, but to practice that which fosters soundness and health. Nevertheless, it is important to realize that while the word “soundness” does indeed refer to matters of “health,” neither of these terms should be confined to physical well-being.

Both mental and physical training are ideal when engaged in with humility in a spirit of grace, being mindful that each one has his own gracious gift from God, one indeed, thus, yet one thus (*cf* 1 Cor.7:7). However, whenever we find our own good habits and self-discipline resulting in an increased measure of pridefulness within ourselves—even in the scorning of those less disciplined than ourselves—then it is evident that our own discipline is itself in need of greater discipline, for the sake of training in, so to say, the weightier matters of the law (*cp* Matt.23:23; Luke 11:42).

In the phrase, “Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly” (Col.3:16), the idea is not “let” in the sense of “permit,” but “let” in the sense of, “Let each one be fully assured in his own mind,” or, “Let there be light.” It is the imperative mood, not the thought of cooperation. The duty to obey is our own. We, who are nothing (Gal.6:9), are nonetheless given this imperative. It is *our* obligation to heed it. If we have any hope in doing so, however, it is not to be in ourselves. The confidence that we have is “through Christ toward God” (2 Cor.3:4). “Not that we are competent of ourselves, to reckon anything as out of ourselves [would be to err], but our competency is of God” (2 Cor.3:5). “*He*, then, Who is supplying you with the spirit, and operating works of power among you—[will be completing what He has undertaken]” (Gal.3:5; *cp* Gal.3:3).

Concerning the one who is infirm in the faith, the apostle declares, “He will be made to stand, for the Lord is

able to make him stand” (Rom.14.4). Patience will wait upon God, and for His appointed time. Similarly, Wisdom will shun all human help, while recognizing and accepting God’s wise counsels as to “what must be” (Rom.8:26).

We simply wish to be meek and humble, to rely upon God instead of man, to boast in our Saviour instead of ourselves. It is not that we wish to be lax in the meantime, until God gives us further saving grace. Not at all. To the contrary, as in all things, we long to be faithful and we seek to be faithful. Indeed, we are thrilled that, in measure, we are faithful; and, we give God all the glory.

But when we fail, as we often do, we wish to recognize that this is because of what we are in ourselves. We are members of the old humanity. We sin because of what we are. We are flesh. “The disposition of the flesh is death . . . because the disposition of the flesh is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able” (Rom.8:6,7). Indeed, whenever we obey or disobey, we act due to a cause, and therefore must act as we do whenever we do act as we do.

Until we face and recognize this simple fact, we can never be humble of heart. Regardless of what we may say, so long as we finally see something of ourselves as the key to our problems, we are boasting in the flesh and not relying on God. The question is not what is popular, but what is true; it is not what “works,” but what is faithful; not what seems right, but what actually is right.

Everyone wants to succeed, even those who have no interest at all in obeying God or in pleasing Him. No one enjoys the suffering which attends failure. Since all genuine believers have a new disposition and walk, it would seem that each one would have some measure of interest not merely in success, but in *faithfulness*. However, unless we have a greater desire to be faithful than merely to be successful, we will care more about success than faithful-

ness. Even if we have a considerable desire to be faithful, nonetheless, if our desire to succeed—to have what we want—is greater than our desire to be faithful, we will surely be disqualified as to the faith (2 Tim.3.1-7).

We may well attain a great many of our goals, even including an externally upright walk, while all the while being remarkably unfaithful. Unless our desire for faithfulness is greater than our desire for success, we will not enjoy the former even if we should have the latter in abundance. If we do not care *how* we succeed, we will never actually succeed at all. The only true success is found in faithfulness to God. Yet faithfulness is impossible apart from *the faith*.

Knowing the truth and loving the truth—while making some progress in pursuing righteousness even though falling far short of the ideal—is ever so much better than being ignorant of the truth or willfully repudiating what is actually true, even if we should manage to gratify many of our desires for success and happiness by so doing.

The withdrawal (or “apostasy”) from the faith is inevitable, for the spirit is saying “explicitly” that it *will* occur (1 Tim.4:1,2; 2 Tim.3:1-13; 4:3,4). The only question, from the human standpoint, is whether we will be a part of it. Therefore, under God and in His grace, we wish to save ourselves from such a course (*cp* 1 Tim.4:1,16).

Paul’s words to the Ephesian elders serve ideally as a solemn entreaty for us as well: “Now I am aware that, after I am out of reach, burdensome wolves will be entering among you, not sparing the flocklet. And from among yourselves will arise men, speaking perverse things to pull away disciples after themselves. Wherefore, watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I cease not admonishing each one with tears. And now I am committing you to God and to *the word of His grace*, which is able to edify and give the enjoyment of an allotment among all who have been hallowed” (Acts 20:29-32).



Question:

The Bible says that “faith without works is dead.” Therefore, how can you teach that we will be saved whether or not we practice good works?

Answer:

While it is always ideal to be believing, James explains that even so, “faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:20). A faith that fails to produce good deeds is certainly a “dead” faith. In a *practical* sense—for all the good that it *does*—it does not exist. This is obviously true, and the principle involved applies today as much as in any other era.

Indeed, if our subject is that of *practical* salvation—being saved out of our failings and then enduring in a commendable walk—we agree with James that such a “dead” faith (even if it should actually exist) cannot save us, it can exercise no saving influence upon us at all. Such a faith—a faith that does not do anything or affect us in any practical way—“*That* faith cannot save [us]” from following a most destructive course (*cp* James 2:14).

A satisfactory level of obedience and endurance is essential in the Circumcision calling, which is the province of James’ ministry (*cp* James 1:1; 2:1,2,14). Under Paul’s evangel, however, insofar as membership in the ecclesia and the provision of eonian life is concerned, not only is personal righteousness not essential, but it has no place at all. That is, our confidence is not in our obedience to law, but in Christ’s obedience to God, even unto the death of the cross. We do not care to scrutinize days, but we long to realize Christ. For we 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).

J.R.C.

Lo! Now is a Day of Salvation

PLEDGE OF OUR ALLOTMENT

AS BELIEVERS, we have emerged from the dire gloom of despair into the glorious enlightenment of conciliation. Yet a sense of anxiety may often persist. Anticipating such timidity, our loving Father has ensured approval and authority. Indeed, His declaration is: “That which the eye did not perceive and the ear did not hear, and to which the heart of man did not ascend—whatever God makes ready for those who are loving Him . . . *God reveals [these] through His spirit*, for the spirit is searching all, even the depths of God” (1 Cor.2:9,10).

How wonderful! God’s own spirit invites and escorts us into His very heart, into the deep, deep recesses of His mighty purpose! Who could possibly have anticipated this gracious resolution of creation’s dilemma? Those to whom this revelation was first entrusted could not have fully realized the glorious intention of such loving provision.

CONCILIATION

Paul’s recorded letters to those in the city of Corinth, were, respectively, “. . . to the ecclesia of God which is in Corinth, hallowed in Christ Jesus, called saints, together with all in every place who invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” and “. . . to the ecclesia of God which is in Corinth, together with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia.”

In that second recorded epistle to the ecclesia of Corinth, we, having the temerity to associate with Paul, are described by the apostle as ambassadors for Christ, beseeching, “Be

conciliated to God!" The wonder of such high honor is great encouragement. In his fine commentary on this, Brother A. E. Knoch writes as follows:

"God insists on being at peace with the world, no matter how they treated His Son, or Paul, or any of His ambassadors. He will withdraw us, His ambassadors, before He declares war, in the coming day of His indignation. What a marvelous token of His grace and love that *God* (not the sinner) does the beseeching now! Nothing can be so foreign to this evangel as a sinner praying to God, for it closes his ears to God's entreaties. We are ambassadors for the high court of heaven, proclaiming peace and conciliation. When the sinner receives the conciliation there is mutual reconciliation between him and God. Sinner, God is beseeching you, through us, 'Be conciliated to God!' Your sins are no hindrance, for He has made Christ a Sin Offering for our sakes that we may become God's righteousness in Him. There is nothing for you to do but to accept His proffered love. Simply thank and adore Him for His grace."¹

SECRET

Revelations of God's gracious purpose are kept secret from all, save those for whom these are intended. For all others, they remain, in His wise counsel, untraceable. This conclusion might seem contrary to the above truths, but remember, even in this day of grace, Israel is yet apostate. Contrast this with the compassion of the apostle for his relatives according to the flesh (Rom.9:1-5), and the recorded pattern of the apostle's own ministry:

Residing in peace for eighteen months at Ephesus, Paul wrote to the saints in Corinth. Eventually, crossing over Macedonia, as far as Illyricum, he came there, in person. "Can we imagine his feelings as he approached

¹ I. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.271.

the city? How he shrank from being severe! Yet he must be severe, should it be necessary. Doubtless the majority would receive him with hearts full of joy and affection. But what of the rebellious minority? It was with such powerful emotions that he followed this [second recorded] epistle some months later."²

Many years were to elapse before Paul was brought as a prisoner before the governor, Porcius Festus, and King Agrippa. Establishing his innocence from the charges of breaking the laws of the Jews or defiling the sanctuary, he invoked his Roman citizenship and appealed to appear at the dais of Caesar. While awaiting trial as a prisoner in Rome, he was visited by many who were foremost of the Jews. He spoke plainly, "from morning till dusk." Some were persuaded, yet others disbelieved. He then declared that momentous revelation of Isaiah, and previously announced by our dear Lord (Acts 28:23-27; cf Isa.6:9,10; Matt.13:14,15).

Israel had rejected Yahweh, the Lord, and, through His apostles, the testimony of holy spirit. But what of this nation, who still, to this very day, are set aside in apostasy? What of those whom Jesus had addressed as "little children," and to whom He had promised so much? Heed the solemn words of our Lord: "For verily I am saying to you that many prophets and just men yearn to perceive what you are observing, and perceive not, and to hear what you are hearing, and hear not" (Matt.13:17).

We have learned from Scriptures that God is conciliating the world, and we know also that the promises made by our Lord concerning the establishing of the kingdom for Israel (Matt.19:28), will be faithfully confirmed to this people. Again, God's spirit guides us:

"For I am not willing for you to be ignorant of this secret,

² I. CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.277.

brethren, lest you may be passing for prudent among yourselves, that callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering. And thus all Israel shall be saved, according as it is written, 'Arriving out of Zion shall be the Rescuer. He will be turning away irreverence from Jacob. And this is My covenant with them, whenever I should be eliminating their sins.' As to the evangel, indeed, they are enemies because of you, yet, as to choice, they are beloved because of the fathers" (Rom.11:25-28).

FELLOW CITIZENS

Many of this nation, in addition to those in Corinth; Barnabas, Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, Apollos, and so many others who are referred to in the Roman epistle (16:5-16), happily responded to Paul's evangel of conciliation and so form part of the joint body of the ecclesia; members of the body of Christ (Eph.2:13-22).

While there is scant record of the apostle reaching out to those who were awaiting the promised glorious kingdom, we do read of resentment from some of these toward Paul's evangel. Notwithstanding Peter's bold and noble urging in the assembly (Acts 15:6-11), that both Jews and the nations are saved, not by law or ritual, but by grace alone, this was not understood or heeded. Even Peter himself denied it by his own acts soon afterwards (Gal.2:11-21). How courageous and stern was Paul's denunciation of such treachery: "But if ever we also, or a messenger out of heaven, should be bringing an evangel to you beside that which we bring to you, let him be anathema! (1:8). How appalled he would be at the present corruption in Christendom!

MATCHLESS GRACE

Was not disclosure of God's gracious conciliation specifically intended to coincide with the calling of those

He had previously designated? Consequent on the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of His beloved Son, God intends, thus so graciously at this present time, to prepare this means of lovingly escorting His miserable, repentant, timid saints. How else may they be coaxed, weaned, and encouraged into the wonders of justification? It must initially seem incredible that we are members of the body. There is need for reassurance.

Conciliation! How may this be fully realized prior to a revelation of God's calling and justifying? What gracious order, leading still further to the wonderful assurance of glorification and immortality! To such heights we ascend, "Conformed to the body of His glory! (Phil.3:21). This is the earnest of the spirit in our hearts (2 Cor.1:22).

O condescension wonderful!
 O boundless love surpassing thought!
 That Christ the mighty Counsellor,
 From heaven to earth salvation brought!
 O love divine! O matchless grace!
 O mercy flowing full and free!
 With wondrous love and winning voice,
 We hear Him whisper, "Come to Me."
 O joy to know that He is mine,
 This wondrous Friend, beyond compare!
 O joy above all human joy,
 He will a place for me prepare!
 O peace that passeth human thought!
 The peace of God so freely giv'n!
 The world cannot this peace destroy,
 This peace that fills the soul with heav'n!"

God's spirit testifies: This is indeed an acceptable era,
 a day of salvation!

Donald Fielding

ALL VIVIFIED IN CHRIST

THE fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians begins with the evangel. Once again, as he often does, Paul focuses our attention on that message which composed the foundation and characterized the spirit of his ministry. In his epistle to the Romans Paul shows us what makes the evangel so welcome to the sinner. There he lays down the basic teaching of the good news. But in his letters to the Corinthians, the apostle builds on the evangel that he had already brought, concentrating on the practical value the evangel has for the believers' current lives.

The evangel guided Paul's behavior every step of the way in bringing the evangel (1 Cor.9:12-23). It also directs the believer both in behavior and thinking. If there is schism, fleshly depravity, greed, selfishness and disorderliness, then it is the word of the cross, our faith that we were justified in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we are bought with a price—it is the evangel that corrects us and strengthens us in a more faithful walk (see, for example, 1 Cor.1:10-31; 4:16; 5:7; 6:11; 7:23; 8:11). It is a message that says *we* can do nothing to save ourselves, and so it fosters real dependency on God in the evangelist and in the evangelized. But it is also a message that says *God* has saved us; He has graciously delivered us from sin and death, in Christ Jesus, through His death and resurrection, and so in believing it we are strengthened in confidence in our God and roused to His praise. What is happening here is that we are being so affected by the message we believe that our lives become more and more attuned to faithfulness.

AN UNFAITHFUL CLAIM

What applies to sinful acts of the flesh also applies to failures in our thinking and our fleshly tendency to alter the truth as God has spoken it. There were those among the Corinthians who were saying there is no resurrection of the dead (1 Cor.15:12). Consequently in exposing the dangers of this unfaithful concept the apostle draws special attention to the evangel which he now expresses in clearest of terms: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and . . . He was entombed, and . . . He has been roused the third day, according to the scriptures" (1 Cor.15:3,4).

Those who have been evangelized need to be evangelized again and again. We cannot lose the justification that has been reckoned to us (Rom.4:11), but, on the other hand, we never lose our need to hear and stand in and retain the evangel which says that Christ died for our sins and was roused from the dead. Those who believe need to grow in believing and be established in faithfulness.

CHRIST HAS BEEN ROUSED

The resurrection of Christ is a pivotal point, fundamental to our faith in two directions, looking back to the cross and forward to immortal life. In truth our present believing, our life of faith, is vain, without purpose and value, if Christ has not been roused from among the dead. First of all, if Christ has not been roused, we are still in our sins (15:17). And also, if Christ has not been roused we are left forlorn and without expectation concerning the life to come (v.19).

CHRIST'S DEATH FOR OUR SINS

Christ *died* for our sins. This is well established in Romans where we learn that He *died* for the sake of the

irreverent (Rom.5:6), for sinners (5:8) who are now justified in His *blood* (5:9), and for enemies who are conciliated to God through the *death* of His Son (10). But we also learned in Romans that Christ “was roused *because of our justifying*” (4:25).

It was our offenses that resulted in Christ being given up to death, and it was our justifying that opened the way to the rousing of Christ. He was not roused in order to justify sinners but because justification had been established. He was roused because the sins of sinners had been dealt with successfully by His death.

We should not think of Christ’s resurrection simply as a recovery out of a tragic circumstance. The death of Christ did not catch God by surprise, calling for new strategies and a rescue plan. God’s Son was “given up in the specific counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). The resurrection of Christ which was also part of God’s counsel is the exultant revelation that God’s purpose for giving His Son for sinners has been achieved. This is why Paul has given a list of witnesses to the risen Christ immediately after and in connection with his restatement of the evangel in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8. The resurrected Christ was seen by over five hundred brethren and the apostles and Paul himself in a special revelation. This is not only evidence of God’s power in giving life where there had been death, but is also the proof of the defeat of death and sin.

This is for all mankind, since all have sinned and all are dying. We have seen that the truth of race-wide justification is dramatically and thoroughly attested in the book of Romans. It was not the Corinthians’ faith that gained their justification. It was the death of Christ that put away sin. Although it is true that, on believing the Corinthians were sealed with the holy spirit of promise (Eph.1:13), and, as believers, righteousness had been now put to their account (Rom.4:5,11,24), and in this respect they differed from the

unbeliever, nevertheless, what Christ did, He did for all. The sins of all the sinners of every era were dealt with by the faithful obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ.

FOR OUR EXPECTATION

But the evangel which announces that the sinner has been put to death in the death of Christ, also proclaims that there is now the certain and happy expectation of life in the future apart from sin. The death of Christ achieves the death of sin, and the resurrection of Christ announces that this is achieved and that the new life apart from sin and death is certain to come.

Hence Paul points out that if Christ has not been roused those who have died in Christ have perished (1 Cor.15:18), for this means the death of Christ would have failed of its object. And the apostle adds, “If we are having an expectation in Christ in this life only, more forlorn than all men are we” (1 Cor.15:19). The present life does not satisfy our hopes. We enjoy blessings in Christ, but these are in spirit and by faith. This is a time when our experience is often characterized by weakness and failure, standing in contrast to what we will enjoy in the future in Christ.

But, even as the death of Christ for sinners means that all mankind will eventually be constituted just, the resurrection of Christ points to a future which involves all humanity in life. Paul is writing to believers, and he has much to say about the implication of Christ’s resurrection for us. We will be vivified in Christ’s presence (15:23). Later in the chapter the apostle offers many details concerning our resurrection body and the change that will occur when we put on incorruption and immortality (15:35-53). But Paul startles the reader (or at least the reader today) by clearly connecting the truth of our future life in Christ with that of the future life of all. And that future life of all will also be *in Christ*. What Paul reveals about us here in 1 Corin-

thians 15 is associated with what is true of everyone. We will be vivified in Christ in His presence. Yet this is not the end of the glorious outcome of Christ's resurrection, which ultimately encompasses the vivification of all in Him.

VIVIFICATION

In 1 Corinthians 15:21,22, Paul reaches a crescendo of evangelical truth implied by the resurrection of Christ. "For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ shall all be vivified" (1 Cor.15:21,22).

Here is the evangel worded in similar terms to Romans 5:12,18,19, but expressed anew in a context especially centered on the resurrection of Christ. The expectation of future glory which is opened up by Christ being roused from among the dead, in a resurrected body, embraces the view of all being vivified.

Later in this chapter Christ is described as a "vivifying Spirit" (1 Cor.15:45). This is said in a context speaking of the resurrection body as roused in glory, in power, a spiritual body (15:42-44). God *vivifies* our *mortal* bodies (Rom.8:11). This is more than a resurrection like that of Lazarus (John 11:43,44), for it is a rousing to life that is apart from mortality (1 Cor.15:53).

Indeed the comparison in 1 Corinthians 15:22 is between "dying" and "vivification," not between "death" and "resurrection." It is in Adam that we are dying; this speaks of our mortality, the process of weakness and decay that continues throughout our life and eventually leads to death. It is this condition of mortality that God puts to an end in the death of His Son and which He replaces with a life that is immortal and incorruptible, "in Christ," that is, by identifying the human being with Christ in His death *and* resurrection.

Although it may not have been apparent to any of us when we first believed, the undeniable implications of the rousing of Christ from among the dead include the certainty that all will eventually be, and must be, made alive, gloriously, powerfully, dominated by spirit, immortal and incorruptible. This of necessity is what will be when anyone is made alive *in Christ*. And Paul tells us here that this will be true of all.

This aspect of the evangel is important to us because it once again places the certainty of our expectation on the solid foundation of the work of Christ. We *know* that we will be vivified in Christ because all shall be vivified in Christ. Race-wide vivification is a certainty because it is accomplished by God Himself in the giving of His Son to death, and it is sealed by the resurrection of Christ out from among the dead.

We look at the human race with our eyes of flesh, and we tremble with weeping. We look at the human race with the eyes of faith, as pictured here in 1 Corinthians, and we tremble with happiness. Furthermore, we look at ourselves with the eyes of flesh and experience, and we tremble with doubts and dismay. But because we believe that Christ has been roused from among the dead, the First-fruit of those who are reposing and the One in Whom all shall be vivified, we look at ourselves in Christ with the eyes of faith and are strengthened with assurance. All that God has said about our future life will come about because it is based on the death and resurrection of Christ.

THE BASIS OF UNIVERSAL VIVIFICATION

The basis for the ultimate vivification of all humanity is the death and resurrection of Christ. The evangel is the issue on which human destiny rests. If God is ever to achieve His will to save all mankind (1 Tim.2:4) and manifest His position as the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.

4:10), then it will be because Christ died for all, and, in accord with His resurrection with power from among the dead, all will be vivified in Him.

Judgment and the severity of condemnation, torment, destruction, the meaning of the Greek word *aiōnios*, issues of divine sovereignty and election, human will and choice, all of these are certainly related to human destiny, and they need to be faced and tested by the Scriptures. But at the very foundation of our considerations on this theme lies the revelation of God in the giving of His Son for sinners. The believer must let this evangel be the deciding factor in determining every issue of truth, not the least of which is God's purpose for humanity as a whole.

Revelation 20:11-15 speaks of condemnation of human beings into the lake of fire which is termed "the second death." But 1 Corinthians 15:22 speaks of all who are dying in Adam being vivified in Christ. God can and will raise certain, sinful human beings and condemn them on the basis of their acts. But because of what Christ did God can and will finally vivify all in Christ, on the basis of the cross of Christ, on the basis of the price He paid, on the basis of the justification gained in His blood, on the basis of Christ's death followed by the triumphant verification of the defeat of death which His resurrection affords.

For this to be true, which the evangel says is true, the Greek word *aiōnios* cannot mean "forever" or "eternal." Any chastening and destruction of human beings cannot be endless. They must be only steps in the process of experiences and events still to come, but they cannot last forever. They do not speak of the goal. Only that which God does in Christ can reveal to us what He has in view for the consummation.

God will vivify all *in Christ* to the end that God may be All in all.

D.H.H.

Notes on 1 Samuel

GOD TAKES AND GIVES

(1 Samuel 25)

25 + Samuel 'died, and all Israel 'convened and 'wailed for him. + They 'entombed him in his homeland 'at Ramah. +Then David 'arose and went 'down to the wilderness of ⁷Maon~.

²+ There was a man in Maon, +yet his ^dbusiness was 'at Carmel. + The man was very wealthy; + he ^yhad a flock of 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats; +now he ^bwas ⁱshearing~ his flock 'at Carmel. ³+ The man's name was Nabal, and his wife's name was Abigail. + The woman was of good intelligence and of lovely shape; +as for the man, + he was a Calebite, obstinate and evil in his actions. ⁴+When David 'heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his flock, ⁵+ David 'sent ten lads.

+ David 'said to the lads, Go up to^d Carmel. +When you come to Nabal, + you will ask ^yhim in my name for peace. ⁶And thus you must say to ~my brother~, + Peace to you! + Peace to your house, and peace to all ^wthat you ^yhave! ⁷And now, ⁷behold^o, I have heard that you ^yhave shearers!. Now ^wyour 'shepherds! ^bwere with us ⁷in the wilderness^o, and we did not mistreat them, nor was anything of theirs ⁿmissed all the days they ^bwere~ 'at Carmel. ⁸Ask ^yyour lads and they shall tell ^yyou. +Hence may ⁿmy lads find favor in your eyes, for we have come on a good day. Do give ^{pr}now, ^wwhatever your hand may find, to your servants and to your son ^yDavid. ⁹+So when David's lads 'came, + they 'spoke to Nabal according to all these 'words in the name of David. +When they 'stopped, ¹⁰+ Nabal

answered David's servants + saying, "Who is David? And who is the son of Jesse? Nowadays there are many servants who are breaching away, each one from the face of his lord. ¹¹ + Should I take my bread and my wine and my slaughtered meat ^wthat I have slaughtered for the shearers of my sheep and give it to men whom I do not know from where they are!

¹² + So David's lads turned back to their way and returned. + They came and told him ^{as}about all these words. ¹³ + Then David said to his men, Gird on, each man his sword! And they girded on, each man his sword, + while David ^{mr}too girded on his sword. + ^{as}About 400 men went up following David; + yet 200 ^{sit}remained ^{on}with the ^{all}gear.

¹⁴ + One young man ^fof the lads told Nabal's wife Abigail, saying, Behold, David sent messengers from the wilderness to bless our lord; + but he pounced on them. ¹⁵ + Yet the men were very good to us, + we were not mistreated, and we did not miss anything all the days that we went about with them when we were in the field. ¹⁶ They were a wall ^{on}for us ^{mr}both by night ^{mr}and by day, all the days that we were with them grazing the flock. ¹⁷ + Now know this and ^{see}consider what you should do! For evil has been ^{all}determined against our lord and ^{on}against all his household. + He is ^ftoo much of a son of decadence to speak to him.

¹⁸ + Abigail quickly + took 200 loaves of bread, + two crocks of wine, + five dressed flocklings, + five seahs of toasted grain, + a hundred clusters of raisins and 200 pressed dried fig cakes, and ^{pl}loaded them on the donkeys. ¹⁹ + Then she said to her lads, Pass on before me! Behold me coming after you! + But she did not tell her husband Nabal. ²⁰ + It came to be that she was riding on the donkey and descending in the concealment of the mountain, + ^{bd}when David and his men happened to be

descending toward her. + So she encountered them.

²¹ + As for David, he had said, Surely for a false hope have I guarded all ^wthat this one had in the wilderness; + there was not anything missed ^fof all ^wthat belonged to him. + Yet he has paid me back evil for good! ²² Thus may Elohim do to the enemies of David, and thus may He add, if I let remain until morning anyone ^fof all who are his, any man-child!

²³ + When Abigail saw David, + she quickly + got down off her donkey, + fell before David on her face and prostrated herself to the earth. ²⁴ + When she fell on at his feet, + she said, On me, my lord, be the depravity! + I pray, let your maidservant speak in your ears! + Hear the words of your maidservant! ²⁵ I pray, let not my lord set his heart against this man of decadence, ^{on} Nabal; for as his name, so is he: Decadent is his name, and decadence is with him.

+ As for me, your maidservant, I did not see my lord's lads whom you sent. ²⁶ And now, my lord, as Yahweh lives and as your soul lives, ^wsince Yahweh has withheld you from coming to bloodshed and from getting victory for yourself by your own hand, + may now your enemies and those who seek evil for my lord, become like Nabal. ²⁷ + So now, let this blessing gift, which your maidservant has brought to my lord, + be given to the lads walking in the footsteps of my lord.

²⁸ I pray, bear with the transgression of your maidservant! For Yahweh shall grant, yea grant to my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of Yahweh, and evil is not found in you throughout your days. ²⁹ + Should anyone rise up to pursue you and to seek your soul, + then my lord's soul will come to be tied up in the bundle of the living with Yahweh your Elohim. + But the soul of your enemies He shall sling out as from the midst of the palm of the sling. ³⁰ + It will come

to be 'when Yahweh 'does for my lord according to 'all the good ^wthat He ^{sp}promised ^{on}concerning you, and commissions you 'as governor over Israel, ³¹ +then this shall not ^bbe for you a cause for remorse ^{or} > a stumbling block to the heart 'of my lord, + >by shedding⁻ blood gratuitously and >by my lord's own ⁷hand^o ^cgetting victory⁻ for himself. +When Yahweh has ^cdealt well 'with my lord, +then you must remember 'your maidservant!

³² + David ^{lsr}replied to Abigail, Blessed^l be Yahweh Elohim of Israel, Who sent you 'this 'day to meet me. ³³ + Blessed^l be your discretion, and blessed^l be you who has detained me 'this 'day from coming⁻ ⁱto bloodshed and from ^cgetting victory⁻ for myself by my own hand. ³⁴ + Nevertheless, as Yahweh Elohim of Israel lives, Who has withheld me from ^cdoing evil⁻ 'to you, for unless you had ⁻quickly + 'come to meet me, ⁱ assuredly no man-child would have been left to Nabal until the morning light. ³⁵ +Then David 'took from her hand ^wwhat she had brought to him; and he said to her, Go up 'in peace to your house! See, I have hearkened ⁱto your voice +that I may lift up your face.

³⁶ +When Abigail 'came to Nabal, + behold, he 'had a banquet in his house like 'a king's banquet. +So Nabal's heart felt good ^{on}in him, and he was drunk unto excess. +So she did not tell > him a thing, small ^{or} great, until the morning light. ³⁷ +Yet it came to 'be in the morning ⁱwhen the wine had gone forth⁻ from Nabal, and his wife had 'told > him 'these 'things, +that his heart 'died ⁱwithin him, and he' became 'like a stone. ³⁸ + It ^{ib}was ^{as}about ten 'days later +that Yahweh 'struck 'Nabal and he 'died. ³⁹ +When David 'heard that Nabal was dead, + he 'said, Blessed^l be Yahweh Who contended 'my cause concerning my reproach from the hand of Nabal and kept 'his servant back from evil. +For Yahweh has reversed 'the evil of Nabal 'on his own head.

+Then David 'sent word and ^{lsp}proposed ⁱto Abigail to

take her for himself 'as a wife. ⁴⁰ +So David's servants 'came to Abigail at^d 'Carmel and 'spoke to her, > saying⁻, David has sent us to you to take you for himself 'as a wife. ⁴¹ + She 'arose and 'prostrated herself, with her nostrils to^d the earth, and 'said, Behold, your maidservant is > a handmaid to wash the feet of my lord's servants. ⁴² +Then Abigail 'quickly + 'arose and 'rode on 'her donkey, +with five of her maidens 'walking 'at her feet. +Thus she 'went after David's messengers and 'became his > wife.

⁴³ David had 'also taken 'Ahinoam from Jezreel; and ^{mr}so both of them 'became his > wives. ⁴⁴ + Saul had given 'his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Palti son of Laish who was from Gallim.

THE DEATH OF SAMUEL

This chapter tells one of the most captivating stories from the life of David. It has scenes of passion, suspense and romance, and at the same time it gloriously displays the hand of God in all that transpires. And amid all this, the narrative takes us one step further in the development of David for his role as God's anointed king.

In most abbreviated fashion, the first verse relates the death of Samuel. This was surely a blow to David. Samuel had anointed David king. David had fled to Samuel when he was alone and desperate with nowhere to go. Samuel was certainly a prominent, and perhaps solitary figure in the mind of David as one whom he revered and on whom he could depend.

Probably David could not publicly mourn this beloved mentor. His presence in public would have provided opportunity for Saul to attack him and would have endangered other mourners of the beloved Samuel. David was bereft of a stalwart of unparalleled spirituality.

The two closing verses of the chapter relate that David was further separated from the house of Saul. Saul gave

his daughter, Michal, David's wife, to Palti. If there had been any faint glimmering of a hope left in the heart and mind of David that somehow, finally, he would be reunited with Saul's house, this act extinguished that hope.

And so David lost a wife, and, in Samuel, a spiritual confidant. Yet God gave him both of these back in Abigail. She became his wife, and, as the story will show, she was blessed with wisdom and was one in whom David could confide.

RESPONDING TO LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES

In both the previous and following chapters David admirably restrains himself from taking vengeance on Saul. Yet sandwiched between these events we see his abject failure as he plans vengeance on the house of Nabal. David's inconsistency reminds us of our own.

Sheep shearing time was traditionally a time of feasting and rejoicing and generosity (*cp* v.7 with Gen.38:12ff; 2 Sam.13:23-29). David humbly requested a gift of provisions, at Nabal's discretion, in return for the protection David and his men had provided Nabal against marauding Philistines. Verses 14-17,21,22 show that David's men had truly provided such service, and that the gift requested was more than deserved.

Nabal was wealthy and could easily afford to be charitable to David. There is a contrast here between the homeless David and Nabal who had dwellings both in Maon and Carmel. But he answered David's messengers with arrogant disdain, degrading David as a vagrant rebel. When David's messengers related Nabal's response to him, he was incensed. "Surely for a false hope have I guarded all that this one had in the wilderness; there was not anything missed of all that belonged to him" (v.21). David ordered his men to prepare for battle that he might take vengeance on Nabal (25:12,13).

Meanwhile one of the servants of Nabal's household

related to Abigail Nabal's treatment of David's messengers and the service of David and his men in the wilderness. "Now know this and consider what you should do! For evil has been determined against our lord and against all his household" (v.17), said the servant. How the servant knew evil was determined is not told. Abigail hastily prepared a generous gift for David and his men.

THE HAND OF GOD

"It came to be that . . . she encountered them" (1 Sam. 25:20). Now begins a course of events, all of which are accredited to God, and all of which result from the responses of people to the circumstances around them and to their convictions and passions. There may have been several routes available to travel between Abigail and David, but they met in a small concealed valley between the mountains where their paths were forced to cross.

"Since Yahweh has withheld you from coming to bloodshed and from getting victory for yourself by your own hand" (v.26), were the words of Abigail upon meeting David. She took their meeting as an assurance that David's evil intentions would not come to fruition. Still she addressed him with deep humility and sincerity. She also presented her plea from the perspective of David's welfare and benefit, not just that of her own household.

In verses 32-34 David accredits Abigail's coming not to her fear, but to Yahweh. "Blessed be Yahweh . . . Who sent you this day to meet me" (v.32). He also sees that it was Yahweh Elohim Who kept him from doing evil. The changing of his mind may indeed have been implemented, from the relative standpoint, by the charming humility Abigail displayed. But it too was of Yahweh "Who has withheld me from doing evil" (v.34).

Neither the hand of Nabal nor the hand of David are independent of the hand of God. "Blessed be Yahweh

Who contended my cause concerning my reproach from evil. For Yahweh has reversed the evil of Nabal on his own head" (v.39).

Even the smallest and least significant elements of life are of Him Who is the Ultimate Cause of all. "Out of Him and through Him and for Him is all" (Rom.11:36). Nabal acted out of drunken arrogance and selfishness. David acted out of anger. Abigail acted out of fear and expediency. Someone spoke to Abigail, and we can only guess at their motives. Yet the Scripture says that all this was of God.

"All is of God." What does that mean? It does not mean that we are puppets. Neither does it mean that God intends for us to live our life apart from the passions and convictions and desires which are the ingredients of who and what we are. But it does mean that in the design of God's wisdom and power we are participants in the grand course of events through which God is making Himself known to His creation. And it means that no detail of our lives is void of purpose and lasting significance. "In Him we are living and moving and are" (Acts 17:28). Believing that all is of God enables and empowers us to live in humility and patience with joy and expectation. But to separate our actions and life from God is to rob us of reason and purpose for existence.

ROMANTIC ENCOUNTERS OF THE PATRIARCHS

There are some interesting comparisons to be made between David's divinely appointed tryst with Abigail, and those of some other of Israel's leaders. The encounters, when several of Israel's patriarchs met their wives, are recorded, and there are some surprising similarities between them. These accounts bear meaningful details that are relevant to the patriarch in view and to his relationship to the nation of Israel.

These encounters follow a similar arrangement of events,

with variations in each case. Jacob's scene seems to trace the standard in most detail (see Genesis 29). He was in a foreign land. He stopped at a well. He met a woman at the well. He draws water for the woman. The woman leaves speedily with glad tidings. The man and woman are married.

In Genesis 24 there is a similar scene for Isaac and Rebecca: the meeting at the well and the drawing of water, and the marriage that follows. So also in Exodus 2:15-22 we read of Moses' encounter with the daughters of the priest of Midian, one of whom he later married.

Jacob had to move a stone to water Laban's flock tended by Rachel. There were many stones in Jacob's life—stones for pillows and stones for memorials. And the heel-grabber who deceived to gain his brother's birthright was deceived on his wedding night, because the elder sister was to be married first. Further wrestling and deceiving characterized his career.

Moses "saved" and "rescued" the daughters of Reuel (Ex.2:17-18) and provided water for them. He was drawn out of the water, as his name indicates, and he saved Israel through the waters of the Red Sea and by providing water in the desert from the rock. Reuel's daughter's stressed the fact of his drawing water: "and, moreover, he drew, yea drew out water for us and let the flock drink" (Ex.2:19).

THE ESPOUSALS OF THE KINGS

In 1 Samuel 9 it seems as if a similar scene is about to unfold for us. Saul was searching for the lost donkeys of his father. He was about to become king of Israel. He was in the nation of Israel, but in an unfamiliar area. He came to a city and met maidens coming out to bail water (v.11). He learned from them of the presence of Samuel, the seer in the city, but then the scene seems to abort. No water was drawn. There is no flock or herd to be watered. There was no recognition or joyous reunion. No marriage followed.

With the kings, the new element of anointing was intimate to their espousal to Israel. But even Saul's anointing was done secretly (9:26-10:1). The whole scenario is shadowed by an ominous cloud of doubt that Saul's leadership and dynasty will ever be established.

On the other hand, there seems to be no espousal scene at all for David, just this divinely staged meeting with Abigail. He is indeed accredited with the capture of Zion by capturing the water access and supply—the spring of Gihon, from which Jerusalem drinks. But no maiden is met at a well or spring. All we see is Abigail, hurrying in fear and apprehension to meet David, then leaving in peace.

With Solomon is the most wonderful espousal scene—the Song of Songs. It is filled with beauty, fragrances, delicious tastes, pleasant touches and pleasing restful sounds. And its final outcome is the satisfaction of the soul's yearnings.

Solomon was anointed king at Gihon, and the day of his anointing is called the day of his espousal (Song 3:11). Solomon means "peace," and Shulamite means "peaceful."

With Saul, there was no finding of his father's donkeys. He never corralled his stubbornness. He never completely delivered Israel from her foes. His dynasty was never established in Israel. There was no account given of his marriage.

But what of David? We have details concerning David and three of his wives, Michal, Abigail and Bathsheba, before marriage. In all of these encounters there is a unifying characteristic—bloodshed. David paid for the hand of Michal with the blood of two hundred Philistines (1 Sam.18:20-28). David met Abigail when intending to kill Nabal and all the males of his household. And David took Bathsheba after killing Uriah with the sword of the Ammonites. David's public career began with the killing of Goliath (1 Sam.17). He led the forces of Israel, warring with her enemies on every side, and finally liberating Israel from the Philistines—something none of the

judges nor Saul had been able to do. Because of David's sin, Nathan spoke God's word to him saying, "The sword shall not withdraw from your house for the eon" (2 Sam. 12:10). When David's kingship was finally established, he desired to build a house, or temple, for Yahweh. Yet God would not allow him to do so, because his life was characterized by so much bloodshed (1 Chron.22:6-11; 28:2,3).

Through this portion of David's life, he represents Christ as the suffering and rejected Messiah. It is appropriate, therefore, that he would not have an espousal scene that would depict a union of himself to Israel as her head. David's relationship to Israel was that of a replacement king. Saul was the first king, and so Israel should have been espoused to him. Paul's figure of speech in Romans 7 could be used here to describe the change in relationships. By death comes freedom from the law to become Another's (Rom.7:1-6). Similarly, David's wives were freed to become his on the basis of a death.

Still, a proposal is made at the hands of the servants of him who was anointed king (v.39). And though we do not see the well for drawing water, nor the flock standing ready to drink, she to whom the proposal came declares herself a handmaid, to wash the feet of her lord's servants (v.41). Then she arose quickly and departed to meet her betrothed (v.42).

Isaac was the son of promise. His passiveness shows that the promise is dependent on the One Who made the promise, not the one receiving the promise. Jacob, the heel-grabbing deceiver shows that no amount of cunning strategy can obtain what is graciously given to halting flesh. Moses shows that life and the promises are reached through death: the death of the Passover, and the death typified in the Red Sea. The course as a whole is: (1) God's promise, (2) man's ineffective wrestling to obtain the promise, (3) God's final deliverance in a salvation through death.

Kings personify rule. Saul shows that the flesh can never rule itself. David shows that those beloved to live out the struggle of flesh and faith will continually battle with the bloody uncleanness of the flesh. "The soul of the flesh, it is in the blood" (Lev.17:11). All that characterizes our life is linked back to the blood. Solomon brings us to a reign of peace, enjoyed when the struggling of the flesh is finished in its death. "Those of Christ Jesus crucify the flesh together with its passions and lusts" (Gal.5:24). The course as a whole is: (1) failure of the flesh, (2) death of the flesh, (3) peace.

LESSONS OF THE SCENE

The practical lessons to be learned from this passage are many. The humility and sincerity of Abigail exhibit true beauty. David's turning away from wrath to wait upon God, and his thankfulness to God that he did so speak volumes. Nabal speaks to us of the foolishness and end of self-indulgence.

And perhaps we should also see here a beautiful picture of things to come. Samuel's death figures the death of Christ as a prophet. Israel is figured by Nabal, unaware and ignorant of the blessings provided by the anointed King they rejected, and Whose origin they questioned. Abigail would represent that remnant of Israel, meeting the Messiah in secret because Israel's leadership had rejected Christ. She exhibits the grace of those five prudent virgins with oil in their lamps who entered with the bridal party at Messiah's return. The list of provisions at Nabal's sheep-shearing begins with bread and wine. The list of provisions in Abigail's blessing gift also begins with bread and wine. These suggest the provision of Christ for Israel and for the world. Nabal, in his death, represents those of Israel who will be cast out of the kingdom.

J. Philip Scranton