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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 2000  
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY-ONE

## EDITORIAL

“LET GOD BE TRUE” and “He is faithful” are two scriptural principles that mean much to me in my life. The articles in this issue remind me of these principles at several points. The pattern of “complements” (see p.245) in the outworking of God’s purposes are faithfully being carried forward. He is imparting faith to His chosen ones (see p.258). Human experiences may often seem so flawed and tragic (see p.271) that we are tempted to think they are outside of God’s operations. But this is not so; they all are part of the great and faithful plan of God and have their contribution to that glorious enlightenment and fulfillment described by the words “God All in all” (see p.277).

With these principles in mind, I would like to present the following brief history and report concerning the preparation of the *Concordant Version of the Old Testament* (CVOT):

The initial work on our translation of the Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures was undertaken by Vladimir Gelesnoff in the early 20th Century. Brother Gelesnoff “did considerable preparatory work of a critical nature,” marking his Hebrew lexicon with suggested English terms for a new translation.<sup>1</sup> Judging from his writings he was especially concerned with the need for consistency in the use of these suggested terms. But his poor health ending in his death at age 43 in 1921 put the project in abeyance.

After Brother Gelesnoff’s death, A. E. Knoch, who had begun work on the CV of the Greek Scriptures, made plans to resume the phase of the work which his co-ed-

1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.13, p.76.

tor had begun, using the “concordant” principles that the two had developed.<sup>2</sup>

Under Brother Knoch’s direction Hebrew-English inter-linear sheets were prepared containing the Hebrew text typed in English letters from left to right with English standards and grammatical information written below by hand. The principal tool for searching out the occurrences of each original term was, and continues to be, *Englishman’s Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance*.

Brother Knoch then inserted his idiomatic translation below the line containing the standards on most of the interlinear sheets. Through all these years Brother Knoch’s major assistant was E. H. Clayton of England who considered many difficult translation problems with Brother Knoch. Brother Clayton gave special attention to grammatical details in both the Greek and Hebrew languages, writing out a multitude of notes on small slips of paper sent back and forth between California and England.<sup>3</sup> In later years he also began the job of typing the idiomatic translation for use by the linotype operator.

A. E. Knoch died in 1965 after the publication of the CV of Genesis and Isaiah. Reviewing Brother Knoch’s many years of labor toward a completed Concordant Version, Brother Clayton wrote at that time, “God’s grace always sustained, for the work had been begun in the fear and love of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it had continued in His strength and the regard for the needs of the saints who looked to the inspired Scriptures God had given to humanity.”<sup>4</sup>

The work went forward with the publication of Daniel in 1968. Also a facsimile edition of Brother Clayton’s typewritten sheets of Jeremiah was issued.

2. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.56, p.125.

3. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.63, p.222.

4. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.56, p.129.

After Brother Clayton’s death, the preparation of the CVOT was continued under the direction of Herman Rocke who soon began to get other co-workers, including myself, acquainted with this project. Many details needed re-checking, including consistency in translation and in indication of grammatical distinctions, especially with the verbs.

We prepared a thorough list of English words used for each Hebrew or Aramaic term as keyed to Englishman’s Concordance. Emendations of the Hebrew text based on the Septuagint, Syriac and Hebrew manuscripts other than the Masoretic Text, and most importantly the Dead Sea Scrolls, called for careful review. (Only recently has all the information from the Dead Sea Scrolls and fragments been made available.) And beyond all these considerations, Brother Rocke was concerned that the idiomatic translation be made more readable, that is, more in accord with English idiom and syntax.

During these years the CV of Ezekiel, the Minor Prophets, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Psalms were published in booklet form. Also two short books, Ruth and Lamentations, were published in issues of *Unsearchable Riches*.

When Brother Rocke died in 1996, the review of the entire Old Testament translation was nearly complete. There are still details of consistency and idiom to be checked, especially in the Pentateuch, and much proof-reading, but the tentative translation of the entire CVOT has been entered into computer storage. Most recently a notebook-sized, large-print booklet containing Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Song was produced from this stored information. Also the book of Job has appeared in sections in the magazine as also portions of I Samuel in the current issues.

Because of the great bulk of material needing to be

checked and corrected, with footnotes added, we cannot hope to publish the entire CVOT within the next five years. Judging from such outward conditions as the size of our staff, health and physical strength, I would despair of any hope for finishing the task even that soon. Yet I am encouraged that we can publish the “Former Prophets” (Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings) within the next few months. We have given special attention to this section in the past year and have it ready now except for an introduction, page headings and cover work.

Looking beyond this publication of the Former Prophets, I trust we can follow in a timely manner with those books not yet published in any form: 1 Chronicles through Esther, and perhaps also with our revision of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Besides the Version itself, we are aware of the need for a concordance of the CVOT. It seems to me that the best course at this point would be the publication of an index to *Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance* based on our vocabulary “key” mentioned above. Yet of course all this is in God's hands.

Our small staff joins me in thanking all of you for your prayers and patience. And above all else we all can be thankful that God is true and faithful through and in spite of all our failures and weaknesses. D.H.H.

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*Studies in Genesis*

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CREATURE COMPLEMENTS

(Genesis 2:15-25)

<sup>15</sup> + **Then Yahweh Elohim 'took `the human and 'settled him in the garden of Eden to serve it and to keep it.** <sup>16</sup> + **Yahweh Elohim 'instructed <sup>on</sup> the human, > saying<sup>-</sup>: From every tree of the garden you may eat, yea eat<sup>-</sup>.** <sup>17</sup> + **But as <sup>f</sup>for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you must never 'eat from it; for 'on the day you eat<sup>-</sup> from it, to die<sup>-</sup> you shall be dying.**

<sup>18</sup> **And Yahweh Elohim 'said: It is not good for the human to <sup>b</sup>be<sup>-</sup> alone by himself. I shall <sup>d</sup>make for him a helper as his complement.** <sup>19</sup> + **Yahweh Elohim had 'formed from the ground every animal of the field and `every flyer of the heavens; and He 'brought each one to the human to see what he would 'call > it. And whatever the human would 'call > it, each living soul, that was its name.** <sup>20</sup> + **So the human was calling the names >of all 'domestic animals, + >of <sup>7</sup>all<sup>cs</sup> flyers of the heavens and >of all animals of the field; +yet for the human no' helper was available as his complement.**

<sup>21</sup> + **Then Yahweh Elohim caused a stupor to 'fall on the human. +While he was sleeping, + He 'took one <sup>f</sup>of his reproductive organs and 'closed up the flesh over its <sup>n</sup>place.** <sup>22</sup> + **Yahweh Elohim 'built `the reproductive<sup>-</sup> organ <sup>w</sup>that He had taken from the human into a woman and 'brought her to the human.** <sup>23</sup> + **The human 'said: This <sup>du</sup>time, it is bone <sup>f</sup>of my bones and flesh <sup>f</sup>of my flesh. > This shall be called woman, for this was taken from <sup>7</sup>her<sup>n</sup> man.**

<sup>24</sup> **Therefore a man shall forsake `his father and `his mother; + he will cling <sup>i</sup>to his wife, and <sup>7</sup>both of them<sup>nc</sup>**

**will <sup>b</sup>be > one flesh. <sup>25</sup> + Both of them <sup>w</sup>were naked, the human and his wife; <sup>+</sup>yet they were not <sup>'</sup>ashamed.**

#### GOD MAKES A COMPLEMENT FOR ADAM

“It is not good for the human to be alone by himself. I shall make for him a helper as his *complement*” (Gen.2:18). God Himself was once alone, so He created Christ as His complement (Col.1:19; 2:9). Christ also was once alone, so He was given His figurative body, the saints of the present secret administration, as His complement (Eph.4:13), and His figurative bride, believing Israel, fulfills this function on the earth. The physical complement given to the first man should help us to apprehend the same truth in the spirit realm, as connected with God and Christ. Adam’s was not a singular incident in human history, but is being repeated continually before our eyes and in our experience. The sexes are not a mere method of continuing the human race, but are primarily a parable of the relation between God and His creatures.

In a very profound sense, this statement is the most remarkable and revealing expression in this record of the beginning. It is the first intimation of *feeling*, of *affection*, of *love*, as expressed in the desire for companionship. We have been overwhelmed with the divine exhibitions of power and wisdom in creation and restoration, but so far there has been no intimation of God’s inmost essence, which would tell us *why* He made all these marvels. Indeed, they do show us that He is *spirit*, but they do not reveal that He is *love*. After all is finished and pronounced very good, Yahweh Elohim finds a lack in the highest and most perfect of earth’s creatures, and, by means of the tree in the midst of the garden, intimates that the history of mankind, is concerned with *evil* as well as good.

One of the very striking contrasts between the creation accounts and the later record is connected with the word

*good*. At first we read again and again that the light, and the heavens, and the land and the herbage and the luminaries and the animals are *good*. Then we are told that all of it is *very good* (1:31). This is said only of the *gold* in the second section (2:12). There we read of the tree of the knowledge of good *and evil* (2:9,17). Then we read of the human that his solitary state was *not good* (2:18). From then on most of the history of mankind is concerned with *evil*, rather than with good. This is no contradiction. In one case the *good* applies to the *work of God*. The other deals with the *history of mankind* during the eons of evil, in which this is used by God to produce a much greater spiritual good, and fits man to fill the need that God feels in fellowship with His creatures. That is the ultimate good.

#### GOD ALONE

Love is lonely when it is alone, with no object upon which to lavish its affection, or to reciprocate in kind. How many of mankind have felt the longing for a kindred spirit to rejoice with them in joy, and to sympathize with them in sorrow! The brightest pages of history are those which portray the unselfish sacrifice and the severe suffering endured for love’s sweet sake. The earliest and greatest event in the history of the universe had its roots in the Deity’s desire for love responsive. And the last and culminating consummation will see the realization of this longing, when God has transformed the enmity of His creatures into deepest filial affection.

#### ADAM ALONE

Adam lacked companionship. He was fully supplied with everything needed for life and comfort. Far more than that, the name of the garden in which he was placed shows that he lived in *luxury*, for that is what *Eden* means in Hebrew. The AV renders it *pleasure, delight, delicacies*,

as a common noun. Adam had almost everything which men covet today, for which they spend their time and strength, their wealth and health. His surroundings were ideal. His food was not only sufficient but delicious. He had work to keep him occupied and strength to do it. All that he lacked was the fond fellowship of a kindred soul. His *body* was amply provided for, but his *heart* was still *hungry*. God Himself had known this before creation, so He saw that it was not good.

#### ANIMALS NO COMPLEMENT

God knew very well that there was no satisfactory companion for the human among the animals, but He wished Adam to discover this for himself, and, at the same time, put before him, and all his descendants, an illustration of the manner in which He satisfies the hearts of His creatures. God had already made the animals of the ground and of the air, so these were brought to the human and named by him. He evidently had such an intuitive knowledge of their characteristics that he was able to give them an appropriate appellation. It may be that some of these are still preserved in Hebrew, such as the partridge, which is called *qra*, from its *call*. Indeed, this name is used for the stem CALL, as in Genesis 1:5, "the darkness He *calls* [*qra*] night." If only all the animals had descriptive names today! They would make zoology as delightful a study as nature. This example may also show how natural is the original language of revelation.

#### A HELP "MEET" FOR HIM

What is the force of the AV rendering, "an help *meet* for him?" The expression "meet" is vague, and suggests *suitable*, *fit*, *proper*, and the like. The Septuagint renders it, literally, *according to*, in the first instance, and *like* in the second. Both of these are probably included in the Hebrew

expression, which is made up of two words AS and FRONT. As these are the only two occurrences of this combination, we cannot deduce or confirm the sense by means of other contexts, so must make full use of this one. The sense is not satisfied if we render it simply *like*, for the woman was to fill a *lack* that Adam felt. This calls for a measure of likeness, but also demands difference, for the two became one flesh. In English the most suitable term to describe this is *complement*, which denotes the part that completes or perfects the whole.

As there was no suitable complement for the human among the animals, where could one be found? We may be sure that non-earthly, spirit creatures would not fill the need, for they were more unlike the human than the animals. *Likeness* is the vital feature of a complement, and it must fill a *lack*. But the human had no physical lack, and there was no other soul sufficiently *like* him, for God had endowed him with more spirit than they. The only possible course was to fulfill both of these conditions by taking the complement *out of him*. The female part of him was removed and built into another human *like* him and *completing* him, so that the two together, although two bodies, are one flesh, and are needed to make a complete human.

#### OUT OF GOD

Can we not see a similarity here to that primeval position which called forth creation in the beginning? As God could find nothing to satisfy His heart outside of Himself, He created Christ, with all the rest of creation through Him, *out of Himself* (cf Rev.3:14; Col.1:15,16). This should help us to grasp, in some measure, the nearness and the dearness of all to Him, first of all to the Son of His love. The whole creation is the product of His yearning for communion with a kindred spirit. Seen in this light it has a halo even in its present passing condition of darkness and despair,

for this is only a preparatory and temporary phase necessary to bring about His desire.

Lack of sufficient spirit, such as was imparted to Adam by Yahweh Elohim Himself, when He blew into his nostrils the breath of lives, kept the animals from filling the void in Adam's heart, and from becoming his helper and complement. And is not this the one great requisite for fellowship with God? All humans are made in the likeness and image of God, in relation to the animals below them in the spiritual scale. But they themselves have not sufficient spirit for communion with the Deity above them, unless He endows them with an added supply of His spirit for fellowship and service. Once more, Yahweh Elohim must breathe upon each one in order to enable him even to believe His Word.

The very first time when we believe God's evangel concerning His Christ, we have fellowship with Him, and fulfill the longing of His love for communion. The very first service that we perform in the power of His spirit makes us fellow-workers with Him. Yet none of this can be accomplished in the power of that spirit which we receive by generation. This, however, was possible for Adam before he sinned. Spirit gives life. Sin always operates to destroy spirit, and induces death. We no longer have the measure of spirit that Adam had in the beginning, hence cannot fulfill the longing of God for fellowship as Adam did in Eden. Instead of believing and obeying God's Word, our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit. Their unbelief brought dying, which produces death. Our faith promises life eonian.

#### MORALS IN MARRIAGE

Only as we see this basic truth, which underlies the relation of the sexes to each other, can we understand why God lays such stress on human conduct in this regard. God's supreme desire to enter into a perfect and perma-

nent love union with His creatures, to become All in all of them, is violated when a married couple is not true to each other, or a faulty or impermanent union is formed. The dire damage to the individual and the race need not be emphasized here, for there are enough educators and reformers who seek to hinder the evil and help humanity by exposing the distressing physical and moral results which accompany lawlessness in this matter. As such social evils are growing worse rather than better, the saints need to be shown a much higher and more powerful motive to help them in this evil day. This is found in its relation to God and His loving union with His own.

#### THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE

The mystery, or secret, of marriage is brought before us in Ephesians, one of the highest and most spiritual of all the sacred scrolls. Even there it is called a *great* secret (Eph.5:32). It is based upon the truths which we have been considering, that the woman was taken out of the man, and in marriage, the two become *one flesh*. In the physical realm it parallels our position in the body of Christ. A man cannot help caring for his own body. Since he and his wife are one flesh, he should have the same *selfish* love for his wife, and it should lead him to nourish and cherish her. The greatness of this secret lies in the fact that it portrays the "selfish" love of Christ for the ecclesia which is His body, and this, in turn, reflects the love of God for Christ and all creation. It is the chief exhibition in the physical realm of the most intimate and heart satisfying revelation which God has given of Himself. In the highest sense of the word, He loves us because He loves *Himself*.

How did God know that Adam would be lonely? So far as the record goes, there is nothing to show that Adam had realized it himself, or had given expression to it. He had not yet named the animals or sought for a companion

among them. It is not enough to say that God is omniscient. Love, in a very real sense, transcends mere knowledge. We could, with equal right, say that God could have made him like the celestial spirits, of whom we read nothing as to this matter. Indeed, God must reveal even His multifarious wisdom to these heavenly hosts through mankind (Eph.3:10). No doubt this great secret is based on the fact that man (whose very name means "Likeness") was made like God, not only as the Subjector, to sway over the earth, but also as to the desires of his heart. God Himself felt the need of fellowship when He was alone, so created Christ, the Son of His love. Anticipating his loneliness, He built Eve as Adam's complement.

#### EVANGELISTS, PASTORS, TEACHERS

God could save everyone without an evangel or an evangelist. If He has predestinated them they are bound to be delivered! But that would defeat His desire for fellowship with those whom He has called. It would leave Him in the exalted but lonely place which He has always had. He wishes to work through those who have received a special portion of His spirit, whether it be evangelists, pastors, or teachers. He is by no means dependent on them, but rather yearns to share His work with them, for the more honors He heaps upon the unworthy, the greater will be the luster of His love in the eyes of all the universe at the consummation.

#### ONE — TWO SEXES

In the first account of man's *creation* (Gen.1:26-28), nothing special is said as to the operation of God's *spirit* in creating Adam. He differs from the previously created animals, in that he is made in the image of God, so is himself a subjector in regard to the other creatures, and is to sway over them, and subdue the earth. He was created *both*

male and female. It is all strictly confined to the *creation*, and was the final, *finishing* touch. The woman had not yet been built, for, in God's great plan, mankind is *one*. Adam, the head of the race, is not nearly so important as Adam, the type of the second human, the Lord from heaven, the last Adam (1 Cor.15:46,47). All life, even Eve, the mother of all living, sprang from *one*, even as all life in the new creation comes from Christ. Eve was *created in* Adam, not separate from him.

#### GENERATION

Our regard for anything depends upon our relation to it. We cannot be unduly concerned with everything in the world. It would be too distracting, and exhausting, for we do not possess the faculties, or the capacity for it. That which is ours, which has cost us something, is far more in our minds than the possessions of others, as a rule. But we are even more interested in what our own hands have made, or our own minds have designed. I have planned and built three houses, largely with my own hands, and have lived in each for sometime. I cannot help having a very special interest in them. It hurts me to see them changed or even painted with colors that do not harmonize with the surroundings.

God, as the Maker and Former of all must have an intense feeling for His handiwork. Whether it be the lustrous orbs of the empyrean or the fair flowers of the field, what must they mean to Him! It stirs my heart even to contemplate their brilliance and beauty. If I had designed and fashioned even the lowliest blossom that blooms, it would be my pride and joy. Though I have only a very remote right even to look at them, they give me a pleasure as the achievements of One whom I have learned to love, whom I can claim as my own Maker. This very morning I rose early, before the sun, hoping to get a glimpse of a comet

which has wandered into view. I once made a long journey in order to experience an eclipse of the sun. It was a wonderful exhibition of the majesty of our mighty Maker.

#### THE CREATOR'S AFFECTION

But the mere making of a thing does not create so close a tie as the invention of something new and novel. My hands have made many things in their time, but my heart is much more taken up with the makings of my mind, which demanded much original thought, and created forms unknown before. These, in a very real sense, are part of me, for they come out of me. They are my brain children, and I cannot help caring for them, no matter what may be their fortunes in the world. Inventions such as these seldom make much money, and most of them receive a very skeptical reception by a cold and unsympathetic public, but that does not diminish the inventor's regard for them. They are their own, and they cannot help liking them.

How immeasurably more must the great Maker of all think of His achievements! Notwithstanding their number, they are all perfect for their place, the product of His heart and head and hand. His hand did not form them merely, though that alone were wonderful. His head invented them before His hands could form them, and, we may be sure, His heart had planned them in the recesses of His being, for essentially, He is love. What His love evolved, and, His will resolved, His spirit has solved. His great heart of love embraces all creation, for it is His by virtue of His close relation to it, while we, vain insects of a second, can only contain what our puny hands can reach.

#### THE COMPLEMENT, OUT OF ADAM

When God's love demanded a response, when His heart yearned for fellowship, His only recourse was to find it *in Himself, in the creation of His own spirit*. Our spirit is out

of Him. This is figured for us in the building of the woman. A complement for Adam was nowhere to be found, even among the living souls which were somewhat like him in their structure and composition. There is a certain degree of affinity between man and the animals. Some men are very fond of their dogs and have considerable affection for them. But these living souls are a complete unit in themselves. What is needed, to bring out the innate love of one creature for another, is to *lack* something that the other supplies. God was complete in Himself yet lacked an object through which to reveal His glories. Adam also was complete, but lacked an object by which to show God's excellencies, so a part was taken *out* of him to be his *complement*. Through this he can mirror many of the excellencies of his Maker.

The key to the affection of the sexes for each other lies in this great truth. Just as a man would feel the lack of one hand to complement the other, so he feels the lack of those organs of generation which were taken out of him to build the woman. That the human Adam once possessed these is quite evident in his present body.

But, of course, a *rib*, more or less, would not be much of a basis for a change in sex. Any number of ribs might be taken from a human, yet it would not affect the sex. The translators of the AV seem to have been quite at a loss to find the meaning of *tzlo*, for they rendered it *beam, board, chamber, corner, halting, leaf, plank, rib, side, and side chamber*. It is used of the "sides" of the tabernacle, which were made of two boards, joined at the top, but separated at the bottom, forming a hollow taper. Corresponding to this, it was also used of the "chambers" in the sides of the temple, which were smaller at the top than at the bottom. So the "rib" taken out of Adam was evidently the hollow *organ* which differentiates the female from the male.

## THE HUMAN

One of the gravest defects in the English language is the lack of a usable, common noun for *human being*, either man or woman, male or female, the equivalent of *anthropos* in Greek, *adm* in Hebrew, and *Mensch* in German, to differentiate it from *aner*, man, *gune*, woman, in Greek, *aish*, man, *ashe*, woman, in Hebrew, and *Mann*, man, and *Frau* or *Weib*, woman, in German. So we are using *human* for an individual of either sex, wherever this can be tolerated, a *superior*<sup>h</sup> or *h*man, where not. As it is, womankind has a very small part in the blessings of the evangel. Christ Himself, as the Son of *Man*, seems to overlook the women entirely. Even when He “is the savior of all *men*” (1 Tim. 4:10, AV), they seem to be excluded. He was the Son of *humanity*. He never referred to Himself as a *man*, though of course He was, and was so called by others (John 1:30; Acts 2:22). Having been begotten by God, it seems possible, as some think, that He was bisexual, so represented women as well as men in His sacrificial work.

Very few seem to realize or recognize the main and underlying *object* of the relationships resulting from generation. They play a much greater part in the revelation of the Deity than creation. Even if humanity cannot *create* life, it can *generate* it. As a result of the two complements, husband and wife, we have a child, and its various stages of growth, from infancy to maturity. Again and again we have this repeated, so that we have, at all times, intimations of the Divine love and care and provisions, not to speak of the opposites. For even divorce and destitution are eloquent examples of God’s dealings with His creatures. In fact, the grounds of divorce vary with God’s administrations, and are in harmony with His operations.

Husband and wife are *complements*, two parts of one whole. Neither of them is complete in him or herself, just

as man is incomplete without God. First a search was made among the animals to find a helper for Adam.

There can be a very close bond between living souls, such as a person and his pet. While still a child I had a little yellow dog, which I loved very dearly. All the more so, as the family on the floor below us were Roman Catholics and objected to my calling him Leo, which was the name of the Pope at that time. How could I help it if they named the Pope after my dog? A lion could have gulped him down whole, but I did not realize that Leo meant *lion*. When we came out west to California, I suffered more in parting from my Leo than from anything else. Later it made me very sad to hear of his death under the wheels of a train. After nearly seventy long years it all comes back to me. Poor little Leo!

If we do not grasp God’s ultimate in the creation of mankind, we might get the impression that His spirit made a mistake in creating the race as one, and then separating it into two sexes. So, also, He later divided it still further into languages and races and nations and religions, and introduced slavery. Like sin, these are necessary to illustrate and emphasize the enmity between man and God and the utter dependence of man upon his Creator during times eonian. But all of this is eonian. Already, *in Christ*, there is no Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female. By faith, we are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal.3:28).

The attraction between the sexes probably produces the strongest attachment in human experience. It probably arises from the fact that they are complementary, and need one another to be complete. This is doubtless intended to give us an experience akin to that between the Creator and the creature. It is perhaps the closest tie in the realm of nature, and so the best adapted to display the greatest of the graces.

A. E. Knoch

## BELIEVING AND UNDERSTANDING

### Question:

We have been blessed by receiving *Unsearchable Riches* for many years, and always enjoy the thoughts of each one who writes articles in it.

I have noticed, however, that, many times, you speak of the so-called "Christian churches" as "our brethren in Christ," stating that they are included among the called and chosen ones who will be vivified in the presence of Christ.

Paul taught you must believe that Jesus died, and was dead and then resurrected after three days. Most all, however, teach that Jesus never really died (nor that anyone else ever really died, for that matter), but that He went on living while His body remained in the tomb, preaching to spirits in prison during that time. This is contrary to what the Bible plainly teaches concerning the state of the dead.

Most churches more or less teach the gospel of the Circumcision, claiming that one must be baptized, pay tithes, do good works, and so forth, in order to be saved. Also, they teach that if you don't believe like they do, then you will be put in hellfire and tormented forever and ever. Isn't this a different evangel than what Paul taught, and subject to his "anathema"?

Do you believe that those who "believe in Jesus" (including the majority of Americans who make this very claim) are really members of the ecclesia of God? While I believe that all mankind will eventually be saved, I don't believe that those who believe and teach a different evangel than that of the apostle Paul are mem-

bers of the body of Christ nor that any such opposers will be granted eonian life in Christ's presence.

If you believe I am wrong here, please show me, because I want to know and am willing to learn.

### Answer:

WE APPRECIATE your kind words concerning our ministry. The affirmation which you make here is concerned with the question of what it means to be a believer. This is a perennial question which we receive. Sometimes, as in your case, it arises independently, as a result of one's own studies. More often, as has been the case a number of times over the years and happens to be so at present as well, various ones of our friends become exercised concerning this question, as the result of some mutual friend's having adopted such a position, contrary to our own teaching on this subject.

Such a course should never be presumed to be wrong nor viewed as necessarily a bad thing, even if, due to the human weakness of all concerned, regrettable incidents will sometimes occur as a result of the public consideration of such "new teaching."

If our findings should be mistaken, and one truly has eyes to see that this is so, then they should be rejected. This is the case just as surely as it is also true that if our teachings should be correct, and one truly has eyes to see that that is so, they should be accepted.

For that matter, even if our position itself should be correct, it may be that hitherto we have failed to adequately explain it, at least with respect to certain questions, ones that even a thoughtful and conscientious reader might still have, having reviewed our existing literature.

That which the Scriptures actually *reveal*, directing our hearts into a true understanding of their declarations, alone is the arbiter of truth. Every one of us is quite up to the task of being mistaken; neither is it any great achieve-

ment simply to *happen* to be correct. What we are *not* able for, of ourselves, however, is the achievement of that most formidable task, not simply of being correct, but of being correct according to the ascertainment of the conclusive evidence which actually proves the veracity of our position.

In replying to the various issues which arise in respect to your inquiry, perhaps it would be best for me to begin simply by clarifying a few incidental points which you introduce, related to our consideration of the principal issue which we wish to evaluate. That issue is whether it is so that one who misunderstands something, therefore necessarily disbelieves it as well.

You are surely correct in suggesting that the traditional teachings of Christendom are, and that to a great degree, a “different evangel” than that brought by Paul, and that those heralding such an evangel must therefore be subject to the apostle’s “anathema” upon all who follow such a course.

But the question remains, Of what does Paul’s anathema consist? We can only know the answer to this question if we first of all know the nature and particulars of Paul’s evangel, which entails a knowledge as well of the delimiting factors determinative of the boundaries of that company to whom it applies.

The nature and particulars of Paul’s evangel entail it being so that this evangel is for all who are called and chosen of God, according to that evangel, irrespective of their faithfulness, whether of deed or doctrine. Such ones, even if unworthy of service, have nevertheless been granted a measure of faith (*cp* Rom.12:3). They are at least believing that Jesus died and rose (*cp* 1 Thess.4:14), and give evidence of their calling in their testimony of heart, “Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor.1:24).

All who believe that Jesus died and rose are believers; and, all such ones are included in the “ecclesia of God.”

Should any be disbelieving, God will be remaining faith-

ful to His blessed promises concerning them (*cf* 2 Tim.2:13). These include, even today, membership in the ecclesia, and for the future, eonian life and glory, even if, due to their own lack of faithfulness, they should forfeit an allotment of eonian reigning in that day. Therefore, it must be that the nature of the anathema which will befall any among them who may bring a “different evangel,” is confined to the loss of the present knowledge and appreciation of much important truth. Indeed, in this practical sense of present-day “destruction,” that of forfeiting a life lived according to truth together with the enjoyment of a concomitant spiritual walk, any course which precludes such blessed privilege is certainly a most destructive course. It is a pathway which evinces a corresponding utter failure to get hold of eonian life, and to do so “really” (*cp* John 17:3; 1 Tim.6:12; 6:19).<sup>1</sup>

#### “BELIEVING IN JESUS”

Of course we would not speak of those groups or congregations themselves, as such (i.e., as collective entities), commonly termed “Christian churches,” as being “our brethren in Christ.” We would, however (based on such passages as Ephesians 4:11-14), suppose that there are individual persons within at least some such groups who are in Christ. Insofar as religious affiliation is concerned, God’s chosen ones may well be members of various diverse communions, or of no formal community at all.

Where you ask whether we believe that those who “believe in Jesus” (I take it that you mean, as their Saviour) are really members of the ecclesia of God, you first of all point out the fact that there are many millions of per-

1. For a more detailed consideration of the question of the necessary scope and sense of the apostle Paul’s declaration in which he avers, “Let him be anathema!” see *Unsearchable Riches*, “Let Him Be Anathema!” vol.87, pp.9-22.

sons, both past and present (including, according to polls, vast numbers of Americans), who profess such very faith. Hence you wish to know if it is our opinion that, factually, all such persons are also members of the ecclesia of God, called and chosen of Him.

Our answer to this question is, No. Surely not all who claim to “believe in Jesus” are truly in Christ. Many who *profess* faith, may nevertheless not *possess* faith. Whether due to some type of peer pressure (in the interests of, for example, civil, political, or social advantage), or merely concern for one’s own personal safety (for example, out of fear that the teaching of the eternal torment of unbelievers might somehow be true), many may profess to believe—and even seek to believe—who nonetheless do not, in fact, believe.

But as to any question of what even the approximate percentage of those who are naming the name of the Lord may be who are also truly in Christ, we simply do not have an opinion. Perhaps it is a fairly high percentage; perhaps it is quite a low percentage; we do not know. But since we do not wish to be disposed above what is written, and, hence, do not wish to place confidence in human speculations, we prefer simply to avoid all speculation concerning that particular question.

#### CAREFULNESS IN EXPRESSION

You made mention of the apostle Paul, stating that he taught that we “must believe . . .” I would only suggest here (and I trust you will agree with me), that, apart from the question of, specifically, that which is to be believed, it was not Paul’s custom, as such, to speak baldly in such terms. Instead, it is so, simply corollarily to what Paul *did* declare that we, indeed, “must believe.”

I mention this only because most, when hearing that which is true in itself here, namely, that we must do some-

thing in order to be saved, will mistakenly conclude that our doing thereof is not under God’s ultimate control but our own. Most will further suppose if there is something that we *must* do in order to be saved, that it follows from this that whatever we *must* do, God therefore *requires* us to do. Any such notion, however, is simply a presumption; it is not necessarily a fact. And, it is a presumption which cannot be a fact, since it is contrary to the truth that our salvation and eonian life is a gracious gift apart from works. This includes all human efforts to believe, as well as all of man’s supposed own endeavors of non-resistance in response to the operations of the spirit.

It is not that we are *required* to believe, but that we are *graciously granted* to be believing (Phil. 1:29). Indispensable antecedent obedience need not be that of the meeting of a requirement; it may instead be (as is the case in the evangel of our salvation) simply the fulfilling of an essentiality.<sup>2</sup> This is a vital distinction to a correct understanding of the nature of the evangel. Therefore, it is important for us to be circumspect and careful not to leave the wrong impression in any instance in which we may speak of it being so that, in some respect, we “must believe.”

#### INCONSISTENT ARGUMENTS

You further spoke of Paul as teaching that “Jesus died, and was dead and then resurrected after three days.” I am sure you will be glad for me to quote exactly the passage to which you refer: “Now I am making known to you, brethren, the evangel which I bring to you, which also you accepted, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you are retaining what I said in bringing the evangel to you, outside and except you believe feignedly. For I

2. For definition of terms, as well as a consideration of the tremendous difference between a “requirement” and an “essentiality,” see *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.91, p.173.

give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that *Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day according to the scriptures . . .*" (1 Cor.15:1-4).

There are many things to consider here, and judge correctly, if we would possess a full and accurate understanding of these words comprising the evangel. This is true of certain related points as well, such as the matter of the present aspect of salvation (*cf* "through which . . . [we] are being saved"), that is, as Paul indicates, except in the case of one who is believing "feignedly" (i.e., not genuinely).

One issue here, it is true, is that of attaining to a full and correct understanding of what is meant by the words, "Christ *died* . . ." even as by the declarations which affirm that, "*He* was entombed . . ." and "*He* has been roused . . ."

There is, however, an additional important issue to take notice of here as well, in this summary declaration of the evangel, one which, even as the question of death, is also capable of being either correctly or incorrectly understood. That issue is this: In what sense is it so that Christ's death, entombment, and resurrection occurred "according to the Scriptures"?

Is it that one need only truly believe that this was so according to whatever the Old Testament may have to say concerning the coming Anointed One, or is it instead that one must first possess a full, accurate knowledge of the grand and complex theme of Hebrew Christology, both typically and prophetically, in all its ins and outs, within the compass of the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures?

If our argument is that one must understand the subject of death correctly, else one cannot "really believe" that Christ died, our argument must likewise be that one must also understand the subject of Hebrew Christology correctly, else one cannot "really believe" that Christ's death was according to the Scriptures. It would be inconsistent and absurd to insist that one's incorrect knowledge of the

former theme (including one's holding of incompatible doctrines, contrary to the truth thereof), precludes one's membership in Christ's body, while denying that one's incorrect knowledge of this latter theme does not preclude one's membership in Christ's body.

I have considered the difficult subject of Hebrew Christology in some detail for over thirty years, having read learned books on the subject, besides doing my own further, incidental research, together with informal reflection and meditation from day to day. Though it may be so that I know somewhat more about this subject than many others, it is undoubtedly so that I know much less about it than those scholars who have made this theme their specialty.

In any case, it is beyond question that I do not understand the subject of Christology "correctly." This is because, first of all, I am not even fully cognizant of it, which makes it impossible for me to understand it correctly.<sup>3</sup>

It is a practical certainty as well that I am at least somewhat mistaken in my consideration of this subject, whether these errors should be sins of commission or omission. Therefore, I do not fully grasp all that is an object of faith relative to this subject. For that matter, we may be likewise certain that the same is true not only of myself but even of the most learned specialists in this field as well. Yet if it is so that one must correctly understand the entirety of that which comprises the evangel in order to partake of future eonian life, then not only are those who believe in immortal souls precluded from this blessing but those as well who fail to understand the doctrines of Christology.

#### DELUSIONS OF EQUIVOCATION

More fundamentally, however, we need to see that the

3. It is impossible for one to understand *correctly* any discrete topic or subtopic of which he is simply ignorant, concerning which he therefore possesses no understanding at all.

claim is simply wrongheaded which effectually asserts that failing to understand a subject correctly is tantamount to a failure to believe it. “Understand” signifies “make out the meaning” (see Keyword Concordance, p.314); “believe” means “*be convinced by* testimony (concerning matters outside the sphere of observation)” (see Keyword Concordance, p.28; *cp* Hebrews 11:1: “faith is [1] an *assumption* . . . [and, 2] a *conviction* . . .”).

Understanding (i.e., discernment of true meaning), is the result of correct interpretation, that is, of correct judgment of *the sense* in which what is said was intended to be understood. Belief, however, consists merely in the acceptance of testimony and the conviction that it is true. One may very well genuinely believe that which he does not truly understand. It is only because we ourselves often speak imprecisely<sup>4</sup> that we are confused concerning this theme, saying that a man does not *believe* a statement to be so, when our actual thought, *fairly and accurately stated*, is that he does not *understand* the statement according to truth, according to the sense in which it is truly intended.

4. The error of argumentation termed the Fallacy of Equivocation is at the root of the mistaken position which equates misunderstanding with unbelief. It is committed in relation to the problem we are considering when in one instance we say a man “does not believe,” when our thought is that he [*a*<sup>1</sup>] “is not convinced by the testimony of,” and yet in another instance say that he “does not believe,” when our thought is that he [*a*<sup>2</sup>] “does not make out the meaning of.” That is, this fallacy is committed when [*a*<sup>2</sup>] is the situation which obtains, and yet, by force of the same language, we argue *as if* (for our argument to have any possible merit) [*a*<sup>1</sup>] were the situation which obtains—even though it does not obtain, nor is it even our thought that it does obtain. This insidious error is the cause of many a false conclusion even as of the unwitting propagation of many a myth. Hence, wherever it exists, we should do our utmost to discern its presence and to reject all arguments based upon its employment.

In addition, it is also wrong to claim that someone “does not really believe” a certain scriptural testimony (e.g., the testimony that Christ died for our sins), in any case in which the person, in fact, not only is honestly convinced that the proffered testimony is true, but in which he simply holds, *in part*, to a wrong opinion concerning it.

Let us be fair. Traditionalists freely believe the account that on the cross, Jesus suffered and died. It is simply incorrect for anyone to deny the fact that this is their faith. It is only that traditionalists differ with non-traditionalists as to *the sense* in which He died. The traditionalist affirms that Jesus died corporeally, with reference to the demise of His body. The non-traditionalist affirms that Jesus died entirely, with reference to the demise of the entirety of His being.

It is not that one party believes that Christ died and the other does not, but that there is a difference of opinion between the two parties as to the correct sense in which it is so that Christ died.

In arriving at any opinion at all concerning a certain declaration of faith, whether or not one should do so consciously and formally, in any case, one must necessarily engage in interpretation concerning it. Opinion—any opinion at all—is impossible apart from interpretation, whether witting or unwitting. And, correct interpretation is no less interpretation than incorrect interpretation. Hence it is naive besides mistaken for any one of us to take the position in respect to himself in contradistinction to his fellows with whom he differs that, “I simply believe the Scriptures as they stand, unlike *you* who merely ‘interpret’ them. I furthermore say this even though I must admit that you, just as surely and in as conservative a way as myself, honestly accept the same writings as I do as constitutive of the very word of God.”

It is most remarkable that many have adopted such a perspective toward those with whom they differ doctrin-

ally, some even going so far as to imagine that those who are their theological opponents as to various important issues, are therefore not even in Christ.

#### MISCONCEPTIONS OF FAITH

The spurious argument that if one does not believe that Jesus died entirely, he does not believe that Jesus died, and so is unsaved, is based on the false assumption that in order to believe any certain statement, it is necessary to possess a true knowledge of its particulars. This simply is not true.

One may believe a declaration, itself, while *also* believing mistakenly concerning certain of its particulars. Perhaps this fact can be helpfully explained by way of the following examples:

There are many statements concerning technical computer topics, ones which I have accepted and believe to be true. I *do* believe these things are true, and I accept them accordingly.

Even so, for years I continued to misunderstand certain aspects of some of them, long after I first believed them to be so. And indeed, in the case of certain other such technical facts, I am aware that even today, after many years engagement in complex computer activities daily, I still do not properly understand them. Indeed, I no doubt continue to hold certain misconceptions concerning various computer-related subjects, ones which I nevertheless *believe* to be true.

Now my son Marc, who is trained in computer science, would never say that I do not *believe* this or that technical proposition to be true, things which he has taught me concerning or otherwise represented to me as true. Instead, he would simply say what is so: that I still *misunderstand* various things concerning some of these subjects.

Another example of honest belief in the presence of much ignorance is that of the belief which I once held, as

a small child with limited spelling skills, concerning pasteurization. I knew that cows lived in pastures, and had been taught that it was good to drink pasteurized milk. So I supposed that pasteurization was somehow concerned with cows that lived in the field as opposed to in a barn.

It is true that I then held a mistaken belief about pasteurization; and, it is true as well that even today I only know a little about that process. In fact, it may also be true that even today I still hold to some mistaken opinion or another concerning pasteurization. Nonetheless, from early childhood, I *have believed* that Borden Company milk is pasteurized.

Indeed, as I have already indicated, when I first believed this declaration, I did not even know what pasteurization *is*, much less did I hold to a fully correct definition thereof. This, however, did not change the fact that I believed what I was told. This is because I simply trusted the Borden Company to be telling me the truth in stating right on their carton that their milk was subjected to a certain process, thus named. My belief in their statement was dependent upon my trust in them; it was not dependent upon any knowledge of my own of the process claimed to have been performed. I did not possess either knowledge or understanding of pasteurization; nevertheless, I possessed *faith* that a process, termed pasteurization—whatever it may consist of—claimed to have been performed, had been performed.

#### FAITH IN GOD'S WORD

The truth concerning those who are called and in Christ, is not that they will correctly understand this or that “fundamental doctrine,” but that they will perceive in Christ, God’s own wisdom and power. They will be convinced of the declaration of faith that Jesus died and rose, whether or not their knowledge should be flawless concerning the correct sense of either “die” or “rise,” in this connection.

For the reasons already stated, the notion that one is simply not a believer or in Christ until he accepts certain important correct doctrines while rejecting certain other incompatible, incorrect doctrines, is necessarily mistaken.

It is true that popular myths such as the Trinity, free will, immortal souls, and eternal torment, are incompatible with and militate against the truth of the evangel. Because of their adherence to such contradictory views, many are kept back, whether to a great degree or even entirely, from a true understanding of the evangel.

We feel this tragedy deeply, and frequently need to be reminded that this, too, even as all else that is wrong with the world, is in God's purpose and will eventuate for good. Yet we rejoice that wherever God gives faith even though He does not yet grant understanding, faith remains, even as all the positional benefits which are afforded to God's chosen ones, who, *incidentally*, are also those who are believing.

How wonderful it is to know that faith is a privilege, not a requisite. Albeit that it is indispensable and essential, in relation to our present exalted position in Christ and our future eonian life and glory, it is but a concomitant: ever an accompanying means of further blessing; never a contrivance of human merit (*cf* Rom.8:28-32; *cp* 1 Cor.1:21-25).

We have no promise that within the course of our present lifetime even relative maturity of faith will be given to all who are chosen. We only know that, whether sooner or later, concerning the one who is infirm in the faith: "he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand." In the meantime, the ecclesia will continue to consist of all those who are *chosen and called*, to whom it is *given* to believe that Christ is the wisdom and power of God and that Jesus died and rose—however limited or faulty their apprehension of these glorious declarations may be.

J.R.C.

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*Notes on 1 Samuel*

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### SAUL'S FINAL PURSUIT

(1 Samuel 26)

**26** + The Ziphites <sup>1</sup>came to Saul at<sup>d</sup> 'Gibeah, > saying<sup>-</sup>, Is not David concealing himself <sup>7</sup>with us<sup>s</sup> <sup>i</sup>on the hill of Hachilah, adjoining the desolation? <sup>2</sup>+So Saul <sup>1</sup>rose and went <sup>1</sup>down to the wilderness of Ziph, and <sup>1</sup>with him 3,000 chosen<sup>1</sup> men of Israel, to seek <sup>1</sup>David in the wilderness of Ziph. <sup>3</sup>+While Saul <sup>1</sup>encamped <sup>i</sup>on the hill of Hachilah <sup>w</sup>adjoining the desolation, <sup>on</sup>by the road, + David was <sup>sit</sup>staying in the wilderness. +When he <sup>lsee</sup>discerned that Saul had come after him to<sup>d</sup> the wilderness, <sup>4</sup>+ David <sup>1</sup>sent out spies<sup>1</sup> +that he might know that Saul had come > prepared<sup>1</sup> <sup>7</sup>from Keilah<sup>0</sup>. <sup>5</sup>+Then David <sup>1</sup>rose <sup>7</sup>in stealth<sup>0</sup> and <sup>1</sup>came to the <sup>ri</sup>place where Saul had encamped, and David <sup>1</sup>saw <sup>the</sup> <sup>ri</sup>place where Saul lay, and Abner son of Ner, the chief of his military host. +Now Saul was lying within the round camp, +while the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers were camping round about him.

<sup>6</sup>+Then David <sup>1</sup>responded and <sup>1</sup>said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, > saying<sup>-</sup>, <sup>a</sup>Who will go <sup>1</sup>down <sup>1</sup>with me into the camp to Saul? + Abishai <sup>lsa</sup>replied, I' shall go down with you. <sup>7</sup>+When David and Abishai <sup>1</sup>came >upon the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers by night, + <sup>bd</sup>there was Saul lying asleep in the round camp, +with his spear stuck<sup>1</sup> into the earth by his headrest; + Abner and the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers were lying round about him. <sup>8</sup>+ Abishai <sup>1</sup>said to David, Today Elohim has surrendered <sup>1</sup>your enemy<sup>1</sup> into your hand. + Now <sup>pr</sup>let me smite him <sup>i</sup>with the spear + into the earth only <sup>du</sup>once, and I shall not repeat this

to him. <sup>9</sup> + But David <sup>lsa</sup> replied to Abishai, You must not <sup>c</sup>bring him to <sup>l</sup>ruin, for <sup>a</sup>who could stretch forth his hand <sup>i</sup>against the anointed of Yahweh, and be innocent? <sup>10</sup> As Yahweh lives, David <sup>lsa</sup> continued, but rather Yahweh Himself should strike him down, whether his day <sup>l</sup>comes and he will die, or he goes <sup>l</sup>down in battle and is swept away.

<sup>11</sup> Far be it <sup>l</sup>from me, <sup>f</sup>by Yahweh, <sup>f</sup>to stretch<sup>-</sup> forth my hand <sup>i</sup>against the anointed of Yahweh! Now <sup>+</sup>then, <sup>pr</sup>do take <sup>l</sup>the spear which is by his headrest and <sup>l</sup>the cruse of water, and let us <sup>l</sup>go <sup>l</sup>on our way. <sup>12</sup> + So David <sup>l</sup>took <sup>l</sup>the spear and <sup>l</sup>the cruse of water from beside Saul's headrest, and they <sup>l</sup>went <sup>l</sup>on their way. <sup>+</sup> There was no one seeing and no one knowing and no one waking; <sup>t</sup> all of them were sleeping, for a stupor from Yahweh had fallen on them.

<sup>13</sup> + Then David <sup>l</sup>passed on to the other <sup>r</sup>side and <sup>l</sup>stood on the summit of the hill afar off, with <sup>l</sup>much <sup>ri</sup>space between them. <sup>14</sup> + David <sup>l</sup>called out to the <sup>wi</sup>soldiers and to Abner son of Ner, <sup>l</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, Are you not answering, Abner? <sup>+</sup>At that Abner <sup>l</sup>responded and <sup>l</sup>said, <sup>a</sup>Who are you that you call out to the king? <sup>15</sup> + David <sup>lsa</sup> replied to Abner, Are you not a man? And <sup>a</sup>who is like you in Israel? Why <sup>+</sup>then did you not keep guard <sup>l</sup>over your lord the king? For one of <sup>l</sup>our <sup>w</sup>soldiers came to <sup>c</sup>bring ruin <sup>l</sup>to the king your lord. <sup>16</sup> Not good is <sup>l</sup>this <sup>l</sup>thing <sup>w</sup>that you have done. As Yahweh lives, <sup>t</sup> sons of death are you all who did not keep guard over your lord, over the anointed of Yahweh. <sup>+</sup> Now <sup>see</sup>look! Where is the king's spear? And <sup>~</sup>where<sup>~</sup> is the cruse of water <sup>w</sup>that was by his headrest?

<sup>17</sup> + Saul <sup>l</sup>recognized <sup>l</sup>David's voice and <sup>lsa</sup> asked, Is this your voice, my son David? And David <sup>lsa</sup> replied, It is my voice, my lord the king. <sup>18</sup> + Then he <sup>l</sup>said, Why then is my lord pursuing after his servant? <sup>t</sup> What <sup>7</sup>sin<sup>0</sup> have I done? <sup>+</sup> What evil deed <sup>7</sup>is found<sup>0</sup> <sup>i</sup>on my hand? <sup>19</sup> + <sup>now</sup>Therefore, I pray, may my lord the king hearken <sup>l</sup>to the words of his servant. If Yahweh incited you <sup>i</sup>against me, let Him

smell an approach present. <sup>+</sup>Yet if the sons of mankind did it, cursed<sup>l</sup> are they before Yahweh! For they have driven me out today from adhering<sup>-</sup> <sup>i</sup>to the allotment of Yahweh, <sup>l</sup>saying<sup>-</sup>, Go, serve other elohim. <sup>20</sup> + <sup>now</sup>Oh, let my blood not <sup>l</sup>fall to<sup>d</sup> the earth aloof from the presence of Yahweh! For the king of Israel has come forth to seek <sup>l</sup>a single flea, just as one <sup>l</sup>pursues <sup>l</sup>a partridge in the mountains.

<sup>21</sup> + Saul <sup>lsa</sup> replied, I have sinned. Return, my son David, for no<sup>t</sup> <sup>fr</sup>longer shall I <sup>c</sup>do evil to you, inasmuch as my soul has been precious in your eyes <sup>l</sup>this <sup>l</sup>day. Behold, I have <sup>c</sup>acted unwisely, and I am very much<sup>-</sup> in <sup>l</sup>error. <sup>22</sup> + David <sup>l</sup>responded and <sup>l</sup>said, <sup>bd</sup>Here is the king's spear. <sup>+</sup> Let one <sup>f</sup>of the lads cross over and <sup>l</sup>take it. <sup>23</sup> + As for Yahweh, He shall recompense <sup>l</sup>each man <sup>l</sup>for his righteousness and <sup>l</sup>for his faithfulness. <sup>w</sup>Though Yahweh gave you into <sup>7</sup>my<sup>cs</sup> hand today, <sup>+</sup> I would not <sup>l</sup>stretch forth<sup>-</sup> my hand <sup>i</sup>against the anointed of Yahweh. <sup>24</sup> And behold, just as your soul was great <sup>l</sup>this <sup>l</sup>day in my eyes, so may my soul be great in the eyes of Yahweh, and may He rescue me from all distress. <sup>25</sup> + Saul <sup>lsa</sup> replied to David, Blessed be you, my son David! You shall <sup>mr</sup>surely <sup>d</sup>accomplish, yea accomplish<sup>-</sup> all, and you shall <sup>mr</sup>surely <sup>all</sup>prevail, yea <sup>all</sup>prevail<sup>-</sup>. <sup>+</sup>Then David <sup>l</sup>went <sup>l</sup>on his way, and Saul, he returned to his <sup>ri</sup>place.

Again the Ziphites betrayed David's presence to Saul. Saul brought his standing army of 3000 men and encamped at the hill of Hachilah. David sent out spies to get an accurate knowledge of Saul's whereabouts, forces and supplies. The biblical narrative has frequently told us of Saul's inner thoughts and the motives behind his actions. But it has locked us up with David's words and actions, and left us to ponder these if we would know his heart. Most of our light on David's inner feelings is found in the Psalms. In passages like the present, we can only surmise what prompted him to enter Saul's camp. Because of this the narrative

becomes more suspenseful, and it draws us to place ourselves in David's sandals, questioning his actions and comparing them with our own.

Zeruiah (v.6) was a sister of David (1 Chron.2:16-17). Her three sons, Abishai, Joab, and Asahel were all loyal to David. These dauntless brothers won their places of leadership by proving their prowess and fearless daring (*cf* 1 Chron.11:10-25). When David asked, "Who will go down with me into the camp to Saul?" seemingly a suicide mission, Abishai was a ready volunteer.

#### SAUL'S SPEAR

A king's or chieftain's spear had much the same significance as a scepter. This explains its presence at Saul's side when he tried previously to thrust it through David, and when he had aimed it at Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:10-11; 19:9,10; 20:33). This was not a javelin, but a large heavy spear. The spear was pointed on the butt end also, providing a warrior with a weapon he could thrust backwards at a pursuing enemy, as Abner did to Asahel (2 Sam.2:23). The rear point was also used to plant the spear in the ground.

It was customary, even into modern times, that the chieftain's spear would be stuck in the ground at his place of encampment, or outside the door of his tent. It served as a standard or ensign to identify the vicinity of the chieftain. This explains why, even from a considerable distance, David would be able to determine Saul's location in the camp. The camp was circular. The circumference of soldiers provided protection for their leaders within.

#### DARING DAVID

David and Abishai stole into Saul's camp. When they reached Saul, Abishai asked permission to kill Saul using only one, swift, merciful stroke. David refused on the grounds that Saul was God's anointed. Needless to say,

David was also God's anointed, and Saul would not desist from continually stretching forth his hand against David. But David's reverence for Yahweh restrained him.

With Saul's spear and water cruse in hand, David and Abishai retreated from the camp to the top of a hill across the valley. From this vantage point David called out to Abner. Abner's reply carries the sense, "Who are you who dares to call to the camp of the king and disturb the king!?"

Then David ingeniously turned the tables on Saul and Abner. In calling out to Abner, as he did, David presented the claim that Saul would be safer if his care were entrusted to David! Abner was speechless. Saul was embarrassed and ashamed to the point he could not continue his pursuit of David.

#### PSALM 7

It may have been that David had bitter enemies in Saul's court. He said to Saul, "Yet if the sons of mankind did it [incited you against me], cursed are they before Yahweh! For they have driven me out today from adhering to the allotment of Yahweh, saying, Go, serve other elohim" (v.19).

The superscription of Psalm 7 makes reference to the words of Cush, a Benjamite. "Save me from all those pursuing me, and rescue me! Lest he should tear my soul to pieces like a lion, tearing it off while there is no rescuer" (Psa.7:1b-2). Verses 3-5 bear a resemblance to David's rebuke of Saul in both chapter 24 and 26: "O Yahweh, my Elohim, if I have done this, if there is iniquity in my palms, if I have requited evil to one at peace with me—I, who pulled off valueless spoils from my foe—may the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it, may he tramp my life into the earth, and may he cause my glory to tabernacle in the soil." Perhaps Saul would have been more lax in pursuing David had there not been an instigator close by who continually provoked Saul's emotions. Probably it was

someone who stood to lose position and authority if Saul's family ceased to rule.

#### PROPHETIC NATURE OF THE SCENE

At the cave, David had cut off the "wing" of Saul's cloak. The wing of the clothing is that portion with which the redeemer overshadows those whom he protects. (Compare Ruth 2:12 and 3:9 with Ezekiel 16:8 and their contexts.) That scene foreshadows that David would take Saul's position as Israel's protector and redeemer. The scene in this chapter foreshadows another aspect of the same truth. David took the spear and cruse of water which are repeatedly said to be located at Saul's headrest. This represents David taking the headship and scepter of rule over Israel.

It was as if David walked among the dead bodies of Saul and his leaders, and picked up the implements of kingship, to begin his rule in Saul's stead. Even David's words in this passage are suggestive of Saul's death: "But rather Yahweh Himself should strike him down, whether his day comes and he will die, or he goes down in battle and is swept away . . . for a stupor from Yahweh had fallen on them . . . As Yahweh lives, sons of death are you all" (verses 10,12,16). And, indeed, the day was soon to come when Saul would fall in battle.

Christ the Lord will return and take the rule of Israel while those who pursued and killed him lie silent in the grave. But their time will come to be raised. And they will be raised by the voice of Christ. And like Saul, they will repent of their deeds.

J. Philip Scranton

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During her many years of human experience including much toil and sadness, **Grace Swart** not only was strengthened with faith, expectation and love but grew in appreciation of the goodness of God. In recent years, she lived near her sister, Wilhelmina Packard, in Hazel Crest, Illinois, with whom she enjoyed close fellowship. She died on August 16 at age 91.

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

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#### THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL

LIKE the sudden, resounding chord of Haydn's "Surprise Symphony," 1 Corinthians 15:22 startles today's reader with its powerful clarity. There is no mistaking what the apostle has said. The same "all" who are dying "in Adam" shall be vivified "in Christ." Yet commentator after commentator and preacher after preacher asks, "Does Paul actually mean to say what he says?" And instead of looking back to see how truly Scripture has prepared the way, and how harmonious this word is with the evangel, the strains of divine indignation and judgment are seized upon, not as unresolved issues now being resolved, not as part of God's means toward His desired end, but as the end itself for millions of human beings, and an end beyond which God is either unable or unwilling to go. We are told that what Paul says elsewhere about judgment and loss are dominating themes which prove that Paul has overreached himself here in 1 Corinthians 15. "He did not mean what he said because elsewhere even Paul himself speaks of those who perish and are condemned without hope, for ever and ever."

#### THE HARMONY OF GOD'S WORD

Yet the conclusion that all humanity will possess and enjoy the life gained by Christ and manifested in His resurrection is fully in accord with Scripture and harmonious with the revelation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 4:6. Paul's letters indeed are addressed to *us who believe*, but they tell of what *God has done*, and what God has done, He has done *through His Son*,

our Lord Jesus Christ. The dominant theme of 1 Corinthians is the word of the cross; it is centered on *Christ and His saving work*. What it says about sinners, those saved by grace and those who are perishing, must finally be related to the primary fact that Christ Jesus came into this world to die for them (1 Tim.1:15). Against this, no arguments based on highly questionable translations (such as, “everlasting” and “for ever and ever”), or even more highly questionable explanations (such as, “Some people must be eternally damned in order for God to display His justice”) can stand. The truth of what Christ came to do and what He did and the results of what He did must always be the determining factor in our understanding of Scripture, and most certainly of disputed passages.

1 Corinthians 15:22 is dramatic. If we are drowsing, it will wake us up. If we have become complacent, it will reinvigorate us spiritually. If we are indulging in a bit of self-congratulation because of all our blessings as believers, it will expand our appreciation of what Christ’s resurrection means to the entirety of God’s creation and to His own reputation. The exultant note of this passage in *contrast* to more somber sections of the Word, does not mean it is in *conflict* with the rest of the epistle or with God’s Word as a whole. It is, in fact, the logical development of the evangel that “Christ died for our sins” (1 Cor.15:3) and the fact that “Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing” (1 Cor.15:20). It does not clash with the rest of Scripture but awakes us to the overall triumphant theme that radiates in it against the dark, contrasting sub-themes.

#### THE GLORY OF GOD

In our Lord’s ministry to Israel He increasingly spoke solemn words of pain and loss. He prophesied that He will someday say to certain people, “I never knew you! Depart

from Me, workers of lawlessness!” (Matt.7:23). To whole nations He will declare, “Go from Me, you cursed, into the fire eonian” (Matt.25:41). In the book of Revelation we are told of other enemies who will be “drinking of the wine of the fury of God, blended undiluted in the cup of His indignation,” who will be “tormented in fire and sulphur . . . and the fumes of their torment are ascending for the eons of the eons” (Rev.14:10,11). Moreover, there is to be a judgment before the great white throne when many of mankind will be condemned to the lake of fire which is the second death (Rev.20:11-15).

But for all their frequency these are not the dominant theme of Scripture. They only serve to impress the goodness of the evangel upon us more solidly. The Lord spoke of condemnation for those who do wicked acts, for enemies and hypocrites and the irreverent, but He is still Jesus, the *Saviour*, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

The often quoted words of Revelation 14 and 20 concerning the lake of fire and torment within the time frame of “for ever and ever” must be carefully and seriously reexamined. A number of critical questions need to be asked. If these passages speak of everlasting torment for sinners from Cain to the Antichrist, why was such a destiny not mentioned, let alone spelled out clearly in Genesis and, indeed, throughout the Old Testament? And if they speak of all such sinners throughout all the ages why is torment for ever and ever applied in Revelation to certain wicked individuals only? And is there a difference between “smoke of their torment” and the actual experience of torment?

But beyond all this lies the all important factor of the revelation of Jesus Christ as “the Alpha and the Omega” (Rev. 1:8), “the First and the Last” (Rev.1:18; 2:8), and “the Origin and the Consummation” (Rev.21:6; 22:13). He is not only unveiled as the One bringing divine wrath upon corrupt

humanity, presiding as their Judge, but above these great works He is to be seen as “The Faithful Witness, the First-born of the dead, and the Suzerain of the kings of the earth” (Rev.1:5). He is the Lion out of the tribe of Judah, but He is also the Lambkin Who was slain (Rev.5:5-8).

This fully accords with 1 Corinthians 15:22-28. Christ is not “the Consummation” for those condemned to the second death until He is known and appreciated by them as the One Who died for their sins, Who is their Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The glory of God is revealed in and through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God’s just judgments cannot be the channel for a full appreciation of His glory. His indignation against sinners is not the final word concerning sinners, but only emphasizes the need for the final word which is God’s love commended in the death of His Son.

#### THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

That earliest of depraved, selfish, cruel and violent sinners, Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve, was put under God’s curse, and he will stand before the great white throne, and he will be condemned to the second death. But before Cain was born, the promise of God was given that Eve would have a Seed Who will hurt the *head* of the serpent (Gen.3:15). The promise is that there would be One Who would take back the authority that Satan had usurped. That word is fulfilled in Christ, as 1 Corinthians 15:24-27 explicitly declares, but even in Genesis 4 when we read of the tragic history of Cain, the words of Genesis 3 must still be heard.

Cain and Lamech, the Egyptians and the Canaanites, Assyria and Babylon, Herod and Judas and the worshippers of the wild beast, these are among the enemies of God. And we ourselves were numbered among them. All of us know the power of sin and the authority of corrup-

tion, both physical and moral, in our lives. The Scriptures speak loudly and at length of these things. Yet always there is the faithful and steady word of promise that this authority of evil over us is dealt with by the One, and this One is our Lord Jesus Christ, God’s beloved Son, Who died for all.

#### ALL VIVIFIED IN CHRIST

In 1 Corinthians 15:22-28, the apostle Paul establishes the evangel that absolutely all of humanity will ultimately enjoy life like that of Christ Himself because of His death and resurrection.

The parallel with “in Adam all are dying” directs us to see that the “all” who shall be vivified in Christ includes everyone of Adam’s descendants. This is verified by the following thought concerning “each in his own class.” Many attempts have been made to make the second *all* mean less than all mankind. One claim is that verse 23 defines this *all* as all “those who are His.” But if this were so, then there is no discernable reason for Paul to speak of “each in his own class.” Each individual among the all who are Christ’s would be in the same class.

But his wording shows that Paul had three classes in view, which are introduced by the words *Firstfruit* [FROM-ORIGIN], *thereupon* and *thereafter* (*cp* the use of these two latter terms in verses 5-7 of this chapter). These terms indicate a sequence of events in which the vivification of all occurs, “each in his own class.” The first rank includes Christ alone, Who leads the way, with His vivification occurring at His resurrection. The second class, introduced by the term “thereupon,” includes all who belong to Christ as God’s chosen ones. They will be vivified *in Christ*, at a future time of Christ’s presence with them, in accord with the various promises God has made in His Word. “Thereafter” comes “the consummation” of vivification *in Christ*

when all enmity, including death itself, is done away with, just as prophesied in Genesis 3:15.

It is significant that vivification in Christ is associated here with the nullifying of enmity and the abolishing of death during Christ's reign. Life immortal and incorruptible is based on the death and resurrection of Christ, but it is experienced under the reign of Christ in His exaltation over all evil forces (*cf* Phil.2:9-11).

#### CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUIT

Christ is the One Who died for sinners, and He is the Firstfruit of vivification. He establishes the pattern of what vivification is. In the Law the "firstfruit" is the first ripened grain or fruit which is gathered and then presented before God in view of His rich provisions to follow (*cf* Ex.23:19; Deut.26:2-10). It is given to God Who supplies abundantly what is needed.

The vivified Christ is Himself the great Source of praise and thanks to God for God's astounding provision of vivification to come. The *need* of vivification is race-wide, because, in Adam, we all are dying, we all are wanting of the glory of God, and we all are unthankful.

The extraordinary value of Christ's resurrection continues to amaze us. It was not simply a rescue of the Son of God from death, but an achievement by God of the defeat of all that is evil and the inauguration of all that is good. This is what is encompassed in the deliverance of Christ out of death into life, and it has positive repercussions for all.

#### THOSE WHO ARE HIS

Paul's emphasis on God's grace to the believer, His choice of us and the breathtaking future He has prepared for us is not being questioned here. But the evidence of this and other passages being examined in this series of studies leads me to the conclusion that Paul relates the salvation

of the believer with the salvation of all. "God is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers" (1 Tim.4:10). All will be vivified in Christ, but "those who are His" will be vivified in their own rank, or class.

I am aware that this view calls for quite an adjustment in thinking of the part of many believers. The idea that judgment determines people's final and eternal destiny has to be discarded. It is Christ Who has settled this matter once and for all in dying for sinners and in His resurrection as the Firstfruit of vivification.

Accepting this view, which is certainly in full accord with Paul's language here, can only add to our assurance concerning our own (gracious and special) calling and strengthen our faith. The truth of the ultimate vivification of all in Christ is centered on Him and His faithful obedience to the death of the cross. It honors God for His wisdom and power and love, and indeed far more truly for His righteousness than the traditional defenses made for the concept of everlasting damnation.

#### THE CONSUMMATION OF VIVIFICATION

The third class of vivification is the last in the series. The word *consummation* does not itself mean "the rest of humanity," but rather it refers to the finishing of this process of vivification which was begun with the resurrection of Christ out from among the dead. Nevertheless, this necessarily is made up of those who were not included in the second class of vivification; they are the only ones left of the all who were dying in Adam.

This consummation is centered and fully dependent on Christ. When God finishes any work He has undertaken He does so in and through His Son. What God does through His Son is not experimental; it is not a binding of wounds or a covering over of errors; it is fully and perfectly and gloriously a solution and a triumph and blessing. It is impos-

sible that there could ever be any vivification apart from Christ, and it is inconceivable that God's work of vivifying all in Christ not be consummated.

#### FORCES OF ENMITY NULLIFIED

The consummation of verse 24 cannot refer to a situation where millions of human beings are doomed in a hopeless hell, for Paul goes on to speak of enmity being nullified. Along with the consummation of vivification there must be an end of those forces of evil that have led to mortality and corruption. The cross of Christ is the basis for this removal of enmity (*cf* Col.1:20), but for the unbeliever the actual experiencing of willing and heartfelt subjection comes in connection with the reign of Christ, whether on earth or among the celestials. The reign of Christ brings about the abolition of all enmity so that what He has gained by His faithfulness in His death for sinners can be realized by all. It is a process in which the harvest, provided by God through the death of His Son is brought in.

The most tenacious and lasting source and force of enmity is death. But it is to be abolished (1 Cor.15:26). This is more than an end to dying; it is the death of death itself, including "the second death" (Rev.20:14). Now we see, if we had any doubts, what vivification means. It is life that is entirely freed from the tyrannizing and debasing influences of death. It is life like the life of Christ itself.

Therefore, if death is abolished, then all must, in God's own time, become alive with such a life as Christ possesses, which is exactly what Paul was saying in the latter half of verse 22. There will eventually be a time of vivification for those belonging to the class that was not earlier found to be Christ's. Then all will be found to be vivified in Christ.

Once there are no longer any forces of enmity in the universe there can be no more enemies. When all are vivified in Christ there can only be welcome and peaceful subjection.

#### ENEMIES SUBJECTED

Hence Paul speaks not only of the forces of enmity but of the creatures who have been held by these forces. All who have experienced the process of dying because they were in Adam will be brought under Christ's feet (1 Cor. 15:25). They will all become subject to Him (15:27,28).

If we are going to speak evangelically of subjection, that is, viewing it with reference to the cross and resurrection of Christ as the basis of Christ's reign, we cannot introduce terms of hate and stubbornness and enmity. They must be done away with, be taken away with the elimination of death. Christ's reigning can only lead to good. Subjection of enemies cannot be outward alone, but must be inward for the sake of the individual who is subjected and even more so for the sake of the One Who subjects. In the final analysis, subjection under the feet of Christ must be of the highest nature in full accord with His disposition of ever seeking the glory of God.

This is the revelation of Philippians 2:10,11, which speaks of everyone bowing and acknowledging the Lordship of Christ "for the glory of God the Father." In view of Christ's death for sinners and His triumphant resurrection, how can we think of His kingdom in terms of human rule with all its corruption and injustice and the inner insubjection, bitterness and hate that results? The subjection Paul speaks of in 1 Corinthians 15 is a subjection under *Christ* Who died for sinners, achieved by God Who commends His love in the giving of His Son.

#### CHRIST SUBJECTED

Much loss of honor for and appreciation of our Lord has resulted from denial of the ultimate, vivified subjection of those enemies who are not His in His presence. Perhaps even more loss has resulted from failure to appreciate the

glory of Christ's climactic act of giving up the kingdom to His God and Father.

Under Christ's reign vivification and subjection are partners to the glory of God. The nature of vivification is defined by the nature of Christ's vivification, full of life and power and for the glory of God. So also the nature of the subjection of all enemies under the feet of Christ is defined by the nature of the Son's subjection of Himself to God being described here in 1 Corinthians 15:28.

God's Son has always been subject to His God and Father. This is exhibited conclusively in His emptying of Himself of His former glory and then His humbling of Himself, "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:7,8). But in that future time when He reaches the pinnacle of His exaltation with all former enemies placed under His feet, in that highest exercise of power and authority and achievement of well being and peace, when all that is good is gained and realized, then He becomes subject to His God and Father in a new way. Then He, as the authoritative, powerful and universal Saviour and Justifier and Reconciler, *to Whom all have been made subject*, becomes subject to God.

There is only one place better for Christ than His place of exaltation as Subjector over all who have been at enmity toward God. And that is the position of the Subjected Subjector Who leads the way into that place of subjection for which all were made. For our Lord this is not a position of loss, not in any way, but one of joyful fulfillment.

All who once were enemies are thus brought, in Christ, into that most blessed place of subjected sonship before God, the glorious place for which they were created and in which alone they can also find their fulfillment and peace. They will fully and perfectly realize God as their All.

ALL IN ALL

"Then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him

Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all" (1 Cor.15:28).

It is highly irreverent to make this grand expression, *God All in all*, to mean that God will be All only in a part of the human race, and that part oblivious or insensitive to the misery of the rest. Equally irreverent is to suppose that, while God will be All in all, this will only mean a sullen and forced pacification for some.

If we know God's righteousness only as it is revealed in His judgments we do not know the whole of His righteousness. His righteous judgments are means to an end, and there will come a time when they are no longer needed. But God's righteousness manifested in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ (Rom.3:21,22) is permanent and full. If we know God's love only as it is revealed in His choice and call of us we do not know the whole of His love. His love toward us is vast and will bring much glory to Him for the transcendence of its grace. But His love commended in the death of His Son for His enemies (Rom.5:8), must ultimately be expressed in realization and enjoyment by all, including the enemies mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15. When God is All in all He will be manifested to all as He is manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As mentioned in the introduction to this series of studies, the "first and foremost" compelling reason for us to believe that all humanity will be saved is that "God is truly what He reveals Himself to be in the Scriptures."<sup>1</sup> As God, He cannot fail to achieve His purpose. As the wise God, the faithful God, the righteous God, the God of all power and peace and love, He will bring His creation into the recognition and appreciation of Himself. He will become ALL in all.

D.H.H.

1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.91, p.35.

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