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Grace Triumphant

Before the world was made
Or sun or planets shone,
Salvation's base was laid
In God's anointed Son,
Who came to spread the truth abroad
And reconcile a world to God.
By mercy's hand upheld,
Firmly His purpose stands:
What love His bosom filled!
What kindness moved His hands!
What pity warmed His pleading breath,
Who meekly blessed His foes in death!
Now raised to realms above
Where boundless mercies shine,
Will Christ forget His love?
Forget this heart of mine?
O, no; His favors never end;
He's here, He's here, the sinner's Friend.
Hail, all-triumphant hour
In which my Saviour rose!
The grave has lost its power;
My soul, forget thy woes.
Widely He'll spread His grace abroad
And safely guide a world to God.

S. Streeter

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 1996
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SEVEN

EDITORIAL

More and more we treasure the saying that “we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour” (2 Tim.4:10), welcoming it as a faithful word for each new day of our lives. We can put no reliance on our leaders, our thinkers, our social, educational, economic and ethical systems, no matter how well-meaning they may be, how sensible and hopeful they may seem. We pray for those in superior station and for all mankind, our neighbors and relatives, and those in distant places, millions upon millions of fellow human beings. But we don't expect (“expect” and “rely” are used for the same Greek word in the Concordant Version) anything of lasting value from them.

Our expectation is built and settled on the living God. That means we are optimistic in every way. As we begin this new year we look forward to great things. But these are not great things of our accomplishment or as measured by the world about us. We expect the great blessings of joy that issues from appreciation of God's grace; of peace that issues from acquaintance with God's work of conciliation; of invigoration that issues from the evangel that is God's power for salvation. Like Paul, we are not despondent, even though our bodies are decaying and we stumble into all sorts of troubles and perplexities, because we know these things are temporary, even momentary in comparison to what God is leading us into (cf 2 Cor.4:7-18). God is living, and He is saving, and He is bringing about “a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory.”

It is significant that Paul reminded the Galatians of both former suffering (Gal.3:4) and happiness (Gal.4:15). Even though they had turned from the message of grace
Paul was heralding, the two experiences of affliction and joy had accompanied their believing of the evangel (see also Phil.1:29:4:4). Indeed for all human beings there is much suffering, but for those who believe there is the special joy of seeing all, including pain and sorrow, under the hand of our gracious God, and though special afflictions are also added for those who believe, in connection with our believing, yet the grace in the evangel gives meaning and purpose to all our struggles.

When we hear of the illnesses of longtime friends of our work, and witness troubles in the lives of fellow believers, and receive whatever portion of evil God sends our way (cf Job 2:10), we remember that God is living, and He is saving. We know there are Goliaths to face in the coming year, but the living God will provide His arrays (see p.35). Yet where we can go beyond Job (see p.23) and beyond David in this recognition of God’s hand operating in all things is that we have accepted and are believing that Christ died for our sins and has been roused from among the dead and exalted above all powers (1 Cor.15:1-4; Phil.2:9-11). Because of the evangel concerning “the grace of Christ” (Gal.1:6), we see the character of the operations of the living God, that they are certain of success and are glorious!

Consequently, as believers, we are aware of such arrays of the living God, as those of grace in the evangel brought by Paul (see pages 5-8 on Philippians and pages 9-22 on Galatians), and of the way in which we have been set upon this pathway of grace (see p.43). The living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, is saving us who believe in special ways even today, bringing His arrays of grace transcendent and of love and faith and expectation into our lives. What a glorious prospect! As we look about at the multitudes of humanity, the ignorance and estrangement and confusion of this eon, we are made exultant by the faith that is given to us. D.H.H.
Living Expressions

FRAMEWORK OF PHILIPPIANS

Introduction (1:1)
Salutation (1:2)
The Philippians—Contribution—Doxology (1:3-11)
  Paul—his bonds in Christ (1:12-18)
  Paul—his indifference to death (1:19-26)
The Philippians—suffering with Paul (1:27-30)
Exhortation to imitate Christ (2:1-4)
Christ (2:5-11)
Exhortation to Obedience (2:12-18)
  Timothy—his character and service (2:19-24)
  Epaphroditus—his character and his sufferings (2:25-30)
Exhortation to Beware (3:1-3)
Paul (3:4-16)
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The Philippians—their care of Paul (4:10)
  Paul—his complacency in want (4:11,12)
  Paul—his strength in Christ (4:13)
The Philippians—Contribution—Doxology (4:14-20)
Conclusion (4:21,22)
Salutation (4:23)

THE BELIEVER’S CONDUCT

Both Ephesians and Colossians are easily divisible into two parts, doctrine and deportment. No such division can be seen in Philippians, for it is all devoted to conduct. It, indeed, divides into two complementary halves, for a glance at its structure will show that it is a reversion, dealing principally with living expressions of the evangel. In the first half are the examples of Christ and Timothy. These are balanced in the second by those of Epaphroditus and Paul. In the first part we are exhorted to imitate Christ (2:1-4); in the second we are hidden to imitate Paul (3:17-4:9). These facts are of vital value in the interpreta-

tion of this epistle, for some passages in it, divorced from its controlling theme, may be made to appear to teach truth quite beyond and contrary to Ephesians, but when kept within the bounds set by the epistle itself, and applied to our experience, they are in fullest accord with the previous epistle and its transcendent revelations.

A casual reading of Philippians gives little idea of the symmetry and beauty of its structure. Yet, for a close consideration of the epistle, there is no key comparable to a clear exhibition of the literary framework. The mind is likely to be lost in a maze of detail and forget the theme under discussion. Indeed it is not always easy to seize the real subject without some such aid as the structure affords. Perhaps the common impression of this epistle is that, like our own letters, it is a jumble of this and that and the other, without any designed relation between its parts. A so-called “analysis” is apt to be arbitrary and is usually derived from the interpretation, instead of aiding it. But a real “framework” should be as self-evident as the skeleton of an animal, with all its parts symmetrical and complementary, making their relationships quite obvious to all.

THE FOUR EXAMPLES

The framework of Philippians shows that its subject is participation in the evangel. We must not limit this to the heralding of “the gospel” to unbelievers. It includes all of the glad message as it was revealed, not only as imparted to faith, but as expressed in life. In the second half of Ephesians we are told how we should walk; here we are shown. There the basis of conduct is truth. Here it is illuminated by example. The greater part of this epistle is devoted to living expressions of the evangel. The service and suffering of its greatest exponents are presented for our consideration. Christ Himself, in His descent from the form of God to the shame of the cross, is presented for our imita-
Conduct and Service

corresponding to this we have Paul's descent from a self-righteous Pharisee to conformation to the death of Christ. The center of the epistle depicts two ideal characters—Timothy for service, and Epaphroditus for suffering.

Practice is a more powerful teacher than precept. Deeds may do more than declarations in directing our lives. In Ephesians we have already been told how we should walk. In Philippians we are given examples of such conduct in the careers of others. We are pointed to the emptying and humiliation of Christ, the forfeits of Paul, the solicitude of Timothy, and the suffering of Epaphroditus. These are the special characters in Holy Writ who are presented for our emulation within the boundaries of this present secret administration. Hence they should be frequent and foremost in our exhortations. They should be the leading characters in Christendom.

EXHORTATION TO SERVICE

In accord with its character, the hortatory passages in Philippians are not grouped together at the close, as in Ephesians and Colossians, but are scattered symmetrically throughout the epistle. They appear before and after the two great examples. The apostle pleads for a humble and obedient disposition like our Lord's (2:1-5, 12-18). He exhorts us to imitate himself and beware of those who act otherwise (3:1-3, 17-21). The question may arise, Since Ephesians has already dealt with the conduct which comports with its new revelation, what room is left for exhortation? The answer is that here also we see the special character of this epistle. The exhortations are general in Ephesians, here they apply particularly to service. Ephesians indeed dealt with the slaves of masters on earth. Philippians deals with the conduct of all saints in their character of slaves of a heavenly Master.

A. E. Knoch

Studies in Galatians

“LET HIM BE ANATHEMA!”

In approaching our consideration of Paul's epistle to the Galatians, in which the apostle defends his evangel of grace, we are especially struck by a recognition of our total dependency on God for the sake of faithfulness in the task at hand. If within Paul's epistles there are “some things hard to apprehend” (2 Peter 3:16), there are a great many other things that are easy to apprehend, even if difficult to accept and believe, due to the power of false tradition.

When we read in this same verse, written by the apostle Peter, that it is “the unlearned and unstable,” who are twisting the words of Paul, “as the rest of the scriptures also,” to their own destruction (or “loss”; ἀποκλείει, from-whole-losing), we are apt to suppose that it is primarily those with little formal education, perhaps ones who are mentally unstable as well, who twist the words of Scripture. In contradistinction to such persons of low estate, we are apt as well to call to mind the learned scholar and the stable citizen, only to suppose that such ones of high station, at least if they should be consecrated believers, are not apt to be guilty of any such twisting of Scripture as contemplated here by Peter. Such, however, is a naïve supposition indeed. In fact, it is a supposition which few scholars would make, for they are well aware of the tremendous diversity of opinion, even within their acknowledged circle, on a vast range of issues, including topics of great importance, whether within the Pauline writings or elsewhere in Scripture.

Perhaps if one insists on taking “unlearned” and “unsta-
ble” in such a sense that all honorable academicians of renown are excluded, we should reply, “All right, but I would have you know that in addition to the destructive twisting of Scripture which is engaged in by the unlearned and unstable, there is much Scripture-twisting engaged in as well by the learned and stable!”

It is not at all likely, however, that such a sense as most conjure up when hearing the word “stable,” and especially the word “learned,” is the thought that Peter had in mind. One may be a stable citizen, friend, and comforter, while being by no means stable in the faith. A man may be solid in his business dealings or otherwise in common points of character, and yet be altogether weak-kneed in standing for truth, or even in recognizing it. Similarly, one may be highly learned and enlightened in many a scripture-related discipline, rendering invaluable service to many in various ways, and still be quite unlearned as to many important scriptural teachings. In such cases, all their learnedness notwithstanding, it is simply that otherwise-learned men, have nevertheless not learned the truth as to various scriptural revelations of great consequence.

“All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are concealed” in Him, in the God and Father of Christ (Col. 2:2,3). Paul does not say that, for one who is a good fellow and scholarly, this is no longer true; that such a one may forego divine enlightenment, and has no need of saving grace in matters of spiritual judgment.

Similarly, Paul declares, “I plant, Apollos irrigates, but God makes it grow up. So that, neither is he who is planting anything, nor he who is irrigating, but God Who makes it grow up . . . . God's fellow workers are we. God's farm, God's building, are you” (1 Cor.3:5-9). Again, Paul does not say that, if one is of prodigious intellect and lauded by all the orthodox as being both astute and consecrated, such a one's intellectual and moral virtues may serve as a substitute means with a view toward that growth in truth for which lesser mortals must wait upon the divine determination. Nor does Paul say that in some mysterious, origi-native sense, such a one is ultimately responsible for his own growth; that he is not God's farm and building, but is his own farm and building.

As a means of grace, factually correct, scripturally-pertinent, advanced learning is often invaluable in the cause of truth, with a view toward its demonstration or proof. While at least in its vital elements, such scholarship will be intellectually sound, this is by no means to say that it will be recognized as such by all conservative and sincere theological academicians or other such professional theologians. Let us not be wise in our own conceit (Prov.26:12). “Let no one be deluding himself. If anyone among you is presuming to be wise in this eon, let him become stupid, that he may be becoming wise, for the wisdom of this world is stupidity with God. For it is written, ‘He is clutching the wise in their craftiness.’ And again, The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain. So that, let no one be boasting in men . . . .” (1 Cor.3:18-21a).

Let no one be Boasting in Men

GRACE TO YOU, AND PEACE!

Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, Who rouses Him from among the dead), and all the brethren with me, to the ecclesias of Galatia:

Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ . . . . (1:1-3)

In this epistle to the Galatians, the characteristic words of thanksgiving or blessing, which introduce Paul's other epistles, are conspicuous by their absence. Instead of giving thanks, Paul “marvels” (1:6); instead of a word of blessing, he pronounces an emphatic anathema (1:8,9). Indeed, Paul, immediately, without delay, begins by emphasizing
the authority which inheres in his apostleship and evangel, though this authority may be challenged or even denied by the Galatians. Without any deference either to formality or pleasantries, Paul abruptly begins by insisting that his apostleship is “not from men, neither through a man,” but that it is instead “through Jesus Christ and God, the Father.”

By his very first words, Paul emphasizes that “all the brethren with [him],” join him in acknowledging his authoritative apostleship, even as in concurring in the substance of the epistle which is to follow. But, far more significantly, Paul intimates here what he soon goes to extraordinary lengths both to stress and elucidate, that he is speaking by the word of the Lord in making this emphatic asseveration of his apostleship. Accordingly, in making the following extended presentation in defense of his evangel, a presentation with which the entirety of the remainder of the epistle will be concerned, Paul thus presses upon the Galatians the fact that he not only has the right to speak, but the right to be heard, and heeded. If the Galatians should dismiss his testimony, it is at their own peril that they do so.

As sobering as all of this is, what is more striking is that even if Paul must omit his usual introductory words of thanksgiving or blessing, that he might lose no time in pressing the urgency of his message upon the recipients of this epistle, he nevertheless does not omit his always-applicable (and, always-appropriate) words of greeting, “from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” This word of greeting is, “Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

What if some should come to disbelieve, and even repudiate, the grace which they once accepted? “Will not their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? May it not be coming to that! Now let God be true, yet every man a liar . . .” (Rom.3:3,4a). What God has promised in grace to His chosen ones, will surely come to pass concerning them. Simply because it is grace, it will not fail to bestow its blessing! That which is in grace is not out of works, “else the grace is coming to be no longer grace” (Rom.11:6). While a wage is not reckoned as a favor (or gracious gift), but as a debt (Rom.4:4), that which is reckoned as a gracious gift, is not reckoned as a debt. Since such a gift is not owed in the first place, and neither at any time does it become owed, it follows that any deficiency of service—however extreme—on the part of the one to whom its endowment has been granted, cannot deprive such a one of its blessing.

Consequently, when believers, such as the Galatians, “fall out of grace” (Gal.4:4b), they do so only in their apprehension of grace, and in an appreciation of it, with all the practical benefit that this entails. One does not, through disobedience, remove himself from the sphere of whatever divine blessing has been afforded him in grace. While this is so, he nevertheless may very well thereby remove himself from the sphere of a recognition and enjoyment, as such, of God’s gracious blessings. This is especially so in the case of one who denies and rejects the truth of grace.

For example, in the coming eons, all the members of the ecclesia which is Christ’s body will joyfully partake of the allotment of life eonian. This is simply because that allotment is a gracious gift (Rom.6:23). Yet only those members of the ecclesia today, who, in fact, and apart from contradiction, believe that eonian life is a gracious gift, presently recognize and enjoy this gift according to its true nature.
Many cannot possibly be at peace in their hearts, for they fancy themselves to be at least possible candidates for divine wrath. They imagine that if they should avoid coming under such judgment, it will finally be thanks only to themselves that they avoided such an awful end. We cannot convince them that they are in error; and God has yet to convince them, whether through ourselves or some other means. So we must deem such strong delusion as being in accord with His wisdom, and ultimately being out of Him (Rom.11:36).

We long for others to rejoice with us in common faith. We know how helpful it has been for ourselves no longer to repudiate God’s grace, but instead to repudiate our own self-righteousness and pride (to the degree that we have succeeded in so doing). We long for our fellow believers to join us in pursuit of a walk consistent with the truth that all is of God, through Him, and for Him. But until God grants them this awareness, and whatever they may say or do in repudiation of grace in the meantime, let us rejoice that the word of truth to them remains: “Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Established, Yet Not Steadfast

Who gives Himself for our sins, so that He might extricate us out of the present wicked eon, according to the will of our God and Father, to Whom be glory for the eons of the eons. Amen! (1:4,5)  

Even as God “extricated” (“lifted out”) Joseph out of all his afflictions” (Acts 7:10), and, later on, extricated the sons of Israel out of Egypt (Acts 7:34), thus also, Christ Jesus “gives Himself for our sins, so that He might extricate us out of the present wicked eon.” In each case, the respective extrication is “according to [literally, “down’] the will of our God and Father, to Whom be [the] glory” (cp v.5). The basis of the blessed deliverance is God’s own decision so to act. What it “comes down to,” then, is that Christ gives Himself for our sins, so that, according to God’s own will, such a glorious deliverance of us, out of this wicked eon (cp 1 Thess.4:15-17), should actually come to pass. It is not that Christ gives Himself for our sins so that such a deliverance might possibly come to pass, but then again might never come to pass at all. If God must wait on man, and worse yet, depend on man, He can never act in grace, much less, can He glorify His own name, alone, in our deliverance.

It is with such considerations having already been presented, that Paul then moves directly to the heart of the Galatians’ error:

I am marveling that thus, swiftly, you are transferred from that which calls you in the grace of Christ, to a different evangel, which is not another (1:6)

Though Paul had once labored among them, “establishing all the disciples” (Acts 18:23), it is evident that the Galatian believers were unable to remain steadfast. Though for some time, they remained in the teaching which they had accepted through Paul, they never became “settled, [and] unmovable” therein (cf 1 Cor.15:58). They were by no means mature in the faith, readily able to discern contradictory teachings. Any objections that they may have initially had to such a different evangel as that introduced by Paul’s opposers, were subsequently quelled, through the persuasiveness of the entrancing error with which the Galatians eventually became enthralled (cf 3:1; 5:1,8).

Whether or not their “insurrection” (5:12) also startled him (cp Phil.1:28), it at least caused Paul to “marvel” (1:6). He frankly admits that the Galatians’ swift transfer from his own evangel of the grace of Christ to a different evangel, was an object of wonder, full of astonishment!

It was not that the Galatians immediately, as soon as Paul was out of reach, turned away from the truth to such grievous error. It was instead that, however long it may have
been before the incipience of their apostasy, once they came under its spell, they then “swiftly” became “transferred” from Paul’s evangel of grace to a different evangel.

“A DIFFERENT EVANGEL, WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER”

Note that the Galatians were transferred from “that which” called them in the grace of Christ to a different evangel. “That which,” in the Concordant Version, simply represents the Greek definite article (“the”). It is evident from what is said, however, that “the [evangel]” through which the Galatians were called into the grace of Christ brought by Paul, was that from which they were transferred to a different evangel. This is the central point: the message to which the Galatians had been transferred, which they deemed a message of good news, was nonetheless different than the evangel of the grace of Christ.

At least in the eyes of those who boast in themselves, it is possible to conceive of a message which holds out blessing as a reward for obedience to law-works, apart from grace, as a message of good news. It is not that, theoretically, such a message could not be a message of good news; it is instead that, as Paul insists, such an evangel is not the evangel of the grace of Christ. Therefore, at its core, this corrupt gospel was not, in fact, a gospel of grace, but of something different than grace, a gospel of blessing by means of law-obedience, apart from the grace of Christ. It is the grace of Christ which ultimately underlies the evangel of the Circumcision, even as, on its face, grace is the essence of the evangel of Christ which Paul was heralding among the nations (2:2).

Therefore, this spurious gospel by which the Galatians had become deceived, was “not another.” That is, it was not actually the evangel of the Circumcision, even if the Galatians were so ignorant of the true nature of that evangel as to identify the heterogenous corruption which they had embraced as the evangel of the Circumcision.

Here, for the English “[an]other,” the Greek is allos, from which “allotropic” is derived, which points to variation of form, to changes of properties shown by elements, without change of essential composition. Whatever the Galatians themselves might claim or imagine, Paul insists that their false gospel is essentially different from the evangel of the grace of Christ. It is not the “other” true evangel (the evangel of the Circumcision) at all, but only a pseudo-evangel which is a gross caricature of the evangel of the Circumcision. According to truth, it is no evangel at all. Therefore, it should be rejected, not embraced.

It is glorious to recognize that the true evangel of the Circumcision was the “other-evangel,” to which Paul here alludes. Though the evangel of the Circumcision differed from Paul’s in “other” (lesser) things—in externals of form and practice, as well as in allotment and in relation to the law—in essence, it was the same as Paul’s. That is, in the wider sense, it too was the evangel of the grace of Christ. Under
The Central Message of “Christ Crucified”

the evangel of the Circumcision, as much so as under that of the Uncircumcision, all blessing flows from the grace of God, through Christ, with all boasting in man debarred.

Hence, only by a fundamental distortion of the true evangel of the grace of Christ itself, could it ever be said that the Galatians’ pseudo-evangel, while being distinct from Paul’s evangel in non-central externals, was nevertheless, in essence, quite the same as the evangel which the apostle himself heralded.

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! As we have declared before and at present I am saying again, if anyone is bringing you an evangel beside that which you accepted, let him be anathema! (1:8,9)

In verses 8 and 9, the New International Version renders the dual phrases, “let him be anathema!” as “let him be eternally condemned!” Those who approve this supposed “dynamic equivalent” for the literal rendering, evidently reason that since the gospel which Paul herein opposes was not a true gospel at all, it must be that those who herald such a message are themselves lost, which, it is alleged, is to be equated with being “eternally condemned.”

We can understand why, as traditional “evangelicals,” such “translators” would conclude that false teachers, ones who themselves were unsaved, would have to be punished eternally. After all, according to them, the vast majority of the entirety of the human race, will be forever damned in the horrors of hellfire. So it is hardly surprising that unsaved, false teachers as well would have to be included, within the company of the damned.

It is not a matter, however, of a failure to believe other important teachings, but of a failure to believe the central message of “Christ crucified,” His death and resurrection, that shows that one is lost. Conversely, where these same glorious essentials are believed, we have the evidence that one is saved. All who see in Christ, God’s own wisdom and power, who believe as well that Jesus died and rose, are included among God’s people (cf 1 Cor.1:21-25; 1 Thess. 4:14). This is so, even if they should be utensils of dishonor as to their service, having been given over to foolish myths.

There is no indication that those who were disturbing the Galatians denied these most basic elements of faith. Indeed, it is not credible to suppose that they did do so. The Galatians would hardly welcome the teaching of any who actually made any such extreme, foundational denials. Therefore, even on so-called “evangelical grounds,” such a remarkable rendering as, “let him be eternally condemned!” should hardly be countenanced.

Paul’s words, “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), make it clear that an evangelist’s divine authority is vested not in the messenger, but in the message. If Paul himself, or even “a messenger out of heaven,” must be anathematized should he bring a different evangel than that of the grace of Christ, it is impossible to believe that any contemporary man, whether priest or pastor, would be exempt from this same proscription.

“DEVO TED TO DESTRUCTION”

But what does it mean to be “anathema,” and of what does the anathema consist here in Paul’s warning?

In the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament), anathema is the translation of the Hebrew cherem. It speaks of something that is “devoted,” yet in the sense of, unto adversative judgment; hence, “devoted to destruction” (or “loss”; e.g., Deut.7:26; Joshua 7:1,11-13). Certainly, an anathema is something that no one would care to invite upon himself. When Paul, then, says of any who bring
a false gospel, “let him be anathema!” the sense is, Let him be subject to certain, adversative judgment. The word itself, however, tells us nothing of the particulars or duration of any such judgment. For this we must consider the nature of the case, in any specific pronouncement of anathema.

The “anathema” which Paul pronounces in Galatians 1:8,9, consists of many grave consequences, but these do not include being subjected to “eternal condemnation.” Life’s justifying is for all mankind; and through the obedience of Christ, the entire vast throng of the human race shall be constituted just (Rom.5:18,19). We rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10), Who will abolish death and become All in all (1 Cor.15:26,28).

Neither does Paul’s anathema consist in the loss of eonian life for any such opposing teachers, those who nevertheless are in Christ. Eonian life is a gracious gift (Rom.6:23); grace reigns, for life eonian, through Jesus Christ, our Lord (Rom. 5:21; cp Titus 3:7). Nor does Paul's anathema consist, in the case of any in Christ who indeed must come under its judgment, of also coming under God's indignation. God has not appointed us to indignation (1 Thess.5:9a); we shall be saved from the indignation of God through Christ (Rom.5:9).

Finally, Paul’s anathema does not impose soulish suffering. There is much that is destructive, that nonetheless is not at all destructive to health, wealth, and pleasure. For example, untroubled resignation concerning, combined with an unbridled zeal to uphold, the teaching of a horrible hell where the vast majority of men must spend eternity, coupled with an ethic that can finally only thank oneself for one’s exemption therefrom, is conducive neither to pity nor humility. Yet since most, especially if they should enjoy a good measure of conventional well-being, are insensitive to the deep injuriousness of such attitudes and beliefs, they remain oblivious to the very real anathema to which their own apostasy has subjected them.

For all the things which Paul’s pronouncement of anathema does not bring upon those who come under its judgment, this anathema does result in the preclusion of its subjects from the circle of those who are faithful dispensers of Christ (Col.1:7), and ensures all such persons’ inclusion among that company who are fraudulent workers (2 Cor.11:13), deceivers (2 Tim.3:13), and enemies of the cross of Christ (Phil.3:18). One may be all of these, without intending to be any of these, while being confident that one is none of these.

Paul’s anathema upon those who proclaim a different evangel, entails their loss of wages at the dais of Christ (cp 1 Cor.3:14,15; 2 Cor.5:10), even as their disqualification for a position of reigning (cp 1 Cor.9:27; 2 Tim.2:12a). It means that, apart from repentance, such will spend their careers in essential and vital opposition to the grace of God. It means that their ministries cannot but become a substantial disservice to others, through which many are injured and deceived. Worst of all, Paul's anathema entails God’s displeasure with the ministry of all such ones, at least with respect to the essential character and content of their teaching. It means a life lived under the power of strong delusion; a strong delusion of a most insidious nature.

If one finally owes their enjoyment of divine blessing to themselves, it is impossible for them to thank God for it. Such cannot glorify God as God, and must to a considerable extent involve themselves in the veneration of the creature rather than the Creator. They cannot thank God alone even for their virtues, much less for their failures, which will yet bring glory to Him, for they imagine that they themselves are ultimately responsible for their deeds.

Anyone who is subject to such dreadful consequences as these, certainly has come under a great anathema; a tremendous course of destruction, to one’s own great loss. And, anyone who repudiates the grace of Christ for a dif-
A Baneful Anathema

It is not that God is indignant with such ones and so is reckoning their offenses against them. This is by no means the case (cf 2 Cor.5:18,19; Rom.5:9,10). It is simply that, as in the case of all evil doing, when one is resolute in the advocacy of fundamentally false teaching, injurious consequences must follow in response to such improper actions. All such chastenings are designed to accord with God’s purpose, and are in perfect harmony with His wisdom and love. Eventually, through such disciplines, and especially, through the saving grace of God itself, all will be brought not only to their senses but to salvation, even as to a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4).

Even if some (indeed, the vast majority) are ignorant of God and of the evangel of the grace of Christ, may such ignorance not be our portion. Let us “sober up justly and . . . not be sinning” (cp 1 Cor.15:34). While Paul’s anathema is formally pronounced only upon those who bring an evangel beside that which the apostle first brought to the Galatians, many of the same injurious consequences which most especially accrue to the heralds of such delusions, necessarily accrue as well to those who accept and live according to the selfsame teachings.

Even so, having duly considered this baneful anathema pronounced by Paul, how we rejoice to know that for those who are in Christ, even if, like the Galatians, they have come under the sway of the teachings of Paul’s antagonists, there is a word of grace and peace. Accordingly, Paul writes to all such ones: “Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Gal.1:3). Hence, as the apostle further declares in closing this epistle, we say as well to our readers in closing this exposition: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit brethren! Amen!” (Gal.6:18).

J.R.C.

Notes on the Book of Job

THE ENDURANCE OF JOB

THE SCENE set before us is grim. A good and compassionate man sits among the ashes, full of boils from head to foot, bereaved of his children, deprived of all his acquisitions, utterly cast down from his position of respect and honor within his world. Three close associates, evidently holding similar positions of responsibility in their respective city-states, have traveled to comfort him. But they are so astounded by his misery they cannot speak.

WHY THIS SUFFERING?

As we try to visualize this scene we find ourselves asking the question, Why? Why is Job experiencing this great evil? And more than this, Why is there evil at all? And most importantly of all, Why is there evil when there is also God?

We cannot expect the book of Job to answer this deepest of questions fully, but we can expect it to provide some important understanding. The book will indeed testify to the most basic principles of all, that God is in charge and has goals of good in view and is operating toward those goals.

Two of these goals are suggested in James 5:11. The most immediate purpose for Job’s afflictions is the development of endurance. But as Paul reminds us in Romans 5:3-5, endurance is not an end in itself, but is a good that leads to further blessings. Hence James speaks of the consummation that the Lord provided for Job, the insight Job gained through the words of Yahweh concerning His deity and the enjoyment of God’s abundant provisions in Job’s “latter years” (Job 42:12-16).
In view of the severity of Job’s sufferings that we can truly speak of his endurance. The measure of Job’s afflictions is the measure of his endurance. We are apt, however, to think of endurance as a kind of passive acceptance. But, though it would include the seven days and nights of silence, Job’s endurance involved his outcries and lamentations starting with chapter 3. Job’s endurance was an insistence on connecting the evil he was suffering with the God Who brought him into existence and Who is operating all.

The elements of the Greek word for endurance, used by James, are: UNDER-REMAIN. Job remained under his afflictions, but not under the afflictions alone. He remained under the conviction that whatever he received in life, whether good or evil, it is from God. Job’s endurance involved a continually honest facing of the facts. The sufferings were genuine; they were not divine judgments against wickedness in himself; he must look to God alone concerning them. Job’s endurance involved his refusal to be deviated from this position.

THE CONSUMMATION

The word “consummation” suggests more than a ceasing or coming to an end. It speaks of coming to ends that were in view from the beginning, in this case to the goals that the Lord had purposed. Job’s sufferings and the endurance given to him under his sufferings lead forward to “the consummation of the Lord,” that is, that achievement of good that the Lord had in view from the beginning.

At the end of the book, Job realizes that he had professed ideas without understanding them: “Things too marvelous for me, that I did not know” (Job 42:3). What he had said was “rightly so” (42:7), but as he spoke was not seeing Yahweh (42:5) with clear realization and confidence. That was reserved for the consummation of his experience.
Job's Reply to Zophar (21:1-34)
Eliphaz's Third Address (22:1-30)
Job's Reply to Eliphaz (23:1-24:25)
Bildad's Third Address (25:1-6)
Job's Reply to Bildad (26:1-27:12)
Job's Summation (29:1-31:40)

LET IT BE DARKNESS!
(Job 3:1-26)

After the seven days and nights of silence, Job opens his mouth and words pour out. It is the reverse of Genesis chapter 1. In Genesis the brief and powerful words of God burst through the darkness and the chaos and bring forth seven days of creative activity and achievement. In Job the seven days (with their seven nights of darkness, appropriately noted) lead to the many words of Job pleading for a negation of his own beginnings. Job would have the light turn back to darkness, and his life undone.

Far from forgetting his words of 2:10, Job associates the evil he is experiencing with his Creator by paralleling his words with the opening words of Genesis, though in reverse order. In effect, Job points to God as the One with ultimate responsibility. God has given life to Job and has brought him into a world energized by light, but a world nevertheless where darkness remains. Life and light are not the problem, but rather the experience of evil within life, and evil so severe that Job longs for a reversal of the light into the darkness of Genesis 1:2. And for this, Job looks to God.

It is in this pathway, the struggle to perceive God in and through his experience of evil, that Job's thoughts take us. His words lead backward from the evil of his afflictions to a longing for the darkness of Genesis 1:2, and this will eventually bring us to a fresh insight into the mean-

Job 3:1-16

3 Thereafter Job opened his mouth, and he 'maledicted his day. 2 *Thus Job *asserted, * 'saying:
3 May the day perish in which I was born, and the night that said, A master is engendered!
4 That day! let it be darkness;
   Let not Eloah from above seek after it,
   And let not a light beam shine on it.
5 May darkness and the blackest shadow redeem it back;
   May a cloud tabernacle over it;
   May rolling fogs of the day frighten it.
6 That night! may gloom take hold of it;
   May it not be one of the days of the year;
   In the numbering of the months, may it not enter.
7 Behold, that night! may it be stark;
   May it not be one of the days of the year;
   In the numbering of the months, may it not enter.
8 May those who curse the day revile it,
   Who are equipped to rouse the dragon.
9 May the stars of its morning gloaming be darkened;
   May it expect a light and there be none,
   And let it not see the eyelids of the dawn.
10 For it did not close the doors of my mother's belly
   Or conceal misery from my eyes.
11 Why did I not die from the womb,
   From the belly come forth and breathe my last?
12 For what reason did two knees anticipate me,
   And why the two breasts that I could suck?
13 For now I would lie and be quiet;
   I would sleep; then there would be 'rest for me,
14 With kings and counselors of the earth,
   The builders of desert tombs for themselves,
15 Or with chiefs who 'had gold,
   Who were filling their houses with silver.
16 or Why *was I not like a buried stillborn child,
   Like babes who have not seen light?
Job and his Maker

ing of Genesis 1:1 and a clearer recognition of God, Who gives light and life.

ELOAH

In addressing Deity or speaking of Him, Job uses the title “Eloah” more often than any other designation. He uses “Elohim” only once, and “El” eighteen times, but he uses the rare title “Eloah” twenty-five times.

The common Hebrew term for God is “Elohim” which is plural in form. “Eloah” is the same term in its singular form and means literally: to-subjector. A. E. Knoch comments on this in relation to the book of Job, as follows:

“The book of Job is remarkable in many ways. As it is one of the earliest pieces of literature, it deals with the relations between man and his Maker in a very simple and primitive fashion. In our present study, it is worthy of note that... [Eloah] is more frequent [in Job] than in all [other books] combined.... Job seems quite sure that his fate lies in the hands of the To-Subjector, Whose function it is to make him bow to the Subjector’s will.”

DIFFERENT CONCERNS

There are distinct differences in tone and direction between the speeches of Job and those of his associates. Job is obsessed with the evil he is suffering and often speaks imprudently as he cries out for understanding and relief. His three associates are shocked by Job’s outbursts and try to redirect his thoughts into more conventional channels. But they forget that Job’s situation is not a conventional one.

Job’s lamentations continually direct attention to searching questions concerning the origin and the purpose of evil, and lead inevitably to thoughts regarding God’s rela-

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Eliphaz's Caution

Job 4:9-5:1

9. By the breath of Eloah are they perishing,
   And by the spirit of His nostrils
   are they being consumed.
10. The roaring of the lion
    and the voice of the black lion are gone,
    And the teeth of the sheltered lions are broken out;
11. The long-maned lion is perishing from lack of prey,
    And the cubs of the lioness are parted away.
12. *Now a word was brought stealthily to me,
    And my ear took hold of a little buzz of it.*
In disquieting thoughts from visions of the night,
In that stupor which falls on mortals,
13. Alarm befell me and quivering,
    And it made the multitude of my bones afraid.
14. Then a wind passed by on before my face;
    The hair of my flesh bristled.
15. Something stood there,
    Yet I could not recognize its appearance;
    A representation was in front of my eyes;
    It was still, and I heard a voice:
16. Can a mortal be righteous before Eloah?
    If He places no faith in His servants,
    And He charges His messengers with ~impropriety~,
    How much more so those who tabernacle
    in houses of clay,
    Whose foundation is in the soil?
    Forces crush them like a moth.
17. Between morning and evening
    they are being pounded;
    *Without being regarded, they perish permanently.*
18. Has not their tent cord been pulled up from them?
    They die, *but not with wisdom.*
19. *Call now! is there one who will answer you?*
    And to *whom from the holy ones shall you face?*

A WORD FROM ELIPHAZ
(Job 4:1-5:27)

It is not that what Eliphaz says is wrong in itself, but it is “not rightly so” in the context of the evil set before him. Like Bildad and Zophar, Eliphaz seeks to restrain and redirect Job’s thoughts. Hence he speaks of Job’s former qualities of leadership (4:3-6) and reminds Job of principles concerning divine operations that Job had previously held in common with his associates (4:7-11).

In no way would Eliphaz continue along the lines of thought that Job had introduced in chapter 3. Instead he would speak of Eloah with caution and a dose of mystery as we see in 4:12-16. When Eliphaz first speaks of Eloah his point concerns humanity rather than God: “Can a mortal be righteous before Eloah?” (4:17).

Hence our thoughts are directed to the fact that human beings are sinners. But the sinner Job, who owes his being to God, is suffering from severest bereavement and throb-
bing pain, and he is struggling for some understanding that relates this all to God. Eliphaz has missed the point, or rather, he refuses to deal with it.

Not only does Eliphaz want Job to concentrate more on himself as a mortal and a sinner, but he would have Job see God as One at a distance from dying and foolish humanity (4:18-5:7). He makes much of inquiring of El and placing his cause before Elohim. He speaks of God’s great deeds and marvelous works, but he refuses to go beyond what he has always understood of God, namely that God provides necessities and safety for the needy and appropriate retribution for the wicked (5:8-16). God causes pain (5:18) but in connection with correction of human failures (5:17). He assures Job that things will work out; as long as Job is innocent God will rescue him and restore him to prosperity (5:19-27). Again, this is what happens to Job, but it happens as God’s consummation rather than as God’s response to human deservings.

Besides using the characteristic title, Eloah, Eliphaz is the first to use the equally distinctive designation, Him Who-Suffices (5:17). Yet Eliphaz’s view of God’s sufficiency is applied only to human worthiness, so that, in effect, the thoughts of Eliphaz are discouraging to Job.

In 1 Corinthians 3:19, Paul cites the words of Eliphaz from Job 5:13. God is clutching or seizing “the wise in their craftiness.” This certainly is a good principle to remember concerning the wisdom of this eon (1 Cor.3:18), but it has little to do with Job’s situation, which would parallel more closely Paul’s situation described in 2 Corinthians 12:7. What Paul heard from the Lord then is surely something Job would have rejoiced to hear, and, we believe, truly in accord with that dimmer revelation of divine purpose that Yahweh finally gave to Job: “Sufficient for you is My grace, for My power in infirmity is being perfected” (2 Cor.12:9).

D.H.H.

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**Job 5:2-17**

2 Thus you must not reject the admonition of Him Who-Suffices.

3 Moreover, I have seen a foolish man reviled;
   And I saw his homestead suddenly reviled:
   And his borders fell within the day.

4 By day they grope at noon as if in the night;
   And may they be crushed in the gate
   "when there is no rescuer'.

5 His harvest, the hungry one shall eat,
   And he shall take it away to "secluded places";
   "Those thirsting~ will gasp for their estate.

6 For sorrow does not grow forth from the soil,
   And from the ground, misery does not sprout,
   But humanity is born to misery,
   "Even as "sparks of burning coal fly aloft.

7 Nevertheless, as for me, I inquire of El,
   And before Elohim do I place my cause,
   Doer of great deeds, "of which there is no fathoming,
   Marvelous works "of which there is no enumeration,
   Who is giving rain on the surface of the earth
   And sending waters over the surface of the open places.

8 In order to "set the lowly on high,
   And so the somber may become impregnable in safety,
   He is annulling the devisings of the crafty,
   So "that their hands may not achieve prosperity,
   Seizing the wise in their craftiness,
   "So that the counsel of the cunning is carried headlong'.

9 By day they encounter darkness,
   And they grope at noon as in the night.

10 Yet He "saves the needy from the sword "of their mouth
   And from the hand of the unyielding.

11 Hence there comes to "be expectation for the poor,
   And iniquity, it shuts its mouth.

12 Behold, happy is the mortal whom Eloah corrects;
   Thus you must not reject the admonition of Him Who-Suffices.
For He Himself causes pain, and He shall bind up;
He transfixes, and His hands, they shall heal.
In six distresses He shall rescue you,
And in seven, evil shall not touch you.
In famine, He will ransom you from death,
And in battle from the hands of the sword.
From scourge of tongue shall you be hidden,
And you shall not fear when it comes.
Devastation and starvation shall you ridicule,
And you shall certainly not fear the wild animal of the earth.
For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field,
And the wild animal of the field will be at peace with you.
You will know that your tent lies in peace,
And you will check over your homestead and shall not miss anything.
You will know also that your seed will be abundant,
And your offspring like the herbage of the earth.
You shall come to the tomb in mature age,
Like a shock of grain that ascends in its season.
Behold this, we have investigated it; it is so;
Do hear it; and you, get to know it for yourself.

When Samuel had ended his last meeting with king Saul and "turned around to leave, Saul held fast to the hem of his robe, and it was torn. Samuel said to him, Yahweh has torn the kingship over Israel away from you today and has given it to an associate of yours who is better than you" (1 Sam. 15:27,28). The prophet declared that this incident was a symbol of what had happened to Saul's dynasty: Yahweh had annulled it and had given the kingship to an associate, to a better man.

Saul may have thought that Samuel might go out some day and anoint that man secretly, just as he himself had once been anointed in secret. A man of Samuel's power and influence could not make such a trip unnoticed, since it would be outside his routine movements to Bethel and Mizpah as a circuit judge. Hence Samuel's curious question (in 16:2): "How can I go?"

Just before Samuel left, "Saul pleaded, I have sinned, yet now, I pray, bring glory to me in front of the elders of my people and in front of Israel. Return with me so that I may prostrate myself before Yahweh your Elohim. So Samuel turned back, following after Saul, and Saul prostrated himself before Yahweh" (15:30,31). Here Saul asked for at least a token show of honor before his people, and Samuel accommodated him.

"Then Samuel went to Ramah; as for Saul, he went up to his house at Gibeah of Saul. Samuel did not come again to see Saul until the day of his death, though Samuel mourned for Saul" (15:34,35).
FILL YOUR HORN WITH OIL!

“Yahweh said to Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go! I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected among his sons a king for Myself. Samuel replied, How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me. Yahweh answered, Take a heifer of the herd in your hand and say, I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh. You must invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and then I shall make known to you what you should do. You must anoint for Me the one whom I shall designate to you” (1 Sam.16:1-3).

Jesse the Bethlehemite was grandson of Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4:17-22). Coming from Ramah, Samuel would have to travel through Gibeah, Saul’s hometown. The latter would call Samuel’s anointing another man an act of treason, if word of it ever reached him. So Samuel was given a cover story. He was to take a heifer with him and make a sacrifice to Yahweh in Bethlehem. When he arrived there, “the elders of the city trembled as they met him. They asked, Are you coming in peace, O seer? He replied, I have come in peace to sacrifice to Yahweh. Hallow yourselves and rejoice today with me. He himself hallowed Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice” (16:4,5).

Bethlehem lay about six miles south of Jerusalem in Judah. The elders were not trembling before the prophetic office, but because of political risk. The high status of the visitor would certainly mean trouble for the city. Either Samuel was Saul’s man who came with acquisitive intentions to the unclaimed south of the land, or he was not Saul’s man, which might put them at risk with Saul. And now the great prophet from the north had come south for a mere sacrifice! Yet Samuel was obviously able to alleviate their fears when he invited them to the sacrifice.

YAHWEH’S SPIRIT PROSPERS ON DAVID

Samuel hallowed Jesse and his sons, carrying out the appropriate ritual of purification before the sacrifice. In this way Samuel was shown each of Jesse’s sons, and he was ready to hear the word from Yahweh whom He had chosen. Looking at the handsome and tall appearance of Eliab, the eldest son, Samuel thought, “Surely, in front of Yahweh is His anointed. But Yahweh said to Samuel, You must not look at his appearance and at the loftiness of his stature, for I have rejected him. For not as a human sees, does the One, Elohim, see. A human sees the visible appearance, yet Yahweh sees into the heart” (16:6,7).

Samuel thought that he had before him all the sons of Jesse. As he viewed them, he imagined that in one of them he was looking at the person whom Yahweh had chosen. Samuel was impressed by the eldest son, Eliab, a striking looking young man; and so he felt sure that the latter must be Yahweh’s anointed (16:6). Yet Yahweh urged Samuel not to look at the lad’s appearance and the loftiness of his stature. Samuel, like people in general, was impressed by what is on the surface. Yet Yahweh perceives the inward qualities and sees into the heart. And so He told Samuel that He had rejected Eliab.

Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But the prophet told Jesse, “Yahweh has not chosen any of these. Then Samuel asked Jesse, Are the lads finished? He replied, There remains yet the youngest. Yet behold, he is shepherding the flock” (16:10,11). At Samuel’s request, Jesse “sent and had him come; he was ruddy, with lovely eyes and of good appearance. And Yahweh said [to the prophet], Rise and anoint him, for this is he. So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and the spirit of Yahweh prospered on David from that day onward. Then Samuel rose and went to Ramah” (16:12,13).
David received the anointing silently; no word was spoken by him, nor by his brothers, nor by Samuel. The anointing was a private act and was not publicized. David's fine appearance was an external sign of his inward merit; Yahweh had seen into his heart, and from that day onward His spirit prospered on David. So by intuition he would come to discern in Israel's soldiers more than a bunch of dismayed people; hence he would call them "the arrays of the living Elohim." For the time being, David would be king in Yahweh's sight only, Who had sought out for Himself a man in accord with His own heart (1 Sam.13:14).

**DAVID MEETS SAUL**

"As for the spirit of Yahweh, it had withdrawn from Saul, and an evil spirit from Yahweh frightened him. Saul's courtiers said to him, Behold now, an evil spirit from Elohim is frightening you. Let our lord now order your courtiers, who are before you, that they should seek a man who knows how to play the harp. Whenever it occurs that an evil spirit from Elohim comes over you, then he will play with his hand, and it will be well with you and give you rest" (1 Sam.16:14-16).

Once the spirit of Elohim had prospered over Saul (11:6) and had enabled him to win victories. This divine power is now said to have withdrawn from him; and the void is filled by an evil spirit from Elohim that frightened him. Hence Saul suffered from fits of extreme depression and later from a kind of persecution mania.

We know from Isaiah 45:6,7, that Yahweh is not only the Former of light and the Maker of good, but also the Creator of darkness and the Creator of evil.1 Now Saul's courtiers had told him, "An evil spirit from Elohim is frightening you," and they recommended the power of music to assuage the depression. So Saul said to them: "Select now for me a man who can play well, and bring him to me. One of the young attendants answered, saying, Behold, I have observed a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who knows how to play. He is a master of valor, a man of war, proficient in speech, a handsome man, and Yahweh is with him" (1 Sam.16:15-18).

So Saul sent word to Jesse, "saying, Do send to me David, your son who is with your flock" (16:19). This royal message was a command that required immediate obedience. Since no one would appear before the king empty-handed, Jesse sent not only his son David, but also some of the produce of his farm: a load of bread, a skin-bottle of wine, and a kid of the goats.

David2 must have been a lovable character. The affection that Saul had for him may have helped toward Saul's healing, while the therapeutic charm of the music of the harp "inspirited Saul, and it was well with him [for the time being]. Then the evil spirit would withdraw from him" (16:23).

We may surmise that David's appointment in 16:22 ("Let David now stay before me") was not intended to be permanent, and that he was only summoned when Saul's intermittent bouts of depression required his services as a musician. We also read in 16:21: "Later David became a bearbearer for him." This happened a few years later when David had matured into a bearded adult who looked very different from the youth of 1 Samuel 16. Hence Saul did not recognize the young man who had slain Goliath, the champion of the Philistines.

**THE ARRAYS OF THE LIVING ELOHIM**

The Philistines had sent an invading army on to Israelite territory, not this time to the central hills from which the

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2. David, literally: Endearing, or Beloved, Darling.
enemy had been chased westwards. Now the Philistines had gathered their forces (1 Sam.17:1) on the borders of Judah and nearer their own territory. The villages mentioned in verse 1 were located about 15 miles west of Bethlehem. Saul and his army “were gathered and encamped in the vale of Elah” (17:2), that ran westwards from the hill country of Judah, roughly in the latitude of Bethlehem.

“Now the Philistines were standing on this side on a hill, while Israel was standing on that side on a hill, with a ravine between them. A champion\(^3\) marched forth from the array of the Philistines; his name was Goliath” (17:3,4), and he was over nine feet in height. This giant taunted the arrays of Israel for forty days (17:16), saying: “Choose for yourselves a man and let him come down against me. If he should prevail in fighting with me and smite me, then we will become servants to you. Yet if I should prevail over him and smite him, then... you must serve us... I challenge the arrays of Israel this day! Give me such a man, and let us fight together. When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and exceedingly fearful” (17:8-11).

“The three elder sons of Jesse had left and gone following Saul to the war... yet David would go and return from attendance on Saul to graze the flock of his father at Bethlehem” (17:13-15). Since the three brothers were needing supplies of food, Jesse sent David out to bring toasted grain and ten loaves of bread to them in the military camp, and to check about their well-being. Jesse added ten fresh milk cheeses for the chief officer of their contingent (17:17,18).

When David arrived at the camp, the army was marching forth to the array. Hence he left his supplies in charge of the quartermaster, so that he could run to the battle line and find out about his brothers’ welfare. While he was still speaking to them, Goliath the Philistine came up. “He

\(^3\) Champion, literally: man of the [space] between [two armies].

spoke those usual words, and David heard them. All the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled before him and were exceedingly fearful” (17:23,24).

Yet David was indignant about those insulting words. He asked, “What shall be done for the man who smites this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he challenges the arrays of the living Elohim?” (17:26). David recognized that the Philistine champion was actually taunting Elohim when he said: “I challenge the arrays of Israel this day” (17:10). We may assume that David’s confidence in the power of his Elohim was absolute, knowing that only faith in Him would overcome the gigantic champion of the Philistines; for the spirit of Yahweh prospered on David (16:13). So to him, Goliath was just a dangerous predator, comparable to the wild animals that used to attack his father’s flock.

In answer to his question, David learned of the three privileges for the one who would kill Goliath: “The king shall enrich him with great riches, he shall give to him his daughter, and he shall make his father’s house free”\(^4\) (17:25). When David asked other soldiers, he received the same answer; and he may have repeated his denouncement: “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he challenges the arrays of the living Elohim?”

David’s words were reported to Saul who sent for him. David announced his offer to fight the giant, but the king tried to discourage him. So David reported of his experience as a shepherd of his father’s flock, “when a lion or a bear came and he carried off a flockling from the drove” (17:34). He would go after the predator and rescue the flockling from its mouth and kill the wild animal. He added: “Your servant has smitten both lion and bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will become like one of them, for he has reproached the arrays of the living Elohim... Yah-

\(^4\) Either tax-exempt, or free from statute-labor for the king.
Yahweh's is the Battle!

who rescued me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He shall rescue me from the hand of this Philistine” (17:36,37).

So the king said: “Go! And Yahweh, He may be with you” (17:37). Then Saul offered David his own armor. This was a most generous offer since only he himself and his son possessed full battle dress. David tried it on, but he was unable to walk in it (17:39); it was probably too large for him.

“Then he took his stave in his hand, chose for himself five smooth stones from the wadi . . . With his sling in his hand he came close to the Philistine” (17:40), who malédicted him in the name of his gods. David replied: “I am coming against you in the Name of Yahweh of hosts, the Elohim of the arrays of Israel, Whom you have challenged today . . . I will smite you . . . Then the whole earth shall know that there is an Elohim in Israel. And this whole assembly shall know that Yahweh shall give victory without sword or spear. For Yahweh’s is the battle, and He will deliver you into our hands” (17:45-47).

“David, with sling and stone, was faster than the Philistine; he smote the Philistine and put him to death . . . Then the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted and pursued the Philistines” (17:50,52). Thus the arrays of the living Elohim responded to the vaunt and the challenge of the enemy (17:10). And David may have rejoiced with words like these (Psa.68:1-4):

Elohim shall arise! His enemies shall be scattered,  
And those hating Him shall flee from His presence!  
Like the whisking away of smoke . . .  
So shall the wicked perish from the presence of Elohim.  
Yet the righteous shall rejoice;  
They shall be glad before Elohim,  
And they shall be elated with rejoicing,  
Sing to Elohim! Make melody to His Name!  

(To be continued)  

H.H.R.

SET FOR LIFE EONIAN

“Now on the coming sabbath almost the entire city was gathered to hear the word of the Lord. Yet the Jews, perceiving the throngs, are filled with jealousy, and they contradicted the things spoken by Paul, blaspheming.

“Being bold, both Paul and Barnabas say, ‘To you first was it necessary that the word of God be spoken. Yet, since, in fact, you are thrusting it away, and are judging yourselves not worthy of eonian life, lo! we are turning to the nations. For thus the Lord has directed us: I have appointed you for a light of the nations; for you to be for salvation as far as the limits of the earth.’

“Now on hearing this, the nations rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and they believe, whoever were set for life eonian” (Acts 13:44-48).

These special words; “set for life eonian” are most significant! Designated, called, and justified, these are familiar terms to our ears. They should be, for these are not merely “terms,” rather they are the precious “keys” which released us from the bondage and misery of despair into the glorious intimacy of reconciliation. Of the hundred and one definitions of this word “set” in the dictionary, we choose two: “to set someone free,” and “to put into order or readiness for use.”

On the previous sabbath, Paul and Barnabas had entered the synagogue, and were courteously invited by the chiefs for “any word of entreaty” (Acts 13:15). While Paul discounted his expert knowledge of ritual and the Mosaic law, deeming his brilliant legalistic experience to be refuse
Apathy toward the Evangel

(Phil.3:8), both he and his companion, a Cyprian Levite, were eminently qualified. Their bearing and Paul's words would plainly testify to their maturity. He spoke fearlessly of his Lord, declaring, for the first time, “Let it then be known to you, brethren, that through this One is being announced to you the pardon of sins, and from all which you could not be justified in the law of Moses, in this One everyone who is believing is being justified” (Acts 13:38,39). Remarkably, on this occasion, there was no dissent. Outside the synagogue, many of the Jews and reverent proselytes spoke privately to Paul and Barnabas, and these were persuaded to remain in the grace of God.

Now, as initially noted, on this second sabbath, Paul's opening words made it plain that he was speaking mainly to the gentile population. Almost the entire inhabitants of Pisidian Antioch had gathered to hear the evangelists. The manner in which the evangel was thankfully received as well as the rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord thoroughly exasperated those Jews who showed themselves neglectful of so great a salvation. With a cunning ploy which seems uncomfortably familiar, they spurred on the reverent, the respectable, and foremost citizens of the city to eject the apostles from their midst! Now in this present day of apostasy, these hypocritical opponents have other allies, apathy and indifference.

Should we today insist that the evangel of the Circumcision must not, under any circumstances, be confused with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, and, moreover, should we insist on a recognition of the—as yet unfulfilled—promise of a glorious millennium for Israel, then our listeners would shake their heads in confusion, or, perhaps like the Jews of Antioch, would do all in their powers to oppose our ministry.

With gentle persuasion and the consummate skill of brilliant oration, the apostle had vainly attempted to reach the hearts of those in the synagogue by referring to those tender words from the second psalm, “My Son art Thou; I today have begotten Thee” (Acts 13:33; Psa.2:7). He brought them the stupendous evangel of justification, associated with the law of Moses. Although this loving kindness was far below the soaring high plateau of justification apart from law, and included a pardon which could and would be revoked, even this made little impression.

“WOE TO ME”

“For necessity is lying upon me, for it were woe to me if I should not be bringing the evangel!” (1 Cor.9:16). We know what the apostle suffered in bringing the evangel. We may read of his profound heartache for his brethren, his relatives according to the flesh as he witnessed their rejection and callousness (Rom.9:1-5). After many, many hard years of suffering infirmities, outrages, necessities, persecution, distresses, he now embarked on carrying his own salvation into effect in heralding the evangel of the Uncircumcision. We may depend on the fact that this would be undertaken with great courage, and “without murmurings and reasoning” (Phil.2:14). What tremendous joy would fill his loving heart in witnessing the glad acceptance of the evangel!

He had no way of knowing those whom his Lord would be calling. We may be sure that he fully honored the Jerusalem agreement, and would confine his commission to the nations. He even went further than mere observance, to the loving gesture of bringing gifts for the poor saints in Judea. The response? Harassment of the young ecclesia and attempted assassination!

“MY SON, THE BELOVED”

What then is persecution but a privilege in light of God's love in setting us for life eonian? Let us, then, meditate on
the particular reference which Paul used to reach the hearts of those in the synagogue in connection with the filial love of the Father for His dear Son. In this we are reminded of the joyful—dare we say proud—announcement, “This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight” (Matt.3:17).

“Open my eyes that I may see
Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me;
Place in my hands the wonderful key
That shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!
Open my ears that I may hear
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;
And while the wave notes fall on my ear,
Everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my ears, illumine me,
Spirit divine!
Open my mouth and let me bear
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;
Open my heart and let me prepare
Love with Thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
Ready, my God, Thy will to see;
Open my heart, illumine me,
Spirit divine!”

The motto on my desk calendar was “Let your religion be less of a theory and more of a love affair.” While this speaks of temporal affection, and may not compare with

1. hymn by Charles H. Scott.

that higher, divine love, yet the very intensity of many such renowned loves may cause some of insipid faith to pale into shame. We ought not to despise this human relationship, for it has much to teach us. Our own dear Father speaks of us as His children. Our Lord drew on this same relationship to provide many instances of filial tenderness. How poignant the sore challenge of Abraham through this same kinship:

“The messenger of Yahweh called to him and said: Abraham! Abraham! And he replied: Here I am. He continued: Do not stretch out your hand on the youth, and do not do anything to him; for now I know that you fear Elohim since you have not kept back your son, your only one from Me” (Gen.22:11,12).

Consider well the precious intimacy of those incidents concerning Jacob and his son, Joseph in Egypt. We can scarce do this casually or with indifference, for here is a searching insight into the suffering and pain of God, for His beloved Son.

“He asked them about their well-being and said: Is all well with your old father of whom you spoke? Is he still alive? They replied: All is well with your servant, our father; he is still alive. And they bowed the head and prostrated to him” (Gen.43:27,28).

Finally, at the conclusion of this drama we read: “Joseph had his chariot hitched up and went up to meet his father Israel in Goshen. When he appeared before him, he fell and wept long on his neck. Then Israel said to Joseph: I am willing to die at this time, after I have seen your face, and that you are still alive” (Gen 46:29,30).

A TIME OF APOSTASY

“Let us not gauge our service by apparent results or so-called success. By that standard the later ministry of our Lord was a failure. Fewer followed Him as He went
God is Preparing Hearts

on unfolding His sufferings. But surely this phase of His earthly service, culminating in the cross, was most appreciated by His God and Father. Paul also went from service to suffering. But shall we say that the aged apostle, in his chains, rejected by the saints in Asia, forsaken by his friends, was not a success? Then it was he wrote his greatest epistles and, in his infirmity, really accomplished far more than all the rest of the apostles together.

“It has always been God’s way to reserve a remnant in the midst of apostasy. Such there is now. We cannot stay the tide of evil. That is in fulfillment of His Word. But we can accomplish a work in the midst of it far more pleasing to God than is possible at any other time. This should encourage us in the midst of apparent failure and when called upon to face opposition. As a soldier our principal business is to suffer evil.

“At the same time God is preparing hearts for the message He has given. We must depend on Him for that quite as much as for the truth itself. Men will not have it unless constrained by His spirit. Let us seek to fall in line with His operations. With gracious persistence, let us present the truth wherever possible, and press it upon all who will hear. Let us not aim merely at the blessing of our fellow saints, but at the higher goal—the glory of God, on which all ultimate blessing depends.”

“Grace be with you all. Amen!”

Donald Fielding


UNSEARCHABLE RICHES VOLUME FOR 1995

*Unsearchable Riches* Volume 86, for the year 1995 (288 pages, bound in dark green cloth), is now at the bindery, and should be available for shipping in a few weeks. The price is $15.00 plus $1.50 shipping (California residents please add sales tax). A list of available *U.R.* volumes (as well as photocopied sets) is available upon request.
EDITORIAL

In the northern hemisphere this is the season of renewal. All around us there is a vigorous burst of life after months of stillness and coldness. The winter speaks of death; the spring speaks of life out of death, however dimly it may be. It is fitting that it was at this time of year our Lord was crucified, and three days later He was roused from among the dead. But nothing in the present system can perfectly picture the truth of this evangel and its significance for humanity and all the universe.

We are always encouraged by the spring season. There is indeed a manifestation of God from the creation of the world (Rom.1:20). But if this is all we have for learning of Him, our feelings of optimism are bound to disappear soon. Springtime may picture resurrection in its renewal, but it is far from paralleling the power, vitality and glory that is in Christ as the Firstfruit of those who are reposing and the One Who is our Life.

The seasons are cycles, repeating themselves over and over again. What God is doing in Christ leads forward to a consummation which is not a ceasing, but an achievement. The ancient practices and symbols of spring that have been incorporated into our culture, the songs and flowers and decorated eggs, and even spring itself, cannot establish a firm grasp of the evangel concerning the cross and vivification of Christ.

The death and resurrection of Christ are not cyclical renewals, and the evangel does not speak merely of reformation and improvement. In that Christ died “He died to Sin once for all time” (Rom.6:10). “In Christ shall all be vivified” (1 Cor.15:22).
The human ideas that make up so much of “Easter” actually reinforce wrong thinking about the death and resurrection of Christ. The old is decorated. And the decorated thing is temporary, like spring itself. This cannot reflect the evangel which speaks of a new creation and an actual achievement that is certain of full and final realization.

The changes that are channeled through Christ are not fading and transient but lead from glory to glory as Paul expressed it in 2 Corinthians 3:18. God’s grace, God’s peace, God’s love—these are blessings in Christ that various contributors have focused upon in this issue.

Especially in dealing with Paul’s evangel and the secrets associated with his apostleship, we find a happiness and a confidence unparalleled by terrestrial experience. The terminology itself is full of optimism: conciliation, reconciliation, delight, love. But when such terms are associated with God’s work in Christ they become powerful in lifting our spirits and effecting changes in our lives. God was in Christ conciliating the world to Himself. It was God’s delight to sever Paul and unveil His Son in him; and His delight reaches forward in the future to the reconciliation of all. Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

As David’s experiences led him to a growing reliance on God as his Impregnable Retreat, so may our experiences lead us to an increasing confidence in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And as Job tenaciously focused upon God through his severe sufferings, so may our hearts be focused on God’s multifarious wisdom, transcendent grace and vast love. When Christ was roused from among the dead, there began a new “spring-time” that speaks only of good, of life and righteousness, that will never fade, but will only increase to that consummation when God is All in all.

D.H.H.
FRAMING OF KOLOSSIANS

Introduction (1:1,2)
   Report of Epaphras to Paul (1:3-8)
      The Secret of Christ
         – Its Realization (1:9-2:7)
            Correction of Doctrine (2:8-23)
            Correction of Deportment (3:1-4:1)
      The Secret of Christ
         – Its Expression (4:2-6)
          Tychicus to the Colossians (4:7-9)
   Conclusion (4:10-18)

The literary framework gives us a clear clue to its contents. Within the Salutations and Mutual Reports, the whole body of the epistle deals with the details of the Secret of Christ. First the apostle, in one of the most sublime passages in Holy Writ, sets forth the secret glories of Christ as the Son of God (1:9-2:7).

At the close of the epistle he speaks of this again, desiring to make it known (4:2-6).

The bulk of this letter deals with correction in doctrine and deportment necessitated by departure from the Secret of Christ. A knowledge of this secret is vital to the spiritual welfare of all who know God.

Rationalism and ritual, the philosophy of the nations and the relation of Israel, are the two great enemies to the truth which find correction in Colossians.

Every false theology or philosophy which places anything of human origin between God and man, is set aside by the great truth that Christ is God’s Complement. As our Complement He displaces all the decrees and rites of Judaism. In Christ we are complete and need naught else to fit us for the Father’s presence.

The secret of Christ is presented in its future aspect in Ephesians. There is to be a harvest era in which Christ is to be supreme, not only on earth, but in the heavens also. His sway will be universal (Eph.1:10,22,23). In Colossians, however, the emphasis is placed on His past headship in creation and His present headship in redemption with a view to a future reconciliation of the universe. The unity of creation has led philosophers to trace it back to a common origin, by some called a “primordial germ.” This first element in creation, however simple it may be said to be, must possess within itself a potential universe. The Son of God, the Firstborn of Creation, is the satisfactory solution to all questions which concern creation. Creation did not begin in chaos but in Christ. It will not end in ruin wrought by man but in universal reconciliation wrought by the blood of His cross.

THE INVOCATION

The invocations in Paul’s three prison epistles are identical. Just as the body of each epistle commences with blessing or thanking, so the first wish of the apostle’s heart for his readers is grace. Divine favor lavished upon those who deserve God’s indignation will yet be the most precious gem in the crown of His glory. His creatures will be awed by His infinite might. They will be amazed by the wonders of His works. They will marvel at His wisdom. Their hearts will swell with thankfulness for His kindness. Far more precious will be the praise and worship which His mercy will call forth. Yet the highest adoration and the deepest affection will come to Him from those who realize the depths of the deficiency of their deserts and the corresponding heights to which His grace has exalted them.

We should make more of His grace. Not only should it warm our own hearts at all times, but it should pervade our walk and our service. Oh, how great a transformation would it work in the heralding of the evangel, if it were presented
Christ is our Peace

in its purity and power! Grace that Saul encountered on the Damascus road. Grace that Paul received to serve the saints. Grace that enabled him to suffer for Christ’s sake. Let us not confine it to the past, to our call, when we first believed. This invocation is not for unbelievers, but for us. Our salvation is not only by but to in grace (Eph.2:5). Not only did it begin with grace, but it continues so, and will finish with the greatest display of all, when our bodies will be transfigured and glorified.

First grace, then peace. First justification, then reconciliation. Were God not gracious, what could there be but indignation and enmity? But now that His favor hovers over us as a benediction, we may have peace with Him, peace in our spirits, peace with our fellow-saints and the world, yea, we may enter into the peace of God, and enjoy some measure of the calm with which He is filled, Who knows the end from the beginning, and Whose great aim is to overcome all enmity with love, and clasp His whole creation to His heart in the bonds of perfect and perpetual peace.

FROM GOD OUR FATHER

These blessings can come from one source alone—from God, Who now looks upon us as His children, and through our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between us, our Saviour and Lord. We are no longer merely creatures of the great Creator. We have entered the circle of His family and now are children of an affectionate Father. He will be gracious to us and give us peace, through the work of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Indeed, He is our Peace, for He not only reconciles us to God through the blood of His cross, but removes the barriers between the saints, and makes the despised Uncircumcision one with the privileged Circumcision.

A.E.K.

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Notes on the Book of Job

THE ARROWS OF HIM WHO-SUFFICES

It is because Job was afflicted with unusual evil that his words and thoughts go beyond the usual wisdom. Without his trial Job would have spoken, concerning any such evil as he was suffering, much as his associates spoke. It is the experience of severe affliction coupled with his uncompromising recognition of God as God (cp Rom.1:21), that makes Job probe deeper into the meaning of this evil.

In Job 4 and 5, Eliphaz had voiced conventional wisdom concerning sufferings. He had determined to his own satisfaction that what Job was experiencing was Eloah’s correction for iniquity, “the admonition of Him Who-Suffices” (5:16-18). The implication was that if Job would acknowledge his sins, and like Eliphaz, “inquire of El” (5:8), he would be rescued out of his afflictions (5:19-27). “Behold this, we have investigated it; it is so. Do hear it; and you, get to know it for yourself.”

JOB’S REPLY

If this bluntness at the end of Eliphaz’s speech leaves us gasping, it does not silence Job. In chapters 6 and 7, the afflicted man stays his course. He continues to affirm that (1) his sufferings are extreme, (2) God has given them, and (3) he would have God remove them by taking away his life.

The words of Eliphaz are, on one hand, like “insipid food” (6:6), and, on the other hand, like the “treacherous” torrents of water that rush down the dry “wadis” in the rainy season (6:15). They do not relate to the realities of Job’s situation, and thus are tasteless; but they also offend, and thus
are treacherous. If all that can be said is that no mortal is righteous before God (4:17) and that God saves the needy (5:15), then all Job can do is resume his plea for death.

Eliphaz has focused attention on Job. Job would turn it back to God. Where Eliphaz had spoken of the admonition of Him Who-Suffices, Job would speak of the arrows of Him Who-Suffices (6:4). Eliphaz measured God's sufficiency for human needs in terms of correction and discipline in light of human sinfulness. But Job could not, in all honesty and reality, see his afflictions as divine admonition. His sufferings were deep and real; they were "arrows;" but they were arrows from Him Who-Suffices.

And that is the problem! Job's sufferings were from God, Who is sufficient in dealing with every sorrow and every woe. Unlike Eliphaz, Job cannot feel any confidence in understanding how the "arrows" relate to God as the All-Sufficient One. But Job is convinced these arrows are not simply divine correctives of secret sins he may have committed.

Nevertheless, they are from God Who is sufficient. They are "frightenings," but frightenings from Eloah, Who is in charge. Job does not know the why, but he is keenly acquainted with the what. Consequently, Job turns away from Eliphaz and makes requests of Eloah. Since Eloah is sufficient in bringing His arrows upon Job, He is sufficient to take away Job's sufferings by taking away his life.

Indeed, Job errs in not relating God's sufficiency to a deliverance that is full of blessing and life, to a bringing of joy out of the sorrows and consolation out of frightenings. But he is right in focusing his attention on God as the One Who is Sufficient. In this way he is being prepared for a fuller grasp of the ways and character of God.

The divine title, Eloah, and the verb, disposed, in Job 6:9 share the same root, word-element, "subject," in Hebrew. Eloah is the To-Subjector; Who can subject His operations to another. Eloah is the Subjector. Consequently, Job would speak of the Subjector, to grant his request, to crush me!

May He let loose His hand and clip me off!

"Then Job answered, saying:

O that my vexation could be weighed, yea weighed.

And they could take up my woe upon the scales together with it.

Because now it is heavier than the sand of the seas,

Therefore my words are impetuous.

For the arrows of Him Who-Suffices are in me;

Their venom is what my spirit has been drinking;

Frightenings from Eloah are arrayed against me.

Does an onager bray over verdure?

Would a bull low over its fodder?

Is insipid food being eaten without salt?

Or is there taste in the ooze of purslane?

My soul refuses to touch them;

They are like bread of sickness to me.

O that my request would come,

That Eloah would grant my expectation,

That Eloah would be disposed to crush me!

May He let loose His hand and clip me off!

Then there would still be this consolation for me,

While I flinch in the travail which He is not sparing,

That I have not suppressed the words of the Holy One.

What is my vigor that I should wait?

And what is my end that I should prolong my soul?

Is my vigor the vigor of stones,

Or my flesh like bronze?

Isn't it that there is nothing in me to help myself,

And all prosperity has been driven away from me?

One who is in despondency should have kindness from his associates,

Even if he should forsake the fear of Him Who-Suffices.

My brothers, they are treacherous like a wadi,

Like a channel of wadis that overflow,

That become somber because of ice,

And snow obscures them.
to the crushing of Job. As it turns out, Eloah was not disposed to crush Job, but rather to bless him. But at this point, Job was not aware of this purpose of the One Who-Suffices.

WORDS OF A DESPERATE MAN

It is a struggle, however, for Job to keep his attention on God. This is reflected in chapter 6, where he alternately addresses God and then his associates. Job first traces his woe to Eloah (verses 1-4), and then, by a series of parables, intimates that his associates' words are irrelevant and meaningless in the present situation (5-7). Next he turns again to Eloah, pleading for Him to grant him death (8-10), and then once more he turns to his associates, describing their words as unhelpful, and even more than that, as treacherous (11-30). (But finally, in chapter 7, Job will turn entirely from the instruments of human wisdom before him and plead his case, with God alone in view.)

In 6:11-27 we see a man “in despondency” (v.14), appealing to his associates to treat him as one who is truly suffering and does not know why. They have jumped to the conclusion that Job needs correcting, but Job knows well that this is not the explanation of his suffering. They are looking for something that does not exist, as travelers in the arid Mideast may look for water that is not there (6:18-21). Their acquaintance with Job should not have led them to think of him as a deceiver (22,23). They cannot point to any specific error on his part (24). “How can correction from you be correcting?” (25).

These indeed are words of a desperate man (26)! The more he thinks about what his associates are saying, the more frustrated he becomes. They are not disposed to face Job as he is; they do not subject their thoughts and words to the fact that someone in dire straits and needs is before them, whose situation cannot be dismissed as a simple matter of divine correction (27-30).

Job 6:17-7:2

17 In the season when they ‘thaw they are effaced;
In the bright warmth they are extinguished from their ‘place.
18 Caravans are ‘sent aside from their way;
They ‘ascend into the wasteland and ‘perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look for waters;
The wayfarers of Sheba expect to find them.
20 But they are ashamed that each one trusted the place;
They come ‘to it, and they are ‘abashed.
21 ‘Thus have you now become ‘to me~; You see catastrophe, and you are ‘fearful.
22 ‘Indeed have I said, Grant something to me?
‘Or, Pay a bribe from your fortune in my ‘behalf?
23 ‘Or, You shall ransom me from the hand of terrifiers?
24 Direct me, and I shall ‘keep silent,
And ‘where I have erred, ‘make ‘me understand.
25 ‘Yet ‘how ‘savory~ are ‘words of uprightness,
‘Yet ‘how can correction from you be correcting?
26 Are you designing to correct with declarations,
‘Yet treat ‘as wind the ‘words of a desperate~ man?
27 Indeed, you would ‘cast lots ‘for the orphan,
And you would ‘barter over your associate.
28 ‘Yet now be kindly disposed; face ‘me;
‘I shall assuredly not ‘lie ‘to your face.
29 Relent, I pray; let it not ‘become iniquity,
And relent further; my righteousness is at stake in it.
30 Is there ‘iniquity ‘on my tongue?
‘Or does not my palate ‘understand woes?
7 ‘Has not a mortal a hard enlistment on the earth?
And his days, are they not like the days of a hireling?
2 Like a slave who is gasping after shade,
And like a hireling who is expecting his wages,

6:21 7...to me: Hb to him.
HIM WITH SIGHT

Job continues to speak of his pitiful situation in chapter 7, but as he proceeds we become aware that he is no longer addressing his associates but rather God Himself. The One “with sight” in the first line of verse 8 is surely Eloah. He is the One Who places a guard over Job (7:12), Who has made a great thing of him, checking him every morning and never taking His probing heed from him (17,18); He is the Preserver of mankind (20).

There is much here that is radical, expressing the bitterness of Job’s soul (11), and much of what Job says is uninformed in that it does not express reliance on God for salvation to a good consummation. But what Job says is right in its recognition of the deity of God. Job traces his woe to God, and this is right. But Job’s only hope is that the God Who dismays and frightens him (14), will bring him death soon (15).

DREAMS AND VISIONS

Job’s reference to dreams and visions from God (7:14) connects with the rather melodramatic description Eliphaz had made of his own “visions of the night” in 4:12-16. Yet where Eliphaz brought his clearly overdrawn account of a mysterious dream to the very conventional and pious question, “Can a mortal be righteous before Eloah?” (4:17), Job’s restless dreams aroused in him the cry, made more shocking by being addressed directly to Deity; “What is a mortal that You should make a great thing of him?” (7:17). Where Eliphaz would speak of God as One at a distance from impure humanity, Job faces Eloah and speaks of Him as One Who checks him every morning and tests him every moment (7:18)! Hence, while Eliphaz seems to speak more reverently than Job about God, his words end up directing our thoughts away from God to man’s sinfulness. Yet

Job 7:3-7:17

3 So am I allotted months of futility for myself, And nights of misery have they assigned to me.
4 If When I lie down, “then I say, When shall I rise? Yet the evening is interminable, And I am surfeited with restlessness until the morning gloaming.
5 My flesh is clothed with maggot and dirty scab; My skin is split apart and is fetid.
6 My days are fleeter than a weaver’s shuttle, And they shall conclude with the limit of the weaving thread.
7 Remember that my life is a wind; My eye shall not turn back to see good.
8 The eye of Him with sight shall not regard me; Your eyes will look for me, *but I will not be there.
9 As a cloud *vanishes and *goes away, So one descending to the unseen shall not ascend.
10 He shall not return any more to his house, And his *place shall not recognize him again.
11 *Indeed for me, I shall not keep back my mouth; O let me *speak in the distress of my spirit; O let me *importune in the bitterness of my soul.
12 Am I the sea or the sea monster That You should place a guard over me?
13 For I said, My cot shall comfort me; My bed shall bear away my concern;
14 Yet You have dismayed me with dreams, And with visions You have frightened me.
15 *So my soul would choose strangling, Death, rather than my bodily staunchness.
16 I reject this; I would not live for the eon; Let me alone, for my days are a transitory breath.
17 What is a mortal that You should make a great thing of him,
18 *Or that You should set Your heart on him?
How Long?

Job’s impetuous words keep focusing attention on God as directly involved in his sufferings.

GOD’S TARGET MARK

Eliphaz had said that “humanity is born to misery” (5:7). But he presented this truth as a simple fact, without making any association with God. In the following verse, 5:8, Eliphaz drew attention to his practice of inquiring of El, but the point of all this was to divert Job’s attention from his misery to God’s providence for the needy and correction of the crafty.

In contrast to this, Job describes his own misery in vivid terms (7:3-5), and boldly traces this to God. Eliphaz had implied that Job’s misery was a judgment on him for his sins, some craftiness that might not be clear to Job’s associates but was clear to God. To this Job replies (without addressing Eliphaz directly, but rather facing Eloah), “I have sinned” (7:20). But is this the reason for his misery? “Yet what do I contrive against You, O Preserver of mankind? Why have You established me as Your target mark, that I should become a load to You?” (Job 7:20).

We may deem these words irreverent, even though we understand how Job is led to utter them. He is extremely harassed. But he refuses to look for any other cause than God Himself. Job is like a target mark. And if so, then this is of God.

Eliphaz was satisfied to view misery simply as a fact of human existence, almost as without cause or purpose. Job could not do so. If his woe cannot be traced to God, then there is no hope at all. But since it is God Who sends arrows of misery upon Job as a target mark, then He can take them away.

The words of Job 7:21 are among the most weighty and revealing of the book. Job means them as a plea for death as an end to his affliction, but for us today, viewing them in light of the evangel of our salvation, we can appreciate their great relevance to Job’s situation. Eloah would indeed bear Job’s depravity, but in doing so He would put the depravity to death so that Job will live. What Job wanted was death. But what God brings is enlightened life.

Consequently we see that the book of Job is not a treatise on human sinfulness and divine judgment, but a masterpiece concerning human suffering and divine purpose.

D.H.H.
JOB'S OUTLOOK IN THE DEBATE

The debate between Job and his associates does not appear to start with any idea that there is an ultimate issue to life, one that requires the fact of resurrection. Death appears to conclude the present life, and any future is not within the outlook of any of the arguments. In Job's first reply to Eliphaz he speaks of our days as an enlistment, those of a hireling (7:1), and he puts the position thus: "As a cloud vanishes and goes away, so one descending to the unseen shall not ascend" (7:9).

However, as Job proceeds, seeking for a solution to his case, he does develop the theme, though without reaching any concrete solution. A point of change is perceived in 14:14 when Job asks, "If a master dies shall he live again?" and he declares, "All the days of my enlistment I shall wait until my relief comes." The problem will not be settled until Yahweh Himself ministers the required glory. He is the Source of all, and to Him all leads.

—adapted from notes by E. H. Clayton

CHANGES IN THE EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

According to an article in the December 4, 1995 issue of Time magazine, "evolutionary theorists" are beginning to conclude "that biological change often occurs in sudden fits and starts," rather than gradually through immense periods of time. They still speak of vast time periods and hold fast to the basic evolutionary theory, but it is now explained that about "543 million years ago . . . within the span of no more than 10 million years, creatures with teeth and tentacles and claws and jaws materialized with the suddenness of apparitions." In a burst of creativity like nothing before or since, nature appears to have sketched out the blueprints for virtually the whole of the animal kingdom. This explosion of biological diversity is described by scientists as biology's Big Bang.

It is disturbing that "nature" should be thought of as creator (cf Rom.1:20,21), but it is intriguing to see that the evidence uncovered by scientists has led the reporter, if not the biologists, to speak of a "burst of creativity."

Samuel, the Last of the Judges

MY IMPREGNABLE RETREAT

"When Saul had seen David going forth to meet the Philistine,1 he had said to Abner, chief of the military host, Whose son is this lad, Abner? And Abner had replied, As your soul lives, O king, how should I know? Then the king had ordered, You inquire! Whose son is this stripling? So, when David had returned from smiting the Philistine, Abner had taken him and brought him before Saul, while the head of the Philistine was still in his hand. Saul said to him, Whose son are you, young man? David replied, The son of your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite" (1 Sam.17:55-58). It seems possible that, before the battle, Saul may have seen David only in his fits of madness, and so he did not recognize him when he clothed David in his royal coat (1 Sam.17:38); and the king did not remember him after the battle either.

JONATHAN’S COVENANT WITH DAVID

David had not yet become the king’s son-in-law, and the people may have wondered why the publicized promise (given to any victor over Goliath)1 was not confirmed. But David did receive the love of the king’s son Jonathan, which was more marvelous to him than the love from women (2 Sam.1:26).

“It came about . . . that Jonathan’s soul was tied to David’s soul; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. On that day Saul took him [into permanent service] and would not

1. i.e., Goliath the Philistine of Gath (1 Sam.17:23).
allow him to return to his father’s house. Jonathan contracted a covenant with David, since he loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David along with his coats and even his sword and his bow and his girdle. Then David went forth with the men of war; wherever Saul sent him, he proceeded intelligently, so that Saul set him over the men of war; and it seemed good in the eyes of all the soldiers and also in the eyes of Saul’s courtiers” (1 Sam.18:1-5).

Jonathan, too, was captured by the charm of David. When Jonathan stripped off his royal garments and gave them to David, he tacitly handed over to him the right of succession to the throne, for he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan’s covenant with David was based on his love for him; thus David would always have the full support of Saul’s heir apparent.

Obviously Saul had no idea that Samuel had already anointed David to become his successor; so there was no sign of jealousy. Saul was delighted to have a military aide who was able to lead others, to win battles, and to be a friend of his son. David had been popular with all the soldiers after his victory over Goliath, and his popularity increased as he joined them as their leader in battle after battle. Even Saul’s courtiers admired David’s military leadership, since he showed discretion and practical ability.

When the record says: “he proceeded intelligently,” it refers to more than common human intelligence. This causative verb form would also mean that “he gained intelligence” or that “he gained insight,” i.e., insight concerning Yahweh’s loving purpose for Israel and for its future king. David would never forget that Samuel, at the bidding of Yahweh, had already anointed him for this highest office.

SAUL’S JEALOUSY AND FEAR OF DAVID

David’s increasing popularity among the soldiers and the people drove a wedge between him and Saul. At a time when David and the army came back from smiting the Philistines, “the women from all the cities of Israel went forth singing and dancing in choruses to meet king Saul with tambourines, with rejoicing and with three-stringed instruments” (1 Sam.18:6). We may assume that they chanted additional verses to celebrate the victories of king Saul and his military aid, and not just the one recorded in verse 7: “Saul has smitten his thousands, yet David his myriads.” Obviously the whole song was not designed to disparage Saul; and the thought rhyme in verse 7 could be paraphrased to say (in prose), our two heroes have killed many, many enemies.

Yet Saul had not the maturity and security to accept the couplet chanted by the women, and to endorse it; so it rankled and festered into incurable jealousy. “Saul’s anger grew exceedingly hot; this matter was displeasing in his eyes, and he said, To David they have ascribed myriads, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. What more can he have but the kingship? Saul was jealously eyeing David from that day and beyondº (1 Sam.18:8,9). Saul may have remembered Samuel’s prophetic words: “Yahweh has torn the kingship over Israel away from you... and has given it to an associate of yours who is better than you” (1 Sam.15:28).

“It came about on the morrow that an evil spirit from Elohim² prospered on Saul. He prophesied [in ecstacy] inside the house, while David was playing the harp with his hand, as he did day by day; but there was a spear in Saul’s hand. Saul lifted up the spear thinking, I shall smite David into the sidewall. Yet David got around his presence twice” (1 Sam.18:10,11).

Saul was well aware of the fact that the spirit of Yahweh

prospered on David; hence everything was going right for David. Since the spirit of Yahweh had withdrawn from Saul, everything went wrong for him, and an evil spirit from Elohim was frightening him (1 Sam.16:14). So “Saul was fearful because of David’s presence . . . . Saul put him away from himself; he made him his chief of a thousand who marched forth and came in before the soldiers . . . . When Saul saw that he was proceeding very intelligently, he shrank away from his presence” (1 Sam.18:12,15). This would mean, he removed him from his presence, hoping that David would be killed in battle.

**MICHAL LOVED DAVID**

“Now Saul’s daughter Michal loved David . . . . So Saul thought I shall give her to him; let her be a trap for him, and let the hand of the Philistines come to be against him . . . . Then Saul said . . . . No delight has the king in a bride-price, but rather in a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king’s enemies . . . . [David] delivered them in full to the king, to become son-in-law to the king. So Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife” (1 Sam.18:20-27).

Saul’s repugnant demand was designed to assure David’s death, just as almost all his dealings with David; he even urged his son Jonathan and all his courtiers to put David to death. So Jonathan warned his friend to go into hiding, and he pleaded with his father on David’s behalf. Jonathan insisted, “Let not the king sin against his servant . . . . for he has not sinned against you, and his deeds have been of very good service to you. When he took his soul in his palm and smote the Philistine, and Yahweh wrought a great victory for Israel, you saw it and rejoiced” (1 Sam.19:4,5).

So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, at least for the time being, and he swore, “As Yahweh lives, he shall assuredly not be put to death” (1 Sam.19:6), and he admitted him to the royal palace as heretofore. It was a temporary reconciliation, for Saul’s jealousy returned. Whenever David smote the Philistines, each victory made David more popular with the army and with the people of Israel, and increased Saul’s fear of him.

Once again, when David was playing the harp for him, “Saul sought to smite David with the spear . . . . yet he dodged from Saul’s presence, as he smote the spear into the sidewall. So David fled and escaped” (1 Sam.19:10). He went to his own house; obviously he thought that Saul had just succumbed to the evil spirit that influenced his actions.

Yet “it occurred in that night that Saul sent messengers to David’s house to observe him and to put him to death in the morning. But Michal his wife told David, saying, If you are not providing for your soul an escape tonight, tomorrow you will be put to death. Michal had David descend through the window that he might go and run away and escape” (1 Sam.19:11,12). Obviously the house joined the wall of the city, allowing him to be lowered without being detected by those who had the house under surveillance.

Then she decided to delay discovery of his departure by putting a dummy on the couch, so as to give the impression that David was sick in bed. She used many small figurines, like those which Rachel hid in her saddle basket (cf Gen. 31:34); thus Michal built up the dummy on the couch. She covered it with David’s cloak and put goats-hair gauze in the place where his head would have been (1 Sam.19:13).

“When Saul sent messengers to take David in, she said, He is ailing.” When Saul heard of it, he sent them back to see David, saying, “Bring him up to me on the couch to put him to death” (1 Sam.19:14,15). When the messengers entered David’s room, they found a dummy on his bed. Saul resented his daughter’s disloyalty in deceiving
Yahweh Elohim, David's Rock, him; yet she claimed that David had threatened her with death (1 Sam.19:16,17).

DAVID WENT TO SAMUEL

“As for David, he ran away and escaped [after Michal had helped him to descend through the window]. He came to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him” (1 Sam.19:18). Obviously they discussed all the recent events, and Samuel may have advised David to fully trust in Yahweh Elohim Who would always rescue him from those who waited in ambush for his soul. Samuel may have added that the Elohim of benignity would go before him and enable him to sing of Elohim's strength and be jubilant each morning over His benignity.

At a later date (without hinting at Saul) David spoke of his enemies (in ambush for his soul, Psalm 59:1,3); thus his verses would be a consolation for those in similar distress.

IMPREGNABLE RETREAT

This term is a conspicuous characteristic of David's psalms, such as: “May Yahweh answer you in a day of distress; May the Name of Jacob's Elohim be your impregnable retreat” (Psa.20:1). He used this verb form again (in Psa.107:4): “Yet for the needy He makes an impregnable retreat from humiliation.”

David used the noun as an attribute of the Deity: “Yahweh shall become an Impregnable Retreat for the crushed, An Impregnable Retreat in seasons of distress” (Psa.9:9,10).

“On the day Yahweh rescued him from the palm of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul, [David] said: ... My El, my Rock! I take refuge in Him ... my Impregnable Retreat” (cf Psa.18:heading, v.2).

“Our Impregnable Retreat is the Elohim of Jacob” (Psa.46:7).

“Elohim...is known as an Impregnable Retreat” (Psa.48:3).

his Fastness and Deliverance

“He only is my Rock and my Salvation, My Impregnable Retreat; I shall not slip...” (Psa.62:2,6).

“But Yahweh shall be my Impregnable Retreat, And my Elohim, the Rock of my refuge” (Psa.94:22).

“Blessed be Yahweh, my Rock, Who is teaching my hands for the battle, My fingers for the battle, My Benignity and my Fastness, My Impregnable Retreat and my Deliverance for me, My Shield; in Him I take refuge” (Psa.144:1,2).

A DAVIDIC INSCRIBED PSALM

When Saul sent, and they kept watch over the house to put him to death.

Rescue me from my enemies, O my Elohim; From those rising against me, may You make me impregnable.

Rescue me from those contriving lawlessness, And from men of bloodshed, save me.

For behold, they wait in ambush for my soul . . . .

For Elohim is my Impregnable Retreat.
The Elohim of benignity to me shall go before me; Elohim, He shall let me see the fate of those who lie in wait for me . . . .

But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength And be jubilant each morning over Your benignity; For You are the Impregnable Retreat for me, And my Haven in the day of my distress.

O my Strength, to You I am making melody, For Elohim is my Impregnable Retreat.

(Psa.59:1-3,9,10,16,17)

H.H.R.

(To be continued)
FOR YOU ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE

We marvel at the reality of God’s love for us. In Psalms 8:4 we read, “What is a mortal that You are mindful of him?” In this the psalmist speaks of the total unworthiness of any human to have God “mindful” of him. What aspects of any human make this attention on God’s part a proper thing for Him? There are none in ourselves, for as the apostle Paul writes in Romans 3:23, “...all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God.” Just before this Paul employs Ecclesiastes 7:20 (“There is not a righteous man in the earth who does good and never sins”), observing in Romans 3:10,11, “Not one is just—not even one. Not one is understanding. Not one is seeking out God.”

It is easy to conclude that from man’s standpoint there is absolutely no justification for God’s lavishing His attention and His love on His creation. In no sense, in no degree however small, can mankind be said to have earned His love or somehow to have become deserving of it.

Yet in 1 John 4:8 we find the profound statement, “for God is love.” At verse 10 of the same chapter we read, “In this is love, not that we love God, but that He loves us...” From His basic nature flows all of the blessings He has poured out and continues to pour out upon us. In Paul’s words, The “love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us” (Rom.5:5). Furthermore, God’s love is so tenacious, so unalterable that nothing in all creation “will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.8:35-39).

God’s Love in Giving His Son

IN GOD’S SIGHT

We are undeserving of God’s love, but God is love, and He pours out His love in our hearts. In this, we grasp that His point of view is radically different from ours.

Paul comments on this in Ephesians 1:3-5, speaking of God’s blessing of choosing us in Christ before the disruption of the world, “we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus.” God’s sight focuses on His goals which so clearly display His love. In Ephesians 2:1-10, the apostle writes of our unworthiness as “sons of stubbornness,” and of God’s vast love toward us nevertheless. Here again God’s viewpoint is centered on the oncoming eons and His achievement in Christ Jesus.

WITH A PRICE

Let us turn back to 1 Corinthians 6:20, where we read, “For you are bought with a price;” and 7:23, where Paul writes, “With a price are you bought.” In the world of business, we know that the price anyone pays for something is in fact the buyer’s value for it. If the asked price is too high, the buyer does not buy, but if the price is seen as commensurate with the value perceived by the buyer, the purchase is made. In the price God has paid for us, for you and me, we learn of the value He places on us, our real worth in His eyes. It is not a view of what we are in ourselves, but what we are in Christ as will be fully manifested in the achievements of God’s purpose.

The price God has paid, in His love, is the giving of His Son on our behalf. We read in Romans 5:8, “God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes.”

Quite some years back while I was very much a beginner in learning the glorious truths of the conciliation, a friend asked me if I knew John 3:16. “Of course!” I replied.
The King James Version’s rendering of that passage was possibly the very first passage I had committed to memory. So he asked, “How does it go?” I replied that he knew it as well as anyone, but he persisted until I recited the verse for him. He then asked what it was that God loved; what did the verse identify as the object of God’s willingness to pay so great a price as His Son, the Beloved? The world! This world with all its failures and faults is valued so highly by God that He has paid a price for it that we are hard pressed to grasp.

Hard pressed to grasp—until we begin to catch a glimpse of His goals of sonship and the display of the transcendent riches of His grace and the heading up of all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth. Consequently, with Paul, we bow our knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that “having been rooted and grounded in love,” we should be strong to grasp what is the breadth and length and depth and height of that vast love (Eph. 3:14-21).

William S. Penn, Jr.

THEOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT

The Doctrine Commission of the Church of England has issued a report entitled, The Mystery of Salvation, in which the traditional teaching of an unending hell of torment has been rejected. Among the reasons for this change is “that the picture of a God who consigned millions to eternal torment was far removed from the revelation of God’s love in Christ.” However, the report seems to have substituted a view of divine failure for the older doctrine of divine malevolence. According to the report, “Hell is not eternal torment, but it is the final and irrevocable choosing of that which is opposed to God so completely and so absolutely that the only end is total nonbeing.”

Similar questionings of the idea of endless suffering are being heard among Protestant “Evangelical” groups, and even within the Roman Catholic Church. As for us, we pray for all who teach God’s Word and believe that Christ died for them, that they may come to place their confidence in the living God and in His Son Who came into the world to save sinners, and Who died for us all.

“MORE THAN CONQUERING”

“BLESSED be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ, according as He chooses us in Him before the disruption of the world, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus; in accord with the delight of His will, for the laud of the glory of His grace, which graces us in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:3-6).

Could there ever be such a “love letter” as this? All of the epistles convey the apostle’s devotion, but here God’s fervent love is emphasized. The approach present, that “…in grace, through faith are you saved,” must surely sweep aside all barriers in overwhelming, incomparable love! Brother A. E. Knoch, once wrote something to the effect that the driving force of fear is impotent compared with the drawing force of love. How true this is. The apostle Paul, who had plainly written of being an ambassador, beseeching for Christ’s sake, “Be conciliated to God” (2 Cor. 5:20), is here setting a supreme example in bringing the evangel by first presenting God’s wonderful love!

Reaching down through long, intervening years, this letter is very personal and private; in God’s wisdom, these gracious words have been completely enigmatic to all but the recipients, “the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:1). It is equally true to say that all the apostle’s letters, which contain many secrets, continue often to be misunderstood by each successive generation.

Paul had previously described how every individual of
God's choice was to be “conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). To our finite minds this may seem incredible. Having announced one of the greatest revelations ever communicated to man concerning God's purpose, he then challenged the power of the whole created universe in reference to this operation of God's love (Rom.8:35-39). Listing suffering, the awe-inspiring might of powerful opponents, all dimensions, time itself, and even the grim specter of death, he concluded that nothing could possibly undermine or frustrate the love of God. He further invigorated with a victorious acclamation: “What, then, shall we declare to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?” (Rom.8:31,32).

God Prepares Good Works

God prepares good works and foreknow all of His saints, but He has also provided the evangelists through whom they are called. He actually prepares the good works in which He wishes us to walk.”

During a recent Scripture study meeting the thought was expressed that nothing new seemed to be emerging from God's precious Word. This opinion was generally and gently rejected, but it turned minds to that scene in Athens, when the “wise” of that world, the Epicurian and Stoic philosophers, assembled at the Areopagus to hear the apostle Paul. Some were heard to observe, “Whatever may this rook be wanting to say?” (Acts.17:18). How significant that an ecclesia was not established at Athens!

During the ensuing group discussion many members paid warm tribute to the dear saints who labor unceasingly, like the apostle, “...to represent every man mature in Christ Jesus” (Col.1:28). God's precious Word has been wonderfully preserved, and it is from these, and these alone, that we have learned of our Father's loving purpose! These truths are enhanced through patient service.

Firmly insisting on his authority to be bringing the evangel, Paul declared, “For which cause I am suffering these things also, but I am not ashamed, for I am aware Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard what is committed to me, for that day” (2 Tim. 1:12). In like manner, we need not be ashamed to refer again and again to the revelations unfolded, both from the Word and also from the many studies and articles in our printed literature.

The vastness of His love

What can it possibly mean to be “more than conquering”? Should we make the mistake of thinking that victory alone over the world-mights of darkness is the only reason

Growing in Realization

for suffering, then perhaps we have not fully grasped, the real, universal achievement encompassed within Christ's victorious cry, "It is accomplished!"

Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
Over us sin no more hath dominion,
For more than conquerors we are."

Of course, there is victory. The outcome of our conflict with the Adversary was never in any doubt. Lest this statement may be misconstrued as arrogant, it is hastily added that the victory is ours in Christ Jesus! How could the triumphant outcome be otherwise? God rescues us out of the jurisdiction of darkness and transports us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Col.1:13).

Consequently, reviewing the influence of our Father's wise calling, we can now see that opposition from the Adversary, darkened apprehension, sin and estrangement, disobedience and offence, were all essential in our individual lives. These all serve their purpose in ultimately bringing creation to a final revelation of our great Father's loving purpose. Without such contrasts—and our very last thought is to disparage the pain and gravity of these—there could be no true and reverent comprehension of the vastness of His love.

In Christ Jesus, we rejoice in this realization of the Father, Whose power is infinite, Whose mighty wisdom defies our understanding, Whose love cannot be measured, and Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). If we would behold Him as He desires, then we must stand, in silent adoring wonder before the ugly, hideous cross of Golgotha. There, if our spirits are strengthened, we may hear the tender, compassionate words of our Lord: "According as the Father loves Me, I, also love you. Remain in My love" (John 15:9).

Donald Fielding

The Conciliation of the World

THERE HAS COME NEW

Over nineteen hundred years ago in the city of Corinth in Greece there was a group of believers in Christ Jesus. They had accepted the evangel that Christ died for their sins and had been roused to a victory in which they shared (cf 1 Cor.15:1-4,20-28,50-57). But like us, who also believe, they had a few problems traced to the fact that they were human beings, descended from Adam, mortals and sinners in the flesh. And stemming from these problems, as must be expected, further problems were created for the whole body of believers in Corinth and for the apostle Paul who had brought the evangel to them.

The evangel was a message of grace and peace from God (2 Cor.1:2), but this was given in the midst of human struggles. There was consolation from God, but this meant there would have also been suffering and affliction (1:3-7). How else could there have been consolation? God was faithful (1:18), but how could this have been apprehended if there had not been disappointments in their lives? The believers were sealed with the earnest of the spirit in their hearts (2 Cor.1:22), but this could not have been appreciated apart from the slippery insecurities of human experience.

SECOND CORINTHIANS

This is a pattern throughout 2 Corinthians, the applying of the evangel to continuing human circumstances. While facing the old problems of human flesh, of pride and jealousy, the apostle meets these problems with powerful and glorious revelations of truth in the evangel he was dispens-
Conciliation through Christ

ing. Where the lusts of the flesh had led to dishonorable behavior (cf. 1 Cor. 5) and so to further sorrow and distress among the ecclesia and for Paul (2 Cor. 2:1-8), there was also a growing appreciation of God’s provisions and the patterns of His operations (2:14-17). Where there was a struggle in heralding a message that was based entirely on faith and not on perception, upheld by spirit and not by flesh, sustained by expectation and not by present comforts and health in the flesh (chapter 3), there was an increasing acquaintance with God’s spiritual power in the evangel (chapter 4).

The problems are related to the old things, not merely to problems of the flesh but also to revelations God gave of Himself in the law and His dealings with Israel, which were centered in the flesh. The evangel given to Paul was centered on the spirit. In this respect it was like the “new covenant” spoken of in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. But it embraced a wider scope and was removed more fully from the flesh and the earthly concerns than the prophets had envisioned. “So that, if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by. Lo! there has come new!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

God Conciliates Us to Himself

At this point in his letter, Paul presents a new revelation of God that is also found in his epistle to the Romans. This is the message of the conciliation. “God conciliates us to Himself through Christ” (2 Cor. 5:18). God has established a change between us and Himself. The Greek word for conciliate is a compound term composed of the elements “down” and “change.” Without claiming too much concerning these elements, we would, nevertheless, draw attention especially to the idea of “change.” This is a concept also involved in the English word “conciliate.” To conciliate is to effect a change from estrangement and antagonism to agreement and even good will. A good picture in our own day is the breaking down of the Berlin wall, which was (from a human standpoint) a bulwark of enmity.

In the evangel dispensed by Paul we learn that God has effected a change in the relationship of human beings to Himself. And He has done this through Christ, that is, through His death. The change is one from enmity to peace toward God and access in God’s grace into His presence as our Father. This is how Paul presents it in his epistles:

“Being, then, justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand…” (Rom. 5:1,2). “For if, being enemies, we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son, much rather, being conciliated, we shall be saved in His life. Yet not only so, but we are glorying also in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we now obtained the conciliation” (Rom. 5:10,11).

“For you did not get slavery’s spirit to fear again, but you got the spirit of sonship, in which we are crying, ‘Abba, Father!’ The spirit itself is testifying together with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom. 8:15,16) “Now, seeing that you are sons, God delegates the spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba, Father!’” (Gal. 4:6).

In Ephesians and Colossians the word of the conciliation is expanded to a revelation of reconciliation which is applied to the body of Christ and finally the entire universe: “And coming, He brings the evangel of peace to you, those afar, and peace to those near, for through Him we both have had the access, in one spirit, to the Father” (Eph. 2:17,18). “In [Christ Jesus] we have boldness and access with confidence through His faith” (Eph. 3:12). “In [the Son of God’s love] the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all to Him (mak-
Prayer for a Spirit of Boldness

ing peace through the blood of His cross)... “(Col.1:20).

This change from enmity to peace, from estrangement to access, from alienation to sonship, is what God establishes in Christ, making Himself known in a new and glorious way. Paul calls it “the secret of the evangel” in Ephesians 6:19, where he speaks of a genuine need when he requests prayers for boldness in making it known.

Although we seem to want things that are new, we also hesitate to give up the old. Believers from Paul’s day to the present have often vacillated in their attitudes toward the evangel. We see it is a message of grace, peace and glory that is wholly out of God. “Yet all is of God…” (2 Cor. 5:18). But the flesh keeps doubting and even denying that this can be true. It is great that God has conciliated us to Himself, but, we reason, there must be some catch. We suppose that it would be safer to qualify this bold declaration of peace with some “if’s” and conditions, in order to insure restraints on the flesh. In this way we make the discipline of the flesh dependent on the flesh. Hence the power of the evangel of peace is, in fact, denied.

Let us not hesitate to take these words of 2 Corinthians 5 candidly and unreservedly as they are written. Through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, God has achieved for us the removal of enmity and all the barriers to His heart that we have erected. He has brought forth a change from estrangement to peace toward Himself as our Father. Let us hold to this evangel tenaciously as we continue to live in these perilous times of increasing agnosticism and outright enmity toward God (cf 2 Tim.3:1-9).

GOD WAS IN CHRIST

The message of conciliation that Paul was dispensing has as its foundation that God has established a change, channeled through the death of His Son for sinners and enemies. This is a new revelation concerning God. Under the old covenant associated with Sinai, God was revealed in His power, but as it responds to human actions, whether good or bad. This led to some acquaintance with God’s mercy in certain circumstances, and with His indignation and stern judgments in many other circumstances. But in the giving of His Son, God is revealed in His power as it flows from this Gift. Consequently, we are now seeing God in a new and fuller way. He is seen in Christ.

Hence we read, “… God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them” (2 Cor.5:19).

In ordinary cases, especially when definitions are made, or one thing is being identified with another, the various verb forms of “be” are not needed in Greek. It is not necessary to say, for example, Red is a color; all that is needed in Greek is to say, Red color. When the word “is,” or, in the present case, “was,” appears, something more than identification of being is in view. The figure of speech called “ellipsis” is involved here, where something is left out that can be supplied by the context and general development of thought.

Following the lead of 2 Corinthians 4:6, where Paul spoke of “the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” we are surely justified in seeing a figure of omission in the words “God was in Christ.” God was [making Himself known] in [the death of] Christ. We learn of God as He reveals Himself in Christ, bringing about tremendous blessings for the world.

CONCILIATING THE WORLD

Some have thought that by the word “world,” Paul must refer to the world of believers only. It is pointed out that Paul addresses the believers in verse 18 in revealing that God conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and so it is concluded that verse 19 must be restricted to the same
Appreciation of the Conciliation

group. But the context has already spoken of what Christ did for “all” (v.14) and has distinguished the special salvation of believers (cp 1 Tim.4:10), by the words “those who are living” (v.15). Indeed, the word “world” is clearly a poor term to use if a restricted portion of humanity is in view.

If something is done by God through the death and resurrection of His Son it is a certainty. It has been done, even though it may not be believed by many and may not be fully realized by any of us. This is why Paul was beseeching all peoples, “Be conciliated to God!” (2 Cor.5:20). He was not entreat- ing them to do something God had already done. Rather he was beseeching that they accept, believe and enjoy what God had already done through Christ. It was at the cross that God was revealing His heart in His Son, by conciliating the world to Himself. And so, as ambassadors, we are beseeching for Christ’s sake, “Become even now, in your heart and lives, what God has achieved on your behalf. Be conciliated to God.”

For us to be conciliated to God in awareness is a matter of accepting and believing and retaining the evangel that God was in Christ conciliating the world to Himself. It is exactly as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, concerning being saved. What God has done is done. But our present appreciation and appropriation of the blessings announced in the evangel arise from our believing the evangel. For us to experience the joy and peace of our conciliation with God (which is what the entreaty “Be conciliated to God!” means) we need to hold fast to the evangel of 2 Corinthians 5:19. Even though there is no evidence, in what we see and hear and feel with our fleshy senses, that God was actually making Himself known in Christ conciliating the world to Himself, nevertheless we believe it, and consequently we experience in spirit the blessings of the conciliation. We are becoming what God has made us in giving His Son for us; we are becoming, in increasing appreciation, conciliated to Him.

Since God is conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, there will eventually come a time when all will experience it. This is brought out later in Colossians 1:20 where we learn that “in Him,” that is, in the Son of God’s love (v.13), there is divine delight to reconcile all enemies on earth or in heaven to God, through the blood of Christ’s cross.

NOT RECKONING OFFENSES

The world is much involved in offending God. In lan-
guage that speaks crudely of Him, and in determination to prove its independence of Him there is unspeakable offense. But still God is not reckoning their offenses to them.

Nevertheless, the world’s offensiveness is understand-
able. No faith has been given to the majority of mankind concerning the evangel of God’s revelation of Himself in Christ. All of humanity is locked up in stubbornness so that God may be merciful to all (Rom.11:32).

What is perhaps more remarkable than the world’s offensiveness, however, is the continuing offense of unbelief among ourselves as believers. Here again we must acknowledge that not all are given the same measure of faith, but it surely is shocking to hear believers speak of God as far less than He claims to be in His Word. Is it not offensive to Him that He is presented as one who takes risks, not knowing how things will turn out, and as one who will consign certain human beings to everlasting torment, or will simply annihilate them even though Christ came into the world to save them? None of us perhaps fully appreciates the certainty of God’s peace, the transcendence of His grace, the reality of His righteousness, the greatness of His power or the vastness of His love as it is revealed in Christ. And where we fail in this, lacking confidence in
His declarations and reliance on Him as the living God, we offend. But He is not reckoning our offenses to us. May God increase our faith in this gracious word!

**HUMAN OFFENDING HUMAN**

We might add a word here about human beings giving and taking offense in relationships among ourselves. This certainly lies behind those “works of the flesh,” that Paul terms, “enmities, strife, jealousies, furies, factions, dissensions, sects, envies” in Galatians 5:20. In Colossians 3:8 the apostle speaks of similar practices of the old humanity, including “anger, fury, malice, calumny,” and these too are offenses against others. Strife and jealousies and anger invariably arise out of the practice of holding against them, the offenses committed by others against ourselves. Rather than becoming imitators of God as beloved children (cf Eph. 5:1), we let the offenses of others fester in our hearts, and consequently we miss much of the joy and peace that flows from the evangel.

The solution, Paul says, is: “Let the word of Christ be making its home in you richly, in all wisdom...” (Col. 3:16). Surely then, this word of Christ which includes what is called “the word of the conciliation” in 2 Corinthians 5:19 is powerful in arbitrating in our hearts to the end that we less and less harbor resentment of offenses committed by others against us and less and less resort deliberately to offending others out of anger and envy and malice.

The word of the conciliation is that God was revealing Himself in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, and not reckoning their offenses to them. God is not reckoning your offenses to you. He is not reckoning my offenses to me. What a gracious and powerful word this is! And how blessed we are to be living in this most acceptable era (2 Cor. 6:2) when the word of the conciliation is made known!

D.H.H

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**“WHEN IT DELIGHTS GOD”**

(Galatians 1:10-17)

For, at present, am I persuading men or God? Or am I seeking to please men? If I still pleased men, I were not a slave of Christ. (1:10)

With these words, having completed the introductory, preparatory portion of the epistle (1:1-9), Paul now begins his personal defense. The dominant theme of the entire epistle is Paul's defense of his own evangel. On this behalf, he would first defend his apostleship. If he has been commissioned by Christ Himself to proclaim this evangel, then it is a true evangel. Therefore, it is to be accepted accordingly by all who are in Christ; and, it is to be heeded and personally applied by all who come under its blessing.

The epistle began with the words, “Paul, an apostle, (not from men, neither through a man... )” (1:1). Now, beginning in verse 10, Paul begins to demonstrate the truth of this initial affirmation. He does so through the word “for,” which refers us to his repeated, insistent declaration, “If anyone is bringing you an evangel beside that which you accepted, let him be anathema!” (1:8,9). That is, the reason why an “anathema” (i.e., a certain, adversative judgment) must fall upon any who bring a different evangel (cp 1:16b) to those whom God is actually blessing according to Paul's evangel, is because, in announcing his evangel, the apostle is not persuading “[as to] men,” but “[as to] God.”

Idiomatically, the Greek word for “persuade” (peithō, PERSUADE) is also rendered “have confidence” (e.g., “those who have confidence in money,” Mark 10:24; cp Gal. 5:7-10).

No one would imagine otherwise than that, in performing
his evangelistic labors, Paul was seeking to persuade men, not God. If, however, the word “persuading” is taken literally, without allowance for an ellipsis such as “as to” (i.e., “persuading [as to]”), the sense would then be merely the trite fact that Paul was seeking to persuade men, not God. In that case, however, the causal conjunction “for,” in relating us back to verses 8 and 9, would introduce an illogical statement. The sense would then be that the reason why an anathema must befall those who bring a different evangel, is because, in performing his ministry, Paul sought to persuade men! Of course it does not follow from the mere fact that Paul’s ministry was on behalf of men (not God), that this constitutes grounds for the pronouncement of an anathema upon Paul’s opposers.

Therefore, the elliptical “as to” (“persuading [as to] men or God?”) or “in” (“having confidence [in] men or God?”) must be understood when considering Paul’s words here. Then, the sense is, “Am I having confidence (in) men or (in) God?” Or, when expressed using the English “persuade”: “Am I persuading (as to) men or (as to) God?” The point then becomes that, in proclaiming his evangel, Paul is confident in (or persuaded as to) the truthfulness of his message, for his message, first of all, is God’s message. And, because that is so, therefore (”For,” 1:10a) it follows, “if anyone is bringing you an evangel beside that which you accepted, let him be anathema!” (1:9).

In proclaiming his evangel, Paul’s confidence is in God, Therefore, the apostle’s ministry of seeking to persuade others was first of all founded upon his own persuasion as to what God had revealed to him through Christ.

Hence, Paul must further add, “If I still pleased men, I were not a slave of Christ” (1:10b). Paul’s words here should be considered in connection with his related declaration in Galatians 5:11: “Now I, brethren, if I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

Consequently [i.e., “In that case, then,”], the snare of the cross of Christ has been nullified.”

For a time, after Saul of Tarsus (as Paul was originally known) first became acquainted with the Lord on the Damascus road (Acts 9:27), he continued on, seeking the righteousness which is in law, according to Moses (Phil.3:6; John 7:23). Saul anticipated the restoring of the kingdom unto Israel, according to the times and eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction (Acts 1:6,7).

During this period, Saul was a member of the ecclesia of believing Jews at Antioch. All such ones lived in expectation of Israel’s promised kingdom, according to the writings of their prophets, while seeking to become blameless themselves according to the law, in anticipation of that day. Believing Jews were zealous for the law (Acts 21:20); they practiced circumcision and sought to keep the law of Moses (cp Acts 15:5). Jesus Himself had warned that any of that calling who were “workers of lawlessness,” had no relationship with Him and would not enter into the kingdom of the heavens (cp Matt.7:21-23; James 2:10).

Therefore, during that early period, before Saul was severed from his law-observing brethren for the work to which God (”the Holy Spirit”) had called him (Acts 13:2), Saul too must have heralded circumcision. In so doing, he, in a righteous sense, pleased men by doing that which those who were seeking to establish their own righteousness according to law (cp Rom.10:3,4), rightly deemed essential to entrance into life in the terrestrial kingdom.

Were Paul, now, however, to still “please men” by continuing to herald circumcision, as he says, “I were not a slave of Christ” (Gal.1:10b).

After having been severed from his past associations, that he might now be engaged in the service of that glorious evangel of God which, apart from law, bestows a declaration of righteousness on all who are believing (Rom.
90  Persuaded as to the Evangel

3:21,22), it would be entirely out of place for Paul still to be pleasing men by heralding circumcision.

That is, such service, now, by Paul, could only “please men” in the case of any who continued to deem such a rite essential for themselves, even though they erred in supposing that it should be imposed as well on the believers of the nations (Acts 15:1,5). In connection with the evangel of the Circumcision and its service, such a rite was indeed essential; even so, it has no place whatever in connection with the evangel which Paul was heralding among the nations (Gal.2:2). Hence, were Paul now to continue to enjoin circumcision even on those of the nations, doing so out of a motive merely to please those who imagined that this was necessary, he could not be “a [worthy] slave of Christ.”

Today, when we ourselves become persuaded as to the evangel which God first revealed to Paul, our confidence too is in God. We can no longer have confidence in the false, human traditions which we first embraced. We must now set aside various ceremonies and observances, ones which we should never have practiced in the first place. If we would be faithful, legalistic scrutiny of days and foods, besides giving heed to sundry do’s and don’ts as prerequisites to salvation, must all be repudiated. This is so, even if in so doing we should incur the displeasure of man as a result.

NOT IN ACCORD WITH MAN

For I am making known to you, brethren, as to the evangel which is being brought by me, that it is not in accord with man. For neither did I accept it from a man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (1:11,12)

Again, the reason why (“for”) Paul was not seeking to please men, and was not still pleasing men, was because the evangel which he brought was not in accord with man. And, in turn, the reason why his evangel was not in accord with man, was because he neither accepted it from a man nor was he taught it by a man.

Not a Pre-existing Message

“Those who were disturbing the Galatians had no message except what they had received [and corrupted and mis-applied] from the twelve apostles. But Paul is unwearied in his insistence that he received nothing from them (cp Gal.2:6). His revelation was a fresh revelation made known to him by the Lord Himself. If Paul merely proclaimed what the twelve taught, why did he not receive it through them? What need for the Lord to descend and call him on the Damascus road? Why should he be severed from the rest at Antioch? Why did the believing Jews in Jerusalem oppose his ministry among the nations?”

Just as in verse 1 Paul declares that his apostleship is neither of human origin nor derivation, he now makes a similar claim concerning his evangel. Paul’s evangel is not “in accord with (kata, DOWN) man.” That is, his evangel itself is not based upon some pre-existing message which was already being taught by someone else. Paul—unlike ourselves, who take our evangel from him—did not simply repeat some extant message which was already in the hands of those who were in Christ before him.

This was because “neither did [he] accept [his evangel] from a man, nor was he taught it [by a man],” but he accepted it through a revelation of Jesus Christ, and he was taught it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

The way this text is rendered in the Concordant Version, is expedient for the ordinary reader in an idiomatic version. Yet with the added words “it came,” even as with no indication of either the ellipsis or of the parallel construction which obtains in the Greek, it lacks the forcefulness and clarity of the more precise sense, as we have sought to bring out in the preceding paragraph.

Paul did not accept his evangel “from [para, BESIDE] a man,” nor was he taught it by a man. The word “man” is in

the singular, as in the phrase “through a man,” in verse 1. In accepting and learning his evangel, since Paul did not stand “beside” any man in so doing, neither did he thus stand beside any particular man.

The emphatic intimation here, however, through the repeated, singular form, is implicative of a particular man. “It points unmistakably to Peter who figures so prominently in this recital. The circumcisionists asserted Paul’s dependence on the elder apostles and the Jerusalem church. They insinuated that he had received his gospel from Peter. Whence, said they, could Paul have derived his knowledge of Christ, but from this fountainhead? This was the fulcrum of the argument which Paul foils.”

In a wider sense, neither is Paul’s evangel in accord with man, with respect to the entirety of the human race. The Hebrew term for human being is *adam* (“Adam”). The Circumcision evangel is very much concerned with the human race, not just Israel, and God’s purpose for it on the earth and in the flesh. So Paul has in mind to distinguish his evangel from that of the Circumcision (which is in accord with humanity). The apostle does not simply make a general contrast between a message from God that is divine in nature, and one concerned with ordinary human thinking and philosophy. It is not only that Paul’s evangel was not “secular” or was not in accord with human wisdom (this is in view in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, for instance). But Paul’s evangel is also different from that of the Circumcision which has much that accords with humanity, though indeed being of God and concerned with Christ.

It seems that, broadly considered, “not in accord with humanity” incorporates both these ideas: (1) not in accord with human wisdom and thinking (as in 1 Corinthians 1), and also (2) not in accord with God’s message concerning

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2. V. Gelesnoff, *Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, p.35.

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or with Israel and the Earth

Israel and the nations, the earth, and the place of human- ity as promised from Adam and on through the prophets. Yet the context of Galatians makes it clear that (2) is what Paul has predominantly in view here, “at present” (1:10).

While Paul is indeed relating “his story” in chapters 1 and 2, nevertheless his account focuses on “the grace of Christ” (1:6), “a revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:12), that is, “the evangel which is being brought by me” (1:11). So both Paul’s story, and the message given to him, have this one pattern: not in accord with humanity, and being in accord with God and a revelation of Jesus Christ that came from God.

SEVERED FROM JUDAISM

For you hear of my behavior once, in Judaism, that I inordinately persecuted the ecclesia of God and ravaged it. And I progressed in Judaism above many contemporar- ies in my race, being inherently exceedingly more zealous for the traditions of my fathers. (1:13,14)

Paul’s use of the term “Judaism” in itself by no means implies any disparagement (*cp* his related expression, “judaizing,” Gal.2:14; *cf* Acts 15:21). Under Judaism, Paul had been circumcised the eighth day, and, in his majority, had become a Hebrew of Hebrews. In relation to the righteousness which is in law, he had been becoming blameless (Phil.3:5,6), even if he was a member of the sect of the Pharisees, which had added many vain traditions to the law.

The point is that “Judaism” simply refers to the institutions of the Jews, the observance of the law of Moses as understood and practiced beginning with the Babylonian exile. The traditions of Paul’s “fathers,” were by no means all vain traditions of men, but were, in many respects, a devout and intelligent observance of the law, as handed down from one generation to the next.

Though the expression “Judaism” was perhaps originally coined by non-Jews, of whom some doubtless used the word
Saul was Ravaging the Ecclesia

with a connotation of contempt, it would, when naturalized among the Jews themselves, lose this idea, and even become a title of honor. The case of the term “Christian,” which was likewise originally a term of reproach (cp Acts 11:25; 26:28), is a parallel case: “For let not any of you be suffering as a murderer, or as a thief, or an evil doer, or as an interferer in other’s affairs; yet if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, yet let him be glorifying God in this name...” (1 Peter 4:16).

Paul’s behavior, however, once, in Judaism, in the days of his unbelief, was another matter. As he says, “he inordinately persecuted the ecclesia of God and ravaged it.” Indeed, not only had he endorsed Stephen’s assassination (Acts 8:1), but he had continually “breathed out threatening and murder against the disciples of the Lord” (Acts 9:1). He had supposed himself bound to commit much contrary to the name of Jesus the Nazarene, and so had acted accordingly. He locked up many of the saints in jails, and even deposited a ballot to despatch them. At all the synagogues, often punishing them, he compelled them to blaspheme. Being exceedingly maddened against them, he persecuted them as far as the outside cities (Acts 26:9-11).

Yet it was also true that he had progressed in Judaism itself, above many contemporaries in his race, being inherently exceedingly more zealous for the traditions of his fathers (1:14).

Paul’s point is that there was nothing in his former career to account for his becoming a herald of the cross. “His prechristian career was such as to exclude all possibility of his receiving any doctrine from the followers of Jesus Christ, least of all from Peter, whom, as leader of the Nazarenes [Acts 24:5], he could only regard as an arch-heretic to be hunted to death.”3 Thus the apostle proves that it

3. V. Gelesnoff, PAUL’S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, p.37.

God’s Delight in Unveiling His Son

was simply absurd to suggest, as certain of his enemies were insinuating, that he had received his evangel from Peter.

Now, when it delights God, Who severs me from my mother’s womb and calls me through His grace, to unveil His Son in me that I may be evangelizing Him among the nations... (1:15,16a)

The particle de (yet), though sometimes, as here, rendered “now,” is often translated “yet,” which captures more of its essence. For example, “Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest...” (Rom.3:21); or, “yet God, being rich in mercy, because of His vast love with which He loves us...” (Eph.2:4). Though sometimes only slightly so, de is an adversative connective, in the sense that that which follows this expression and to which it refers (e.g., God’s righteousness, or, His mercy and vast love) stands against the subject which precedes it. Just as God’s righteousness, mercy, and vast love, blessedly stand against human sin, thus also God’s “delight” to unveil His Son in the foremost sinner (1 Tim.1:15,16), Saul of Tarsus, stood against Saul’s Judaism, in which, in his unbelief, he had so ferociously persecuted the ecclesia.

To clarify this point, instead of saying, “Now, when it delights God...” we will say, “Yet, when it delights God.” Then the sense becomes more apparent: It is true that, as Saul, Paul had once been engaged in Judaism, and had progressed in Judaism above many contemporaries in his race. “Yet when it delights God,” He severed Paul “from his mother’s womb and call[ed him] through His grace” (1:15).

Thus it becomes evident that “mother’s womb,” here, is not literal but figurative. Indeed, through the severing of the umbilical cord, all infants, when first born, are severed from their literal mother’s womb. But Paul, in the considerations before us, was severed from Judaism. Judaism was that which had long been nourishing him, as well as being that in which he had enjoyed much growth. Hence, he speaks of it as having been his “mother’s womb.”
Thus, Paul was severed from Judaism, and even from those of its practitioners who were believers in Christ (cp Acts 13:2). Yet Paul was “severed for the [i.e., that] evangel of God . . . concerning His Son . . . Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom.1:1-4), which, in its most complete form, has been preserved for us in the epistle to the Romans. This evangel of God—which is also the evangel of Christ (Gal.1:7)—was revealed to Paul by Jesus Christ Himself. Hence, with reference to the one to whom Christ had revealed this evangel, Paul termed it “my evangel” (Rom.16:25). This is the evangel which Paul brought (1:11); the evangel which he heralded among the nations (2:2).

When it delighted God to unveil His Son in Paul, He simply did so. Nothing is too marvelous for Him (Jer.32:17,27). In this, Paul becomes “a pattern of those who,” even when they do not as yet believe, “are about to be believing on [Jesus Christ] for life eonian” (1 Tim.1:16). Even in the days of their unbelief, it may be truly said of them that their faith is “impending.” Thus it was that, “whoever were set for life eonian,” “they believe” (Acts 13:48). It is those for whom eonian life has been arranged, who believe on Christ. This is because the Lord “overwhelms” the unbelief of “those who are chosen” (2 Tim.2:10), “with faith and love in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim.1:14).

I did not immediately submit it to flesh and blood, neither came I up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I came away into Arabia, and I return again to Damascus. (1:16b,17)

Paul had not received his evangel from those who were apostles before him, and was acting under a sense of a unique divine call that admitted of neither human validation nor supplement. Therefore, rather than seeking out one or more of the twelve for any reason whatsoever, Paul instead came away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

(To be continued)
EDITORIAL

In Memoriam
Herman H. Rocke
1908-1996

Our brother and fellow worker, Herman H. Rocke, has been put to repose. It is with sorrow and with a deep sense of loss that we make this announcement. Yet we are thanking our God and Father for the wise and gracious guidance He channeled to us for many years through this chosen vessel.

Born in Germany on July 21, 1908, he, in his own words, “received peace with God through the blood of Christ” as a boy of 15. He spent many years filled with questions, searching for answers in the established churches and schools. He wanted to know as clearly as possible just what God was saying in His Word, and toward this end he studied both Hebrew and Greek as taught in the universities.

It was during the last years of the Second World War that he visited a church in Berlin, pastored by Brother H. Grossman, where A. E. Knoch had enjoyed fellowship several years previously. In a letter to Brother Knoch written in 1946, Herman related: “The answers to my questions [were] given by Grossman’s sermons and the Concordant Literature which was made available to me by Brother Wolff at Stepelnitz.”

His schooling in languages opened up jobs for him as English interpreter and later as coordinator of cultural events for soldiers in the American army. In the meantime he was engrossed in reestablishing the Concordant work in Germany. By 1954 he was living in Hamburg and serving as managing editor of the magazine and other German publications.
Then in the January 1960 issue of Unsearchable Riches it was announced, “At the time of writing, we have received word of the impending departure of the Editor of our German magazine, Brother Herman Rocke, and his wife, from Hamburg, for the United States. Our brother plans, D.V., to take up residence in Los Angeles, where he will assume the duties of editorial assistant to A. E. Knoch, the Compiler of the Concordant Version.”

Thus, while still continuing his labors with the Konkordanter Verlag, Brother Rocke and his wife Luise, moved to Los Angeles, living for awhile nearly next door to Brother and Sister Knoch, and so he became much involved in the English work as well. I remember well my own first visit to Los Angeles in July 1960, when I was privileged to meet Brother Knoch and his family, and also Herman and Luise, as well as their two children who had previously moved to the United States. The humble setting only made the thrill of witnessing the daily conferring of A. E. Knoch and Herman Rocke, along with David Knoch, on the Concordant Version of Isaiah, all that more striking. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gratuity (as Herman so often repeated)!

My real acquaintance with Brother Rocke began when I moved to California in 1972 and assumed many of the duties previously carried on for many years by Brother Ernest Knoch. The Rockes were then living in Carpinteria, California, in a mobile home near the ocean shore. They would drive to the office in Canyon Country each week, putting in long hours on the Concordant Version of the Old Testament and the preparation of Unsearchable Riches.

Herman seldom spoke about himself or family concerns. He immersed himself in his work with great discipline and dedication. It seems to me that I came to know him best during the last few years when we were separated by many miles of distance (after Luise’s death in 1992, Herman lived first with his son in Davis, California, and then more recently with his daughter in Beaverton, Oregon). Our communication was principally by mail, sometimes by telephone, but the fellowship of mutual solicitude by prayer and petition as we labored together on the Old Testament translation was the highest of privileges for me in our association for the last 24 years.

Up to about eight weeks ago, Herman was still working 40 hours or more a week on the Concordant translation and on both the German and English magazines. He occasionally mentioned intestinal distress, and his age had taken its toll. But it did come as a shock to me when I learned in early March that he had terminal cancer and had been forced to leave his desk completely. He was able to stay at home under his daughter’s care. I spoke with him briefly by telephone on April 22 and felt it was for the last time in this life, as it came to be. He died the evening of April 25.

I would like to share some lines from his letters and reports of the past few years and months. Perhaps his words will be as encouraging and uplifting to others as they have been to me (the first citation is much earlier than the others and seems especially timely in light of Bro. Rocke’s death as well as the current studies on the book of Job in the magazine):

April 19, 1985. “I have spent some time on Job 19:25-27 . . . Job was inspired to speak these words; so the expectation of resurrection lies at the very heart of Job’s faith. Hence he may be called a prophet in his own right; for by many portions and modes, of old, God was speaking to the fathers . . . Another important point is the fact that Job expected to perceive Eloah with his own eyes (i.e., from my flesh), not El, not Elohim. So Job used the divine title that reflects the general direction of Christ’s activity, Godcards.

“The scroll of Job stands out from all the other books of
the O.T. in that the title Eloah occurs 41 times in Job, and only 17 times elsewhere. In this way the scroll as a whole points to Christ, the Redeemer. The expressions, ‘with my own eyes, from my flesh, behind my skin,’ show that it is indeed Job in person who will be present and stand erect and perceive Eloah, his Redeemer.

September 29, 1991. “My daily prayer is not only for spiritual wisdom and revelation of the divine thoughts, but also for a full mental grasp of the intricacies of the Hebrew texts that will come before me in the course of the day. I also pray for the ability to accurately translate them into English. I pray for the gift of logical thinking and for a good memory so as to be able to recall the occurrence of similar Hebrew phrases.”

September 20, 1993. “This morning I woke up at 5:48 (Oregon time). I do not rise this early now, but I wake up around 5:00 almost every morning. Since this is 8:00 your time, I start praying for you and ye all for the Lord’s blessing for the new day—blessing for all endurance and patience with joy: that we may be endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory.”

July 10, 1994. “If the Lord should ever be willing, and I shall be living (James 4:15), I would like to write a few articles about Samuel, the Last of the Judges . . . . About four weeks ago, I became sick with jaundice [and] had to spend 24 hours in the hospital for continuous intravenous drip of antibiotics . . . . Right now, I have no pain. ‘Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless our inward [man] is being renewed day by day’ (2 Cor.4:16).”

August 23, 1994. “Thank you for your mail of Aug. 17 and the description of the star gazing session. This brings to mind Col.3:1-4 . . . . be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.—So often I am looking up to the heavens from where He will be descend-
mail. I have been thanking the Lord daily for having full vision on my right eye (there is cataract on the left one), and the recent inflammation is receding. Praise the Lord, there is no stomach pain today as has been every day in the past weeks."

The final note from his hand was attached to some work on Amos that he was returning to me; it is dated February 25, 1996, and is here given in its entirety: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you! Yours in Him, Herman."

Brother Rocke nearly completed the revision work on 2 Samuel but was unable to do this for the two books of Kings as he had hoped. Yet always he reminded himself of the praise and prayers of Paul, centered in confidence in the One Who will be completing the work He has begun in us (cf Phil.1:6). This is reflected in his study, The Prayer of Faith, which appeared in Unsearchable Riches for March 1960 and in his book, Check Your Panoply, from which we have excerpted the article beginning on the following page.

The article on 2 Corinthians 5:18,19 that appeared in our March issue was prepared at Brother Rocke's request. For one who lived through two world wars at close hand, this message of God's achievement of conciliation held special meaning, and it seems fitting that he was so concerned in his last months that we continue to give it stress. He knew it was because of the truth that God was in Christ conciliating the world to Himself that our prayers are broadened toward all mankind, and we may find something of what Paul called "a mild and quiet life" (1 Tim.2:2) even in these stressful days.

Memorial services were held by his family in Oregon, and friends in California and Michigan. We say good night for now, in expectation of the morning that begins that blessed time when we will always be together with our Lord.

D.H.H.

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A Mild and Quiet Life

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Putting on the panoply of God is something which cannot be accomplished without "praying on every occasion" (Eph.6:18). This signifies that the various phases (girding the loins, putting on the cuirass, etc.) should each be accompanied by such prayers and petitions, as were practiced by Paul and his associates.

Some people are under the impression that a prayer is nothing more than the opening of their heart toward God, just like the opening of a flower toward the light. They consider this to be their utmost effort. God will have the rest. To a certain degree this may be correct in a case of great personal affliction. If this, however, became our permanent attitude we would remain in the realm of emotion instead of taking the path leading toward the highest praise of God of which the human tongue is capable. We need to learn more thoroughly how to pray with the renewed mind. This means we have to abandon any passive attitude in prayer and become as active in it as we possibly can. The point should be emphasized that praying is like performing a task for which we have to prepare ourselves. Mature prayer requires our undivided attention in addition to spiritual wisdom and realization of God. If the words are vague and general, this is a sign that something is lacking.

Perhaps we have not yet fully grasped all of God's promises that pertain to us. They ought to be studied time and again, and as thoroughly as possible; otherwise our faith is in danger. It may be overshadowed by pious fantasies, leading us to believe that this or that is urgent and valuable
and useful in the work of the Lord. It is not right to bring such arbitrary petitions before God in prayer even if they are well meant and find the approval of pious tradition.

We should become acquainted with the Lord’s will before we attempt to do our utmost in His service. We ought to know what He expects from us in this administration, and we should heed His warnings of the traps of the Adversary. It is true that the Lord said that no one is able to snatch the disciples out of the Father’s hand (John 10:29). And nothing shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom.8:35). But it is also true that Satan claimed even the apostles, to sift them as grain. The Adversary was authorized in his attempt to ruin Job’s faith. Yahweh told Satan, “He is in your hand!” But there was the restriction, “Only keep his soul alive” (Job 2:6).

Even today the Adversary is requesting such authorization, especially in order to prevent the most fervent of the faithful from growing into maturity. If he cannot hinder their spiritual growth by Job’s plagues, he will try time and again to distort God’s Word before their spiritual eyes, so that they do not come into a realization of the truth and will not sober up out of the trap of the Adversary (2 Tim.2:25,26).

The most common deception is to assume the translation of the Bible to be inspired and therefore infallible. Hence people are reluctant to accept any truth which is apparent in the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures only, but not in their translation.

Others revel in the delusion that they can request from God as much as they are able to believe, and that, even if it be impossible, God will finally grant it to them. They do not know that what God denies, Satan will readily provide if this provision serves to detain them in deception.

Only by nourishing ourselves daily with the words of faith and of the ideal teaching (1 Tim.4:6) may we avoid the trap of asking for things which God has not promised for today. The prayer of faith is therefore primarily based on the words of faith and teaching which the exalted Christ had Paul write down for us. Concentrating on the Pauline letters we should not overlook, however, that the path leads from immaturity in Corinthians to maturity in Ephesians.

GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

If, praying with a renewed mind, we address the Supreme with these few words, He would consider them far superior to ten thousand uncontrolled words, when we let our emotions run away with us, and fail to glorify the Supreme as we should. By the invocation “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” we acknowledge that it was Jesus Who took away the sin of the world and became obedient unto the death of the cross on Golgotha; hence there is no longer a barrier between God and us. In addition we are obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ and serve Him until all is subjected to Him (1 Cor.15:28). Finally Christ is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, and He makes peace through the blood of His cross in order to reconcile all to Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:15-20). Christ is also the Head of the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all (Eph.1:23).

Whenever we make petitions for something which exceeds the abilities of weak mortals, we should address God, the Almighty, the supreme Subjector, the Source of all power, wisdom and love. As a matter of fact we can hardly pray and ignore Him Who is all and has all and does all that we are longing for. Anybody else is only channeling those gifts which originate from Him. This is why we always should go back to the fountainhead, to God Himself, in order to give Him all the praise and thanks and glory which are due to Him alone.
When Jesus says, “I am the Way . . . . No one is coming to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6), then He means that henceforth no other way leads to God. Up to that time Israel had approached Yahweh by means of a divine ritual of various sacrifices. Since Golgotha the situation is different. Now we approach the Almighty in the new Way which is Christ Who was sacrificed for us. Through Him we now have direct access to His Father in spirit.

Let us make ample use of this invocation: God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! Paul did so and he should have known, for he had seen the exalted Christ repeatedly (Acts 26:16) and had become His spokesman for the highest revelations. Whenever he wants to glorify God with the most sublime words at his disposal he uses this invocation and he occasionally adds “Father of pities” or “Father of glory” (2 Cor.1:3; Eph.1:3,17; Col.1:3).

Certainly He is our God and Father, too; but when we address Him as “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” we grant Him higher honors and greater glory and subjection, as well as our fullest agreement with everything that God did through Christ, not only in the creation but also in the reconciliation, not only for us but also for the rest of mankind and the spiritual beings.

Some people are afraid to address God directly and prefer to begin their prayers with the words, “Dear Jesus.” This might be due to a feeling or assumption that He Who also walked this earth and died for our sins would be closer to us and perhaps understand us better than His God and Father. There is, however, no reason for such shyness. On the contrary, Jesus said that the Father is seeking those who are worshiping Him (John 4:23). God wants us to grow in the realization of His will (Col.1:9,10) until we finally see that He is actually and originally everything of which Christ became the Image (Col.1:15). Our acquaintance with the Image should help us to correct our ideas about God Himself and to adore Him in an appropriate manner.

When things overwhelm us, however, there might be no time for us to pray with the renewed mind. Then we will perhaps sigh and groan in ourselves and pray the way we always did under similar distress. God will never weigh our words under such circumstances, for He reads the thoughts from our hearts, regardless of whether we exclaim “Dear Jesus” or “My God and Father” or whatever had been our habit.

PLEADINGS AND THANKSGIVING

The result of praying should always be to keep out any estrangement between God and ourselves. Whenever addressing the Supreme we may have fellowship with Him, similar to that which everybody is going to enjoy to the fullest extent in the future when God will be All in all (1 Cor.15:28). In our prayers today, even if He is not yet all in us, He is at least something in you and in me. When petitions are made in the ecclesia and all those present say, “Amen,” God is at least something in them. The more mature the prayer, the better; if the hearers are able to follow its trend of thought, God will be even more in them. Being true and, in love, making all grow into Him, Who is the Head, Christ (Eph.4:15), we may be coming nearer and nearer, in spirit, to the consummation when God will be all in us, too. Thus such hours as lead to estrangement with Him will become fewer, and continuous harmonious fellowship with Him will become the dominant factor in our lives.

In prayer, our thoughts will go to our fellow men; our superiors, and authorities in this country and elsewhere. In Paul’s day the overall situation was by no means peaceful; under the reign of Emperor Claudius all Jews were expelled from Rome; the young ecclesia at Thessalonica went through such persecutions and afflictions that they were alarmed and afraid, thinking that perhaps the day of the Lord was already present; they felt they might have
missed the snatching away. In addition, Paul's personal career was marked by "much endurance in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in blows, in jails, in turbulences, in toils," etc. We can look that up in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

It is under the impact of such events during those restless years, and also under the leadership of God's holy spirit, that Paul gives to Timothy, and to us as well, a prayer guide pertaining both to our inward peace and the outward situation with relation to the people around us. Paul strongly recommends pleadings and thanksgiving for all of them, including the superior authorities (1 Tim.2:1-4). Since he does so in view of the Roman government of his day, in view of the wicked men and false brethren, we may even more feel like imitating him in his attitude.

Only on condition of daily nourishment with the words of faith and of the ideal teaching (1 Tim.4:6), however, will we be able to rejoice in pleadings and thanksgiving for those who seemingly add to our hardships in life. As long as we are not fully aware of the divine truths for today we might be inclined to withstand our superiors and our authorities, quoting Peter to the effect that we should obey God rather than men. But Acts 5:29 does not apply to the political rule or to Roman military government which was in power at that time, but to the Sanhedrin, a Jewish council consisting of chiefs, scribes, and elders. It was to them that Peter and the apostles replied, "One must yield to God rather than to men." The words of ideal teaching concerning our relationship to superiors and authorities today are found in Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25 and Titus 2:9,10.

Our prayer guide (1 Tim.2:1-4) tells us that a life in devoutness and gravity is ideal and welcome in the sight of God, that is, a mild and quiet life. God is not only our Saviour, but He wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. This truth is brought out once more in the same letter (4:10): "... for this are we toiling and being reproached, that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers." And the apostle adds: "These things be charging and teaching." In agreement with this fact is Colossians 1:20: "... through Him to reconcile all to Him, (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens."

These words of faith and of the ideal teaching contain a promise which alleviates the hardships originating from our contact with the outside world: It is God's irrevocable will that everybody be saved and come into a realization of the truth about God and about Himself. We are well aware that this will not happen in our day; but after the eons when all beings will be reconciled with Him in the consummation, then indeed He will be All in all and not only in us who believe today.

On the path toward this goal everyone has his individual experience with bitterness, fury, anger, clamor, calumny and malice. This experience may be more or less thorough; it may be gained actively or passively, until all detest these things as much as God does. For this purpose most people will have to review their lives before the great white throne (Rev.20:11-15), in order to evaluate it objectively; that is, to see it with God's eyes and agree with His verdict. Later on, every creature will have no other desire but to enjoy and reflect God's love.

As believers it is our immense privilege to know already now how intensely God hates sin because it prevents His creatures from enjoying real happiness. Our way of life will indeed be peaceful, mild, and quiet when we consider sin to be a tool used by God to help His creatures realize their absolute dependence on Him until they will dread any life without Him so much that they are driven to His heart. When we have recognized this divine line of
Seeing Others as God Sees Them

thought we will be able to adopt the same attitude toward all men as the Father of pities is showing.

As long as we are conscious of the words of faith and of the ideal teaching as quoted above we will rejoice in always including all mankind in our pleadings, with thanksgiving, not forgetting kings and all those in a superior station. We may be leading a mild and quiet life, not because God will remove wicked men and false brethren and turbulences, but because we will begin to look at them the way He does. We will agree with His plans in all their details and be subject to His will in all things. Therefore we cannot but praise Him continually.

H.H.R.

SORROW ON SORROW

The death of Herman Rocke has brought sorrow on sorrow (Phil. 2:27), in that it has followed the death of several other close friends in faith.

Louis Abbott of Stover, Missouri was a brother who so rejoiced in the truth of universal reconciliation that he gave up his work as a full-time minister so that he could speak freely of the certainty of God's victory in Christ for everyone. Hence, as an auto mechanic he studied Greek and shared the truth of God's Word with customers, by correspondence and in travels. He died, with both joy and peace in his heart, on April 17 at the age of 80.

Walter Dane of San Gabriel, California, was also a brother who suffered loss in fellowship because of his conviction that God will be All in all. He also found that this was not a loss in confidence and joy in the Lord, and he was always an encouragement to us in our work and in the fellowship of the faith (Philemon 6). He died on February 8 at 89 years of age.

Theodore Jodar of Edmonds, Washington, was in his 93rd year when he died on March 28. With his wife, Elva, who survives him, he had come to grasp the truth of God's eonian purpose under the ministry of Adlai Loudy and others, many years ago. And more recently he shared in fellowship and support with our friends in the Seattle area. Yes, these losses bring us sorrow, but not without expectation!

The Epistles of Paul

PAUL'S PROMISE EPISTLES

The blessed expectation of our Lord's return before the day of His indignation is the subject of these, Paul's earliest epistles. It is the early opening wedge between those who received his ministry among the nations and those of the Circumcision, who looked for Messiah's advent after the display of His indignation and the destruction of man's kingdoms.

The historical background for this change is given in the book of Acts, though the teaching itself is not found there because the Acts is a treatise on the kingdom of God for Israel. In the ministry of our Lord and His twelve apostles His coming is always presented in its connection with the promised kingdom. It will be with power and great glory (Matt.24:30; Mark 12:26; Luke 21:27). His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:11,12; Zech.14:1-5).

All the predictions in the book of Daniel and in the Revelation of Jesus Christ will find fulfillment from then on. It will follow an era of the most awful and terrific judgments mankind will ever be called upon to endure. So long as the kingdom was impending, these judgments, also, were hanging over a rebellious race.

At first Paul, like all the rest, confined his ministry to the Jews. At Antioch, where the disciples were first called “Christians,” there were none except Jews and proselytes. From this he was separated (Acts 13:2). At Pisidian Antioch he first turned to the nations, or Gentiles. After that, though he spoke to the Jews first, he proclaimed Christ freely among the nations, preaching grace. One of the first questions for
Caught Up to Meet our Lord

these believers among the nations was, What shall become of us in the great judgments which precede the coming of the kingdom? Will God visit us also with the terrors of His indignation? In answer to this the apostle is given an entirely new revelation concerning the future presence of the Lord. The believers among the nations were saved on the ground of grace. This is to characterize all God’s dealings with them. Hence they cannot remain in the scene which is visited by His indignation. They must be sheltered or removed. Some saints in Israel are sheltered, but the new company, composed principally of saints from the other nations who have believed Paul’s preaching, are to be removed. Paul receives the revelation that, long before the Lord descends in glory to set up His kingdom, He will descend, not to the earth, but to the air, and His saints will be caught up to meet Him there. Thus they will be above the lightnings and thunders of the terrible day of the Lord.

In later epistles, as the truth was gradually developed, more details were added to this glorious revelation. The Corinthian mind found difficulties in this doctrine, so the apostle unfolds to them the secret of the resurrection (1 Cor.15:51,52), that our bodies, which, at present, are adapted only to an earthly environment, are to be changed to suit the celestial spheres. The Philippian letter caps the climax by the added revelation that they shall be transfigured into the glorious likeness of our Lord Himself!

1 Thessalonians

The historical setting and occasion for this epistle is found in the book of Acts (17:1-15; 18:5). By constraint of the Spirit of God, after he had revisited the scenes of his first missionary journey, Paul is led to go across to Macedonia. He perceived a vision in which a Macedonian entreated him, “Cross over into Macedonia. Help us!” In response to this appeal Paul and his party founded an ecclesia in Philippi, to which also he afterwards penned the epistle of that name. After being beaten and imprisoned, they are besought to leave the city, and came to Thessalonica.

Paul first reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue for three sabbaths, showing from their Scriptures that Christ must suffer and rise from the dead and that Jesus was their Messiah. Some believed, but some did not. As at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:46-48), Paul then turns to those outside the pale of Judaism, and of these a vast multitude believe. But, as at Pisidian Antioch, the unbelieving Jews stirred up a persecution against them so that they were sent away. After going to Berea (Acts 17:10) and Athens (Acts 17:15-34), he came to Corinth, where both Silas and Timothy joined him (Acts 18:5; 1 Thess.3:6) and where he probably wrote this, the first of all the writings of the Greek Scriptures.

Paul did not desire to leave the Thessalonians. They had only just received the evangel and needed to be taught and confirmed in the faith. He was deeply concerned about them and sought twice to return to them, but was hindered. So he sent Timothy in his stead. The report of Timothy greatly comforted him. Not being able to go to them, he pens this epistle.

THE LITERARY STRUCTURE

The literary framework shows that the whole epistle takes its color from the persecutions endured by the Thessalonians. At present they are suffering from the anger of men, but they shall be saved from the indignation of God. The Jews who persecute them are drawing down God’s indignation, but the Thessalonians will never be subjects of His wrath (1:10; 2:16; 5:9).

The doctrinal burden of the epistle is based on the truth of the Lord’s future presence. He had taught this during the few days he was with them but it needed further explanation.
We Shall Live Together with Him

Some had died and some were indifferent. Would these two classes be left out when He comes? The answer is that those who are asleep will be roused first and accompany the living when they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. They will not be left behind.

So, too, those who do not watch. The death of Christ provides for their salvation from future wrath quite apart from their present walk. All who are His, whether watchful or drowsy, shall live together with Him.

FRAMEWORK OF 1 THESSALONIANS
Salutation and Benediction (1:1)
Prayer (1:2-5)
Thessalonians–Experience (1:2-3:10)
Prayer (3:11-13)
Thessalonians–Walk (4:1-5:22)
Prayer (5:23,24)
Salutation and Benediction (5:25-28)

2 THESSALONIANS
This second letter to the Thessalonians is a sequel to the first. The Thessalonians are still unable to distinguish between the rage of man and the wrath of God. Their continued trial and persecution leads them to conclude that God is against them instead of for them. The kingdom of God, which was proclaimed among them, is to be introduced with divine judgments. The day of the Lord, in which it will be set up, opens with an unparalleled display of divine indignation. They still persist in imagining that this day had begun, especially as, in some way, this was represented to be the apostle’s teaching (2:2).

In reply Paul and his fellow workers define these dreaded judgments as those which fall only on those being unacquainted with God and who do not obey the evangels, especially on such as their persecutors. Their main argument is

Preferred for Salvation and Faith

founded on the teaching of the first epistle in reference to the Lord’s presence and our assembling with Him in the air. There they had been definitely taught that this must occur before the day of His indignation.

The secret phase of lawlessness has been in operation throughout this economy, but its full development has been held in check by the presence of the saints. When we are taken out of the midst, then, and not till then, will the apostasy bear its bitter fruit. Its presence will be indicated by the presence of the man of lawlessness, corresponding to the head of the wild beast of the Unveiling of Jesus Christ (Rev.13:1) who will be seconded by the false prophet who does signs and miracles to prove his claims (Rev.13:11).

By these mankind is deluded to its destruction.

But the Thessalonians are not deceived by God but preferred for salvation and belief of the truth and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The latter part of the epistle is devoted to some practical disorders, especially busybodies who do not work for their living.

FRAMEWORK OF 2 THESSALONIANS
Salutation–Benediction (1:1-2)
Thanksgiving (1:3-10)
Prayer for Thessalonians (1:11,12)
Admonition–Apostasy (2:1-12)
Thanksgiving (2:13-17)
Prayer for Apostles (3:1-5)
Admonitions–Disorder (3:6-15)
Salutation–Benediction (3:16-18)

The literary framework is a simple alternation within the salutations. A thanksgiving, a prayer, and an admonition are found in this order in both the former and latter half of the letter.

If the epistle is read with its leading thought in mind—
Inexhaustible Stores of Grace

that we are delivered from the coming divine indignation—it will be seen to give it color and warmth everywhere, and especially in the assurances of God's mind toward them in their trials.

IN GOD THE FATHER

It is marvelous to trace God's method in revealing His grace. Using the severe trials of the Thessalonians as a background and their fears as a foil, He assures them that they will not be involved in the terrible time when His indignation shall be poured out on the earth. The faithful among the Circumcision will be saved through it, but these will be caught away before it comes. They are not assigned to indignation but to the procuring of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. This salvation is not based on their faithfulness, but on the fact that Christ died for them (1 Thess. 5:9,10).

The two great arguments in these promise epistles are these: The dead are at no disadvantage, for they shall rise first; the drowsy will not be left behind, for it is a matter of pure grace, dependent on Christ's death. All will be caught away from the earth before the indignation of God is manifested.

Thus is the future aspect of our salvation revealed in Paul's earliest epistles. And we submit that the opening words are a key and clue to the character and abundance of its grace, when the Thessalonians are placed in God the Father.

That those who had so lately bowed down to idols, who still lacked all covenant relations with the God of Israel, should be so described is hint enough of unique and inexhaustible stores of grace which must flow from it. Indeed, the very absence of any covenant leaves the Father's heart free to deal with them untrammeled by their disabilities and failures.

A.E.K.

“THE TRUTH OF THE EVANGEL”
(Galatians 1:18-2:5)

When it delighted God to unveil His Son in Saul of Tarsus that he might be evangelizing Him among the nations, rather than immediately submitting his revelation to flesh and blood, or going up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before him, he instead went away into Arabia, and then returned again to Damascus (1:15-17). This itself is most striking, for it is most unusual. But what happened next, three years later, is even more remarkable:

Thereupon, after three years, I came up to Jerusalem to relate my story to Cephas, and I stay with him fifteen days. Yet I became acquainted with no one different from the apostles, except James, the brother of the Lord. Now what I am writing to you, lo! in God's sight, I say that I am not lying. Thereupon I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Yet I was unknown by face to the ecclesias of Judea which are in Christ. Yet only they were hearing that “He who once was persecuting us, now is evangelizing the faith which once he ravaged.” And they glorified God in me. (1:18-24)

“The natural course for one in Saul's case would be to go up to Jerusalem and submit to them what he had received from the Lord and seek their patronage and fellowship in its proclamation, or indeed, ask their opinion and permission to promulgate it. But what did he do? He went into the desert where no human influence was at work. He waited three years before telling Peter about it, and then he does not even form the acquaintance of the twelve or of the ecclesia. They actually did not know him personally, though
they were glorifying God for the great change in him. All of this shows conclusively that Paul did not, at that time, derive his doctrine from Peter or the twelve.”¹

The ecclesias of Judea were only hearing concerning Paul that he who had once persecuted them, was now evangelizing “the faith” which once he ravaged (1:23). The faith which once he ravaged, was simply that elemental yet vital faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. What the Jews thus had heard concerning Paul undoubtedly reflects the essence of his message at that time. We may not infer from this, however, that this is all that Paul ever taught. Nor may we infer from this that “[that] faith” which, as a body of teaching, is “the expectation of Israel” (cf Acts 28:20), which faith, time and again, Paul indeed rehearsed in making known the entire counsel of God (cf Acts 20:27), is to be identified with the evangel which he was heralding among the nations.

“My glorified God in me” (1:24). The believing Jews gave glory not to Saul but to his God; they glorified God, in him. May we be doing the same, not only in considering the faithful career of our apostle, but in taking note of “whatever is renowned” among ourselves (“if there is any virtue, and if any applause”, Phil.4:8b). Let us be imitating Paul in the humble acknowledgement that, “in the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor.15:10).

Thereupon, after the lapse of fourteen years, I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also along with me. Now I went up in accord with a revelation, and submitted to them the evangel which I am heralding among the nations, yet privately to those of repute, lest somehow I should be racing or run for naught.

But not even Titus, who is with me, being a Greek, is compelled to be circumcised. Yet, it was because of the false brethren who were smuggled in, who came in by the way to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they shall be enslaving us—unto whom, not even for an hour do we simulate by subjection, that the truth of the evangel should be continuing with you. (2:1-5)

Paul was not deficient in anything pertaining to the “paramount” apostles (2 Cor.11:5; 12:11). In fact, in relation to Paul, they were paramount (i.e., of greatest concern or importance; supreme in rank, power, or authority), only in the sense that undiscerning men perceived them thus.

Previously, Paul had “related” his story to Cephas (1:18). Now, he “submits” (2:2) the evangel which he was heralding among the nations to those in Jerusalem. In each case, he imparts something to the others; he does not learn from them. Initially, he had perceived that his evangel of grace apart from law was bound to be disturbing to many. Hence, he had prepared Cephas for this, before the crisis came. And now, fourteen years later, due to the ever-widening rift among many over issues of law-obedience, Paul went up to Jerusalem to place his evangel before them.

In so doing, Paul acted not only in accord with a revelation, but in response to some who came down from Judea to Antioch, with whom Paul and Barnabas had “come to have no slight commotion and questioning” (Acts 15:2). At Antioch, Paul had informed the believers that “God opens to the nations a door of faith” (Acts 14:27). Yet these antagonists who had come down from Judea, “taught the brethren that ‘If you should not be circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ Now as Paul and Barnabas come to have no slight commotion and questioning with them, they prescribe that Paul and Barnabas and some others from among them are to go up to Jerusalem concerning this question” (Acts 15:1,2).

Paul, however, submitted his evangel privately to those of repute, lest somehow he should be racing or run for naught.

False Brethren Smuggled In

(2:1,2). Paul was well aware that Peter and James were by no means free from the influences of the circumcisionist party, those who sought to impose the law on the believers of the nations. So Paul constrains these “pillars” to express a definite opinion on this question to him privately, before any further influence from such zealots could be brought to bear upon them. Then, when gathered in assembly together with the circumcisionists, they freely affirmed in public what they had already assured Paul of privately, that they agreed that the law was not to be imposed on the nations (Acts 15:10; 15:19-21).

It was only because of the “false brethren” who were “smuggled in” (2:4) when Paul and his party were received by “the ecclesia and the apostles and the elders” (Acts 15:4) at Jerusalem, that any controversy arose concerning circumcision. It was not that the profession of faith itself in Christ by such ones was false, for we are informed that they had “believed” (Acts 15:5). These included certain Pharisees who rose up in the midst of the Jerusalem assembly saying of those reached by Paul that they “must be circumcised, besides charging them to keep the law of Moses.” Instead, Paul’s characterization of them as “false” brethren, is in reference to their false testimony and teaching. They were brethren who were acting falsely; thus they were “false” brethren. Yet it is not by being “false,” but solely by “being true,” that we “in love . . . should be making all grow into Him, Who is the Head—Christ” (Eph.4:15).

GLORIFYING IN EXPECTATION

It is in an awareness of the importance of proclaiming “the truth of the evangel,” that we strive to make Paul’s evangel known. In seeking to carry out such ministry, we often point out that Paul’s evangel is not a message to the effect that at least some will escape eternal torment, or even that at least some will be exempted from eternal annihilation.

The Fulness of the Evangel

Nor is Paul’s evangel some speculation claiming that most but not all will be saved, or that perhaps, but perhaps not, eventually all will be saved. Further, Paul’s evangel is not that, in the end, all believers too will be saved, together with the rest of humanity, while unworthy believers must first be subjected to God’s wrath, prior to being put to death once again, for long eons of time. Nor is Paul’s evangel to the effect that while all will finally be made alive, this will only be so because, even as with believers today, all will have finally saved themselves from rejecting Christ by virtue of their own responsible decisions, for which, in the end, God can neither be thanked nor glorified.

Maturely speaking, Paul’s evangel is not even the truth that none will be lost; instead, it is the revelation that God will be All in all. Hence we are glorying not so much in anticipation of our own deliverance, but in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:2). To God be the glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen! (Eph.3:21).

If we ourselves would affirm the evangel which Paul was heralding among the nations, we can no more deny its present aspect than its ultimate issue. Indeed, the greater part of its teaching concerns not questions of human des-tiny, but those aspects of the untraceable riches of Christ centered in the present ecclesia. Yet conversely, if we too would proclaim the fulness of the evangel brought by Paul, we must freely herald God’s purpose of the eons, the goal and consummation of all.

That God will vivify all mankind and reconcile all throughout the universe, is ever in our hearts and frequently on our lips. Yet we wish to present this glorious revelation not in isolation, but, according as Paul, in its vital connection to the entire divine counsel. Beyond this, we would especially announce God’s ultimate in its relation to those revelations which Paul terms, “God’s wisdom in a secret” (1 Cor.2:7),
Attributing the Works of Christ

namely, the entire complement of Pauline teachings elsewhere undisclosed throughout the Scriptures.

"THE BLASPHEMY OF THE SPIRIT"

One of the most common claims we encounter is that since some commit the so-called "unpardonable sin," all will not be saved.

There are three accounts as to the sin that is not being pardoned. In Matthew, the reading is, "... the blasphemy of the spirit shall not be pardoned... whoever may be saying aught against the holy spirit, it shall not be pardoned him, neither in this eon nor in that which is impending" (Matt.12:31,32). Mark's account reads, "... whoever should be blaspheming against the holy spirit is having no pardon for the eon, but is liable to the eonian penalty for the sin—for they said, 'An unclean spirit has he'" (Mark 3:29). The third account, that of Luke, simply reads, "the one who blasphemes against the holy spirit shall not be being pardoned" (Luke 12:10).

"The blasphemy of the spirit consists in attributing the works of Christ, done by the power of God's Spirit, to demons or unclean spirits. As these works were the means used to produce repentance and pardon, and this was essential for entrance into the kingdom [prophesied by Israel's prophets], it is readily seen that pardon is impossible in such a case. The time, however, is limited to this eon or the coming eon of the kingdom. Eventually, all mankind will be far more than pardoned. They will be justified (Rom.5:18) and reconciled (Col.1:20). But this will not take place until a full eon later, when the kingdom is given over to the Father (1 Cor.15:24).

"We cannot commit the sin against the holy Spirit because our salvation is not based on miracles and signs. It follows faith, not sight. And, [before God as our Judge,] we are not pardoned, but justified (Rom.3:24,26). Condemnation is impossible (Rom.8:1). Moreover, we are explicitly told that, in the latter eras, some will be withdrawing from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons. Any spirit manifestation [or ostensibly 'spiritual' teaching] not in perfect accord with the scriptures should be given the most severe tests, lest we be among those who are deceived by them."3

Similarly, just as our Lord declared that those who blasphemed against the holy spirit would not be being pardoned, He likewise affirmed that the indignation of God "is remaining" on those "being stubborn" as to the Son (John 3:36). Yet even as this latter passage does not address what will be the consequence, in relation to indignation, should such stubbornness be removed, the former texts do not address what will be the result consequent to the time when one who was not pardoned is nevertheless judged.

We should not reason if a sin should go unpardoned, that therefore those who do not obtain pardon but instead enter the judging, will never be saved. Even in human systems of justice, many who never obtain a pardon, who instead must undergo the full penalty for their lawless deeds, after they have done so, are released from prison,

having paid their debt to society. It does not follow because they were never pardoned, that they were never released from prison. Even in the case of the most serious crimes where the death penalty is imposed, the state, at that juncture, considers justice to have been met. It does not sentence the criminal to "eternal" death, but simply to death. Should God resurrect and eventually vivify one thus put to death (and He will!), the state could have no objection that the demands of its justice had not been met, in any such case.

Warnings concerning the sin that is not being pardoned, are not addressed to the members of the body of Christ. Instead, Paul's message to us is that we are not appointed to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we shall be saved from the indignation of God (1 Thess.5:9; Rom.5:9).

Further, we are not saved because we believe, but we believe because we are saved. While it is true that we must believe if we would be saved, this is so simply in light of the fact that salvation is not apart from faith. It is not, however, that we are "required" to believe and accept Christ, for our salvation is in grace, apart from law. Instead, we are graciously granted to be believing (Phil.1:29); God parts a measure of faith to each of His chosen ones (Rom.8:33; 12:3).

God saved us out of our unbelief. Even as in the case of Paul, the “faith and love in Christ Jesus,” “overwhelms” our unbelief (1 Tim.1:14,16). Like self-control, faith is a fruit of the spirit (Gal.5:23); not a prerequisite of salvation. Salvation is not a matter of making some sort of "responsible" decision in favor of a requirement, but of being chosen and predesignated of God, before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4,5).

As presented in Paul's evangel, eonian life is a gracious gift (Rom.6:23). Hence, in granting us eonian life, God displays not the generosity of His reward, but the transcendent riches of His grace (Eph.2:7). In this provision, He

makes known not His integrity as a faithful Rewarder, but His vast love as a gracious Saviour. Hence, as many do, to make our eonian life hinge on our own obedience, is egregiously to misrepresent Paul's evangel at its very core.

For us, Grace reigns, for life eonian (Rom.5:21), any forfeiture of an allotment in God's kingdom that may be incurred by us for unfaithfulness, notwithstanding (cp 2 Tim.2:11-13; Gal.5:21). Thus, in this connection, where sin increases, grace supereexceeds (Rom.5:20). God has designated us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus (Eph.1:5), having chosen us, foreknown us, called us, graced us with faith, and justified us as well, all unto this glorious end (Rom.8:30; cp 1 Cor.1:24).

This is the evangel of our salvation; it is the evangel which Paul heralded among the nations (Gal.2:2). It is in accord with the delight of God's will and for the land of the glory of His grace (Eph.1:6).

Beyond these marvelous considerations as to our own salvation, may we indeed also come to realize the glorious truth that our Saviour, God, wills all mankind to be saved,

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4. It does not follow that if we do not enjoy an allotment in God's reign, that we therefore will not live under its jurisdiction. Basileia (translated "kingdom") is simply the corresponding noun of the verb basileuo (translated "reign"). It will be helpful for us to be aware that even as basileuo literally means "reign" (used as a verb), thus also, basileia also literally means "reign" (used as a noun). The former means "to exercise a king's sovereignty"; hence, the latter means "the sovereign power pertaining to [a king's sovereignty]." It is only when basileia is used metonymically, as a figure of speech for "a realm ruled by a king" (or the territory or people thereof), that it should be understood in the common sense of the English "kingdom" (i.e., dominion). Yet it is on this basis, that of the common English usage of "kingdom," that it is claimed that those who do not "inherit the kingdom," must necessarily either be dead or in hellfire. Any such notion related to basileia here, however, is not only unwarranted but mistaken, for it contradicts the glorious truth that "the allotment of life eonian" (Titus 3:7) is an expectation in grace.
and to come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). God has formed the decision that this should occur; and, He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). All His counsel shall be confirmed, and all His desire will He do (Isa.46:10).

God is not exclusively the Saviour of believers, but especially the Saviour of believers. Those who believe, enjoy a special salvation, with unique blessings for the eons to come. God is not only our Saviour, but is also the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10). The fact is that God will one day abolish death and become All in all (1 Cor.15:26,28). It is His purpose as well, through Christ Jesus, to reconcile all, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens; thus, “making peace through the blood of His cross” (Col.1:20).

All contrary claims such as that all “Christ-rejectors” or sundry other sinners will be eternally lost, must be repudiated. Those who make such claims are simply mistaken. Such ones do not have a realization of “the grace of God in truth” (Col.1:6), nor of “the gratuitaty in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ” (Rom.5:15). Yet it is only thus, in gratuitous grace, that “Christ Jesus...is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all” (1 Tim.2:6). And, it is also only thus, consequently, that, “even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified” (1 Cor.15:22).

In the question of human destiny, those who oppose the grace of God in truth, either deny that Christ died for the sake of the salvation of all mankind, or, alternatively, represent salvation as a reward for obedience, while merely calling it a “free gift.” “As to the faith, they swerve” (1 Tim.6:21), in advocating any such false teachings.

May we be given eyes to see and ears to hear “the truth of the evangel,” the evangel which the apostle Paul heralded among the nations. “Now may the God of expectation, be filling you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the power of holy spirit” (Rom.15:13).
memories as something to be left behind, “...forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—towards the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:13).

Incidentally, let those distressed or troubled, who have not yet grasped the loving provision of God’s justification, ponder on this, requesting enlightenment of His spirit.

It will not be a palatable thought, but whether we like it or not, we are virtual prisoners, bound by influences which are far more restrictive than any iron bars.

CAPTIVITY

“The real law and apparent functions of the law are very different. And, in order to effect its real object it was necessary that it should not appear on the surface. The apparent object of the law was to give life to all who consistently and constantly kept it. As it never gave life to anyone, for no one was able to fulfill its demands, it appears as if the law has failed of its primary object. And further, as it revived the passions of sin which were dormant, it seems to have defeated its own aim. But the real object of the law was to reveal the inordinate sinfulness of sin, and in this it was most successful.”

When one reads the apostle Paul’s epistles there is a heart-warming sense of instant rapport. He fully experienced the dilemma of being enslaved, a helpless prisoner in a body of death. What a wonderful relief he expresses as he writes: “A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? Grace! I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Consequently, then, I myself, with the mind, indeed, am slaving for God’s law, yet with the flesh for Sin’s law” (Rom.7:24,25).

With characteristic boldness, the apostle’s words concern the enslaving grip of our bodies of death are very searching (Rom.7:24). Quite firmly, he acknowledged his own helplessness in striving to please God by obeying the clear mandates of holy and just laws. With evident relief, he turned from such anguish to the blessed freedom assured under Grace.

Mindful of the tremendous sacrifice which had achieved this glorious gift of love, he further urged that, as former slaves and prisoners of sin, in righteousness we should now be slaving for the Lord. Indeed, in this epistle to the saints in Rome, he begins by presenting himself as Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus.

“Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God’s spirit is making its home in you. Now if anyone has not Christ’s spirit, this one is not His. Now if Christ is in you, the body indeed, is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness. Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you. Consequently, then, brethren, debtors are we, not to flesh, to be living in accord with flesh, for if you are living in accord with flesh, you are about to be dying. Yet if, in spirit, you are putting the practices of the body to death, you will be living. For whoever are being led by God’s spirit, these are sons of God” (Rom.8:9-14).

FREEDOM OF WILL

Should we question the much vaunted, philosophic vanity of “free will,” then rest assured, there will certainly be no lack of opponents. It was Samuel Johnson, English lexicographer (1709-1784), who, in 1769, rather foolishly wrote, “Sir, we know our will is free, and there’s an end on.” What the particular issue was we are not certain, but of this much we are sure: Doubtless, he was influenced by the circumstances of his birth, and education.
“What is meant by freedom of will is the correspondence between heredity and environment. Lack of friction is mistaken for liberty. If the impulses received from our ancestors urge us into a course agreeable to our surroundings we have the consciousness of being free to do as we please. But to imagine that these seeds of our volition were planted by our own hands, or that they have been conjured forth by us from void vacuity, so that our will arises without root, and flourishes without soil, water or air, is sheer imbecility.”

Proponents of such “freedom” will swiftly quote many examples from Scripture, of how the wills of both saint and sinner are frequently in conflict with the will of God! Further, they even refer to our Lord's own words as He entered Jerusalem, “How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen is assembling her brood under her wings—and you will not!” (Matt.23:38); and again, to the Jews: “Search the scriptures, for in them you are supposing to have life eonian, and those are they which are testifying concerning Me, and not willing are you to come to Me that you may have life” (John 5:39). Evidently, these dissenters are not only ignorant and oblivious of the true deity of the God and Father of all, but also, in their pride, they display a complete lack of understanding the reasons why Israel is now, in part, calloused.

With regard to God's purpose in connection with the nation of Israel, the scriptures are quite plain. These truths are stated so emphatically; not once, but several times. First, they rejected Yahweh (Isa.6:9,10); then they rejected the Lord (Matt.13:14,15); and finally, they rejected the testimony of the spirit (Acts 28:26,27). Here, it must be stressed; Did this nation have any choice? We might equally ask, with reverence, Did any of those involved in

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As declared above, these bodies of death are yet temples. They are habitations for three spirits. The spirits of God and His loving Son take up residence, with our own! It might be concluded that in consequence, all our conduct would then be beyond criticism. Not so! Not so! We all learn, through sad experience, that there is only one deliverance from the disabling, corrupting influence of indwelling sin, and that way is to consider ourselves dead to all its lusts and excesses, yet gloriously alive, in grace, to bring our loving Father the real joy for which He longs. Not negative, grudging, hypocritical lip-service, nor passive indolence, but willing response Even commendable selfless service will not satisfy Him unless it is in response to His transcendent gratuity of grace and love.

MATURITY

Nearly two thousand years have passed, and still, like Epaphras (Col.4:12,13), we have much misery over those about us who will not even bear with the truths of God’s evangel, much less become mature and established. Some may protest this concern, declaring, “God chooses and calls. Furthermore, He justifies and glorifies (Rom.8:29). To thus trouble yourselves would seem to set at naught the apostle’s injunction not to worry (Phil.4:6).”

Whenever scripture is quoted in such disputes, then let this be a warning to us. Our Lord’s trial was marked by the Adversary using a similar subterfuge: “It is written” (Matt.4:6). But how do we know that scripture is being misused here? How may we be sure? We have a defensive weapon, the sword of the spirit which is a declaration of God, and we must learn to wield it, opportunely, inopportune. Only thus will the peace of God garrison our hearts and apprehensions in Christ Jesus. Be assured, whether here or in our future ministry among the celestials, we will not view those who do not rejoice with us in the wonderful love of God with complacency or indifference. We were not chosen and called for this! The absolute grace of our election must redound to God’s glory. His hunger for the love of all creatures must find a like response in ourselves.

The apostle yearned to present every saint mature, “. . . not minors, surging hither and thither and being carried about by every wind of teaching, by human caprice, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception” (Eph.4:14). This maturity is not arrived at immediately, but through Paul’s later epistles we are guided to maturing confidence in God, with blessed relief. How refreshing to discover for example, such reassurance as this:

“So that, my beloved, according as you always obey, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, with fear and trembling, be carrying your own salvation into effect, for it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight” (Phil.2:12,13).

“When the spirit of God is received and imparts life to the saint, this is limited to his spirit, his mind, his will, and does not affect the flesh directly until the deliverance of the body in Christ’s presence. It does not eradicate his will, but forms it. Unwilling obedience would be most unacceptable to God.”

Finally, beloved in the Lord, take heart; be not cast down. Although detained in these bodies of death until our Lord’s appearing, now, our whole outlook is being changed. It is God Who is operating in us, for the sake of His delight.

Donald Fielding


SUMMER FELLOWSHIP

Weekend Scripture Conferences are scheduled for June 7-9 in Willard, Ohio (phone: 419-935-2027) and in Baldwin, Michigan for August 2-4 (phone: 616-745-7562).
IF NOT GOD, INDEED WHO?

Job has struggled to keep the focus of the debate concerning his sufferings on God. His associates, however, see his experience as a warning to Job for self-examination and repentance. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are united in their conviction that Job is treading on dangerous ground in relating God to the evil that has come upon him apart from the standard and ancient qualifications.

BILDAD’S FIRST ANSWER
(Job 8:1-22)

It is perhaps kindly meant when Bildad calls Job’s words “abundant wind” (8:1), as though to suggest an excuse for Job’s utterances. In any case, Bildad tries to get Job to think more conventionally about Deity and then get himself better positioned for divine favor.

First of all, Bildad asks, “Does El distort judgment?” (8:3). The associates see Job’s evil as divine judgment on human evil. And this means, in their opinion, that Job is responsible for some evil, very much out of the ordinary, that calls for this severe and unusual judgment.

But rather than placing the blame entirely on Job’s shoulders, Bildad ingeniously suggests it may have been Job’s sons who had committed this evil (8:4). If this is the case, Bildad offers Job a way to extricate himself from the affliction. He should diligently seek early for El and supplicate to Him (8:5). If it is his sons who were at fault and Job himself is “spotless and upright,” then Job should look for the return of peace to his homestead, as long, of course, as it is truly a righteous homestead (8:6).

JOB 8-10

8 *Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, *saying:
How could you declare these things,
And the sayings of your mouth be such abundant wind?
3 Does El distort judgment,
And should He Who-Suffices distort justice?
4 If your sons sin against Him,
*Then He shall cast them out into the grip of their transgression.
5 Yet if you yourself *seek early for El,
And to Him Who-Suffices you supplicate,
6 If you are spotless and upright,
*Even now He would *rouse Himself over you,
And He would *bring peace
to your righteous homestead.
7 *So your beginning will *seem inferior,
*Yet your latter state shall grow very great.
8 For ask, I pray, of the former generation,
And *survey the investigations of their fathers.
9 For we are of yesterday, and we *know nothing,
For our days on the earth are but a shadow.
10 Shall they not direct you, *apprise you
And *bring forth declarations from their heart?
11 Can papyrus *grow with no marsh?
Can marsh grass grow *great without water?
12 *Even while it is in its full pollination,
though it be not *plucked,
*Yet it would *dry up before all other grass.
Already we see how Bildad has directed attention away from the central issue of God’s responsibility and purpose for this evil, just as Eliphaz had done in chapters 4 and 5. This means that the focus is now on Job to take whatever steps are required to get the evil removed.

In 8:8-22 Bildad points Job to the established wisdom that has been passed down from one generation to the next. It does not occur to him that Job’s pain and sorrow could be anything but divine correction. The parables of verse 11 bring out the truth that there is always a cause for any effect. This is a fundamental principle, and Job would fully agree with it. But Bildad’s error is that he refuses to join in Job’s searching for the cause of the present evil in the operations of God outside of His works of righteous judgment on human sinning. Hence Bildad assumes that the marsh grass (Job’s situation of suffering) must have developed solely from the “water” of human sinning. To be sure, God has brought it on Job, but Bildad would have this seen as God’s reaction to Job’s (or his sons’) secret sins. Bildad would not have the cause traced back any further than human depravity.

In modern terms, “the buck stops” with Job or his family.

Since Bildad has closed the door on any further investigating he is left with irrelevancies. God disavows the one who forgets Him and who is thus polluted (8:13-19), but He does not reject the flawless man (8:20). Job can still be brought back into blessing, and his enemies will be destroyed (8:21,22).

**JOB REPLIES TO BILDAD**
(Job 9:1-10:22)

But what does this have to do with what is right there before Bildad’s face? Job has not forgotten El, and in relation to other human beings he is flawless and upright. Although Job agrees that what Bildad has said is true (9:2a), it avoids

**Job 8:13-9:6**

13 So are the paths laid for all those forgetting El,
   And so the expectation of the polluted man shall perish,
14 He whose confidence is cut asunder,
   And his trust is a spider’s house.
15 He leans on his house, “but it does not stand;
   He holds fast to it, “but it does not stand firm.
16 He is moist in the presence of the sun,
   And his young shoots are sent forth
   throughout his garden.

17 His roots become tangled about a mound;
   He “holds on” a house of stones.
18 But if one swallows him up from his place,
   Then it disavows him: I have not seen you.
19 Behold, this is the elation of his brief way,
   And from the soil others shall sprout.
20 Behold, El Himself does not reject the flawless man,
   And He does not hold fast on the hand of evildoers.
21 He shall yet fill your mouth with mirth,
   And your lips with joyful shouting.
22 Those hating you shall be clothed with shame,
   And the tent of the wicked, it shall be no more.

9 So Job answered, “saying:
2 Truly I know that this is so,
3 Yet “how can a mortal be righteous “before El?
4 If he desires to contend with Him,
   He could not answer Him one time “out of a thousand.
5 He is wise in heart and resolute in vigor;
   “Who has stiffened himself against Him
   and fared well?
6 He is the One shifting mountains,
   and they do not know it,
   Who overturns them in His anger,
7 The One disturbing the earth from its place,
   So “that its columns are shuddering,

8:17 — holds on: Hb perceives.
the real issue of the origin and purpose of evil. This is what needs to be addressed, and Job insists on doing so.

As a first step, Job asks, “How can a mortal be righteous before El?” (9:2b). He is at an impasse, and his associates do not seem to realize it.

Here Job is not accusing Bildad of saying something untrue, but of ignoring the facts in the case. Job is suffering; it is of God; Job cannot be justified before God; no one seems to have an explanation; and God Himself remains silent about it all (9:3).

What Bildad has said about God, that He rewards the righteous and rejects the sinner, is so inadequate! It just does not deal with the reality of the immediate evil. God is transcendently wise and powerful, doing great wonders and marvelous works (9:4-10). Human beings are not righteous before Him. And life is full of evil. Let these facts all be examined together. Job cannot fit them together, but he is making more progress than Bildad who refuses to associate them clearly.

Job cannot “see” God or “detect” His Character (9:11) or discover what He is up to. Yet he wants to know what God is doing (9:12).

Bildad was not at all helpful because he wanted to limit the discussion to the level of human accountability for their sins and divine justice in dealing with their sins. Consequently, Job turns again to Eloah concerning all these seemingly contradictory facts. But so far He remains silent. Even if Job were righteous, it appears that Eloah would not speak (9:13-16).

INJURED GRATUITOUSLY

Once again Job speaks boldly, even bluntly, to and concerning Deity (17-20). From what Job knows concerning his own faults and his present sufferings his injuries are gratuitous.

Job 9:7-9:20

7 The One *speaking to the sun’s disk* so *that it does not rise,*
   And Who places a *seal about the stars,*
8 Who alone is *stretching out the heavens,*
   And Who is *treading on the high swells of the sea,*
9 Who is *making the Great Bear, Orion* and the Pleiades, *besides the chambers* of the south,
10 Who is doing great wonders until there can be no fathoming,
   and marvelous works until there can be no numbering.

11 Behold, when He *passes on before me I cannot see Him,*
   And when He *passes by, + I cannot detect Him.*
12 Behold, should He *abduct,* *a who could turn Him back?*
   *Who could say to Him, What are You doing?*
13 Eloah, He does not *reverse His anger;* the helpers of Rahab + prostrate beneath Him.
14 Indeed, how should I *answer Him* or *choose my words with Him?*
15 I, who, #though I were righteous, âam not ‘answered~c
   When I am supplicating to my Judge,~
16 If I call out, and He should answer me, I could not believe that He is *giving ear to my voice.*
17 He Who is hurting me for the worth of a hair, And Who has multiplied my injuries gratuitously,
18 He does not +allow me to get back my wind, "But rather He *surfeits me with bitter things.*
19 #As for vigor, behold the Resolute One, And #as for judgment, +who can *summon* +Him?*
20 #Though I were ‘righteous, my mouth would ‘condemn me;
   Though I were flawless, He would declare me ‘perverse.

9:9 chambers: i.e., starry regions.
9:13 Rahab: i.e., audacity, a symbol of Egypt (cf 26:12; Ps 87:4; Is 30:7).
9:15 ~c am not ‘answered; Hb shall not answer.
9:19 ~c Him; Hb me.
Yahweh Himself had declared to the Adversary that he was trying to “incite Me against [Job] to swallow him up gratuitously” (Job 2:3). There was no discernable cause for Job’s sufferings. When all the suggestions of Eliphaz and Bildad are cleared aside as irrelevant, we are left at the present point in the debate with the harsh assessment that Job is afflicted for no purpose beyond “the worth of a hair,” that is, gratuitously (9:17). Furthermore, God, as “the Resolute One,” has so far revealed nothing further than this fact of Job’s condemnation.

We are aware that Job is not suffering gratuitously, and this by the very fact that it was God Who was swallowing him up. God does not do anything without a reason. God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11), and this is for good (Rom.8:28). But Job does not have this awareness, and he struggles just to maintain an honest and clear perspective on life as it is (9:21-24).

What Job’s associates are urging is a pretence. Job shows that their solution does not get to the root of the problem. God brings “both the flawless and the wicked one” to their end. Even more depressing, there is evidence He has given the earth into the hand of the wicked and blinds the judges (Job 9:24). “If not He, indeed who is it?”

That is the critical question. It must not be swept under the rug. The pain is too sharp to indulge in half truths and pious principles. Hence Job speaks frankly about what Eloah has brought upon him. His life is brief (9:25,26); he is physically unable to suppress his grief and smile (27,28); he is condemned and does not know why (29); and even if he could make himself pure before God, He would still dip him in the slough (30,31).

There is no question in Job’s mind that it is God Who is doing this. The question is whether or not God is aware of what He is doing and has a reason for doing it. Because of his suffering Job is able to leap miles ahead of his asso-

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Job 9:21-10:1

21 Were I flawless, I would not know my own soul; I would reject my life.
22 It is all one. Therefore I say, Both the flawless and wicked one Will He bring to their end.
23 If a scourge brings death suddenly, He derides the trial of the innocent.
24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked; He covers the faces of its judges; If not He, indeed who is it?
25 + My days are fleeter than a runner; They race away; they see no good.
26 They pass on like ships of bulrush, Like the vulture that pounces down on its food.
27 If I say, Let me forget my concern, Let me set my face free and smile,
28 I still shrink before all my griefs; I know that You do not hold me innocent.
29 I am already being condemned; Why is this that I should be wearied in vain?
30 If I washed myself with waters of snow And purged my palms in purity,
31 Then You would dip me in the slough, And my own raiments would abhor me.
32 For He is not a man like me that I should assert to Him: Let us come together for judgment.
33 There is not any arbitrator between us, Who could set his hand on us both.
34 Let Him withdraw His club from me, And let not the dread of Him frighten me.
35 Let me speak and not fear Him, ‘But I am not so within myself.
10 My soul is disgusted with my life; Let me give free rein to myself and my concern; Let me speak in the bitterness of my soul.
iates in considering the problem of evil in light of the existence of God.

Chapter nine ends with an important step forward in Job’s thoughts. Turning from direct address, Job speaks of Deity in the third person (9:32-35). “He is not a man that I should assert to Him.” Consequently, the suffering Job (the suffering “enemy”) calls for an “arbitrator” between God and himself. This will be mentioned again in later speeches.

THE LABOR OF ELOAH’S PALMS

After this thought of an intermediary Job returns to his pleas directly addressed to Deity. In this there is no thought of telling God what is so, but of bringing what is so out in the open. Nor is there any thought of criticizing Deity, but rather a pressing desire to know that God is truly in charge. Job is a sinner and a creature of earth, but the fact remains that he is “the labor of Your hands” (10:3). Eloah does not see as a mortal sees (10:4); nevertheless “Your hands shaped me and made me” (10:8). All that Job has has come from God (10:11,12).

God has every right to do with us as He wants. But in our experiences of bitterness (10:1), we, like Job, desperately want to hear from Him. Job wants to know why Eloah contends with him (10:2); is there any good in this (10:3)? does God understand anything of our mortality and depravity and helplessness, without a rescuer (4-7)?

God brought Job into the world and molded him like clay (8-11). “Life and benignity have You granted to me, And Your supervision has guarded my spirit.” But in relation to the present situation of extreme suffering and loss, God has secluded in His heart any hint of purpose or meaning (13a). All that Job knows concerning the mind of Deity in this is that whether he is wicked or righteous, Eloah hunts him like a lion, sends marvelous works against him and brings fresh changes of charging hosts upon him (10:13b-17).

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Job 10:2-10:16

2 Let me say to Eloah, O do not condemn me!
   ‘Let me know on what you contend with me!
3 Is it good to You that You should work harm,
   That You should reject the labor of Your palms,
   And that You shine on the counsel of the wicked?
4 Do You have eyes of flesh?
   ‘Can You see as a mortal sees?
5 Are Your days like a mortal’s days,
   ‘Or Your years like the days of a human master,
6 That You should seek out my depravity
   And should inquire into my sin,
7 ‘Although Your knowledge is that I am not wicked,
   And there is no one rescuing from Your hand?
8 Your hands shaped me and ‘made me;
   ‘Yet afterward ‘You swallow me up round about.
9 Remember, I pray, that You ‘molded me like clay,
   And ‘You shall turn me back to soil.
10 Did You not ‘pour me forth like milk
   And ‘curdle me like cheese?
11 You ‘clothed me with skin and flesh,
   And ‘hedges me together with bones and sinews.
12 Life and benignity have You ‘granted ‘to me,
   And Your supervision has guarded my spirit.
13 ‘Yet these things You secluded in Your heart;
   I know that this was ‘in Your mind:
14 If I sin, ‘then You observe me,
   And You do not ‘hold me ‘innocent of my depravity.
15 If I am wicked, woe to me!
   ‘Yet if I am righteous, I shall not lift up my head,
   Surfeited with dishonor and ‘satiated with’ my humiliation.
16 ‘August’, You ‘hunt me like a black lion;
   ‘Then You ‘again and again send ‘marvelous works ‘against me.

10:7-~ afterward: Hb altogether.
10:15 —- satiated with: Hb see.
10:16 —- August: Hb He is august.
17 You renew Your testimonies in front of me,  
And You increase Your vexation against me;  
Changes of hosts come upon me.
18 + Then why did You bring me forth from the womb?  
I would have breathed my last,  
and no eye would have seen me.
19 I would have been just as if I had not come into being;  
I would have been fetched from the belly to the tomb.
20 Are not the days of my transient lifetime few~?  
se"Turn away from me that I may smile a little,
21 i Ere I go away and not return,  
To a country of darkness and the blackest shadow,  
A country of such faintness as deepest gloom,  
Of blackest shadow and disorder;  
And which shines like deepest gloom.

10:20 set the days of my transient lifetime few: Hb my days few which are left off.

This is the sort of problem that Job insists on investigating. The associates refuse to touch it with a ten foot pole. And Eloah remains silent. And there does not seem to be a mediator. Consequently, once again Job pleads for a brief respite and then "deepest gloom . . . blackest shadow and disorder" (10:20-22).

But death is no solution, as God has now made clear through Paul (Phil.1:23). It is not an end of pain in the darkness and emptiness of death that solves the problem of pain, but rather the defeat of pain and its justification through the faith of Jesus Christ, with the consummation of the appreciation of the glory of God in life. Job would not see this fully, but he will receive what becomes an early type and picture of the Creator's solution. God is for us; He Who spares not His own Son but gives Him up for us all shall be graciously granting us all. D.H.H.
EDITORIAL

The apostle Paul did not know the details of his immediate future, even though he received many special revelations concerning what lay ahead for him. Yet he made plans and expressed his hopes in prayer. We can see this in Romans 15:22-33 when he wrote concerning his upcoming journey to Jerusalem and his desire to travel from there on to Rome and continuing afterwards to Spain. Anticipating troubles in Jerusalem, he struggled in prayer that he be “rescued from the stubborn in Judea.”

He did go to Jerusalem (despite opposition) but was not rescued from severe adversities there. He did reach Rome, though not exactly in the manner he expected. We do not know if he ever saw Spain.

But the point is that he did make plans and set forward with prayer in carrying them out. Of course Paul received unusual guidance from the Lord, but as a whole, this series of incidents is similar to our own experiences in many ways. It is right that we make plans in accord with our responsibilities as God has placed us in the world. Our hearts should devise our way, as Proverbs 16:9 puts it, but in making our plans we remain aware that God establishes our steps (see also Proverbs 19:21).

Paul’s words in Romans and this principle laid down in Proverbs, along with similar passages of scripture, are much in my mind these days, especially in light of the recent loss of our co-worker, Herman Rocke. Friends are asking how this affects the Old Testament translation project, and if any changes are required. It seems a proper time at least to review our plans and assess our situation, and certainly
to make it a matter of prayer in which, hopefully, our readers will join. We know that God will accomplish His will.

Recognizing that our steps are of the Lord, we enthusiastically plan to continue our testimony in this magazine and our other publications to the glories of God’s purpose and the grace in the evangel heralded by Paul (see the articles on Paul’s Personal Letters and on Galatians in this issue). Concerning this, there remains after more than 1900 years, a struggle of considerable amount (cf Col.2:1). This is not to say that we are alone in speaking of God’s “multifarious wisdom” (see Brother Fielding’s article starting on p.169), but it does seem that there is today less and less appreciation of the gratuity of God’s grace and less boldness in making it known than ever before. And there also seems to be an increase in stubborn opposition to the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ. Yet how priceless is this message of the riches of grace in Christ Jesus (see the thoughts on contentment and rejoicing, starting on p.175).

Regarding the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, our desire is to complete the translation and then bring it through the publishing process. It is not wholly clear how best to do this in light of our resources and in order to meet the needs of our friends and brethren in Christ most effectively. But our plans are to continue forward in preparing for the publication of the complete “Old Testament,” and eventually the whole of the scriptures in a Concordant translation. We hope to make further announcements concerning this project in subsequent issues of the magazine.

In the meantime we want to continue and even expand the use of portions of the Old Testament in the magazine, as we are presently doing with the book of Job.

We ask our readers to struggle together with us in prayers concerning these matters.

D.H.H.

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**PAUL’S PERSONAL EPISTLES**

Both Timothy and Titus are called children by Paul in his letters to them. He is their spiritual father. He deals with them as a father with his son, charging and encouraging them in their career as men of God. In his first letter to each he adds the epithet “genuine,” or “legitimate.” Just as the actual child cannot but resemble his parents, so we find in Timothy and Titus many of the features of their spiritual father.

Paul’s letters to Timothy and Titus are concerned with conduct in service. Not only are they given instructions for their own guidance, but rules are laid down for the selection and service of elders, or supervisors, and servants. These two classes were officially recognized and appointed and their functions defined. Besides this there are exhortations for all the various classes in the ecclesias, old and young, the rich and the dependent widow, and slaves. The second epistle to Timothy is especially applicable to the last days, showing whom and what to avoid, and with whom we may associate.

Philemon makes most gracious provision for those in bondage to believing masters.

**1 TIMOTHY**

As a guide in understanding the great contrast between Paul’s two epistles to Timothy it is important to know when the first epistle was penned. If it was written to Timothy in Ephesus while Paul went to Macedonia, we have no situation corresponding to it in the book of Acts,
and it is difficult to understand why the instructions given should be needed in Ephesus where Paul had labored so long and which had the benefit of his personal superintendence for years.

If we reverse the situation and send Timothy to Macedonia to the ecclesias from which Paul had been driven before he could set them in order, and to which he dared not go on peril of his life, every precept in the epistle is full of point, and we have circumstances which exactly correspond in Acts 19:22. This places the epistle at the second crisis in the apostle’s ministry (Acts 19:21; Rom.15:19; 2 Cor.5:15). His second epistle was written after the third and final crisis. This places a great gap between them which accounts for the vast difference in the aspect of affairs.

In the first epistle we have the ecclesia described as God’s house, the pillar and base of the truth (3:15). In the second it has become a “great house” with utensils of various kinds, both honorable and base (2:20). In the first the pristine power of faith holds all together. In the second the dominant note is apostasy.

FRAMEWORK OF 1 TIMOTHY
Grace (1:1,2)
Admonitions Regarding Teaching (1:3-20)
Saviour of All Mankind (2:1-7)
– Rules for the Ecclesia (2:8-3:13)
Temporary Instructions (3:14)
– Secret of Devoutness (3:15,16)
Subsequent Eras (4:1-5)
– Exercise in Devoutness (4:6-8)
Saviour of All Mankind (4:9-16)
– Rules for the Ecclesia (5:1-6:2)
Admonitions Regarding Walk (6:3-21)
Grace (6:21)

2 TIMOTHY
Paul’s second epistle to Timothy is, perhaps, the last letter from his pen. In all his other epistles he looks forward to further service. Now he tells Timothy that he had finished his career (4:7). The period of his dissolution was imminent (4:6). The whole epistle takes character from this fact.

The first epistle was probably written at that great crisis in the apostle’s ministry when he first formed his purpose to go to Rome (Acts 19:21). Its subject is service. Its object was the organization of the ecclesias to uphold God’s truth. The subject of the second epistle is suffering (2:3). Even within the “great house” of those called out, there is a swerving from the truth (2:16-20). Separation from such evil becomes the duty of all who wish to please God.

The letter should be especially prized by the Lord’s slaves in these last days, for the apostasy which began even in Paul’s time has become worse with each succeeding century. The practical question, How shall we serve in the midst of present day departure? is fully answered in this letter.

The first injunction in 2 Timothy is of principal importance today. “Have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from me” (1:13). So prevalent is the use of unscriptural words, and so loose are the translations of Paul’s words that it is no marvel that the Bible is supposed to buttress the babel which pretends to the dignity of “Christian doctrine.”

The corresponding injunction, “Herald the word. Stand by it” (2 Tim.4:2) is as critical as the earlier one. After having the proper words it is necessary to proclaim them, and not the multitudinous substitutes which today have supplanted the preaching of the Scriptures.

But even if we have the proper expressions and proclaim the Scriptures, there is yet one other injunction which is vital to the truth. Without it there is confusion and error in its most subtle and destructive form. Without it the Scrip-
tures themselves become the exponent and champion of error. With it they are clear and unconfused, upholding the truth. Paul exhorts Timothy to present himself as an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of truth (2 Tim.2:15). An example follows which leaves us in no doubt as to its meaning. Some said that the resurrection had already occurred. They misplaced the truth. They did not deny it, or corrupt it. They put it in the past, when it was still future. Thus it is with the great bulk of Scripture today. It is misplaced. That which is truth at one time is destructive error at another. So, today, many things in the Bible are vehemently maintained in all good conscience, when a correct apportionment of truth would leave them for another time.

**FRAMEWORK OF 2 TIMOTHY**

The remedy for the present distress is clearly shown in the literary framework.

- **Salutation of Grace** (1:1-2)
- **Timothy's Gift** (1:3-7); **Paul's Commission** (1:8-12)
- **Sound Words in View of Apostasy** (1:13-18)
- **Exhortation for Endurance** (2:1-18)
- **Exhortation to Remain** (2:19-3:17)
- **Herald the Word in View of Myths** (4:1-4)
- **Timothy's Service** (4:5); **Paul's Career** (4:6-18)
- **Benediction of Grace** (4:19-22)

The epistle proper begins with an exhortation to have the pattern of sound words (1:13). It closes with the charge to herald the word (4:2). Its central subject contains the command to “correctly cut” the word of truth (2:15). The Sacred Scriptures are the one great need for these degenerate days (3:16).

**TITUS**

The only recorded visit of the apostle Paul to Crete was when his ship was detained there some time on his journey to Rome (Acts 27:7-12). The writer of Acts was with the apostle, and doubtless others (such as Demas and Crescens) accompanied him, including, it would seem, Titus, as far as Crete. Paul's direction that he should leave the island and meet him in Nicopolis (3:12) seems to confirm this, for, later, Paul writes to Timothy that Titus had gone to Dalmatia (2 Tim.4:10). There was a Nicopolis on the Adriatic near the boundary of Macedonia and Dalmatia. Hence this letter was probably written from Rome not long after his arrival. His early intention to visit Spain (Rom.15:24), and his decision to winter in Nicopolis (3:12), seems to have failed of fruition, for Paul is still in Rome when he informs Timothy of his imminent dissolution (2 Tim.4:6).

**FRAMEWORK OF TITUS**

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<th>Salutation of Grace (1:1-4)</th>
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<td><strong>Benediction of Grace</strong> (3:12-15)</td>
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The evident purport of this epistle is hortatory. It deals with the practical duties of life. No doctrine is developed. As shown by the literary framework, the chief subjects are the appointment of elders who are to serve as supervisors, and the conduct of those who are slaves. The paragraph dealing with elders is logically followed by one describing their duties and difficulties due to the insubjection of
PHILEMON

This, the only private, personal letter from the pen of the apostle Paul, is a perfect specimen of its kind. Its power- ward appeal is the ripe fruitage of that overwhelming grace which Paul dispensed from his Roman prison. Himself a prisoner, he captures the runaway slave and gives him the freedom of Christ, yet sends him back to his master from whom he had escaped. This note was doubtless written at the same time as the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians. Onesimus accompanied Tychicus (Eph.6:21) to Ephesus and Colosse (Col.4:7-9). From the fact that Onesimus is spoken of as one of you, (Col.4:9), we infer that Philemon belonged to the ecclesia at Colosse, and that he was given the message to the master in that epistle at the same time (Col.4:1). But this little letter goes far beyond what is just and equal, so far as Onesimus is concerned. Not only a slave, but subject to torture and death for stealing from his master, he was delivered to Philemon. Can we realize what this must have meant to him? To be taken from the deepest depths of social degradation and to be sealed with Christ in the celestial realms. By faith, almost exhausts the possibilities of grace. And now upon all this, he is given this precious passport to his master's heart!

Paul is the apostle of the nations, the Uncircumcision: the twelve ministered to the Circumcision, the nation of Israel. They brought mercy to the other nations, conditioned on Israel's blessing: his ministry follows the defection of Israel. They were confined to earth: he includes the heavens. They are confined within the eons, Paul propounds a purpose which preceded the eons and which will not be accomplished until after they have run their course. Paul alone gives us present truth. All truth is profitable in that it teaches us the ways of God; but only that truth is applicable which was written for the present administration. May the application of this great principle bring as much blessing to each reader of these lines as it has brought to the writer!

A. E. Knoch

SUMMARY

Salutation, Grace (1:1,2)

Paul's Joy, Saints Soothed (1:7)

Paul Entreats Concerning his Child (1:8-10)

Paul Offers Refund For Onesimus (1:18,19)

Greetings, Grace (1:23-25)

The Apostle of the Nations

The Twelve Ministered to the Circumcision, the Nation of Israel. They Brung Mercy to the Other Nations, Conditioned on Israel's Blessing: His Ministry Follows the Defection of Israel. They Were Confined to Earth: He Includes the Heavens. They Are Confined Within the Eons, Paul Propounds a Purpose Which Preceded the Eons and Which Will Not Be Accomplished Until After They Have Run Their Course. Paul Alone Gives Us Present Truth. All Truth Is Profitable in That It Teaches Us the Ways of God; but Only That Truth Is Applicable Which Was Written for the Present Administration.
THE HAND OF ELOAH

After seeking to silence Job from his “multitude of words” (11:2-4), which seem so shocking and impious, Zophar cries out, “O that Eloah would speak!” (v.5). In this there is agreement with Job’s own longing, if not with his despair as expressed in 9:15,16. But Zophar is immediately ready to speak for Eloah.

With patient condescension Zophar explains what sort of thing Eloah would say to Job if He did speak. “Then He would tell you obscured secrets of wisdom.” And more to the point as far as Zophar is concerned, Eloah would make Job understand that He “is granting you oblivion of some of your depravity” (11:6). Zophar is convinced that Job has committed some great depravity, but allows that Eloah may have given Job some measure of forgetfulness of what he did.

Yet again, Zophar directs attention to Eloah and His perfection and authority (11:7-11). These verses, like 5:9,10, spoken by Eliphaz, seem to accord with the extended passages in chapters 38-41 when Yahweh Himself does speak. Still, the reason such references to God’s deity by Job’s associates do not make these words “rightly so” (cf 42:7) is that they are voiced for the wrong reason. Like Eliphaz and Bildad, Zophar speaks of the greatness of Eloah in order to lead to the themes of judgment and religious warnings. The concern is not to focus attention on God and the wisdom of His ways, but rather to direct Job in his own personal behavior before the majestic Deity.

Zophar points to possible lawlessness in Job’s hands that

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11 *Then Zophar the Naamathite answered, *saying:
12 Shall this multitude of words not be answered? And should this man of glib lips be justified?
13 Shall your inventions *turn all men to silence? And shall you keep deriding while there is no one criticizing?
14 + *Now you say, My doctrine is spotless, And I *am purified in Your eyes.
15 + Nevertheless—*O *that Eloah would speak, *That He should open His lips *before you!
16 + *Then He would *tell you obscured secrets of wisdom, For reality *has double sides; *Hence know this: that Eloah is *granting you oblivion of some of your depravity.
17 Can you *find out the fathoming of Eloah? #Could you *find out # the all* perfection of Him Who-Suffices?
18 These are loftier than the heavens; what can you contrive? Deeper than the unseen; what can you know?
19 Its measure is longer than the earth And wider than the sea.
20 If He should pass by or lock up Or *call an assembly, *who could *turn Him back?
21 For He Himself knows *all men of hypocrisy; *When He sees lawlessness, *shall He not consider?
22 + *The hollow* man shall become wise of heart *Whenever the colt of an onager is born a human.
Job’s Hand

must be put away (11:12-14). This shows us that Zophar really thinks of God’s actions as responses to human behavior rather than operations in accord with a divine purpose. If Job would confess his secret sins, then Eloah would be able to bless him, and he would forget his misery and trust with expectation (11:15-19). But the fact remains that Job has always spread out his palms to God (v.13), and his condition currently fits Zophar’s description of the fate of the wicked. Job’s eyes are “exhausted” right now with tears; for Job there is presently no visible “flight to safety,” and the only expectation he has for his soul is death (11:20).

None of this advances any understanding of God’s dealings with Job. It does not encourage Job’s trust in the perfect sufficiency of Him Who-Suffices, or his appreciation of His wisdom. God is aware of all human hypocrisy and lawlessness (11:11), but Job’s need is to become more aware of divine faithfulness, wisdom and righteousness.

SO JOB ANSWERED
(Job 12:1-25)

Job’s associates have spoken of God but have not helped Job keep focusing on Him as One involved in the events and experiences of our lives. This is because what they have said concerning God has really directed the attention onto Job and what he must do in order to come under divine favor once again. Now in Job’s reply to Zophar he stoops to their level and joins the fray, man against man. His attacks take the form of sarcasm. “Truly, you are the people, and with you wisdom shall die!” (12:2). This leads to a defense of himself (12:3), followed by further complaints about his associates’ attitudes (12:4,5).

Nevertheless, Job recalls how he had always been one “who was calling on Eloah” (v.4). This leads Job’s mind back to the major problem of squaring the presence of evil with the power and righteousness of God.

Job 11:13-12:6

13 If you yourself prepare your heart, 
And you spread out your palms to Him,
14 If lawlessness is in your hand, put it far away,  
And do not allow iniquity to tabernacle in your tents,
15 Then without blemish, you may lift up your face,  
And you will become solidly set and shall not fear.  
16 For you would forget the misery; 
You would remember it only like waters that have passed.
17 And higher than the noonday sun your life-course shall rise; 
Should it be faint, it shall become like the morning.
18 You will trust because there will be expectation;  
*When you reconnoiter, you may lie down in trust.
19 + When you recline, there will be no trembling,  
And many will beseech your face.
20 Yet the eyes of the wicked shall be all exhausted, 
And flight to safety will perish /for them  
And their expectation become an expiring of soul.
12 So Job answered, saying:
2 Truly, /you are the people, 
And with you wisdom shall die!
3 *However, I have heart understanding as well as you; 
I am not falling / behind you;
+ For who is there not knowing such things as these?
4 As the sport of his associates am I becoming, 
Who was calling on Eloah, and He answered him, 
Made sport of, though righteous and flawless.
5 Contempt /for misfortune/ is /in the reflections /of the self-satisfied one, 
Readied for those of tottering feet.
6 The tents of devastators are at ease, 
And for those disturbing El there is serenity, 
For him who brings along an eloah in his hand.

12:5 --- for misfortune; MT: torch.
First of all, Job points out, the wicked seem to get away with their wickedness. Even for those who disturb El there is serenity (12:6). And secondly, “the hand of Eloah, it has done this” (12:9)! It is not, as Zophar had insisted, a question of what Job’s hands have done, whether intentionally or not, whether obvious to others or obscured, but of what Eloah’s hand has done.

It is the hand of God that has shaped us as living souls, and our spirit comes from Him (12:10). It is as a living soul, instilled with spirit by the hand of Eloah, that Job can feel the aching loss of his children. God has made him a sentient being who can know the pain of the boils covering his body and the horror of his destitution. God has granted him spirit that keeps him alive in an existence of searing agony and unrelieved sorrow.

If Zophar would speak for Eloah, why has he not spoken about what is so obvious? Those who disturb El live in comfort, and one who called on Him is made sport of, “though righteous and flawless.” And that is a serious problem. Even the beasts of the field, the birds and fish, know this (12:7-9). How can we ever become acquainted with God’s power and wisdom unless we face up to the evils we hear and see and feel all around us?

Don’t we learn by listening and observing and exercising our senses (v.11)? We begin our education as infants and do not have to wait until we are old before we recognize that God does whatever fits His counsel and wisdom (12:12-15). Both the sinner and the one who leads him down the pathway of error are God’s (v.16). God causes counselors and judges to do stupid things and be cheated, kings and priests and solid citizens to be overthrown, elders and patrons and the powerful to fall (12:17-22). The fate of nations and the policies of their leaders are all under God’s control (12:23-25).

Evil is a fact, and the perfection of the all-powerful
God Who has made us is a fact. Job is saying the right thing when he puts these two facts together in his declarations. The hand of Eloah is involved in the failures of worthy human beings and in the stupidity of our most capable leaders. Indeed the word “involved” is not strong enough. Several times, especially in 12:17-25, Job uses the Hebrew verb form that speaks of causing the action to happen. God causes counselors and priests to be looted. He causes the putting away of eloquence (v.20) and heart understanding (v.24), and He causes leaders to “stray in wayless wasteland” (v.24).

TO PLEAD WITH EL
(Job 13:1-27)

Job’s experience by means of his eyes and ears has made it evident to him that God is the First Cause of all these things. Job is well aware of his own sinfulness, but this should not be related only to divine judgments and divorced from trust in God. His associates obviously cannot explain the involvement of Deity in this evil, nor do they want to discuss it in any clear way. It is the issue of all issues that they most want to avoid.

Zophar wanted to speak for Eloah, which, if he could have done so truly, would have been welcome to Job. But as for Job himself, he would speak to God as the One Who Suffices. He longs to plead his case before the Supreme Subjector (13:3).

Verses 4-13 of chapter 13 show us a distracted and frustrated Job, falling once more into sarcasm and outright anger. Job longs to speak to Eloah. Nevertheless, he has had to listen to a man who has already judged his case. And what Zophar has said is “falsehood,” and “iniquity.” There is no healing for Job in such talk.

It appears to Job that Zophar wishes to curry favor with God, claiming to contend for Him by showing par-
tality toward Him (13:7,8). But what he says about Job is not true. Zophar himself needs to be investigated; he may delude human beings, but God, Who knows Zophar’s secret thoughts, will not be deluded. It would be better if Zophar would simply keep silent (13:5,13).

In 13:9-12 we find Job turning Zophar’s warnings against him. This is all very well from a human standpoint, but it is a distraction from the major point of God’s place in all the evil that has come upon Job. But once Job gets this out of his system, he seems to get a better hold on himself and prepares for the pleading of his case before God (13:14-19). Like David in later times, Job would have God be his judge (cf 2 Sam.24:14).

**JOB, THE ENEMY**

Job first calls for protection from the One before Whom he pleads (13:20,21). Then he proposes a two-way exchange of thought (22). And finally, evidently without waiting for God to speak, Job bursts out with what he wants to say. Job’s questions and complaints in 13:23-27 center upon the explosive address to Yahweh in verse 24. “Why should You conceal Your face and reckon me as Your enemy?” Because the name “Job” and the word for “enemy” are practically the same in Hebrew, we cannot help but feel there is a great deal of irony packed into this plea.

Job, who, relative to other human beings, “was flawless and upright, fearing Elohim and keeping away from evil” (Job 1:1), nevertheless was reckoned as God’s enemy. (Here is a matter that hits home for us all, and for believers this calls for renewed appreciation of passages such as Romans 5:1-11 and Colossians 1:13-23.)

In voicing this significant problem of human enmity and alienation from God, Job is being prepared to receive God’s own assurance of divine purpose and ability in carrying out this purpose.

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**Job 13:14-14:2**

14 * I shall take up my flesh in my teeth
   And place my soul in my palm.
15 Behold, He may despatch me, yet I shall wait for Him;
   Yea, I shall plead my ways ‘before His face.
16 Moreover, this will be * salvation for me,
   For a polluted man would not ‘come before Him.
17 Hear, yea hear* my declaration,
   And let my disclosure come into your ears.
18 Behold *now, I have arranged a plea;
   I know that I ‘ shall be justified.
19 *Who is he who shall contend *against me?
   For I would now* ‘keep silent and breathe my last.
20 *Only two things, O do not ‘do *to me;
   Then I shall not conceal myself from Your face;
21 *Keep Your palm far from *on me,
   And let not the dread of You ‘frighten me.
22 *Either call, and I ‘shall answer,
   Or I shall speak; ‘then, I pray, reply to me.
23 How many are my depravities and sins?
   *Let me know my transgression and my sin.
24 Why should You conceal Your face
   And reckon me ‘as Your enemy?
25 Would You ‘terrify a leaf being whisked away?
   And would You ‘pursue dry stubble?
26 That You may list bitter things *against me,
   And ‘impute to me the depravities of my youth,
27 And that You may place my feet in shackles
   And ‘keep watch over all my paths;
   That You may set a statute *for the bottoms of my feet.
28 + A ‘man, like a rotten thing, he is disintegrating,
   Like a cloak when a moth has eaten it.
14 A human, born* of a woman,
   Is short of days and surfeited with disturbance.
2 *He comes forth like a blossom and is snipped off;
   + He races ‘away like a shadow and does not ‘stand.

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13:14 Hb begins with On what (meaning “why”), repeated from the end of v.13 but absent in LXX.
We, even as believers, may often feel a oneness with Job, the enemy, in many of his thoughts, feeling sometimes (rather, often) like a rotting cloak (13:28), "short of days and surfeited [up to the gills] with disturbance" (14:1). It is altogether human to cry out to God as Job does in 14:3-5, saying in effect, "I don't get it! Why make such a big thing of such a miserable, little, temporary creature as I am?" But the great difference between Job and ourselves is that, in faith, we have received the conciliation (Rom.5:11). As for Job, however, he remains without assurance of divine purpose for this enmity. He can only cry out in "declarations without knowledge" (Job 38:2). Nevertheless, despite all Job's professing of ideas without understanding (cf Job 42:3), the Godward directing of his thoughts and words is altogether right. And even here, in the depths of his despair, he is led to a growing confidence in El.

An indication of this developing trust can be seen in Job's use of the little word "until" in 14:6-14. At first Job's only hope is that God would forbear from paying attention to him, "until, like a hireling, he may fill in his days" (v.6). Then, in death, the human shall remain in oblivious sleep "until the heavens fail," (v.12), which would seem likely a long, long time. Here Job would be concealed by God until His "anger turns back (v.13), which is suddenly a more encouraging thought, for indeed God's anger may not be permanent, and there is no need for concealment apart from divine anger.

Finally, as the high point of Job's thoughts in this reply to Zophar, he asks, "If a master dies shall he live again?" and declares, "All the days of my enlistment I shall wait until my relief comes" (Job 14:14). Here is a marvelous ray of hope in the midst of Job's despair. Like other passages of
Even ‘if You are now numbering my steps, 
You shall then no’ longer observe on my sin,
My transgression shall be sealed’ up in a pouch,
And You shall cover over on my depravity.

Nevertheless, ‘even the mountain falls’ and ‘decays,
And the rock shifts from its ‘place.

Water reduces stones to powder;
†The flattening rain ‘overflows’ the soil of the earth;
+So do You cause the expectation of a mortal to perish.
You ‘overpower him’ permanently, and he ‘goes away;
His face alters’, and You ‘send him afar.
His sons may attain glory, ‘yet he does not know it;
+Or they may be discredited,
‘yet he does not ‘understand it of them.
Yea, his flesh shall be in pain over himself,
And his soul shall mourn over his state.

14:19 †– The flattening rain ‘overflows; †Hb She overflows her self-sown plants.

explosive joy in the midst of deep sorrow, such as Lamentations 3:21-24 and Micah 4:1-8, Job 14:14-17 stands out in brilliant light because of the darkness of its surroundings. Relief will come because God will long for the work of His hands (14:15).

No doubt Job says more than he can feel assured about here, for he immediately falls back into morbid thoughts of death and forgetfulness, starting with the word “nevertheless” in 14:18. Job looks at the evidence of his present suffering and lack of expectation, ending his speech with a sob.

“Nevertheless” the damage has been done, or rather the counter-damage, in Job’s words of hope. Words of mourning are not to be the final words of Job.

D.H.H.

THE WAYS OF GOD AND MAN

JOBS ASSOCIATES were good men—good, that is, in intention, good in the deepest desire of their hearts, but utterly wrong in their knowledge of God’s ways. They knew God, yet did not speak of Him the thing that was right: they were grave, yet uttered folly. Theirs was a pattern case. In them are set forth the flimsy substitutes for divine revelation to which we are ever prone to turn: leaning on antiquity and majority and erudition.

They held tenaciously to their own teaching because it was ancient. “Among us are both the greyhaired and hoary headed, more abundant in days than your father” (15:10). The antiquity of a belief is no proof of its truth. In our quest after truth we should be influenced by nothing save the ruling of Scripture.

They were also much inclined to lean on the number and distinction of those “with them.” But majorities and minorities cannot be recognized as factors in establishing the truth.

Again, Job’s opponents reposed implicit confidence in education and erudition. Their speeches are replete with personal observations, profusely seasoned with quotations from the fathers, and abound in reference to arts and sciences, but contain only one reference to the Word of God (22:22).

The knowledge of Job’s friends was not of faith. They knew only what is seen. Nature was their text-book. However, they ignored that nature reveals God’s works, but not His ways. These are unfolded by God’s Word. Psalm
168 In Accord with God’s Purpose

19 elaborates this distinction; its first part (verses 1-6) is occupied with the revelation of God written in the heavens, and its latter part (verses 7-14) with the revelation of God written in the Word.

The heavens recount the perfection of God’s handiwork; the Scriptures make known God’s dealings with His servants. In the universe about us all is order, harmony, law, symmetry. In the world of humanity all is confusion and disorder;—we read of “error,” “faults,” “sins,” “transgressions.”

This antithesis between the works of God in creation and His ways with mankind, the friends could not account for, but labored to “reconcile” it with their theory. Grounded on this false hypothesis as to the “course of the world,” they inferred that all calamity is a judgment on sin, and prosperity a reward for uprightness. The position of the three friends is substantially the same, only Eliphaz supports it by experience, Bildad by tradition, Zophar by human merit.

In relating Job’s sufferings only to divine judgment upon sin, in accord with their established viewpoint, the friends essentially ruled out any association of this evil with God’s operations. Because Job knew his troubles were not retribution for secret sins, this viewpoint was devastating to him; it meant that there was no reason at all for this evil.

It is not calamity that oppresses and depresses, but calamity unrelated to any divine purpose, that springs from nothing and leads to nothing. If it is appointed by God for His purposes, whether or not we are aware of His purposes, it can be viewed with equanimity and borne with fortitude. God is in the darkness as well as in the light, in death as well as in life. This is what Job longed to hear, but concerning which his associates had nothing to say.

V. Gelesnoff

God’s Multifarious Wisdom

CONCEALED IN GOD

“To me, less than the least of all saints, was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations, and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord; in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, through His faith” (Eph.3:8-12).

Such astonishing revelations of God’s purpose in creation are rare. Even when they are plainly expressed, without equivocation or sophistry, so as to appear quite simple to understand, comprehension of God’s wisdom is nevertheless limited. Concerning recognition of God the Father and His Son, our Lord, Paul had previously declared, “...not in all is there this knowledge” (1 Cor.8:7).

The significance of Paul’s stupendous announcement leads him to petition God: “On this behalf am I bowing my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, after Whom every kindred in the heavens and on earth is being named, that He may be giving you, in accord with the riches of His glory, to be made staunch with power, through His spirit, in the man within, Christ to dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, having been rooted and grounded in love, should be strong to grasp, together with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height—to know
the love of Christ as well which transcends knowledge—
that you may be completed for the entire complement of
God” (Eph.3:14-19).

Secret! Untraceable! Concealed! Were we not design-
nated, called, and justified, then we would be quite unable
to understand this transcendent revelation. These words
are addressed “. . . to all the saints who are also believ-
ers in Christ Jesus.” They are the very pinnacle of divine
confiding! When such disclosures are confused with the
evangel pertaining to the Uncircumcision and their expec-
tation of the kingdom, then this is a clear sign of immatu-
rely or deception.

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

There is a delightful parallel to be drawn between the
guardian shepherds on the night of the nativity, and those
to whom Paul was writing. Small wonder that these shep-
herds were startled! Small wonder that they came hurry-
ing into Bethlehem! We may also feel some sympathy with
those who remained in the fields to tend the flocks. An
essential difference is that not a single one of the ecclesia
will be left behind when they are snatched away in clouds,
to meet the Lord in the air!

But what news of the nativity! What incredible, glori-
ous news! The heavenly host could not contain their joy at
the significance of the birth of the royal Babe. God’s great
purpose for all creation was centered in the wonderful gift
of His dear Son.

These same host could not possibly anticipate Golgotha.
When it occurred, how perplexed they must have been
until the exaltation, when Christ Jesus was raised and
presented in celestial glory. And yet, once more we are
able to perceive that full realization and acceptance of
His just and worthy honors was not granted to all, even
among the celestials.

Humanity is apt to become preoccupied with God’s
purpose here on earth, but those who recognize the glo-
ries of His Son soon come to perceive His universal dig-
nity. Indeed, in the astounding announcement which the
apostle declared, he stressed that the multifarious wisdom
of God was to be made known “through the ecclesia.” Yet
there are some of this privileged body who are inclined
to overlook the fact that their very unworthiness is a nec-
essary contrast to enhance the gracious love which the
Father lavishes on His children. Lessons concerning the
gratuitous grace of this love are made crystal clear when
lavished on the least deserving of all.

“For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is
not out of you; it is God’s approach present, not of works,
lest anyone should be boasting. For His achievement are
we, being created in Christ Jesus for good works, which
God makes ready beforehand, that we should be walking
in them” (Eph.2:8-10).

Paul, who humbly wrote, “Make room for us” (1 Cor.7:2),
kept the above glorious revelation to himself for over four-
teen years! He fully understood that in the fullness of time
he would be able to share his delightful news, but first,
paralleling the inevitable ascending from tender faith to
maturity, there was a vital need for patience and gentle
encouragement. What must that have meant for him? How
could we have subdued our elation?

What forbearance and pathos there is in his words; “And
I am acquainted with such a man (whether in a body or out-
side of the body I am not aware—God is aware) that he was
snatched away into paradise and hears ineffable declara-
tions, which it is not allowed a man to speak” (2 Cor.12:3,4).

We have no means of knowing what prompted the tim-
ing of disclosure of God’s revelation through His apostle,
but we do know for certain that it would have come as an
essential development to those who had carefully followed
Paul’s teaching. Even so, none could possibly have speculated the distinct honor which God then revealed. Never before had the celestial destiny of the ecclesia been set forth. But, if the honor was startling to the ecclesia, what must it have meant to the celestial sovereignties and authorities?

AMONG THE CELESTIALS

The entire Ephesian epistle is a comprehensive declaration of God's love for His Son, our Lord, but in a breathtaking blaze of glory, we are uplifted by the statement that as part of the high honors justifiably bestowed upon the Son, He is given, “...as Head over all to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all” (1:22,23).

Already, in spirit, we are confirmed as being seated together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus. Did Paul, as he tenderly entreated and instructed, provide hints concerning the celestial destiny of the ecclesia as he wrote, “Are you not aware that we shall be judging messengers, not to mention life's affairs?” (1 Cor.5:3). In the light of his prior knowledge, there can surely be no misunderstanding that he plainly taught a future, blessed fullness of realization in his words regarding seeing, no longer out of an installment, but face to face (13:12).

Although he withheld the secret of celestial honors revealed in the Ephesian epistle, he was able to provide a powerful encouragement in divulging the blessed secret of resurrection to the stumbling ecclesia in Corinth.

The reality of our present humiliation is far removed from the glories or our expectation. Together with the apostle we also are considered weak, stupid and dishonored. Our message is rejected, yet we persist. How else may we reflect just a little of the grace which is lavished? Like Paul, we rejoice in infirmities, for Christ’s sake.

In the closing words of this mighty epistle of Ephesians, Paul urges all to receive the defensive armor against the stratagems of the Adversary, emphasizing that we are not to wrestle with flesh and blood, but “...with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials” (6:12).

This can only mean that these same forces must regard the future exaltation of the ecclesia with some trepidation. If God were all in these celestials, then surely they would anticipate and welcome the Lord’s brethren in their transformed glory, with open arms. Are these, as with humanity, also indifferent to the glory of God’s Son? In their arrogance do they view the terrestrial with contempt? It requires no special imagination to understand that there is a need, and that need is for a realization of the immensity and wonder of God’s love. God’s wisdom chooses the ignoble and contemptible to be disgracing the wise. This aspect of God’s purpose confounds humanity. It is equally enigmatic to the celestials. Once more, we are instructed that this wise choosing was a secret; a wisdom, “...which has been concealed” (1 Cor.2:7).

BE REJOICING

And thus God’s glorious purpose in creation unfolds. There is no experiment; no adaptation. True, there is adjustment. Our Lord made this perfectly clear when He explained to His disciples why He began to speak in parables: “Now answering, He said to them that ‘To you has it been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, yet to those it has not been given. For anyone who has, to him shall be given, and he shall have a superfluity. Yet anyone who has not, that also which he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore in parables am I speaking to them, seeing that, observing, they are not observing, and hearing, they are not hearing, neither are they understanding’” (Matt.13:11-13).

Jesus then declared the solemn prophecy of Isaiah con-
The Peace of God

cerning the nation of Israel, and to this very day, following
on Paul’s quotation of this same prophecy (Acts 28:26-28),
this special people, beloved because of the fathers, are set
aside, in callousness. “For unregretted are the graces and
the calling of God. For even as you once were stubborn
toward God, yet now were shown mercy at their stubborn-
ness, thus these also are now stubborn to this mercy of
yours, that now they also may be shown mercy. For God
locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be
merciful to all” (Rom.11:29-32). Once again, we must be
careful to note that these words were addressed to “… the
called of Jesus Christ.”

“Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will declare,
be rejoicing! Let your lenience be known to all men: the
Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in every-
thing, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your
requests be made known to God, and the peace of God,
that is superior to every frame of mind, shall be garrison-
ing your hearts and apprehensions in Christ Jesusº” (Phil.
4:4-7). Worry can cause real physical disability, even death.
But genuine peace is imparted when we learn of God’s
loving, immutable purpose which nothing in this whole
wide universe can possibly frustrate. We may indeed be
rejoicing in the Lord!

The special revelation which we have been considering
is a powerful encouragement for peace in Christ Jesus, our
Lord. Just as it was gradually unfolded, then we may rest
assured that there are still many such rich disclosures in
our Father’s superabounding love for all creation.

“No to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above
all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to
the power that is operating in us, to Him be glory in the
ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the
eons of the eons! Amen!” (Eph.3:20,21).

Donald Fielding

Contentment and True Rejoicing

NOT ALREADY PERFECTED

Our imperfections in the flesh can be a real spoiler of
spiritual joy. Our awareness of not perfectly measuring up
to the standard set before us by Paul to walk worthy of
the calling with which we were called is often overpower-
ing. As a consequence, the peace of God does not always
fill our hearts and minds. How do we cope with this? We
will give twelve points which we hope will be helpful in
“endurance and patience with joy” (Col.1:11).

1. As long as we are here in our terrestrial tabernacle,
we know that God is not finished fashioning and fram-
ing us. From Colossians 1:12 we learn that our heavenly
Father is making us competent for the allotment awaiting
us. Thus, let us not run ahead of Him, but let us be gra-
cious with others and ourselves.

2. For reasons best known to God, we have been given
only an earnest of His holy spirit and not as yet a full mea-
sure. But how good and encouraging to know that we also
have been sealed with the holy spirit of promise for the day
of deliverance (Eph.1:13; 4:30). Furthermore, we have not
been given a full measure of faith, but a limited measure
(Rom.12:3). Some receive more than others. That is one
reason why we should never compare ourselves with our-
selves (2 Cor.10:12), but be as helpful and lenient as can be,
without being presumptuous or condescending. We are all objects of God’s grace.

3. The apostle Paul said in Philippians 4:11 that he had
learned to be content. This means to us that Paul was not
born with that blessing, but that in the “school of God” he
had learned it. Some of us may not learn it until the last day in “school.” Paul learned a very important lesson spoken of in 2 Corinthians 12:9. We are thankful for the many precious declarations given in this administration of grace, but we should be especially grateful for the one given to Paul when he had earnestly prayed for the removal of an infirmity (imperfection). Paul simply was told, “Sufficient for you is My grace.” This might be called one of the understatements of the eons. What more and what better can be granted us in our infirmities than knowing that we have been saved by grace and in grace (that is into the sphere of grace). As a fish in the ocean encounters water always, in all its movements, so we, in all our experiences in “school,” encounter God’s grace in Christ Jesus no matter how many imperfections we still have.

4. Since we will never come in this life to that degree of perfection that will allow us to say with honesty that we practice flawlessly the standard set before us, it is very helpful to consider what Peter, as a disciple, experienced when he was granted permission to walk on the water toward Jesus (Matt.14:27-33). As long as He kept his eyes focused on His Lord, he was successful. When he looked at the billowing waves, he became afraid and began to sink. Of course, Jesus saved him. One important lesson to learn from Peter’s experience is to keep our focus on the truth as it was revealed to Paul by our glorified Lord and Saviour. The truth will be making us free, also from the frustrations of our imperfections.

5. Yes, as we walk on the stormy sea of life (perhaps too many times with a sinking feeling), we would heed Paul’s entreaty, “Do not worry about anything” (Phil.4:6). That includes, not worrying about the fact that we are not as yet perfect. How may we accomplish this? Simply by keeping in mind that because of the death of Christ we will be presented holy and flawless and unimpeachable in His sight (Col.1:21,22). This is a powerful way to cope with such shortcomings as fear and worry, or anything else that tends to make us aware of our imperfections.

6. Someone has said that we must never look back “when trying to plow a straight furrow.” For spiritual maturity it is very important not to look back on any successes or any failures we have experienced. This does not mean to be dishonest and to pretend that we are capable through mental acrobatics to remove from our memory past experiences, good and bad. No, it simply means not to live by our experiences and feelings; but to let God’s declarations concerning His grace in Christ, and His operation in this administration of grace determine our daily walk and feelings.

7. While we are in this tabernacle of flesh, we need to comprehend the meaning of what Paul says when he uses the word “reckoning” in Romans 6:11. “Thus you also, be reckoning yourselves to be dead, indeed, to Sin, yet living to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.” Now, since “sin” means “missing the mark,” then we have here a basis for not looking at our failures. The standing, or position we have with God is secure in Christ Jesus, and since nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom.8:31-35), we have very much to encourage us to live by God’s success in Christ Jesus.

8. Sometimes we wonder what would happen if God granted us complete maturity, and mastery over the flesh at this time. Would it not make us difficult to live with? Just suppose that, for instance, we could tell another that we never worry about anything anymore. Would that not sound conceived and unreal? Would that not make us walk about with an air of self-righteousness? How wonderful and humbling to realize that we are given God’s righteousness in Christ Jesus in Whom we are instructed to boast (1 Cor.1:31).

9. It is more realistic to pursue joyfully that for which
we have been grasped. Paul said it so well in Philippians 3:12-14. “Not that I already obtained, or am already perfected. Yet I am pursuing, if I may be grasping also that for which I was grasped also by Christ Jesus. Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing—forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus.”

In this passage Paul plainly acknowledges that he does not consider himself to be perfect. He also states that he is not dwelling on those things that are behind him. And is it not interesting that (as mentioned above under #3) Paul, nevertheless, has learned to be content. He is content because he revels in the truths of justification, conciliation and glorification (in spirit he—and we as well—have already been given every spiritual blessing among the celestial in Christ, Eph.1:3). He does not allow his imperfections to make him “uptight.” Instead, he is living by the perfection he has in Christ Jesus. This gives him a great amount of energy in the pursuit of grasping and laying hold on eonian life. The marvelous truths he was commissioned to proclaim, plus his constant contact in prayer with the God of all power, wisdom and love, enabled him to live by faith and to cast out frustration. He encouraged us to imitate him.

10. The physical conditions of life can at times be very trying. We are not asked to become unnatural, but the Scripture says that we do not sorrow as the world does (1 Thess.4:13). We do groan, yet our groaning is different from the groaning and moaning that goes on in society. We are entreated to do all without murmurings and reasonings (Phil.2:14), yet the difficulties of life often cause us tears and sadness while we rejoice in the truth that all is out of, through, and for God! We are fully persuaded that all things that are taking place in our lives and in the billions of other human lives, contribute to the universal goal so succinctly stated in 1 Corinthians 15:28—“That God may be All in all.” This must mean that we, as creatures, through the experience of good and evil, have to become nothing in ourselves. Creatures can only find true fulfillment and perfect satisfaction by having the Creator as their all, the Creator Who has revealed Himself as Father, and has told us that we belong to His family (Eph.2:19). How good to know that God is establishing a family relationship with His creatures; not a cold business-like relationship, but a relationship of intimacy and love!

11. It is very interesting to read in Hebrews that Christ learned obedience by the things He suffered. We do not have to learn obedience but we may learn contentment. And this while we suffer from many imperfections. It is a great relief that we are complete in Christ (Col.2:10), and live by His faith (Gal.2:20). This indeed, is more than enough to help us forget our own shortcomings, and to be invigorated for positive living. This positive living is to be understood not merely as being free from worry (although that is very important), but to rejoice in serving the Lord and to remember that the Lord is always near. The more we rejoice in the Lord the less we worry in our imperfections. That it is important to rejoice is clearly indicated in Philippians 4:4, “Be rejoice in the Lord always! Again, I will declare, be rejoice!”; as well as in Romans 15:13, “Now may the God of expectation be filling you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the power of holy spirit.”

12. We feel that it is very important to keep in mind that the Great Potter is ultimately the One Who will achieve all these commendable qualities in us. In Ephesians 2:10 it says that we are His achievement; and in Philippians 2:13 it clearly states that God is “operating in us to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight.” Isn’t it marvelous to know that it all depends upon Him to what degree we
Contentment and Appreciation

succeed? This knowledge is invigorating and of tremendous importance in terms of worthy walk. This helps us to avoid indulging in too much introspection or “navel-gazing.” Let us look up, for our deliverance is drawing near!

May these twelve points help us to cope victoriously with the “painful” awareness of not always being able to perfectly walk worthily, to banish worrying, and to bask in the peace of God. These points, of course, are not given as an excuse for our imperfections. On the contrary, we hope that a proper reading of these may be of great help in becoming more involved in pursuing the goal of walking worthily, in the spirit of contentment and true rejoicing in full appreciation of the perfection we have in Christ Jesus our Saviour and Lord.

Peter Feddema

OCTOBER CONFERENCES

The Autumn Fellowship in Baldwin, Michigan is scheduled this year for October 4-6 at the Grace and Truth Chapel. Andrew Maclarty (editor of Grace and Truth magazine) from Nottingham, England, is planning to attend, as well as to bring messages from God’s Word. Other speakers planning to attend include Phil Scranton, Jeff Priddy and Dean Hough. Meetings begin at 9:30 Friday morning and conclude about noon on Sunday. For further information contact Dean Hough (daytime phone: 810-798-8131).

Brother Maclarty will also be speaking at the monthly meeting in Waterloo, Ontario on October 12. Harry Watts of Kitchener, Ontario, can supply further information concerning this time of fellowship (phone: 519-745-3154).

REPORTS

Pastor Rick Farwell from Wagener, South Carolina, and Jeff Priddy from Greenwich, Ohio, brought messages of grace and expectation during a weekend conference in Waterloo, Ontario, May 10-12. Four weeks later, Brother Priddy hosted a similar series of meetings in Wllard, Ohio. There was good attendance on both occasions with gratifying interest in the evangel given to Paul.

Studies in Galatians

THE EVANGEL OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION

(Galatians 2:6-14)

In Galatians 2:3, Paul refers to the time when “not even Titus, who is with me, being a Greek, is compelled to be circumcised.” This was during the period of Paul’s second visit to the holy city, after the lapse of fourteen years, when he again went up to Jerusalem together with Barnabas, taking Titus along with him (2:1). Yet while not even Titus, who was with Paul, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised, Paul adds that nonetheless, “it was because of the false brethren who were smuggled in, who came in by the way to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they shall be enslaving us” (2:4). That is—and the sense is so evident that Paul breaks off his words without actually expressing his thought—it was because of the claims (cp Acts 15:1,2,5) of certain “false brethren” that Titus was then pressed by some to be circumcised, even though even these could not well compel him to undergo the rite, contrary to the counsel of the pillars of the Jerusalem ecclesia.

Now from those reputed to be somewhat—what kind they once were is of no consequence to me (God is not taking up the human aspect)—for to me those of repute submitted nothing. But, on the contrary, perceiving that I have been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision (for He Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision operates in me also for the nations), and, knowing the grace which is being given to me, James and Cephas and John, who are supposed to be pillars, give to me and Barnabas the
right hand of fellowship, that we, indeed, are to be for the nations, yet they for the Circumcision—only that we may be remembering the poor, which same thing I endeavor also to do. (2:6-10)

In speaking of the twelve as “those reputed to be somewhat,” Paul should not be understood as disparaging them. Paul does not refer to any exalted claims which the twelve made for themselves, but to those advanced in favor of the twelve by the circumcisionists, in the interests of their own legalistic devisings.

Those who were apostles before Paul “submitted nothing” to him. The twelve acknowledged the message and ministry of Paul as sufficient unto itself. Paul’s evangel needed no addition—and received none—from the twelve. But, on the contrary, since God was operating in Paul for the apostleship of the nations, as well as in Peter for that of the Circumcision, the twelve perceived that Paul had been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter of the Circumcision. Hence, James, Cephas, and John “knew” the grace which was being given to Paul. As a result, they gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, acknowledging that Paul and Barnabas were to be for the nations, yet they themselves for the Circumcision. The only word they wished to add was a request that Paul and his fellow workers may be remembering the poor among the Jews, which same thing, as Paul assures us, he endeavored also to do.

Considered in itself, it is possible to understand the phrase “the evangel of the Uncircumcision” as a metonymy for “the evangelization of the Uncircumcision.” But it is not translation but interpretation to render this phrase, as in most modern Bibles, “the gospel to the Uncircumcision.” Such a rendering supports the popular claim that in all respects Paul’s gospel is the same as that of the twelve. It gives credence as well to the related common assertion that by the words “the gospel of Christ,” we are to understand a singular message of good news which, in all particulars, applies to all who are in Christ.

Both “Uncircumcision” and “Circumcision” are in the genitive case. As will be explained later in this article, the sign of the genitive in English is of- not to-. Ideally, objective translation requires the former and precludes the latter. There may be a few cases where, due to the idiosyncrasies of English, good diction may be strained if the genitive should be represented by of. Nearly always, however, and certainly in this case at hand, it makes perfectly good English to say “the evangel of the Uncircumcision,” as much so as to say, “the epistles of the apostle Paul.” They are not the epistles to the apostle Paul, but the apostle Paul’s epistles. Similarly, Paul does not speak of the evangel to the Uncircumcision, but of the Uncircumcision’s evangel.

No one claims that the phrase “the apostleship of the Circumcision” (2:8), ought to be translated “the apostleship to the Circumcision.” Further, it should be noted that by the words which follow in verse 9, “we, indeed, are to be for [lit., “into”] the nations, yet they for [i.e., “into”] the Circumcision,” any general thought of evangelization directed, respectively, to both the nations and the Circumcision is thereby adequately expressed. Hence it becomes all the more untenable to render verse 7 as “the evangel to the Uncircumcision.”

We are plainly told that the One Who operates in Peter for the apostleship of the Circumcision, is the One Who operates in Paul also for (the apostleship of) the nations. And, the word to us also is, that Paul has been entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, according as Peter (with the evangel) of the Circumcision. Let us accept the Scripture for what it says, while adjusting our faith accordingly.

Paul speaks explicitly of “the evangel which I am heralding among the nations” (2:2); “the evangel which is being
brought by me” (1:11); which he neither accepted from man nor was taught by man, that instead came to him “through a revelation of Jesus Christ” (1:12). The apostle himself will inform us as to its particulars. If we believe and understand both the revelations of Paul’s evangel, according to Christ Himself, as well as the teachings of the twelve according as the Lord instructed them, we will soon know whether Paul’s evangel “of the Uncircumcision” is a fresh revelation, distinct in various respects from the teaching of the twelve, or is, however expressed, essentially merely a restatement of their teaching.

It is not that the evangel of the Uncircumcision is the exclusive province of those of the nations; nor is it that the evangel of the Circumcision debars all but those who are Israelites by nature. It is rather that the evangel of the Uncircumcision is the evangel which is primarily for those of the nations, as brought to the nations through the ministry of the apostle Paul, who is the apostle of the nations (Rom.11:13; cp 1 Tim.2:7; 2 Tim.1:11; Eph.3:8).

Certain Israelites (such as Paul himself) are also called and blessed according to that evangel which, characteristically, is the evangel of the Uncircumcision. Similarly, certain non-Israelites were themselves called and blessed according to that evangel which, characteristically, is the evangel of the Circumcision.

In the former case, any such descendants of Jacob lose their standing as Israelites and forfeit the advantages of the law—while concomitantly gaining the even greater benefits of the evangel of the Uncircumcision. If they are faithful, like Paul, they gladly forfeit all such benefits of flesh, while deeming them mere refuse (cf Phil.3:4-8).

In the latter case, like those of old who sojourned in Israel, any such non-Israelite believers who were nonetheless called and blessed according to the evangel of the Circumcision, were required to heed the law of Yahweh, which attended that evangel. Any such ones must become proselytes (cf Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43); that is, they must “come toward” Israel and observe the “one law,” which applied not only to the native-born, but to the naturalized citizen as well (Ex.12:49). Initially, such ones had to undergo the rite of circumcision; subsequently, they would make a pass-over to Yahweh. They would then be deemed “natives of the land [of Israel]” (Ex.12:48,49). As naturalized Israelites, they would also be required to keep from violating the sabbaths, as well as to keep their hand from any evil, according to the law of Moses. Only thus could they hold fast to Yahweh’s covenant (Isa.56:1-7; cp Acts 15:21) and be worthy of the resurrection of the just (cf Luke 14:14; 20:35; cp Matt.5:17-20; 7:21-23).

Thus it is fitting for Paul to declare that God will be justifying the Circumcision “out of faith” and the Uncircumcision “through the faith” (Rom.3:30). In each case, the faith which justifies is “Jesus Christ’s faith” (Rom.3:22); “the faith of Jesus” (Rom.3:26). As in Romans 11:36, where it is revealed that all is not only out of God, but through God as well, here too in Romans 3:30, it is certainly likewise true that, under God, both the Circumcision and the Uncircumcision owe not only the origin but the agency of their justification as well to the faith of Christ.

Yet in the case of the Circumcision believers, who must center much of their attention upon their own observance of the law, it is not so obvious that, even so, their justification is solely out of Jesus Christ’s faith. After all, this truth, as such, is not even a part of the evangel of the Circumcision, even though it is certainly true concerning them, even as Paul declares.

However, in the case of the believers of the Uncircumcision, who are not under law at all (Rom.6:14), for whom Grace reigns even where sin increases (Rom.5:20,21), whose very evangel brings to the forefront the fact that
their justification is not only out of (the faith of) Christ, but is through (the faith of) Christ as well, it becomes fitting for Paul to emphasize that God will be justifying them "through the faith of Christ."

FEAR AND HYPOCRISY

Now when Cephas came to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, for he was self-censured. For, before the coming of some from James, he ate together with those of the nations. Yet when they came, he shrank back, and severed himself, fearing those of the Circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also play the hypocrite with him, so that Barnabas also was led away with their hypocrisy. (2:11-13)

Cephas was "self-censured" concerning his hypocrisy; he knew he was wrong and experienced guilt. Before the coming of "some from James," he had eaten together with those of the nations. "Yet when they came, he shrank back, and severed himself, fearing those of the Circumcision." Then the rest of the Jews joined in, and they too played the hypocrite, together with him. They were all aware that even though the believers of the Uncircumcision did not observe the law, this was no reason to decline their fellowship, much less to sever themselves from them. It was those who came "from James" who were in the wrong, not Paul or the believers of the Uncircumcision. In supposing that those of the Uncircumcision must be circumcised and keep the law if they would be saved (cf Acts 15:1,2,5), or at this juncture, at least in imposing their own opinions as to practical holiness and perfection upon others, these unnamed men behaved most improperly. Yet to have such a profound influence not only upon Cephas but upon the rest of the Jews and even Barnabas besides, they must have been highly esteemed men of renown. Yet even so, they were in fact but self-appointed authoritarians engaging in shameful (albeit highly effective) fear tactics.

But when I perceived that they are not correct in their attitude toward the truth of the evangel, I said to Cephas in front of all, "If you, being inherently a Jew, are living as the nations, and not as the Jews, how are you compelling the nations to be judaizing?" (2:14).

It was not that they were wholly ignorant of the evangel heralded by Paul, but that they were incorrect in their attitude concerning it. They failed to give it sufficient honor and recognition. Thus under the duress of circumstance, their remarkable fear of these Circumcision authoritarians, became the decisive influence in determining their behavior.

Cephas was "inherently" (i.e., originally, by right) a Jew; it was not that he had become a naturalized citizen, but that he was a Jew "by nature" (cp 2:15). Even so, in acknowledgment of Paul's evangel, Cephas properly had been living "as [those of the] nations" live, and "not as Jews," who commonly had little or no association with non-Jews. This is simply to say that in respect of free intercourse with those of the nations, Cephas, hitherto, had behaved as if he himself were one of the nations. Yet when some formidable ones from James came, due to his fear of these men of the Circumcision, he shrank back and even went so far as to sever himself from those of the nations.

How is it, then, Paul asks, that you, Cephas, are compelling the nations to be judaizing? It was by no means Peter's teaching, in word, that judaizing was compulsory for those of the nations; in fact, earlier, he had spoken against any such claim (cf Acts 15:7-11). Even though Cephas did not verbally affirm that it was compulsory for the nations to be judaizing, nevertheless, by his actions, he effectively did this very thing. That is, in light of Cephas' own behavior, the non-Jewish believers might well conclude that the only way for them to be accepted as faithful at least by their Jewish fellow believers if not by God Himself as well, would be by their taking up with Judaism. How inconsis-
tent it was of Cephas to behave as he did, in light of the strong, negative influence that this would bring to bear upon the believers of the nations.

THROUGH FAITH OF CHRIST, OR FAITH IN CHRIST?

In the next article in this series, we intend to consider Galatians 2:16, which is centered in the revelation that “we may be justified through the faith of Christ and not by works of law.” But in preparation for that study, we first need to consider the translation itself, “faith of Christ.” This becomes a special need since most modern translations, even as they render “the evangel of the Uncircumcision” (2:7) as “the gospel to the uncircumcised” (e.g., the NASB), translate “faith of Christ” similarly, as “faith in Christ.”

This question as to the sense of the phrase, “the faith of Christ,” is by no means solely a question of grammar; yet it is indeed a question in which grammatical issues are an important consideration. Grammatically, the question as to what is to be understood by πιστις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (i.e., “faith of Jesus Christ”), is a question of the usage of the genitive case. Grammatical case is the syntactical relationship of a noun, pronoun, or adjective to other words in a sentence, generally indicated by declensional endings in inflected languages (such as Greek), or by prepositions and word order in non-inflected languages (such as English).

The Greek genitive case includes the English possessive case. The genitive’s presence is indicated in the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT’s sublinear by of (when no connective is present; e.g., “son of David,” Matt.1:20). Of is intended as a neutral means by which to indicate the genitive (that is, to indicate that, in some respect, “this is of that”).

Though the Concordant Version sometimes renders the genitive as an adjective (e.g., “His messengers of-power” as “His powerful messengers,” 2 Thess.1:7), otherwise, the CV nearly always represents the genitive case by the English “of.”

The genitive case is the case of genus or kind. It is the specifying case; the case of appurtenance. The function of the genitive is largely adjectival (e.g., “the day of preparation,” was the preparation day; Luke 23:54). Indeed, the Concordant Version renders “[after] the exile of-BABYLON,” as “[after] the Babylonian exile” (Matt.1:12). Similarly, “the blasphemy of the spirit” (Matt.12:31), in the Greek syntax, is “THE . . . OF THE spirit blasphemy.”

The usual claim, however, is that the genitive “of-Christ faith” is nonetheless translated true to sense as “faith in Christ,” since, we are told, this phrase is an “objective genitive.” It is said that as the phrase “faith of God” in Mark 11:22 concerns man’s faith God-ward, the Pauline phrase “faith of Christ” concerns man’s faith Christ-ward.

The answer to this, of course, is that it does not follow that if, in the nature of the case, “faith of God” in the preceding text involves man’s faith God-ward, “faith of Christ”...
as Paul uses this expression, refers to man’s faith Christward. By such faulty logic as this, nearly anything can be “proved.” Yet beyond such fallacious arguments, there is little to commend the claim that “faith of Christ” means man’s faith in Christ.

In fact, the main reason for the acceptance of this interpretation (which is made a part of the translation itself in most modern Bibles) is the age-old tradition that affirms that one is saved by his own believing. Such a notion is then read into the text. In turn, it is further claimed that through such very passages, Paul himself sets forth the self-same teaching. Thus, through such circular reasoning, the rendering “faith in Christ” is justified by its advocates.

All that the Greek says is: of-Christ faith; that is, faith that, in some respect, has reference, or relates to Christ. The translation “faith in Christ,” then, is not really a translation at all, but an interpretation. And, as popularly understood, it is certainly a mistaken interpretation as well.

Even on grammatical grounds the case here for an “objective” genitive (i.e., for a faith that is directed Christward) is very weak. Yet if one insists on such an interpretation, it would then become necessary to refer this “faith in Christ” to God, not to man, in order for this expression to accord with the evangel itself, the revelation that justification is gratuitous and in grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus.

In the Pauline epistles, apart from the disputed cases in which the genitive is “Christ” or its equivalent, in every case (approximately twenty-four instances) in which “faith” is followed by a proper noun or pronoun in the genitive case, the genitive is unmistakably subjective. Twenty instances refer to the faith of believers; one to the faith of anyone who believes; two to the faith of Abraham; and one to the faithfulness of God.

When Paul wishes to speak of the believer’s faith in (i.e., “into”) Christ, he does so not by means of a genitive noun apart from a preposition, but by means of an accusative (i.e., objective) noun together with an accusative preposition: “... rejoicing and observing your order and the stability of your faith in (i.e., “into”) Christ” (Col.2:5).

A parallel expression to the faith of Christ, is that of the grace of Christ: “grace which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ” (Rom.5:15). It would never occur to anyone to translate this text as “grace in Christ,” much less to claim that it speaks of the believer’s grace! Yet the only real difference between the genitive “of Christ” here and those which we have considered elsewhere, is that here the phrase is appended as a modifier of grace, while in the others (as in Galatians 2:20) the same phrase functions as a modifier of faith.

Similarly, just as Romans 3:3 speaks of “the faithfulness of God,” Romans 3:22, 26 speaks of the “faithfulness of Jesus Christ,” the “faithfulness of Jesus.” Further, the phrase “the faith of Abraham” in Romans 4:16 forms a precise formal parallel to the phrase “the faith of Jesus” in Romans 3:26. Thus, as these parallels between the faith of Abraham and the faith of Christ make clear, “the faith of Christ” refers to His faithful obedience unto death; our Lord’s trust in God concerning the cross.

The very notion that those texts which say “faith of Christ” nonetheless have in view faith in Christ—namely the believer’s own faith in Christ—is but the stepchild of the long-standing tradition that affirms that “justification by faith” means man’s justification not by his performing works of law, but by his acceptance of Christ and assenting to faith in Him. The idea is that man saves himself, or if it is preferred, qualifies for God to save him, not by a former method, that of performing righteous deeds, but by a new method, that of acquiescing in faith.

Traditional theology is not merely saying that salvation comes upon believing in Christ, and not apart from or
prior to. What it is also saying (even if more implicitly than explicitly) is that salvation is of the nature of an exchange, a reward, requital, or compensation. When preachers say that salvation is "by faith [i.e., man's faith]," they are using "by" in a transactional sense, according to the meeting of a requirement (as in, "by doing your work, you are entitled to your wages").

The phrase faith of Christ, however, is parallel to and must agree with the essence of the evangel itself, the revelation that we are "being justified gratuitously in [God's] grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus" (Rom.3:24). The deliverance is not said to be through our faith in Christ Jesus, but through Christ Jesus Himself. Similarly, it is not revealed that we were conciliated to God through our faith in the death of His Son, but that we were conciliated to God through the death of His Son (Rom.5:10). Further, it will not do to attempt to avoid this truth by artfully claiming that while this is so, it is only so on the "condition" (i.e., based upon a requirement) that we accept and believe on Christ. Any such claim is spurious; for we are not justified on a "conditional" basis that we meet some sort of requirement. Instead, we are justified apart from law, on a gratuitous and gracious basis, which precludes any and all requirements.

Therefore, all passages which declaim "the faith of Jesus Christ," out of which we are justified, must be understood to be referring to a faith which is His own: Christ's own perfect faith—not man's faulty faith in Him.

Of course we ourselves can only speak of our justification by means of our own faith, since it is by faith that we apprehend what God has achieved through the work of the cross, even as what He will yet achieve in the eons ahead, when His promises are fulfilled. Still, the saint's own faith only gains for him a recognition of the justification which God has already established for him—through the faith of Christ (cf Rom.4:25,5:1; 5:9).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reliance on the Living God

THE DEITY OF GOD

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

THE POTENCY OF TRUTH

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

There is no truth so potent as that of Colossians 1:20 in reaching those whom the traditional teaching has failed to touch. Nothing is so powerful in the case of the open infidel. Much of the gospel effort of today has lost its vitality and knows little of God’s sovereign grace. God grant that there may be a little reviving and that the recovery of these precious truths may rekindle the zeal of many, for the furtherance of the gospel!
The peace of God, which is superior to every frame of mind, should preside in the hearts of all who have grasped the glories and grandeur of our God, especially those who acknowledge Him as the only Creator and Reconciler of the universe. He commenced all, and He can bring it to its consummation. But, more than this, all is not only out of Him and for Him, but it is also through Him. Not only the past and the future, but the present is His concern. He is not unmindful of the stress and strain, the sorrow and the sighing, the confusion and the conflict which surround us now. Let us not be moved by these things, as though the reins had dropped from His hands, or His heart felt no concern in the tiny tribulations of this nether scene.

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

We have our trials in fellowship with those whom God has called out of the world. In some countries, many have lost their very lives merely because they belonged to Him. Many a believer in other lands has had to suffer severely in seeking to gain a livelihood. Even in so-called Christian lands the strife in the nominal churches, or between the church and state, has led to much unrest.

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

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

We are reminded of the sons of Israel in Egypt, when Moses and Aaron came to lead them out. What was the first effect? Because they demanded that the people leave Egypt to worship Yahweh in the wilderness, Pharaoh increased their burdens, and they had to rake together their own straw for the bricks they made. Their superintendents were smitten, and they went to Pharaoh, without avail. Then they encountered Moses and said to him,
“May Yahweh see you, and may He judge, since you have caused our scent to stink in the eyes of Pharaoh” (Ex.5:21).

Poor Moses, he was a trouble maker. Most of us can sympathize with him. So he went to Yahweh and said, “Yahweh, why have You done evil to this people? And why is this that You have sent me?” (5:22).

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

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

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

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

Peace is to be found only in God. He is the only stable and immovable point in the universe. Yet it is possible for all to be at peace in Him. As sinners we received peace with God through the blood of Christ. As saints it is our privilege to go far beyond this, and to enjoy the peace of God. God is not worried as to the outcome of His eonian travail with His creatures. He knows all beforehand. But both is because every single detail of the present is not only within His control, but it fulfills its microscopic mission in preparing for and bringing about the grand consummation He has in view. That will be a time of perfect peace, but it could never be enjoyed or appreciated without the preceding panic of the present. Israel must suffer in Egypt before she can sing on the shores of the Red Sea. And God could dwell among them only as among a redeemed race.
May the peace of God preside in our hearts, not in spite of the unrest in the world and the strife among the saints, but because of it! The God out of Whom all is, and into Whom all tends, now operates all, and especially the evil, so that, in the consummation, His creatures will know good because of their experience of evil and will be able to praise and adore Him in a degree worthy of His Name and satisfying to His heart. Let us live in the realization that all is through Him now. Only thus may we really share God's own peace—the peace of God.

OUT AND THROUGH AND FOR

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

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

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

THANKING GOD

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

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

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

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

A.E.K.

“He Shall Save His People”

SALVATION AND JUDGMENT IN THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

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

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

THE PROMISE OF SALVATION

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

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

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

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

**HIS PEOPLE**

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

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

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

**SAVED FROM SINS**

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

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

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

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

COMMANDS, WARNINGS AND JUDGMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Now if the blind should be guiding the blind, both shall be falling into a pit” (Matt.15:14).
For whosoever may be wanting to save his soul shall be destroying it. Yet whoever should be destroying his soul on My account shall be finding it” (Matt.16:25).

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE SAVIOUR

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

It has been shown in chapters 3 through 25 that God’s people Israel are sinners and need to be saved from their sins. Matthew 26 and 27 make this indisputable. But also, anticipating what is revealed later, this darkest of all events recorded in this book becomes the basis for the full and glorious realization of 1:21.

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

THE TEACHING OF EVERLASTING HELL

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

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

Is it possible that One Who came to save sinners should end up saving but a few and becoming the great Stumbling
Stone for the rest to their eternal condemnation? All His roles, as Judge, as Condemner, even as Stumbling Stone (cf Rom.9:32,33), can only serve to the end of His manifestation as the Saviour.

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

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

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

D.H.H.

(To be continued)

Note: We always regret typographical errors that are missed in proofreading, but one in the July issue calls for special mention. Please change the word “Uncircumcision” to “Circumcision” on page 170, line 10.
him somewhere, for a period of unspecified duration, He therefore doubtlessly transferred him into the celestial realms themselves, so that he might remain in the divine presence even unto today.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

J.R.C.
A WITNESS IN THE HEAVENS

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

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

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

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

15 *Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, *saying:
2 Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge?
* Or should he fill his belly with the east wind?
3 Ought he to plead with speech that is unprofitable,
And with declarations that have no benefit in them?
4 Yet you, indeed you quash devout fear,
And you deprecate pious meditation before El.
5 For your depravity trains your mouth,
So *that you choose the tongue of the crafty.
6 Your own mouth condemns you, * not I,
And your lips *answer against you.
7 Are you the first human ever born?
* Were you travailed in birth before the hills?
8 Do you hear the deliberation of Eloah,
* Or do you hold a monopoly for yourself on wisdom?
9 What do you know *that we do not know,
Or *understand, and it is not with us?
10 Among us are *both the greyhaired
And hoary headed,
More abundant in days than your father.
11 Are the consolations of El a little thing for you,
* Or the word *gently shared with you?
12 *Why does your heart *take you away,
And *why do your eyes *scowl,
That you should reverse your spirit *against El
And *send forth these declarations from your mouth?
13 What is a mortal that he should be cleared,
* Or that one born of a woman should be justified?
he should be cleared, or that one born of a woman should be justified” (15:14). Looking at Job, Eliphaz says in effect, “Job, you are abhorrent and spoiled and are drinking iniquity like water” (v.16).

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

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

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

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

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

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**Job 15:15-15:28**

15 If even ‘on His holy ones, He ‘puts no’ reliance, And the heavens are not purged in His eyes, How much less ‘man, Who is abhorrent and spoiled, Who is drinking iniquity like water.

16 I shall disclose it to you; hear ‘me; + This which I have perceived, + let me ‘recount it, That which the wise can’t tell, And they suppressed nothing received from their fathers,

17 (To them, to them alone was given the countryside, And no ‘alien’ passed in their midst):

18 All the days of the wicked man, he is travailing, +Even throughout the number of years that are stored up for the terrifier.

19 The sound of alarming things is in his ears; ‘When at peace, the devastator’ comes against him.

20 He cannot believe in restoration from darkness, And he must be on watch for the sword.

21 He is wandering about as bread for the falcon; He knows that the day of darkness is ready at hand.

22 Frightening him are distress and constraint; It shall overpower him like a king equipped for onslaught.

23 For he has stretched his hand out ‘against El, And he makes himself an arrogant ‘master ‘against Him Who-Suffices.

24 He ‘runs ‘against Him ‘with neck armor, ‘With his thickly bossed shields.

25 ‘Indeed he has covered his face ‘with his fat, And he ‘gathers fat pads on his hips.

26 ‘Yet he shall tabernacle in suppressed cities, Houses ‘in which no’ one shall later dwell, “That are destined to become mounds.

15:23 7-- for the falcon: MT where is it?
that corresponds with the sufferings of obviously wicked human beings in the world of his day. To leave God out of the picture in Job's misery and to focus alone on the human dimension (as we call it today) is cruel to Job and fatal to any understanding of God.

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

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

**JOB ANSWERS ELIPHAZ**

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

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

**Job 15:29-16:6**

29 He shall not be enriched; + His estate shall not rise, And his shadow shall not stretch out over the earth.  
30 He shall not be taken away from darkness; The blaze shall dry up his young shoot, And his bud shall be taken away by the wind.  
31 Let him not rely on futility; He will be led astray, For his "palm tree" shall become futility.  
32 When not yet its day, it shall be 'snipped off"; And its fronds shall not be flourishing.  
33 Like a vine he shall cast down his unripe grape, And he shall fling off his blossom like an olive.  
34 For the congregation of the polluted is stark, And fire devours the tents of bribery.  
35 They engender - misery and beget - lawlessness, And their belly, it prepares deceit.

16 *So Job answered, * saying:  
2 I have heard many things like these; Miserable comforters are you all.  
3 Will there be an end to such windy words? Or what is so painful to you that you should answer?  
4 I myself also could speak like you; O that your soul were in the place of my soul: I would indeed join declarations together against you, And I would indeed wag my head over you.  
5 I could make you resolute with my mouth, And the condolence of my lips would keep back grief.  
6 If I do speak, my pain is not being kept back, *Yet when I do forbear, what pain is going away from me? "

15:29 ~ his shadow; 15:35 ~ their.  
15:32 ~ snipped off; 15:35 ~ filled.
nature of his experience Job has an advantage over his associates. Job knows his severe agony is something unique and traceable only to the Supreme, and so he is forced to direct his thoughts of God who is ultimately responsible for his sufferings as well as the desolating effects of Job’s company (v.7).

WITNESS AGAINST JOB

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

With words similar to Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53, and thus foreshadowing the agonies of the cross, Job speaks of his sufferings and traces them in no uncertain terms to Deity. “He thrusts through my kidneys and does not spare... He breaches me, breach adjoining breach...” (16:13,14). In this Job is not saying that his sufferings testify “against” God rather than against himself, but God is their Source, and that must not be papered over. As for Job, his own testimony is clear. He is full of sorrow and in dark despair (16:15,16), but he has not committed violence, and his pleas are spotless (v.17).

A WITNESS FOR JOB

Is there no one to take Job’s part? Is there no one to testify on behalf of this man named “Enemy,” who keeps
The answer is bold and resounding: “Even now, behold, my Witness is in the heavens, and my Guarantor is in the heights” (Job 16:19).

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

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

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

SURETY FOR JOB

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

My associates are my mockers;
My eye weeps forth to Eloah;
+That He may plead ‘between a master and Eloah,
+As between a son of humanity and his associate.

For the years few in number have ‘arrived,
And I shall go on the path where I shall not return.

My spirit is devitalized;
My days are extinct;
The tombs are ready for me.

My spirit is devitalized;
My days are extinct;
The tombs are ready for me.

Assuredly, captious men are all ‘around me,
And my eye ‘lodges all night ‘upon their bitterness.

Lay down, I pray, ‘surety for me’ with Yourself;
‘Who is he that would ‘clasp my hand in pledge?’

For You have secluded their heart from intelligence;
Therefore, You shall not exalt them.

Such a one ‘denounces his associates for a portion,
+While the eyes of his own sons are all ‘failing.

+ He has put me down ‘as a proverb to the people,
So ‘that I become one spit at to the face.

+ My eye grows ‘dim from vexation,
And my features, all of them, are like a shadow.

Upright men are ‘appalled ‘at this,
And the innocent man ‘rouses himself ‘against the polluted man,
+But the righteous one ‘holds to his way,
And the one of clean hands ‘continues in resoluteness.

+ Nevertheless, all of ‘you,’
+ ‘come forward ‘again, I pray;
+ ‘Though I shall not find a wise man ‘among you.

My days have passed;
My plans are pulled apart,
Even the ‘proposal’ of my heart.

17:9 ~c surety for me; MT be my surety.
17:10 M—c you; Hb them.
17:11 ~c proposal; Hb tenancies.
§12 They £convert night into day,
Making light seem near in the face of darkness.
§13 $Since I expect the unseen as my house,
I will strew out my berth in darkness;
§14 I will call out to the grave, My father are you,
To the maggot, My mother and my sister.
§15 + Where indeed is my expectation?
And §my good hope, $who shall regard it?
§16 Shall they descend &by my side~Q to the unseen,
&or will our rest be together on in the soil?

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

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

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

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

D.H.H.
“THROUGH THE FAITH OF CHRIST”  
(Galatians 2:15-21)

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

(2:15,16)

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

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

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

Such ones, then, may “also” believe “into Christ Jesus”—thus to restate the case more positively and boldly—that (1) they may be justified by the faith of Christ; and (2) not by works of law, seeing that, according as it is written, “no living one at all can be righteous before [God]” (cit. Psa. 143:2; cp Rom.3:20).

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

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

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

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

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

“NOT BY WORKS OF LAW”

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

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

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

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

God is our Justifier

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

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

JUSTIFYING THE IRREVERENT

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

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

In the anticipatory sense, God justifies us through Christ, thus, even now, calling what is not as if it were, because, in that day, the day of Christ’s glorious advent, we will then actually be constituted just. Then, we will be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom.8:29). In the day of our vivification, we will enjoy immortality and incorruption, even
as great power and glory (1 Cor.15:42,43). We are awaiting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory (Phil.3:20,21). Surely, then, in an anticipatory sense as well, it should not surprise us that, even today, God already declares us righteous.

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

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

**LIVING UNTO GOD**

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

Though a trivial act in itself, Cephas' refusal to eat with those of the nations (2:12), was fraught with serious consequences. Thus he affirmed that the uncircumcised believers were “common and unclean” (cp Acts 10:28; 11:3), and set up again the barrier of law. If we should put ourselves under law, by claiming that this is what Christ would have us do, we imply that, effectually, He is the dispenser of sin.
ments [of the law] also.” The essential meaning of the law (love for God and then for our fellow humans) is observed by those who are “living in spirit” (which means living in accord with the evangel; cf Gal.3:5).

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

“Our sins have been died for, “that we should be living to God.” Our living to God depends upon our having died to

Righteousness through Grace

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

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

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

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

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

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

Forgetting the Things Behind

“BE CONCILIATED TO GOD!”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Yet this does not invalidate our pre-expectancy. Under the law, and even in the Circumcision evangel, some response is necessary, or the blessing is withdrawn. Not so in grace, apart from law. Grace operates even better in the midst of failure and opposition than otherwise, for these provide a background for its display.”

“Too good to be true!”

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

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

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

A great deal has been written concerning the love of God. Well might the apostle Paul stress the paramount grandeur of love. Above all else this deep, unchanging
affect the Creator for His creatures is such, that He yearns toward us and provides us with the most gracious means of comprehending the nature of this love, by granting the tenderness and intimate relationships of parent and offspring. Hence He presents Himself as Father for all the vast numbers of His children. Shall He casually lose one, even one? Would we? Is there any real offense which would irrevocably turn us away from our own beloved?

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

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

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

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

Donald Fielding

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EDITORIAL

With thanksgiving we complete another volume of Unsearchable Riches, in which we have endeavored to witness to the evangel of the grace of Christ and the glories of His God and Father. No doubt our readers will agree with us that no experience in this life gives strength, satisfaction and encouragement like spending time in meditating on God's Word and sharing the good news with others, whether by speaking or writing, whether privately in conversation or letter, or publicly in gatherings or publications such as this.

This is because God's spirit invigorates us through His tidings (see Brother Coram’s comments on pages 257-262). Especially the evangel revealed to Paul and preserved for us in his epistles works continually in those who are believing, bearing the fruit of the spirit in their lives (Gal.5:22,23). But all of God's Word from Genesis to Job to Matthew to Revelation is beneficial for equipping us for good acts (2 Tim.3:16,17).

To be sure, as Brother A. E. Knoch testifies (see pages 243-250), there is a conflict between human thinking and God's declarations. We feel that God could not really have created evil, but God says He does (Isa.45:7). We are fearful that the evangel of grace will break down restraints on human wickedness, but God tells us it is His power for salvation (Rom.1:16). We reason that God's operations of judgment and condemnation are ends in themselves, but God speaks of His delight to bring all into reconciliation through the blood of Christ's cross (Eph.1:10; Col.1:20).
What a joy and genuine source of spiritual invigoration there is in discarding the idea of an everlasting hell and accepting the truth that “God has a goal. He intends to become All in all” (p.246).

This, in turn helps us to distinguish between the process and the goal (p.246). So many apparent contradictions in Scripture and controversies concerning fundamental issues are resolved by this principle, as illustrated in our series on Galatians and Job and Matthew.

“God is our all, in things great and small” (p.250). The great fact of human stubbornness, and all the myriad, little expressions of this stubbornness in individual lives, was the background that led Paul to exclaim with praise that all is out of God and through Him and for Him (Rom. 11:36). This is what Job also was struggling to see in the midst of his massive affliction and loss. Human wisdom, as voiced by Job’s associates, which would distance God from such evils (except as expressions of His judgments) only increases despair (see pages 277-287).

The full realization of God as our all is still ahead. But in His grace there is movement toward this goal in our experience as believers. Regarding our faith and walk in faith, Brother Fielding writes, “There is a pattern here that is shared by us all. There is a progression” (p.271). Although such progress is often uneven, and in some instances seemingly truncated altogether, yet God is faithful, and the more we focus on Him as the living God, out of Whom all is, the more our present way will partake of the spirit of the goal.

As we grow in the realization of God we grow out of discouragement and despair. And as we hold fast to the evangel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we lose our grip on anxiety and fear. “Now to our God and Father be glory for the eons of the eons! Amen!” (Col.4:20).

D.H.H.
texts in the Word which made me uncomfortable. I knew
the so-called “explanations,” but they appeared to be only
a form of unbelief.

The salvation of all troubled me from the very first. The
Brethren changed God’s will: all men to be saved, to God’s
wishes, but my concordance showed me that it was the
Brethren who wished it so, not God. He works all things
according to the counsel of His will. They also altered “the
Saviour of all” to “the Preserver of all.” Since it was nec-
essary for them to corrupt God’s Word on this theme it
was clear that they did not have the truth. Romans five
and First Corinthians fifteen and Colossians one con-
tained statements which I could not believe because they
contradicted many other passages dealing with the fate
of unbelievers. It was only after the truth as to the eonian
times was opened up to me that I was able to exult in their
glorious unfoldings.

I now found myself able to accept and approve of those
statements in the Bible which stumble so many saints,
and cause so much unbelief, which may be concentrated
in the one case of Pharaoh. God hardened his heart, and
will judge him for doing that which he was forced to do.
Is this right?

Not only that, but God was greatly glorified by Pha-
raoh’s opposition. How can He judge him? A believer
in eternal torment finds it impossible to charge God with
such an atrocity, and refuses to believe it, or “explains” it
away. But once we see God’s ultimate and that judgment,
in God’s Word, sets matters right, all is clear and accept-
able. God’s glory demands expression. Pharaoh, earth’s
highest, is the best means. He is too soft, so he must be
hardened. Eventually, at the consummation, he will be
reconciled. But that is not possible until he has realized
the enormity of his sins, and suffered their just penalty,
set by God Who is just, not vindictive.

But even then I was not satisfied. There were still pas-
sages in God’s Word which did not receive my hearty acqui-
escence. I had a horror of implicating God in sin, so how
could I echo the apostle’s words “all is out of Him” (Rom.
11:36)? All out of Him—the evil, the misery, the opposition
to His will? Yet the passage itself insists that He locks up
all in stubbornness (Rom.11:32). Other passages, such as
the sixth of Isaiah, boldly tell us that He blinds men’s eyes
so that they cannot see. Pharaoh’s is no isolated case. It is
very evident that God uses these things in order that His
glory may be manifested. Is it then God’s will that men
should sin? That cannot be. What is sin?

Once I found out that sin is failure, I saw that I had
been making God the greatest of all sinners, so long as I
believed that He could not save all, or that He had not
been able to keep sin out of the universe, or that it was
contrary to His purpose. Failure is sin, and if we imagine
that God has failed in any particular we make Him the
Sinner of sinners. God will not fail, and has not failed.

The first thought which came to me then was, “shall we,
then, do evil that good may come?” Never! But immedi-
ately I was reminded that this is the very charge that was
hurled at Paul! Could there be any better proof that I was
on the right track?

God does evil that good may come, for
He is wise and powerful and loving. But men are foolish
and weak and hateful, so cannot use evil, except in the
most limited degree. A father may be trusted to put his
child’s finger near enough to the hot stove so as to teach
it to fear the fire, for he loves the child. Otherwise it is a
most dangerous and erroneous doctrine. But God is not a
man. That is the trouble with theology. It is always deify-
ing man and humanizing God.

So it was that I arrived at my goal: to believe all of God’s
Word and to suffer persecution like Paul. He was falsely
charged with teaching men to do evil (Rom.3:5-8), and he
The Process is Temporary

was reproached for saying that God is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10).

But, above all, I now have a real God, Whom I can worship and adore without the least reservation. He harms, but He heals, and both together, the harming as well as the healing, is a blessing to His creatures as well as a glory to Himself.

It is our object to lead our readers to this same goal, where they can accept all of God’s words and give Him all the adoration of their hearts.

THE PROCESS AND THE GOAL

God has a goal. He intends to become All in all His creatures (1 Cor.15:28). He will accomplish this by way of reconciling all His enemies by the blood of Christ’s cross, by justifying, vivifying, and saving all mankind at the consummation (Col.1:20; Rom.5:18; 1 Cor.15:22; 1 Tim.2:4; 4:10). But before this there is a long and painful preparatory process, a weary way which leads His creatures to this consummation, much of which seems as dark and distressing as the goal is bright and filled with blessing.

Almost all of us are short-sighted. We see a part of the way but we do not see the end. We confuse the going with the goal. Our Bible translations are partly to blame, for they fail to clearly mark the fleeting nature of the process, as it is in the original languages. And if an honest attempt is made to carry this across in a concordant version, it clashes with our conventions and our hard hearts. God grant that we may faithfully witness, in our renderings, when God reveals an absolute fact concerning God and His purpose, and when it is only a temporary process, for this He has clearly indicated in the ancient manuscripts.

Judgment is God’s strange work. He uses it on the way.

Men make it the end. No matter how an unbeliever is dealt with, whether he dies as a result of sin, or by the direct intervention of God, whether he be cast into outer darkness or into Gehenna, this is not his end. All who do not belong to Christ will be roused from the dead and judged before the great white throne. There they are not forgiven, or saved, but judged. But this is not their end. All these will be cast into the lake of fire, to suffer the second death. Even this is not their end. God does not reach His goal in any of His disciplinary measures. These only prepare His creatures for it. Let us not confuse the going with the goal.

Very little is said to us about God’s goal until Paul completes the orbit of God’s Word with his later revelations. Hints there have always been by which hearts in tune with God have been filled with high hopes. But it is not until the meridian sun of God’s grace has come from behind the clouds of sin and law, to reveal the deepest recesses of God’s immanent love to the most undeserving of the race, it is not until the truth for the present was made known that God tore aside the veil of the future completely, and gave us an unclouded view of His ultimate. Once we revel in this we will never go back to previous revelation on this theme, for like the curtain of the tabernacle, it seems to hide, rather than reveal the full blaze of the Shekinah glory.

The usual way is to view the goal in the darkness of the way. We go back to passages which deal with judgments and allow them to throw their dark shadows across the consummation. We should believe that God will justify all mankind (Rom.5:18), and view the previous judgments in the light of this final achievement. We bring up passages which tell of death, to darken God’s declaration that it will be abolished. We should believe that God will make death inoperative at the last, and view the previous passages in this glorious light. We turn to tests which prove that unbelievers will be lost or destroyed, and, with these
Reconciliation Follows Estrangement

passages, dim the great declaration that God wills the salvation of all. We should illumine them with the later and higher revelation. We find God’s enemies in the fiery lake at what seems to be the close of revelation, and misuse this fact to deny God’s declaration that all will be reconciled (Col.1:20). We should not take one to destroy the other, but believe both, for reconciliation follows estrangement, and it alone accords with God’s final goal.

How perverse and blind have we often been! When God says all, we have said some. When God speaks of a very small fraction of mankind, such as the living nations who stand before Christ to be judged according to their treatment of Israel (cf Matt.25:31-46)—a mere handful as compared with all mankind—then we make their sentence hopeless and extend it to all! Faith has almost fled from the earth. What calls itself faith is mostly a masquerade, for it refuses God’s Word for the traditions of men, yet insists that it is genuine.

Let us allow the light of the latest revelation to illumine the earlier, partial unfolding, and let us not use the earlier to eclipse the latest, the highest, and the only complete unveiling of God’s mind and heart.

Why should we be Jonahs, sitting under our withered gourd, furious because God does not fulfill the word which we have proclaimed. What about the truthfulness of God’s Word? Must it not be upheld? Would it not make God a liar if He repented and did not overturn Nineveh in forty days? The idea that God has a heart as well as a mouth, and had compassion on the creatures He has made was heresy in Jonah’s eyes. Are we not far worse than Jonah? He actually had to take back God’s express declaration. We need only retract our own false inferences from it, dictated by the heart altogether out of harmony with His loving goal, which our dim eyes have failed to discern, even though it is written in letters of gold across the horizon of the far off future, and is clearly visible to every heart which has been humbled by His grace, and which beats in unison with His love. God grant that we are no Jonahs!

GOD ALL IN US

Most delightful is it to contemplate that distant day when God will be All in all. Because of the unbelief of Christendom we are prone to emphasize the second all, and rightly insist that it admits of no exceptions. Every creature of His hand will then be close to His heart. Yet we should not confine our contemplations to the number alone, but also maintain the full meaning of the first All. God will not occupy a small fraction of our lives, nor even half or three-fourths. He will be everything to us. There will be nothing in our experience that will not be divine. Every occurrence, each incident, large or small, important or trivial, will come to us consciously as a gratuitu given by God, and it will bring a constant response of adoring worship.

GOD SOMETHING IN ALL

Perhaps it would not be too much to say that God is something in everyone in this life. Even the unbeliever and the atheist, especially in their earlier years, have at least a tinge of God-consciousness, especially when overwhelmed with sudden terror or dismay. But it is not until He reveals Himself to His chosen, that they begin to realize the part He plays in their lives, and that He becomes the focus of their consciousness. At first this may be very weak, but, as they become mature, He takes a larger and larger place in their experience. The heathen have idols made by human hands. Let us beware lest we also worship a deity who is not and will not be our all, made by human hands.
Salvation is All of God

GOD ALL IN SALVATION

In these days the standard question which is pressed upon the unbeliever is, “What must I do to be saved?” This leaves the impression that the sinner must have a hand in his salvation. He must repent, or reform, or join the church. Even Paul’s reply to the Philippian warden, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved…” (Acts 16:31) is distorted, as though it were a meritorious deed, when, in fact, it is of faith that it may accord with grace, not with works (Rom.4:16). And the faith is that of God’s chosen (Titus 1:1). Salvation is all of God. It begins with His choice before the disruption (Eph.1:4), which eventuates in His call and justification and glorification (Rom.8:30). Nothing is left to us. He alone gave His Son, the sacrifice that saves. May we add nothing to it!

GOD ALL IN LIFE

But the believer need not wait until that day. As he matures he will gradually realize that God is All to him now. At first he seeks to inject himself and his will, and the unknown god of chance into the affairs of life. Then he begins to see that God is in all the great crises, the important decisions. But finally he wakes to the fact that everything, no matter what its size or duration, is under God’s control. All space and that which fills it is subject to the Great Disposer. All time and every event that occurs in it is planned and put in its appearance when God wills. God is our all, in things great and small! So we anticipate the glorious goal to which He is guiding His universe. May this be the precious portion of all who have partaken of His peace!

A. E. Knoch

The preceding studies are adapted from three editorials appearing in Unsearchable Riches, vol.24, pp.65-69; vol.26, pp.131-134; and vol.42, pp.225,226.

Studies in Galatians

O FOOLISH GALATIANS!
(Galatians 3:1-9)

O foolish Galatians! (3:1a)

It is only because of the extremity of the Galatians’ error in their repudiation of the grace of God (cf 2:21), that the apostle is led to speak thus, explicitly declaring unto the Galatians that in respect of their repudiation of divine grace they are foolish indeed.

By his explicit characterization of the Galatians as “foolish,” Paul was prepared to risk initial offense for the sake of eventual good; the eventual good that would come whenever the Lord Himself (cp 5:10a; Rom.14:4c), through these very words of Paul’s, would bring the Galatians to a realization of the truth.

It has been the part of inspiration as well for Paul to speak thus, in consideration of the needs of every believer, down the centuries, whom God would enlighten in the truth of the evangel. Often, that we might truly acquire wisdom, it is needful for us to know not only that of which it consists, but that of which it does not consist.

It is not that Paul’s appraisal of the Galatians as “foolish” was inaccurate; nor can we charge him with having overstated the case. It is only that, for so long as one remains foolish, he cannot be expected to respond favorably to any true appraisal of his condition.

It is to be regretted that in everyday speech the word “foolish” is usually used connotatively, in a disparaging or demeaning sense. It is often a term of belittlement or ridicule. Indeed, it is in a consideration of this common usage
Deficiency in Judgment, of “foolish,” together with an awareness that we do well not to demean or ridicule others, that we hesitate to speak at all of others as being foolish.

The primary definition of “fool,” however, is “One who is deficient in judgment, sense, or understanding”; likewise, a “foolish” thought or deed, is one “Having or resulting from poor judgment; unwise.” This accords with the Greek term for “foolish,” anoēton, the elements of which signify “un-minded” (i.e., “thoughtless, in the sense of deficiency of proper thought). Any secondary or tertiary definitions of foolish such as “ridiculous” or “gullible,” not to mention connotations of derision, denigration, or scorn, are not the essential meaning of either “fool” or “foolish.”

It is true that we do well to minimize both our declarations and thoughts in consideration of such ideas as those which these lesser definitions of “foolish,” and especially their connotations, call to mind. But it is also true that we do well to note, whether in ourselves or others, that which constitutes deficiency in judgment, sense, or understanding, especially where the measure of that deficiency is extensive.

All such deficiency is “foolishness”; it is a deficiency of wisdom, which is the highest and best application of knowledge. Since it is impossible to know what is wise apart from a knowledge as well of that which precludes wisdom, it is vital that we be mindful not only of that which is wise, but also of that which is foolish. Those who are foolish, are those who engage in that which is foolish; in that which is marked by deficiency in judgment, sense, or understanding. To imagine that it is the sine qua non of love to avoid appraising others as foolish even where this is the case, is itself a foolish notion.

2. i.e., indispensable condition or element; Latin: “without which not.”

It is rather that, as a rule, it is the sine qua non of prudence not to inform a fool of his foolishness. This is because, “The foolish despise wisdom and discipline” (Prov.1:7); and, because “The way of a fool seems upright in his own eyes” (Prov.12:15). “Wisdom is too high for the fool” (Prov.24:7). Indeed, “Though you bray the fool in a mortar, in the midst of the grist with a pestle, his folly shall not go away from him” (Prov.27:22). Accordingly, then, “Let a bereaved bear encounter a man, but certainly not a stupid [i.e., undiscerning] person in his folly” (Prov.17:12).

“JUSTIFIED IN HIS BLOOD”

Who bewitches you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was graphically crucified? (3:1b)

“Who” is the indefinite pronoun, tis, signifying ANY. When possible, the Concordant Version seeks to preserve its indefiniteness by rendering it any, some, or certain. Idiomatically, however, it must often be rendered who, whose, which, what, why, or with negatives, one. Paul’s point, then, was not to inquire specifically as to just who it was who had bewitched them; nor does he seek to elicit just what particular means any such ones had used unto this end. His point is rather—since it was evident that they had become bewitched—that something must have bewitched them. This sense, stated as a rhetorical question, may be expressed thus: “[In light of your profound withdrawal from the faith,] is there not something that bewitches you—before whose eyes Jesus Christ was graphically crucified?”

“Graphically” is an idiomatic variant of prographo (before-write), which literally means, “write before” (e.g., Eph.3:3). Paul had “written before” the mind’s eye of every one of the Galatians that Christ had died for their sakes, and that—in the bloody death of His crucifixion—they were now justified (cp Rom.5:8,9). It was ever the burden of Paul’s
Paul Proclaimed God’s Purpose in

ministry to declaim the word recorded in Romans 8:32, which is: “Surely He Who spares not His own Son, but
gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be gracious granting us all?”

This is the truth which Paul vividly outlined and clearly set forth concerning “Christ crucified,” graphically present-
ing it before the eyes of the Galatians. It is not at all that
he denied the horror of the cross or sought to minimize it,
but that he did not specifically rehearse the details of its
terror. Much less did he employ any account of our Lord’s
sufferings merely to evoke the maudlin, thus stirring the
emotions while leaving the intellect quiescent, specifically
in the knowledge of the evangel itself.

“The phrase ‘openly set forth’ [ASV; ‘graphically,’ CV] is
regarded by some as proof of the oratorical ability of the
apostle. He possessed—so we are told—an eloquence which
had at its disposal the whole armory of rhetoric, and he
captured an audience by drawing vivid, impressively real-
istic pictures of the scenes attending the betrayal and
death of our Lord.

“Modern preachers, nursed in the artificial atmosphere
of academic theories, imagine that eloquence, imagination,
descriptive ability, are the most effective weapons of a her-
ald of the cross, and that, equipped with these, the truth is
sure to ride on prosperously from conquest to conquest.

“Imbued with the idea, they strive to fascinate an audi-
ence with animated word pictures of the scenes enacted
in the garden of Gethsemane, the judgment hall of Pilate,
and the hill Golgotha. The audience is spellbound and visi-
bly moved. moist eyes are in evidence everywhere. A sol-
enn hush pervades the room.

“At the conclusion of the service commendatory remarks
flow in profusion. The sermon is unanimously pronounced
‘wonderful.' The congregation disbands and everybody goes
home. By the time the afternoon repast is over, popular

the Death and Resurrection of Christ 255

mood turns to a lighter vein. The effect of the sermon has
worn off. Its elegant style and rhetorical flourishes have
volatilized. Many begin to feel that a visit to the ‘movies’
would fittingly complement the sermon.

“Why has such a seemingly impressive oration failed
to produce a lasting impression? How did it come to
pass that it so readily resolved itself into thin air? Just
because the preacher’s preoccupation with the circum-
stantial events of our Lord’s death prevented his under-
standing its deep purpose and vital import. In divorcing
the external events of our Lord’s passion from the under-
lying purpose, his preaching became sentimental, produc-
ing emotional ebulliences, ecstatic raptures, anomalous
and spectacular experiences, outbursts of gush, while the
intellect remained inactive and the conscience dormant.

The apostle disdained the artifices which form the stock
in trade of professional evangelists and preachers (cp 1 Cor.
2:1-5; 2 Cor.10:10). He never wasted a second in reciting
the chain of circumstantial events which brought about the
death of God’s Son. He pushed his way above and beyond
these. The purpose of God for the universe converging in
the cross of Christ was the one object engaging his mind.
The bearing of the cross on the tremendous questions of
law, sin, life—these were the initial truths which he strove
to impart to his hearers—these were the truths which he
set forth lucidly and convincingly, which he drove home to
the mind by the irresistible power of his logic and burned
into the heart by the consuming passion of his love.

“So powerfully were these truths presented by the apos-
tle and so profoundly did they grip the Galatians, that
they yielded an immediate harvest of precious fruit. So
firmly were they convinced of the truth of the evangel that
their faith weathered the storm of persecution. They suf-
f/r('many things' for truth’s sake. That they should now
remove to a different evangel, and meander in bypaths of
legalism, after so splendid a record, was a strange enigma, a positive ‘marvel,’ which the apostle could only attribute to ‘bewitchment.’”3

Though in Galatians 3:1, “bewitches” is a figure of speech, it is quite an apt metaphor. When believers withdraw from the faith, their situation is not unlike one in which, in certain religions of the world, a “witch” “casts a spell” upon its victim, thus rendering its captive subject to its own wicked behests and sinister designs.

Similarly, the situation that literally obtains in cases in which even believer’s themselves begin to withdraw from the faith, is one in which they now “give heed to deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons, in the hypocrisy of false expressions, their own conscience having been cauterized” (1 Tim.4:1,2).

It is evident that these deceiving spirits themselves are but Satan’s own agents. This is because wherever believers are found “antagonizing” (instead-thru-placing) the words of the apostle Paul, we are to account for this, not by a mere acknowledgement of the infirmity of the flesh, but by recognizing that, at a deeper level, what has occurred is that such ones have fallen into “the trap of the Adversary, having been caught alive by him for that one’s will” (2 Tim.2:24-26).

Paul was mindful that, in our response to such fearful encounters, we must, first of all, “not be fighting”; then, we must rather, “be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with evil, with meekness training those who are antagonizing, seeing whether God may be giving them repentance to come to a realization of the truth (and [whether] they will [then] be sobering up out of the trap of the Adversary, [hitherto] having been caught alive by him for that one’s will)” (2 Tim.2:24-26).


Glad-Tidings of Faith and Joy

**THE SPIRIT’S OWN TESTIMONY**

This only I want to learn from you: Did you get the spirit by works of law or by hearing of faith? So foolish are you? Undertaking in spirit, are you now being completed in flesh? So much did you suffer feignedly? Since, surely, it also is feignedly! (3:2-4)

Paul astutely reduces the dispute between himself and the Galatians to a single issue. The strength of his protest lies in its appeal to the Galatians’ own experience, which they cannot well deny. Yet the success of his argument assumes that they are honest enough to acknowledge the facts, being sensible enough as well to apply them logically.

The Galatians could not honestly deny that they got the spirit through the glad-tidings of faith, not through works of law. Accordingly, they got the spirit of sonship, in which they cried, “Abba, Father!” the spirit itself testifying together with their spirit that they were children of God (cp Rom.8:15,16; Gal.4:6).

The sense of the phrase “So foolish are you?” literally, is “Thus foolish are you?” That is, rhetorically, Paul asks the Galatians, “Are you foolish in the following way?” Namely, he asks them, Are you foolish in such a way so as to be supposing that while, as you yourselves must acknowledge, you have undertaken in spirit, you must now, nevertheless, go on and become completed in flesh?

Having assured them that any such notion is a foolish notion, in a similar vein, Paul then continues on, inquiring, “So much did you suffer feignedly? Since, surely, it also is feignedly!” That is, the Galatians were as aware that they had genuinely obtained the spirit by the tidings of faith, as they were likewise aware that their sufferings for the name of Christ were not a sham but were altogether real. They could not honestly deny the former fact any more than the latter, though to justify their recent apostasy, they would be constrained to deny both of these propositions.
Paul has the Galatians on the horns of a dilemma. Turn which way they will, they simply cannot (1) remain honest, and (2) continue to acknowledge Paul’s authority as an apostle, while at the same time justifying their own departure from his teaching.

When the truth is reduced to a single issue expressed in its simplest form, its acceptance is still dependent upon the integrity and sensibility of those to whom it is presented. Those who will not face the simplest of facts and respond appropriately thereunto, show that, at bottom, their difficulty is not so much intellectual but moral; not so much ignorance as stubbornness. To all that precludes their position, they may indeed interminably continue to respond by the words, “Yes, but.” But what they may no longer do for even an hour, subsequent to such a crisis, is to continue to respond thus out of a clean heart governed by a sound mind.

SOURCED IN TRUTH AND GRACE

Paul is willing to rest his case on this one item of evidence. Verse two (along with its repetition and amplification in verses 5 and 6) is the linchpin of the apostle’s argument, the Galatians’ own experience of having received the spirit. He deems it irrefutable that they got the spirit not ex ergón nomou (“out of acts of law”), but ex akoës pisteōs (“out of hearing [i.e., tidings] of belief [i.e., faith]”).

By the phrases “by works of law” and “by the [tidings] of faith,” we are not to understand two alternative methods of common principle, but two proposed sources of mutually-exclusive, antithetical principle. One is false, the other true, in reference to being that out of which the spirit is obtained.

Paul does not present two alternative means by which man, ultimately by his own efforts, secures his acceptance before God; the one works, the other faith. It is not that one human means of gaining the divine acceptance is now supplanted by another human means of doing the same thing. Even if faith is reduced to acquiescence, assent, or even non-resistance, thus understood, as a human means of gaining God’s acceptance, it retains a meritorious nature evoking reciprocity, to which Righteousness itself must grant its just due. Such a schema merely replaces one system of merit with another. “It simply substitutes the mental act of having faith for the bodily one of being circumcised.”

“Suppose one man to rely on his own faith and another to rely on his own works; then the faith of the one and the works of the other are equally of the same filthy rags.”

This is the whole point: if we are relying on anything of ourselves, whether our works or our faith, we have repudiated grace and are fundamentally mistaken in our understanding of Paul’s evangel.

It is not that the Galatians got the spirit on the basis of a believing act of hearing, even if most suppose this to be so. Such reasoning is based upon the assumption that since “works of law” describes one type of human action, “hearing of faith” must describe some alternative type of human action. This interpretation attributes to Paul the thought: “You got the spirit not because you did X but because you did Y.” Such an understanding, however, is impossible, not because it is simplistic and naïve (though it is certainly both of these), but because it accords with fleshly glory and human pride, while failing to accord with either monotheism or divine grace.

Akoë literally means “hearing” (e.g., Mark 7:35). Sometimes, however, where it was noted that it was used metonymically of “that which is heard” (e.g., Matt.24:6; Rom.


10:17), the Concordant Version renders it “tidings,” in reference to the message itself which is associated with the “hearing” thereof. This clearly appears to be the sense as well in Galatians 3, verses 2 and 5, in the phrase, ex akoês pisteōs, which can be better rendered in accord with the context as “tidings of faith,” instead of “hearing of faith.”

This is so, for, in the nature of the case, the Galatians got the spirit out of the tidings (or “message”) of faith, which they subsequently heard and believed. The glad-tidings of Christ which are “of faith” (i.e., which pertain or relate to faith), do so in that they constitute the object of faith; that is, that which is believed, based upon that which is heard.

As “Isaiah is saying, ‘Lord, who believes our tidings?’” (Rom.10:16; cit. Isa.53:1). Even so, to those who do believe, according as it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those bringing an evangel of good!” (Rom.10:15; cit. Isa. 52:7). “Consequently, faith is out of tidings, yet the tidings through a declaration of Christ” (Rom.10:17).

It was not, however, “by,” in a transactional sense, the Galatians’ acceptance of tidings of faith, that they “qualified for,” or “met the requirements of,” getting the spirit. By their acceptance of the evangel, the Galatians gained a beginning in the knowledge of God, according as it is in Christ Jesus. They did not thereby gain a right to any endowment of the spirit of God.

Instead of gaining a right to spiritual blessing by an acceptance of spiritual truth, it is rather that out of the power inherent in the message of the glad-tidings of Christ (the “tidings of faith”), God’s chosen ones graciously obtain the spirit and believe. This occurs in the day when it delights God to unveil His Son in them, according to the pattern which Christ Himself established in the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, who is also Paul, the apostle of the nations (cp Gal.1:15,16; 1 Tim.1:12-16; 2 Tim.2:10).

He, then, Who is supplying you with the spirit, and oper-

ating works of power among you—did you get the spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith...? (3:5)

In declaring, “He, then, Who is supplying you with the spirit, and operating works of power among you—” Paul does not complete his thought. Yet he then goes on to repeat the preceding question once again: “Did you get the spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith...?” Since the only true answer to this question is that they got the spirit by the hearing (i.e., tidings) of faith, Paul then rejoins, “He, then, Who is supplying you with the spirit, and operating works of power among you—”

It is as if Paul wishes for the Galatians themselves to be honest enough and perceptive enough to gladly supply the self-evident omission, which is, “… will be completing what He has undertaken.” Thus the full sense becomes: “He, then, Who is supplying you with the spirit, and operating works of power among you, [will be completing what He has undertaken]” (cp Phil.1:6).

... according as Abraham believes God, and it is reckoned to him for righteousness? Know, consequently, that those of faith, these are sons of Abraham. Now the scripture, perceiving before that God is justifying the nations by faith, brings before an evangel to Abraham, that In you shall all the nations be blessed. So that those of faith are being blessed together with believing Abraham. (3:6-9)

There is a foundational agreement in kind between Abraham’s calling and faith and our own calling and faith. Similarly, since the most just thing that any man can do is to believe God’s own word, when we ourselves also, even as Abraham, believe the word of His promise, our so doing is reckoned to us “for [i.e., “into”] righteousness” (Rom.4:22-24). God appraises our believing as being among (and so, thus He accounts it “into”) that class of deeds which He deems righteous. Even though faith extends no “rights” to its possessors, and is itself a gracious gift, it is nonethe-
Faith Accords with Grace

less considered righteous by God Himself, besides being full of practical value for ourselves.

We are to know, "consequently, that those of faith, these are sons of Abraham" (3:7). Faith does not make God's promise true; instead, it finds it true. Faith's acceptance of the divine promise does not entitle its bearer to the promise's blessing; rather, it convicts its possessor of the truth of the promise's blessing. Faith has no value whatsoever as "legal tender." It simply acknowledges that which was already true prior to and wholly apart from its subsequent acceptance thereof. It is not that we will obtain the blessing, "if we will believe it true." It is instead, that we will be blessed; and, we believe that this is true.

Since the scripture, "perceiving before" that God is justifying the nations by faith, it therefore, prototypically, "brings before" an evangel to Abraham, declaring that, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." "So that," those of faith are being blessed together with believing Abraham.

Our being "blessed together" with Abraham is on the common ground of faith, according to grace (Rom.4:16). It is not that our blessing "together" with him affords us the identical future allotment which God has appointed for Abraham. Similarly, while God will grant us eonian life even if we should be persisting in sin (cf Rom.5:20-6:1), no such principle obtained in the case of Abraham, concerning whom law-obedience still retained a vital place unto the realization of the blessing (cf Gen.26:5), its certainty in grace notwithstanding. This is so, even though Abraham's blessing also, even as our own, ultimately depended upon God alone.

A striking commonality of grace through faith obtains between ourselves and Abraham. Hence, in respect thereof, we indeed become "sons of Abraham." May we have "confidence in the Lord," that one day not only the Galatians but every believer from every era will be made to stand in faith, full of wisdom, according to truth.

THE VOICE OF ONE IMPLORING

When nearly two thousand years ago, our Lord was generated in the form of humanity in the womb of Mary, a messenger appeared to Joseph and declared: "Now she shall be bringing forth a Son, and you shall be calling His name Jesus, for He shall be saving His people from their sins" (Matt.1:20,21). Jesus came to save. But there was no immediate deliverance of Israel from their sins. In fact Matthew chapter 2 tells of the political opposition to the little Boy as "King of the Jews" (2:2). Instead of saving His people Jesus was saved from a massacre within Israel by being taken outside the land. Joseph and Mary took the child and fled into Egypt (Matt.2:13-18).

Meanwhile the sins of pride and jealousy and deceit and murder continued within Israel, and the result was "lamentation and much anguish" (Matt.2:18).

Such intervening events cannot keep the promise of Matthew 1:21 from being fulfilled, but in making the sins of the nation more evident with the resulting sufferings ever multiplying, they prepare the people for the appreciation of God's saving work. They add to the accumulating evidence that Israel is unable to save themselves, and if they are to be saved they must be saved by the Saviour.

THE KING OF THE JEWS

The King had come, but not yet the kingdom. The Saviour had been born, but not yet the salvation born in realization. Nevertheless, when the King reigns He will reign not only as Ruler and Judge, but as Saviour too. God had
promised this as described, for example, by Zechariah the prophet (Zec.9:9):

Exult exceedingly, daughter of Zion!
Raise a joyful shout, daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, Your King shall come to you!
Righteous and bringing salvation is He . . .

The saving work of the King is in view in other prophecies as well, though not always expressed with these exact words. In Micah 5:2,4, which is cited in Matthew 2:6, the terms are “Ruler” and “shepherd,” but the point is the same. God intends to deliver His people Israel by means of Jesus, the King Who will “shepherd them in the strength of Yahweh” (Micah 5:4).

JOHN THE BAPTIST

More years passed before John comes imploring the nation's repentance, “for near is the kingdom of the heavens” (Matt.3:1). This call for repentance (a change in mind) reflects the words of Yahweh through Ezekiel: “. . . turn about and turn back from all your transgressions . . . and make yourselves a new heart [the symbol for the mind] and a new spirit” (Ezek.18:30-32); and again, “I assuredly am not delighting in the death of the wicked one, but rather that the wicked one may turn back from his way and live” (Ezek.33:11).

To be sure, the message, both through Ezekiel and through John, seems at first glance to place the whole responsibility for changing their mind and turning back and living righteously on the sinners. But the place of Jesus as Saviour is not made clear by a word that centers on what the people must do. Is Jesus to be manifested and known as Saviour from sins simply by telling sinners to stop sinning? Is this the fulfillment of Matthew 1:21?

Indeed it is not. The call for repentance does not bring the changes in thinking and acting that are needed, and so the imperative must ultimately be seen as a declarative founded on the promise that the Saviour Himself will save His people.

In accord with this, John is presented in Matthew 3:3 as the one spoken of in Isaiah 40:3. He is preparing the way for the Saviour, and the call to repentance is not a limiting qualification to this presentation. The whole of Isaiah 40 defines the Saviour as the One Who actually saves His people, not One Who merely instructs them to save themselves. Note the following declarations from that chapter (verses 1,2,10,11,29):

Comfort, oh comfort My people!
Says your Elohim.
Speak to the heart of Jerusalem,
And proclaim to her
That her enlistment is fulfilled,
And her depravity is dealt with benevolently,
That she has taken from the hand of Yahweh
Shelters from all her sins . . .
Behold, my Lord Yahweh shall come with steadfastness,
And His arm ruling for Him;
Behold, His reward is with Him,
And His arm is before him.
Like a shepherd He shall graze His drove;
In His arms He shall gather the lambskins together,
And in His bosom He shall carry them . . .
He is giving vigor to the faint,
And to the one who is without virility
He is increasing staunchness . . .

In keeping with Israel’s calling, the promise was for a sheltering from sins; justification as presented in Paul’s evangel was not yet in view. But, that salvation is God’s provision is true of every calling. The people who are told in Ezekiel 18:31 to make themselves a new heart and a new spirit are themselves to be made new by Yahweh,
Salvation Comes through the Son according to Ezekiel 36:26. “I will give you a new heart and a new spirit.” Because of His spirit which He grants to them they will obey all Yahweh’s statutes and ordinances (Ezk.36:27).

Repent!

So also with repentance. The people must change their minds, but ultimately it will be seen that doing this is God’s endowment. Peter completed the message begun by John when he declared to Israel, “Now the God of our fathers rouses Jesus, on Whom you lay hands, hanging Him on a pole. This Inaugurator and Saviour, God exalts to His right hand to give repentance to Israel and the pardon of sins” (Acts 5:30,31).

Repentance and the producing of fruit worthy of repentance are presented by John as prerequisites of the kingdom of the heavens. But the people are sinners. The most disciplined of them and the most intelligent are “Progeny of vipers” (Matt.3:7). How can such sinners and hypocrites produce such fruit? It will never happen by human strength in following commands, or by fear of punishment. It can happen only by God’s own rescue through His Son, Who will save His people from their sins.

Nevertheless, human inability must be made clear, and that is vividly being made known to us in the book of Matthew, in the account of our Lord’s ministry and Israel’s rejection of Him. Consequently, we find that the promise of Matthew 1:21 seems shoved to the background as we listen, in chapter 2, to the lamentations and anguish of the “Rachels” of Israel, and follow in chapter 3 the sobering warnings of John.

1. The Hebrew word translated “obey” in Ezekiel 36:27 literally means “do” and is the same word translated “make” earlier in this verse and in Ezekiel 18:31.
in Matthew's account. John the Baptist not only warned them that the ax was already lying at the root of the trees, and those which did not produce fine fruit would be hewn down and cast into the fire, but he characterized our Lord's ministry as two kinds of baptism, one in holy spirit and one in fire.

“He would winnow out the grain in the nation, yet He would also burn up the chaff with fire unextinguished (Matt.3:10-12). So that, even in Israel itself, the kingdom judgments are figured by fire. Our Lord repeats the Baptist's warning with special reference to the false prophets.”

This had been made clear by the prophets, who sometimes even used the figures of speech used here by John. Note how Isaiah had spoken of hewing down trees, and of fire in, in describing that future day of vengeance (10:33,34; 34:8-10):

Behold the Lord, Yahweh of hosts
Shall lop off the foliage with terror,
And those high of stature shall be hacked down,
And the haughty, they shall be abased.
He will fell the thickets of the wildwood with iron,
And Lebanon shall fall before the Noble One , . . .
For Yahweh has a day of vengeance,
A year of repayment for Zion's cause,
. . . its earth will become pitch blazing forth;
By night and by day it shall not be quenched;
For the eon its smoke shall ascend . . . .
These things will occur, but they cannot stop the salvation provided by the Saviour from eventually embracing the whole of Israel and the nations round about as well, and, although it was not specifically revealed to John, this achievement will eventually embrace all mankind (1 Tim.4:10).


Unquenchable or Unquenched?

UNEXTINGUISHED FIRE

In view of the significance of the Name Jesus and of His purpose in coming into this world it is impossible that Matthew 3:12 can be speaking of an everlasting hell. Nevertheless, as incomprehensible as it may be, this idea which erodes the very foundation of evangelical truth has been implanted into this passage.

To translate this passage using the term “unquenchable” and thus to indicate that the fires must burn forever, is to say that even before our Lord began His ministry, it was possible that He would not save some of His people, even many, from their sins. Indeed, if repentance and a turning away from wickedness is seen as wholly dependent on the individual sinner, it would already seem unlikely, if not impossible, that anyone would ever be saved from their sins.

This problem, however, is easily cleared away by recognizing that the word “unquenchable” is a mistranslation. There is no contradiction between Matthew 1:21 and 3:12 because the Greek adjective here indicates merely that the fire will not be quenched by anyone. It is not that it is some kind of super-blaze that must burn on endlessly, but rather it will burn without interference until it has burned up the “chaff” that fuels it.

The language here, as most agree, indicates a parallel with Isaiah 66:24, which reads in the Authorized Version: “And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched . . . .” Let us note this carefully. The passage says the fire will not be quenched, but it does not say it is unquenchable. This is a significant point, for in Isaiah 34:10, quoted earlier, and in at least two other passages from the prophets, the same language is used of fire that clearly is not eternal. Jer-

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miah speaks of the gates and citadels of Jerusalem being devoured by fire that shall not be put out (Jer. 17:27). And Ezekiel tells of the trees in the Negev being burned with a blaze that also shall not be quenched (Ezek. 20:47). In these cases the fire continues without interruption or interference until all that it is burning is burned up.

It is puzzling that this distinction between “unquenchable” and “not quenched” has not been recognized. The New English Bible translation, for example, says of the fire, in both Jeremiah 17:27 and Ezekiel 20:47, that it “shall not be put out;” but of the fire in Matthew 3:12 that it “can never go out.” In this way, some hope is preserved for those coming under the judgments described by the earlier prophets, for a fire that is not put out can still burn out. But hope is, in effect, entirely cut off for some by this translation of John’s introduction to Jesus, the Saviour!

John was no more speaking of some kind of a miracle fire that could not possibly go out than were Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. By translating his words in such a way, the faithful imploring of John is changed to a threat of unbelievable horror that effectively eclipses the evangel concerning the Saviour.

Matthew concludes the account of John’s ministry with his baptizing of Jesus and the words of God “out of the heavens, saying, ‘This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight’” (Matt. 3:17). God has no delight in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11), but He does delight in His Son Who is the Saviour of sinners. Uncertainty concerning the results of John’s imploring and the certainty of stern judgment against human sin cannot negate the expression of love and delight in this divine announcement, paralleling in fullest harmony the announcement of Matthew 1:21, but rather serve only to make that announcement all the more glorious.

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11:25) and this by the gentiles just as soon as the evangel breaks through to them. The Jews reject the evangel and call down judgment. How dire must be the punishment due to these uncircumcised aliens for stoning the chosen vessel God had sent for their salvation! This is surely the opportunity demanded by grace to show its potency. They drag his body, battered and bleeding, outside the city, but his spirit flies far ahead to the paradise of the new earth, and soars into the heights of the third heaven. There he sees the despised, undeserving gentiles . . . ruling the celestial realms as members of Christ's body and 'blessed with all spiritual blessing among the celestials' (Eph.1:3). Here we reach the summit of grace, the secret (1 Cor.2:7) which God had prepared for those who love Him. Though Paul was not really dead, it is well to note that, from this time on, he reckons himself and all believers as having died, and as living a resurrection life (2 Cor.1:9).1

As a father with his beloved children (1 Thess.2:11), Paul delighted to share the evangel of God. Writing to the stumbling ecclesia of Corinth, he declared, "Lo! this third time I hold myself ready to come to you and I shall not be an encumbrance, for I am not seeking yours but you. For the children ought not to be hoarding for the parents, but the parents for the children. Yet with the greatest relish shall I spend and be bankrupted for the sake of your souls, even if loving you more exceedingly diminishes your love for me" (2 Cor.12:14,15).

MINORS IN CHRIST

Can we possibly imagine what it must have been like for the apostle to restrain his elation at the wonder of God's revelations? How he must have yearned to share the glory of it all with them. Yet this was not to be. Using

1. A. E. Knoch, Concordant Commentary, p.201.

Forceful Figures

a form of expression known as a simile, Paul was not hesitant in stern rebuke. "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to minors in Christ. Milk I give you to drink, not solid food, for not as yet were you able" (1 Cor.3:1,2). May our God and Father patiently escort us in minority so as to avoid these many pitfalls of division and arrogance.

God's Word is full of superb figures of speech. By way of pause or slight digression, may we give some thought concerning these which is provided on page 349, Appendix A of the Concordant Literal New Testament:

“God, Who studded the sky with jewels and carpeted the earth with colors, has written His revelation in language which reflects the beauties of His visible creation. The diction of the East and of the Scriptures is full of fine figures, over which we walk with ruthless tread, seldom stopping to admire the blooms beneath our feet. It is the voice of feeling as well as fact. Nor is its beauty merely ornamental. Unless our eyes are opened to their presence and we feel their force, we may fail to enter beneath the surface of bare facts, into the heart of God's truth, and be led astray by mere externals.”

The following figure may help illustrate the dilemma which we ourselves will face when bringing the evangel: Despite the present traffic congestion on our roads, we all enjoy the pleasures of driving a vehicle. We visit lovely mountain scenes, picturesque harbors, remote valleys; and we travel many miles to enjoy the grandeur and peace of huge, silent forests. Also, we are pleased to instruct our children in this same skill and mobility. Yet it would be totally irresponsible for us to simply hand them ignition keys to drive some vehicle, without instruction and without escort. What would we give to board a solo aircraft and soar away! But just imagine the dire results if we ventured forth without adequate instruction and experience.
In the maturing of our faith there are differing degrees of progress. Some saints have little difficulty in setting aside the gnawing fears of imagined conditions of “backsliding” for example. Yet it takes time and a thorough grasp of Scriptures, to be reassured concerning the reality of being chosen, called, and justified. Nothing imparts more profound peace than to learn of our righteousness being based, not on our feeble faith, but rather, through Jesus Christ’s faith! (Rom.3:22; 5:1).

Despite this supremely comforting reassurance, many of us undergo momentary discomfiture when we read: “Faithful is the saying: ‘For if we died together, we shall be living together also; if we are enduring, we shall be reigning together also; if we are disowning, He also will be disowning us; if we are disbelieving, He is remaining faithful—He cannot disown Himself’” (2 Tim.2:11-13). Here, it is urged that we must not make the grave mistake of confusing the award of reigning, with the security of our salvation. As noted above, but for emphasis stated once more, this great salvation is all based on the sure foundation of the saving grace and faith of the Son of God’s love.

But concerning the reigning, along with our apostle we strive to contend the ideal contest. There may be times when in some distress or distraction we may be disturbed by the haunting memories of the initial pressures and anxieties of an immature understanding of God’s loving power and wisdom.

Nevertheless, progress is made in dissipating these anxieties as we focus attention on God and His grace in Christ Jesus our Lord. “Wherefore we are ambitious also, whether at home or away from home, to be well pleasing to Him” (2 Cor.5:9). The evangel stirs us to faithful evangelizing: “For Christ, then, are we ambassadors, as of God entreat ing through us. We are beseeching for Christ’s sake, ...

We trust God.

With the blessed expectation of our being snatched away together with those dear ones who sleep in the Lord, to meet Him in the air, and thus be appearing at the dais of Christ (2 Cor.5:10), one might imagine that all concerns of the security of our salvation would be at rest. Well, with regard to eonian life, this is so, but still there is confusion. Is it possible that here, where there is requital or award for meritorious service, we might possibly forfeit anything at all of those matters which now seem so precious? Certainly; those matters are centered in the self and the flesh. It becomes increasingly obvious, especially in maturity, that our concept of the virtuous or commendable is far from reliable. In this we trust God. We submit, trembling, all the many aspects of our service for His loving consideration. If there is aught remaining, we shall be very, very thankful!

“One of the most gracious aspects of the dais is its influence on our present service and conduct. If all realized that much that we do will be made a bonfire in that day, it would radically revolutionize ‘Christian’ service. If we would only remind ourselves that the race is not to the swift, unless they observe the rules, we would be more concerned to heed the Scriptures, and not walk disorderly. Even if we attain the highest honors among men for the passing period of our earthly life, what is that if it puts us in the lowest place in the coming eons? That is a very mean motive, but the grace of it lies in the fact that the very same selfish desire to have the pre-eminence, when viewed in the light of the dais, will cure us of it now, when we need such help . . . Let us learn this precious lesson.
God’s grace is not exhausted in effecting our salvation. He continues to be gracious in using us in His service.”

As we grow toward maturity in appreciating the dais of Christ we see how vitally it is associated with God’s grace. Afflictions and sufferings are graciously granted to us (Phil. 1:29), which in turn produce endurance (Rom. 5:3), which is rewarded at the dais with reigning (2 Tim. 2:12).

APPLAUSE

“For the rest, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is grave, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is agreeable, whatever is renowned—if there is any virtue, and if any applause, be taking these into account. What you learned also, and accepted and hear and perceived in me, these be putting into practice, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil. 4:8,9).

Donald Fielding


REPOSING IN CHRIST

The following friends in faith were put to repose during 1996, in addition to other brethren whose deaths we announced in previous issues: Pearson G. Rutter, age 89, Whittier, California; Robert A. Racer, 78, Dunkirk, Indiana; L. Josephine Hawes, 89, Los Altos, California; Charles Fletcher, 95, St. Catherines, Ontario; Irma Degen, Medicine Hat, Alberta; Myrtle Hansen, 93, Brea, California; Clara Snider, Grandville, Michigan; Amos D. King, 94, Richmond, Virginia.

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Notes on the Book of Job

HOW LONG?

Both Bildad’s second address and Job’s reply begin with the question, How long? This expression indicates impatience with each other, both Bildad and Job finding the “declarations” of the other personally offensive (18:2; 19:2).

We may well consider Job more justified in this than Bildad who sits apart from the pain and sorrow that racks every corner of Job’s being. But this does not mean that Bildad does not genuinely feel ill-treated (18:3) and deeply desire an end to the present turmoil.

At one time or another, and increasingly (so it seems) as we grow older, we find ourselves crying out, How long is this going to go on? Our distresses, like those in these chapters of Job, often arise from offenses committed by acquaintances and even those who are close to us. These seem more acute than hurts suffered because of what our world calls “acts of God” such as storms or earthquakes or droughts. This is because we feel we can’t do anything about the latter, but we can do something about personal offenses, usually by trying to get the offender to stop his offensiveness.

Of course this only tends to increase the unpleasantness. The question, “How long?” must eventually be asked of God if it is to lead us to any real solution. We have noticed that Job began that way, directing his attention to Eloah, and, though Job becomes more and more occupied by the offenses of his associates, he still is able to rise above the human conflicts and concentrate his mind on the Deity. This struggle to keep the divine operations in
view reaches what may be its highest level in chapter 19. The "How long?" of 19:2, addressed to Bildad, becomes directed to Eloah in the "crying out" and the "imploring" of 19:7. And this leads Job's heart to the stirring declarations of 19:23-27a. The question, "How long?" becomes the faithful declaration "I know my Redeemer is living," and the expectant declaration "I shall perceive Eloah."

BILDAD'S SECOND ADDRESS

For Bildad the question, "How long?" introduces a reproof to Job for his continued declarations (cf Job's complaint in 16:3) which, in Bildad's eyes, betray a lack of understanding and of proper respect (18:2,3). Addressing Job with sarcasm, Bildad points to his anger as something that harms Job but really has no lasting effect on the larger world (v.4).

The rest of Bildad's speech is a development of a major theme of all three "comforters," namely, that the wicked will suffer for their wickedness. The word "moreover," introducing verse 5 indicates that Bildad means to add these remarks about the fate of the wicked to what he has already said in criticism of Job. Although Bildad speaks in general terms, he intends Job to understand this has direct bearing on his case.

Hence Bildad observes that Job tears his own soul to pieces (v.4); in accord with this, Bildad points out, the wicked one's own counsel shall fling him down (v.7); he will fall into a trap by his own feet (18:8-10). Job is himself the wicked person Bildad describes.

(Perhaps we may be excused in detecting a tone of satisfaction in Bildad's description of the fate of the wicked in 18:11-16. The images of frightful tormentors and the devouring of internal organs were much later incorporated, and expanded, by preachers and theologians and even poets like Dante, in their concept of hell.)
To Bildad, Job is living proof of the principle that the wicked pay for their evil thoughts and deeds. Job’s virility has turned to famishing (v.12). His skin is devoured by boils from head to feet and his organs are attacked by a further infestation of the “firstborn of death” (perhaps a deadly disease), as Bildad expresses it in 18:13.

Finally Bildad declares that the wicked will lose everything, his fame, his habitance, his descendants (18:14-10), with his only legacy being the appalling horror others will feel when they view the ruins of one who knew not El (18:20,21). It is unnecessary for Bildad to add explicitly what he has said implicitly: “How like you, Job!”

However, looking beyond what Bildad implies about Job, we must ask, What does all this say about God? Bildad’s words present the Deity as One solely interested in reward and retribution when it comes to His dealings with humanity. Otherwise, God does not involve Himself much in the affairs of earthly creatures.

In the end, as we will see, Yahweh decisively refutes the restrictive view of the three by claiming responsibility for all things. And by the example of Job’s “consummation,” God shows that He has a purpose for the good of that which He has made.

**Eloah Himself has Overturned me**

Job’s question, “How long?” is directed to Bildad and his companions in reference to their treatment of him. In 19:2-5 Job gives eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But once again he is able to pull himself away from useless (and generally disastrous) fightings with human opponents and to focus on God.

His associates need to face the fundamental truth that Eloah Himself has overturned Job and encompassed him in His trap (19:6) for His own reasons and purposes. And then they need to contemplate the necessary implications

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**Job 18:13-19:6**

13 **His skin shall be ‘eaten ~by sickness’;**
   The firstborn of death shall eat his organs.

14 **He shall be pulled away from his tent**
   where his trust had dwelt;
   And it shall ‘make him march
   to the king of decadent things.

15 **It shall tabernacle in his tent / which no longer is his;**
   Sulfur shall be sifted ~about his homestead.

16 From beneath, his roots ‘dry up,
   And from above, his harvest branches are ‘snipped off.

17 **His remembrance perishes from the earth,**
   And he ‘has no’ name on the face of the open place.

18 **They shall thrust him from light into darkness,**
   And they shall chase him from the habitance.

19 **He will ‘have no’ progeny and no’ posterity~**
   among his people,
   And there will be no survivor
   in the places of his sojourning.

20 of Westerners are appalled ~at his day of ruin,
   And easterners hold back in horror.

21 Surely these were the tabernacles
   of an iniquitous man,
   And this was the place of one who knew not El.

19 ‘So Job answered, + saying:
2 How ~long shall you afflict my soul
   And crush me ‘with declarations?

3 These ten ~times have you ‘mortified me;
   You are not ‘ashamed that you ‘ill-treat me.

4 *Yet indeed, even if I truly have erred,
   My error would ‘lodge in me.

5 If truly you would ‘magnify yourselves over me
   And ‘plead against me my reproach,

6 Know indeed that Eloah Himself has overturned me,
   And His weir trap has encompassed me.

18:13 ~by sickness: Hb components of [he shall eat components of his skin].
18:19 progeny... posterity: Hb word order is posterity... progeny.
of this fact in light of Job’s previous devoutness and walk in the fear of God.

Job cries out: “Violence!” but is not answered, and no right judgment has appeared (v.7). Eloah has blocked Job’s path, and placed him in darkness, has stripped his glory from him, has taken him from his high position among mankind, has broken him down and removed his expectation; He has heated up His anger against him (19:8-11).

Furthermore, Eloah has brought opposers against Job and put any friends far from him (19:12-19). Rather than enlightening Job and adjudicating the problem so others can see the truth, God has sent His troops against him with the result that sojourners and servants see Job as a foreigner, and those he provides for see him as repellent.

Indeed, as Bildad noted, Job’s skin and bones and flesh are sorely under attack (v.20). Everything about Job is a source of agony and complaint. His list is so long that, like his associates, we feel wearied in listening to them. But in Job’s tracing of these evils to God, we are being prepared for a powerful revelation of divine wisdom and goodness.

This preparation for deeper appreciation of God is solidly constructed on Job’s unswerving insistence that God is not a disinterested party in all this evil, whose only concern in it all is, at best, to see that the wicked get what they deserve. “Be gracious to me! be gracious to me, you, my associates!,” Job shouts out, “For the hand of Eloah has touched me” (19:21).

As he has done before, Job has traveled from the position of personal attacks against one who has attacked him to the position of pouring out his soul to Eloah. Now in 19:22 he reverts briefly to ask his associates a question, but one that involves God as much as themselves: “Why are you pursuing me like El and are not satisfied with my flesh?”

Job’s sufferings involve his flesh, his bones, his organs, his skin. El has brought these afflictions upon him, and
his associates relentlessly add to every pain by placing the ultimate responsibility on Job himself. Will no one join Job in pleading to God for enlightenment?

MY REDEEMER IS LIVING

It is because Job feels no one is paying attention to what he is trying to say that he exclaims, “O that indeed my declarations were written down! O, that they were delineated in a scroll, with iron pen and lead, that they should be hewn in rock for the future!” (19:23,24).

Perhaps no words of Job are more worthy of being preserved in stone than these that follow in 19:25-27b. Deity is seen here as ultimately concerned with deliverance not simply pursuit (cf v.22), and as alive and actively involved toward this end. The visible evidence of diseased skin and physical exhaustion, along with Job's appearance as an alien will give way to a triumphant acquaintance with Eloah as Job's Redeemer.

Even after Job had expressed hope for a heavenly Witness in chapter 16, he fell back into a despair where the best outlook seemed to be the unseen (17:13), and he cried, “Where indeed is my expectation? And my good hope, who shall regard it?” (17:15). Now he has just said of Eloah, “He uproots my expectation like a tree” (19:10). But despite all evidence to the contrary, Job holds fast to a reliance on God, and expectation bursts forth.

As we read Job's words here, we can almost feel the exultation of his voice. Then suddenly he seems to writhe in pain as if convulsed by sharp cramps, and cries, “My innermost being is consumed in my bosom” (v.27c). The burst of conscious assurance is gone, and Job has only strength enough to utter one final word at the human level. If these men are plotting against Job by seeking the cause of all his problems within himself, they need to think about how their principle of retribution can apply to them (19:28,29).

Job 19:21-29

21 Be gracious to me! be gracious to me, you, my associates!
   For the hand of Eloah has touched i me.
22 Why are you pursuing me like El
   And are not satisfied i with my flesh?
23 “O  that indeed my declarations  were  written down!
   “O  that  they were delineated in a scroll,
24  With iron pen and lead,
   That  they should be hewn in rock for the future!
25 “Yet as for me, I know my Redeemer i is living,
   And after this He shall arise on the soil;
26 And  of behind my skin  “I will stand erect”,
   And from my flesh I shall perceive Eloah,
27 Whom I ´ shall perceive for myself,
   And my own eyes will see, and not an alien.'
   My innermost being is all consumed in my bosom.
28 "If you are saying, “How may we pursue ’ him?
   And: The root of the matter is found in ’ him’”,
29 Shrink for yourselves from the presence of the sword
   (For fury brings the wretchedness of the sword)
   That you may know what adjudication is.
19:26 — I will stand erect: Hb: they will encompass this.
19:28 7—cs him: Hb: me.

*  

That may be a good put down and a telling line for the debate, but the climactic point was made in verses 25-27b concerning the Redeemer and the standing erect and the perceiving of Eloah. And that applies to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar as well as to Job.

With this expectation in view, we can be excused for taking Bildad's and Job's opening words in these chapters and asking, not in frustration but in joyful anticipation, How long? How long before these things shall occur in full?  

D.H.H.
THE LIVING REDEEMER

Job’s thoughts jump from complaint and rage to bursts of confidence and hope, but there is a consistency in his overall desire to relate his sufferings to God, with understanding. His impatience with his associates stems from their efforts to direct Job’s mind away from this focus. In the meantime God remains silent and apparently distant and unconcerned, which seems to support Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar.

What Job speaks is so (cf 42:8), though it is without knowledge and understanding (cf 38:2,4; 42:3). Job does not begin to realize what it means that we receive both good and evil from God (2:10) until he both experiences the evil and is given God’s revelation of Himself. The great declarations of Job 19:25-27b are true, but they are not settled into his consciousness; they are not yet a part of his being.

For Job, the knowledge that his Redeemer is living has not yet become realization in chapter 19. But it is so, and gloriously so.

This is one of the grandest passages in Scripture, which has given many troubled people relief and hope through the centuries. In God’s wisdom it speaks of the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus and the expectation of seeing Him Who died and was roused from the dead on our behalf, even though Job could have known nothing of this great evangel.

But there are textual problems related to this passage. Perhaps this is because it stands out so brightly within its context and states that which cannot be confirmed by empirical evidence and human experience. It seems to say too much at this point in the book and for Job in his situation and time. But whatever the reason for this textual corruption, the result is a certain measure of uncertainty in translation. It is clearly an expression of hope, but there is room for debate concerning several of the details.

In earlier stages in the attempt to produce a Concordant Version of this passage, more emendations were made than presently included in our translation. One of the most significant of these was in the first line of verse 25 which was rendered, “...I know the Redeemer shall come to be.” The verbs live and become are very similar in Hebrew and could have been confused in the transmission of the text. Also it is possible that the small Hebrew letter indicating “my” was originally attached to the verb indicating future action.

But we have ended up keeping the reading as given in the extant Hebrew manuscripts, without emendation. It seems especially fitting that Job would speak of the Redeemer as “my Redeemer.” This parallels similar statements of Joseph (Gen.48:16) and David (Psa.19:14), both of whom endured much affliction and rejection and looked to God for deliverance. That they saw God in this personal way as their specific Redeemer seems to support the idea that Job shared this viewpoint.

It is certainly true that Job deeply desired Eloah to appear and speak to him, and this would be naturally expressed in Hebrew by the common verb “become.” There was no visible sign of the Redeemer, yet indeed He does come to be, or appear, later as events unfold. But the word “living” is also appropriate in this context, not that Job thought the absence of the Redeemer indicated He was dead, but that Job’s afflictions indicated Job was close to death, and this is what made it so important to Job that his Redeemer was continuing to live.

For us, however, in our present experiences of evil and needs for endurance, we know Christ as our Deliverance (cf Rom.3:24; 1 Cor.1:30; Eph.1:7), Who is living as the One Who died and rose from the dead. Indeed, He is more than our living Redeemer, for in Him we have the assurance of justification, vivification and reconciliation. And we, each one individually and personally, shall perceive Him with full appreciation, to the glory of God the Father.

D.H.H.