Unsearchable Riches

A Bimonthly Magazine
For God and His
Word

VOLUME LXXXVIII

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15570 Knochaven Road
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Unfinished

Unfinished—that is what life seems to be,
A thing of vision—what we *want* to be,
Of futile effort—oasis never found,
Of highest hope—yet hope dashed to the ground,
Of great resolves, though seldom carried out,
Of fine ideals which end in dread and doubt;
E'en if attained, they cannot satisfy;
All earthly things must mock us when we die.

But soon the many things which here we miss
Will gladden in a life of perfect bliss.
The jarring notes of discord and of pain
Resolve in perfect cadence—greater gain,
Far greater gain through having known the ill,
Through having learned of God to just "be still,"
Through having learned that humans all are frail
And *One alone* is strong and will prevail.

L. Cock

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 1997
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT

EDITORIAL

GOD'S GLORY AND PRAISE is the grand goal we have set before us in this little magazine and in our meetings, as well as our translations and other literature. All our efforts to recover and clarify and make known His Word are only means to reveal His wisdom, power and love. All our suffering and endurance have little value if they do not lead to the laud of His name and fame. Worship must arise from all that we do, or it is wasted effort. We depend upon this spirit to hallow every word and every expression in our ministry.

Many dark and dismal clouds in Christendom have come to obscure the brilliance of His radiance, so that few can perceive His honors as the One and only God, the Deity Supreme, Who loves all His creatures and wisely plans all good and all evil to bring them close to His heart when He has achieved His end. Many are not able to see Him as the Creator and Sustainer and Reconciler of the universe. Instead they imagine a mirage in which chaos commences and carries on and concludes creation. His love is eclipsed by such doctrines as eternal torment, His wisdom is blotted out by ignorance of His plans and purpose, His power is diminished by His apparent inability to cope with sin.

To chase these sullen clouds from the sky, to clear away the thick fog from the ground, we reach right back of all human speculation and translation to divine revelation. Nor do we repeat the past processes and offer our own. With our translation we furnish the apparatus to test and confirm it, for we do not desire to stand between anyone and the light. Our concordance, unlike the usual ones of

Bible translations, is a concordance of the *inspired original,* not of a traditional version. The ordinary believer, if his *heart* is in it, can find out what God has said. That this is the best means to bring Him adoration and praise is evident, for nothing can compare with His own Word to reveal His will and unveil His heart. A. E. Knoch

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THERE are many things in the modern world that get us stirred up, mostly distressing changes in attitudes and apparent increases in harmful activities. But Paul tells us not to be noting what is being observed, but rather what is not being observed (2 Cor.4:18), where in fact there are stirring and glorious revelations that are eonian.

Astonishing and very unexpected things happened in our Lord's ministry as recorded in Matthew. The kingdom was near, and yet commandments that exceeded the demands of Sinai had to be followed fully and perfectly for anyone to enter into it. Upright Job was severely afflicted, while wicked people prospered, and Job's associates pontificated about ancient ethical principles that did not harmonize with what was *presently* in front of their eyes. In Galatians we find a reformed blasphemer upset because people who had received the evangel from him were trying to reform themselves.

Most unexpected of all, *crucifixion* as God's purposed means for the death of His Son, channeled through the Roman, Pilate, jolts our complacency. In all of these themes, featured in this issue of our magazine, there is much that is surprising and stirring. Yet also they all lead to a revelation of God's glory. And once something of God's glorious consummation is seen, "face to face," in all these operations we find ourselves exclaiming with Paul, "O, the depth of the riches of God's wisdom!" D.H.H.

CRUCIFIXION

CHRIST *died.* He shed His *blood.* He was *crucified.* These terms differ from one another in their relation to us. Each brings a special benefit, which is its opposite. He *died* that we might *live.* Through His *blood* He *suffered* that we may *enjoy* His *salvation.* He was *crucified* that we may be *glorified.*

Through their sacrifices the Jews were familiar with death and bloodshed. But none of their ritual gave specific foreshadowing of the shameful execution of a criminal. It is in Paul's evangel for the nations that the theme of crucifixion comes to the fore. Here it is revealed that this shameful death brings not only life and joy, but celestial glory.

The fact that the sin offering in Israel, which foreshadowed the great Sacrifice, was neither painful nor shameful, suggests that we consider closely the circumstances connected with the crucifixion of Christ. There we will find that the priests of Israel who were appointed to offer the sacrifice would not and could not use this method. Even Herod could not. Only Pilate, by the authority vested in him by Rome, the ruler of the *nations,* could crucify the Lord of glory (Luke 22:66-23:25).

THE NATION OF ISRAEL

Although the nation of Israel, in the flesh, was not founded on any association with crucifixion, it did commence in *death.* The Creator must not have something with which to work. His glory demands that there be nothing on which to base His achievements. So the nation of Israel

began with the dead bodies of Abraham and his wife. And from such a source will spring the greatest of all nations. Neither were they petted and protected from all harm, so that they could become greater than the rest by their own power. Rather the opposite, so that their future glory will be entirely due to Yahweh Elohim Himself.

The sacred scrolls committed to Israel contained many types and predictions concerning their promised Messiah, not only His glories, but His *sorrows* also. But the latter did not appeal to them, so were largely overlooked. When He came to them in lowliness, as a Man of sorrows, they rejected Him. Even His own disciples had overlooked these, expecting that He was about to be *redeeming* Israel, rather than be rejected and crucified. So, after His resurrection He said to them, "O foolish and tardy of heart to be believing on *all* which the prophets speak! Must not the Christ be *suffering* these things, and be entering into His glory?" And, beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them, in all the scriptures, that which concerned Himself (Luke 24:19-27).

THE CHIEF PRIEST

After He was arrested, Christ was taken to the house of the chief priest (Luke 22:54). Although they charged Him with blasphemy and demanded His death, and would probably have stoned Him if the Roman law had allowed it, the chief priests were compelled to turn His execution over to the nations. If left to Israel and their religious leaders, Christ would probably never have been done to death by crucifixion.

The law of Moses called for sacrifices for sin. The victim had to be without blemish, so that there was no fault in it, no just cause for being killed. It was the duty of the chief priest to see that this was so. In this light, it was right that Caiaphas sought to put the great Sacrifice to death, but

he was very wrong in his motives and in trying to convict Jesus of blasphemy (Matt.26:57-68). Moreover, the sacrifices were not allowed to suffer. The blood was drained from their veins, so that they lost all sensation before they died. But Caiaphas allowed them to buffet Him and slap Him. The blood was not allowed to leave Him until just before He let out His spirit (Matt.27:49-68).

PILATE

Under the law, in Israel, and especially in connection with the sacrifices, crucifixion was unknown. The chief priest and Israel were the instruments God used to accomplish the death of Christ, but not the form of that death or the indignities and sufferings that accompanied it. Pilate was convinced that Christ was not guilty, and sought to assert his own innocence, but he, and the nations whom he represented are the means God used for the *suffering* and *shame* and the curse divine that led Him to be forsaken by His El (Matt.27:46).

Pilate was a "good" politician. Though he was not deceived by the priests and populace, and was convinced that Christ was not guilty, and desired to release Him, yet he judged that the interests of the state demanded that the majority should have their way, even though he washed his hands of it. Here we have a good example of human government in this present wicked world. Justice must often give way to expedience, and God's word concerning His Christ receives no hearing except among the few who have been chosen and called to suffer with Him.

BAPTISM AND CRUCIFIXION

Baptism was only a symbol of spiritual *cleansing* under the law of Moses and the ministries of John and Christ. In Paul's evangel it went much further, so that it signified *death, and entombment,* as well as *rousing* from among

the dead (Rom.6:4; Col.2:12). But there is no thought of shame or suffering or alienation from God, which are the vital features of Christ's death for us, sinners of the nations. Crucifixion on our part goes much further and affects our life far more vitally than baptism, to which no shame is attached.

The reason why Paul no longer baptized, after he had done so is that *baptism makes void the cross* (1 Cor.1:17). This change in the apostle's practice just at the time when the present secret administration was being gradually introduced should show clearly that, as an outward act, it is not in keeping with the foundation truth of this era.

The vast difference between baptism and crucifixion may best be seen in the literal occurrences. The crucifixion degraded Christ to the lowest level of human shame and abasement. What could be more disgraceful and humiliating than to be gibbeted on a pole, suffering not only the insults of men, but the curse of God? In contrast, His tomb (pictured by baptism), with its rolling stone as a door, was that of a rich and honorable counselor, Joseph of Arimathea (Luke 23:50).

CRUCIFIXION, BRIEF IN TIME

The fact that Christ *could* have saved the malefactor at the time, as the unbelieving criminal suggested (Luke 23:39), and, *could* have saved Himself, as some suggested (Matt.27:40; Mark 15:30; Luke 23:37), and indeed, it *would* have been possible to avoid the cross altogether, as His own disciples desired (Matt.16:23; Mark 8:33)—all this suggests that God had a most important object in crucifixion, and that was the revelation of His highest attributes by means of it. He could save none who were not lost, nor manifest the depth of His love except to His enemies. But there is one vital difference, and that lies in the realm of *time*.

The "kenosis" or emptying Himself of the form of God

to become like a human, and the consequent humiliation and obedience even to the death of the cross (Phil.2:6-8), occupied only about thirty-three years, a third of a century. In contrast to this short span of time, His glory in the future as a result of this, will be immeasurably prolonged. The first thirty years of His humanity was a comparatively mild form of lowliness, without much suffering or dishonor. His ministry in Israel for three years was accompanied by a greater measure of humiliation and disrepute due to the priestly and secular rulers and unbelieving Jews, but tempered by the faithful few who loved and adored Him. This lasted for only about a tenth as long as His previous preparatory period.

The climax of His career came when the religious leaders and political powers abused him and reviled Him and mocked His royal rights with a crown of thorns, and prepared to offer Him up as the Sacrificial Victim, finally fixing His human form upon a pole. This was the lowest depth of depravity to which humanity could sink Him. This occupied but a minute measure of His ministry, to be counted in hours. It brought Him as low as man could bring Him, and is the basis for the truth of the cross, which speaks to us of debasement, degradation, dishonor, and brought with it the curse of God Himself. This terrible, intense torment lasted for three hours, but it is the basis of blessing for the infinite future.

SHAME AND GLORY

From this we can see two things clearly, that future glory is based on a contrast with shame, but especially that the shame is comparatively short, the glory of limitless duration. It will be of the greatest help to us to seek to realize this, especially if we are in the midst of humiliation or pain or perplexity, when due to faithfulness to God.

The element of shame and disgrace, added by cruci-

fixion to the sacrifice of Christ, will find its counterpart in the sublime celestial glories which will come to Him and to those who count themselves crucified with Him in spirit. They, along with Him, will become channels of the highest blessing in the future, among the celestials, but, with Him, they must first suffer, in a minute measure, the hatred and contempt of the wicked world.

Although Peter refers to the crucifixion of Christ in the book of Acts (Acts 2:36; 4:10), it is given to Paul, in his epistles, to speak of the crucifixion of the believer together with Christ. It is Christ's cross and our *association with Him* that raises us with Him into glories of the Celestial sphere.

Knowing God's plans for the blessing of those chosen in Christ in the highest place among the celestials, it is easy to see why He was not only a Sacrifice under the law, for those under it, like the offerings in Israel, but had to suffer much direr pain and shame. His death was not merely for salvation from the penalty of sin and transgression, but for justification and reconciliation and glorification of the believer in close association with Christ Himself, in His great work of subjecting and reconciling all to God the Father.

A. E. Knoch

EXCEPT IN THE CROSS

It was as much as a half century ago that Brother A. E. Knoch worked on a series of studies concerning *crucifixion* as the form of Christ's death. It was never completed, as he turned to other matters, especially work on the Hebrew Scriptures. But the article above is selected from the opening pages of his handwritten notes, and we hope to add several more articles from these notes during 1997. Some of his thoughts were left undeveloped, but it is evident that Brother Knoch intended to lay emphasis on Paul's unique use of the words "cross" and "crucifixion" in presenting his evangel. God's highest glories flow from this most shameful form of death and are based on it. Consequently, we say with Paul, "May it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal.6:14).

GRACIOUSLY GRANTED, THROUGH PROMISE

(Galatians 3:10-29)

INITIALLY, the Galatian believers obtained the spirit *out of* tidings of faith, the glad-tidings of faith, which they subsequently heard and believed (Gal.3:2). This is because *out of* the *power* inherent in the evangel of Christ (*cf* Rom. 1:16), God's *chosen* ones graciously obtain the spirit and believe. This is what truly occurs, and, why it truly occurs, wherever one truly enters into faith. Those who believed, were, "*whoever were set* for life eonian" (*cf* Acts 13:48), the grace of our Lord overwhelming their unbelief "with faith and love in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim.1:14).

Since the Galatians had "undertaken" (Gal.3:3) in *spirit,* it would be "foolish" to suppose that God would now reverse Himself, somehow expecting them to become completed in flesh. It is on this basis that Paul shows that it is correct to conclude: "He, then, who is supplying you with the spirit, and operating works of power among you [will be completing what He has undertaken]." That is, Paul assures, since you "undertook" in spirit, and even now *God* is continuing to supply you with the spirit and operate works of *power* among you, "*He, then* . . . [will *also* be *completing* what He has undertaken]" (*cf* Gal.3:2,3,5).

It is important for us today to believe and recognize that God is continuing to supply us with the spirit, even as to operate works of power among us. It is to be regretted that to the popular mind the thought of "spiritual works of power" evokes images of the sensationalistic, the pseudo-

miraculous, and the superstitious. While we have no need of these and do well to eschew all such spurious activities, still, we remain in vital need of God's genuine provision of spirit, even as of His faithful works of power within us.

It is with the eyes of faith that we perceive that when we continue in faithfulness, or in cases where we have faltered or failed and yet subsequently recover, that these experiences, ones both of sustenance and deliverance, reflect God's spiritual provision unto us even as His powerful operations, both in us, individually, and among us, collectively. Were it not so, I could not possibly compose this present writing; nor could you, the reader, find spiritual benefit in it. So it is, concerning all our activities of faith: they are the fruit of whatever measure of spirit God has been pleased to grant us, according to His present spiritual operations *in power.*

For whoever are of works of law are under a curse, for it is written that, Accursed is everyone who is not remaining in all things written in the scroll of the law to do them. (3:10)

"How striking the contrast! As many as are of faith [v.9] are *blessed. Accursed* is everyone who does not remain in all which has been written in the scroll of the law to do it. Who would be so perverse as to choose law? Yet the heresy of Galatianism is far more prevalent today than ever. Life under law [with blessing on the basis of law-obedience] can only come to one who keeps every precept perfectly at all times, yet is forfeited at the slightest infringement. Life through faith does not depend on conduct but on the One in Whom the faith is placed."[1]

There are only two conceivable sources of blessing: (1) divine grace; and (2) human works of law. Only one of these, however, divine grace, is a viable source of blessing. The other, works of law, since it is infirm through the flesh

1. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.282.

(Rom.8:3), has been rendered ineffectual. That being so, whoever are "out of" works of law are under a curse. This is because, "Accursed is everyone who is not remaining in *all* things written in the scroll of the law to do them" (3:10; cit. Deut.27:26; *cp* 28:15).

The fact that under the law some were less sinful than others is not the point. What is important to see is that no one in Israel ever *deserved* blessing, but only cursing, and that in the fullest possible degree. Such is the *righteous* standard of the law. On the one hand, it was so unspeakably severe as to demand perfection from any who, by their own obedience, would obtain a single blessing or escape a single curse. Yet on the other hand, it was this very stringency of the law that ensured that *all* under its jurisdiction would be equally dependent upon God and His grace, if they would enjoy any blessing at all.

It is simply delusion to imagine that some under law were somehow more deserving of blessing than others, according to their works. Since all were sinners, *none* were deserving of any blessing whatsoever, according to the law's own *righteous* standard. Instead, *all* were wholly dependent upon divine *grace*—and grace alone—for any blessing received, however small or great.

It is true that on a basis of strict justice, the least infraction of the law would call forth all its curses. God was often *merciful,* however, and did not impose the law's full penalty, even though it had been repeatedly violated. This is because God is merciful; and, because He has the prerogative to be merciful "to whom He will" (Rom.9:18). For to Moses He is saying, "I shall be *merciful* to whomever I may be merciful, and I shall be *pitying* whomever I may be pitying" (Rom.9:15; cit. Ex.33:19). These words, as such, are Paul's inspired interpretation of the actual divine declaration recorded in Exodus 33:19, which is, "I will be *gracious* to whom I am being gracious and will have *com-*

passion for whom I am having compassion." Thus we learn that mercy is a matter of grace, even as that pity is the fruit of compassion.

It is vital to recognize that, under law, those who were characteristically faithful in their practice of law-obedience, thus were faithful, "according to the choice of *grace*" (Rom.11:5; *cp* Isa.26:12). Hence the blessing of such ones—since they too were sinners—was not "*out of*" law-obedience, but was instead *in* grace (Rom.11:6).[2]

The Galatians, however, having repudiated grace (1:6; 2:21), were simply seeking blessing "out of" law-obedience itself. They did not realize that blessing is never granted from such a source, even under law. How foolish they were, then, ones to whom the law had not even been given, who were not obliged to keep it, nonetheless to attempt to put themselves under it, even as to anticipate blessing on the presumed basis of their own ability to keep it!

Such is ever the confidence of fleshly man; he fails to realize that whatever *is* worthy in his walk is due to the grace of God alone, and that any further obedience rendered by him will itself likewise be dependent upon further grace, apart from which he will surely fail (*cp* Rom.9:29; cit. Isa.1:9). He reasons not, correctly, that since grace has granted him what virtue he has, he will likewise be dependent on grace alone for any increase in virtue, but instead, incorrectly, that since he ultimately has himself alone to thank for what virtue he has, he will likewise ultimately have himself alone to thank for any progress in virtue he may make. If there is a law that is to be kept, for obedience to which one may expect an increase in personal welfare, the fleshly man deems himself a worthy candidate to fulfill it. Such ones having confidence in themselves that

2. These considerations alone show that the popular teaching of free will is but human delusion and vanity.

they are just (*cf* Luke 18:9), therefore proudly declaim, "All that Yahweh speaks we shall do" (Ex.19:8a).

Now that in law no one is being justified with God is evident, for the just one by faith shall be living. Now the law is not of faith, but who does them "shall be living in them." (3:11,12)

It is not the province of law to justify, but to condemn. Effectually, the law merely says, "He who heeds my precepts shall find life in so doing"; which life no one ever finds since no one ever heeds its precepts (*cf* Lev.18:5; *cp* Luke 10:28). Like evil, law, too, is transitory. It lasts only until God's purpose through its agency has been realized. Those who are "just" (as spoken of in Habakkuk 2:4), owe their righteousness not to law, much less to themselves, but to grace. Life comes to them not out of their imperfect (and so disqualified) law-obedience, but out of *faith*, that it may accord with *grace*.

Christ reclaims us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for our sakes, for it is written, Accursed is everyone hanging on a pole, that the blessing of Abraham may be coming to the nations in Christ Jesus, that we may be obtaining the promise of the spirit through faith. (3:13,14)

The pronoun "us," here, refers to Paul and his Jewish brethren on whom the law weighed so heavily. Christ reclaimed them from the law's grip. Thus, through His death on the cross (His "hanging on a pole"; *cf* Deut. 21:23), Christ cleared "those whoever, in fear of death, were through their entire life liable to slavery" (Heb.2:15), the slavery of the law.

The purpose of His death on the cross, further, was, "that the blessing of Abraham may be coming to the nations *in Christ Jesus*, that we may be obtaining the promise of the spirit through faith" (3:14).

"The sacrifice of Christ made provision for all classes and all contingencies. For those under law He bore its

curse, so that they may receive the blessing of Abraham. And He bore the sins of those not under law as well, so that they, too, may obtain the righteousness of Abraham. So both, through faith, receive the spirit, by which they may exceed the righteous demands of the law."[3]

Since God has graciously granted the allotment to Abraham through the promise—and therefore, accordingly, through promise, has allotted the blessing of justification to us, out of Jesus Christ's faith (*cp* Gal. 2:16)—the burning question is: "*What,* then, *is* the law?" (Gal.3:19). In preparation for answering this very question, Paul first points out the following:

Brethren (I am saying this as a man), a human covenant likewise having been ratified, no one is repudiating or modifying it. Now to Abraham the promises were declared, and to his Seed. He is not saying "And to seeds," as of many, but as of One: And to "your Seed," which is Christ.[4] *Now this am I saying: a covenant, having been ratified before by God, the law, having come four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not invalidate, so as to nullify the promise. For if the enjoyment of the allotment is of law, it is no longer of promise. Yet God has graciously granted it to Abraham through the promise.* (3:15-18)

What, then, is the law? (3:19a)

Here is the answer:

On behalf of transgressions was it added . . . . (3:19b)

"Law changes sin from a mere mistake to the over-stepping of a divine command. It enhances the sinfulness of sin. Transgression is sin against a known law, entailing not only the usual penalties, but the added displeasure of

3. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.282.

4. Christ, our *only* Saviour, is represented by the *singular* "seed" of Abraham. That is, even as Abraham's offspring *alone* may possess their promised blessings, thus also our blessings in Christ depend *solely* upon His finished work (*cf Unsearchable Riches,* vol.81, pp.46-48).

God against one who defies His precepts . . . . The promises Abraham received [which, incidentally, subsequently, came to be] in connection with the law, were unconditional; [ultimately speaking,] dependent only on God's faithfulness. They were given without any reference to the law and [thus] do not depend on any legal observance for fulfillment."[5]

Charin ("on behalf," CV) is the accusative form of "grace," and is used as a preposition with the genitive case ("*of* transgressions").

The Authorized Version, at least as interpreted by some, is very misleading here in its rendering "*because* of transgressions." The words "*because* of" have led some to imagine that transgression obtained prior to Moses; and that the reference here is merely to ceremonial laws which were temporarily added by Moses to an already extant timeless moral code (namely, to a code which, under Moses, was merely formalized as the "Ten Commandments"). All of this is perfectly false (as well as artful and unreasonable); yet it is instructive to note the lengths to which some will go in order to impose the law upon believers today.

The idea of the Greek word, *charin,* is that of an act done with the objective of somehow bringing favor (i.e., some type of benefit or advantage) to the object in view (*cp* Titus 1:5,11). This is just what the entrance of the law afforded to transgression. Hence the law was given *on behalf* of the resultant transgressions which came into being through the law. Where no law is, neither is there transgression (Rom.4:15); yet the bestowal of law gives rise to its violation, which is transgression. Transgression owes its very existence to law, and cannot exist apart from it. Thus, on behalf of transgressions, "law came in by the way, *that the offense should be increasing*" (Rom.5:20).

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5. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, pp.282.

THE ESSENCE OF THE EVANGEL

. . . until the Seed should come to Whom He has promised, being prescribed through messengers in the hand of a mediator. Now there is no Mediator of one. Yet God is One. Is the law, then, against the promises of God? May it not be coming to that! For if a law were given that is able to vivify, really, righteousness were out of law. But the scripture locks up all together under sin, that the promise out of Jesus Christ's faith may be given to those who are believing. (3:19c-22)

The law, on behalf of transgressions, however, was added *"until* the Seed should come . . ." (Gal.3:19c). This fact is of special relevance to our understanding of the evangel, since we are apt to fear that our sins may bar us from its benefits.

In speaking of himself and of his fellow Israelites who had now obtained the evangel which he proclaimed (*cp* Gal.2:15), Paul declares:

Now before the coming of faith we were garrisoned under law, being locked up together for the faith about to be revealed. So that the law has become our escort to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. Now, at the coming of faith, we are no longer under an escort, for you are all sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. For whoever are baptized into Christ, put on Christ, in Whom there is no Jew nor yet Greek, there is no slave nor yet free, there is no male and female, for you all are one in Christ Jesus. Now if you are Christ's, consequently you are of Abraham's seed, enjoyers of the allotment according to the promise. (3:23-29)

As is true of all scripture, to avoid misinterpretation, this passage must be kept within its context and understood accordingly. The context is that of the epistle to the Galatians which is a defense of the exclusively-Pauline teaching of justification by faith (the faith of Christ). Specifically, the context is that of the evangel of the Uncir-

cumcision (Gal.2:7)—the evangel *which* Paul was heralding among the nations (Gal.2:2).

This evangel is "in accord with the faith of God's chosen, and a realization of the truth which accords with devoutness, in expectation of life eonian, which God, Who does not lie, *promises* before times eonian, yet manifests His word in its own eras by heralding, with which [Paul] was entrusted, according to the injunction of God, our Saviour" (Titus 1:1-3).

These glorious declarations, however, are not revelations of the evangel of the Circumcision, but that of the Uncircumcision (Gal.2:7). Indeed, in a number of vital particulars, they are contrary to the Circumcision evangel. The evangel of the Circumcision consists only of pardon (which may be withdrawn); *it knows nothing of justification.* Under the evangel of the Circumcision, works of righteousness, according to Moses, are essential to life (i.e., to "remaining for the eon"; 1 John 2:17; *cp* Matt.7:21,23).

Yet under Paul's evangel, the evangel which, broadly speaking, is the evangel of the *Un*circumcision, not only are we justified apart from law, but, "where sin increases, graces superexceeds" (Rom.5:20); where there is persistence in sin, grace increases accordingly (Rom.6:1), for life eonian (Rom.5:21). *This is not true under the evangel of the Circumcision.*

NO LONGER UNDER AN ESCORT

Therefore, *as it stands in relation to the Pauline evangel,* the law is nothing more than a *former* escort.[6] It is but

6. adapted from A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.282. It should be noted that in declining to subject ourselves to the particulars of the *Mosaic* instruction, it is not that we have been given over to lawlessness. The entreaties of Paul for service in the evangel, inculcate a far more august (and encompassing) "morality" than that of the demands of Sinai.

an erstwhile servant; a pedagogue-slave which, while useful in its day in its ministrations on behalf of children, is now rendered wholly redundant, since the children have attained their majority.

Thus, on behalf of transgressions, the law was added (yet incidentally so, with respect to the original promises made to Abraham) *until* the Seed should come. Insofar as Paul and those of his fellow Israelites to whom this evangel had been granted are concerned, the law had become their escort to Christ. Now at the coming of the *faith* (through the advent of Christ; *cp* 2 Tim.1:10), *such ones* (*"we"*; Gal. 3:25) are no longer under an escort. Thus, whoever—*among those who are in view in this context;* namely, among those who are blessed according to Paul's evangel—are baptized into Christ put on *Christ,* in Whom—with respect to Paul's evangel and insofar as it is concerned—there is no Jew nor yet Greek, nor any other distinction, for all, thus blessed, are one in Christ Jesus (Gal.3:27,28).

Thus, in a figure, we become "of Abraham's seed"; that is, literally, we become enjoyers of an allotment *according to promise* (Gal.3:29). (It is not "the" allotment, or "the" promise; the definite article does not appear in the Greek.)

In service, or in the *Lord,* the slave was still a slave, the sexes were still recognized; but—under Paul's evangel—in *Christ,* in Whom we are complete (Col.2:10), all physical distinctions vanish. By faith, all who are called according to the Pauline evangel (*cp* Gal. 1:6-9) enter into the same high place of privilege, and are blessed with the common promise and righteousness of which this evangel consists. Thus, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, since all of the evangel's blessings are *graciously* granted to us, through promise, in Him.[7] J.R.C.

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7. adapted from A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.282.

ASTONISHED AT HIS TEACHING

JOHN had announced the nearness of the kingdom (Matt. 3:2), and the spirit of God and His voice out of the heavens had identified Jesus as God's Son, the Beloved in Whom He delights (3:16,17). The way seemed to be opened up for the manifestation of Jesus as Saviour and King.

But the kingdom with its deliverance from the many evils of present life did not immediately appear. In fact, the next event recorded in Matthew was the trial of Jesus by the Adversary, in the midst of great weakness and travail (Matt.4:1-11). And here the very blessings of food and safety and rule that characterize the kingdom were set before Jesus, and He refused them. This refusal under the most difficult of situations shows clearly that the kingdom must come in accord with God's ways and will. The death of Christ as a basis for all the blessings of the kingdom must occur first. When our Lord receives the rule it will be as the Saviour Who does not only save and bless, but Who does so on a firm basis established by God.

There would be no blessing in having food and protection and divine rule where there is no power given over sin. For Jesus to have accepted earthly rule from the Adversary would not only mean that the worship is deflected from God, which is horrible beyond thought, but that Israel and all mankind would continue under the effects of sin and weakness of flesh. There was something far more vital than having all physical needs supplied and safety from all harm under perfect and wise rule. And this was salvation from sin.

A GREAT LIGHT

After this Jesus retired into Galilee, far distant from Jerusalem where the kingdom would be centered. Here the people sitting in darkness perceived a great light (Matt. 4:16), as Jesus heralded the very message spoken by John, saying, "Repent! for near is the kingdom of the heavens!" (4:17). The radiant hope of the kingdom drawing near did not seem to have been dimmed by the call for repentance. Loyal and capable followers were called, including Peter, the "Rock," and "immediately" leaving their work and family ties they followed Jesus (4:18-22).

The signs of the approaching kingdom continued in a positive way. Jesus led His disciples throughout Galilee, "heralding the *evangel* of the kingdom, *and curing every disease and every debility* among the people" (Matt.4:23). The type of thing the Adversary recognized Jesus could do as God's Son (4:3), but which He refused to do for Himself under those conditions, He now was actually doing among the sinners of Galilee. And the tidings spread, with *vast throngs* streaming to Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and the other side of the Jordan (Matt.4:24,25). The kingdom had drawn very near indeed.

But the problem of sin had not yet been dealt with.

THE TEACHING ON THE MOUNT

The mountain was the symbol of rule. Hence, in directing attention to the kingdom, Jesus ascended to a mountain and taught concerning the kingdom that had come so very near. As recorded in Matthew, His words take up the bulk of three chapters, 5:3-7:27. "And it came when Jesus finishes these sayings, that the throngs were *astonished* at His teaching, for He was teaching them as One having authority and not as their scribes" (Matt.7:28,29).

What astonished the Galileans was that Jesus, Who had

lived among them as one of them, could speak with such authority. But there seems to have been no more astonishment concerning the instruction itself than was felt at Sinai when Moses first delivered the message of Exodus 20-23. At that earlier time "Moses came and related to the people all the words of Yahweh and all the judgments. Then all the people responded with one voice and said: All the words which Yahweh has spoken we shall do" (Exodus 24:3). In neither case was there any sign of genuine inner enlightenment concerning human infirmity and need of a Saviour from sins.

Yet whether they noted it or not, there is for us even more of astonishment in what Jesus said than in the authoritative manner in which He spoke. Not even the least of the precepts given in the law could be annulled (Matt.5:19). The required standard of righteousness exceeded that maintained by the most diligent and disciplined of Israelites (5:20). Every precept had to be obeyed inwardly as well as outwardly, so that "You shall not murder" required also that "You shall not be angry with your brother" (5:21,22); and "You shall not be committing adultery" demanded also that "You shall not have any lust in your heart" (5:27,28) as well as severest restrictions on divorce and remarriage (5:31,32). The laws concerning sacrifices, though still in effect, involved important prerequisites such as removing offenses and settling debts (5:23-26). The law against perjury was shown to include a law against making oaths or saying anything that might bring dishonor to God or even Jerusalem or even oneself as an Israelite (Matt.5:33-37).

Not only were the laws given at Sinai intensified in this message, but some were even replaced by higher demands, in light of the approaching times of Jacob's troubles. What was commanded by Jesus could never be obeyed apart from God's spirit. This was especially so of laws concerned with just judgments. The people were to suffer unjust treat-

ment from outsiders and leave all the settling of accounts to God (Matt.5:43-47). And this astonishing requirement was followed by perhaps the most astonishing statement in the entire message: "You, then, shall be perfect (or: mature) as your heavenly Father is perfect" (5:48).

ASTONISHING PROMISES

The promises connected with these intensified demands were equally astonishing. Good deeds were required, but they must be done secretly and not at all motivated by rewards and praises from fellow humans (Matt.6:1-4), but rather in view of wages from God (6:8-13). "For if you should be forgiving men their offenses, *your heavenly Father also will be forgiving you*" (6:14). "Now you, when fasting, rub your head with oil and wash your face, so that you may not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father Who is in hiding, and *your Father, Who is observing in hiding, will be paying you*" (6:17,18). The heavenly Father was aware of their every need, so that they needed to seek first the kingdom and its righteousness, and all these provisions of clothing and food would be added to them (6:31-34).

It was in the following of all these laws, which in fact lay behind the laws as given at Sinai, that these Israelites would enter the kingdom and enjoy its blessings. When all hypocrisy and pride would be removed through the spiritual invigoration of the new covenant, and full reliance and confidence was placed in God, then they would request, and it would be given to them (7:7).

THE NARROWED WAY

The level of righteousness demanded was astonishing. The blessings promised on the basis of achieving this high level of righteousness were also astonishing. But the most astonishing thing about this entire message is the fact that Jesus spoke of these requirements and these blessings, and

the people received them, *as though they were certain to come about!* Yet how can the promises be fulfilled if the level of righteousness demanded for their fulfillment be impossible of attainment?

How is it possible that anyone would find "the cramped gate and narrowed way" which led away into life (Matt.7:13,14)? How is it possible that anyone would produce the "ideal fruit" required (7:16-20)? Would anyone be able to avoid anger toward a brother that makes him liable to the Gehenna of fire (Matt.5:22)? Would anyone be so free of lust and wrong thoughts that there is no possibility of loss in Gehenna (5:30)? Who of all those listening to Jesus on the mount that day could claim that they were perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (5:48)?

Long before Jesus had finished this message, there surely arose in the hearts of many who listened the question the disciples later asked of the Lord, "Who, consequently, can be saved?" The answer would have to be the same as Jesus gave then: "With men this is impossible, *yet with God all is possible*" (Matt.19:25,26).

YOU SHALL BE PERFECT

The throngs listening to Jesus speak were sinners. They were not perfect even by the humanly manipulated levels of perfection set by the Pharisees. And yet Jesus said they shall be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect!

Here is a statement for the highest astonishment! The Authorized Version renders the future tense as a command: "Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect," which is not entirely incorrect. The parallel word in the law given to Moses at Sinai is also expressed by an indicative verb: "Holy shall you become, for I am holy, Yahweh your Elohim" (Lev.19:2). But in Luke 6:36, where the Lord's sermon on "an even place" is recorded, the Lord uses the imperative: "Become,

then, pitiful, according as your Father also is pitiful." What is commanded is also promised! It is commanded as a test to display human inability, but it is promised as a revelation of divine ability.

As a command, the astonishment in Matthew 5:48 lies in the fact that it speaks of an impossibility for Israel and indeed for us all! As a promise, the astonishment lies in the marvel of God's achievement. Israel must be brought to the point where they realize they cannot be perfect as God is perfect so that they shall be made perfect and holy and pitiful as their Father is perfect, holy and pitiful.

Ultimately Israel will be saved from their imperfection and immaturity, and so they will reflect the perfection of the heavenly Father. They will be saved from their sins, by their Saviour, Jesus.

IMPOSSIBILITY OF ETERNAL LOSS

It is surely ironic that portions of Matthew 5-7 should be understood and taught in defense of the doctrine of everlasting hell for the wicked. Entirely apart from the fact that the Greek word *aiōnios* (read into this context from Matthew 25:46) does not mean endlessness[1], and the fact that Gehenna does not refer to a place of fiery, conscious torment[2], imposing such a perverse idea on our Lord's sermon makes a complete mockery and confusion of His message.

It can only be claimed hypocritically that Jesus is speaking of an everlasting destiny of misery, from which there is no possibility of escape, for certain individuals (not, of course, including ourselves). The demands placed on our Lord's listeners are demands that no one could keep apart

1. *cf* A. E. Knoch: ALL IN ALL, pp.192-206; James Coram: "The Living God and the Eons," *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.79, p.171.

2. *cf* James Coram: "The Gehenna of Fire," *Unsearchable Riches,* vol. 83, p.279.

from God's gift of a Saviour from sins. God must make His people perfect as He is perfect, or else none of them will enter into the kingdom. Solely on the basis of the standards of righteousness laid down in these chapters, and apart from the Saviour's salvation from sins, no one, whether they are God's people Israel or not, can hope to receive the promises.

If the promise of maturity and perfection is to be fulfilled, God must open the eyes of the blind and give spiritual strength, which in fact He has promised to do in the giving of His Son as the Saviour of His people.

This is not to say that Gehenna and destruction as spoken of here are not serious realities. But we who believe that Christ died for our sins, and that this is the sole basis of our salvation and expectation of life, must surely be prepared in heart to treat our Lord's words concerning future judgments with the greatest care and caution, lest we bring dishonor to His Name. It is well to ask how much anger lies behind the traditional interpretation of these passages. Where is the sense of humility and the turning of the other cheek, demanded by our Lord here, in the scenes of hell so often still presented in sermons of many Bible teachers? Why should we put limits to God's grace and restrict the effectiveness of the cross of Christ by stubborn adherence to such concepts as double predestination[3] or the idea that God has given up a measure of His sovereign will in favor of the free will of man? Why should we confine God's justice to His work of judgment, and His love to His work of salvation, in order to defend the idea of everlasting loss?

It is not the sin of hypocrisy alone that is involved here. There is the sin of disbelief in the attempts to explain a passage like Romans 5:18 in terms of not all mankind being

3. Double predestination is the idea that God predetermined that some people would be saved, and the rest damned to everlasting hell.

justified, or 1 Corinthians 15:22 in terms of not all being vivified in Christ, or Colossians 1:20 in terms of a reconciliation through the blood of Christ's cross that does not reach every enemy in the universe. There is the failure (to our great present loss) of not relying on God as the living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10), and not glorifying Him for His goal of becoming All in all (1 Cor.15:28).

As for our Lord's ministry as recorded in the book of Matthew, we should eagerly view all His words of warning and dire predictions of judgment in the light of such promises as Matthew 1:21 ("He shall be saving His people from their sins"), and Matthew 2:6 ("For out of [Judah] shall come forth the Ruler Who shall shepherd My people Israel") and Matthew 5:48 ("You, then, shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"). We should take to heart as literal truth the words of Ezekiel 36:25,26 and connect them unreservedly to the promise of Matthew 5:8 concerning the clean of heart: "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idol clods I shall cleanse you. I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit will I bestow within you, and I will take away the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

In every way we should avoid a conclusion that sees God as dooming to an eternal hell those whom He does not yet give a clean heart and does not yet make perfect and mature as He is perfect. Here in Matthew God is setting forth astonishing demands, demands which are impossible for anyone to fulfill in their own strength, but He is also preparing Israel for the Saviour from sin and the granting of His spirit for power of righteousness that exceeds that ever shown by their most diligent law-keeper. And what is said about Gehenna and fire and the great fall of the sinner's (the "stupid" man's) house must be taken in rela-

tion to the overall goals announced. God can and does use warnings as motivations for repentance, and He can and does use the carrying out of His judgments for enlightening the eyes of the blinded sinners involved, as well as for purposes of discipline, but these are steps along the way and are not ends in themselves. In the consummation it will be seen and appreciated that Jesus is the Saviour from sins so that God may be known and relied on by all as the Saviour of all mankind. D.H.H.

JUDGMENT IN GEHENNA

THE FUTURE JUDGMENT SCENE described in Isaiah 66:23, 24 is much easier to understand when we become aware of what has already taken place at this very same spot, just outside Jerusalem. Here lay the gorge called the vale of the sons of Hinnom. The Israelites once built their high places here for the purpose of sacrificing their own children to the god Molech (Jer.7:31; 19:5; 2 Kings 23:10). Later this same spot was termed "Tophet," that is "Vomit" or "Abomination." This gloomy valley, the setting for Israel's most awful and offensive crimes, had already been turned by Yahweh into a place of judgment, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem. This was the spot that Yahweh picked to give His sinful people over to the sword so that it became known as the "Valley of Slaughter" because so many were slain on its slopes.

Because of the presence of so many unburied dead, this gorge became especially repulsive to the Jews, so was only inhabited by the birds and beasts of prey.

When these concluding lines from Isaiah's prophecy were read to the Jews in their synagogue, they knew full well that such words could only refer to the cursed vale of the sons of Hinnom, outside the city, which later became

known as the Gehenna. It was obvious to them that this would be the logical spot, in that future day, for God to deal out judgment. For many, many years this same valley had served as the "city dump" for the refuse of the townsfolk. Even the corpses of executed criminals were cast into it, to be devoured by the worms and the fires, which burned incessantly in order to destroy the filth and the stench.

Our Lord's predictions about the coming kingdom closely paralleled those of the prophets, for He not only foresaw bountiful blessings but also fearful judgments. He elaborated upon what had been said about this period in previous predictions, explaining it more fully and shedding further light on many hazy points. He warned His hearers powerfully of the judgment which would one day envelop the vale of Hinnom. Unfortunately, faulty translation has hidden this fact from the eyes of most and severed the connection between our Lord's threats and the warnings of Isaiah 66:24, because in every passage where our Lord referred to Gehenna, these versions mistranslate it "hell." Perhaps this is done to lend support to the sagging doctrine of "everlasting torment," yet it mars and mutilates the important link between those predictions in prior prophecies which deal with the same subject.

Like a diamond in its setting, this judgment scene in Gehenna fits into the framework of our Lord's sermon. He first spoke about entering the kingdom, which at the same time He was still heralding as "near." But, in contrast to this, He also warned them of the possibility that one might forfeit all its blessings by being caught in different snares, which can only mean becoming bound to certain sins . . . . Such will be thrown into Gehenna at the kingdom's inauguration. The severity of this judgment is seen from His dictum that merely calling a brother "Stupid" would make one liable to the Gehenna of fire (Matt.5:22).

On the other hand He offers comfort to those who will

endure affliction in that day because of their faith, with these words: "Now I am saying to you, My friends, be not afraid of those who are killing the body and after this do not have anything more excessive that they can do. Now I shall be intimating to you of Whom you may be afraid. Be afraid of Him, Who, after killing, has authority to be casting into Gehenna. Yea, I am saying to you, of this One be afraid" (Luke 12:4,5).

Here we may see the proper order of the process of this judgment of Gehenna. First the body is killed, and only after that is the corpse thrown into the valley with its smoldering fires and voracious worms. Therefore this is not a judgment in which the sinner suffers, for he is already dead. Likewise, it becomes very evident that this terrestrial tribunal cannot last forever. Even though the Lord called it "eonian fire," this only indicates that it will burn throughout one whole eon. That it must have an end is not difficult to prove. Scripture says definitely that at the end of the millennium the entire earth will be dissolved by combustion (2 Peter 3:12). Thus this place of judgment located in the vale of Hinnom will also melt and be decomposed like everything else on the earth's surface.

M. Jaegle

THE CRAMPED GATE AND NARROW WAY

How earnestly did we once exhort sinners to leave the broad way which leads to destruction, for the narrow path that leads to life! (Matt.7:13,14). But, thank God, we learned the great truth that we are in Christ and share His life. How then could we be on a road that *leads to* life? I learned, moreover, that the entrance into life was *wide,* not *cramped.* It was entered by *grace,* not by *striving* (Luke 13:24). The narrow way was not the evangel but

the *law.* That leads to life, for those who keep it, but, alas of the few who find it, none observe it. The precept given for life is for death (Rom.7:10).

The word "strait" is no longer understood, hence it is translated *cramped* in the Concordant Version. In its other forms it means *groan, distress.* We westerners do not know what a narrow road is. I lived on a narrow street. It was just wide enough so three automobiles could drive abreast. In the East a street is not narrow if a single auto mobile can squeeze through. It is wide, extra wide. It is narrow if pedestrians must go in single file. The word *cramped* means still more. It is so narrow that it makes one groan to squeeze through. That is the normal experience of one under the law of Moses. But the freedom we have in Christ is like the flight of a bird in the air. Not cramped, but spacious. Full of life, not leading to life. Not groaning, but singing!

The figure of the two ways was used by our Lord in proclaiming the evangel of the kingdom, before His rejection by Israel, with the cross out of sight, long before Paul was given his evangel for the nations, which is in force today. Yet even in that economy the gospel was not cramped. In the tabernacle the entrance was very wide indeed. Our Lord's words were immediately preceded by the basic law of the kingdom. "All, then, whatever you may be wanting that men should be doing to you, thus *you,* also, be doing to them, for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt.7:12). This law is the cramped gate and narrow way. Who can fulfill it?

A. E. Knoch

The above writing, "Judgment in Gehenna," by M. Jaegle, is from *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.52, pp.74,75; the meditation, "The Cramped Gate and Narrow Way," by A. E. Knoch, is from *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.24, p.150.

FACE TO FACE

THE SON OF GOD'S LOVE "is the Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross), whether those on the earth or those in the heavens" (Col.1:18-20).

Of all the many wonderful declarations of God's love for His Son, this surely is the most comprehensive. These words describe the full and glorious honors which are justly bestowed, but in addition, there is also a clear declaration of intent. As Firstborn among many brethren, our Lord is to lead this same ecclesia in a grand consummation of universal reconciliation. Moreover, this is achieved through the only means possible, *the blood of His cross!* How often we forget that it is this supreme sacrifice which will bring God the rich harvest of His heart's desire. We ourselves are graced ". . . in the Beloved: in Whom we are having the deliverance through His blood" (Eph.1:6,7).

GOD'S VAST LOVE

It is of paramount importance that we should not conclude that everything prior to Golgotha was failure or disappointment and that God was carrying out some vague sort of *rescue mission.* Throughout past centuries there have been disasters or tragedies which the casual observer will view as God's discipline and even anger, but a closer look, lovingly escorted by His spirit, must reveal a gradual

unfolding of our Father's immutable purpose, founded in His vast love, righteousness and grace.

"Let us not get the false idea that God, the Subjector, was unjust until the cross of Christ, and that then He set right the evil He had done. He did not change then. But He *manifested* His justice and love in the sacrifice of His Son. In Him, His Image and Likeness, He showed how *He* suffers, along with His creatures, as the victims of evil and sin. He *displayed* His righteousness even when He passed over the penalties of sins in the past, but especially in the current era, so that we can see His righteousness in the sacrifice of His Son. Before the cross His justice was but dimly discerned, as we see in the book of Job. Now it is definitely demonstrated by the suffering, death and resurrection of His Beloved.

"The sacrifice of Christ, the Son of God, although the sorest sin that man ever committed, has virtue in it to counteract and transmute all sin into a source of highest blessing to man and greatest glory to God. All eonian sin is necessary as a somber background for post-eonian blessing, through the value of His mediatorial offering. On the earth, in Israel and the nations, this gradually leads up to the consummation, through the *propitiation* of the kingdom until the *justification* of all (Rom.5:18) at the consummation. But for us, whose realm is among the celestials, justification is already our portion.

"In Christ's cross God displays *His* righteousness, so that He is Himself just, as well as the Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus (Rom.3:26). We must not restrict our thoughts to the fact that He is *our* Justifier, through Christ. Before He could be that He must be *manifestly* just *Himself*. We must acknowledge that, to the limited understanding of a human, apart from His revelation, God may appear to be a ferocious fiend. In fact, almost all uninspired religions show Him as such by means of their idols and their

ceremonial rites. Even Christendom presents Him as an eternal tormentor in regard to the unbeliever. But the cross has proven, by the suffering of His Son, that He is far more than just or right, even *gracious* and *loving*."[1]

BEFORE THE DISRUPTION

Writing to the dispersed expatriates who had escaped the cruel Roman persecution, Peter made it clear that they were ransomed, not with corruptible things, ". . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a flawless and unspotted lamb, foreknown, indeed, *before the disruption of the world, yet manifested in the last times,* because of you, who through Him are believing in God, Who rouses Him from among the dead and is giving Him glory, so that your faith and expectation is to be in God" (1 Peter 1:19-21).

Here is clear evidence that God made loving provision long before the apparent intrusion of sin. There was nothing unforeseen, nor should we even consider the appearance of sin as an intrusion. This was introduced as an essentially contrasting factor of revelation into His wise and wonderful affection. The separation and pain were real enough, as was the suffering of God. That the awful sacrifice of His Son was needed is sufficient proof of the infinite dimensions of God's love. Through our Lord's precious words we are granted a brief and quite intimate glimpse into the tender relationship between the Father and Son:

"I glorify Thee on earth, finishing the work which Thou hast given Me, that I should be doing it. And now glorify Thou Me, Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had before the world is with Thee" (John 17:4,5), and again, ". . . for Thou lovest Me before the disruption of the world" (John 17:24).

"It is with awed hearts and unshod feet that we enter

1. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.47, p.192.

into the pure precincts of God's love to His Son. We feel most unworthy to listen to such sacred secrets. Before the disruption, before sin or sorrow or a single sigh had sent its shadows across this scene, God's love for His Son had its birth. He came into the world, not to win God's love, but in response to it."[2]

While He hung, crucified, at Golgotha, our Lord's words were charged with profound significance, but what shall we declare concerning the silence of His Father?

"Was it for me He bowed His head
Upon the cross, and freely shed
His precious blood—that crimson tide?
Was it for me the Saviour died?"

IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

There are many startling considerations to be realized by those who are able to accept what this supreme sacrifice accomplished. This present day of grace, a glorious time of conciliation, was just one of many honors worthily lavished upon the Son of God's love.

The incredible revelation that the multifarious wisdom of God was to be made known to the celestials, *through a terrestrial ecclesia,* designated, called, and justified, was now granted. Disclosure of this amazing news, following Christ's exaltation, was first made known through the apostle Paul. For all; but especially the ecclesia, this unique plan in God's purpose, is full of tremendous significance. Firstborn among many brethren! Essential to His glory! ". . . how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?" (Rom.8:32).

It was not immediately apparent, especially to His disciples, who looked for the restoration of the kingdom, but it now becomes obvious that the nation of Israel *had to reject*

2. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.168.

both King and kingdom. In fact, the kingdom itself could not be restored unless the King was put to death. Further; and here we must pause in profound adoration. The unfolding of this present secret administration of grace, ". . . concealed from the eons in God" (Eph.3:9), was completely impossible *prior to the shedding of His innocent blood on Golgotha's stake.*

The great longing of God's heart is to disclose and share His unbounded love with all creation. His first loving act was the gift of His Son: "Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him" (Col.1:16,17).

The divine condescension in this revelation is not at all fully comprehended. There are innumerable terms of endearment which only humans might fully appreciate. "Father," "Son," "Brethren," and all the associated loving intimacy of other family relationships. These terms practically fill the whole of Scripture, and it is through these that we learn just a little of the deep meaning of tenderness and compassion; but especially, love.

The dire influence of death and sin in our members cause us to make the mistake of measuring His infinite wisdom by our own vain folly. In Scripture there are many apparent contradictions, but these only appear so because there is partial revelation of truth. We must not make premature judgments until we have, *not instalments alone, but the whole truth!*

GOD'S SPIRIT IS SEARCHING ALL

When considering the offense in Eden which left such a devastating legacy of death, and then the callousness

of the nation of Israel in first rejecting the offered kingdom and then crucifying the King, we are faced with two questions. (1) Could God not have foreseen these calamities? (2) If those involved, Adam and the nation of Israel, were helpless, being disabled, will they ultimately be held responsible for their deeds?

In love, our gracious Father has anticipated such reverent inquiry. We seek clear perception of His purpose, and we exult in all indications of His deity. At the long awaited consummation it is the glory of the Father and His Son which will ring throughout the whole universe in a grand acclamation of praise. We are urged to examine these matters, ". . . for the spirit is searching all, even the depths of God" (1 Cor.2:10).

"Now we obtained, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we may be perceiving that which is being graciously given to us by God, which we are speaking also, not with words taught by human wisdom, but with those taught by the spirit, matching spiritual blessings with spiritual words" (1 Cor.2:12-13).

Answering the first question it is evident that provision was made for the necessary humbling, self-awareness gained only through a knowledge of good and evil. The bleak estrangement which followed on our parent's disobedience and sin also provided a situation where our gracious Father could reveal His great love. When the last enemy, death, is abolished, so the grievous effects of sin will have run their course. We perceive that the just, divine judgments of God are corrective; which will set matters right, and which will bring Him honor, praise and glory from all creation. Then will come to pass that great consummation, when, through His victorious Son, ". . . God may be All in all" (1 Cor.15:28).

We beseech our Father's patience for even posing this second question. It is difficult, nay, hopeless, to view this

from our dying, disabled condition and with our feeble understanding. Whatever thoughts we may venture on this subject will inevitably be based on the subjective values of human justice. How dare we question the loving wisdom of God, ". . . Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:11). This imagined dilemma has already been rehearsed and answered in Scripture (Rom. 9:14-25), and as stated above, all God's judgments are corrective. Suffice it then to reiterate this and also note that "God locks up all in stubbornness" (Rom.11:32). None will ultimately be held to be "responsible," and thankfully, God's judgments will not be based on human responsibility.

With hindsight (the ability to understand, after something has happened, what might better have been done or what caused the event), and even with our present bewildering standards of justice, we would no more consider Israel "responsible" in rejecting the kingdom restoration which we now know simply would not, and indeed could not, *in those days,* have happened.

Indeed there is much that God brings into our lives that "is hard to understand, till with a mind discerning, we trace His guiding hand . . . . So keep us, Lord, e'er trusting, supremely in Thy love, our all to Thee confiding, our hearts with Thee above." Both in present struggle and in future judgment God is working out His glorious purpose.

"The knowledge of God's Word is good, an acquaintance with His ways is better, but a realization of Himself is best. Faith accepts His sayings, confidence acquiesces in His ways, love rests in His essence. Let us believe what He says, and we will not only delight in what He does, but exult in what He is."[3]

Donald Fielding

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3. A. E. Knoch: THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD, p.340.

DISQUIETING THOUGHTS

THERE is often a conflict between what we think *ought to be* so and what *is* so. This is well exhibited throughout the debate between Job and his associates.

In his second address (chapter 20), Zophar tells Job how things should be, as firmly established by ancient wisdom: "Don't you know this, from long ago, from when humanity was placed on the earth, that the jubilant song of the wicked is brief, and the rejoicing of the polluted lasts but a moment?" (Job 20:5). To think otherwise, as Job seems to have been suggesting, is disquieting to Zophar and creates a hurried sense of nervousness in him (20:2).

Good must be rewarded. Evil must be punished. And this is what Zophar's belief in God is all about. "El shall evict" any gain of the wicked man "from his belly" (20:15). "He shall send against him the heat of His anger and shall rain it upon him as his nourishment" (20:23).

This is true, but what *should* be generally remains for now as what *shall* be fully realized but *is not* yet experienced. The great error with Zophar's position is that he sees God only as an ongoing Enforcer of the principle that good is rewarded and wickedness condemned. To go beyond that and see God, as Job has been maintaining with a great struggle, as responsible for all things, shaping and directing both good and evil in accord with His own unknown design, would upset Zophar's whole philosophy of life.

Consequently, Zophar takes a false position about the current and ongoing fate of wicked people that is easily shown to be wrong by most observable evidence. Zophar

JOB 20, 21

20 +**Then Zophar the Naamathite** ˡ**answered,** + ˡ**saying:**
2 **Therefore my disquieting** thoughts
are causing me to **reply,**
+ ⁱ**On** ᵖ**account of my hurried**⁻ sense with**in me.**
3 **I am hearing admonition** meant for **my mortification,**
And the **spirit** ᶠ**of my understanding**
makes **me** ˡ**respond.**
4 Don't **you know this, from** ᶠʳ**long** ago,
From when **humanity** was **placed**⁻ **on** the **earth,**
5 **That** the **jubilant** song **of** the **wicked** is ᶠ **brief,**
And the **rejoicing of** the **polluted** lasts ᶠʳ**but** a **moment?**
6 Even **if his dignity** ˡ**ascends to** the **heavens,**
And his head ˡ**touches** › the **thick** clouds,
7 **He shall perish** › **permanently like his** own **ordure;**
Those hav**ing seen him shall say, Where** is **he?**
8 **He shall fly** away **like** a **dream,**
and they shall not find him,
+**For he shall be bolted away like** a **vision of** the **night.**
9 The **eye** that **glimpsed him** + **shall not** ᶜ**do** so **anymore,**
Neither shall his ʳⁱ**place regard him further.**
10 **His sons shall** ᵐ**seek benevolence** from the **poor,**
+**When his hands** ˡ**relinquish their virility.**
11 **His bones were filled** by **his adolescence,**
+**Yet** that gain **shall lie with him** ᵒⁿ**in** the **soil.**
12 Even **if evil is** ˡ**sweet in his mouth,**
And **he** ˡ**suppresses it under his tongue,**
13 Though **he** ˡ**spares** ᵒⁿ **it and** does **not** ˡ**forsake it,**
And he ˡ**holds fast to it** ⁱ**on** the **midst of his palate,**

claims that human history "from long ago" shows that "the rejoicing of the polluted lasts but a moment" (20:5) and that "he shall perish permanently like his own ordure" (20:7). Not only this, but Zophar insists that the children of such evil people will be impoverished (v.10); their estate will be lost (v.15), for El Himself will see to it (20:15,23).

Zophar is not viewing some far future adjudication but claims that serpents (undoubtedly associated with Genesis and the entrance of sin) will soon turn against the person who has followed the leadings of sin (20:16-18). Such a person, like Job, will lose all his ill-gotten gains before he dies (20:17,18). "When his affluence is full" (as Job's has been) "there shall be distress for him; *every means of misery* shall come upon him" (20:22). It is as simple as that. Thus, in this way, Zophar interprets the horrors of Job's situation displayed before his eyes.

With such a narrow viewpoint both of God and of the witness of history, Zophar is setting himself up for a fall. His whole principle that good is currently rewarded and evil clearly punished cannot stand before the facts of ongoing events and past records. If "dread" (v.25) and "total darkness" (v.26) is the "allotment" being assigned to the wicked person "by El" (v.29), then why can't this be seen?

Zophar will take no direct part in the next round of speeches. This may suggest that he is abashed by the way in which Job so easily refutes his arguments. In any case, the exchange of thoughts in Job 20 and 21 makes it evident that if the principle of good being rewarded and evil being put down is to be maintained along with a recognition of God, then God must be involved in more than justly responding to human thoughts and deeds. God must be operating all things with some future and unknown goal in view. And this is the very hope Job has been clinging to and Zophar has been trying to extinguish.

14 Yet **his bread will be turned** sour **in his bowels;**
The **bile of cobras** is **within him.**
15 The **estate he has swallowed** down,
+ **he shall vomit it** up;
El shall evict it from his belly.
16 **He shall suck** the **poison of cobras;**
The **tongue of** a **puff-adder shall kill him.**
17 **He shall not see** [i] the **rillets,**
The **streams of torrents of honey and clotted cream.**
18 He [c]**must return**[l] the fruit of his **labor**
and not [l]**swallow** it down,
And [M]**in**~[S] the **estate of his commerce,**
he has **no**[t] [l]**enjoyment.**
19 **For he has maltreated, he has forsaken** the **poor;**
He has pillaged a **house** + which **he** did **not** [l]**build.**
20 **For he has not known ease in his belly;**
[i]**From his coveting, he** has **not** [m]**tried** to [l]**escape.**
21 There **is no**thing in **store** [›]**of his food.**
Therefore his bounty can**not** [l]**hope** to last.
22 [i]**When his affluence** is **full**–
there **shall be distress for him;**
Every means of misery shall come upon **him.**
23 **It shall come** to **be,** in order **to fill his belly,**
That **He shall send** [i]**against him** the **heat of His anger**
And shall rain it up**on him** [i]**as his nourishment.**
24 **He shall** run **away from** a **weapon of iron;**
From a **bronze bow it shall cut into him.**
25 **It will be pulled** out **and** brought [l]**forth from** his **body,**
And a **flashing** blade **from his bile;**
Dread shall [go]**come over him.**
26 [all]**Total darkness** lies **buried**[l] **for his secluded**[l] riches;
A **fire** that **was not blown** upon **shall devour him;**
It shall imperil anything **surviving in his tent.**
27 The **heavens shall expose his depravity,**
And the **earth** will **rise**[l] [›]**against him.**

20:18 *M-~s* **in:** Hb **as.**

JOB'S PANIC

If Zophar is disquieted by Job's attempts to associate his suffering with some divine operation apart from simple retribution for wickedness, Job's spirit is "impatient," (21:4) and he is "filled with panic and shuddering" (21:6) by any suggestion that it could be otherwise. Job believes in God as Judge and Rewarder just as much as his associates, but for Job this operation of adjudication cannot explain either his present sufferings or the facts concerning the present lives of clearly irreverent and wicked people. Job's entire soul shudders at such a narrow view of Deity and the experience of evil. If God's only connection with humanity lies in the realm of discipline then He can have little to do with Job's sufferings, and that cannot be!

"Face me," Job commands, "and be desolated, and place your hand over your mouth" (Job 21:5). If Zophar will look at Job fairly, in view of his own knowledge of Job's history, he will know that his pat explanations for evil will not serve. Then if he will honestly look around at humanity as a whole his disquietude will become desolation.

The great weight of evidence from the past and present shows that the wicked "become masterful with potent power" (21:7). "Their seed is established; their houses remain in peace, . . . *and no club of Eloah is upon them*" (21:8,9). Instead of his sons begging scraps from the poor (*cf* 20:10) "their youngsters go forth like the flock, and their children are dancing" (21:11). Far from their jubilant song being brief (*cf* 20:5), "they take up tambourine and harp, and they rejoice to the sound of the shepherd's pipe. They finish their days in well-being, and they settle down in a quiet moment to the unseen" (21:12,13). It is the exception rather than the rule when the wicked end their days in poverty and distress.

Moreover, those who irreverently mock the Deity, say-

28 The ~deluge~ **shall deport his house,**
Spilling over **in** the **day of His anger.**
29 **This** is the **portion from Elohim** for the **wicked** *h*person,
And the **allotment** *sa*assigned **him** *f* **by El.**
21 +**So Job** |answered, + |saying:
2 **Hearken,** yea **hearken**~ to **my declaration,**
And let this *b*be **your consolations** to me.
3 **Bear** with **me** +**while I**′ **am speaking,**
And after I have **spoken**~, **you may deride.**
4 As for **me,** is **my concern** directed **to** a **human?**
And if so, for **what reason**
should not my spirit be impatient?
5 **Face** › **me, and be desolated,**
And place your **hand over** your **mouth.**
6 + *if* **When I remember** this, + **I am** filled with **panic,**
And shuddering takes **hold** of **my flesh.**
7 For **what reason should** the **wicked live** on?
They develop *mr*and become **masterful**
with **potent** power.
8 **Their seed** is **established**| **with them** ›**in their presence,**
And their offspring ›**in** front of **their eyes.**
9 **Their houses** remain in **peace** apart **from alarm,**
And no[t] **club of Eloah** is upon **them.**
10 [7]**Their**~ **bull impregnates and is never** |**fruitless;**
[7]**Their**~ **young cow** |**delivers and** does **not** |**miscarry.**
11 **They** *m*let **their youngsters** |**go** forth **like** the **flock,**
And their children are dancing.
12 **They** |**take up** *as* **tambourine and harp,**
And they |**rejoice to** the **sound of** the **shepherd's pipe.**
13 **They** |*all*finish **their days in well**-being,
And they |**settle** down **in** a quiet **moment** to the **unseen.**
14 +**Yet they** |**say to El, Go away from us,**
+**For we** do **not desire** a **knowledge of Your ways.**

20:28 ~-~ **deluge:** Hb **crop of.**
21:10 7-~ **Their:** Hb **His.**

ing to El, "Go away from us, for we do not desire a knowledge of Your ways" end up holding on to the good they had planned to get. This wicked devising, at least, is as it appears to Job even though he was not in on their counseled plans (21:14-16). Job has not been in on God's counsels either, but assuming that the wicked will eventually receive Eloah's appointed cramps for their lawlessness, he determines that this must be presently secluded (21:17-19), and so reserved for another time.

Job's reply to Zophar in chapter 21 is devastating. It points clearly to observable evidence that Zophar has not admitted but which anyone "passing on the way" could verify (21:29). But Job does not exult in this triumph. It does not end Job's panic and shuddering to prove that wicked people prosper and that El does not bring the club of His anger upon them. Zophar's arguments have been offensive vanity (21:34) because they do not face the fact that an upright person like Job is being afflicted, and wicked people, both in the past and in the present, so often prosper. This is what should have been disquieting to Zophar instead of Job's attempts to relate these apparent inequalities to God. The critical question is why God has *not* brought His club on the wicked. There is something about God and His relationship to evil that cannot be explained simply by the principles of judgment and reward.

In chapter 21 Job makes little progress in this struggle to relate his sufferings to a wise and powerful Deity. He pays more attention to Zophar's arguments in chapter 20 than he has previously done to anything his associates have said. Because Zophar's arguments are so easily refuted, Job becomes more distracted than before from the major issue. The problem of evil in this world where God is in charge is deepened by the evidence Job lays before Zophar and us in this address.

Yet we have gained by this exchange in chapters 20 and

15 **What** is He **Who-Suffices that we should serve Him?**
And what [l]**benefit** would **we** [c]**gain**
that we should make **intercession** [i]**to Him?**
16 **Behold,** is **not their good in their hand?**
(Still, **the counsel of** the **wicked is far from me.**)
17 **How** often **is** the **lamp of** the **wicked** [l]**extinguished**
[+]**That their calamity** [l]**comes on them,**
That **He** [l]**apportions cramps in His anger?**
18 Do **they** [l]**become like crushed straw before** the **wind,**
[+]**Or like trash** that the **sweeping** whirlwind **steals** away?
19 **Is Eloah secluding** payment for **his**[◊] **lawlessness**
to give **to his sons?**
May He repay [›] **him** [+]**that he may know!**
20 **May his** own **eyes see his downfall,**
And may he drink [f]**of** the **fury of** Him **Who-Suffices.**
21 **For what** is **his delight in his house after he** is gone,
[+]**When** the **number of his months has run out?**
22 Who **shall teach knowledge to El,**
[+]**Since He Him**self **shall judge** the **exalted**[l] ones?
23 **This** one [l]**dies in his robust plentifulness,**
His whole state **snug and** at **ease;**
24 **His viscera are full** of **fat,**
And the **marrow of his bones is** [l]**hearty.**
25 [+]**Yet an**other [l]**dies** [i]**with** a **bitter soul,**
[+] Who **has nev**er **eaten** [i]**of good.**
26 **They** [l]**lie together** [on]**in** the **soil,**
And maggots [l]**cover** [on] **them** both.
27 **Behold, I know your devisings**
And the **schemes** that **you** [l]**wrongly** make [on]**against me.**
28 **For you are saying, Where** is the **house of** the **tyrant,**
And where are the **tent tabernacles of** the **wicked?**
29 Have **you not asked** those **passing** on the **way,**
And do **you not** [l]**admit their evidence,**

21:19 his: i.e., a man's.

30 **That** the **evil** one **is** ˡ**kept back** ˃**in** the **day of calamity;**
˃**In** the **day of rage they are** ˡ**escorted** safely?
31 ᵃ**Who** ˡ**denounces his way** ᵒⁿ**to his face,**
And ᵃ**who** ˡ**repays** ˃ **him** for what **he** himself **has done?**
32 ⁺**When he´ is** ˡ**fetched to** the **burying ground,**
⁺ Watch **is** set ˡ**alert over** the **grave-mound.**
33 The **clods of** the **wadi are sweet to him;**
⁺ **All humanity** ˡ**draws** out **after him,**
And there **is no numbering** of those **before him.**
34 **How** ⁺**then** can **you** ˡ**comfort me** with **vanity,**
⁺**When** only **offense remains** in **your replies?**

*

21. We have learned that no matter how true something may be, it cannot be shown true by false claims. It is true that evil will not prosper, and indeed God will see to this. El Himself "shall judge the exalted ones" (21:22). But reliance on this principle cannot be established by pretending that it is observable and verifiable in current experience, or by supposing God has nothing in view beyond such works of judgment. We have also gained in being prepared a little more than before for the revelations of Himself and His operations that God gives in the latter chapters of the book. What we observe and hear and feel at present is not the consummation. D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, VOLUME 87

Bindery work has now been completed, and *Unsearchable Riches* volume 87 (1996) is now available for shipment (clothbound, dark green cloth, 288 pages; $20.00 per copy, $2.00 s&h; California residents add sales tax). We regret that we cannot make these volumes available at a lower price; however, our basic production costs alone are substantially in excess of $15.00 per volume, and bindery expenses are more than $6.00 per book additional.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1997
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT

EDITORIAL

THESE are good times for being a believer. People are sinners. There is much sickness in body and weakness in mind. Hate and greed are everywhere, and wars are far from disappearing. We cannot get away from dangers and fears, and the sense of vulnerability keeps seeping into our lives.

But this is not simply because we are approaching the end of the second millennium since Christ came among us or that the characteristics of the last days of our era (*cf* 2 Tim.3:1-9) seem to be growing, but disease and unease have afflicted humanity from the very beginning. And the most powerful and greatest of remedies for this is, as it has always been, faith in God and His Word.

Job spoke of the prosperity of powerful oppressors of his day who arise and make it so "none can put reliance in their lives" (Job 24:22). In the days of Eli, his own sons became disqualified to mediate for sinners because of their own evil deeds (1 Sam.2:22-26). Yet Job, even under crushing affliction, was strengthened by secluding in his bosom the instruction and sayings of God (Job 23:12). Also in Eli's time, Hannah exulted in Yahweh Who *regulates* actions and Who makes destitute and enriches (1 Sam.2:3,7).

Similarly in our Lord's early ministry a leper came to Him with full confidence in His ability to cleanse, and a Roman officer approached Him with conviction concerning His authority to heal, while "the sons of the kingdom" whom Jesus came to save from their sins, continued in the *darkness* of their weaknesses and sorrows (Matt.8:1-13). How was it that Job and Hannah, and the leper and the centurion were blessed with faith, but thousands of others all around them remained in stubbornness, with all its distor-

tions and phobias? Did not Eliphaz and Eli and the sons of the kingdom need confidence in God and assurance in the wisdom and goodness of His ways as much as the others? And even more sobering, we must ask about the outright wicked people Job referred to, and the sons of Eli, and those who sought to kill Jesus: Did they not need to rest with confidence in the wisdom, power and glory of God?

Of course they did. Thus Christ died also for these sinners, these infirm and irreverent enemies who have not yet been given faith as we have been given (*cf* Rom.5:6-11, 18,19). But in the meantime, we can only rejoice that God has graciously granted us faith (Phil.1:29) in these days. The majority of mankind are like the unbelieving malefactor at the cross with our Lord, who voiced "skepticism" and only wanted "a *present* release from their woes .... They do not believe God or look for bliss in the future through His Anointed" (see p.55). What a privilege it is, in these dark days while death continues its relentless eroding of human hopes and strength, to believe that God is in control! What a blessing to keep firmly in our hearts the truth that He Who rouses Christ from among the dead (see p.57) will also vivify dying humanity in Him!

But even many who believe that Christ died for their sins have not been given the grace of being assured that in dying for all, all are identified in His death (2 Cor.5:14) and that all enemies in the universe will someday know that reconciliation that has been gained through the blood of the cross (Col.1:20). To believe what Paul writes concerning the oncoming eons and the "full glories of God's consummation" (*cf* p.67) is not granted to all our brethren today. But what a spirit of joy and optimism believing this revelation instills!

May the considerations taken up in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches* encourage the reader, day by day, in confidence and assurance in faith, and in thankfulness and praise to our faithful God. D.H.H.

CRUCIFIED TOGETHER WITH HIM

THE CROSS is the basis of the evangel for today. The essential place of Christ's humiliating death was never heralded before Paul, and even he did not proclaim it in the book of Acts, because Israel was still on the scene, and it was not yet recognized in their evangel. For that matter, it is not given its proper place in Christendom today, which does that for which Paul was not commissioned, and is founded on human wisdom and effort. The world, in its wisdom, demands something of man, either the deeds that had to be done under the law, in Israel, such as repentance, baptism, and corresponding conduct, or a life of doing and giving and self-improvement, utterly ignoring the sentence of crucifixion passed upon it by the Supreme.

Nevertheless, with boldness and clarity, the evangel of grace and peace has now been made known in Paul's epistles, firmly founded on the crucifixion of Christ. "Yet we are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity" (1 Cor.1:23). "For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death, nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that *our old humanity was crucified together with Him* . . ." (Rom. 6:5,6). "With Christ have I been crucified" (Gal.2:20).

When we died with Christ[1] we did not die an ordinary death of gradual dissolution, simply from lack of vitality.

1. See also A. E. Knoch's article "Crucified With Christ," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.38, p.37.

We died as sinners, as incorrigible criminals, worthy of being wiped off the face of the earth. All this was within us, even if it never showed much on the surface. Christ received our deserts. His death was fraught with a time of terrible torture and disgrace from the hand of man and awful distress from the hiding of God's face.

THOSE CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

It may help us to grasp the momentous truth of our crucifixion with Christ, in spirit, if we consider the literal occurrences when He was nailed to the stake. He was not the only one who was executed in this way on that occasion. Four in all, two robbers (Matt.27:38; Mark 15:27), and two malefactors (Luke 23:32), were crucified *with* Christ on that day. These were representative and illustrative of the great truth that the *world* (Gal.6:14), and the *flesh* (Gal. 5:24), and the *old humanity* (Rom.6:6), and *Paul* (Gal. 2:20) and *we* ourselves are reckoned to have died together with Him (Rom.6:8-11; Col.2:20), on that, the greatest crisis in human history.

THE FOUR CRIMINALS

It is generally supposed that only two others were crucified with Christ, but a careful consideration seems to show that there were two kinds, malefactors and robbers, each of which represents a different division of mankind. *Malefactors* are, literally, simply EVIL-ACTers. It is used only in Luke, which is written about the Son of Adam, and includes a view of all humanity, all of whom do evil. All are sinners. *Robbers*, however, which is used in Matthew, refers especially to the people under law, and the nation who, not only sinned, but transgressed and offended. The A.V. actually uses the word "rob" in Malachi 3:8 where the whole nation is accused of defrauding Yahweh of tithes and heave offerings. In our Lord's day, especially at His

trial and crucifixion, the chief priests were far more guilty than Herod or Pilate.

THE WORLD CRUCIFIED

The simple fact that Christ not only suffered and died, but underwent the shameful, humiliating ordeal of crucifixion *for* the world, should show that it greatly deserves the same sentence. But we will never be able to see this if we do not view it as it appears in God's sight, and consider it in its relation to Him. Not until then will we, like the malefactor (Luke 23:41), acknowledge the justness of our crucifixion, in spirit.

Let us consider mankind as a whole. We have God's opinion of them before the deluge: "And seeing is Yahweh Elohim that much is the evil of mankind in the earth, and every form of the devices of its heart is but evil all its days" (Gen.6:5). And is not the world today altogether deserving of a similar assessment?

When Paul writes, "May it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal.6:14), he is not referring to the *death* of Christ merely, for salvation, but the *cross* of Christ for humiliation. So few make the distinction, but there is a tremendous difference. It is the *shameful* death. *The end of the flesh is in view here.* There are all kinds of movements today to make man better. They have been at it for four or five thousand years, and behold, where we are! We cannot expect any more from human efforts now than in the past, for the simple reason that God has already crucified the world.

THE BELIEVING MALEFACTOR

Even though a malefactor, one of the men who was crucified with Christ had *faith* in Him and looked to the *future.* He did not even ask for present relief, but rebuked his com-

panion for his lack of godly fear. He then acknowledged the justice of his own judgment and recognized the sinlessness of the Saviour. He had evidently heard of His proclamation of the kingdom and believed, so looked forward, in faith, to a future salvation in that day. For those who are crucified with Christ, there is no glorification in this life, but only in that which is to come. We are "joint enjoyers of Christ's allotment, *if so be that we are suffering together,* that we should be glorified together also" (Rom.8:17).

Of the four who were literally crucified with Christ, the believing malefactor comes closest to our spiritual position. The unbelieving malefactor may well be taken as representative of the *world* today. He it was who blasphemed Him, who challenged Him to bring about a *present* salvation from the evils that beset them. But the believer was like us. He acknowledged the justness of his fate, yet justified Christ, and believed in His salvation in the *future.*

THE MALEFACTOR STANDS FOR HUMANITY

Perhaps the most important point about this malefactor is the total *lack* of good works, or any effort whatever to *merit* salvation. Indeed, what could he have done in his position? He acknowledged his guilt, but had no opportunity whatever to do any works fit for repentance. He begs to be remembered by the Lord when He may be coming into His kingdom. But he had not fulfilled any of the conditions for entrance into it. So our Lord does not promise this boon, but assures him that he would be with Him under conditions the very opposite of the suffering and distress which he was enduring. This was best expressed by the term "paradise."

The name paradise is often used in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures for a PROTECTED place, or garden. It is the Persian word for a *park.* It describes, no doubt, a literal garden in the new earth (Rev.2:7; 22:1-5), in the

midst of which will be the log of life, yet, at the same time, a symbol of future bliss in the spiritual as well as the physical sphere. Our Lord chose this term as a type of future felicity as a contrast to present suffering. Until He Himself returns in glory, the saints have no promise of physical pleasure or glory apart from His presence. There is an earthly paradise in the new earth. But Paul was snatched away to the third heaven, so it may also be symbolic of future bliss in any location.

PRESENT PAIN AND FUTURE BLISS

The great difference between faith and unbelief came to a focus at the crucifixion. The unbelieving malefactor, representative of mankind as a whole, in accord with Luke's account, voices his skepticism by saying "Are not you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" (Luke 23:39). But he received no answer from our Lord. This exposes the heart of humanity. They want a *present* release from their woes. They will follow a leader who will promise them health, wealth and happiness in *this* life. The world is continually striving to improve the condition of humanity in this eon and will follow any antichrist who promises them immediate relief from their troubles. They do not believe God or look for bliss in the future, through His Anointed.

THE SEQUEL

Like the malefactor on the cross, we have no promise of present relief. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we are under trial, as a preparation and a contrast to future bliss, so that we will all the more glorify God for it when it comes. God is faithful, so will not try us above our ability, and, as in the case of the malefactor, we are told the *sequel,* in order to enable us to undergo it (1 Cor.10:11-13). The AV gives us a false hope in this passage, when it translates "a *way of escape,* that ye may be able to bear it." This is self

evident, for, if we had a way of escape, what need is there of ability to bear it? No, indeed! Apart from *His presence in glory,* our place is that which the world gave Him, in crucifixion, like the malefactor who died in faith, and will not be glorified until Christ comes in His kingdom.

BLESSING THROUGH DEATH

To the spiritual student, the Scriptures contain intimations of blessing through death from the first, for only thus can God reveal Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. To Adam and the race He gave the experience of dissolution, or dying. In His great love plan we can look at it only as a preparation for resurrection, in which He may reveal Himself as the Life. Later, in preparation for Israel, He gave some special experiences of life out of death. Abraham was as good as dead before He gave life to the chosen nation. Isaac was also doomed and resurrected in a figure. And last and greatest of all, all our blessings come to us, not through the life, but through the death of Christ, His Son.

A.E.K.

LLOYD A. HIBBERD

Our brother in the Lord and fellow worker in the evangel, Lloyd Hibberd, was put to repose on February 18, 1997, lacking only a few days of completing his 86th year. He had been a farmer and carpenter in the Centerville, Ohio area for much of his life before moving to Baldwin, Michigan in 1974 where he labored as pastor at the Grace and Truth Chapel. He also served as agent for *Grace and Truth* magazine for many years and as overseer for the monthly Fellowship gatherings in the area. Even in the last years of infirmity, he continued his mail ministry which had grown during the years. His appreciation for God as a God of order and purpose became reflected in Brother Hibberd's own concern to make plans and set goals in the heralding of God's Word. Yet he knew and came to realize more and more that "man proposes, but God disposes," and always rejoiced in the truth that God was operating all in accord with the counsel of *His* will. Our sympathy is extended to his wife, Dorothy, and the rest of his family. We will all miss him very much.

D.H.H.

"IN THREE DAYS I WILL RAISE IT UP"

QUESTION: In John 2:19, Jesus declared to the Jews, "Raze this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." How did Jesus "raise it up" (referring to His resurrection) if He was dead? In a letter to a correspondent, a friend of mine asked, Who resurrected Jesus if He was truly dead. The answer he received is that Jesus raised Himself, which seems to agree with John 2:19. Do you have any light to shed on this verse?

ANSWER: We should not assume, a priori, that when Jesus spoke the words recorded here, "I will raise it up" (in reference to His body), that He was referring to an act whereby He would give *life* to His erstwhile dead body, or, alternatively, that He was even hereby specifically referring to His own "resurrection" (i.e., His own return *to life*) itself. He speaks of doing something concerning His body; not Himself. And, He does not say that He will do that of which He speaks three days hence *while He is still dead,* but simply that He will do it three days hence, those three days being understood as a period in which He would be dead.

Our Lord's declaration is not, "Three days after you kill Me, I will do something, while yet dead." Much less does He say that the specific thing that He would then do is give *life* to His formerly dead body. Specifically, He does not say, "I will then return My body *to life.*"

Such an assumption is no part of the text itself, nor is it a corollary thereunto. Such a supposition is simply a proposed interpretation. The question at issue is whether it is also a correct interpretation. To presume that it *is* a cor-

rect interpretation (not to mention to presume that it is the phrase in question's only possible reference), is to assume what is at issue, an elementary error in logic. Indeed, to accept such a supposition is to concede the question. Obviously, if Jesus were "dead," and yet, while dead, was able to do *something*—much less something so astonishing as return His own body to life—then, in "death," He was by no means truly dead.

If we believe that Jesus actually died, then we are aware that, while dead, He could do nothing at all.

Further, the Scripture nowhere speaks of resurrecting dead *bodies*, but of resurrecting dead *persons*. Since man has a body, when a man is "resurrected" from the dead, he "stands up." This simply has reference to the normally upright position of a *living* man, in contradistinction to the normally supine position of a dead man, a corpse, when buried. It is understood, by association, that for one to "stand up," one must first possess life, in order to be able to do so. "Stand up" (i.e., "resurrection"), when used of the return to life of men (from the dead to the living), is not actually a literal expression. It is rather a faded figure, the metonymy of the adjunct, by which that which is associated with the object in view is the actual intended reference (i.e., while the body is the object in view, it is the person himself [whose body it is], which is the actual intended reference).

Unacceptable as it may be to many, if we would be faithful, we must hold fast to the principle that "the dead do not live"; they are not alive, until they are *given* life. It does not follow that since when death occurs, a man's body continues to exist, therefore the man himself continues to exist, whether without any body at all or with a new body. Death does not consist merely in not having a body; much less does it consist in merely no longer possessing a former body while nonetheless possessing a new body

instead. Death, rather, consists of *not* having *life*. "Death" is the antonym of "life." One who is alive is not dead; and, one who is dead is not alive.

Much of the confusion over John 2:19 is over the English word "resurrection," even though neither it, in the Version, nor its Greek equivalent, in the Greek text, is a part of this phrase in question. The Version reads "raise," not "resurrect"; and, the Greek word here is not the one that says "UP-STAND," but the one that says "ROUSE." Hence, the English reader might well suppose that the Greek reads "UP-STAND," when it fact, instead, it reads "ROUSE." Much faulty reasoning is involved as well, in the usual considerations of this verse.

It is to be regretted, too, that the Concordant Version found it necessary (and I know of no better workable solution, either) not to distinguish in translation, here, the word which says "rouse" from that which says "stand up." In the Greek, the word which is often rendered "rise," or "raise" (even though this word, *anistêmi,* does *not* appear in John 2:19), is essentially the same word as that for "resurrection." (The only difference is that the former is a verb, and the latter, *anastasis,* is a noun.) All that the word says is "UP-STAND"; that is, "stand up."

It is wholly beside the point that the noun, by metonymy, is often *used* of the *event* which, in English, we call "the resurrection" (i.e., "the great up-standing"; in the words of the Negro spiritual, "the great gettin' up morning"). Our future resurrection from the dead includes not only our "standing up," but first, our being returned to *life* (indeed to a life of vivification, such as Christ's own). Even so, the Greek word for this does not mean "return to life," and it is not always even so used. In Luke 2:34, it appears in the phrase, "[Christ is lying] for the fall and *rising* of many in Israel"; i.e., through Him, many in Israel, one day, would fall under His judgment, while others would arise (i.e., be

caused to "stand") in blessing and righteousness—regardless of specifically how this were to be achieved.

When used literally, "UP-STAND" refers simply to the change in bodily position from supine to erect. When one who, overnight, has been "reposing" (i.e., LYING [down]), in the morning, no longer continues to do so, he "raises" (or "resurrects") himself from bed (Mark 1:35; see the various other literal and figurative usages of this term; p.250, Keyword Concordance).

Our passage in question, however, concerns not the word whose standard is "UP-STAND," but "ROUSE" (see the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT). The solution is simple: It was *God* Who roused the *Person,* Christ, from among *the dead* (e.g., Acts 4:10; 1 Cor.15:15); it was *Christ Himself* Who—once having been returned to *life* by God—subsequently, under God, roused (i.e., "stirred," or "activated") His own *body* (the "it" of John 2:19), with a view toward its subsequent change of position from supine, in death, to erect or upright, now, in vivification.

Every day, even we ourselves manage to "rouse" our own bodies from a drowsy state in a supine position to an awakened state in an upright position, so as, consequently, to stand up erect. There is nothing inherently remarkable that Christ should do the same, at any time, including "three days" in the future from the day on which He spoke. However, what *is* remarkable—indeed astonishing—is that He should do so even three days after His enemies had killed Him! That surely this One is the *Son* of God—"Whom *God* rouses from among the dead" (Acts 3:15)—was the sane conclusion drawn by those who were witnesses of His resurrection.

There is nothing whatever here, in John 2:19, in favor of the claim that Jesus is the Deity Himself; to introduce such accretions, is to distract from the real import and vitality of our Lord's words. J.R.C.

TRANSFORMATION

WE HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED to a gentleness and a grace in Paul's words and deeds. All his actions reflect absolute commitment. His life, from that dramatic arrest on the Damascus road, was a vivid testimony of complete dedication to his Lord. He was changed; indeed he was changed! Throughout the whole of his special commission his zeal and devotion for Christ never faltered for one moment. In every sense of that word, he underwent a definite process of transformation. In a vision to Ananias, our Lord describes Paul as ". . . a choice instrument" (Acts 9:15).

A brief consideration of Paul's former qualities will swiftly establish that the change in him was not a loss of strength of character but a transformation of these qualities by grace and in love. God had carefully prepared Paul, His "*choice instrument*." The name of this young man was Saul. He was a Hebrew of very careful upbringing, intensely zealous in the performance of his religious duties (*cf* Phil.3:4-6), but with a mind broadened by contact with the wider life and speculative thinking of the Graeco-Roman world (*cf* Acts 17:18-34). Born in Tarsus of Cilicia, he was yet reared at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

This brief review should make us look a little closer at the apostle's background. Immediately, we will become aware that here is no mere *man of straw!* Although he stressed that he considered that his former achievements in flesh were but refuse in comparison with gaining Christ, they must not be discounted if we are to gain some estimation of his very impressive character. Towering above all his contemporaries in intellect, and possessing an intensely

logical and ordered mind, we perceive that in his personality there is tempered steel of the finest quality! Tough, resourceful, and very determined!

His strength of character and his firm belief in the divine commission should not be lightly passed over. Shortly following the confrontation with his Lord outside Damascus, and embarking on his assignment, Paul passed through the island of Cyprus to Paphos. Being withstood by a Jew, Bar-Jesus, named Elymus the "Magician," who sought to pervert the proconsul, Sergius Paul from the faith, Paul demonstrated just a little of the authority of his supreme office (*cf* Acts 13:9-12).

"Sergius Paul was the first individual among the nations who heard the evangel, without first becoming a proselyte of Judaism. Hence his case is typical. Bar-Jesus stands for the Jewish dispersion, who always resisted every attempt to proclaim the evangel to the nations. Seldom, indeed, do we find Paul performing any judgment miracle, but here he blinds the sorcerer for a season. This is the judgment which has befallen Israel during the present administration of God's grace. Israel, in part, has become calloused until the full complement of the nations may be entering (Rom.11:25). Throughout Paul's missionary journeys, when he turned from the unbelieving Jews to the nations, the Jews became jealous and sought to turn the Gentiles against him. They became blind spiritually, as Bar-Jesus became physically."[1]

"THE POWER OF GOD"

Forced by the imprudence of those to whom he ministered in Corinth, Paul catalogued some of the infirmities, outrages, necessities, persecutions and distresses which he gladly endured for Christ's sake. As we read of these in

1. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.198.

that eleventh chapter of his recorded second letter to the ecclesia of that city, we shake our heads in wonder! But surely his threat of *a rod* in the preceding letter (1 Cor. 4:21), was simply that. May any be so unloving as to imagine Paul literally administering such discipline? However, his closing words of the second letter should make us catch our breath in awe: "I have declared before, and am predicting as when being present the second time and now, being absent, to those having sinned before and to all the rest, that if I should be coming again, *I shall not spare,* since you are seeking a test of Christ speaking in me, Who is not weak for you, but powerful among you. For even if He was crucified out of weakness, nevertheless He is living by the power of God. For we also are weak together with Him, but we shall be living together with Him by the power of God for you" (2 Cor.13:2-4).

"HEAD OVER ALL"

In the great entreaty of Ephesians 6:10-17 we are greeted with the bold salutation, ". . . brethren mine." How encouraging to stand by the unflinching apostle, heed his sound advice, and take up all the accoutrements of our defensive armor in the conflict with our present celestial opponents. Reviewing the impressive forces opposed to us is a daunting task. The apostle openly declares that our evangel, which is covered, is, purely and simply, the heralding of the glory of Christ Jesus, our Lord. He further acknowledges that ". . . we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the transcendence of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor.4:7).

It is this reassurance which enables us, in our puny helplessness, to rise above our fear. Imagine, Sovereignties! Authorities! Powers and Lordships! As we gaze aloft at the vast canopy of stars in such profusion as to be quite beyond human computation, then small wonder if we sur-

render to an overwhelming sense of insignificance. But wait! We are not left thus exposed and vulnerable. Having *received* our helmet of salvation, now let us firmly grasp the sword of the spirit which is a declaration of God.

In the apostle's letters there is a repeated pattern. Prior to setting any task or requesting response, he is careful to present the motivating power. So we first discern his rich presentation of our glorious identity and the very special love gifts which have been lavished. May we review these again, *and again, and again!*

"Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all" (Eph.1:15-23).

"THE PRIZE OF GOD'S CALLING ABOVE"

With becoming modesty, we may *roll up our sleeves* and look once more at the conflict which our dear brother, Paul, has advised. Let us identify those who are in opposition. They are not *all messengers,* and since the stars and their

respective planetary bodies are so numerous, then what may we surmise concerning the numbers of the celestials? *But not all are opposed to the transcendent glory of our privileged appointment!* At Bethlehem there were many who sang for joy at the birth of God's Son. Also, they must have witnessed the bewildering crucifixion and glorious exaltation. Could all of these have remained indifferent?

The disabled reasoning of humanity might suggest that it is absurd, even arrogant, for us to even suggest that we are accorded the privilege of bringing these celestials into subjection to Christ, but as Paul declared, "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). In like manner, each one of the ecclesia, while eagerly anticipating presentation at the dais of Christ, must also regard even this wonderful time, not so much a climax in God's calling, but rather a glorious commencement of service among the celestials. Until the consummation, we, *and all of God's creatures* are, inevitably, in a loving process of transformation. Those messengers (or angels) who exhibited so close a scrutiny of Paul (1 Cor.4:9), brought him no divine communication, but we may be sure that they relayed vital information concerning him, his experience, and the outcome of his commission. What astonishment for the celestials to learn of our tremendous blessings in the exalted Christ!

TO-SUBJECTORS

God has chosen an ecclesia from humanity which, led by His beloved Son, is to bring all His creatures from the turmoil which prevails across the length and breadth of the universe, into loving submission. "Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is

above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2: 9-11). Already, through the strength of our weakness, all are learning of the multifarious wisdom and gracious love of God! It is patently evident that all positions of *rule* must necessarily imply a condition of *misrule.* Despite the present superiority of the celestials, they also suffer, like humanity, through their present insubjection, or misrule. What joy when in fully transformed glory, into the same image, and then endowed with powers beyond feeble imagination, we, as To-subjectors, will be able to resolve, in Christ, in love, all their distrust and resentment!

God's precious Word teaches that Christ Jesus alone has immortality (1 Tim.6:16). Exposure to the mighty power of celestials would be more than we, in our present corruptible, frail human flesh might endure, but even the greatest among these, Michael or Gabriel, the chief messengers, and even Satan have not that unique immortality which will be granted to those of the ecclesia when they are summoned and snatched away (1 Cor.15:53).

"The highest dignitaries in the universe will gladly bow before the members of Christ's body, which will have the place supreme, not only in rule, but in the dispensation of God's favor and in the reconciliation of the celestial hosts to Him. We who were last have become first. Such is the potency of grace."[2]

Surely through these, all must learn, not of man, but the love of God. But, conversely, what may the ideals and standards of celestials possibly mean to the ones who have been *earthbound,* whose corruptible lives, by comparison, have been, as it were, but a passing thought? In

2. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.60, p.206.

transformed, exalted glory, shall there be empathy, comprehension? What must life from among disabled, dying humanity have meant for our Lord, prior to the commencement of His ministry? The stench of putrefaction is more than we can bear, but what must the charnel house of this earth have been like for Him? What deep sadness for Him to observe the maimed and the blind, or to witness the intense grief and the sad helplessness? Did He soothe them in their restless sleep? How troubled He was to learn of the death of John the baptist. How disturbed in spirit He was to witness the grief of those sisters, Mary and Martha. As He was dying at Golgotha, He grieved for the comfort of His mother.

THE EVANGEL OF LOVE

Knowing His Father's purpose, our Lord faithfully fulfilled every single aspect, even to the prompting of His executioners to comply with the psalmist's words, "*They gave Me poison in My repast, and for My thirst they cause Me to drink vinegar*" (Psa.69:21) He exercised patience, and profound wisdom, but above all, through His great love, He changed the whole course of the history of mankind. It is presumptuous to compare our mission to His, but there is one vital similarity. We also are entrusted with a precious evangel. The evangel of love!

As the apostle Paul lay, unconscious, outside the city of Lystra, he was granted a vision into the future, even as the apostle John was enabled to view the future terrestrial kingdom. But it is to Paul that we must turn if we are to perceive the full glories of God's consummation. From this great apostle, who completes the Word of God (Col. 1:25), we learn not only the reason for transformation, but the full, glorious conclusion of this same transformation. *All achieved, in love, that God will be All in all!*

Donald Fielding

THAT I MIGHT FIND HIM

JOB'S WORLD has become a chaos. It is dark and confused and empty like the world of Genesis 1:2 before God speaks and light appears.

What Job's associates have to say only confirms the chaos because they refuse to relate God to the evil before them except as judgment upon Job for secret sins. That is the source of all despair, the idea that there is no divine origin of, and control over, and positive purpose for, the pain and losses of our lives. In effect, Eliphaz and his companions try to put God out of the picture except for the narrow compass of reward and retribution.

Beginning this third cycle of speeches, Eliphaz asks, "Is it to El that a master is profitable?" (22:2). He tells Job that God has no need of us, but we can profit ourselves by gaining intelligence, by "wising up" as modern Eliphazes put it. God's profit arises in spite of humanity, not because of it. "Is it delight to Him Who-Suffices that you should be righteous? And should it be His gain that your ways become flawless?" (v.3).

Eliphaz wants to put Job in his place and show him that God will go on quite well without him. God's profit, delight and gain do not depend on him. Job may speak all he wants about his history of fearing Eloah, but that will not make any difference to the divine Judge Who has brought this evil on Job because of Job's wickedness and irreverence, and for no other reason. "Is it because of your devout fear that He is correcting you, that He is entering into judgment with you?" Eliphaz asks sarcastically (v.4). Any possi-

JOB 22-24

22 +**Then Eliphaz the Temanite** ˡ**answered,** + ˡ**saying:**
2 Is it **to El** that a **master is** ˡ**profitable?**
ᵗ**Rather** the **intelligent**ˡ one **is** ˡ**profitable** ᵒⁿ**to him**self.
3 Is it **delight to** Him **Who-Suffices**
that you should be righteous?
And should it be His **gain**
that your ways become ˡ**flawless?**
4 Is it ᶠ**because** of **your** devout **fear**
that **He is correcting you,**
That **He is entering in**to **judgment with you?**
5 Is it **not** because **your evil** is ᵐⁿ**great,**
And there **is no end to your depravities?**
6 **For you** have exacted ˡ**pledge**
of **your brothers gratuitously,**
And you have ˡ**stripped** off the **garments of** the **naked.**
7 **No**ᵗ **water** have **you** ᶜ**given** the **faint** to ˡ**drink,**
And from the **hungry** have **you** ˡ**withheld bread.**
8 + The **man of** the **arm** of power, **he** ˃**has the land,**
And he of **repute**ˡ **is dwelling in it.**
9 **Widows you have sent** away **empty,**
And the **arms of orphans** ⁷**you** have ˡ**crushed**~ᶜ.
10 **Therefore, snares** are **round about you,**
And sudden alarm ᵐ**fills you** with ˡ**panic;**
11 ⁷**Light has be**come~ **darkness** so **you** can**not** ˡ**see,**
And a **concourse of water is covering you.**

22:9 7-~*c* **you** have ˡ**crushed:** Hb **it is** ˡ**crushed.**
22:11 7-~ **Light has be**come: Hb **Or.**

ble record of fearing God in Job's life is irrelevant in view of that depravity which he refuses to admit, whatever it may be. "Is it not because your evil is great and there is no end of your depravities?" (v.5).

Eliphaz is so convinced of his conclusion that he makes definite charges against Job without witnesses or evidence of any kind: Job has cheated and stolen from his brothers (v.6); he has withheld water and food from the poor (v.7); he has used his power to take land from others (much as Ahab was later to do in taking possession of Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings 21), and has crushed the widow and orphan (22:8,9). These are all crimes that God expressly forbids in the law of Moses, as most serious and requiring of condemnation.

"Therefore," Eliphaz explains, snares and alarms and darkness have come upon Job (22:10,11).

The trend of Eliphaz's message is obvious. It is a classic lecture of a type still being heard. God's concern for His creation is overlooked and His anger against the sinner is underlined. The sinner is charged with specific wicked acts, and repentance is called for so that the sinner can get back on the right track before God.

In 22:12 Eliphaz points to the loftiness of Eloah, no doubt trusting Job will be properly abashed for his audacity toward the Deity. This leads to the further charge that because of God's loftiness and murkiness and thick clouds in between, Job assumes El cannot see what he is doing (22:13,14).

Eliphaz then likens Job to the lawless people of Noah's day (22:15-18) and in Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis chapters 19 and 20). From these threats of flood and fire he concludes his masterful sermon by stressing Job's responsibilities in behavior (v.21) and heart (v.22), the need to submit to Him Who-Suffices (v.23) and to put aside worldly wealth (v.24). For "Then He Who-Suffices will become

12 Is **not Eloah loftier** than the **heavens?**
+ **See** the **top**most **stars,** ᵗ**how high they are.**
13 +**Yet you say, What** does **El know?**
Can **He** ˡ**judge through murkiness?**
14 **Thick** clouds are a **concealment for Him,**
so +**that He** can**not** ˡ**see,**
And He ˡ**walks** about the **circle of** the **heavens.**
15 **Are you keeping** the **path of** the **eon** of old
ʷ**That** the ᵃᵈ**men of lawlessness trod,**
16 **Who were arrested** +**when not** yet their **time,**
When a **river was** ˡ**poured** over **their foundation,**
17 ·Who were **saying to El, Withdraw from us,**
And, What can He **Who-Suffices** ˡ**effect for** ⁷**us**~ᶜ**?**
18 +**Yet He Him**self **had filled their houses** with **good;**
(+**Still** the **counsel of** the **wicked is far from me.**)
19 The **righteous** ˡ**see** it **and** ˡ**rejoice,**
And the **innocent** one ˡ**derides** › **them,** saying:
20 **Assuredly** whoever **rose** against **us is suppressed,**
And fire has devoured their surplus.
21 **Be careful,** I **pray,** ʷⁱ**toward Him, and fare well;**
ᵗ**By these** means **good shall come** to **you.**
22 **Take** hold, I **pray,** to the **law from His mouth,**
And place His sayings in your heart.
23 **If you** ˡ**return unto** Him **Who-Suffices**
⁷**and you** ˡ**submit**~,
If **you** ᶜ**put iniquity** ˡ**far from your tent**
24 **And set**~ aside your **gold ore** upon the **soil,**
And wealth of **Ophir** ᵗ**among** the **rocks of** the **wadis,**
25 +**Then** He **Who-Suffices will become your gold ore**
And rich **pinnacles of silver for you.**
26 **For then you shall find pleasure** for your**self**
ᵒⁿ**in** Him **Who-Suffices,**
And you shall lift up **your face to Eloah.**

22:17 7-~*c* **us:** Hb **them.**
22:23 7-~ **and you** ˡ**submit:** Hb **you shall be rebuilt.**

your gold ore and rich pinnacles of silver for you," (v.25) and you will find your pleasure in Him (v.26). Finally, with stirring words, Job is called to prayers of entreaty and the paying of vows (22:27,28), and is promised power and light and salvation and escape from all his woes (22:28-30).

But we know, as Eliphaz does not, that Job's sufferings are not judgments for hidden sins, but rather they come immediately from the hand of Satan who questioned the enduring strength of Job's *flawlessness,* and behind that lies the responsibility of God Himself. What Eliphaz says so eloquently is irrelevant, and thus both unintelligent and cruel.

JOB'S CONCERN

Job hardly seems to feel the hurt in the words of Eliphaz. His concern is the hand of God which is so heavy on his sighing (23:2). "O that I knew where I might find Him!" (v.3). Rather than Job thinking the thick clouds conceal his own sins from God (as Eliphaz charged in 22:13,14), he feels that God is concealing Himself from him. "I cannot detect Him . . . . I do not perceive Him . . . . I do not see Him" (23:8,9).

Job wants to arrange his plea before God (v.4) in order to hear "the declarations with which He shall answer" (v.5). Job knows that he is not guilty of secret sins that require such affliction and loss as he is enduring, and His confidence in God is that He will not place such false charges against him (v.6). There is no question in Job's mind that the Judge will judge his case rightly and so grant deliverance (v.7) from all the darkness and chaos of the present. In fact, this is what will occur as described in Job 42:7, and it will occur in light, with power and be made evident and clear to all.

In the meantime Job cannot perceive his Judge. But God does know the way that has come upon Job, and Job will "go forth like gold" (v.10).

27 **You shall entreat › Him, and He shall hear you,**
And you shall pay your vows.
28 **+When you ˡprescribe** a *sa*matter,
+ it shall be confirmed to you,
And light will brighten *on* **your ways.**
29 **ᵗWhen they abase, +then you may** *sa*claim **pride,**
+For He shall save the **downcast of eyes.**
30 **He shall** give **escape** to the **innocent ~man~,**
And ⁷**you shall escape~ ⁱby the purity of your palms.**
23 +So Job ˡanswered, + ˡsaying:
2 **Today** *mr*as **well, my concern** will seem **rebellious;**
⁷**His~***c* **hand is heavy on my sighing.**
3 *a*O ˡᵍ**that I knew +where I might find Him,**
That **I might come unto His establishment!**
4 **I** would ˡ**arrange** a **plea before Him**
And ˡfill my mouth with **pleadings.**
5 **I** would ˡ**know** the **declarations**
with which **He shall answer,**
And I would ˡ**understand what He shall say to me.**
6 **Shall He contend** *wi*against **me**
ⁱ**with** an *mn*abundance **of vigor?**
ʸ**Surely He Him**self **shall not place** charges ⁱ**against me!**
7 **There** an **upright** man could **plead**ˡ **with Him;**
And I would **be** ˡ**delivered › permanently**
from my Judgeˡ.
8 **Behold, I** ˡ**go** to the **east, and He is no**t there,
And *af* **back** again, **and I** can**not** ˡ**detect › Him.**
9 ⁱ**When He** is *d***working**⁻ to the **left,**
+ I do **not** ˡ**perceive** Him;
He ˡ**goes back** to the **right,** ⁺**yet I** do **not** ˡ**see** Him.
10 ᵗ**But He knows** the **way with me;**
When **He tests me, + I shall** go **forth like gold.**

22:30 ~~~ **man:** Hb **where;** 7-~ **you shall escape:** Hb **he shall be** given **escape.**
23:2 7-~*c* **His:** Hb **My.**

While Eliphaz's speech was a lecture appealing to the sinner to change his ways, Job's speech is a plea directed to God in the midst of crushing pain. Yet Job continues to focus on God's movement and way (23:11). He does not remove himself from "the instruction of His lips" and secludes in his bosom "the sayings of His mouth" (v.12). What an amazing store of endurance has come to Job from this association with God's ways and words! No wonder Job longs for a word from Eloah concerning evil that is unrelated to judgment on sin.

Another great burst of confidence and praise in Job's speeches is set before us in 23:13,14, such as in 16:19-21 and 19:25-27, resounding with hopeful implications: "He is One, and who can turn Him back? What His soul has yearned for He shall do. For He shall accomplish what is marked out for me." With humanity there are as many opinions and aims as there are people. But God is One, and He carries out His plans. What His soul yearns for is not expressed by the present distress of Job's experiences, but it will be expressed in the *accomplishment* of the entire operation marked out in the divine blueprint.

Eliphaz has spoken in health and strength, but Job is flustered because "El Himself has made my heart timorous" (v.16). But he is not effaced, not "perishing" (*cf* 2 Cor.4:9) because of the darkness and gloom that has disrupted his life (v.17). What is marked out for Job is full of chaos at present, but this cannot be the end.

FOR WHAT REASON?

After struggling to a lofty height of assurance Job is pulled down by consideration of the inequalities and unfairness easily perceived in the world. In asking why times for dealing with these wrongs have not yet been provided and why we have not perceived these days when He Who-Suffices will set things right (24:1), Job is not doubting they

11 **My feet have held** closely [i]**to His movement;**
I have kept to **His way and** have **not** [l]**turned aside.**
12 From the **instruction of His lips**
[+] **I** do **not** [l]**remove** myself;
I have secluded [7]**in~ my bosom**
the **sayings of His mouth.**
13 [+]**Yet He** is [i] **One, and** [a]**who** can [l]**turn Him back?**
[+] What **His soul has yearned** for [+] **He shall do.**
14 **For He shall accomplish** what is **marked out** for **me,**
And many other plans are **with Him like these.**
15 **Therefore, I am** [l]**flustered** [f]**at His presence;**
When **I** [l]**consider** [+] **I am** [l]**afraid** [f]**of Him.**
16 [+] **El Him**self **has** [c]**made my heart timorous,**
And He **Who-Suffices has flustered me.**
17 [t]**But I am not effaced** [f] **because of darkness**
And [f] **because gloom has covered my face.**
24 For **what reason have times** for judgment
not been set aside [f]**by** Him **Who-Suffices,**
And why do those **knowing Him not perceive His days?**
2 [7]The **wicked**[0] [l]**move away boundary** markers;
They pillage the **drove and** openly [l]**graze** them.
3 The **orphans' donkey they** [l]**lead** away;
They take the **widow's bull** as a [l]**pledge.**
4 **They** [l]**turn aside** the **needy from** the **way;**
The **humbled of** the **earth** must **hide together.**
5 **Behold,** like **onagers in** the **wilderness**
They go **forth early**[l] **for prey,**
In their contriving ~until the **evening;**
Yet **no**[t]**~ nourishment for** their **youths!**
6 **They** [l]**reap in** the **field ~**[i]**at night~,**
And they [l]**scavenge** in the **vineyard of** the **wicked.**
7 **Naked, they** [l]**lodge** at night [f] **without clothing,**
And they [is]**have no covering** [i]**for** the **cold.**

23:12 7-~ **in:** Hb **from.**
24:5 ~~~ **until** the **evening;** Yet **no**[t]**:** Hb **steppe, for it.**
24:6 ~~~ [i]**at night:** Hb **his fodder.**

will come. But the flustered fear and gloom of 23:15-17 has grown into impatience which is only increased as Job turns his attention away from God to human wickedness in the world.

Job denies the charges of depravity hurled against him by Eliphaz, but he readily admits there are such wicked people in the world who cheat and steal and humble the needy (24:2-4). And Job fully agrees that God will deal with these wrongs. But Job's sufferings are not an example of this sort of retribution, and the question remains, Why do these wicked people seem to get away with their evil acts, and prosper?

The sufferings of their victims, children, the poor and the oppressed are recounted in 24:5-12. "Yet Eloah, He does not place charges of impropriety." The association of the wicked with darkness is described in verses 13-17, yet they remain uncondemned, valuing "the decadent things of the blackest shadow."

FLEET OVER THE SURFACE OF THE WATERS

Job 24:18a is one of several lines in this chapter that seem obscure and difficult to fit in the context. Some modern translations drastically emend the Hebrew wording in order to bring out some semblance of sense. Hence the New English Bible has: "Such men are scum on the surface of the water;" and the Jerusalem Bible, which transfers the line to follow 27:23 says: "Headlong he flees from daylight." The King James Version is more literal: "He is as swift as the waters," but the second "as" would better have been rendered "upon" as in Genesis 1:2, or "over" as in the Concordant Version.

This association with the last clause of Genesis 1:2 may offer a clue to the meaning of this line. Eliphaz identified darkness as Job's lot in 22:11, and in 22:13,14, he referred

8 **They are** ˡ**doused** *f* **by** the **mountain storm,**
And *f* **without** a **refuge they hug to** a **rock.**
9 Yet others ˡ**snatch** the **orphan from** the **breast,**
And they take as a ˡ**pledge** ~the **infant of**~ the **humble.**
10 **Naked they go** about **without clothing,**
And hungry they carry the **sheaf.**
11 ~**Without their songs**~ **they** ˡ**clarify** oil;
They tread the **winevats** ⁺**yet are** ˡ**thirsty.**
12 *f* **In** the **city** ~the **dying**~ ˡ**moan,**
And the **soul of** the **wounded** ˡ**implores** for help;
⁺**Yet Eloah, He** does **not** ˡ**place** charges of **impropriety.**
13 **They**ˊ *b***are** *i***among** those **revolting** against the **light;**
They neither recognize its ways
Nor dwell in its tracks.
14 ›**When** the **light** is gone the **murderer**ˡ ˡ**arises;**
He ˡ**despatches** the **humbled and needy** one;
And in the **night he** ˡ*b***continues as** a **thief.**
15 ⁺ The **eye of** the **adulterer**ˡ **keeps** watch
for the **gloaming,**
› **Saying**¯**, No***ⁱ* **eye** can ˡ**regard me;**
And he ˡ**places** a **concealment** over his **face;**
16 **In** the **darkness he burrows** into **houses.**
By day they seal › **them**selves up;
They do **not know** the **light.**
17 **For altogether morning** is **blackest shadow to them,**
For each one ˡ**values** the **decadent** things
of the **blackest shadow.**
18 **He** is **fleet over** the sur**face of** the **waters.**
May their portion be dishonored *i***on** the **land;**
May he not face the **way** of the **vineyards.**
19 **May aridity** *mr***and warmth siphon** away
the **snow waters,**
And the **unseen** those who **have sinned.**

24:9 ~~~ **the infant of:** MT **and on.**
24:11 ~~~ **Without their songs:** Hb **Between their barricades.**
24:12 ~~~ **the dying:** MT *ad***men.**

to murkiness and thick cloud. Job's great complaint has been that he cannot detect God, though he is not completely effaced because of the darkness and gloom that engulfs him. In addition Job has just been speaking of the darkness as the realm of the wicked, and his continuing longings for God to establish order and deal out judgment would naturally suggest a parallel with God's operations in dealing with the chaos and darkness that engulfed the earth in Genesis 1:2a. The remedy for chaos and darkness in Genesis 1 began with the spirit of Elohim *vibrating* over the surface of the waters, and it continued with the voice of Elohim calling for light.

In Hebrew the word "fleet" is in the same family as the word "sound" and "voice." All of this may suggest that it is Elohim, operating with the invisible power of spirit associated with the sound of His voice, speedily bringing light where there is darkness, and order where there is chaos, Who is in view here in Job 24:18a. Both the darkness of Job's afflictions and the concealment of the wicked one's acts must eventually be brought into the light, and it is God Who will do so. For that is the opening revelation of Scripture concerning Who He is and what He is like.

HIS EYES ARE ON THEIR WAYS

The remainder of chapter 24 consists of Job's maledictions on the wicked. He agrees with his associates that God will bring them to their deserts. But this is not a perceptible operation of God in the present. What is seen is chaos where iniquity and evil prosper "and none can put reliance in their lives" (v.22).

God gives serenity to the wicked person now, but His eyes are on their ways (v.23). The wicked "are exalted a little while, but each will be [exalted] no more; they will be reduced" and shut off (v.24).

20 **May** the ~city **square~** [l]**forget him,**
The **maggot** find **him** ¯**sweet;**
May he not be remembered any [fr]**more,**
So [+]**that, like** a **tree, iniquity shall be broken** down.
21 [7]**He has** [c]**done evil~** to the **barren** one who [l]**bears not,**
And he has **not** [c]**done** [l]**good** for the **widow.**
22 [+] **He draws** forth the **sturdy** ones [i]**by his vigor;**
He [l]**arises, and non**e can [c]**put** [l]**reliance in** their **lives.**
23 **He**◇ [l]**gives** › **serenity to him, and he** [l]**leans** back,
[+]**Yet His eyes** are **on their ways.**
24 **They are exalted** a **little** while,
[+]**but** each **will be no** more;
[+] **They will be reduced;**
Like all others **they shall be shut** off,
And like the **head of** a **grainstalk**
they shall be snipped off.
25 [+]**But if not** so, **indeed** [a]**who** can [c]**prove me** a [l]**liar**
[+]**Or** [pl]**establish my declaration as nothing?**

24:20 ~~~ city **square:** Hb **womb.**
24:21 7~~ **He has** [c]**done evil:** Hb **grazing.**
24:23 He: i.e., Eloah.

Even in the consideration of the wicked acts of sinners, Job is not utterly cast down. This is because even here His attention is drawn toward God Who will eventually settle all these inequalities which last only "a little while." The prosperity of the wicked is not permanent; so also the misery of Job is not marked out by God as a permanent condition.

If this "is not so, indeed who can prove" Job a liar (v.25)? If it is so, then also the voice of Him Who is fleet will bring light where darkness reigns and still the chaotic waters without and within Job. D.H.H.

1 SAMUEL 1,2

1 [+]**There** [lb]**was a certain man from** [`]**Ramathaim** of the **Zuphites, from** the **hill** country **of Ephraim;** [+] **his name** was **Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph,** an **Ephraimite.** 2 [+] **He** [>]**had two wives;** the **name of** [7]**the**[s] **one** was **Hannah, and** the **name of the second** was **Peninnah. And** [>] **Peninnah came** to [lb]**have children;** [+]**but Hannah** [>]**had no children.** 3 [+] **From days** to[d] **days**[◊] [`]**this** [`]**man** went **up from his city to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh of hosts** [i]**at Shiloh.** [+] **There** [7]**Eli and**[0] the **two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas,** were **priests for Yahweh.**

4 [+]**When the day** [lb]**came** [+]**that Elkanah** [l]**sacrificed,** [+]**then he would give to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and her daughters** their **assigned** shares. 5 [+]**But to Hannah he** would [l]**give one double-sized assigned** share, **for** it was [`]**Hannah** that **he loved;** [+]**yet Yahweh had closed her womb.** 6 [+] **Moreover her rival would vex her** to **vexation in order** to **dishearten**~ **her** [t]**since Yahweh had tightly closed** up **her womb.**

7 [+] [so]**This** [ld]**happened year** [i]**by year. As often as she** went **up**~ [i]**to** the **House of Yahweh,** the other would [l]**vex her** in [so]**this** way, so [+]**that she** [l]**lamented and** would **not** [`]**eat.** 8 [+] **Her husband Elkanah** [l]**said to her, Hannah, why are you lamenting?** [+] **Why are you not eating? And why** does **your heart** feel [l]**bad?** Am **not I better for you** [f]**than ten sons?**

9 **After** [7]**they**~ had **eaten**~ **and** [af] **drunk**~ [t]**at Shiloh,** [+]

1:3 From days to[d] **days:** i.e., From year to year.
1:9 7-~ they: Hb **she.**

Hannah [l]**arose** [7]**and stood before Yahweh**[0] [+]**while Eli the priest** was **sitting on the covered** seat [on]**by** the door-**jamb of** the **temple of Yahweh.** 10 [+] **She** was in **bitterness of soul** [+]**when she** [l]**prayed** [7]**to**~[s] **Yahweh and** [l]**lamented,** yea **lamented**~. 11 [+] **She** [l]**vowed** a **vow,** [+] [l]**saying, O Yahweh of hosts, if You** will [lsee]**look,** yea [see]**look**~ [t]**upon** the **humiliation of Your maidservant and will remember me and not** [l]**forget** `**Your maidservant, and** if **You will** [g]**grant** › **Your maidservant** a [mt]**male** [seed]**descendant,** [+]**then I will** [g]**dedicate him to Yahweh** for **all** the **days of his life;** [7]**he shall not drink wine or intoxicant**[Q]**, and no**[t] **razor-blade shall** come **upon his head.**

12 [+] **It came** to **be** [t]**as she multiplied** › her **prayers**~ **before Yahweh,** [+]**that Eli** was **observing** `**her mouth.** 13 [+]**As** for **Hannah, she** was **speaking** [on]**in her heart;** [but]**only her lips** were **moving,** [+]**yet her voice** could **not be** [l]**heard.** [+]**So Eli** [l]**reckoned her to** be **drunk.** 14 [+] **Eli** [l]**said to her, How** [fr]**long** will **you** behave [l]**drunk? Put away** `**your wine from** [on] **you,** [7]**and go from** the **presence of Yahweh**[0]**.** 15 [+] **Hannah** [l]**answered,** [+] [l]**saying, Not** so, **my lord! I** am a **woman** who is **hard** pressed in **spirit;** [+] **I have drunk no**[t] **wine** [+]**or intoxicant.** [+]**Yet I** have **been pouring out** `**my soul before Yahweh.** 16 **You must not** [lg]**take** `**your maidservant** [bf]**for** a **daughter of worthlessness,** [t]**since I have spoken** [bd]**hitherto** [f]**out** of the **magnitude of my concern and my vexation.** 17 [+]**So Eli** [l]**answered,** [+] [l]**saying, Go** ›**in peace!** [+] **May** the **Elohim of Israel** [g]**grant** `**your request** [w]**that you have asked** [f]**of** [wi] **Him.** 18 [+] **She** [lsa]**replied, May your** handmaid **find favor in your eyes!** [+]**Then the woman** [l]**went** › **her way** [7]**and** [l]**came to her booth**[0] [+]**where she** [l]**ate** [7]**and** [l]**drank with her husband**[0]**; and her face** [b]**was no**[t] [fr]**longer** sad **for herself.**

19 [+] **They** [c]**rose** [l]**early in** the **morning and** [l]**worshiped before Yahweh.** [+]**Then they** [l]**returned and** [l]**came to their**

1:10 *7-~s* **to:** Hb **on.**

house at[d] `Ramah. + **Elkanah** [l]**knew** `**his wife Hannah; and Yahweh** [l]**remembered her.**

20 +**So it came** to [l]**be** >**at** the **revolution of the days** +**that Hannah** had **been** [l]**pregnant and** had [l]**borne** a **son.** + **She** had [l]**called** `**his name Samuel** [7]**and** had [l]**said**[0], **For** it was [f]**of Yahweh** [7]**Elohim of hosts**[0] that **I have asked** for **him.** 21 +**When the man Elkanah and all his house**hold **were** going **up to sacrifice to Yahweh** [7i]**at Shiloh**[0] `the annual **sacrifice of the days, and** to pay `**his vow** [7]**and all the tithes of his field**[0], 22 +**then Hannah** did **not** go **up** [7]**with him**[0], **for she said to her husband,** [fr]**When the lad is** [l]**weaned,** + **I will bring him;** +**for he** must **appear** `before the **face of Yahweh and** [sit]**abide there** [fr]**for** the **eon.** 23 + **Her husband Elkanah** [lsa]**replied to her, Do** `what seems **good in your eyes.** [sit]**Stay** here **until you** have **weaned**~ `**him.** [y]**Only may Yahweh confirm** [7]`what was com**ing forth from your mouth**~Q.

+**So the woman** [lsit]**stayed** there **and** [l]**nursed** `**her son until she weaned**~ `**him.** 24 +**Then she** [c]**took him** [l]**up with her** [7]**to Shiloh**Q, **as** [w]**soon** as **she had weaned him,** [i]**with** [7]a **three**[l] year old bull of the **herd and bread**~Q, + **one ephah of meal** flour **and** a **waterskin of wine. And** though **the lad** was in his early **youth,** + **she** [l]**brought him** to the **house of Yahweh** at **Shiloh.** 25 +**Then they** [l]**slew** `**the** young **bull, and they** [l]**brought** `**the lad to Eli.** 26 + **She** [l]**said, O! My lord!** As **your soul** is **alive, my lord, I** am **the woman** `who was **standing up** [wi]**beside you in this** place >**and praying**~ **to Yahweh.** 27 **For** `**this** `**lad I had prayed, and Yahweh** has [lg]**granted to me** `**my request** [w]**that I had asked** [f]**of** [wi] **him.** 28 + [mr]**Therefore I**′ **have** [c]**given him** as a **loan to Yahweh. All the days** [w]**that he** [7]**lives**~, **he** is one **requested**[l] **for Yahweh. And he** [l]**bowed down there** >**before Yahweh.**

1:23 7--Q `what was com**ing forth from your mouth:** Hb `**His word.**
1:24 7--Q a **three**[l] year old bull of the **herd and bread:** Hb **three** young **bulls.**
1:28 7-- **lives:** Hb **becomes.**

2 +**Then Hannah** ˡ**prayed,** + ˡ**saying:**

Glad is my heart in Yahweh!
High is my horn in ⁷**my Elohim**ᶜˢ**!**
Wide is my mouth over my enemiesˡ**,**
For I rejoice in Your salvation.
2 **No** one **is holy like Yahweh;**
ᵗ**Yea, no** one **is** ⁷**holy**⁰ **barring You,**
And no one **is** ⁷**righteous**~ **like our Elohim.**
3 **Do not** ˡ**speak** with **lofty superiority** so ˡ**much;**
May no **impertinence** come **forth from your mouth!**
For an **El of knowledge** is **Yahweh;**
And actions are regulated ›**by Him.**
4 The **bows of** the **masters** are **cracked,**
+**Yet** those who **stumble**ˡ **are belted** with **valor.**
5 The **surfeited have hired** themselves out ⁱ**for bread;**
+**Yet** the **famishing leave** hunger **behind.**
ᶠʳ**While** the **barren** one **has borne seven,**
+ **She** who was ᵐⁿ**abundant** in **sons has wasted away.**
6 **Yahweh** is ᶜ**putting** to **death and** is ᵐ**keeping alive;**
He is ᶜ**bringing down** to the **unseen, and He** ᶜ**brings** ˡ**up.**
7 **Yahweh** is ᶜ**making destitute and** is **enriching;**
He is ᶜ**laying low** and is **exalting too.**
8 He is **raising** the **poor from** the **soil** dust
⁷**And**ᶜˢ ˡ**exalts** the **needy from** the **ash heaps,**
› **Seating**~ them **with patrons** ⁷**of peoples**⁰**,**
+ ˡ**Allotting them** a **throne of glory.**
For Yahweh's are the **stanchions of** the **earth;**
+ **He** has ˡ**set** the **habitance** upon **them.**
9 **He is guarding** the **feet of His benign** ones;
+**Yet** the **wicked shall be silenced in darkness,**
For not ⁱ**by vigor** has **man** ˡ**mastery.**

2:1 *7-cs* **my Elohim:** Hb **Yahweh.**
2:2 *7-~* **righteous:** Hb **rock.**

10 As for **Yahweh,** those **contending** with **Him**
shall be undone;
*on*Against *Sy*them~*c* **shall He thunder in** the **heavens.**
Yahweh´ shall adjudicate the **limits of** the **earth.**
+ **He shall give strength to His king;**
+ **He shall exalt** the **horn of His anointed** one.

11 +**Then** 7**they** l**left him there before Yahweh and** l**went~** to*d* `**Ramah,** *M*to~*s* **his house;** +**as** for **the lad, he** *b*r**emained** in the **ministry**l `to **Yahweh** `in the **presence of Eli the priest.**

12 +**Now** the **sons of Eli** were **sons of worthlessness,** who did **not acknowledge** `**Yahweh** 13 +**or the priests' due** portion `from **the people.** When **any one** was **sacrificing** a **sacrifice,** +**then** a **young attendant of the priest would come,** *as*w**hile the meat**◊ was **cooking**−, +with `a **three-tined** `**fork in his hand,** 14 +**which he would poke in**to the **chafing-pan or** *i* **large pot or** *i* **caldron or** *i* **kettle. All** *w*t**hat the fork** *c*b**rought** l**up, the priest** would l**take** *i*f**or him**self. **Thus they** would l*d*t**reat** *i*a**t Shiloh** › **all** the **Israel**ites `who **came**l **there** 7**to sacrifice to Yahweh**0. 15 **Moreover,** *i* **ere they** *c*m**ade** `**the fat** l**fume,** + a **young attendant of the priest would come and say to** the **man** `who was **sacrificing,** Do *g*d**onate** some **meat**◊ **to roast for** the **priest;** +**for he shall not take from you cooked**l **meat**◊ 7**out** of **the caldron**0**, for** it **should** be **uncooked.** 16 +**If the man** l*sa*r**eplied to him, Let the fat fume,** yea **fume**− *as* **awhile,** +**then take for yourself** *as* w**hat your soul is yearning** for, + **he would** *sa*r**eply, No**t**, for you shall** *g*d**onate** it **now; and if not, I will take** it *i*b**y brunt** force. 17 + The **sin of the young attendants** l*b*w**as very great** `in the **presence of Yahweh, for** `these **men spurned** `the approach **present of Yahweh.**

18 + **Samuel** was in the **ministry**l `**before Yahweh** as a

2:10 *Sy-~c* **them:** Hb **him.**
2:11 7*-~* **they** l**left him there before Yahweh and** l**went:** Hb **Elkanah** l**went;** *M-~s* **to:** Hb **on.**
2:13,15 meat: lit., **flesh.**

lad girdedˡ with a **linen ephod.** 19 **His mother** would ⁺**also** ˡᵈ**make** a **small robe for him, and she would** ᶜ**bring** it **up to him from days** to[d] **days,** ⁱ**when she** went **up**⁻ `with **her husband to sacrifice** `**the sacrifice of days.**◊ 20 **And Eli would bless** `**Elkanah and** `**his wife,** ⁺ ⁻**saying, May Yahweh** ᵠ**repay**~ you and give ˃ **you seed** *f* **by** `**this** `**woman** ᵘ**in** place of **the loan** *w* ⁷**she had loaned**~ᵠ **to Yahweh.** ⁺**Then they went to** ᴹ**their**~ᶜ ʳⁱ**place.** 21 ᵠ**And Yahweh** ˡ**visited**~ `**Hannah;** ⁺ **she** had ˡ**pregnancies and** gave ˡ**birth** to **three sons and two daughters,** ⁺**while the lad Samuel** ˡ**grew up** ⁷^in the **presence of**~ᵠ **Yahweh.**

22 ⁺**Now Eli was very old; and he heard** `of **all** *w***that his sons were doing to all Israel, and** `*w***how they** ˡ**lay** `with **the women** `who **enlisted**ˡ at the entrance **opening of** the **tent of appointment.** 23 ⁺**So he** would ˡ**say to them, Why are you doing things like** `**these?** *w***For I** am **hearing from** `**all the people** `about **these things of yours** as **evil.** 24 ⁷**You**⁰ **must not** ⁷**do so**⁰**, my sons; for not good** is **the report** *w***that I hear**ˡ **passing** about among **Yahweh's people.** 25 **If** a **man** ˡ**sins** ˃**against** a **man,** ⁺**then Elohim will mediate** for **him.** ⁺ **If** a **man** ˡ**sins** ˃**against Yahweh,** ᵃ**who should mediate for him?** ⁺**But they** did **not** ˡ**hearken to their father's voice; for Yahweh desired to** ᶜ**put them** to **death.** 26 ⁺**Yet the lad Samuel** was **going** on **and** growing **greater** ⁺ in **goodness** ᵐʳ**both with Yahweh and** ᵐʳ **with men.**

27 ⁺ **A man of Elohim** ˡ**came to Eli and** ˡ**said to him, Thus** ˢᵃ**speaks Yahweh:** Did **I** not **reveal,** yea **reveal**⁻ Myself **to your father's house** ⁱ**when they** ᵇ**were**⁻ **in Egypt,** ⁷**servants**ᵠ **to** the **house of Pharaoh?** 28 ⁺ **I chose**⁻ `**him from all** the **tribes of Israel** to be **Mine for** the **priesthood, to ascend** ᵒⁿ **My altar, to fume incense, to wear** the **ephod before Me. And I** ˡᵍ**assigned to your father's house** `**all** the

2:19 `**the sacrifice of days:** i.e., the annual sacrifice.
2:20 *Q*~~ **repay:** Hb **place;** *7*~~*Q* **she had loaned:** Hb **he had loaned;** *M*~~*c* **their** Hb **his.**
2:21 *Q*~~ **And Yahweh** ˡ**visited:** Hb **For Yahweh visited;** *7*~~*Q* ^in the **presence of:** Hb **with.**

fire offerings **of** the **sons of Israel** [7]**for food**[Q]. [29] **Why are you**[◊] **showing disrespect** [i]**for My sacrifice and** [i]**for My** approach **present** [w]**that I have determined** for My **habitation? +Why are you glorifying** ›**your sons** more [f]**than Me, to** [c]**make** yourselves **plump**– [f]**with the first** portion **of every** approach **present** ›**by My people Israel?** [30] **Therefore,** this is the **averring of Yahweh Elohim of Israel: I said,** yea **said**–**, Your house and your father's house shall walk** about **before Me** [fr]**for** the **eon. +Yet now,** this is the **averring of Yahweh: Far be it** ›**from Me! For** those **glorifying Me shall I glorify, +yet** those **despising Me shall be dishonored.** [31] **Behold** the **days** are **coming** ([M]this is the **averring of Yahweh**[c]**), +when I will hack** down ›**your seed and** ‹the **seed of your father's house,** to keep them **from becoming**– **old in your house.** [32] **+Then you will look** on a **rival** in My **habitation, in all** [w]**that he** [c]**does good** ‹with **Israel. And** there **shall not** [b]**be** an **old** man **in your house all the days.** [33] **+As** for the **man** ›**of yours** whom **I shall not cut** off **from** [wi] **My altar,** I will cause › [all]**failure**– ‹to [7]**his**~[Q] **eyes and** › **pining** ‹to [7]**his**~[Q] **soul. +Yet all** the **increase of your house shall die** [7i]**by** the **sword of**[Q] **men.** [34] **And this** is **the sign for you** [w]**that shall** [in]**befall** › **your two sons,** › **Hophni and Phinehas:** [i]**On** the **same day shall both of them die.**

[35] **+Yet I will raise** up **for** Myself a **faithful**[l] **priest; he shall do** [7]**all**[cs] **according** to [w]**what** is **in My heart and in My soul. And I will build for him** a **faithful**[l] **house; + he will walk** about **before My anointed** one **all the days.** [36] **+Then it will** [b]**occur** that **every**one ‹who is **left**[l] over **in your house, shall come** ›**and bow down**– **to him for** a **gerah of silver +or** a **loaf of bread, and he will say,** Let **me adhere,** if you [pr]**please, to one of the priestly** duties, that I may have a **morsel of bread to eat.**

2:29 you: Qumran and LXX singular; Hb plural.
2:33 *7-~Q* **his:** Hb **your** (2x).
2:35 *7-cs* **all:** *cf* 2 S 15:24-37; 1 K 2:27.

FIRST SAMUEL: OVERVIEW

FIRST SAMUEL is a book containing many contrasts—contrasts carefully woven together to teach specific lessons about the control and rule that is exercised on our lives. There is the rule of the flesh, striving to do what it desires and what it thinks is right, but failing to be dependent upon God. And there is the rule of faith which honors God. Each of these is exhibited in varying degrees, and the struggle between them is most instructive because we, as believers, experience both. All experience the power of the flesh, but, by God's grace, a new power has entered the lives of those who walk by faith (*cf* Rom.7:25; 2 Cor.5:7).

Throughout 1 Samuel these themes of confidence in the flesh and reliance on God are presented in view of the broader theme of God's control of all events. Both in the relative sense of daily experience, and in the absolute sense of God's purposes, we see God actively involved and operating.

THE FLESH: RESPECT FOR PEOPLE, RATHER THAN GOD

Among the contrasts between flesh and faith are those illustrated in the lives of Eli and Saul. Eli shows us first the failing of the flesh when he speaks to his sons about their terrible sins. He said he was hearing reports *from the people* about the things his sons were doing. It is quite true that he knew these acts were sins against God, but it was the grumbling of the people, instead of jealousy for God, which triggered a response from Eli. Soon a man of God came to Eli with God's reproach and the ques-

tion, "Why are you glorifying your sons more than Me?" (1 Sam.2:22-30).

The nation Israel shows the same desire of the flesh in asking for a king. "Now do appoint for us a king, to judge us *like all the other nations*" (1 Sam.8:5). God's response to Samuel's prayer was, ". . . it is Me Whom they have rejected from being King over them" (8:7).

Saul is a premier example of the flesh. He tries repeatedly to serve God, but he continually bases his decisions on the people and circumstances that surround him: "When I saw that *the force scattered from me,* and you, *you did not come* within the appointed days, and *the Philistines were being gathered* . . . I felt compelled to offer up the ascent approach" (13:11-12). Saul explained to Samuel, "Because *I hearkened to the voice of the soldiers* . . . I brought back Agag . . . . Yet *the soldiers took* from the loot some small cattle and large cattle . . . *I have sinned, yet now, I pray, bring glory to me in front of the elders of my people and in front of Israel*" (15:20,21,30). And to David Saul said, "*You are not able* to go against this Philistine to fight with him, *for you are a youth,* and *he* has been *a man of war from his youth*" (17:33). Saul continually had his eye on the flesh and judged according to the flesh, and this was the cause of his replacement by David.

FAITH: AFTER THE HEART OF GOD

The man of God who came to Eli said God would raise up for Himself *a faithful priest who would "do all according to what is in My heart and in My soul"* (2:35). When Israel pleaded with Samuel to help them return to God, Samuel said, "*If it is with all your heart that you are returning to Yahweh,* then put away the foreign elohim and the Ashtaroth from your midst and prepare *your heart for Yahweh and serve Him, Him alone*" (7:3; *cf* 12:20-24). When Saul, overcome with anxiety, offered the sacrifice, instead

of waiting for Samuel, Samuel told him, "Yet now your dynasty shall not be confirmed. Yahweh has sought out for Himself a man *in accord with His own heart*" (13:14). And when Samuel beheld Jesse's sons, God's word to him was, "You must not look at his appearance and at the loftiness of his stature [the outstanding feature of Saul (10:23)], 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*" (16:7).

The contrast throughout these passages is the difference between a heart that is fully committed to God, and one that, while it may want to serve God, honors other things as well. "More than any guarding, *preserve your heart*, for from it spring the outflowings of life" (Prov.4:23). This commitment was voiced by Christ during His temptation in the wilderness, "The Lord your God shall you be worshipping, and *to Him only shall you be offering divine service*" (Matt.4:10).

THE CONTROL AND CHOICE ARE GOD'S

The book of 1 Samuel tells of many changing events and patterns of life in the history of Israel. Corruption was increasing in the days of Eli. His sons were profaning the worship and frustrating the worshipers. Israel needed a replacement for Eli—someone strong to lead the nation—someone who could take charge and change things.

Notice the subtle description the Scriptures give of the situation: "The *lad* Samuel was in the ministry before Yahweh under Eli the priest. *In those days the word of Yahweh had become rare; there was no vision being unfolded.* Then it occurred on that day: Eli was lying down in his own place; *his eyes had started to grow dim, and he was not able to see. The lamp of Elohim was not yet quenched, while Samuel was lying down in the temple of Yahweh where the coffer of Elohim was*" (1 Sam.3:1-4). Eli was nearly blind phys-

ically, and this represented his greater blindness toward God. But as long as the lad in an ephod was in the temple (*cf* 1 Sam.2:18), the light of God was not quenched. "A lad cannot replace a priest," we cry! A lad, of himself, could not. But that is all the flesh sees. The flesh is slow to see God, standing strong in young Samuel.

Saul started his era of leadership with victories and a reasonable acceptance by the people. Had we been Israelites then, we probably would have thought Saul was an average king, but needed to have a better replacement. And seeing Jonathan's character and leadership, we would likely have been content to wait for his natural ascent to the throne. But God is in control, and He removes both Saul and Jonathan, even Saul's entire house, in one fell stroke. In His wisdom it was much better to establish David as king.

But perhaps the most striking feature of God's control was His calling of prophets. There was no fleshly succession of the great prophets. One was called from here and another from there. He brought them forth from nowhere to rebuke priests and kings and whatever form of leadership the nation had at the time. Even David was humiliated by the prophet Gad (1 Sam.22:5; 2 Sam.24:11-14). All of this shows that there is no human form of rule—no rule of the flesh—that can permanently guide humanity.

The whole scenario may be summed up best in the song of Hannah. After years of hoping for a child, a new life within her, Hannah flung herself upon God, and canceling all confidence in her flesh, she poured out her heart to Him. Her song at the dedication of Samuel praises a God Who is little known by the terms of her expressions (1 Sam.2:1-10). Here is the God Who is "operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:11). He is humbling some and exalting others and His wisdom and power pervades all that occurs. Our expectation is in Him.

J. Philip Scranton

IF THE LORD IS WILLING

IN His sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke of the kingdom and the blessings for those who heard and heeded His words. But it is evident, not only in looking back at the failure of Israel but at our own experience of weakness and sin as well, that no one can achieve the perfection described in Matthew 5:17-48 apart from God's deliverance from sin. The words of Matthew 5-7 only make the promise of Matthew 1:21 more clearly necessary. There must be One Who saves from sin.

Otherwise, when the kingdom arrives, all Israel must be cast into Gehenna (Matt.5:22,27-30); they all must collect the wages of hypocrisy (6:3-5); everyone of them will be brought to destruction (7:13,14); the Lord must declare to them all: "I never knew you! Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness!" (7:23). Jesus required that they be doing the will of His Father Who is in the heavens (7:21). Yet for this to happen they must be established under the covenant of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. And for that to happen there must be a work of the Saviour that saves from sin.

DESCENDING FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Those who listened to the Lord's message "were astonished at His teaching" (7:28), and when He descended from the mountain "vast throngs follow Him" (Matt.8:1). Yet to begin with, we read of only one individual out of the vast throngs who comes to Jesus as the Saviour. This is a man afflicted with leprosy, who worships the Lord, saying "Lord, if Thou shouldst be willing, Thou canst cleanse me!" (8:2).

The leper is a picture of the sinner, and cleansing from leprosy is a picture of cleansing from sin. This is very promising in light of the message of Matthew 5-7. If He was willing Jesus could cleanse all the sinners of Israel from their sins. The very fact that He was willing to cleanse the leper from leprosy, and that He did so, tells us of His willingness to save His people from their sins and that He will do so.

Nevertheless, it was not the time for this cleansing. Jesus sent the cleansed leper to the priest "as a sign that He is the One Who can cleanse the leprosy of the sinful nation. [The priesthood] should have known that the One Who can do this is the long-desired Messiah. There is no intimation that they heeded this testimony, so that here we have, in a parable, the same truth with which John begins his evangel: His own people do not accept Him (John 1:11). Indeed, this is more striking. For the priests had before them continually the lesson of the suffering sacrifice. If no other class in the nation could understand His rejection and sorrow and death, they should have recognized that this is the One Who was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. But, in that deeper wisdom of God, they were also the ones who were ordained to be the slayers of the great Sacrifice."[1]

Indeed we may well say that the priests ought to have known that Jesus was the Promised One Who would save His people from their sins. The testimony of the cured leper was clear. But they were blinded to what was right before their eyes, so that they might offer up the Lamb of God Who thus would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

What shall we say, however, concerning the results of this blindness as they affect this particular priest who received this marvelous testimony? And what of the priesthood as a whole, which became the instrument for the giving up of

1. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.20.

the Lamb of God? If anyone is destined to hear the Lord's words, "Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness!" surely they must be included.

NO ONE IN ISRAEL

It is not that the priestly unbelief should escape judgment. But we must not make the words of condemnation and rejection spoken by the Saviour mean something that makes it impossible for Him to save such sinners as these. The priest was a sinner as well as the leper. They both needed cleansing from sin. *And so did everyone in Israel and in the entire world.*

This great need even beyond the circle of His people Israel is shown by the next occurrence in our Lord's ministry as recorded by Matthew. A centurion, that is, a Roman military officer, came to Jesus in Capernaum, and pleaded that the Lord would cure his boy who was prostate with paralysis and dreadful torments (Matt.8:5-8). There is much for our learning here, but first of all, let us note that which was so marvelous to Jesus, that this Roman centurion displayed more faith in Him than His people Israel were displaying. "Verily, I am saying to you, With no one in Israel so much faith did I find" (Matt.8:10).

There was *no one in Israel* who had faith like this centurion's. And yet, Jesus was the One Who was to save His people from their sins!

The leper was cleansed, and the boy was cured, but the priest showed no indication of comprehending the leper's testimony, and countless Israelites, as "sons of the kingdom" would be cast out into outer darkness with lamentation and gnashing of teeth when the kingdom arrived (Matt.8:11,12). These are our Lord's words, and they will be fulfilled.

But to make this condemnation an everlasting punishment in hell, without hope, without relief, without any

possibility of Jesus becoming the Saviour and Shepherd of these who are His people (*cf* Matt.2:6) is surely to mistake the mind of God. Unbelief is sin, and its wages must accord with the serious nature of the sin. Nevertheless, it surely is impossible that Jesus will never know in a saving way those whom He came to save, that He can never wipe away the tears of those cast out into darkness away from the light of the kingdom, that all the sons of the kingdom will never bow in the Name of the Saviour and acclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

THE TEACHING OF HELL

The traditional doctrine of hell is founded on more passages in Matthew than any other portion of God's Word. The King James Version renders the word *Gehenna* "hell" seven times in Matthew (5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33), and two times it uses "hell" for *hades* (11:23; 16:18). From this it is concluded that hell is a place of fire, where the whole body perishes, the soul and body destroyed, where one is brought down in judgment, and where there are strong gates. (There is renewed controversy today over the sense implied by the words "perish" and "destroy," some claiming from these terms that hell involves the annihilation of the sinner and the majority still taking the terms figuratively as symbolic of hopelessness. Very little attention seems to be given in this connection to the fact that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, *i.e.*, those who are perishing.)

The whole subject of an unending punishment is expanded by taking every warning of future judgment and loss in our Lord's ministry as further revelation concerning hell. Hence, as we have noted, the fire of hell is determined by a further mistranslation to be unquenchable (Matt.3:12), punishment in hell is supposed to be the "wages" of hypocrites (Matt.5:2-5), hell is seen as the place of destruction at the end of broad and spacious way (Matt.7:13), the des-

tiny of workers of lawlessness who are expelled from our Lord's presence (7:23), and despite normal implications of the word "fire" hell is found to be a place of "outer darkness" where those who are destroyed continue to lament and gnash their teeth (8:12).

Many more such details are added from later passages in Matthew, culminating in the use of the terrifying words of Matthew 25:46 as rendered by the King James Version, and followed by most other translations. From the Lord's description of the future judgment of the nations, it is claimed that hell is the place of "everlasting punishment," making punishment an end in itself, and finally securing the impossibility of Jesus ever fully taking His place as Saviour.

HIS WILL AND OURS

The willingness of Jesus to save sinners is not consciously questioned by believers, but in effect many fail to appreciate its importance. Other issues intrude on almost every consideration of our Lord's will, such as: "What about the human will? What if the human being is not willing to be saved?" "What if the divine willingness to save is limited and arbitrarily directed?" Theological problems concerning election, predestination, and free will keep cropping up. Few seem to see our Lord's willingness as such a decisive and determinative factor in salvation as the leper saw it. Few are as clear about the certainty and authority for healing of a word from the Lord as the centurion was. "Lord, I am not competent that Thou mayest enter under my roof, but *only say the word and my boy will be healed!*" (Matt.8:8).

But the willingness of the Lord to save is not held captive to conditions and situations outside of God's control. It is not a well-meaning but hopeless wishing for the best. The casting out of the sons of the kingdom into outer darkness is not proof that Jesus can never be their Saviour from sin, nor evidence that He has no willingness to save them

from such sorrow. They must weep and lament for a time, but this is only part of the process, and not at all the goal, or the ultimate expression of the divine will. Darkness and sorrow serve and do not oppose the operations of the One Who is willing to save.

The critical issue here is the divine willingness to save, not ours to be saved. "It is not of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful" (Rom.9:16). His people will be willing in the day of His power (Psa.110:3). May we become more and more like the leper who boldly testified to the vital and effective place of the Lord's will, and more and more like the Roman centurion who was unswerving in conviction concerning the Lord's authority and power to heal. No matter how much human stubbornness and blindness, darkness and lamentation come in between, the final resolution is the Lord's Who is willing to save, Who is Jesus the Saviour, Who shall save His people from their sins.

D.H.H.

REPOSING IN CHRIST

Sister Hazel Silva of Boise, Idaho, was put to repose on December 9, 1996, at age 85. Along with her husband Ted, who preceded her in death in 1974, she eagerly embraced the truth concerning God's delight to head up all in the Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bindery work has now been completed, and *Unsearchable Riches* volume 87 (1996) is now available for shipment (clothbound, dark green cloth, 288 pages; $20.00 per copy, $2.00 s&h (California residents add sales tax).

Our current series, *Studies in Galatians,* which began in volume 87, number 1, does not appear in this issue. Since our writings on Galatians 4 (which, sequentially, would be the next portion of Scripture due for exposition at this time) were already published in volume 82 (pp.155-164; 219-231), we intend to resume our publication of these Galatians studies in our next issue, beginning with Galatians 5:1.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 1997
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT

EDITORIAL

"IF" is a little word that sometimes brings big trouble into our minds. It conveys a sense of urgent and even hopeless responsibility many times in the Lord's ministry (*cf* Matt.6:14,15,22; 10:13; 17:20; 21:21). Yet as we have been discovering in the studies on Matthew (see p.117), such instructions must not be divorced from the promise given to Israel in Matthew 1:21. The conditions will be met, but only as God provides His spirit under the new covenant and on the basis of the salvation gained through His Son.

For us as well, Paul's words in 2 Timothy 2:12, ". . . *if* we are disowning, He also will be disowning us," are sobering. Yet again, by keeping this in context, we realize His disowning relates to future reigning and not to eonian life, for He cannot disown us who have been graciously called and placed as members of *Himself*. And this appreciation of the completeness of our salvation, in turn, increases our appreciation for our Lord and strengthens our confidence in Him to Whom we belong.

But these are human *ifs* concerning future and unknown developments. The *ifs* concerning divine operations channeled through Christ are quite different and carry much the same sense as *since*: "*If* God is for us . . ." (Rom.8:31); ". . . *If* One died for the sake of all . . ." (2 Cor. 5:14). In this class is such a word as Romans 6:8, ". . . if we died together with Christ." Here is a way of expressing the evangel that Christ died for our sins; it is a fact, and the *if* is used in order to get us thinking about the significance of this fact.

Thus, very often the *ifs* of Scripture direct our hearts to

joyful and glorious thoughts, away from fearful doubts to exultant assurance. We can even add them to various revelations of truth and connect them to their scriptural conclusions. For instance, in Brother Knoch's articles on the cross (see p. 99), he has been saying in effect: "*If* we have been crucified with Christ, then we all are on the same level as the malefactors and Saul of Tarsus, great sinners in need of grace."

So also Brother Fielding reminds us (see p.123), that *if* we have been chosen and called as members of Christ's body we may be mutually solicitous for one another. Brother Scranton traces a pattern in the lives of Saul and David (see p.128), that can be expressed similarly, using Paul's words in Ephesians 2:1-10. *If* God saves us in grace from a spirit of *stubbornness,* then we are God's achievement for His display of transcendent riches of grace and for good works which He makes ready beforehand.

Again, *if* God was operating with wisdom and power in Job's sufferings (see p.139), then Job could endure them all with expectation. *If* darkness and storm and chaos are under divine control, then they must have a purpose that corresponds with His character of righteousness.

Already with these examples the word *if* is becoming a word of delight. This is because we are noticing the condition upon which the word rests. *If* it rests on God's promise or achievements, the word *if* is full of assurance and joy. *If* our freedom and benefits (see p.105) are dependent on our act of circumcising then we are debtors to do the whole law, but *if* they are dependent on God's grace in and through Christ, then we are brought into the realm of faith operating through love (Gal.5:1-6). *If* Christ truly died for our sins and God actually reconciles us through the blood of His cross, then we are overwhelmed by grace. *If* the evangel is true, then there is joy and peace and endurance and love being poured out into our lives. D.H.H.

UNITY BY CRUCIFIXION

PAUL writes of his personal relation to crucifixion twice. Once, in connection with the Corinthians, he insists that he had *not* been crucified *for* them (1 Cor.1:13). And again, in relation to his own justification, he says that he *had* been crucified *with* Christ (Gal.2:20). As he was the foremost of sinners (1 Tim.1:15), these seemingly contradictory statements may help us to clarify our own relationship to the shameful death of our Saviour and Justifier. The point is that neither Paul nor any other man is the center and unifier. They are all reckoned as crucified criminals. Christ alone was crucified *for* them, and so He is the Center and Basis of unity.

Death by crucifixion is the basis of the unity in the joint body of Christ. Any other method will divide. Baptism is a good example. It united believers of the Circumcision in the Acts period. Cornelius, the proselyte was also joined to them by baptism (Acts 10:47-48). Paul himself was baptized (Acts 19:10), and baptized others. Why did he not continue?

Baptism is not nearly so *offensive* as the cross. Hence Paul says to the Corinthians (1:17), "Christ does not commission me to be baptizing, but to be bringing the evangel, not in wisdom of word, *lest the cross of Christ may be made void.*"

PAUL AND CRUCIFIXION

First of all, let us acknowledge that Paul really had been the greatest of all sinners, for he not only endorsed

the assassination of Stephen, but he devastated the ecclesia, going into the homes, dragged out men and women, and gave them over to jail (Acts 8:1-3). Besides breathing out threatening and murder against the Lord's disciples in Jerusalem, he requested letters from the chief priest, so that he might bind the saints in Damascus and lead them to Jerusalem (Acts 9:1-2). Was there ever any other private person who went to such lengths to wipe out the disciples of Christ? The Saviour endured a most shameful death Himself in order to reconcile and glorify sinners, but Paul sought to deal out distress and death to the saints.

Some might suggest the high priests and Pilate, who actually were responsible for Christ's crucifixion, were the most reprehensible, so they have the foremost places in the rank of sinners. But God does not reckon that way. They were officials, and probably deemed it their duty to please the populace. Pilate, especially, was not doing what he wished to do. Besides, they were under the compulsion of the divine decree, and fulfilled the page of prophecy. Their heart was not in it as was the case with Paul. So we cannot well dispute Paul's claim to the foremost place in the rank of sinners.

PAUL CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

Paul is probably the best example we have of crucifixion *with* Christ. Although easily the foremost and finest example of the so-called "Christian" life, his experience, his sufferings, his debasement, were a tremendous contrast to the fortunate and honorable positions of the leaders of today. Paul sought no following, no glory from men.

For his dastardly deeds Paul was crucified in God's reckoning. The unbelieving malefactor blasphemed Jesus and demanded "Are not you the Christ? Save yourself and us!" Then, "answering, the other one, rebuking him, averred, 'Yet you are not fearing God, seeing that you are in the

same judgment! And we, indeed, justly, for we are getting back the deserts of what we commit, yet this One commits nothing amiss' " (Luke 23:39-41). This should be the language of every believer in this era of God's grace. When our eyes are opened to see ourselves in His light, then we acknowledge that the crucifixion of Christ *for* us, demands that, in spirit, we are crucified *with* Him.

PAUL NOT CRUCIFIED FOR US

Negatively, Paul was *not* crucified *for* us (1 Cor.1:13). This is of far greater importance than appears on the surface, especially in these last days. Positively it may be stated thus: In Paul's ministry the *crucified Christ* is the *only Center* of *unity.* No other one was crucified for us, so *He alone* is the focus of our affections. In Christendom great men, good men, pious men, capable men, have risen and gathered disciples about themselves or their teaching, but they have created conflict and confusion, and destroyed the unity which depends alone on Christ and His crucifixion.

CRUCIFIXION UNITY

The Corinthian ecclesia was richly endowed with gifts, yet inclined to division by following human leaders. In the beginning some of the Corinthians became partisans for Paul. Some preferred Apollos, others Cephas. Yet others would not join them, so made their own division under the name of Christ. Thus they not only parted Christ among them, but strove with one another as to the right leader. At that early stage of minority, before most of present truth had even been revealed and some of it would eventually be discarded, when they were still observing by means of a mirror, in an enigma (1 Cor.13:3-13), there was much more excuse. Christendom today is mostly in the same condition.

It is easy to see why some of them were Paulists. He was

the one who brought the evangel to them. As he reminds them later, he *planted*. Apollos came later, and *irrigated* (1 Cor.3:6). There seems to be no record that Cephas ever went there. But none of these proclaimed themselves, but *Christ*. That there is a tendency today to be partial to Paul, especially among those who are, in a measure, mature, can easily be understood. But it is a very different matter than forming an exclusive party. Indeed, Paul personally is not in question, but his teaching, and that should unite *all* the saints, especially as a part of it is this very passage, which bases all unity on *crucifixion*, which applies only to Christ Himself (1 Cor.1:10-13).

Crucifixion is the proper basis of all *vital spiritual* unity among believers among the nations. As offenders against the Divine Majesty we *all* alike deserve crucifixion. Not one is worthy to head a separate party. Especially today, almost all saints are immature, and in different stages of development, and under the influence of false teaching and practice, so they choose, or rather drift, into a "body" with another head than the crucified Christ.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED

There is only one Christ and one cross, and this should be the center and rallying point of all believers in Him. Paul and Apollos and Cephas were all good and great men, but they divided those who followed them. Even Paul, although he is the *channel* of the truth for us today, is not the center. He was not crucified for our sakes! Christ is the focus of all God's operations and the Head of the body. But, for us, He is the Crucified, and we are associated with Him, not in the earthly glories, but in the cross of His shame. There He was the lowest on earth, and we with Him. Only thus can we be with Him as the Highest in glory (1 Cor.1:13-31).

A. E. Knoch

The following abstract of our writings on Galatians 4, summarizes the articles "Getting the Place of a Son" (4:1-16) and "Children of Promise" (4:17-31), which appeared in volume 82 (pp.155-164; 219-231):

GALATIANS FOUR

IN Galatians 4, Paul continues in defense of his evangel of justification by the faith of Christ. Earlier he had called the Galatians foolish for thinking they were incomplete apart from maintaining the precepts of the law. The Galatians were *wanting* to be under the law (Gal.4:21) and were looking at Paul as their enemy (4:16). This tendency to bring in law-keeping has increased today where some form of "conditional" salvation is widely taught and defended.

Abraham's enjoyment of an allotment being based solely on God's promise, and therefore in grace, is a prototype of the evangel. Believing Israelites like Paul were once enslaved to the elements of the Mosaic system (Gal. 4:1-3). But Christ coming under the jurisdiction of the law reclaims those under the law giving all believers the place of a son (Gal.4:4-7), a place of great worth, near and dear to the Father's heart.

The blessings we have are given to us gratuitously and are not altered by our obedience or disobedience. To proclaim this evangel is a struggle. Even where it is not opposed it is often accepted halfheartedly and is neglected or ignored.

Prior to receiving the evangel the Galatians were slaves of the jurisdiction of darkness, and now they were wanting to turn again to a condition of slavery, albeit in a new form of law-keeping (Gal.4:8-11).

Paul, who once observed the law, wants the Galatians to become as he was now and as they used to be with respect

to the law (Gal.4:12). In denying the evangel they were only injuring themselves. When Paul first announced the evangel of grace to them the Galatians responded with a happiness of solicitude toward Paul. Now they were occupied with law-keeping and looked on Paul, who kept pointing to God's grace, as their enemy (Gal.4:13-16).

Those who were disturbing the Galatians were jealous, or zealously enthusiastic toward them because they wanted the Galatians to be jealous indeed to their ways and ideas. Despite the fact that the Galatians considered Paul their enemy, Paul sees them as his beloved "little children" and points them to the properly directed jealously or zeal (Gal. 4:17-20). Out of his perplexity he decides to tell them an allegory based on the story of Hagar and Sarah, Ishmael and Isaac (Gal.4:22-31; *cf* Gen. chapters 16,17, and 21).

If the Galatians worked to become such ardent devotees of the law, Paul would have them only to comply with its own dictate as recorded in this story (Gal.4:21,22) which essentially teaches that the works of the flesh debar entrance into God's allotment.

This allotment of glorious life and joy in the presence of Christ Himself in the oncoming eons is promised to us by God in His grace. Thus it is that we now are blessed like Abraham, Sarah and Isaac of old, in accord with God's gracious promise. This word of promise for us is the evangel of the salvation brought by Paul.

Our God has determined to bless us (*cp* Gen.17:2), to take note of us (*cp* Gen.21:1), and grant us our allotment according to His own promise in grace. This is simply to affirm that we have no say in the matter, which is good news indeed.

Thus Paul would have the Galatians toss aside the law as the toys of infancy that they might enter into the glory and freedom of the filial relation: the place of a *son* for God through Christ Jesus (4:1-7; *cp* Eph.1:5). J.R.C.

"YOU FALL OUT OF GRACE"
(Galatians 5:1-15)

THE BLESSINGS of Paul's evangel, which are our allotment in grace, are blessings which the God of all grace, Who does not lie, *promises* "before times eonian" (Titus 1:2b). Even as, if a blessing is out of works, it is no longer *grace* (Rom.11:6b), thus also, if the enjoyment of an allotment is out of law, it is no longer out of *promise* (Gal.3:18a).

Since God has graciously granted Abraham his allotment through promise (Gal.3:18b), and since, in the gracious blessings of the evangel, we, in principle, are of "Abraham's seed," we too, *like* Abraham's seed, are enjoyers of an allotment according to promise (*cf* Gal.3:29). Hence, Paul further joyously declares: "you brethren, *as Isaac,* are children of *promise*" (4:28; *cp* Rom.9:9).

The Galatians did not realize that "the law is *not* of *faith*" (Gal.3:12a). That is, they failed to recognize that law-obedience and resultant blessing, is not of the nature merely of faith, of that in which one simply trusts in God's promise. The law, rather, in one's obedience to its precepts, is of the principle that the one who *does them* "shall be living [i.e., finding life and blessing] *in them*" (3:12b; cit. Lev.18:5).

Since the law is not of faith, neither does it accord with grace (*cp* Rom.4:16). It has no place in relation to the evangel brought by Paul, which bestows the transcendent grace of justification *apart* from law, on *all* who are believing (Acts 13:39; Rom.3:21,24).

For freedom Christ frees us! (5:1a)

In Christ Jesus, Who has become to us wisdom from God, besides righteousness and holiness and deliverance (1 Cor.1:30,31), we are *complete* (Col.2:10). Therefore, in Him, in the benefits afforded us through His sacrificial death, we are *free* from any need to be "justified in law" (*cf* Gal.5:4). Christ is the "consummation" of "law for righteousness" (Rom.10:4). Obeying law in order to become righteous, is something which is quite impossible for mortals (Rom.3:9,10; 8:3,7). In spirit, "law for righteousness" must ever point to Christ, in Whom alone its goal is realized (*cp* Rom.8:3,4). Only in Him is that which the law sought actually achieved. Through the one just award of Christ, life's justifying comes into all mankind (Rom.5:18). Through Him alone, this entire vast company shall be constituted just (Rom.5:19).

While eventually, *all*—whether those in the heavens or those on the earth—will be headed up in the Christ (Eph. 1:10), the Galatians were already in Christ and blessed according to the revelations of Paul's evangel. Therefore, since the blessing of being righteous in Christ had already been bestowed upon them, they had been liberated from any need for following "law for righteousness."

Strictly (since the dative case is used, together with the definite article), it is, "*Into this* freedom Christ frees us!" (5:1). This freedom, allegorically speaking, is the freedom of being "not the children of the maid, but of the free woman" (4:31), which is to say, the freedom of Isaac; the freedom of being children of promise (4:28), according to grace.

It is the freedom of, "At 'this season' I shall come 'and there will be for Sarah a son'" as in the case of "Rebecca also [who] is having her bed of *one,* Isaac, our father. For, not as yet being born or putting into practice anything good or bad, that the purpose of God may be remaining as a *choice,* not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling, it

was declared to her that 'The greater *shall* be slaving for the inferior'" (Rom.9:9-12).

Stand firm, then, and be not again enthralled with the yoke of slavery. (5:1b)

"In the Greek, it is simply 'TO-YOKE-OF-SLAVERY.' That is, we must not become 'enthralled' (spellbound or enslaved) by *any* 'yoke of slavery.' Yet any 'Christian teaching' or ministry which takes the position that the believer's righteousness or at least the benefits which this righteousness entails, are granted to him, in the last analysis, not because of what Christ has done but because of what he himself has done, is both a deception and a yoke of slavery.

"This freedom, then, of which Paul speaks, for which Christ frees us, is freedom from any need even to attempt to become righteous by works of law. We enjoy the blessings of the untraceable riches of Christ (Eph.3:8). We are not participants in the economy of the law, and are by no means subject to its curses. Christ *reclaims* us from the curse of the law, becoming a curse for our sakes (Gal. 3:13). Consequently, since God is for us, who is against us (Rom.8:31)?

"We were conciliated to God not through our faith in God's Son or through our faith in His death, but *through the death of God's Son* (Rom.5:10). God did not, reciprocally, *take* us to Himself consequent to our acceptance of Christ. That would not have been a *choice* (*cf* Rom.9:11), but an obligation. Instead, He actually *chose* us in Christ, even 'before the disruption of the world' (Eph.1:4). God graciously grants faith to all His chosen ones (*cp* 1 Cor. 1:24-29; Rom.12:3; Phil.1:29). Therefore, the believer's faith does not constitute an entitlement to salvation, but a surety of salvation, a surety to the believer that he (or she), indeed, is one of God's chosen ones."[1]

1. *Unsearchable Riches,* "For Freedom Christ Frees Us!" vol.81, pp.227,228.

DEBTORS TO THE LAW

Paul's question to the Galatians, who wanted to be under law, had been whether they had indeed "heard" the law itself, in its testimony to those who presume that they are able to keep it, and that thus, by their own obedience, gain its proffered blessing (Gal.4:21; *cp* Ex.19:8). If the Galatians truly wished to "hear" the law, that is, act in accordance with its testimony, then they were to "cast out this maid and her son" (4:30), which, in Paul's allegory of the free woman and the maid, is identified as the covenant from mount Sinai with all its legal precepts (4:24,25).

Lo! I, Paul, am saying to you that if you should be circumcising, Christ will benefit you nothing. Now I am attesting again to every man who is circumcising, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Exempted from Christ were you who are being justified in law. (5:2-4a)

Note the emphasis of the apostle's declaration here: "Lo! I Paul am saying to you . . . ." Still, the words "if you should be circumcising, Christ will benefit you nothing," must not be wrenched from their context; much less are they to be understood categorically, for this would contradict not only the entire tenor of the epistle, but the very evangel itself. Paul speaks relatively, in relation to justification in law. The sense is, If you should be circumcising (in the interests of *justification*), Christ will benefit you nothing (*in justification*). Thus, *Christ*—or *Circumcision:* which shall it be?

Indeed, in circumcising, one is only fulfilling a single point of law, not the entirety of the law. This one point of law by no means stands in isolation, as if nothing more need be done. To the contrary, the situation is rather that "every man who is circumcising . . . is a debtor to do the whole law." This accords with Romans 2:25: "For circumcision, indeed, is benefiting if you should be putting the law into practice, yet if you should be a transgressor of

law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision"; as well as with James 2:10: "For anyone who should be keeping the whole law, yet should be tripping in one thing, has become liable for all."

Even as the words, "if you should be circumcising, Christ will benefit you nothing," are to be understood in relation to justification, the phrase, "Exempted from Christ," is likewise to be understood in this same connection. Accordingly, the word "Christ," herein, is used metonymically, in reference to His benefits, and that in the sense of one's own recognition thereof. The sense is, inherent to the view of one holding such a perspective, Those who are being justified *in law,* were thereby exempted from being justified *in Christ.* This is simply to say that it follows from the position that one *is* justified in law, that one is *not* justified in Christ. One precludes the other. Thus, in one's own perception, one "nullifies" or "makes unproductive" (as the Greek word translated here "exempted" is elsewhere rendered) the work of Christ in justification. Hence, in nullifying the true benefits of Christ, the Galatians repudiated the grace of God (*cp* 2:21).

You fall out of grace. (5:4b)

Indeed, this is just what one does who seeks a right standing before God by means of law, even if he should freely acknowledge the sacrificial death of Christ on behalf of his sins. In one's own recognition, one falls *out of grace,* not by practicing sin, but by falling *into law.* In truth, however, simply because it is *grace,* it is impossible for one to remove himself from its blessing, even by the darkest of deeds.

"In withdrawing from a real relation to the *Saviour,* the Galatians 'fall away' from *grace.* The verb 'fall out' (*ekpiptō*) is applied, in Acts 27:17, 26, 29, 32, to the course of a ship driven out from her course. The image of a drifting vessel is reinforced in verse seven, by the figure of a race. These racers made a fine start, but they have stumbled (3:3; 5:7);

the vessel set out from the harbor in splendid style, but has been caught and set adrift by the 'winds of doctrine.'

"This 'falling out' bears no resemblance to the 'falling away' doctrine. It is rather the exact opposite of 'stand firm' in 5:1. In terms of theology to fall away means 'final and eternal loss.' This theological fiction is a positive hindrance to the understanding and enjoyment of truth. True, Scripture speaks of 'loss'; but that loss is temporary, strictly confined to the creature's experience, and, like Israel's loss, becomes the 'riches' of the world, in the good providence of God"[2]

"'Falling from grace,' is not, as usually supposed, a loss of the benefits of Christ's salvation through *breaking* the law, but is rather a loss of a realization of those benefits through attempting to *keep* the law. He who falls into sin does not forfeit the grace of God. Blessed to relate, grace abounds in such a case (*cf* Rom.6:1). But he who seeks to establish his own salvation by works has no need of the grace of God . . . . He thus repudiates grace. He falls out of the sphere where grace operates."[3]

ENTREATY FOR FAITHFUL SERVICE

For we, in spirit, are awaiting the expectation of righteousness by faith. (5:5)

Until the day of Christ's advent, we, in spirit, "as if present" (*cp* 1 Cor.5:3), are awaiting the *expectation of* righteousness [i.e., of justification], and we are doing so by faith. We await that expectation which relates to righteousness, that is to say, which relates to our conformation to the image of Christ together with the transfiguration of the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of Christ's own glory. Even as, though we are already sons of

2. Vladimir Gelesnoff, PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, p.121.
3. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.284.

God yet are awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our body (Rom.8:23b), thus also, though we are already justified, we are awaiting the expectation *of* righteousness, that glory which God has appointed for us in coming eons and beyond. Thus, proleptically speaking (i.e., in a spirit of anticipation), we *are* justified; for, literally speaking, we *will be* justified, in that day.

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is availing anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith, operating through love. (5:6)

Faith, operating through love, alone is that which avails. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision—nor any other human deed either of obeying or of omitting to obey law—avails anything at all, *in Christ Jesus.* It is in Christ Jesus alone that all aspects of salvation are achieved, "through the blood of His cross." Law obedience, as such, with necessarily attendant curses for violation thereof, simply has no place in our salvation.

"*All* is allowed me," says Paul, "but not all is expedient." "All *is* allowed me, but I will not be put under its authority by anything" (1 Cor.6:12). "All is *allowed* me, but not all is edifying" (1 Cor.10:23). The words which immediately follow, then, "Let no one be seeking the welfare of himself, but that of another" (1 Cor.10:24), are not to be understood as a legal requirement under pains of the repeated violation of which one will "lose his salvation," or any other blessing in Christ.

What is achieved in Christ, cannot be forfeited by man. Hence all such entreaties, such as that of 1 Corinthians 10:24, should simply be understood as that which is expedient or edifying, pleasing to God and beneficial to man. Though all such words of entreaty of our apostle have a vital place in our service (even as the counsel of all necessarily universally-applicable words of wisdom throughout all Scripture), even so, no scriptural entreaty of upright-

ness at all, however important, has any place whatsoever in our justification, in which we are complete in Christ.

You raced ideally! Who hinders you not to be persuaded by the truth? (5:7)

These words are reminiscent of Paul's previous fulmination, "O foolish Galatians! Who bewitches you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was graphically crucified?" (3:1). How painful it must have been for Paul to see his own "little children" in faith (4:19), so misapprehend the evangel of their salvation, especially when they had once "raced ideally" (*cf* 4:13-15; Acts 18:23). As with the Corinthians, it was true of the Galatians as well in relation to Paul: "If you should be having ten thousand escorts in Christ, nevertheless not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus, through the evangel, I beget you. I am entreating you, then, become imitators of me" (1 Cor.4:15,16).

Further, Paul recognizes that his opposers have hindered the Galatians from being persuaded by the truth, and this softens the edge of his repeatedly piercing words.

This persuasion is not of Him Who is calling you. (5:8)

Even though, ultimately speaking, *all* is not only out of God, but through and for Him as well (Rom.11:36), relatively speaking, there is much that is "not of God." Such is the case at hand. Faithfully speaking, this persuasion which the Galatians had mistakenly embraced was *not* of God; Paul's teaching *was* of God; for he had received it directly through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (1:12).

A little leaven is leavening the whole kneading. (5:9)

The Galatians were stark proof of the truth of this saying. Under the law, leaven was a type of sin (e.g., Ex.13:5-7; Matt.16:12). Leaven, such as yeast, may only be a small entity in itself, but it soon permeates and affects the whole kneading, from which many loaves may be made. Similarly, the "leaven" of the misplaced truth of circumcision, a small thing in itself, had given rise to a wider desire

among the Galatians to be under law in general. Accordingly, as Paul was informed, they were now "scrutinizing" days and months and seasons and years, all in a sedulous effort to observe the holy times of the law in their precise appointed seasons (*cf* Gal.4:10).

I have confidence in you in the Lord that in nothing you will be disposed otherwise. (5:10a)

Literally, Paul's confidence here, was certainly not "in" the Galatians themselves. It was rather "in*to*" (*eis*) them. That is, they were the objects of Paul's confidence, which was "*in* the Lord," Paul's confidence that "in nothing you *will* be disposed otherwise." Specifically when this would be so, Paul could not say. He simply knew that the infirm in the faith will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand (Rom.14:4). In the meantime, he could only wait, seeing whether God may be giving them repentance to come into a realization of the truth (2 Tim.2:25b).

Now he who is disturbing you shall be bearing his judgment, whosoever he may be. (5:10b)

These words remind us of those of 2 Timothy 2:14, 15: "Alexander the coppersmith displayed to me much evil: the Lord will be paying him in accord with his acts—whom you also guard against, for very much has he withstood words of ours." Such disservice to the saints will surely call forth corresponding requital upon all such bad works when considered at the dais of Christ, and will mean the forfeiture of wages in the case of many in that day (1 Cor. 3:14,15; 2 Cor.5:10).

Now I, brethren, if I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? (5:11a).

It is evident that Paul was faced with opposition on all sides. From certain appearances, some may have inferred the mistaken impression that the apostle, effectually at least, was "still heralding circumcision" (*cf* Acts 21:20-26). These or others, through jealousy and gossip, may have

led still others to suppose that this was actually so. Paul's logic, however, is unassailable: "If I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?" Many knew well that Paul was *not* heralding circumcision, and were most displeased that this was so (*cf* Acts 15:1,2a,5). If he had only continued to do so, all corresponding persecution would have ceased.

Consequently the snare of the cross of Christ has been nullified. (5:11b)

Conversely, however, if Paul had continued to herald circumcision, the *snare of* the cross of Christ would have been nullified. A "snare" (*skandalon*) is "a means of tripping or a cause of falling" (Keyword Concordance, p.275). The glorious truth associated with Christ's cross becomes just this to many, by means of which they trip, and fall into opposing error. That truth is the revelation that salvation is in grace and through Christ alone. This scandalizes both human pride and fleshly ethics, by which most are enslaved.

The evangel is simply unacceptable to those who wish to boast in something of themselves—something that *they* have done. In most circles today, "accepting Christ" (or alternatively, obeying Him as Lord) has supplanted first-century circumcision as the fancied "requirement" for salvation. Among the exponents of such views today, just as surely as among the circumcisionists of Galatia, thus the *snare* of the cross[4] is nullified. By denying its truth, they remove its offense.

Would that those who are raising you to insurrection struck themselves off also! (5:12)

Out of exasperation, Paul resorts to sarcasm. In his ebullient hyperbole and irony, he wishes that those who had roused the Galatians to insurrection, might finish their

4. For an extended consideration of this subject, see the article, "The Snare of the Cross," *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.81, pp.269-278.

work of mutilation of the flesh by striking themselves off also. Then they could no longer deceive the saints. On the principle that a little cutting is good, surely a lot of cutting is better still.

FREEDOM AND FAITHFULNESS

For you were called for freedom, brethren, only use not the freedom for an incentive to the flesh . . . . (5:13a)

The literal reading is, "[You were called] *on* freedom." It is on a basis of freedom from needing to seek "law for righteousness" that we are called. And, into such freedom Christ frees us (5:1)! Far from denying this truth, Paul would only add, "use not [this] freedom for an incentive to the flesh."

Left to ourselves, the "flesh," that is, we ourselves, considered in our own foolishness and weakness, would misuse this very truth, if not through abject abandonment, at least in careless neglect or apathy. In consideration of this tendency, as a complement to the truth of the evangel itself, we need to be reminded that there are still "many foolish and harmful desires which are swamping men [believers not excepted] in extermination and destruction" (1 Tim.6:9).

Though only certain such injurious desires, in some cases, may lead to bodily extermination and destruction, many such fleshly foibles regularly lead to the quenching of the spirit even as to the diminution if not destruction of a life of faithfulness. "So that, let him who is supposing he stands beware that he should not be falling" (1 Cor.10:12).

. . . but through love be slaving for one another. For the entire law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You shall love your associate as yourself." (5:13b,14)

Truly, love is the greatest thing, for apart from it we are nothing. Of all the sagacities of wisdom, walking in love heads the list. "To no one owe anything, except to be loving one another, for he who is loving another has fulfilled

law" (Rom.13:8); and ". . . if there is any other precept, it is summed up in this saying, in this: 'You shall love your associate as yourself' " (Rom.13:9b).

It is not enough for us to be loving only those loving us. As the Lord declared, "What thanks [or 'grace'] is it" to be doing that (Luke 6:32)? His entreaty was rather, "Be loving your enemies . . ." (Luke 6:35a), even as Paul further confirms in Romans 12:20,21, adding, "Be not conquered by evil; but conquer evil with good."

"Love pervades the Pauline writings. According to him, it is love that imparts to freedom, as to all else, virtue and meaning. It derives from love the element of preciousness. He says, *'through love* be slaving for one another' . . . .

"Love transcends and glorifies all things because it is absolutely disinterested. It is the only thing in all the universe that 'seeketh not its own.' Everything else seeks something, because though other things may be *self*-sufficient [i.e., they may afford sufficiency to themselves], they are not *all*-sufficient [i.e., sufficient for all else as well]. Faith seeks an object to rest on; hope, an object to look to. Love alone seeks naught else but to give—to bestow itself. It is the rest of faith and the goal of hope."[5]

Now if you are biting and devouring one another, beware that you may not be consumed by one another. (5:15)

O the injury to the cause of Christ even as impediment to the furtherance of the evangel, that results from a failure to give heed to this warning! Indeed, being "consumed" is that unto which "biting and devouring" leads. Through anger, bitterness, envy, gossip, and faction, even as disrespect, ingratitude, pride, selfishness, and implacableness, greater evil is repeatedly done from within than the aggregate evil that accrues from without. May God give us grace to spare us from such declension, or cause us to cease and desist therefrom where we have had a part. J.R.C.

5. Vladimir Gelesnoff, PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, p.128.

LORD! SAVE US!

JESUS SHALL SAVE His people from their sins (Matt.1:21). But even after speaking to them of the perfection enjoyed in this salvation and its high standards of thinking and acting (Matt.5-7) there seemed to be no interest in this great operation, at least as the Saviour's achievement. A leper came to Jesus for cleansing from leprosy (Matt.8:2). A Roman centurion came, requesting healing for his boy who was dreadfully tormented in paralysis (8:5-8). They brought to Him many demoniacs, "and He cast out the spirits with a word, and all those who have an illness He cures" (8:16). But no one came to ask for salvation from sins.

The people may have forgotten this mission of the Lord's, if indeed they had ever given it much thought. But Jesus was fully aware of the work He was involved in and the hardships it involved along the way (*cf* Matt.8:20), as well as the ultimate humiliation needed in order for this salvation to be gained. The cleansing of the leper, the healing of the paralytic and curing of the diseased were pictures of that fuller cleansing from sins that God would accomplish through His Son.

WE ARE PERISHING

No one approached Jesus, saying, "Lord! Save us from our sins!" even though all were perishing with that most universal and devastating of diseases. But His disciples who had followed Him aboard a ship approached Him when a storm from an earthquake threatened their lives. They

roused Him, for He was drowsing, and cried out, "Lord! Save us! We are perishing!" (Matt.8:23-25).

What the disciples said here is what all Israel will say when their eyes are opened to the dangers they are in and to their helplessness in themselves and need of the Saviour. But the disciples lacked one essential element that they and all Israel will possess when they are saved from their sins. That is the blessing of faith in the Saviour and reliance on His goodness, power and love. Jesus criticized the disciples for being "timid" and "scant of faith" (v.26). This will not be so under the new covenant when they all shall know the Lord from the smallest of them to the greatest (Jer.31:34). Then the Rescuer will come out of Zion, and He will establish His covenant and eliminate their sins, and all Israel shall be saved (Rom.11:26-28).

The disciples were right in recognizing this helplessness and in going to Jesus for salvation, but they were wrong in their lack of confidence in the Saviour. To be sure this was a very human sin, and something that we all are guilty of time and time again. But that does not make it right and only indicates that the disciples were not yet saved from their sins. Their sin of unbelief was not as great as the sin of unbelief shown by the scribes and Pharisees, but we must not suppose that the Saviour is concerned only in saving from small sins. The fact that Jesus was the Saviour of these disciples from the churning sea and will save them from all their sins, including that of unbelief, is evidence for, not proof against, the eventual salvation of the unbelieving leaders of Israel from their sins including the sins of unbelief and enmity.

COURAGE, CHILD!

In Matthew 9:1-8 we read about the faith of some in the Lord's ability to heal. These "brought to Him a paralytic, prostrate on a couch," and *perceiving their faith,* He healed

this paralytic with the words, "Courage, child! Pardoned are you sins!" This took the people by surprise, and some of the scribes, who correctly associated pardon of sins with God, immediately inferred that Jesus was speaking blasphemy. Powers for healing were sometimes given to certain people, but the power to pardon sins was something most unusual except in prophecy concerning the Messiah. "[Yahweh] is pardoning all your depravity, Who is healing all your ailments" (Psa.103:3; *cf* Isa.43:25; Jer.33:8).

The pardon of sins is not the same as salvation from sins, but it has this great blessing in view. By saying "Pardoned are your sins," Jesus was employing His authority as Saviour. He would be saving His people from their sins, and in view of that certain achievement He could speak the present pardon of the paralytic. For the paralytic, this pardon was the basis for his present physical healing. The healing was given to one who exhibited even more faith than the disciples had shown on the Sea, but the faith of the paralytic was not the cause of his healing, but rather only a means or channel by which the Saviour brought His work of saving from sin (itself in the restrictive form of pardon) into his life.

BROODING WICKEDNESS IN HEART

Some of the scribes who heard Jesus pardon the sins of the paralytic and witnessed this work of healing were "brooding wickedness" in their hearts rather than being invigorated by faith (Matt.9:3,4). They had even less faith than the disciples who were "scant of faith" (8:26). But those (excluding Judas) who were so often scant of faith will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (*cf* Matt.19:28), and these scribes will likely be included among those sons of the kingdom who will be cast out into outer darkness with lamentation and gnashing of teeth (Matt.8:12).

Furthermore, Jesus called many who were "tribute col-

lectors and sinners" (Matt.9:10-13) rather than the Pharisees who were more diligent in heeding the law. Obviously this was not because the tribute collectors had been meeting the standards laid down in Matthew 5-7. Their careers were full of disobedience to laws that were not at all the least of the precepts (*cf* 5:19). But, like the lepers and the crippled and the diseased, many of the tribute collectors and similar sinners, were aware of their need of a Saviour.

Jesus explained to His disciples, "No need have the strong of a physician, but those having an illness .... For I did not come to call the just, but sinners" (Matt.9:12,13). Yet the Pharisees also were sinners. They did not admit it, at least outwardly, but more to the point, they had not been given that righteous honesty to recognize their need; they were not granted even that scantness of faith that was given to the disciples.

We observe in this that the lepers and diseased, and the tribute collectors and noted sinners, were more "fortunate" than the highly disciplined Pharisees and the healthy and prosperous leaders of Israel of that day. There was more opportunity in the lives of Matthew and Peter for the display of God's power for salvation, and His mercy to sinners, than in the lives of the scribes and Pharisees. We rejoice in this operation of divine wisdom and glory. But all this glory is obscured and confused by the teaching that the outer darkness reserved for these Pharisees is an everlasting punishment in hell, both for them and for all who are not called into faith.

HE WHO ENDURES TO THE CONSUMMATION

Jesus did indeed make it clear that there would come a day of judging. For Sodom and Gomorrah it would be more tolerable in that day than for the cities of Israel where the message of warning and hope carried by the disciples

would be rejected (Matt.10:15). Those who would persecute and kill the disciples will face the future prospect of the destruction of their soul and their body in Gehenna (Matt.10:28). And those who would disown Jesus in front of men will be disowned in front of His Father (10:33).

In fact, Jesus indicated that even those who start out following His commission of Matthew 10:5-10 but do not endure under persecutions "to the consummation" might not be saved (10:22). Not only must they have faith, but they also must have endurance in faithfulness.

Still, in the end faith and endurance must be seen as gifts of God, connected to His providential placings and shapings of individuals. A woman was given a hemorrhage for twelve years and so was led to seek healing outside of herself and her own efforts (Matt.9:20-22). A tribute collector named Matthew experienced the disdain of his own people and was given the honesty of knowing some of his sins, such as, perhaps, greed and cowardice. We do not know all the factors that were involved, but it is clear that he was well prepared for a deeper revelation of salvation, one that went beyond physical healing or deliverance from earthquakes on the sea.

On the other hand, many in Israel were calloused and given a spirit of stupor (*cf* Rom.11:7,8). The fact that God determined the course of Peter's life, with all his scantness of faith, and that of the scribes who brooded wickedness in their heart, does not change the fact that each will be judged in accord with his acts. And James the brother of John will be given a throne in the kingdom, while Herod who instigated the assassination of James (Acts 12:1,2) will be condemned to the destruction of his soul and body, as we may well infer from our Lord's words in Matthew 10:28.

Exactly how the Judge will judge all these matters, in consideration of all the factors of each one's life, is beyond

our comprehension. Like David we thankfully leave this to God, Who alone knows all these things. But we must not confuse judgment with the work of the Saviour in saving from sin, and certainly not think of condemnation in the eons ahead as a final state that keeps Jesus from being the Saviour of His people from their sins, and that keeps God from being manifested as the Saviour of all mankind.

EVERY TONGUE SHALL ACCLAIM

It is a great source of frustration that our commonly used translations of the Bible should have rendered certain scriptural terms in such a way that our Lord's teaching concerning judgment confuses and even contradicts His teaching concerning salvation from sins. The fact is that none of the warnings and prophecies of Jesus concerning judgment make it impossible for Him to save all His people and all sinners of all time from their sins. Those who are condemned will be brought to a recognition of need for salvation that surely will surpass the recognition of need possessed by the disciples in the fierce tossing of the Sea, and the paralytic in his seeking out of Jesus, and Matthew the tribute collector in the awareness of his disobedience and disloyalty, and Peter after denying the Lord.

It is beyond such judgment and condemnation that the most stubborn and calloused of sinners out of Israel and all mankind will be blessed with both a realization of their need of a Saviour and appreciation of Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Then, they also will look to Jesus and cry out in faith "Lord! Save us from our sins!" And He will do so on the basis of His death for sinners. Then, in accord with God's own timings, they will join Matthew and the ex-Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, in acclaiming the Lordship of Jesus the Saviour, Who is the Christ, and this for the glory of God, the Father (Phil.2:10,11). D.H.H.

MUTUALLY SOLICITOUS

INSTINCTIVELY, most of us enjoy the companionship and support of others. Much of this was denied the apostle Paul when he suffered imprisonment in Rome.

Yet if Paul's incarceration brought a sense of loneliness and frustration, we find also much that is invigorating and encouraging. He was suffering evil unto bonds as a malefactor, *but the word of God was not bound* (*cf* 2 Tim.2:8-10). In the letters which were penned within those prison walls are recorded the most wonderful revelations ever to be confided from our gracious Father to His privileged children. In the light of such gracious blessings already lavished on those least deserving, our glorious expectation assures that God has a vast treasure store of such love gifts. What future precious disclosures might possibly compare with these:

"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 a 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).

"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" (Eph.2:8-10).

"For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently in the form of God,

deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

"Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God the Father" (Phil.2:5-11).

". . . Who is the image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him.

"And He is Head of the body, the ecclesia, Who is Sovereign, Firstborn from among the dead, that in all He may be becoming first, for in Him the entire complement delights to dwell, and through Him to reconcile all to Him (making peace through the blood of His cross,) through Him, whether those on earth or those in the heavens" (Col.1:15-20).

OF CAESAR'S HOUSE

Just imagine. For two years there was a constant stream of guards, each daily taking their place of duty alongside the great apostle. We talk today of a "captive audience," but in those circumstances just who was the prisoner and who was the guard? These same guards must have witnessed frequent meetings between Paul and his visitors. They must have listened to some truly amazing discussions! It is highly unlikely that they would have the slightest interest in becoming proselytes in the religion of the despised

Jews, yet there was nothing in Paul's evangel which might provoke conflict in their loyalty to the Empire. There is joy for us as we read the closing words of Paul's "love letter" to the believers in Philippi:

"Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. Greeting you are the brethren with me. Greeting you are all the saints, *yet especially those of Caesar's house*" (Phil.4:21,22).

The above italics have been added to illustrate that far from being bound, the apostle's evangel was widely proclaimed and received. The soldier guards must have relayed the prisoner's words to their families, and of course, to their superiors. During the time of Paul's imprisonment the authorities were most sensitive concerning the stability of the empire. Any threat of rebellion was summarily crushed. But the apostle taught with all boldness, unforbidden, that which concerned the Lord Jesus Christ. His authority for this commission was plainly established when he emphatically suspended the heralding of God's kingdom to the apostate nation of Israel. His declaration of Isaiah's prophecy clearly indicated that this apostasy was to remain, ". . . until the complement of the nations may be entering" (Rom.11:25).

"Let it be known to you, then, that to the nations was dispatched this salvation of God, and they will hear" (Acts 28:28).

THE TIE THAT BINDS

During his exemplary service, Paul suffered grievous persecution. The proud believers in Corinth provoked him into listing these (2 Cor.11:22-33), which doubtless served as a rebuke. However, in his thankful letter to those in Philippi, there shines a most ingenuous quality. Here he presented just a little of himself, his impressive background—which he set aside—his complete commitment, and his earnest expectation. This he fervently yearned to share

with all, and especially those who had so generously contributed to his needs while in prison.

Yet he suffered! he lamented! Fully aware that his confinement would be bringing concern to those in Philippi, he expressed real anxiety that they should not sorrow, but rather rejoice. How touching to read of Epaphroditus being depressed because they had heard that he was infirm. What mutual solicitation is here! Although the apostle urged, "Be rejoicing in the Lord always! Again, I will declare, be rejoicing" (Phil.4:4), his heartache now as he observed the envy and strife and faction indicates that this was among the sorest trials of his life.

"THE LORD IS NEAR"

As we approach what we discern as the last days of this present eon, we must all suffer more and more the daunting experience of isolation. Yahweh Elohim, the Creator, in His wisdom knew that the condition of aloneness was not good for humankind (*cf* Gen.2:15-18). The members of the ecclesia share the blessed boon of being God's dwelling place, in spirit (Eph.2:22), but cut off from this great communion, ". . . the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now" (Rom.8:22).

Even we, ourselves, who are awaiting the sonship, the deliverance, are awaiting it with endurance. We have learned not to be downcast with the apathy which often greets our witness. Daily, we find the most encouraging guidance and comfort in God's precious Word. We have this same consolation without, and we have within, the link, the union of love, which is through His indwelling spirit.

In the circumstances of Paul's imprisonment, he suffered from the knowledge that this would bring sadness to those in Philippi. Do we have this same anxiety for each other? Are we so preoccupied with our own pride and vainglory as to be indifferent to the circumstances of

fellow saints? Are we contentious; envious? Our wonderful blessings should so inspire us that our conduct ought to be in stark contrast to the hypocritical, self exaltation which infects Christianity today. We have not so learned of the humility and self-abasement of our Lord.

To be mutually solicitous for one another is a natural outcome of those who are honored with the unique distinction of being chosen to be members of the body of Christ. The apostle expressed this so searchingly: "And whether one member is suffering, all the members are sympathizing, or one member is being esteemed, all the members are rejoicing with it" (1 Cor.12:26).

Beloved in Christ; whoever you are; wherever you are; comforted in companionship; alone or isolated through location, death, or sad divergence of faith; take heart! "The Lord is near" (Phil.4:6).

Donald Fielding

MEDITATION

Lord, let me meditate upon Thy Word.
How pure Thy sayings, sweeter than the taste
Of honey in my mouth. Let me not waste
My thoughts on human teachings, which afford
No lasting happiness, but rather, Lord,
Create in me the will, Thy truth to learn,
And give me understanding to discern
The priceless gems with which Thy Word is stored.

O, let me seek Thee, then, with my whole heart!
Teach me Thy way, that I may lean on Thee,
And from Thy counsels nevermore depart,
For in Thy Word my greatest joy shall be.
Yes, Father, it shall be my chief delight
To meditate upon it day and night.

John H. Essex

ISRAEL'S FIRST TWO KINGS

THE books of Samuel are largely concerned with Israel's first two kings, and a comparative study of details recorded about them is full of instruction.

Saul is introduced by a genealogy which leads back to Aphiah, who is designated as "a master of valor" (1 Sam.9:1). Then Saul himself is described as ". . . a choice youth and good looking; there was no man of the sons of Israel better looking than he; from his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people" (9:2). Saul was a natural choice for a position of leadership. His family was known for military prowess, and Israel needed deliverance from her enemies, particularly the Philistines. Saul had the appearance of a leader. His name means *asked* or *demanded,* and he was the leader Israel was demanding. He represented what Israel desired.

Saul's name is also nearly the same in Hebrew as *sheol,* which may have acquired its name from its insatiable *demand* for humanity (Prov.30:15,16). Saul's reign was a constant struggle: "The war against the Philistines was unyielding all the days of Saul" (1 Sam.14:52). Saul died in battle, sorely frustrated, giving up his life in defeat (1 Sam.31). Such a thought brings to mind the cry of Paul when he spoke of trying to serve God in the strength of the flesh, "A wretched man am I. What will rescue me out of this body of death?" (Rom.7:24).

On the other hand, the introduction to David seems somewhat backward by human standards. God sent Samuel to Bethlehem, telling him *He had chosen* a king *for*

Himself from among the sons of Jesse (16:1). No longer was it Israel's choice; no longer was it the desire of the flesh that would be set in the place of rule. Instead, there was David whose name means *beloved.* He was not the desire of the nation. His only claim was that he was *beloved.* He was the object of Another's love.

This is faith's only claim. We had nothing. We did nothing. But God loves us—we are beloved. It is the realization of this fact that places the reins of life in the hands of faith.

The 16th chapter of 1 Samuel records David's anointing. In the first verse God sent Samuel, saying He had chosen a king from among Jesse's sons. But David's name is not even mentioned until the 13th verse. God required Samuel to follow instructions without disclosing what the end result would be. The king who would rule in faith would even be anointed as an obedient act of faith.

Jesse and all seven of his elder sons were assembled at the feast. But David was still in the field with the sheep. No one had thought it necessary to send for David—he was overlooked. No one saw in David what God saw in David. David was like the greater Beloved One (Matt.3:17; Col. 1:13) Who was to come many years later. He would be the Stone the builders would reject. But like David, He, the rejected Stone, would become the Head of the corner (Acts 4:11; 1 Pet.2:7). "He has no shapeliness nor honor that we should observe Him, and no such appearance that we should covet Him" (Isa.53:2).

Even Jesse himself did not recognize in David what God saw. Perhaps David was too idealistic, or too musical, or too straight-forward, or too artless, too naive or too uncompromising. For whatever reason, David, like the child Samuel at the feet of Eli, was too young and insignificant to merit attention. But when all *seven*—the number of completion— of Jesse's sons had passed by, it was time for the *eighth.* Like the eighth day for circum-

cision (*cf* Luke 1:59; Col.2:11) this *eighth* speaks of a new beginning with the passing away of the flesh, even with its most desirable aspects. As in the case of Noah (2 Pet.2:5), the *eighth* brings us through judgment to a new world and a new creation.

Saul alone is mentioned as a son of Kish. Evidently Saul was the firstborn, and perhaps the only son of Kish. Saul's precedence to David in the kingship is like the precedence of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 15:45, "But not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual."

THE HAND OF GOD

From Saul's genealogy the narrative leads directly to Saul's search for his father's jennies. The loss of the jennies, even the minute details in the life of Kish that brought about his ownership of the jennies, even Saul's fruitless wanderings in search of the jennies, were all part of the workings of God. God said to Samuel, "About this time tomorrow, *I shall send a man to you* from the area of Benjamin, and you must anoint him as governor over My people Israel" (1 Sam.9:16). The emphasis of the context on God's disposal of this course of events should draw out the question *Why?* Why was Saul searching for the lost donkeys? Why was he not searching for lost sheep or goats or cattle or horses?

Saul was *not* searching for sheep because his leadership could not be characterized as shepherding. In fact, Saul is here being contrasted with the shepherd David. Saul was searching for donkeys because they are characterized by stubbornness. The scenario is remarkably like that of Israel. Israel was stubbornly wandering away from God, wanting to be like the nations, and serving the flesh. Saul would recover neither the donkeys of Kish nor those of his heavenly Father.

THE STUBBORNNESS OF THE FLESH

The donkey is the epitome of stubbornness, and in this respect is ideally suited to represent humanity in its tenacious clinging to the works of the flesh. We speak not so much in this context of the works of the flesh which are universally considered sinful, but we speak of those works in which the flesh strives to please God and simultaneously to perform something in which it can boast.

In Exodus 13:13 Moses parallels humans and donkeys regarding the redemption of the firstborn. In his parleying with Job, Zophar said, "The hollow man shall become wise of heart whenever the colt of an onager [a wild ass] is born a human" (Job 11:12). In other words, the fool is stubbornly and hopelessly lost in his folly, and only God's grace can remove that folly from him. Paul also speaks of human stubbornness, saying, "For even as you once were stubborn toward God, yet now were you shown mercy at their stubbornness, 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.11:30-32; see also Eph.2:1-2).

First, notice the stubbornness in Saul. Saul's impatience in offering the sacrifice before Samuel's arrival at Gilgal is a prime example (1 Sam.13:8-14):

[Saul] waited seven days, the appointed time that Samuel had set; yet Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the force was scattering from him. So Saul said, Bring close to me the ascent approach and the peace offerings; and he offered up the ascent approach. Now it came to be, as soon as he finished offering up the ascent approach, behold, Samuel was coming. And Saul went forth to meet him and bless him. But Samuel said, What have you done? Saul replied, When I saw that the force scattered from me, and you,

you did not come within the appointed days, and the Philistines were being gathered at Michmash, then I thought, Now the Philistines shall come down against me to Gilgal, and I have not yet beseeched the face of Yahweh. So I felt compelled to offer up the ascent approach.

Samuel replied to Saul, You acted unwisely! O that you had observed the instruction of Yahweh your Elohim that He enjoined on you! Then Yahweh would now have established your dynasty over Israel for the eon. Yet now your dynasty shall not be confirmed. Yahweh has sought out for Himself a man in accord with His own heart; and Yahweh shall commission him as governor over His people, for you have not observed what Yahweh enjoined on you.

Samuel's remonstrance of Saul shows that God's delight is in the obedience that comes from listening to God rather than the beckonings of the world, and in the devoted attention that weighs actions against the revealed will of God rather than the frantic displays of the flesh (*cf* 15:10-23). Samuel described Saul's actions as *rebellion, insubordination and rejection of Yahweh's command.* These three are a good summation of the stubbornness of the flesh.

Even the place of Saul's stubborn disobedience is significant. It was at Gilgal, which means *rolling away.* Israel, wandering in the wilderness, was an example of the flesh trying to serve God. Failure and grumbling menaced every step. It was Israel's fear and stubborn reliance upon the flesh and its appraisal of circumstances which kept them from entering the promised land earlier. At Gilgal the new generation was circumcised—the flesh was cut off. "Then Yahweh said to Joshua, 'Today I have *rolled the reproach* of Egypt away from you.' So they call the name of that place Gilgal until this day" (Josh.5:9). In the cross, which is the circumcision of Christ, our body of flesh is stripped off (Col.2:11). In His resurrection our reproach is rolled away. The rolling away of the stone from His tomb speaks

of the rolling away of our reproach. And this has its place in the believer's life too, for "those of Christ Jesus crucify the flesh together with its passions and lusts" (Gal.5:24).

Israel's stubbornness in the days of Saul was little different than in the days of Christ. Stephen, before the Jews, said, "*Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in your hearts and ears, you are ever clashing with the holy spirit!*" (Acts 7:51). And the nations are no better. Paul to the Galatians wrote: "O foolish Galatians! . . . did you get the spirit by works of law or by the hearing of faith? So foolish are you? Undertaking in spirit, are you now being completed in flesh? (Gal.3:1-3). "For flesh is lusting against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh. Now these are opposing one another, lest you should be doing whatever you may want" (Gal.5:17). This is all stubbornness to the complete and perfect work of God in Christ Jesus.

Saul never found the jennies. This is typical of our inability ever to reform the flesh. And, in contrast with Saul's failure is the record of David's behavior as a shepherd. When Jesse sent David to check on the welfare of his brothers in Saul's service, it is recorded that David left the sheep in the care of a keeper (17:20). This brings to mind that Christ did not leave His disciples alone, but sent the spirit of truth to console and guide them (John 16). Furthermore, in David's conversation with Saul, he told how he had protected the sheep, even rescuing them from the mouths of lions and bears (17:34-36).

Christ entered Jerusalem riding the colt of a donkey which never before had been ridden (Mark 11:1-11). This shows that His completed work is sufficient to vanquish the stubborn flesh and all its works and transform us into children of God. This is true not only of individuals, but also of Israel nationally, as the future will witness, and eventually of all humanity.

J. Philip Scranton

1 Samuel 9

9 +**There** [lb]**was** a **man from** ~**Gibeah of**~ **Benjamin;** + **his name** was **Kish son of Abiel son of Zeror son of Becorath son of Aphiah,** the **son of** a Benjamite **man,** a **master of valor.** 2 + **He** [b]**came** to `**have** a **son, and his name** was **Saul,** a **choice** youth **and good** looking; + there **was no man** [f]**of** the **sons of Israel better** looking [f]**than he; from his** [bk]**shoulders** + **upward** he was **taller** [f]**than any of the people.**

3 +**When the jennies** `**of Saul's father Kish** got [l]**lost,** + **Kish** [l]**said to his son Saul, Take** [pr]**now** `with **you** `**one** [f]**of the lads;** + **get up, go** and **seek** `**the jennies.** 4 +**So** [7]**they**~[c] [l]**passed** [i]**through** the **hill** country **of Ephraim, and** [7]**they**~[s] [l]**passed** [i]**through** the **area of Shalisha,** +**but they** did **not find** them. + **They** [l]**passed** [i]**through** the **area of Shaalim,** +**yet** they **were not** there. +**When** [7]**they**~[cs] [l]**passed** [i]**through** the Benjamite **area, they** +**still** did **not find** them. 5 **They** **had come** into the **area of Zuph** +**when Saul said to his lad who** was **with him,** Do [go]**come,** + **let us** [l]**return, lest my father** [l]**stop worrying** [f]**about the jennies and** become **anxious** `**about us.** 6 +**Yet** [7]**the lad**[0] [l]**said to him, Behold** [pr]**now,** a **man of Elohim** is **in** `**this city, and the man** is highly **respected**[l]; **everything** [w]**that he** [l]**speaks** [l]**comes,** yea **comes**~ true. **Now let us** [l]**go there; perhaps he shall tell** ` **us** `**our way on which we** should **go.** 7 + **Saul** [sa]**replied to his lad,** +**But** [bd]**if we** [l]**go,** + **what shall we bring** ` the **man? For the bread** [f]**in our** [all]**bags is used up, and** there **is no** token of **regard** [7]**with us**[0] **to bring to the man of Elohim. What** do `**we** have? 8 + **The lad** ` **answered**~ `**Saul** [l]**again,** + [l]**saying, Behold,** I **find** I have a **quarter of** a **shekel of silver in my hand.** + [7]**We**~[c] may **give** it **to the man of Elohim, and he will tell** ` **us** `about **our way.**

9 **Beforetime in Israel,** [i]**when** `a **man went**~ **to inquire** of **Elohim, he would** [sa]**speak thus,** [go]**Come and let us** [l]**go** [fr]**to the seer**[l]; **for beforetime** ` the **prophet** of **today was**

|called `a seer|.—[10] **+So Saul |said to his lad, Good** is **your word; do** [go]**come, let us |go. +So they |went to the city where the man of Elohim** was.

[11] As **they** were **going up** [i] the **ascent** to **the city, + they´ found maidens** coming **forth to bail water; and they** [sa]**asked ›them, Is** there **the seer| in this** place? [12] **+ They |answered `them, + |saying,** He **is** there; **behold before you! Make haste now,** [t]**because today he has come to** the **city; for** there is a **sacrifice today for** the **people** [i]**on** the **high-place.** [13] **As** soon as **you enter~ the city, you shall** [so]**surely find `him** [i] **ere he** goes **|up** to[d] **the high-place to eat.** [t] **The people shall not eat until he comes~; for he´** must **|bless the sacrifice,** [7]**and**[cs] **afterward** those `who are **invited| shall eat. +Now** go **up, for you shall find `him right away.** [14] **+So they** went **|up** to **the city.** When **they came|** into the **midst of the ~gate~, behold +there** was **Samuel** coming **forth to meet them `on** his [on]**way~** up to **the high-place.**

[15] **+Now one day before Saul came~, Yahweh Him**self **had revealed** `to the **ear of Samuel, › saying~,** [16] [as]**About** this **time** tomorrow, **I shall send** a **man to you from** the **area of Benjamin, and you** must **anoint him `as governor over My people Israel. + He will save `My people from** the **hand of** the **Philistines, for I have seen** `[7]the **humiliation of~ My people,** [t]**and their** outcry **has come to Me.**

[17] **+When Samuel saw `Saul, + Yahweh Him**self **responded** to **him:** [bd]**Here** is **the man** of **whom I** [sa]**spoke to you; this** one **shall steer** the course [i]**of My people.** [18] **+Then Saul** came **|close** `to **Samuel in** the **midst of the gate and |said** to him, Do **tell › me,** [pr]**please, just where** is the **house of the seer|?** [19] **+ Samuel |answered `Saul, + |saying, I** am **the seer|.** Go **up before me** to **the high-place, +for =you** must **eat with me today. + In** the **morning I will send you** off, **and I shall tell › you every**thing [w]**that** is **in your heart.** [20] **+As for your jennies** `that got **lost| three** `days ago **today, you must not** [pl]**set `your heart `on them, for they have been**

found. +**Now to** [a]**whom** does **all** that is **desirable** in **Israel** belong if **not to you and to all** the **house of your father?** 21 + **Saul** |**answered,** + |**saying,** Am **I not** a **Benjamite, from** the **smallest of** the **tribes of Israel?** + **My family** is **the** most **insignificant** [f]**of all** the **families of the** [7]**tribes**~[c] **of Benjamin.** +**So why** do **you speak to me** [as]**in** ·**this manner?**

22 +**Then Samuel** |**took** `**Saul and** `**his lad and** |**brought them** into[d] the **room and** |**gave** › **them** a [ri]**place** [i]**at** the **head of** those `who had been **invited**|; + **they** were [as]**about thirty men.** 23 + **Samuel** |**said to** the [sl]**cook,** Do [g]**bring** `**the assigned** share [w]**that I gave to you,** of **which I said to you,** [pl]**Set** `**it** aside [wi]**by you.** 24 +**So the** [sl]**cook** |**raised up** `**the leg and the** ~**fat tail**~ **and** |**placed** them **before Saul. And** [7]**Samuel**[0] |**said** [7]**to Saul**[0]**, Behold,** ~What was **kept**| reserved~ is [pl]**set**⁻ **before you. Eat; for to** this **appointed** time has it been **kept**| **for you,** when I ›**had said**⁻**, I have invited the people.** +**So Saul** |**ate with Samuel** [i]**on** ·**that day.** 25 +**Then they** |**descended from the high-place** to **the city; and he** |**spoke with Saul on the roof-level.**

26 + **They** [c]**arose** |**early;** + **it came** to |**be as the dawn ascended**⁻**,** +**that Samuel** |**called to Saul** [7]**on**[0] **the roof-level,** › **saying**⁻, Do **get up** +**that I may send you** off. + **Saul** |**got up, and** the **two of them, he and Samuel,** went |**forth,** ·**outside**[d]. 27 As **they** were **going down** [i]**to** the **end of the city,** + **Samuel said to Saul,** [sa]**Tell** › the **lad** +**that he should pass** on **before us,—and he** |**passed** on—+**as** for **you, stand** still [as]**for awhile, and I shall announce** to **you** `the **word of Elohim.**

*

1 Samuel 16

16 + **Yahweh** |**said to Samuel, How** [fr]**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** *see*selected [i]among **his sons** a **king for** Myself. 2 + **Samuel** [lsa]**replied, How** can **I** [l]**go? +If Saul hears** of it, + **he will kill me.** + **Yahweh** [lsa]**answered, 7Take~**Qc a **heifer of** the **herd in your hand and** ¯**say, I have come to sacrifice to Yahweh.** 3 + **You** must **invite** › **Jesse 7to~**c the **sacrifice, and** then **I′ shall** c**make known** to **you** `w**what you should do.** + **You** must **anoint for Me** `the one **whom I shall** sa**designate to you.**

4 + **Samuel** [l]**did** `w**as Yahweh had** sp**instructed** him. +**When he** [l]**came** to **Bethlehem,** + the **elders of the city** [l]**trembled** ›**as** they **met¯ him.** + 7**They~**cs [lsa]**asked,** Are **you coming¯** in **peace,** 7O **seer**[l]Q**?** 5 + **He** [lsa]**replied, I have come** in **peace to sacrifice to Yahweh. Hallow** yourselves **and** 7**rejoice today~** `with **me.** + **He** himself [l]**hallowed `Jesse and `his sons and** [l]**invited** › **them to** the **sacrifice.**

6 + **It** [lb]**came** about [i]**when they entered¯ and he** [lsee]**looked** `at **Eliab,** +**that he** [lsa]**thought,** y**Surely,** in **front of Yahweh** is **His anointed.** 7 +**But Yahweh** [l]**said to Samuel, You must not** [l]**look** ›**at his appearance and** ›**at** the **loftiness of his stature, for I have rejected him. For not** w**as** ·**a human** [l]**sees,** 7does **the** One, **Elohim,** [l]**see**0**.** t ·A **human′** [l]**sees** › the **visible** appearance, +**yet Yahweh′** [l]**sees** into the **heart,** 8 +**Then Jesse** [l]**called** › **Abinadab and** c**made him** [l]**pass before Samuel;** +**but he** [l]**said, Yahweh has not chosen** i **this** one mr**either.** 9 +**When Jesse** c**made Shammah** [l]**pass** by, **he** +**again** [l]**said, Yahweh has not chosen** i **this** one mr**either.** 10 +**Thus Jesse** c**made seven of his sons** [l]**pass before Samuel, and Samuel** [l]**said to Jesse, Yahweh has not chosen** any [i]**of these.**

11 +**Then Samuel** [lsa]**asked** › **Jesse, Are the lads finished?** + **He** [lsa]**replied,** There **remains** fr**yet the youngest.** +**Yet behold,** he is **shepherding** i the **flock.** + **Samuel** [l]**said to Jesse,** Do **send and procure him, for we shall not** gather **around until he comes¯ here.** 12 +**So he** [l]**sent and** c**had**

him |come; + **he** was **ruddy, with lovely eyes and** of **good appearance. And Yahweh** |said, **Rise** and **anoint him, for this** is **he.** 13 +**So Samuel** |took `**the horn of oil and** |**anointed** `**him in** the [nr]**midst of his brothers; and** the **spirit of Yahweh** |**prospered** ›**on David from** ·**that** ·**day** + **onward.** +**Then Samuel** |**rose and** |**went** to[d] ·**Ramah.**

14 +**As** for the **spirit of Yahweh, it had withdrawn from** [wi] **Saul, and** an **evil spirit from** `**Yahweh frightened him.** 15 + **Saul's courtiers** |**said to him, Behold** [pr]**now,** an **evil spirit** from **Elohim** is **frightening you.** 16 **Let our lord** [pr]**now** [sa]**order your courtiers,** who are **before you,** that **they should seek** a **man** who **knows**| how to **play**| [i] the **harp.** +**Whenever it** [b]**occurs** [i]**that** an **evil spirit** from **Elohim** [b]**comes**‾ **over you,** +**then he will play** [i]**with his hand, and it will be well** ›**with you** [7]**and** [c]**give you rest**[0]**.** 17 +**So Saul** |**said to his courtiers,** [see]**Select** [pr]**now for me** a **man** who ›**can play**‾ **well**|**, and** ‾**bring** him **to me.** 18 + **One** [f]**of the young attendants** |**answered,** + |**saying, Behold, I have** [see]**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.** 19 +**So Saul** |**sent messengers to Jesse,** + |**saying,** Do **send to me** `**David, your son who** is [i]**with** [7]**your**[0] **flock.**

20 + **Jesse** |**took** a **donkey** [7]**and** |[pl]**loaded on it** an **omer**[0] **of bread,** + a **skin-bottle of wine, and one kid of** the **goats, and** |**sent** it **to Saul** [i]**by** the **hand of his son David.** 21 +**So David** |**came to Saul and** |**stood before him.** + Saul |**liked him very** much, **and** later David |**became** a [all]**gear-bearer**| **for him.** 22 + **Saul** |**sent** word **to Jesse,** › **saying**‾**, Let David** [pr]**now stay before me, for he has found favor in my eyes.** 23 +**Whenever it** [b]**occurred** [i]**that** an [7]**evil**[0] **spirit** from **Elohim** [b]**came**‾ ›**over Saul,** +**then David took** `**the harp and played** [i]**with his hand.** + **It inspirited** › **Saul, and it was well** ›**with him.** +**Then the evil spirit would withdraw from** [on] **him.**

THE THUNDER OF GOD'S MASTERFUL DEEDS

WHAT Job's associates say is not absolutely wrong, but it is often wrong in implication and application. Truth concerning God is not used by them to bring strength and assurance to the suffering Job, but rather just the opposite. And there is no real interest in glorifying God for His power and wisdom and righteousness, but rather in defending their own concepts of His glory, thus in effect deflecting glory to themselves.

DIVINE DOMINION AND HUMAN DEPRAVITY

Bildad's final, and very brief, address repeats thoughts that were previously brought forward by others (*cf* Job 4:17-19; 15:14-16) concerning God's power and human insignificance. God has dominion and awesome might (25:2), and man is a maggot and worm before Him (v.6).

The facts are so; the significance given to the facts is "not rightly so" (*cf* Job 42:8). The One with awesome might and numberless troops does establish peace, but if this has application to Job in his present affliction it is not a simple use of divine force in retribution against little creatures for whom God has no very deep interest, as Bildad suggests. It is true, as Job himself has testified, that a mortal (in himself) cannot be justified before El (*cf* 9:26), but Bildad repeats this truism in order to distance God from human humiliation and woe. And this offers nothing to Job except hopelessness and multiplied despair. It is well that the three associates are now silenced.

ONE WITHOUT VIGOR

Job's response is sarcasm in 26:2-4 followed by a magnificent poem concerning ancient operations of what Bildad called God's "dominion and awesome might."

How Bildad has helped Job! He has spoken of God's power to one who is without vigor, and of the counsels of God to one who is without wisdom. But what he has said offers no hope to Job for strength or understanding.

As he has all along, Job turns his attention from his associates and their insinuations, and he endeavors to direct his thoughts to God and His operations. Since Yahweh has not yet spoken to Job, he can dwell only on previous revelations of God as passed down from generation to generation. The superb poem of Job 26:5-14 concerns a "little buzz" of the thunder of God's masterful deeds (26:14) in past times, most particularly as recorded in Genesis 1:2,3.

Job has referred to this passage before, and the reason for his great interest in it is not difficult to see. The chaos (*cf* Job 26:7) and darkness (*cf* 26:10) of Genesis 1:2 parallel that in Job's present existence, and the operation of God's spirit and word in bringing seemliness out of the chaos (Job 26:12,13) suggests a possible parallel to Job's own deliverance. The waters and thick clouds covering the earth and blocking out the full moon (26:8,9) reflect the account of Genesis concerning the abyss covered by darkness. And here also Job sees God acting on the surface of the waters, using again, as he did in 24:18, almost exactly the same phrase used at the end of the second verse of the Scriptures. Whatever God's action is, whether delineating the horizon or circling a limit,[1] over the surface of the waters, He is seen here as bringing order out of chaos. And that is where Job's expectation lies.

1. These two phrases are alternative translations for the opening words of Job 26:10.

JOB 25,26

25 +Then Bildad the Shuhite ˈanswered, + ˈsaying:
2 **Dominion⁻ and awesome** might are **with Him,**
Who is [d]**establishing peace in His heights.**
3 **Is** it possible to **number** › **His troops,**
And on [a]**whom** does **His light not** ˈ**rise?**
4 [wt]**How** +**then** can a **mortal be** ˈ**justified** [wi]**before El,**
And [wt]**how** can one **born**ˈ **of woman be** ˈ**spotless?**
5 [bd]**If** [fr]**even** the **moon** + does **not** ˈ**irradiate,**
And the **stars, they are not spotless in His eyes,**
6 **How much less** [t] a **mortal,** that **maggot,**
And a **son of humanity,** that **worm?**

26 +So Job ˈanswered, + ˈsaying:
2 [wt]**How you have helped** one **without vigor**
And **saved** an **arm** [not]**without strength!**
3 [wt]**How you have counseled** one › **without wisdom,**
And the **reality** of things
you have › [mn]**abundantly** [c]**made known!**
4 `For [a]**whom have you told** these **declarations,**
And [a]**whose breath has** come **forth from you?**
5 The **Rephaim, they** ˈ**travailed,**
[f] Those **beneath** the **waters and tabernacling** in **them.**
6 The **unseen** was **naked** in **front of Him,**
And there **was no covering for Abaddon.**
7 He **stretched**ˈ **out** the **north over** the **chaos,**
Hanging the **earth** upon **nothingness.**
8 He **bundled**ˈ up the **waters in His thick** clouds,
And the **cloud was not rent beneath them.**

The opening passages of Genesis say nothing about Rephaim[2] (Job 26:5) or Abaddon (v.6; *cf* Job 28:22; 31:12; Psa.88:11; Rev.9:11) or Rahab (v.12; *cf* Job 9:13; Psa.87:4; 89:10; Isa.30:7; 51:9), though these are used elsewhere in Scripture often in contexts concerning ancient upheavals. As Yahweh Himself will do later, Job draws attention to great and fearful creations of God, human and animal and non-terrestrial, and God's inscrutable judgments (*cf* Rom.11:33) and dealings with them.

In 26:7 Job speaks of the earth in chaos, having been hung upon nothingness; it is seen covered by God's thick clouds which kept back the light of the full moon (v.8). But then in verse 10, using the language of Genesis 1:2, Job sees God marking out a horizon in all the murkiness of water and cloud and diffused and dimmed light, so that light and darkness were separated as in Genesis 1:4 and the waters were divided as in Genesis 1:6. The invisible power of God is at work here so that the "columns" supporting all this cover of liquids and gases were made to collapse (v.11) and the sea is lulled, and "Rahab" (which means "Audacious" and is often used in reference to Egypt, and perhaps refers here to rushing channels of water) is transfixed and brought under control.

Job 26:13 speaks of two pivotal events of enormous significance. By God's spirit the heavens were made seemly, so that clarity and beauty filled the skies. And by His hand He travailed in the creation of the fugitive serpent. Genesis informs us only that God made every creature, and consequently we assume this includes the Adversary who appears as a serpent in Genesis chapter 3. But here in Job we learn not only that God made the Adversary, but that He did so with struggle and pain like the travailing of a woman in childbirth. God is responsible for all these

2. *cf Unsearchable Riches,* vol.22, p.255.

9 He **held**[l] back the **face of** the **~full moon~,**
Spreading~ over it His cloud.
10 **~He delineated** the **horizon~ over** the sur**face of** the **waters,**
Unto the [all]**boundary of light with darkness.**
11 The **columns of** the **heavens were made** to [l]**collapse**
And were [l]**stunned** [f]**at His rebuke.**
12 [i]**By His vigor He lulled the sea,**
And [i]**by His understanding He transfixed Rahab.**
13 [i]**By His spirit** the **heavens were made seemly;**
His hand travailed with the **fugitive serpent.**
14 **Behold, these** are but the **fringes of His ways,**
And what a little **buzz of** a **word is heard** [i]**of Him!**
[+]**Yet** the **thunder of His masterful** deeds,
[a]**who shall understand** it?

26:9 ~~~ full moon: MT **throne.**
26:10 ~~~ He delineated the **horizon:** MT **He circled** a **statutory** limit.



epoch-shaping events, both positive and negative. And this is vital to Job's whole struggle and to our own appreciation of God and this portion of His Word.

THE FUGITIVE SERPENT

God brings travail to the Rephaim, exposes the dark and hiddenness of Sheol, and lulls and transfixes the waters. He is greater than all of these, and His triumphs over them are but minor actions in comparison with the immensity of His masterful deeds.

But of all the comparisons in power presented here, that made in Job 26:13 is most remarkable. *By God's spirit the heavens were made seemly; His hand travailed with the fugitive serpent.* A. E. Knoch commented on this passage many years ago:[3]

3. *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.15, pp.206-208.

"Note the contrast between the garnishing of the heavens by His *spirit,* and the painful production of the serpent by His *hand.* The spirit is used of intimate and vital association; the hand holds its work at a distance, and suggests power and skill, rather than communion.

". . . Not only is the term *serpent* the same as the name of Eve's tempter in Eden's garden, but Isaiah describes it in precisely the same terms, the *fugitive serpent* (Isa.27:1). 'In that day, Yahweh shall visit with His sword, hard, great and steadfast, upon leviathan, the fugitive serpent, even upon leviathan, the tortuous serpent, and He will kill the monster which is in the sea.' [The] connection with the twelfth chapter of Revelation is too close to deny. If Satan is that 'ancient serpent' (Rev.20:2), how can we help but identify him with Isaiah and Job and Genesis?"

For all their vast proportions, these operations of God in creation and disruption and making seemly are only "fringes of His ways," (Job 26:14). What they say about God's dominion and awesome might (25:2) constitute only "a little buzz of a word." The full "thunder of His masterful deeds" is beyond human grasp.

Having expanded the greatness of God and the power of His deeds far beyond the feeble attempt of Bildad in chapter 25, Job has shown himself as even more insignificant a maggot and worm than Bildad had thought. But the greatness of God and the littleness of the human does not remove us out of the sphere of divine purpose and concern. The buzz of God's deeds as surely and as truly involves the boils and sorrows that engulf Job as the lulling of the raging waters of the inundated earth and the making seemly of the tempestuous heavens of the disruption of Genesis 1:2. Job's afflictions are somehow bound together with God's own travail in forming the Adversary, and the thunder of God's masterful deeds will resound effectively and victoriously over it all. D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 1997
BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT

EDITORIAL

WE cannot walk worthily of the calling with which we were called (*cf* Eph.4:1) if we are not coming to know what that calling is. We cannot walk worthily of the evangel (Phil. 1:27) if we are not familiar with that evangel that Paul was commissioned to bring to the nations. We cannot walk worthily of the Lord (Col.1:10) if we are not acquainted with Jesus Christ as our Lord, or walk worthily of God (1 Thess.2:12) if we are not growing in realization of Him Who calls us into His own kingdom and glory.

The foundation of our calling lies in the crucifixion of Christ, which is the wisdom of God (see p.147). This word of the cross is what alone leads to true "humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love" (Eph.4:2). Hence Paul testifies, "With Christ have I been crucified, yet I am living; no longer I, but living in me is Christ" (Gal.2:20). There is no room for boasting in ourselves or for setting ourselves above others, for our justification is gratuitous, through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24), and reconciliation is through the blood of His cross (Col.1:20).

Recently I have been reading some books that try to defend the traditional teaching of an everlasting hell. Not only is this doctrine unreasonable and untenable in the light of God's Word (see p.172), but it also is bound to have harmful effects on our thinking and our behavior. One writer thinks of evangelizing unbelievers solely in terms of warning the unsaved concerning the torments of hell. Indeed very few who claim to be evangelists give primary attention to the evangel that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (*cf* 1 Cor.15:1-4). The evan-

gel of our salvation is a message concerning what Christ *has done* for sinners, not what sinners must do in order to escape the drastic consequences of eternal miseries in hell. The love of Christ as revealed in the evangel is that which constrains us in the worthy walk (*cf* 2 Cor.5:14,15).

It is the twisting of the evangel, such as attempts to harmonize it with unscriptural ideas such as an "unpardonable sin" (see p.179), that has drastic consequences, not eternally catastrophic, but with serious loss to our present joy and peace and a worthy walk. When we overlook the fact that God chooses us in Christ before we were born, even before evil and sin had entered the world, and that God calls us in grace and graciously grants us faith, instilling His spirit and operating in us, it is pride rather than humility, and dissension rather than meekness, and strife rather than patience, and callousness rather than love, that are bound to creep into our lives.

Job's concentration on God in the midst of his affliction (see p.154), and David's reliance on God rather than his flesh (see p.165) present ideal parallels for us in our walk. Walking in spirit and bearing its fruit (see p.183) is based on the appreciation of God's love in the gift of His Son. All believers can testify to this. The more we know His grace, the more we grow in grace. But if God's love is not seen as involved in *all* His works, including judgment and condemnation, there is bound to be a stunting of the fruit of the spirit in our lives.

With these concerns in view, we send out another issue of *Unsearchable Riches.* We do so with the prayer that we all be growing in realization of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who calls us with a holy calling, and be becoming more and more acquainted with His Son Who is our Lord and Who is revealed in the evangel founded on His faithful obedience to the death of the cross.

D.H.H.

THE STUPIDITY AND THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

A DEATH of shame and ignominy is the very opposite of what the world is striving for, and the pathway least able to lead to success and glory. Yet in the case of Christ, His lifework was a failure, and His death was a disgrace as judged by every human standard. No wonder, not only His lowly life, but His scandalous death became a *snare* to the nation of Israel (1 Cor.1:23), and they repudiated Him. They, like the rest of the world, wanted a great Leader and a successful King, Who will not be gibbeted on a pole, but triumph over all who dare to oppose Him. Such a One they will have, in the future, but His earthly glories, as well as His celestial supremacy, will be based on His death for deliverance, His suffering for salvation, and His disgrace for glory.

The fleshly rite of circumcision was given to Abraham and to his people as a sign of the *cutting off* of the flesh. But the chosen nation perverted it to a badge of honor which elevates them above the other nations in the flesh. They reversed its significance and cancelled its power. Not until they are taught to strip off the flesh by the power of the spirit, will they be set over the other nations, not to tyrannize over them and degrade them, but to teach and help them to know the blessing of subjection to their Yahweh, the Subjector.

In Paul's day *many* of the saints were conducting themselves as *enemies* of the cross of Christ, of whom he spoke often with lamentation (Phil.3:18). Today Christendom as a whole adores the ornamental crucifix in their ritual, but

neither knows nor cares about conduct which is in accord with His death upon the accursed stake, and our crucifixion with Him. Paul, in their day, exemplified this, so that they could see it in action. But how few, today, even approach to it, or even desire it? And how many oppose and decry it, even if a feeble attempt is made in that direction!

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

Worldly wisdom is the opposite of the word of the cross. The wise of this world can see no sense in the cross of Christ, nor in a way of life according to it. "For the word of the cross is stupidity, indeed, to those who are perishing . . . . Christ crucified . . . [is] to the nations stupidity" (1 Cor.1:18,23). Their chief effort is to obtain as much wealth and honor and power as the world can give, without any regard to the life to come. They do not realize that this life is a very brief preparation for the perpetual hereafter (*cf* 2 Cor.4:17).

Even if they could see the difference in time, it is even more difficult for them to see the sense in undergoing suffering and shame in view of the future, or how this can prepare them for the glory. Alas! Most believers, like the Corinthians, do not realize that this present life is not our goal, but only a prelude to perpetuity. Indeed, they might ask, If God is love, why does He not display it by present earthly, soulish blessing? They cannot see that this brings little or none of the heartfelt response that He craves, or that this prepares us for our great mission of revealing His love to other creatures in the universe.

STUPIDITY IN THE SCRIPTURES

The greatest stupidity, perhaps, is to be ignorant of God's words and ways, and so ignore them. That is the way of the world. The supreme wisdom is to study God's words and conform to them. That should be the aim of all the saints.

Almost everyone has a vague idea of what is meant by stupidity, yet it may help us to comprehend its force in the Scriptures, especially when associated with crucifixion. We will first consider the occasions on which our Lord used it in His ministry. In each case there is an underlying principle that applies at all times, which may help us avoid some of the stupidity with which we are engulfed.

A LASTING FOUNDATION

Even in connection with the kingdom on earth, this principle applies. Our Lord likened His hearers to two men, one *prudent,* the other *stupid.* "Everyone, then, who is hearing these sayings of Mine and is doing them shall be likened to a prudent man who builds his house on the rock. And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blow and they lunge at that house, and it does not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who is hearing these sayings of Mine and not doing them shall be likened to a stupid man who builds his house on sand. And the rain descended, and the rivers came, and the winds blow and they dash against that house, and it falls: and the fall of it was great" (Matt.7:24-27).

The prudent man looked forward to the future. He knew, even as we all realize to some extent, that the weather is changeable. Hence he reckoned with conditions in the future, where the violence of the wind and water would not damage or destroy his house. Consequently he founded it on a rock. We should also look ahead, and base our doings on the only firm foundation in the universe—the Word of God. But even the rocks will melt in the final conflagration, so we must build on that which will also stand the fire and be found in the new creation, in which we already have a place, in spirit.

Man's doing, man's word, man's world is continually changing and shifting and forms no firm basis on which

to build our lives. It is not merely imprudent, but *stupid,* to found our future on anything less than the immutable, lasting verities revealed to us through the Scriptures. Those to whom our Lord spoke had to conform in order to enter the *earthly kingdom.* We have a much greater and grander outlook. Would it not be stupid of us to base our lives on the present evil and evanescent eon?

DIVINE VALUES

Later, Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees: "Woe to you, blind guides! who are saying, 'Whoever should be swearing by the temple, it is nothing; yet whoever should be swearing by the gold of the temple is owing.' Stupid and blind! for which is greater, the gold, or the temple that hallows the gold? And, 'Whoever should be swearing by the altar, it is nothing; yet whoever should be swearing by the approach present upon it is owing.' Stupid and blind! for which is greater, the approach present or the altar that is hallowing the approach present?" (Matt.23:16-19).

The scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of our Lord's day, were *blind* as well as *stupid.* They put material riches above spiritual values. Subconsciously, by their teaching, they exposed the lack of their own hearts. They claimed that swearing by the temple caused no obligation, but swearing by the gold on it was binding. But is not this true in religious circles today? The divine presence is not nearly so binding as financial obligations. A man must pay his debts, but his obligations to the Deity are not important and may be overlooked.

STUPID AND PRUDENT

In the parable of the ten virgins (Matt.25:1-12), Jesus spoke of five who were stupid, who got their torches without a supply of extra oil. "Now in the middle of the night a clamor occurs: 'Lo! the bridegroom! Come out to meet

him!' Then roused were all those virgins, and they adorn their torches. Now the stupid said to the prudent, 'Give us of your oil, for our torches are going out.' Yet the prudent answered, saying, 'No, lest at some time there should not be sufficient for us and you.'"

For this life many *seem* to be prudent by making due provision for the physical needs as long as they live. Like the five stupid virgins, they have enough oil to last until the bridegroom comes, but have made no provision for the final meeting. They prudently provide for this life, which may not last more then a few moments. Even if it stretches out to a century, what is that in comparison to the rest of the eons, or the unending consummation?

WISDOM AND THE CROSS

What is the wisdom of this world? In order to intelligently appreciate the wisdom of God, as exhibited in the cross of Christ, it would be helpful to have some idea of what the world deems the highest wisdom. Recently my attention was drawn to a public address on the subject, "What is wisdom?" As the speaker was an author as well as a philosopher, and an acute thinker, it may be taken as among the best that a godless human can produce. It was introduced by a fine acknowledgment of the author's insignificance: "I feel like a droplet of spray which, proudly poised for a moment on the crest of a wave, undertakes to analyze the sea."

He commences well, as follows: "Ideally, wisdom is *total perspective*—seeing an object, event, or idea in *all* its pertinent relationships. Spinoza defined wisdom as seeing things *in view of eternity.* I suggest defining it as seeing things *in view of the whole.* Obviously we can merely *approach* such a total perspective. *To possess it would be to be God.*"

This is really a frank acknowledgement, not only of the *limitation* of human wisdom, but of its *fallibility* and *folly*.

In *time* he can see only a little of the past, and none of the future. In *space* he can see only fragments of the universe. Pure reason alone should convince him that he is in need of a divine revelation.

THE STUPIDITY OF WORLDLY WISDOM

Although the very definition which our philosopher gives to human wisdom leads him to the very gateway of all wisdom, he is so stupid that he will not enter. Since he acknowledges that there is a God Who possesses all wisdom, why does he not seek to learn from Him? He has evidently studied many books by human philosophers, yet is still in darkness as to the greatest and most vital theme of human existence. Indeed, he even mentions "Christ" as one of many wise men, *but not the Bible* as God's revelation, nor even hints that it denounces the very "wisdom" that he possesses and recommends.

As he rejects the totality of divine wisdom as revealed in the Scriptures, he falls back upon patches of human experience: "The first lesson of philosophy is that philosophy is the study of any part of our experience in the light of our whole experience." The individual experiences of the mass of mankind and their vast variety lead them to many and contradictory conclusions, all of which must be mingled with as much folly as with wisdom. All mankind are locked up under sin (Gal. 3:22). Human experience is a very meager source of wisdom.

THE LARGER PERSPECTIVE

"The second lesson," we are told, "is that the philosopher is a very small part of a very large whole . . . not a possessor, but a lover of wisdom . . . fated . . . never to possess, but only to desire and adore" it. This seems a wise acknowledgment in a way, but, if wisdom is unattainable, is it wise to spend a lifetime in seeking it? Later on he speaks of see-

ing things in a larger perspective, and thus, at least, touching the skirts of wisdom.

In closing he recommends a perception of nature, of science and, especially, of history as recorded in the written works of great men. A list is given of the greatest of these, and, in this long list we read of Confucius, Buddha, Plato, Euripedes, Seneca, etc. Nothing is said of the Word of *God,* which is the repository of the only true wisdom, or even of Solomon, who focused so extensively on the subject, or the very highest of all revelations of the mind of God, God's secret wisdom, *which not one of the men of this eon knows* (1 Cor.2:8).

HERALDING CHRIST CRUCIFIED

"For since, in fact, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God, God delights, through the stupidity of the heralding, to save those who are believing, since, in fact, Jews signs are requesting, and Greeks wisdom are seeking, yet we are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity, yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor.1:21-24).

A. E. Knoch

RAYMOND VAN DYKE

An era has passed with the death of Brother Ray Van Dyke of Grand Rapids, Michigan, on July 21 in his 89th year. A tireless and enthusiastic herald of the word of God's grace and the glories of His purpose, day by day through most all his life, he awaits the wreath his Lord will be paying in that day. He often challenged others on traditional ideas (especially those that are unclear and mystical) that did not fully agree with the Scriptures or bring glory to God, but he was also ready to adjust his own thinking when others challenged him on the same basis. His family and the family of faith meeting with him through the years are most keenly aware of their loss, but we all join with them in joyful anticipation of his part and that of us all in God's completing operations ahead.

ELOHIM UNDERSTANDS

THE EXTENSION, in chapters 27 through 31, of Job's last response to the vexatious charges of his associates has some intriguing and even puzzling aspects. The specific mention, at the beginning of chapters 27 and 29, that Job *continued* to lift up his discourse, marks off this section as distinct from Job's former speeches. But what Job says here is even more unexpected, often appearing to contradict his former thoughts and to line up with those of his three associates. Then the fact that Zophar is not identified as delivering a third speech, and so the structure of the debate cycle that began with chapter 3 seems to be thrown out of balance, brings up further questions about the Hebrew text as we have it.

Yet because the ancient manuscripts are in agreement in ascribing chapters 26 through 31 to Job, it is the best course to accept this identification and consider the significance of these chapters in this light. Clearly much of the latter half of chapter 27 harmonizes with Zophar's former discourses in chapters 11 and 20, and they do not seem to accord with Job's former thoughts, especially those of chapter 21 where Job directly replies to Zophar. This indicates that Job himself delivers Zophar's final speech!

Several reasons for this surprising development suggest themselves. First of all, as we have previously noted, Bildad's last discourse (chapter 25) was unusually stunted and faltering. And prior to that, Job's reply to Eliphaz in chapters 23 and 24 was especially forceful, concluding with the challenge that if Job has not spoken what is so, who

can prove him a liar? (24:25). The three associates have strongly insinuated, even to the extent of indictment, that Job's afflictions are divine judgments for secret sins. But, while fully agreeing that God will not allow wickedness finally to prosper, Job has insisted on two current, observable facts, namely that the wicked often are prospering at present, and that at least one man who is upright and fearing God, and this to a degree beyond his peers, is suffering with excessive loss and physical and mental pain. Bildad is shown in chapter 25 as completely unable to deal with Job's parting shot of 24:25. And Zophar does not even try.

The arguments of Job's three associates have collapsed. They are unable to prove that Job's afflictions stem from divine retribution for sin. And the silence of Zophar dramatically underscores this collapse.

A second explanation for this unusual speech given by the suffering Job also lies in the realm of the drama of the entire situation. Here is a man who should be completely exhausted by both his afflictions and the tormenting insults of the charges brought against him. Yet he not only *continues* in denying these charges and turning them back upon the accusers, and not only *continues* to cry out to God for *His* response and revelation of Himself in these events and experiences, but Job also takes up the very arguments of the three associates for them, himself completing the cycle of the debate. Nothing else could better test the force of Zophar's argument, and nothing else could more impressively testify to the endurance of Job.

We will watch through these chapters to see if Job is able to put the arguments of his associates in right perspective to the two facts mentioned above concerning the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of Job. For now, however, we cannot but be impressed, as was James, by the sheer *endurance* of this man, and the perseverance of his struggle to find in Eloah One Who acts in all things, and

Who acts with wisdom and purpose. To see the three who sit apart from Job's evils silenced and to find Job going on and on with words piled upon words concerning God and righteousness and judgment and wisdom takes our breath away. And we are eager to follow it all to its "consummation."

Finally, with the silence of his associates, the focus of our attention is drawn more to Job himself, and even more obviously by Job voicing Zophar's argument. This will aid us in relating the thoughts of Elihu in chapters 32-37 more distinctly to Job himself and what he has been saying. But even more significantly, with Job now standing alone at center stage, as it were, we will be helped in focusing on the way in which Yahweh's words in chapters 38-41, when He takes center stage, apply to the suffering and travail of the individual human being.

JOB'S CONTINUED DISCOURSE

There is a pause between chapters 26 and 27. It is time for Zophar to speak. But he is silent.

Then the miserable Job breaks the silence and continues his discourse with nothing of exhaustion or mildness in his voice. He begins with an oath based on the most dependable of foundations, the indisputable fact that God is the living God (27:2). And what Job says (surely he shouts) is exactly that which has frightened and scandalized his associates so sharply, now stated in no uncertain terms: El has refused judgment to Job! He Who-Suffices has brought bitterness to the soul of one who holds to his righteousness!

We ourselves can hardly keep from gasping as we read these words. What shuddering, what cowering in dismay, even terror, must have come over those present as Job utters these shocking convictions of his heart! Physically and emotionally exhausted, Job nevertheless finds breath (from the spirit of Eloah) to continue to speak what he is certain is true (27:3). He refuses even to consider the pos-

sibility that he is suffering divine retribution for unknown sins (though he has readily admitted he is a sinner), and he certainly will not make a lying confession for the sake of relief from his sufferings (v.4). What his associates have implied cannot be justified, and he will have no part of their suggestions (v.5). He has lost just about everything else, but he will not lose that righteousness which consists in speaking honestly (v.6).

Once again, by turning his attention to himself and the false charges of his associates, Job is distracted from his main focus which has been Godward. The implications of his associates have enraged him, so that he "darkens counsel" (*cf* Job 38:2) by indulging in self-defense and in uttering a curse on that person who would be an enemy to him.

The curse of Job 27:7-10 harmonizes more with the viewpoint of Zophar in chapter 20 than with Job's own observations in chapter 21. Zophar saw the wicked man as one who perishes "like his own ordure" and flies away like a dream (20:7,8). On the other hand Job's testimony had been that the wicked "become masterful with potent power" (21:7). Now in 27:7,8 Job maledicts his unnamed enemy (Job would certainly have Zophar consider how he might fit this description) in terms of being clipped off and eased away, very much like the terms Zophar used in his previous sermon of warning to Job (*cf* 11:11,12; 20:5-29).

It is not that Job denies that God will deal justly with the wicked or even that the wicked often suffer in the present day as a direct result of their iniquity. But he has seen how inadequate the fact of divine judgment was in explaining his sufferings. Nevertheless, for now, Job takes up this matter of divine judgment, expressing himself indefinitely as to who the enemy may be and when the adverse effects of wickedness may come. What he is saying here in effect is that if the shoe (which Zophar has previously described) fits, let it be worn.

In Job 27:8-13 there are eight direct references to Deity, twice as *Eloah,* three times as *El,* and three times as *Him Who-Suffices*. But these are all references to God within the narrow viewpoint of the traditional wisdom expressed by Zophar and his companions. This is Eloah, Him Who-Suffices, El, in bringing His hand of judgment against the wicked acts of sinners. For the present Job has taken up the thoughts of his associates and "directs back" to them what they have said in reference to "the hand of El" (27:11). What they have said about God as Judge might well be applied to any person whose words and deeds cannot be justified, such as themselves (*cf* 27:5a).

THIS TRANSITORY BREATH

All three of Job's "comforters" have already said these things that Job is about to voice in 27:13-23. Eliphaz boasted that he had *perceived* that the wicked man is travailing all his days (Job 15:17,20); Bildad testified that such a decadent person will leave no posterity (18:19). And Zophar claimed a spirit of "understanding" concerning the very matters voiced here by Job, while chiding him, "Don't you know this, from long ago?" (20:3,4).

But if they have all perceived (or *claimed* to have perceived) that such things happen to the wicked, why are they vain in their knowledge as though what they say has application to Job's situation (and not to themselves), and as though their thoughts would be helpful to him (27:12)?

Job calls what his three associates have said "transitory breath." This is a rendering of the same Hebrew term translated "vanity" in the concluding thought of Job's last reply to Zophar. "How then can you comfort me with *vanity,* when only offense remains in your replies?" (Job 21:34). The word does not mean "nothingness" or "something false" so much as *something not permanent or weighty,* as in the opening chapter of Ecclesiastes. Even if these things con-

JOB 27,28

27 +**Then Job** ˡ**continued** to **lift**⁻ up **his discourse,**
+ ˡ**saying:**
2 As **El lives,** Who **has taken away judgment** for **me,**
+ He **Who-Suffices,** Who **has** ᶜ**brought bitterness**
on **my soul,**
3 ᵗ **As long as my breath** is yet **whole** within **me**
And the **spirit of Eloah** is **in my nostrils,**
4 **My lips shall assuredly not speak iniquity,**
And my tongue, it shall assuredly not ᶜᵒᵒ**utter deceit.**
5 **Far be it** ˃**from me should I** ever ˡ**justify** ˂**you;**
Until I ˡ**breathe** my **last,**
I shall not put away my integrity from me.
6 **I will** ᶜ**hold fast** ᵗ**to my righteousness,**
and I shall not relax;
My heart shall never reproach me
ᶠ**throughout my days.**
7 **May my enemy**ˡ **become like** the **wicked,**
And the one **rising** against **me like** the **iniquitous.**
8 **For what** is the **expectation of** the **polluted**
ᵗ**when he is** ˡ**clipped** off,
ᵗ**When Eloah** ˡ**eases** away **his soul?**
9 **Shall El hearken** to **his cry?**
ᵗ**When distress** ˡ**comes** upon **him,**
10 ᶦᶠ **Would he find** ˡ**pleasure** ᵒⁿ**in** Him **Who-Suffices?**
Would **he** ˡ**call** on **Eloah** ᵗ**at all times?**
11 **I shall direct** back ˋto **you** these matters
ᵗ**about** the **hand of El;**
ʷ**What** is ʷⁱ**concerning** Him **Who-Suffices**
I shall not suppress.

cerning God's judgment upon the wicked were truly occurring all the time (which Job disputed in chapter 21), they do not help in relating the fact of Job's sufferings to the operations of God.

The knowledge that El apportions judgment to the wicked (27:13; *cp* Zophar's words in 20:29) is part of the wisdom called the fear of God which will be centered upon in chapter 28. The wicked man's sons will be preyed on by other people (v.14). There will be a lack of natural affection within his family (v.15). His riches will not last (27:16-19). God can always send greater forces against him than all his strongholds could withstand (27:20-23).

Job has brought the arguments of his associates against them. What they said in application to Job can more surely be said in application to them. Yet in the end these are transitory considerations. God will judge all wickedness, but that cannot be the end of the matter. The hand of El is involved in far more than granting the wicked their just portion, and this assurance that God takes responsibility for His creation, beyond acts of judgment, is what Job is still longing to receive.

A QUEST FOR WISDOM

In chapter 28 Job continues to voice the arguments of Zophar who had spoken in 11:6 of "obscured secrets of wisdom." Now Job describes the quest for such wisdom in carefully crafted, poetic terms, just as we would have expected Zophar to do. Again we are astounded that Job is able to come up with this sort of polished oration under the circumstances. But the fact that he does so gives special weight to the conclusions drawn in verses 23-28. Because Job has been longing to perceive more of God than the traditional knowledge of Him as Judge, the words of Job 28 can be extended beyond the limited meaning they would have when voiced by Zophar. The truth that "Elohim, He

12 *bd*If all of you´ have perceived this yourselves,
+Then why are you |vain with this transitory breath?◊
13 "This is the portion of a wicked *h*person *wi*from El
And the allotment terrifiers |procure
from Him Who-Suffices.
14 *if*However |many are his sons, for them is the sword,
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
15 In a death plague his survivors shall be entombed,
And his widows shall not lament.
16 If he |piles up silver like soil
And |lays clothing in store like clay,
17 He shall lay it in store,
+yet the righteous one shall put it on,
And the innocent one shall apportion the silver.
18 He builds his house like a cocoon,
And like a booth that a field-keeper| *d*makes.
19 He shall lie down rich, +yet he may not 7do so again~*c*;
When he uncloses his eyes + it shall not be there.
20 Decadent things shall overtake him ~by day~;
A sweeping whirlwind will steal him away at night.
21 The east wind shall carry him off so +that he is |gone,
And it shall ~toss him away in a hurricane~
from his *ri*place.
22 + It shall fling violently *on*against him and not |spare
As he runs |away, yea away~ from its hand.
23 It shall slap its palms *on*at him
And hiss *on* him away from his *ri*place."
28 *t*Indeed, for silver there is a mine,
And for gold a *ri*place where men may *fl*refine it.
2 Iron may be taken from the soil,
And from ore copper may be smelted.

27:12 transitory breath: In vs.13-23 Job cites the "transitory breath" of his associates.
27:19 7-~*c* do so **again:** Hb **be gathered.**
27:20 ~~~ **by day:** Hb **like water.**
27:21 ~~~ toss **him** away in a **hurricane:** Hb **horrify him** (*cf* Ps 58:9).

understands" the way of wisdom, "and He, yea He Himself knows its place" (28:23) applies to more than fearing God as the Instrument of indignation against sin.

Job compares the quest for wisdom with a search for silver and gold and other metals and precious stones (28:1,2). Man searches for these in dark mineshafts where birds and beasts have never gone (28:3-8). But though miners have found these metalic treasures by such diligent and courageous searchings, wisdom has been more elusive (28:9-14).

In addition, wisdom cannot be gained by paying gold and silver and precious stones for it (28:15-19). Where can it be found, and how can it be gained (20-22)? The answer is that Elohim understands its way (23-27). And He has shared its secrets so far as saying to mankind "Behold, the fear of Yahweh, it is wisdom, and to withdraw from evil is understanding" (Job 28:28).

This is the foundational revelation of that great piece of wisdom literature, the book of Proverbs. "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov.1:5). But it is wisdom that Job had already possessed before he was afflicted (*cf* Job 1:1). His associates shared this wisdom with him, but because they were not experiencing what Job was experiencing they were not driven as he was to know God beyond His place as Judge and Discipliner and Rewarder.

Hence the words of Job 28:23 come to express a hope that Elohim has placed treasures of wisdom not only in the fear of God but in the appreciation of God in all our experiences.

The fierce emotions displayed by Job in the early portion of chapter 27 are gone. He is no longer dwelling on the personal insults in the words of his associates. But rather he finds their arguments turning his thoughts back to God Who looks to the ends of the earth and sees under the entire heavens (28:24). With a tone of optimism missing in Zophar's previous speeches, Job speaks of the Elohim

Who created the earth and heavens and all the powerful forces of wind and water and rain and thunder (28:24-26). Job is back on the right track. And indeed, without realizing all its implications, he has surely come upon a great advancement in wisdom when he says that Elohim, He understands its way.

D.H.H.



3 Man [pl]**puts** an **end to darkness,**
And to every [all]**limit** is **he fathoming**
For the **stone** ore in **gloom and blackest shadow.**
4 A ~**people**~ of **sojourners**[l] **has breached mineshafts**
In places **forgotten**[l] *f* **by** the **foot** of man;
Far **from mortal** men,
they swing down on ropes **and sway.**
5 The **earth, from her is** coming **forth bread,**
[+]**Yet beneath her,** all **is** overturned **as though** by **fire,**
6 A [ri]**place** where **her stones** are **sapphire,**
And it [›]**has** the **soil of gold;**
7 That **track,** the **bird of prey** does **not know it,**
And the **eye of** the **falcon has never glimpsed it;**
8 The **strutting beasts**◊ **have never tread** along **it;**
The **black** lion **has never** ~**passed**~ **over it.**
9 Man **has put forth his hand** [t]**on** the **flint**stone;
He has overturned *f* the **root of** the **mountains.**
10 **He has rent** open **minetunnels** [t]**through** the **rock,**
And his eye has seen every precious treasure.
11 **He has bound up streams from** their **seeping,**
And the **obscured** secret **he** [c]**brings** [l]**forth** to **light.**
12 [+]**But** [·]**wisdom,** *f* **where** can **it be** [l]**found?**
And just where is the [ri]**place of understanding?**
13 **Mortal** man does **not know its appraisal,**
And it is not being found in the **land of the living.**

14 The **abyss says, It** is **not in me!**
And the **sea says,** There **is no** such thing **with me!**
15 **Solid gold** can**not be** [l]**given** [u]**instead of it,**
And silver can**not be** [l]**weighed** as **its price.**
16 **It** can**not be** [l]**classed** [i]**with certified** gold **of Ophir,**
Or [i]**with precious onyx and sapphire.**
17 **Neither gold** [+]**or glass** can **be its** [l]**appraisal,**
[+]**Or articles of glittering** gold **its** ex**change.**
18 **Coral and crystal,** such **shall not** even **be mentioned;**
[+] **Wisdom** is more **attractive** [f]**than rubies.**
19 **Peridot of Cush is not its** [l]**appraisal;**
[i]**With pure certified** gold **it** can**not be** [l]**classed.**
20 **From where** [+]**then** can [`]**wisdom** [l]**come?**
And just where is the [ri]**place of understanding?**
21 [+] **It has been obscured from** the **eyes**
of every living creature,
And from the **flyer of the heavens**
it has been concealed.
22 **Abaddon and death say:**
[i]**With our ears we have heard report** of **it.**
23 **Elohim, He understands its way,**
And He, yea **He** Himself **knows** [`]**its** [ri]**place.**
24 **For He**[´] [l]**looks to** the **ends of the earth;**
He [l]**sees under the entire heavens.**
25 [>]**When** He [d]**granted**[–] **weight to** the **wind**
And when **He gauged** the **waters** [i]**by measure,**
26 [i]**When** He [d]**imposed**[–] a **statutory** limit [>]**on** the **rain**
And a pathway **for** the **thunderbolts,**
27 **Then He saw it and** [l]**rehearsed it;**
He prepared it and [mr]**also fathomed it.**
28 **And He** [l]**said to mankind,**
Behold, the **fear of** [S]**Yahweh**[ph]**, it** is **wisdom,**
And to **withdraw**[–] **from evil** is **understanding.**

28:4 ~~~ **people:** Hb **from with.**
28:8 The **strutting beasts:** lit., **Sons of strutting;** ~~~ **passed:** Hb **ornamented.**

ANOINTED AS KING

THE INITIAL ANOINTINGS of Saul and David by Samuel are different in a number of ways. An anointing itself represents the spirit of God coming upon the anointed one, endowing the necessary abilities for service. In this they were the same, but the details surrounding the first anointing of Saul and those surrounding that of David are distinct from each other in many instructive points.

The anointing of Saul was accompanied and verified as divine by three signs (1 Sam.10:1-13). Signs were sought by the Jews (1 Cor.1:22), and were an accommodation for unbelief (*cf* 1 Cor.14:22). It becomes evident that Saul is, in many ways, typical of Israel, as well as typical of the flesh. That is because Israel herself displays the flesh with all its failings and shortcomings.

THREE SIGNS

The signs given to Saul are suggestive of special events in Israel's history, events which highlight God's dealings with the flesh. The first sign (1 Sam.10:2) occurs near the tomb of Rachel. It calls to mind the birth of Benjamin-Benoni—"the son of my sorrow," who became "the son of my right hand" (*cf* Gen.35:17-20). This has many applications. Israel, as well as humanity, passes through a vale of tears before entering into power and glory. The bondage of Egypt comes before the reigns of David and Solomon, and the present dispersion precedes the future kingdom. The imprisonment of Joseph precedes his ascent to the throne of Egypt, just as the humiliation and suffering of Christ are preparatory for His ascent to the throne of the universe.

The two witnesses at Rachel's tomb bear testimony that Saul could not recover the jennies. John and Christ bore witness that Israel was yet too stubborn to submit to God's revelation. Israel was subject to the dictates of the flesh. The cross of Christ is the crucifixion of the flesh, and His resurrection is to life in the spirit and power of God. Israel has not yet entered into that as a nation. So the first sign is suggestive of Israel's condition at the coming of Christ. The first sign speaks of failure in the flesh.

The second sign (1Sam.10:3,4) brings a gift to Saul. Saul would meet three men going up to Bethel—where Abraham and Jacob built altars, where worship was held, where Samuel on his circuit judged the people. The men would be carrying their sacrificial gifts with them, and they would give Saul two loaves. Saul was accepting something of God's blessing. To him this testified to the validity of his anointing. The *two wave offerings of bread* (1 Sam.10:4) are suggestive of Pentecost (Lev.23:17), a time of blessing upon Israel. It looks forward to the time when Israel, through judgments will enter into the beginning of her blessings.

The third sign (1 Sam.10:5,6) would be the spirit of Yahweh coming upon Saul, and his prophesying and being *transformed into another man.* These three steps are God's way with Israel after the flesh. God shows them the folly of their fleshly zeal that is *not in accord with recognition* (Rom.10:1-4). He blesses them bringing them through judgments into His blessings, and He pours out His spirit upon them. This is His way with all flesh, apart from special grace.

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID

How different this is from David's initial anointing (1 Sam.16:11-13)! "Then Samuel asked Jesse, Are the lads finished? He replied, There remains yet the youngest. Yet

behold, he is shepherding the flock. Samuel said to Jesse, Do send and procure him, for we shall not gather around until he comes here. So he sent and had him come; he was ruddy with lovely eyes and of good appearance. And Yahweh said, 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."

David did not stumble over Samuel in vain wanderings, but he was in his appointed place, keeping the sheep. We are told of no preliminary conversations with Samuel; no spending the night with Samuel; no preliminary feast; no instructions received concerning a walk down the roadway; no private anointing after which he could mull the situation over. David was summoned to the house. His family was not even to sit down to eat until he arrived. He was anointed immediately in front of his brethren.

David was denied the preparatory words and the confirmatory signs. They were unnecessary, for he was already walking by faith rather than by sight. And such signs were not given so that David would not be tempted to lean on such things.

David's anointing bears many similarities to the baptism of Christ. Both of the anointers, Samuel and the Baptist, were dedicated as Nazirites before their births (see Numbers 6). David's name means Beloved, and when Christ was baptized the Father's voice from heaven said, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight" (Matt.3:17). David was anointed "in the midst of his brothers," and Christ was baptized publicly at John's baptism. When Samuel anointed David, "the spirit of Yahweh prospered on David from that day onward." When Christ was baptized, John testified, "I have gazed upon the spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, *and it remains on Him*" (John 1:33).

As we will see in our considerations of David's expe-

riences, many of those experiences typified Christ and His humiliation and work. No sooner was Christ recognized at His baptism than He was driven by the spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted there. Like David, the anointed King of Israel, *Christ,* the *Anointed One* Who was born King, had many things to suffer before ascending upon His throne.

THUNDERCLAPS AND RAIN

The official coronation of Saul as king bears more resemblance to the giving of the law, or the days of Jacob's trouble, than it does to any aspect of the promised kingdom. Samuel prefaced his address with the statement, "... let me enter into judgment with you before Yahweh ..." (1 Sam.12:7).

The great displeasure of God was demonstrated with the display of power in a storm during the wheat harvest, as announced by Samuel: "Now then, stand by and see this great thing that Yahweh will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest today? I shall call upon Yahweh that He may send thunderclaps and rain. Then give thought and see that your evil deed which you have done, is too great in the eyes of Yahweh, when you requested a king for yourselves. Then Samuel called upon Yahweh, and Yahweh sent thunderclaps and rain on that day, so that all the people feared Yahweh and Samuel exceedingly" (1 Sam.12:16-18).

They had been similarly afraid at Sinai, watching the smoking, quaking mountain, and hearing the blaring voice, and knowing that no one could even touch the mountain, on the penalty of death (Ex.19:12-20). On the other hand, David's anointing was not accompanied by a fear of God, though there was a present fear of the flesh—of Saul (1 Sam.16:2).

The contrast, as we have already seen, is between flesh and spirit, between that which appeals to the soul and

that which is hidden in the heart. Even in their anointings, these two kings picture this great fact of God's ways: "Not first the spiritual, but the soulish, thereupon the spiritual" (1 Cor.15:46).

J. Philip Scranton

*

1 Samuel 10

10 +**Then Samuel** |**took** `a **vial of** ·**oil,** + |**poured** some **on his head and** |**kissed him.** + **He** |**said,** Has **not** 7**Yahweh anointed you** >**as governor over His people, over Israel? And you, you shall steer** the course ᵗ**of** the **people of Yahweh.** + **You**´ **shall save them from** the **hand of their enemies**| ᶠ **round about. And this** is **the sign for you**ᵒ **that Yahweh has anointed you** >**as governor over His allotment:** 2 ⁱ**When you** ᵍᵒ**leave**⁻ ᶠ ʷⁱ **me today,** + **you will come upon two men** ʷⁱ**near** the **tomb of Rachel in** the **territory of Benjamin** ᵗ**at Zelzah; and they will** ˢᵃ**tell** > **you, The jennies** ʷ**that you went** out **to seek, have been found; and** ᵇᵈ**now your father has abandoned** `the **matter of the jennies and is anxious** >**about you,** > **saying**⁻**, What shall I do** >**about my son?**

3 +**When you pass on from there and beyond and come as far as** the **oak of Tabor,** + 7**you will find**~ᶜ **there three men** going **up to the Elohim** at **Bethel, one carrying three kids, and one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying** a **crock of wine.** 4 + **They will ask** >**after your welfare and give** > **you two** 7**wave** offerings **of**ᵠ **bread; and you** must **take** them **from their hand.** 5 **Afterward you shall come** to **the Hill of Elohim, where** the 7**garrison**~ᶜ **of** the **Philistines** is. **And there, as you enter**⁻ **the city, it shall** ᵇ**occur** +**that you will come** upon **a group of prophets descending from the high-place,** +**with zithers,** + **tambourines,** +

flutes and harps before them; and they will be **prophesying** in ecstasy. 6 +**Then** the **spirit of Yahweh will prosper over you, and you will prophesy** along **with them;** + **you will be transformed** into **another man.** 7 +**When it** *b*occurs **that these signs are coming to you, do for** yourself *w*whatever **your hand shall find, for the** One, **Elohim,** is **with you.** 8 + **You** must go **down before me** to Gilgal; **and behold, I** will be coming **down to you to** *c*offer up **ascent** approaches and **to sacrifice sacrifices of peace** offerings. **Seven days shall you wait until I come to you; and I will inform you** *w*what **you should do.**

9 + **It** *b*occurred **as he turned around his back to** *go*leave *f wi* **Samuel,** +**that Elohim transformed his heart** into **another; and all those signs came** true *i*on **that day.** 10 +**When** 7**he**~*cs* **came** 7**from**^{s} **there** to^{d} **Gibeah,** + **behold,** the **group of prophets met him.** +**Then** the **spirit of Elohim prospered on him, and he prophesied in their midst.** 11 +**So it came** to **be,** when **all the people** who had **known him** *f* **heretofore** + **saw** him, + *bd*how **he prophesied with** the **prophets,** + **they said,** each **man to his associate, What** is **this** that **has** *b*happened **to** the **son of Kish?** Is **Saul** *mr*also *i*among the **prophets?** 12 + A **man from there responded,** + **saying, And** *a*who is 7**his**~*c* **father? Therefore it has become** a **proverb,** Is **Saul** *mr*also *i*among the **prophets?** 13 +**When** Saul **had** *all*finished *f* **prophesying,** + **he came** to **the high-place.**

14 + **Saul's uncle** *sa*asked **him and his lad, Where** did **you go?** + **He** *sa*replied, **To seek the jennies. And** when **we saw that** they **were no**where to be found, + **we came to Samuel.** 15 +**Now Saul's uncle said, Do tell me,** *pr*please, **what Samuel said to you.** 16 + **Saul** *sa*replied **to his uncle, He told,** yea **told us that the jennies had been found.** +**Yet** about the **matter of the kingship he** did **not tell him** *w*what **Samuel had said.**

17 + **Samuel** [cry]**summoned** `**the people to Yahweh** at
·**Mizpah** 18 **and** ['**said to** the **sons of Israel, Thus** [sa]**speaks
Yahweh Elohim of Israel: I**´ [c]**brought** `**Israel up** [f]**out** of
Egypt and ['**rescued** `**you from** the **hand of** [7]**Pharaoh king
of**[0] **Egypt and from** the **hand of all the kingdoms** ·that were
oppressing `**you.** 19 +**Yet you**´ **have today rejected** `**your Elo-
him Who** has been [c]**bringing salvation**' **to you from all your
evils and your distresses.** +**But you** ['**said,** [7]**No**[t~cs]**, for you
should** [pl]**set up** a **king over us.** + **Now station** yourselves
before Yahweh ›**by your tribes and** ›**by your thousands.**

20 +**When Samuel** [c]**brought** ['**near** `**all** the **tribes of Israel,**
+ the **tribe of Benjamin was** ['**selected** by lot. 21 +**When he**
[c]**brought** ['**near** `the **tribe of Benjamin** ›**by its families,** +
the Matrite family was ['**selected.** [7]+**When he** [c]**brought**
['**near the Matrite family** ›**by masters**[0]**,** + **Saul son of Kish
was** ['**selected.** +**Yet** when **they** ['**sought him,** + **he was not
found.** 22 +**Then they** ['**asked** [i] **Yahweh** [fr]**again, Has** [7]**the**[0]
man come here [fr]**yet?** + **Yahweh** [sa]**replied, Behold, he** is
hiding ›**among the** [all]**gear.** 23 +**So they** ['**ran and** ['**took him
from there.** +**Then he** ['**stationed** himself **in** the **midst of
the people;** + **from his** [bk]**shoulders** + **upward, he was** ['**taller**
[f]**than any of the people.** 24 +**Now Samuel** ['**said to all the
people,** Do **you see** [i] **whom Yahweh has chosen?** [i]**Indeed,**
there **is no** one **like him** [i]**among all the people.** +**At** that **all
the people** ['**shouted,** + ['**saying,** Long ['**live the king.**

25 + **Samuel** ['**spoke to the people** `about the **customary**
rights **of the kingship;** + **he** ['**wrote** them **in** a **scroll and**
['**left** it **before Yahweh.** +**Then Samuel** ['**dismissed** `**all the
people,** each **man to his home.** 26 + **Saul** [mr]**too went to his
home** at[d] **Gibeah; and going with him were** [7]**sons of**[Q] ·**valor**
[i] **whose heart Elohim had touched.** 27 +**But** some **sons of
worthlessness said,** [wt]**How shall this** one **save us?** +**So they**
['**despised him and** did **not bring** any **present to him.**

+**Yet he** [b]**was** [as] **silent**'.

IN THE DAY OF JUDGING

THE GOOD NEWS of the nearness of the kingdom was qualified by limitations and sober warnings through much of our Lord's ministry to Israel. The message spoke of glory to come, but it was directed to the nation of Israel alone (Matt.10:5,6; 15:24), with the prediction that only a few would follow the teachings set forth (Matt.7:14). And judgment leading to severe losses and lamentations lay ahead for those who opposed or simply failed to heed the word.

The narrow range of the heralding has seldom been given careful consideration. When it is recognized, it is usually quickly explained that it was only a temporary situation which ended with the commission of Matthew 28:19. But this does not change the fact that the teachings within Matthew appear in a confined context originally directed to a single people out of the whole of mankind.

The constricted scope of the context has been downplayed. On the other hand, the severity and extent of the condemnation has been greatly overstated and applied to the whole of unbelieving humanity in the most horrible of terms for all eternity. Where the biblical revelation of blessing is confined to a certain group, interpreters tend to diminish the importance of the limiting factors. And where the biblical revelation concerns the sobering judgment upon unbelievers and opposers of truth within that group of people, the details are exaggerated and amassed together in a terrifying jumble that is applied to evil people everywhere and at all times, other than ourselves.

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

We are told that long after the experiences in Eden, and after long eras of wickedness and irreverence, Jesus revealed that sinners who reject Him (or even fail to put their trust in Him) and oppose the truth (or even fail to support it) will be cast into an everlasting hell, where also, it is generally assumed, countless former sinners were already confined. Using phrases and terms especially from the Lord's ministry to Israel, but also from the book of Revelation and other scattered portions of the Bible, and stringing them together without careful consideration of context and proper word meaning, Jesus, Whose name means Yahweh-Saviour, is put forth as a teacher of catastrophic pain and loss. This fate is for others of course, like the Pharisees (who saw something similar for tribute collectors and sinners of their day), and like the mockers and humanists and atheists of our day, and of course those who avoid God and are useless, who are not doing kindness, who defraud with their tongues, with the venom of snakes under their tongues, whose mouth with imprecation and bitterness is crammed, whose feet are sharp to shed blood, and in whose ways are bruises and wretchedness, and who display no fear of God (*cf* Rom.3:12-18).

For now we will look at only three chapters from the book of Matthew to see how this doctrine of final hopelessness is read into the sacred text. Misusing passages from Matthew 10, 11 and 12, the everlasting misery of hell is found to include something parallel to, but more drastic than, the fire and brimstone that fell on the land of Sodom and the land of Gomorrah (Matt.10:15; 11:24), a fate which God Himself executes and which is fearfully worse than human beings could ever institute themselves (10:28), where sinners are disowned (10:33), and all their pleasures destroyed (10:28,39). This hell, it is announced, is full of unending woe greater than that suffered by Tyre

and Sidon of old (Matt.11:22). "Hell," so it is assumed, is located down below "in Hades" where wicked and stubborn people will subside along with those of Capernaum (11:23). We are told on the basis of Matthew 12:31,32 that hell will be bad for everyone who goes there, but especially bad for those who blaspheme against the holy spirit (which is variously explained). Furthermore, it is claimed, often with a touch of pride for having "accepted the Lord" and "continued steadfast," those who reject the Lord will be condemned by those former sinners who repented of their sin before they died (12:41,42), and those who had repented but turned back to their wicked ways will end up worse off than they might have been had they never repented in the first place (12:43-45).[1]

NEITHER REASONABLE NOR TENABLE

The condemnation spoken of by our Lord in these chapters is a serious matter calling for careful and reverent consideration. But it is also a serious matter to make the condemnation more severe and widespread than the context suggests or would be harmonious with the revelation of God in the Scriptures. In no way could Jesus, as the One Who came to save, be speaking here of an everlasting hell for every stubborn and wicked person from Cain to Judas and beyond to our own day.

The traditional doctrine of hell is neither reasonable nor tenable in light of our Lord's ministry and the entirety of God's Word. We do not rest on the reasonableness of our case, for that is a subjective matter. What seems reasonable to one person may not to another. Nevertheless, we

1. It is not intended to suggest that these are the interpretations that every defender of the doctrine of everlasting hell would give to these passages, much less that these are correct interpretations. But this is typical of the sort of hermeneutics used in building up the doctrine.

do contend that the idea of everlasting hell in Jesus' ministry to Israel is unreasonable from every viewpoint, and this needs to be faced. We also contend that this doctrine darkens every revelation of God in Scripture and is not tenable in its light.

Judgment that effectively leads to repentance and understanding, that is not an end in itself or lasts forever, is fully reasonable and appropriate to the Lord's ministry to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But it is not reasonable that the excruciating horror of an everlasting state of misery, or even the haunting nightmare of final annihilation, should not have been spoken of until the first century A.D. It is not reasonable that the details of condemnation to eternal fire and absolute hopelessness should not have been given where it might have made some impression for reform, but instead were given to a narrow audience at the very time when their leadership was most entrenched in hypocrisy and the people themselves were extremely stubborn and contradictory (*cf* Rom.10:21).

It is not reasonable that the warnings concerning such a certain and unchangeable fate for unrepentant sinners should have been given only in bits and pieces and in terms that would not be immediately plain to common people, untrained in all the proper nuances of the expressions used. (Who, for instance, would have understood that the word "Gehenna" referred to a place of torment under the earth rather than a place outside the walls of Jerusalem to which it had always referred previously, or that "hades" all of the sudden referred to this same "hell" instead of the "unseen" abode of the dead, or that the impending eon of 12:32 was eternal in contrast to the present eon?)

But perhaps, as some have explained to us, it may be that such paradoxes only *seem* unreasonable to us who suffer corrupt abilities of reason. But no, this only makes the situation worse, for it would mean that the Scriptures

do not reveal God to us, but only present Him in terms that have no correspondence with our usage of these very terms. Everything about hell as defined above contradicts the testimony of these three chapters about the Character and Heart of God. In fact, when the revelation of God given in these chapters is accepted in faith, the doctrine of eternal punishment in hell becomes not only unreasonable, but *untenable.*

UNVEILING THE FATHER

In His ministry Jesus unveiled the Father to certain individuals as He intended (Matt.11:27). What He unveiled of the Father was that He takes those burdened under toil and turmoil and brings them into rest for their souls, under kindness and lightness of load (11:28-30). It is not tenable that the One Who is revealed this way would impose unspeakably heavy judgments without mercy or even a pretense of equity in matching sin with penalty.

In unveiling the Father, Jesus made Him known as the Source of healing powers granted to the disciples, who were to announce the nearness of God's glorious kingdom (Matt.10:7,8). Jesus revealed that God gives gratuitously, not on the basis of human deservings or efforts (10:9). The Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is "Lord of heaven and earth" (11:25). There is only one conclusion possible. He Who is made known by the cleansing and healing and the granting of sight and hearing and strength recorded in these chapters, cannot by any frank and sane thinking be made out as one who condemns to everlasting hell.

God was not being revealed in these chapters as one whose judgments are unchangeable verdicts of penalties worse than man could ever impose. God's power is revealed in His judging (though not exclusively there), but He is not revealed as one who is other than the God of power for cleansing and deliverance. His ability to destroy is greater

than the ability of human opposers to kill the body, but it is not "worse" in any sense of hopelessness or finality as so many have inferred from Matthew 10:28. He is to be feared with awe that recognizes His true greatness, but not dreaded for terrifying judgments that have no end or purpose beyond themselves. And the work of judging certainly will not be a contradiction to the revelation of God as the powerful Saviour. The One Who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna is the Father of the One Who came to save sinners.

Hence it is untenable that God's judgments should lead to a destiny of everlasting hell. This perverse teaching is untenable in light of all we learn about God in the Person of Jesus Christ, Who shall save His people from their sins (Matt.1:21), Who came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10) and Who gave Himself a correspondent Ransom for all (1 Tim.2:6). His people Israel remained sinners throughout Matthew 10, 11 and 12, and the most diligent observers of the law continued to refuse even to recognize that they were sinners. But the Saviour will save, and no blindness, no stubbornness, no fortressed hypocrisy, and no judgment to lamentation and destruction can keep Him from being what His Name declares Him to be.

JUDGING AND VICTORY

We have noted above how quickly our brethren point out that the commission of Matthew 10:5,6 was a temporary step toward the broader commission of chapter 28. May it be that many more will come to appreciate the temporary nature of God's judgments which also are steps toward a destination, that greatest of all goals, the glory of God. Divine judgments never represent the end of the line.

In these chapters of Matthew, Jesus referred often to "the day of judging" or "the judging" or simply to the operation of judging (e.g., Matt.10:15; 11:18,20,22,24; 12:36,41,42).

He spoke of them in terms of woe and warning. These are sober and fearful events, even as the many adverse judgments upon Israel throughout their history. So also the judgment that was brought upon Adam and Eve and that passed through into all humanity is sober and fearful, bringing failure and woe, pain and sorrow into all our lives.

Yet it is wrong and harmful to spiritual growth and any clarity in our appreciation of God to suppose that God's judgments are ends in themselves. To speak of divine judgments in terms of pain and destruction that never ends is to empty the words of Scripture concerning them of their power. Such a doctrine robs judgment of any sane balance and meaning.

Jesus Himself in this very section of Scripture testifies that judgment is a means to a good end. In Matthew 12:18-21 He cites a passage from Isaiah (42:1-4) concerning His ministry, in which He would report "judging to the nations" (v.18). Then at some later point He would "be casting out judging for victory." The judging looks ahead to something else. In Isaiah 42:3 judging is seen as serving the end of "truth." Truth and victory are two terms that describe God's goal. Some might see these in a negative light, thinking of truth only as that which exposes irreverence and wickedness and of victory only as that which puts its enemies down. But we are learning that what is true is good, and what is victory is full of joy and peace because of what we are perceiving of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor.4:6).

The day of judging is something to fear, but not with despair. It may involve much sorrow and loss for many, not only of Israel, but of the nations as well, yet it is an operation of our God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In harmony with the assurance of Matthew 12:21 we move forward to the reliance on God as the Saviour of all mankind spoken of in 1 Timothy 4:10. D.H.H.

UNPARDONED SIN

PROBABLY most people under biblical influence have been either perplexed or distressed by the alarming phrase "the unpardonable sin." The fear has been aggravated by the way modern evangelists use this idea, finding it a very convenient one with which to frighten those they wish to persuade to seek salvation according to their formula. They will tell their hearers that if they do not respond promptly to the sermon, the holy spirit may cease to operate upon them for conversion, and in that case they will be eternally lost and doomed. One man so taught declared that he was sure he was going to hell, because the spirit had ceased to plead with him to become a Christian. Many others have gone insane and suicidal as a result of this entirely needless worry.

For it *is* needless, because "unpardonable sin" is not found in the Scriptures. And though there are a few texts on which this traditional fear is based, these do not teach the thought as it is being forced upon people in this needless way.

What may be called "unpardoned sin" is discernible in the case of Israel in the wilderness. They were warned that they would not be forgiven when they sinned at that time (Ex.23:21; Josh.24:19). But that did not mean hopelessness, for God forgave them from Egypt to Kadesh-Barnea (Num.14:19-21). The sense in which they were not pardoned, as they were warned in the two references cited above, was that the two penalties imposed upon sin (suffering and death) were inflicted upon Israel in the time of the Judges, as in the wilderness. They suffered many severe

troubles, and in many cases, death. But remember that it was temporary death, until their future resurrection.

We have said that what is called "unpardonable sin" should be named "unpardoned sin." And we should note that it is only temporarily unpardoned, as in the case of Israel just cited. That such sin is merely "unpardoned" can be shown from Hebrews 10:28, for here such offenders are only "dying without pity," but not to remain in death endlessly without hope of relief. When we realize that such withholding of pardon is only for the time being, the gloom of those misinterpretations of Scriptures vanishes, and room is left to rejoice in the infinite mercy and love as manifested on Golgotha. (J. W. Williams, *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.36, pp.61,65,66)

THE TIME IS CIRCUMSCRIBED

Anyone reading all of the passages (Matt.12:31,32; Mark 3:28-30; Luke 12:10) attentively will see that the time of action is circumscribed. It is confined within the boundaries of only two eons. With considerable circumstance we are informed that a pardon is not possible—neither in this eon nor in that which is future.

The sin against the holy spirit will not be pardoned in the time specified, the only time when pardon is offered, in this eon and in the next, according as it is written. (Moreover, it is concerned with the proclamation of the kingdom to Israel, and not with the present grace.) The statements where this time limit is not directly included imply the same thing in the form of the verb. Consequently, the fate, after the next eon, of those who commit this sin, is not determined by these passages, but by other explicit declarations.

The sin against the holy spirit shall *not* be pardoned (Luke 12:10). It will be *judged.* Those who commit it will stand before the great white throne and will suffer the penalty imposed by our Lord for this sin. They will be cast into the

lake of fire, which is the second death. Thereafter, when death is abolished, and all are made alive at the consummation, they, with all the rest of mankind, will be justified and reconciled to God through the blood of Christ's cross. (A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.26, pp.60,63)

THE CONTEXT

If Luke 12:10 is wrenched from its context, it might be used to prove that this sin will never be forgiven. However, there are other passages pointing to this same judgment which prove that such reasoning is futile and unsound.

In considering this passage we gain another opportunity to learn the important lesson of how we must interpret God's judicial language. God had often spoken in this same manner in previous revelation. He told Hosea to inform the house of Israel that He would no longer have mercy upon them (1:6). Yet, later, through the prophet Jeremiah (33:8), He promised them that He will pardon all their iniquities. This later statement does not annul His former warning, yet it does prove that Hosea's message does not refer to an *eternal* calamity. And God has never changed His terminology. He has always kept His word. When He threatened to punish, He did so, but He never casts off the offenders "forever." Hence we should not misconstrue His words and use them to "prove" that He intends to punish certain ones with never-ending torture. His judgments are *always* confined by their context to a specific limited period.

This passage, found in Luke 12:10, reveals how careful we must be in dealing with God's Word. It sounds final. "He shall *not be pardoned.*" However, a parallel scripture, which deals with the same judgment, is found in Matthew 12:31,32. In Matthew's account these significant words are added to the phrase "shall not be pardoned": "neither in this eon nor in that which is impending." Here the wrath

of God has a fixed boundary. It will last for two, well-defined eons; this present eon, and the one following, which is also the one in which Gehenna will be operative. The proper meaning of this passage has also been obscured in many of the popular versions, which often translate the word "eon" *world,* or, worse yet, *forever,* and thus tend to teach that there is positively no hope for those who commit the so-called "unpardonable sin."

Nevertheless, the consequences of blasphemy against the holy spirit are serious enough. Not one of those who are guilty of this sin shall enter into the kingdom; instead they must endure much pain and distress. And this will be only just, for this is one of the most serious offenses against God. The Jews accused Christ, Who had been *filled* with holy spirit, of being possessed instead by an *unclean* spirit (Mark 3:29,30). Such was this form of blasphemy. At Pentecost, the stubborn sons of Judah continued to hold this same attitude. Fearlessly Stephen hurled this serious accusation against them: "Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in your hearts and ears, you are ever clashing with the holy spirit" (Acts 7:51).

Many are the saints who, through want of a clear understanding of the place and application of these prophecies, have terrified and tortured themselves by the fear of having committed the "unpardonable sin." Yet Paul never even mentions such an offense, because it is impossible for it to take place in the present administration of grace. The holy spirit, dwelling within each believer, can be *sorrowed,* so that it is made inactive and powerless in the offender's daily life, but it will never depart from him, for it is the *seal* which keeps him for the day of deliverance (Eph. 4:30). (M. Jaegle, *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.52, pp.75-77).

Editor's note: The preceding selections are adapted from longer studies appearing in past issues of *Unsearchable Riches,* as indicated.

WALKING IN SPIRIT

(Galatians 5:16-26)

IT IS INSTRUCTIVE to note that Paul's epistle to the Galatians discloses but few particulars as to the Galatians' especial application of the false principles which they had adopted. It is evident that this is because it is not their own particular variety of such errors with which the apostle is primarily concerned, but such mistaken principles themselves, however and wherever they may be applied.

In considering individual passages within this epistle, it is important to maintain an awareness of Paul's overall purpose in writing the epistle itself. Individual texts must not be taken in isolation, as if they were incidental writings; instead, they must ever be related to the epistle's essential theme.

That essential theme is Paul's defense of the evangel, in light of the Galatians' rejection thereof and adoption of false teachings contrary in essence to the evangel of Christ. Insofar as their apprehension of truth was concerned, these false teachings had "transferred" the Galatians from the evangel which had called them in the *grace* of Christ, to a *different* evangel (1:6). Now they repudiated grace (*cp* 2:21), and wanted to be under law (4:21). Hence their position entailed it being so that a man *is* being justified by works of law (*cp* 2:16), and that even if they had *undertaken* in spirit, they must now be *completed* in flesh (3:3).

It is vital to realize that such an appraisal of the Galatians' erroneous beliefs is the language of the apostle Paul, not of the Galatians themselves. Paul describes the true nature of their position; not their own perception thereof. The apostle states that of which their newfangled teach-

ing, effectually, consists; not what they formally ascribed to it. Certainly, they would not have described their beliefs thus, insisting that they now held to something different than grace; that they had repudiated grace; that they were now to become completed in flesh, and justified by works. To be sure, all of this is true of their newly adopted teachings. But this is not to say that they realized this and acknowledged it, it having been their express intention to embrace such views, as such.

Paul, however, recognized what their false persuasions entailed and so actually amounted to. He does not write of matters of flesh and spirit incidentally, but as these themes relate to the truth of the evangel which he was heralding among the nations (2:2). It is in defense of the truth of the evangel of the *grace* of Christ that he says what he does as to flesh and spirit.

Now I am saying, Walk in spirit, and you should under no circumstances be consummating the lust of the flesh. For the flesh is lusting against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh. Now these are opposing one another, lest you should be doing whatever you may want. (5:16,17)

Paul uses the phrase, "[this] I am saying" or its equivalent in many passages.[1] He uses such language in order to draw attention to his words and sum up his thought, much as we would say, "In essence, here's what I have to say," or "Here's my point."

How we long not to consummate the lusts of the flesh! And, here is what we must do, in order for this noble longing to be realized: we must be "walking in spirit." Then, Paul assures us, we will not consummate the lusts of the flesh, the many "foolish and harmful desires" which so often plague our path (*cf* 1 Tim.6:9; James 1:14,15).

1. In addition to 5:16, such phrases occur in four other places within Galatians itself (1:9; 3:15,17; 4:1).

Rather than the human condition and situation, however, being such that no reasonable goal is insurmountable, Paul insists that quite the opposite is the case. We are not in control: *Lest* we may be doing whatever *we* may want, there are forces at work to prevent this from happening. These are "the flesh," and, "the spirit."

Our true state may succinctly be described as one in which the flesh is lusting against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh. Now these are opposing one another, *lest* we should be doing whatever *we* may want. Wherever the spirit prevails, we are kept from sinning (*cf* Gen.20:6) and caused to walk uprightly (*cp* Rom.8:1b,2; 1 Cor.15:10). Yet wherever the flesh gains the upper hand, the works of the flesh must ever occur. The situation is just that simple. Therefore our need is for a greater measure of spirit to regulate our way, not for a more favorable opportunity in which we must still finally depend on ourselves, in the machinations of our own flesh.

Where our walk, even characteristically, is the outworking of the invigorating power of God's spirit, we do not, characteristically, consummate the lusts of the flesh. We say "characteristically," only because even our best efforts and purest moments are tainted with sin, or at least they are tarnished by its presence, due to discrete imperfections of flesh within us, even in the presence of our noblest deeds.

Since all is out of God, it is not at all that we ourselves have the ultimate jurisdiction in the matter of our walking "in spirit." Still, this in no way diminishes our *need* to be walking in spirit, which is Paul's subject.

The spirit, ultimately speaking, is not controlled by the flesh; it is rather that the spirit must control the flesh. The spirit is not a "tool" in the hands of the flesh, the flesh having lordship over the spirit. The spirit is rather the power which must control "sin's flesh" (Rom.8:3) within the fleshly creature. The spirit, not the creature himself,

must control the creature, directing him into paths of virtue and holiness, lest the flesh, once again, should gain the ascendency.

It must ever be remembered that the flesh *will* dominate—it will dominate *us*—wherever God does not dominate the flesh. Therefore, we rely on God and not ourselves, having no confidence in the flesh.

"ALL IS ALLOWED ME"

Now, if you are led by spirit, you are not still under law. (5:18)

Those who are being led by God's spirit, these are sons of God (Rom.8:14). Since the Galatians had been called and blessed according to Paul's evangel, they too, even as Paul himself, were "sons of God" (4:6,7) whether they realized this and its significance or not. Consequently, they were *not* under law. That is, in relation to the evangel and its allotment, they were not dependent upon obedience to law for blessing, but only upon the faithfulness of God in His promise in grace, apart from law.

The revelation that we are not under law, but under grace, is a revelation made in relation to the blessings of the evangel. It should not be taken categorically, as if we were exempt from all standards of right and wrong and need not concern ourselves as to a faithful walk. Further, the natural law that "for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction," must ever be kept in mind.

It is not that there are no extant divine laws which apply to ourselves. Living justly, is living according to ways, or standards, that are just. Jesus Christ gives Himself for us that He should be redeeming us from all lawlessness and be cleansing for Himself a people to be about Him, zealous for ideal acts (Titus 2:14).

It is rather that we are not under law as a way to justification. We are not under what Paul says in Romans 2:13

about having to do the law in order to be justified, as in the case of one who *is* under law and obliged to keep it.

We are not under law in the sense of the context of Romans 6:14 ("Sin shall not be lording it over you, for you are not under law, but under grace"). The context of Romans 6:14, is the promise of Romans 5:19 that the entire vast company which is in view there, which is "all mankind" (*cf* Rom. 5:18), shall be constituted just. And, the context, most especially, is that of Romans 5:20, 21, where Paul declares that where sin increases, grace superexceeds. There he assures as well that even as Sin reigns in death, thus Grace also should be reigning, through righteousness, for life eonian, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. The righteousness in view is the righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith (Rom.3:22). Now the consummation is life eonian. For the ration of Sin is death, yet the gracious gift of God is life eonian, in Christ Jesus, our Lord (Rom.6:22b,23).

We are not under law with respect to justification, deliverance, eonian life, and other blessings directly related to the evangel. The same holds true for 1 Corinthians 6:12 and 10:23 where the context remains Paul's evangel and the fact that Christ has become to us righteousness and holiness and deliverance, which indeed is God's wisdom. "All is allowed me" as far as justification is concerned because nothing I do changes or even affects the justification that is out of and through the faith of Jesus Christ.

Still, we are not, for example, without the rule of action (or "law") that declares, "Let him who steals by no means still be stealing" (Eph.4:28). Stealing will have inevitable results, perhaps even "equal" in the force of the evil that comes back upon us ("opposite" in its direction). But we are not under any law which prohibits stealing in the sense that it is required for justification.

Even in regard to penalties imposed by the law of Moses, there are differences between us and Israel. There are

effects that can be called penalties produced by our stealing, but they are not the same as the effects that came on Achan (and the nation), for example (Joshua 7:1-26; 22:20). Instead, our act of stealing brings a penalty into our present life in perhaps a quenched spirit, and into our future life in matters of loss of reward. For Achan, and actually every single Israelite throughout their history, disobeying the law (as they all have done) results in the fact that they cannot be justified, besides resulting in all sorts of other effects on their present lives and future place in the Kingdom. Their justification can only come to them as God's achievement "out of faith" of Jesus Christ (Rom.3:30), but they remain under law as a method for justification until God's time when the impossibility of this method becomes clear to everyone.

We have already been removed from every other director for justification, whether law or conscience or common sense or whatever, and placed under the directorship of Grace, the directorship of the evangel which says we are justified gratuitously through the deliverance that is in Christ Jesus.

DISTINCT ALLOTMENTS

Now apparent are the works of the flesh, which are adultery, prostitution, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, enchantment, enmities, strife, jealousies, furies, factions, dissensions, sects, envies, murders, drunkennesses, revelries, and the like of these, which, I am predicting to you, according as I predicted also, that those committing such things shall not be enjoying the allotment of the kingdom of God. (5:19-21)

Even if murders, drunkennesses, and revelries, or even adultery, prostitution, uncleanness, wantonness, idolatry, and enchantment, do not so often attend believers, the sins of strife, jealousies, furies, factions, dissensions,

sects, envies, are by no means uncommon (*cp* 5:15; 5:26). Whether sins of the former group or the latter, those committing *any* of these sins or the like thereof, "shall not be enjoying the allotment of the kingdom of God."

"Enjoy," here, does not represent an individual Greek word, but is needed in translation of this verbal form of the word "allotment." It is not to be understood in the sense of pleasure, but of possession of or participation in. In ultra-literal form, this verse reads: "REIGN OF-God NOT WILL-BE-tenantING." Should it be that, in eons to come, we do not "tenant," or participate in, God's *reign,* even now we may take up our "tenancy" as those whose expectation is life eonian (Titus 3:7).

The word translated here as "kingdom" (the noun, *basileia*) literally means "reign," as a noun, even as the verb, *basileuō,* likewise means "reign." As we have mentioned previously, even as the verbal form means "to exercise a king's sovereignty," the noun means "the sovereign power pertaining to [a king's sovereignty]" (*cf* KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, pp.168, 243).

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 "king*dom*," that is, of a territory or people ruled by a king. This cannot be the case here, certainly not in any sense of "[fail to] *live* under the jurisdiction and within the realm of [the 'kingdom']." Since we have been justified in *grace,* we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of "the allotment of life eonian," quite apart from any consideration of whether we may also enjoy an allotment of God's reign.

Be it remembered, however, that it is "If we are enduring," that "we shall be *reigning*" (2 Tim.2:12). "Be not deceived" (*cf* 1 Cor.6:7-11), those comitt*ing* the works of the flesh shall *not* be enjoying the allotment of the *reign* of God.

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

Now the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control: against such things there is no law. Now those of Christ Jesus crucify the flesh together with its passions, and lusts. If we may be living in spirit, in spirit we may be observing the elements also. We may not become vainglorious, challenging one another, envying another. (5:22-26)

"The flesh acts; the spirit bears fruit, delicious not only to us but to God. Fruit is not the result of mechanical effort but the natural expression of life and growth. If we love others we will need no legal restrictions to keep us from injuring them. Law is a useless encumbrance to those who walk after the spirit. They need no promptings to do good and are above the penalties imposed on evil doers."[2]

Since the Galatians wanted to be under law (4:21), Paul dryly informs them that there is no law against either love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, or self-control. Since there is no law against any of these things, why not seek to manifest them, giving time and effort to their cultivation instead of to biting and devouring (5:15)?

Let the Galatians realize too that "those of Christ Jesus crucify the flesh together with its passions, and lusts." All those "of Christ Jesus" crucify the flesh in some measure. The flesh may be far from dead; but, at whatever rate, as we grow in the growth of God (*cf* Col.2:19), we progress in the crucifixion of the flesh.

This is simply what is so. However limited and imperfect, a new disposition and a new walk is something that we *have;* it is not something that we ourselves create. Its presence is to be accounted for by "*the spirit's law of life* in Christ Jesus" (Rom.8:2). We do well, then, to cease from all

2. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.284.

"vainglorious[ness]," believing and behaving as if the essential reason for our holiness were something of ourselves. Vainglorying only produces "challenging and envy" (5:26), not "God's administration which is in faith" (1 Tim.1:4b).

If it should be that we "may be living in spirit," which is to say, if it should be our experience to be manifesting the fruit of the spirit (*cp* 5:22-25), we will find that *in spirit*, we may also be (i.e., we shall also be) observing the elements (5:25). "The elements," refers to the particulars of the law (*cp* 4:3; Acts 21:24b). In the phrase, "in spirit, we may be observing the elements also," the words "in spirit" are an appositive explaining the sense which Paul has in mind in which the Galatians will, when living in spirit, at once, *also* be observing the elements. Then, besides exhibiting the fruit of the spirit, they will be "observing the law," indeed, though only figuratively, in its spirit or intent.[3] Ideally, the goal of the law was to instil in any who would truly maintain it, these very same holy virtues which Paul rehearses in 5:22,23 (*cp* Lev.19:2; Rom.8:3). In actuality, however, such noble characteristics can only come into existence as fruit of the spirit, not as the force of law acting upon the flesh, which only makes matters worse (Rom.7:7-13).

SPIRITUAL FRUIT OF GRACE

Law is not laid down for the just, yet it is for the lawless and insubordinate (1 Tim.1:9), which sometimes includes believers in their practical affairs. We need to be mindful of the rules, that we might be "competing lawfully" (2 Tim.2:5), contending the ideal contest, so as to finish our career faithfully (*cp* 2 Tim.4:7). Even so, law cannot subject the flesh; and, in the measure that we are influenced by the spirit, law becomes redundant.

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3. *cp* Romans 7:6: "Yet now we were exempted from the law, dying in that in which we were retained, so that it is for us to be slaving in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter."

Once God's spirit moves so as to produce its fruit, its seed is germinated and begins to grow; as the spirit continues its invigorating work, growth proceeds apace, eventuating in the very *fruit* of the spirit itself, whether its growing season should be long or short. It is certainly true that where we quench the spirit's power, we experience a corresponding diminution of the spirit's fruit. In all such cases, however, according as He is intending, God is well able to grant us increased invigoration, thus attenuating our quenching of the spirit's operations, *lest His vine should fail to bear.*

All such illustrations of nature and husbandry are merely metaphors of the literal truth that all growth is of God, including the saint's growth in holiness and practical righteousness. Ultimately, all depends upon God and His grace; nothing depends upon man and his flesh.

It is true that if the Galatians would be faithful, they must be attendant to duty; but in thus engaging themselves, they are to recognize and thank God for their very attention to duty in which they are engaged.

Where the Galatians should fail, they are to account for this as due to their own disposition of flesh, which is out of God. This disposition of flesh is that from which they desperately need a Saviour, One Who will save them according to His own grace. Even if the fulness of His work of salvation must await their resurrection, any portion thereof that is to be achieved even now, must be completed not in flesh but in spirit. The spirit is that which is vivifying. The flesh is not benefiting anything (John 6:63).

Where the Galatians should succeed, they are to recognize this wholly as God's work within them, for they are His achievement (Eph.2:10); His "farm" (1 Cor.3:9); the soil in which *He* produces *His* fruit, according to *His* grace—that no *flesh* at all should be boasting in His sight (*cp* 1 Cor.1:29). J.R.C.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 1997
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT

EDITORIAL

EXPECTATION of the glory of God (Rom.5:2) is the equivalent of reliance on the living God (1 Tim.4:10). Both terms, *expect* and *rely* are translations of the same Greek word, *elpizō*. We *expect* God's glory to embrace the future, and we *rely* on Him as One Who is ever alive in carrying on His operations with power and purpose in our lives day by day.

Through his afflictions Job came to see that reliance on God was not dependent on human practice and feeling. It was not a matter of: You can depend on God if He can depend on you; or: As long as I feel all right, God is blessing me. Job had always been very careful to "put on righteousness" (Job 29:14) so that he could say, "I shall breathe my last in old age, and I shall multiply my days like sand" (29:18). But later he found, that even though he "expected" good, *yet evil came* (see p.228). Reliance on God, as Job was to learn, is to expect good because God is good, even though evil comes for a period, as it surely does.

We rely on God and expect His glory because He has a glorious purpose and is operating all in accord with that counseled purpose He has willed (Eph.1:10,11). To know that *we are called in accord with God's purpose* (see p.211) builds up our reliance on God and strengthens our expectation of good, even though many evils come into our present experience.

Saul and Jonathan are also good pictures of this truth. Saul was filled with fears and burdened by woes because his faith in God's victory over the Philistines was *hampered by the flesh* (see p.217). His erratic behavior contrasts with Jonathan's trust that "there is no restraint to

Yahweh" in the human situation used in His operations of salvation (1 Sam.14:6).

But does not our future depend on what we do right now? After all, Paul himself wrote, in a portion of his letter to the Galatians discussed in this issue (see p.200), "Be not deceived, God is not to be sneered at, for whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also" (Gal.6:7).

Yes, there are consequences to our actions, both now and in the future. But this does not change the fact that God has a purpose of the eons which He "makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Eph.3:11). Paul and the Galatians and all of us who believe have "the expectation of righteousness" which is gained by the faith of Jesus Christ (*cf* Gal. 3:22; 5:5). This assurance of being constituted righteous with life eonian becomes the fertile soil for the growth and reaping of the qualities of life eonian, of the fruit of the spirit (Gal.5:22,23), in our lives today. Paul's whole point in Galatians 6:7,8 is encouragement to be "sowing into the spirit." This is a matter of reliance on God Who calls us through the evangel of the grace of Christ (Gal.1:6). What we do not do is to sow our hopes for righteousness in our fleshly abilities (actually, inabilities) to gain righteousness. We sow in reliance on our gracious God and in expectation of the blessings He achieves in Christ.

Once Job thought of Eloah's guarding of him (Job 29:2) as a sort of divine response to Job's upright acts in the fear of God. Later in perceiving God as One Who is actively involved in all things, even fierce and fearful things like storms and beasts, he saw God not simply as One Who responds but One Who initiates according to His will. Consequently Job's upright acts could become the responding factor, the human response to a true perception of God.

Like our apostle, we would "be having no confidence in ourselves, but in God, Who rouses the dead . . . on Whom we rely" (2 Cor.1:9,10). D.H.H.

HUMANITY CRUCIFIED

ACCORDING to his Hebrew name, Adam (*Hb.* ADM, most-LIKE) resembled his Creator more than any other creature on earth, so that he was given the position of subjector over them, as Elohim possessed over him. This was passed on to his posterity. It includes the subjection of the sexes, the elder over the younger, the firstborn over his brethren and of humanity as a whole over the lower creatures. But, in each case, this was to be only an image and reflection of the subjection of the whole of humanity to El, the universal Subjector, so that they would learn to know Him, although He was imperceptible to their physical senses. Their failure, moreover, would enable Him to reveal to them the treasuries of His grace and love; which was His ultimate object.

Ideally, then, humanity is a social order based on subjection, in which each member should be subject to another above it, and all, even the highest be controlled by the Supreme. So it will be in the consummation. Our Lord will subject all to His Father, and then be subject Himself (1 Cor.15:28), and thus transform humanity into a family, with the Subjector as its Father. Since Adam transgressed and offended, mankind as a whole has refused to be subject, so God appointed a To-subjector (Eloah) to subordinate them to Him. But when He emptied Himself of His supernal glories, and came as a lowly Human to woo and win them by goodness and grace, they not only rejected Him and killed Him, but *crucified* Him, putting Him under the curse of God for a time.

That was the spiritual climax of human history. Because He outranks all human nobility in His ancestry, having been the Original of God's creation (Rev.3:14), and having occupied the most glorious place in His presence (John 17:5), being inherently in the form divine so that He need rob Him of nothing in order to appear as His equal (Phil. 2:6,7), being so supernally pre-eminent, and then voluntarily descending to the level of a lowly human, formed like a slave, spreading more physical as well as spiritual blessing among His people, what was His reward? He richly deserved the greatest gift that humanity could give, the highest honor ever handed to a mortal, which, thank God, He will yet receive.

But this was not all by any means. He was God's chosen One to bring the greatest blessing to humanity. He was, even before He came in the form of humanity, the great To-subjector, the Eloah, Who has the power to subdue all to the Father's gentle sway, Who, even then, as a lowly human, could command twelve legions, or nearly a hundred thousand powerful heavenly messengers to do His bidding. Men should have feared Him, they should have honored Him, they should have revered Him, they should have loved Him and showered on Him all the blessings and honors that the race could bestow.

THE DEATH OF THE CROSS

Instead, the spiritual representatives of the holiest earthly nation, Israel, and a ruler of the mightiest mundane power, Rome, joined hands to bring Him down to the lowest most dishonorable death that mankind can devise, and sink Him below the curse of God, His Subjector and Father. As Jerusalem was the only place where these two species of subjection were found together it was necessary that He should go there for this display of humanity's utter failure. There the supreme Priest and Potentate

of the universe delivers Himself into the highest spiritual and political powers of humanity so that they could display their utter failure as subjectors.

Some may surmise that the chief priest of Israel and the proconsul of Rome were especially bad and bloodthirsty men, but the record seems to indicate the contrary. Caiaphas, the chief priest did not pronounce the sentence alone. He put it up to the elders and the whole Sanhedrin, the highest religious heads of humanity (Luke 22:66). The entire multitude led Him to Pilate (Luke 23:1). So with Pilate. He found no fault in Jesus and sought to shift the responsibility to Herod. Even there the chief priests and the scribes took the lead in denouncing Him (Luke 23:10). Twice more Pilate sought to set Him free (Luke 23:13-16,22). It was the multitude of *humanity,* especially *enlightened religious* humanity who encompassed the crucifixion of Christ. They were a sample of the rottenness of the whole race.

What is the just Judge's sentence on such a horrible humanity? What says His holy law? In it we read "Soul for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deut.19:21). That defines for us the doom which humanity deserves. *It calls for crucifixion,* the same doom it dealt out to Him, and thus the sentence stands against the whole human race for the whole of this administration. That is the judgment against it in God's sight, and should be in ours.

HUMANITY ONE

When Adam sinned, the judgment was not confined to him, but the sentence has passed on to the whole race. Humanity as a unit receives this result of Adam's sin. So it is with the effects of Christ's obedience. His death is reckoned to all: ". . . as it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation, thus also it is through one

just award for all mankind for life's justifying. For even as, through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just" (Rom.5:18,19).

Indeed, Christ's death was *for* all, and will yet *release* all from the Adamic doom. Now, in *spirit,* those who believe, acknowledge the crucifixion of humanity, including their own, as the just judgment of God. We see our baptism into the death of Christ as meaning "our old humanity was crucified together with Him" (*cf* Rom.6:3-6). But we also see this as including all mankind: "For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that, if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died . . ." (2 Cor.5:14).

CRUCIFIED, GLORIFIED

The grandest of Christ's future glories will not be based upon any eminence that He attained in His earthly career, but rather upon the depth of His humiliation. So, let us not imagine that the future fate of those called into the fellowship of God's Son depends upon the fame and fortune to which they attain in this life, but rather upon the hardship and humiliation that comes to them because of faithfulness to Him. And this is especially true if it comes from the religious dignitaries of the day. Pilate, of himself, would never have harmed the Man of Galilee, but the chief priests, the respected representatives of Israel's Elohim, they demanded that He be crucified.

Humanity being "most like" to the Subjectors, Christ also came to be in the likeness of humanity (Phil.2:7), even though His spirit did not come through Adam, but direct from God. Although He was rejected and crucified by humanity, or, rather, because He, as a Human, descended to the deepest depth of dishonor for humanity, He will ascend to the highest heights of grandest glory. "Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him

with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2:9-11).

Included in this exaltation and prior to its full realization, He will call to Himself a selection of saints Who, in spirit, were crucified with Him, and, in a minute measure, have suffered some of the shame and humiliation of His crucifixion. For to us it is graciously granted, "for Christ's sake, not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also" (Phil.1:29).

CONSEQUENTLY, ALL DIED

Furthermore, our hearts leap with still growing exultation as we contemplate the certain *consequences* of the death of all humanity in the death for them of the Son of God's love, Who so loves them. If One died for all, consequently all died (2 Cor.5:14). But if all died, if all are included in the crucifixion of the old humanity, consequently all shall be vivified in Christ (*cf* 1 Cor.15:22) and come to know the joy and peace of living, not to themselves, but to the One dying and being roused for their sakes (*cf* 2 Cor.5:15). A. E. Knoch

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Clyde Walters of Pomona, California, age 52, fell asleep in Christ on September 10. Though he did not attend our local meetings, he was an honored friend in faith and generous supporter of our work. Recognizing the truth that all is out of, through, and for God, and will yet redound to His glory, Clyde was one who could look at the morally challenged or down-and-out, and with genuine sincerity say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I" (*cp* 1 Cor.15:10).

Virginia Faire of Duvall, Washington, age 75, died on September 7. In recent months, Virginia had begun to help us in our project of making the *Unsearchable Riches* volumes available in computer form. Three of her children, Mike, Marilyn, and James, now continue on, in accord with their dear mother's own faith, rejoicing in the God of all grace Who, through Christ Jesus, is the Saviour of all mankind.

SOWING INTO THE SPIRIT
(Galatians 6:1-10)

BELIEVERS may easily offend one another, whether over questions of truth or in countless other ways. Too often, differences of opinion lead to factiousness and "challenging," even as to unacknowledged envy and vainglory (which is the opposite of humility; *cp* Phil.2:3), with egregious mistakes made on all sides (*cf* Gal.5:25).

It is no coincidence, then, that Paul chooses this very juncture in his argument, here in Galatians 5:26, to declare that, "we may not become vainglorious, challenging one another, envying one another." That is, to clarify this statement through recasting in the indicative: We *will not* become vainglorious, challenging one another, envying one another. That is, this will be so, if we are living in spirit.

Brethren, if a man should be precipitated, also, in some offense, you, who are spiritual, be attuning such a one, in a spirit of meekness, noting yourself, that you, also, may not be tried. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fill up the law of Christ. For if anyone is supposing himself to be anything, being nothing, he is imposing on himself. Now let each one be testing his own work, and then he shall be having his boast for himself alone, and not for another, for each one shall be bearing his own load. (6:1-5)

By the phrase, "if a man should be *precipitated, also,* in some offense . . . " we take it that Paul has in view not a first-time offense, but a case in which the offender has engaged in this same offense before, and now has done so again, evoking a response by the offended party.[1]

1. The Greek word translated "precipitated," literally says, "BEFORE-

It may be that, in forbearance, we refrained from responding to an earlier offense of an associate. But now we feel that a response is called for and should be made. The question then becomes, *Who* shall respond, *How* shall the response be made, and of *What* shall such a proper response principally consist.

Before even considering these particulars, however, let us note well what is the most important consideration of our response, in cases where an offense has occurred. It is that we are to be *dealing graciously,* if we should be having a complaint against anyone: "dealing graciously among yourselves, if anyone should be having a complaint against any. According as the Lord also deals graciously with you, thus also you [be dealing graciously with one another]" (Col.3:13).

Accordingly, then, "Let all bitterness and fury and anger and clamor and calumny be taken away from you with all malice, yet become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, *dealing graciously* among yourselves, according as God also, in Christ, deals graciously with you" (Eph. 4:31,32).

In certain relations, however, some may have so violated our trust through repeated deeds of wickedness or uncleanness, that expedience dictates that we shun them, whether wholly or in part. As such ones pose a significant danger to us, in cases where they give little or no indication of change either of heart or habit, we are not obliged, either in the name of forgiveness or dealing graciously, to put ourselves, once again, in harm's way.

GOTTEN" (*cf* the Keyword Concordance entry, "get before," p.122). While the definition of the English verb "precipitate" as "falling with steep descent; to throw headlong," makes good sense in English, the definition of the English noun, "precipitate," which is, "a product, result, or outcome of some process or action," seems more reflective of the Greek.

We are obliged, however, truly to forgive them; and, specifically, to deal graciously with them, in whatever way is best suited to their case. We may not be unkind to them, and are to be truly concerned with their welfare. Still, in some cases, where such ones are neither amenable to our counsel, nor otherwise disposed to change their injurious ways, the most gracious thing to do on their behalf, may well be to avoid them. While truly wishing them well, remembering them in prayer, and having them in heart, thus committing them to God and to the disciplines which, in due time, He will grant them for their good, may be our only practical recourse.

It is to be regretted that, both in Colossians 3:13 as well as in Ephesians 4:32, by its interpretative rendering, "forgiving [one another]," for the literal "gracing" ("dealing graciously [among yourselves]," CV), the Authorized Version has obscured an important truth.

Forgiveness, if granted at all, may well be granted begrudgingly; and, among men, it is rarely granted unconditionally. Certainly, "forgiveness" is involved in dealing graciously. Forgiveness, however, in itself, especially if it is more formal than heartfelt, may well not be *gracious* forgiveness at all.

Paul does not instruct us to "forgive one another"; much less does he then leave it to ourselves to decide the way in which we shall do so and the conditions upon which we shall do so. Instead, he entreats us to be "dealing *graciously*" with one another.

"Grace" [*charis,* JOY] is simply that which brings *joy* [*chara,* JOY]. Grace may often come in the form of "tough love." Such grace, though purposed to bring joy, may well not bring joy immediately, nor apart from its own agency of "training" or "discipline" (literally, of "HITting"; *cp* Titus 2:12a; *cf* entry "discipline," Keyword Concordance, p.77).

Not only is grace that which brings joy, but it is that which

is not out of works ("If it is in *grace,* it is no longer out of works, else the grace is coming to be no longer grace"; Rom.11:6a). Therefore, if we would deal *graciously* with an associate, we must do that by which we seek to bring joy to our associate, extending our gracious dealings to him, not upon our own "terms," but unconditionally.

When we have become offended, our thoughts are generally centered upon our own wounded feelings. Bitterness often festers, love is lacking, and the spirit is quenched. In such a state, we not only *have* a complaint against another, but we wish to *give expression* to our complaint as well. Since our thoughts are centered on the wrongness of the other person's actions, we fail to see that the issue here is not at all who is right and who is wrong—as if, if we should succeed in proving the other person wrong, we may then consider ourselves at liberty to be as bitter toward him as we please. Instead, the issue here is just one thing, and it is this: What is *our* obligation, now, now that, rightly or wrongly, we have come to have a complaint against another?

The answer to this question is that, as the offended party, it now becomes *our* duty to deal *graciously* with the offender—"if anyone should be having a complaint against any." And, it now becomes *our* sin if we should fail to do so. According as the Lord also deals graciously with us, then, thus also let us deal graciously with one another.

YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL

Specifically, the answer to the question, "*Who* shall respond?" if a man should be precipitated, also, in some offense, is, "You who are *spiritual.*" This is as if to say, "No others need apply." Unless we are empowered to make mention of another's offense in such a way that our response is vitally characterized by God's spirit, our response in such situations cannot possibly be a worthy response.

Similarly, the answer to the question, "*How* shall we

respond?" is, "In a spirit of meekness," while "noting [ourselves]." If, while seeking to attune another, we should fail to keep in mind our "own self," with all its weaknesses and sins, we may very well find ourselves in trying circumstances. By overlooking our own shortcomings in our attempts to attune, we may easily find ourselves offending the very person who had first offended us.

To act in a spirit of meekness, is to act in a "mildly submissive" way (*cf* entry "meek," Keyword Concordance, p.193). One who is meek, is one who is patient and gentle, devoid of acerbity. Even when correcting another, such a one's manner is like that of one who is obliged to be submissive to the other party, even where this may not literally be the case.

By being both sympathetic and empathetic toward the failings of another, apart from all rancor and scorn, we may somewhat bear the burden of the offending party's trial, which issued in his offense. If we are sensitive to the offender's burdens, even if they should be simply those of such a one's own deficiency of character, we will recognize that while he may have offended us in some certain way on occasion, it is he himself who must live with himself continually. Such, in fact, is a burdensome load indeed, whether or not the offender himself realizes this. The point is that, until God should change him, the offender will continue to be under the heavy load which produced his offensive deeds in the first place. We should try to make the situation better for him, not worse, simply because we are displeased with his behavior.

Since the Galatians are so taken with the idea of law, Paul says to them, "Bear one another's burdens [that is, ease the 'heaviness' of one another's loads], and thus fill up 'the law of Christ'" (5:2). Each one must indeed be bearing his *own* load, according to his own character and circumstances. But if we would fulfill "the law of Christ," here, we would seek to ease the other party's burden in

it all by centering our attention not upon our displeasure with him but upon what will help him, even as make his situation less difficult to endure.

Finally, the answer to the question, Of *what* shall such a proper response principally consist? is, "Declarations and deeds of attunement." Since the goal is to "attune" and thus *help* the offender, not to vent our wrath or take vengeance upon him, whatever we say and do in such cases must be conducive to such goals. Unless we are clear as to what is needful and what is not with a view toward edification and are also earnestly desirous of implementing it, we cannot hope to attune another through any efforts of our own.

"For if anyone is supposing himself to be anything, being nothing, he is imposing on himself" (6:3). Those who think highly of *themselves,* who consider *themselves* "quite something" indeed, are, according to Paul, imposing on themselves. They are imposing on themselves a prideful and unclean falsehood. What good qualities they do have (which, decidedly, do not include humility) are entirely the gift of God's grace and in the last analysis are not at all owing to themselves, but to God's powerful operations.

If we should "test" that work which is not of God's grace but which issues out of our own "self" or flesh, taking note of its actual nature, then we shall be having our boast therein, so to say, "into [ourselves] alone," inasmuch as we will not care to direct it into the hearing of another. That is, in that case, we will wish to "keep to ourselves" any such "boast" that might be made, which cannot literally be our boast at all but only our shame.

Now let him who is being instructed in the word be contributing to him who is instructing, in all good things. (6:6)

This is a matter of which Paul speaks but little and of which we would do the same. Greedy teachers are no more noble than niggardly saints. Nor should one who falls down here be excessively criticized. We all are tripping

in much; and, each has his own gracious gift from God, one indeed, thus, yet one thus. Still, Paul's testimony can hardly be faulted for being unclear: "Now let him who is being instructed in the word be contributing to him who is instructing, in all good things."

It is well to note, however, that the apostle simply states what should be done, leaving any particulars as to the form or measure of "all good things" to a consideration of the particular needs of the one instructing, even as to the generosity of the contributor. Any such contributions should be made not only in consideration of necessary needs, but as a matter of honor, in the sense of recognition of value for services rendered (*cp* 1 Tim.5:17). Even so, such contributions, like all gifts, should only be made "according as each has proposed in his heart, not sorrowfully, nor of compulsion, for the gleeful giver is loved by God" (*cf* 2 Cor.9:8).

"GET HOLD OF LIFE REALLY"

Be not deceived, God is not to be sneered at, for whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also, for he who is sowing for his own flesh, from the flesh shall be reaping corruption, yet he who is sowing for the spirit, from the spirit shall be reaping life eonian. (6:7,8)

The apostle's words here, "whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also," constitute a truism, a statement the truth of which is obvious. This, however, does not make such words trite or unimportant. Hence we must not let the often prideful and heartless misuse of this saying by some, keep us from giving due attention to its important message.

"Sowing and reaping, planting and harvesting, are procedures well-known to most of mankind; so they are a fruitful source of figures to describe the course of spiritual affairs. Most of us use them to illustrate only one point: whatsoever anyone sows, that shall he reap (Gal.6:7). It is a fact that

every plant produces that which springs from its seed and nothing else. Not from thorns are they culling grapes, nor from star thistles, figs (Matt.7:16). And you cannot harvest wheat if you plant barley. But there are divine operations which do not accord with natural processes. In resurrection, for instance, it is sown in corruption, in dishonor, in infirmity, a soulish body; but it is roused in incorruption, in glory, in power, a spiritual body. *God is not limited by the laws of nature* . . . .

"'Sowing and reaping' is used in the so-called 'gospel,' to frighten sinners into repentance. But this seems not only unscriptural but unfortunate. Men are turned inward to themselves, where there is no good news to be found."[2]

The idea is that if one sows the seed of a life of sin, he will harvest a crop of the consequences thereof, which, it is claimed, is eternal torment in hellfire. The claim is that since sinful deeds have consequences which bear a direct correspondence to their nature, therefore a lifetime of disobedience to God, will have such terrible consequences as that which can neither be mitigated by mercy nor removed by grace.

We heartily agree that that which is sown is also that which is reaped, and that, in the case of sin, this truism reflects the fact that sinful deeds have adversative consequences corresponding to their nature. But it hardly follows from this that the consequence which ensues from a lifetime of unbelief and sin is eternal torment in hellfire, beyond the reach of all mercy and grace.

Instead of making fantastic, speculative applications of our own concerning "sowing and reaping," we should instead note how and to whom Paul applies this saying. It is not to the lost, but to *the Galatian saints* who were going back to circumcision and the law and the flesh, when they should

2. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.76, pp.251,252.

have been taken up with the spirit, to whom Paul declares: "Be not deceived, God is not to be sneered at, for whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also."

The Galatians wished to be doing their own part, completing in flesh what God had only begun in spirit. Hence they were repudiating grace and boasting in self, seeking justification not through the faith of Christ but through works of law. The consequence, then, of such sinful sowing, must be the reaping of Paul's sobering edict, "Let him be anathema!" in relation to the truth of the evangel, the one who is "bringing an evangel to you beside that which we bring to you" (1:8,9).

Further, Paul's principle point here is not to be found in the words, "whatsoever a man may be sowing, this shall he be reaping also," but in the following declaration in which he explains the reason *why,* in his application of this saying, these words are appropriate and true. This saying is true with respect to conformity to the evangel, *"for* he who is sowing for [lit., *"into"*] his own flesh, from the flesh shall be reaping corruption, yet he who is sowing for [*"into"*] the spirit, from the spirit shall be reaping life eonian."

"Nothing is said of the seed sown. Our attention is concentrated on the *soil* in which it is planted. The question is, Shall we plant our seed in flesh or spirit. It is *the quality of the soil* on which all else depends."[3]

Even the ideal seed of a quest for obedience to God and righteous service in His name, planted into the soil of the flesh, must yield the consequences thereof, which are *the fruit of failure,* in any attempt to realize this very quest. The flesh—that is, man of himself—is of no help at all either in the ascertainment of truth or in the realization of a faithful walk in correspondence thereunto. The Galatians, in denying this truth, albeit unwittingly, were effectually sneering at God!

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3. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.76, pp.252,253.

The literal, future allotment of eonian life is our expectation in grace (*cp* Titus 3:7; Eph.2:5-7), and will be granted even where there is persistence in sin (*cf* Rom.5:20-6:1). Therefore, the "*reaping*" of "life eonian," here in Galatians 6:8, which speaks of an attainment as the result of works, must be identified not with future, life eonian itself, but, through the figure of metonymy, with that which is associated with it even now. It is one's faithful relationship to the only true God, as well as with His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: "Now it is eonian life that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou dost commission, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). In this same sense, Paul sought to be attaining to the resurrection that is out from among the dead" (Phil.3:11), entreating Timothy similarly to "get hold of eonian life" (1 Tim.6:12).

Now we may not be despondent in ideal doing, for in due season we shall be reaping, if we do not faint. (6:9)

Even in a figure, we cannot expect to "reap" life eonian while at the same time remaining inert, as a consequence of "fainting." That is, a realization of God and His truth will only come through our own protracted effort, not apart therefrom. In the phrase, "if we do not faint," the words "if we do," though needed in translation, are not in the Greek; likewise, the "not," here, is the conditional negative, while "faint" is literally the incomplete form, "fainting," and appears in the middle voice, which reflects the involvement of the one engaged in that which is the activity of the verb. The words "not fainting," following the phrase "in due season we shall be reaping," then, constitute an appositive, elucidating the conditions under which we *shall* be reaping. Our reaping of "life eonian" shall occur, through a process which we ourselves undergo, in which we, rather than "fainting away," remain vigorously conscious, active in the things of God.

The words, "Now we may not be despondent in ideal doing, for in due season we shall be reaping, [while] not

faint[ing]," are said not so much as a warning but as an encouragement. Again, to clarify the sense which the subjunctive mood, which is the mood of dependency, reflects here, in this matter which is dependent solely on spirit, according to grace, we will recast this declaration in the indicative: "Now we *shall* not be despondent in ideal doing, for in due season we shall be reaping, [while] not faint[ing]."

That is, the time will come when the infirm in faith will be made to stand, *through* their own efforts, *by* the grace of God. This is so, for the Lord is able to make them stand (Rom.14:4). As Paul had previously declared to the Galatians: "I have confidence *into* you *in* the Lord that in nothing you *will* be disposed otherwise" (5:10a).

In the face of our own corruption, the wickedness of the world, even as the seeming-tardiness of the Lord's promise, we may, failing hitherto to realize a greater awareness of "eonian life," often become despondent. Is it really worth it all—all the rejection, misunderstanding, loneliness, and hurt? The answer is, Yes! it is worth it all. And the Lord will make this unmistakably evident to each one of us: "in due season."

Consequently, then, as we have occasion, we are working for the good of all, yet specially for the family of faith. (6:10)

It is as a consequence of his awareness of the glorious and assured outcome, that of the day in which each one of us shall "get hold of life really" (*cf* 1 Tim.6:19), that the apostle finds himself, "working for the good of all, yet specially for the family of faith." Since Paul recognized and proclaimed God as the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers (1 Tim.4:10), it was only natural that he should be engaged in labors for the good of all, albeit specially for the family of faith.

May it be our portion to be imitating Paul in these considerations and activities: "Become imitators of me, according as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor.11:1). J.R.C.

CALLED IN ACCORD WITH GOD'S PURPOSE

IN HIS FINAL LETTER to Timothy, the apostle Paul warned that in the last days there would be perilous periods (2 Tim.3:1). Today we can recognize these perils, for there is a disturbing reality in his description. He urged his *child beloved* to ". . . suffer evil with the evangel in accord with the power of God, Who saves us and calls us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian" (2 Tim.1:8,9).

When we examine God's purpose we are confronted with the omnipotence of His intention. Previously, in his letter to the called of Jesus Christ in Rome, Paul had shown that it was extremely foolish for any to protest against this. "O man! who are you, to be sure, who are answering again to God?" (Rom.9:20). In God's intention there is absolute power. This arrests all human reason. The vanity of man's puny knowledge is exposed, and all are subjected.

For many this is a humiliation that is unacceptable, and there is retreat into rationalism, or some such futile philosophy. However, for His ecclesia, who embrace His precious Word, there is serenity and peace. These, who are aware of God's calling in the Son of God's love, acclaim with the great apostle, "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom.8:31).

A HOLY CALLING

May we consider this wonderful part of God's immutable purpose, His calling of us with a holy calling. He intends,

not merely wishes as though it might not be, but clearly intends something which is of profound significance! Further, and this is most intriguing, He also *reveals* this same glorious intention to members of the ecclesia, the body of Christ, unworthy objects of His deep affection:

"Yet God, being rich in mercy, because of the vast love with which He loves us (we also being dead to the offenses and the lusts), vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus, that, in the oncoming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 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.2:4-10).

The overwhelming wonder of this aspect of God's purpose is multiplied when we note and ponder the fact that three times our calling is presented in connection with *Christ Jesus.* We exult in the very precious relationship we share with respect to His grand title, "Son of God's love" (*cf* Col. 1:13). This is quite intimate, and reserved for those who rejoice in being near and dear to the heart of His Father. But when the official title, Christ Jesus, is used then we may be sure that here is something very important!

HIS ACHIEVEMENT

In spirit we are vivified, roused and seated together in Christ Jesus among the celestials. Thus God is even now displaying the transcendent riches of His grace, for we are His achievement in Christ Jesus. Whether we believe this or not, nothing can possibly affect, undermine, or in any way modify this settled, glorious accomplishment. In

humiliation, we await its fulfillment with endurance. This is noble encouragement indeed.

This unique preference granted to the ecclesia which is the body of Christ is striking, but even more astounding is the fact that this is yet a part of God's determined intention to be All in all! Members of this ecclesia, elected in grace, are to play an integral and vital role in the process whereby God, together with His Son, will bring about that grand conclusion. We must not make the foolish mistake of imagining that He needs a helping hand, but we rejoice that He uses us in displaying the transcendent riches of His grace.

We might be hesitant in accepting full assurance of our privileged position. Indeed, some critics might insinuate that the very suggestion is borne out of arrogance. But we do not make the claim, but simply point to God's Word.

"REJOICING IN MY SUFFERING"

Paul's encouraging words from prison, to the generous saints in Philippi, were that he was praying that their love would be superabounding in realization and all sensibility, that they be testing things of consequence; be sincere, no stumbling block (Phil.1:4-11). Today, we do well to heed these precious words. It has been suggested that a thorough knowledge of God's purpose will shine upon our path and remove much of uncertainty in proceeding along our way. As we realize, we will appreciate and thus mature, being rooted and grounded in love.

In this priceless epistle to the Philippians the great apostle further added (1:29,30) that not only has God graciously granted belief, but has further awarded the privilege of suffering also for the sake of Christ. Did he complain? Not a bit of it! He rejoiced in his suffering—for the ecclesia (Col. 1:24). In the context of this study, we must perceive that any present heartache of humiliation and indignity is an

essential contrast to future exaltation, in Christ. Respectfully, it is submitted that as an exhibition of His love, this suffering compares in a slight way with the awful anguish and pain of His Own Son's rejection.

It is no presumption to call on our Lord's words. "He who is hating Me is hating My Father also. If I do not the works among them which no other does, they had no sin. Yet now they have seen also, and they have hated Me as well as My Father, but it is that the word written in their law may be fulfilled, that they hate Me gratuitously" (John 15:23-25).

These words were shared with the eleven faithful followers after Jesus had dispatched Judas from their assembly into the fateful night. They were spoken concerning the nation of Israel. God concealed so much from that nation. His beloved Son honored this, clearly recognizing His Father's deep purpose: "I am acclaiming Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for Thou dost conceal these things from the wise and intelligent and Thou dost reveal them to minors. Yea, Father, seeing that thus it became a delight in front of Thee" (Luke 10:21).

PRAISE TO HIS GLORY

In the course of announcing God's gracious gift to ". . . the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all" (Eph.1:23), we learn that we are to be instrumental in lauding, or bringing praise to, His glory (Eph.1:6,12,14). What a great and blessed honor!

Even now, whether this is fully realized or not; even now we have full and gloriously free access into the august presence of our God and Father. We are a new creation, whose ". . . realm is inherent in the heavens, out of which we are awaiting a Saviour also, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory, in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself" (Phil.3:20,21).

We have no means of knowing how this astounding revelation was initially received among the celestials. So often—to our shame—we are selfishly preoccupied with *our*selves, *our* blessings, *our* future. We pay scant attention to how we might serve to be *for the laud of God's glory.* From the first disclosure of this preferment there has been antagonism. It might be hastily concluded that upon our resurrection to immortality we would then repay. Not so! There is no revenge for all the misery caused. To the contrary; we are so conscious of God's grace that our song throughout the eons will focus alone on His love in the death of His Son for us all.

ALL CREATION

Perhaps one very important point has been overlooked. Our special appointment, with all its grand dimensions, is not confined! Is it at all possible that throughout the whole of this universe of created beings there might be one, just one, who, in despair, regards himself as beyond or beneath the yearning love of the Creator? See; already we long to embark on our mission of bringing grace, love, and peace! Meditate on the wonder that is disclosed: "For the premonition of the *creation* is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God." It is not this planet alone, but the entire universe that is included in this divine expectation of the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom.8:19-23).

Putting aside the embarrassment of our own assessment, may we dwell on what God has already accomplished with us? We are holy and flawless in His sight! By the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will, we are guaranteed a role in the administration of the complement of the eras, and are pre-expectant in the Christ. Further, we are sealed with the holy spirit of promise. This is an earnest of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured by our God and Father.

Can there be any doubt concerning the grace of God's election, His choice of us in Christ Jesus? But then, all of this begs the question, How are we to serve for the glory and laud of God? We acknowledge that our very helpless and hopeless condition must surely testify to the pure unmerited favor which God lavishes, and which clearly demonstrates the wisdom and love of His purpose.

LOVE RESPONSIVE

There is surely much more. This is a day of salvation; yet there appears to be so many indications that the presence of the Lord is imminent. We eagerly look for Him with every moment. God's indignation is withheld because we have yet to be caught up to be with His dear Son, and He will not harm the ecclesia. Our tributes to the glory and laud of God are sadly, but inevitably, limited. What might we, in our wretched condition, possibly bring as an offering to our God and Father, to express our grateful wonder? Most humbly, we present words which might reach from our hearts into His, which longs for love responsive.

We recall the words which first changed our lives: "For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God, nevertheless empties Himself, taking the form of a slave, coming to be in the likeness of humanity, and, being found in fashion as a human, He humbles Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

"Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2:5-11).

Donald Fielding

FAITH HAMPERED BY THE FLESH

THE closing verses of 1 Samuel 13 provide a very important detail for the setting of chapter 14. "No artificer in iron was found in all the land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, 'Otherwise the Hebrews might make swords or spears.' So all Israel would go down to the Philistines, each man to get his plowshare honed, also his mattock, his hatchet, and his scythe" (1 Sam.13:19-20). Israel was virtually weaponless. Some commentators suggest the passage literally means that only Saul and Jonathan possessed full suits of armor, while the rest of the Israelite force would have had only single implements for warfare. Whatever the case may have been, it is certain that they were ill-equipped to battle a formidable foe. This serves to remind us that, in the flesh, we are helpless against the stratagems of the Adversary. The panoply of God is a necessity of the believer today when the fiery arrows of discouragement, self-centeredness and the like are threatening our joy and peace in the Lord.

The 14th chapter of 1 Samuel sets before us a sharp contrast between Jonathan and Saul. Jonathan was motivated and shielded by faith, while Saul was only motivated by what he could perceive with his senses. In later passages conversations between Saul and Jonathan show that Saul intended for Jonathan to be his successor to the throne (e.g. 1 Sam.20:30,31). Perhaps Jonathan, aware of his father's plans, suspected Saul would not allow him to undertake what would surely appear to be foolish chances. Whatever the case, Jonathan moved on a plan of action without his father's knowledge or consent.

FROM THORN TO SHINING

Jonathan and his gear-bearer passed over the wadi to the ascent to the camp of the Philistines, while Saul stayed near Gibeah, under the pomegranate tree (1 Sam.14:1-3). Jonathan's words to his gear-bearer verify his true motive in the situation, ". . . let us pass over to the detachment of those *uncircumcised*" (14:6). Jonathan saw the Philistines in their relationship to God. They had been condemned, and were to be driven out of the land. They were the enemies of God's people. They were the oppressors. And to this he added an artless and exemplary statement of his faith, "Perhaps Yahweh shall act for us, for there is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few" (v.6).

The setting (14:4,5) is very interesting and significant. A wadi separates Geba on the south and Michmash on the north. On each side of the wadi is a cliff, a face of rock, which could be scaled by young, athletic men. The northern rock face would reflect the sun, while the southern face would be shaded. This helps to explain why the crags received their names. The northern rock was named *Bozez* which means *shining,* and the southern was named *Seneh,* or *thorn,* probably from its smooth surface and shape. *Shining* carries with it the idea of *glory,* while *thorn* bears the idea of a *curse.* Israel was camped in the area of the shadow and curse, their priest was of the family of Ichabod (*the glory is departed,* v.3), and their glory lay in crossing over and scaling the heights to *Michmash* (which means a *treasure* or something precious *laid up in store*). But the flesh cannot see the venture as being even remotely feasible.

Jonathan exposed himself to the Philistines, and, believing God was with him, he crawled up the face of the rock on his hands and feet. Jonathan was completely vulnerable at this time (14:11-13). A rock, rolled over the edge, would probably have sent him to his death. But no place

is better than the center of God's will, even if it endangers our life. As they had planned with Samson, the Philistines intended to make sport of Jonathan, but they were soon turned back by his attack. And in a small place, covering about a half acre of ground (v.14), God used Jonathan and his gear-bearer to start an overthrow that spread to "every city in the hill country of Ephraim" (v.23). God chooses the weak things to disgrace the strong, "that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight" (*cf* 1 Cor.1:26-29).

SAUL'S ERRATIC BEHAVIOR

Notice the differences between Saul's approach to service and Jonathan's. Jonathan moved on a course of action which he believed to be consonant with God's will. After reaching a point of uncertainty, he looked for confirmation that he was doing the right thing, before proceeding. He was not presumptuous, thinking that he possessed the insight to know God's will in every situation. He found this confirmation in the response of the Philistines, something over which he had no control.

Saul, on the other hand, was not attuned to God's will and purpose. He was the designated leader of Israel against the Philistines, but he waited under the pomegranate tree for something to happen. When the disturbance and trembling of the Philistine camp began, he determined to consult God through the priest. But the clamor became so great that he stayed the priest, deciding, evidently, that there was either no need to consult God, or there was not time for consulting God (1 Sam.14:16-19).

How ironic it is then, that Saul deferred to take the time to seek God's guidance, yet took sufficient time to invoke a curse upon anyone who tasted nourishment before the evening, "before I am avenged on my enemies" (v.24). He would later find that whatever time was saved by not consulting God was more than lost when he was driven to con-

sult God concerning his own actions (1 Sam.14:36-46). And not only did Saul lose time by not consulting God at the outset, but he may also have traded victory over the enemy for victory in a single battle. No time is better spent than in seeking God's face.

Jonathan saw the Philistines as the *uncircumcised* enemies of God and God's people. And he saw the outcome of battle as issuing from God. Saul saw the Philistines as his personal enemies, and he sought his own vengeance upon them. Furthermore, his invocation of the curse upon anyone who ate before the evening restricted the strength and endurance of the soldiers to what they currently possessed. The weakness of the flesh was not acknowledged. The battle was to be won in their own strength apart from any refreshment or help. This is a common error of the flesh. It desires to win the battle in its own strength, so that it can glory in the victory.

A TASTE OF HONEY

Jonathan was free to live and act and rejoice in whatever transpired. He was on a mission of devoted service and love. He did not know what was going to happen. *Perhaps* Yahweh would act for them (14:6). Jonathan was not under any pressure—from himself or others—to achieve any certain degree of success. "There is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few" (14:6). Jonathan was not battling his enemies, but Yahweh's enemies. Jonathan was not trying to prove or show anything. He was simply seeking to serve God by helping God's people.

On the other hand, Saul was under a great stress, and most of it was self-imposed. 1 Samuel abounds with examples of Saul's attentiveness to the whims of the people. His worst disobediences were decisions to satisfy the crowd. He tried to impress the people with his sincerity and the importance of his office by invoking an oath upon the

people which did nothing but proclaim that *Saul hates the Philistines.* That oath, which is first described as Saul's "great error" (v.24), progressed to become the sin of many: "Behold, the people are sinning against Yahweh by eating [meat] with the blood . . ." (v.33).

How astoundingly different were this father and son in their service to God! And because Jonathan's ear had not listened to the voice that commanded all to be done in the strength of the flesh, he was free, in his service, to taste sweet and refreshing satisfaction. He tasted the honey God supplies to artless and faithful servants. His strength was renewed, while the strength of those around him was exhausted. His eyes lighted up with vigor and power, while others grew faint (14:27-29).

GLORYING IN INFIRMITIES

This experience of Jonathan is very suggestive of many passages written by the apostle Paul. We will focus on one. In 2 Corinthians 11 and 12, Paul relates that he came through many trials—beatings, shipwreck, hunger, robbers, cold and nakedness—yet all these things were minor in comparison to the revelations that were given to him. These phenomenal revelations were something to glory in, but Paul said this, "With the greatest relish, then, will I rather be glorying in my infirmities, that the power of Christ should be tabernacling over me. Wherefore I delight in infirmities, in outrages, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for, whenever I may be weak, then I am powerful" (2 Cor.12:9,10). "Yet those stretching toward Yahweh will vary their vigor, and they shall ascend on pinions as vultures. They shall run, and not be weary. They shall go, and not faint" (Isa.40:31).

Jonathan was giving his all in artless simplicity. When he became exhausted, God provided an abundant supply of refreshment—refreshment which those around him

avoided. Saul was still busy serving laws and keeping order and finding someone to blame. Paul left Saul behind. He deemed all the things Saul valued to be refuse, and instead he pursued the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus. Serving the flesh ends in sin. Stepping out in faith promises an invigorating taste of honey.

J. Philip Scranton

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Concordant Version of 1 Samuel 13:19–14:52

19 +**No**[t] **artificer** [7]in **iron**[0] **was** [l]**found in all** the **land of Israel,** [t]**because** the **Philistines had said, Otherwise the Hebrews** might [ld]**make swords or spears.** 20 +**So all Israel** would go [l]**down** [7]**to**[s] **the Philistines,** each **man to** get **`his plowshare honed¯, +also `his mattock,** + **`his hatchet, and `his** [7]**scythe~.** 21 + **·Tool-sharpening** [b]**cost** a **pim for plowshares and for mattocks, and** › a **third of** [7]a **shekel~ ~for whetting¯~** › **the hatchets and for** [st]**setting up¯ the goad-points.** 22 +**Thus it came** to **be** [i]**on** the **day of** the **battle of** [7]**Michmash**[0] +**that no**[t] **sword** +**or spear was found in** the **hand of any of the people who** were `with **Saul and `Jonathan; +only** › **Saul and** › **his son Jonathan** [l]**kept hold of** them.

23 +**Now** a **detachment of Philistines** had marched [l]**forth to** the **pass of Michmash.**

14 +**Then it** [lb]**came** about ·one **day** +**that Jonathan son of Saul** [l]**said to** ·his **lad, his** [all]**gear-bearer**[l], Do [go]**come,** + **let us** [l]**cross** over **to** the **detachment of** the **Philistines who** are [f]**over** on **that** [p]**side.** +**Yet he** did **not tell** › **his father.** 2 +**As** for **Saul,** he was [sit]**staying** [i]**at the outmost** part **of Gibeah under the pomegranate** tree [w] [i]**by** the **~threshing-site~.** + **With him** was ·a [wi]**force** [w]**of** [as]**about 600 men,** 3 +**also Ahijah** who was **wearing** an **ephod;** he was a **son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas son of Eli, Yah-**

weh's priest *i***at Shiloh.** +**As** for **the** *wi***force, no***t* one **knew that Jonathan had gone.**

4 + **Between the passages** by **which Jonathan sought to cross over** to the **detachment of** the **Philistines,** there was 'a **tooth**like **crag** *f***on this** *f p***side, and** 'another **tooth**like **crag** *f***on that** *f p***side;** + the **name of the one** was **Bozez, and** the **name of the other** was **Seneh.** 5 **The one** 'tooth was a **stanchion** *f***on** the **north opposite Michmash, and the other** *f***on** the **south** was **opposite Geba.**

6 + **Jonathan** |**said to** 'his **lad, his** *all***gear-bearer**|, Do *go***come,** + **let us** |**cross** over **to the detachment of** 'those **uncircumcised. Perhaps Yahweh shall** *d***act for us, for** there **is no restraint to Yahweh to save** *i***by many or** *i***by few.** 7 + **His** *all***gear-bearer**| *sa***replied to him, Do all, whatever** is **in your heart,** ›**what you intend** to do! *bd***For I** am **with you;** *7***my heart***0* is **like your heart!** 8 + **Jonathan** *sa***continued,** *bd***Here we** are **crossing** over **to** 'those **men** +**where we expose** ourselves **to them.** 9 **If they** |**say thus to us,** Stand **still until we** *c***make contact**– ›**with you,** +**then we** must **stay** *u***where we** are, **and we should not** go on **up to them.** 10 +**Yet if they** |**say thus** *7***to us***0*, Come **up** *7***to**~*s* **us,** +**then we** must go **up, for Yahweh has given them** into **our hand.** + **That** shall be **the sign for us.**

11 +**So both of them** |**exposed** themselves **to** the **Philistine detachment; and** the **Philistines** |**said,** *bd***Here** the **Hebrews** are coming **forth from the holes where they had hidden** themselves. 12 + The **men of the detachment** |**responded** `to **Jonathan and** `**his** *all***gear-bearer**|, + |**saying,** Come **up to us, and we shall** *c***let** `**you know** something. +**Then Jonathan** |**said to his** *all***gear-bearer**|, Come **up after me, for Yahweh has given them** into the **hand of Israel!** 13 **And Jonathan** crawled |**up on his hands and on his feet,** +**with his** *all***gear-bearer**| *af***behind him.** + The Philistines |**fell before Jonathan** *7*+**when he** |**smote them***0*; **and his** *all***gear-bearer**| was *m***putting** them to **death**| *af***behind him.** 14 + This |*b***was**

the first ˙smiting [w]**when Jonathan and his** [all]**gear-bearer**ˡ **smote** [as]**about twenty men** within [as]**about half** the **plowing line** in an **acre of field.**

15 ⁺**Then** a **trembling** [b]**occurred in** the Philistine **camp, in** the **field and** ⁱ**among** ˙their **whole** [wi]**force; the detachment and the raiding contingent, they**ʹ [mr]**also trembled.** ⁺ **The earth was** ˡ**disturbed, and it** ˡ**became** ˃ a **trembling** from **Elohim.**

16 ⁺ ⁱ**At Gibeah of Benjamin, Saul's** ˙**watchmen**ˡ ˡ**saw** ⁺ [bd]**how the throng was dissolved and** ˡ**went** ⁷**hither**[cs] **and thither**˜. 17 ⁺**So Saul** ˡ**said to** the [wi]**soldiers who** were ˋwith **him,** [pr]**Now** [n]**muster** the forces **and see** [a]**who has gone** out **from** [wi] **us.** ⁺**So they** [n]**mustered** them, **and behold, Jonathan and his** [all]**gear-bearer**ˡ **were no**t there. 18 ⁺**Then Saul** ˡ**said to Ahijah,** Do [c]**bring close** ⁷**the ephod! For he**ʹ **wore the ephod**˜ ⁱ**on** ˙**that day** ⁷**before**˜ the **sons of Israel.** 19 ⁺**Now it** [b]**came** about, [fr]**while Saul spoke to the priest,** ⁺**that the clamor** [w] **in** the **Philistine camp** ⁺ ˡ**went** on **and** [go]**became**˜ [mn]**greater.** ⁺**So Saul** ˡ**said to the priest, Gather** in **your hand!**

20 ⁺**Now Saul and the whole** [wi]**force** [w] ˋwith **him were** ˡ**convoked.** ⁺**Then they** ˡ**set** out [fr]**for** ˙a **fight;** ⁺**yet behold,** there [b]**was** the **sword of** each **man** ⁱ**against his associate,** their **discomfiture** being **exceedingly great.** 21 **And** ˙those **Hebrews who had** [b]**been** ˃**with** the **Philistines heretofore** and **had** come **up with them into the camp,** ⁷**turned** back˜[c]; ⁺ **they** [mr]**too** ˃ **came** to **be**˜ **with Israel,** [w] **with Saul and Jonathan.** 22 ⁺**When all** the **men of Israel,** ˋwho were **hiding** themselves **in** the **hill** country **of Ephraim, heard that** the **Philistines had fled,** ⁺**then they**ʹ [mr]**too** ˡ**followed** hard **after them in** the **fighting.** 23 ⁺**Thus Yahweh** ˡ**saved** ˋ**Israel** ⁱ**on** ˙**that day.** ⁺**As for the fighting, it passed** ˋbeyond **Beth-aven.** 7+ **All the people,** [as]**about 10,000 men,** [b]**were with Saul; and the fighting** [b]**was scattered**ˡ into **every city in** the **hill** country **of Ephraim.**

24 +Yet Saul erred in a great error[0] [i]on ˙that day, +when
Saul ˡinvoked `the people, ˃ saying⁻, Cursedˡ be the man
who ˡeats nourishment [fr]before the evening, +before I
am avenged [f]on my enemiesˡ. +So none of the [wi]soldiers
tasted nourishment. 25 +Now all those of the land would
come into a wildwood +when there [lb]was honey on the
surface of the field. 26 +When the [wi]soldiers ˡcame to the
wildwood, + behold, [7]its bees~ ~had [go]left~! +But no one
[c]let his hand overtakeˡ to his mouth, for the [wi]soldiers
feared `the oath.

27 +As for Jonathan, he had not heard his father [i] adjure⁻
`the [wi]force. +So he ˡstretched out `the end of the staff [w] in
his hand and ˡdipped `it into the wildwood honey. +When
he ˡbrought his hand back to his mouth, + his eyes were
lighting up. 28 +At this a man [f]of the [wi]force ˡresponded and
ˡsaid, Your father adjured, yea adjured⁻ `the [wi]force, ˃ say-
ing⁻, Cursedˡ be the man who ˡeats nourishment today.
And so the [wi]soldiers are ˡfaint. 29 + Jonathan [lsa]replied, My
father has brought trouble `on the land. See [pr]now [t]how
my eyes had lit up [t]when I tasted a little of ˙this honey.
30 How much more so the [wi]soldiers; [t] O that they would
have eaten, yea eaten⁻ today [f]of the loot of their enemiesˡ
[w]when they found it! For now the smiting [i]among the Phi-
listines [7]would have been [mn]greater~[Q].

31 + They ˡsmote [i] the Philistines [i] ˙that day from Mich-
mash to[d] Aijalon; +yet the [wi]soldiers were exceedingly
ˡfaint. 32 +So the [wi]soldiers ˡpounced ˃on the loot; + they
ˡtook small cattle, + oxen and bull calves of the herd and
ˡslew them on[d] the earth, and the [wi]soldiers ˡate them [on]with
the blood. 33 +When they ˡtold ˃ Saul, ˃ saying⁻, Behold,
the people are sinning ˃against Yahweh ˃by eating⁻ [on]with
the blood, + he [lsa]replied, Treacherous are you! Roll a
large stone [7]here~ to me! 34 And Saul [lsa]ordered, Scat-
ter [i]among the people and ⁻[sa]tell ˃ them, Let each man
[c]bring his bull close to me, and each man his flockling,

and ¯slay them ⁱ**on this** stone, **and** then ¯**eat.** ⁺ **You should not sin** ›**against Yahweh** ›**by eating¯** ›**with the blood.** ⁺**So all the people** ᶜ**brought** ˡ**close,** each **man** ⁷ʷ**whatever~** was **in his hand** ᵗthat **night, and they** ˡ**slew** it **there.** 35 ⁺**Thus Saul** ˡ**built** an **altar for Yahweh;** ᵗwith **it he started** › **altar building¯ for Yahweh.**

36 ⁺ **Saul** ˡ**said, Let us** go ˡ**down after** the **Philistines** by **night and let us** ˡ**plunder** ⁱ**among them until the morning light; and let us not** ᶜ**let one** ⁱ**of them** ˡ**remain.** The soldiers ˡˢᵃ**replied, Do** ᵃˡˡ**whatever** is ᵗ**good in your eyes.** ⁺**But the priest** ˡ**said, Let us** draw ˡ**near here to the** One, **Elohim.** 37 ⁺**So Saul** ˡ**asked** ⁱ **Elohim, Shall I** go **down after** the **Philistines? Shall You give them in**to the **hand of Israel?** ⁺**Yet He** did **not answer him** ⁱ**on** ᵗthat **day.** 38 ⁺**Then Saul** ˡ**said,** Come **close here, all** you **corner**stones **of the** ʷⁱ**force, and know and see whereby** ᵗ**this** ᵗ**sin has** ᵇ**come** about **today.** 39 **For** as **Yahweh lives** ᵗWho ᶜ**brings salvation**ˡ ᵗ**to Israel,** ᵗ**even if** it **was** ⁱ**by him, my son Jonathan,** ᵗ **he shall** be put to **death,** yea **death¯.** ⁺**Yet no** one ᶠ**of all the** ʷⁱ**soldiers** was **responding** to **him.** 40 ⁺**Then he** ˡ**said to all** ⁷the **men of**⁰ **Israel, You´ shall** ᵇ**stay** ›**on one** ᵖ**side, and I and my son Jonathan, we shall** ᵇ**stay** ›**on** the **other** ᵖ**side.** ⁺ **The** ʷⁱ**soldiers** ˡˢᵃ**replied to Saul, Do** ᵗwhat seems **good in your eyes.** 41 **Saul** ⁺**then** ˡ**said to Yahweh Elohim of Israel,** ⁷**Why have You not answered** ᵗ**Your servant today? If** ᵗ**this** ᵗ**depravity is in me or in my son Jonathan, Yahweh Elohim of Israel,** do **grant** the lot **Urim.** ⁺**Yet if it is in Your people Israel,**⁰ do **grant** the lot **Thummim.** ⁺**Thus Jonathan and Saul were** ˡ**selected, and the** ʷⁱ**soldiers went** forth cleared. 42 ⁺**Then Saul** ˡ**said, Cast** the lots **between me and** ᵇᵗ **my son Jonathan.** ⁺**Thus Jonathan was** ˡ**selected.**

43 ⁺**Now Saul** ˡ**said to Jonathan,** Do **tell** › **me what you have done.** ⁺**So Jonathan** ˡ**told** › **him** ⁺ ˡ**saying, I tasted,** yea **tasted¯** a **little honey** ⁱ**with** the **end of the staff** ʷ**that** was **in my hand.** ᵇᵈ**Here I** am, **let me die.** 44 ⁺ **Saul** ˡˢᵃ**re-**

plied, Thus may Elohim do [7]**to me**[cs] **and thus** [l]**add** to it. **You shall** [t]**surely die,** yea **die**⁻ [7]**today~.** 45 [+]**But the** [wi]**soldiers** [l]**said to Saul, Should Jonathan die** [7]**today**[0] **who has** [d]**brought** [t]**this** [t]**great victory** [i]**to Israel? Far be it,** as **Yahweh lives,** [if]**that** [f]**even** a **hair from his head should fall** to[d] the **earth, for he has** [d]**acted with Elohim** [t]**this** [t]**day.** [+]**Thus the** [wi]**force** [l]**ransomed** `**Jonathan, and he** did **not die.** 46 [+] **Saul** gave [l]**up**[f] the [af]**pursuit** of the **Philistines, and** the **Philistines went** back **to their** own [n]**place.**

47 [+]**After Saul had seized the kingship over Israel,** [+] **he** [l]**fought** [i]**with all his enemies**[l] **round about,** [i]**with Moab and** [i]**with** the **sons of Ammon,** [+] [i]**with Edom and** [i]**with** the [7]**king~**Q **of Zobah, and** [i]**with** the **Philistines; and** [i] **wherever he turned toward** them, **he was** [7]**victorious~.** 48 [+] **He** [ld]**acted valiantly and** also [l]**smote** `**Amalek;** [+]**thus he** [l]**rescued** `**Israel from** the **hand of its** [7]**robbers**[l]~Q.

49 [+] **Saul's sons** [lb]**were: Jonathan,** [+] **Ishvi, and Malchishua.** [+]**As** for the **names of his two daughters,** the **name of the firstborn** was **Merab, and** the **name of the younger** one was **Michal.** 50 [+] The **name of Saul's wife** was **Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz; and** the **name of** the **chief of his** militia **host** was **Abner son of Saul's uncle Ner.** 51 [+] **Kish, Saul's father, and Ner, Abner's father,** were **sons of Abiel.**

52 [+] **The war** [on]**against** the **Philistines** [lb]**was unyielding all** the **days of Saul.** [+]**When Saul saw any masterful man** [+]**or any son of valor,** [+] **he** would [l]**add him to his** host.

13:20 7-~ **scythe:** Hb **plowshare.**
14:2 ~~~ **threshing-site:** Hb **Migron,** LXX **Magdon.**
14:18 7-~ `**the ephod! For he´ wore the ephod:** Hb **the coffer of Elohim, for the coffer of Elohim** [b]**was.**
14:26 7-~ **its bees:** Hb **honey.** ~~~ **had** [s]**left:** MT [s]**flowing of.**
14:30 7-~Q **would have been** [m]**greater:** Hb **was not great.**
14:33 7-~ **here:** Hb **today.**
14:34 7-~ [w]**whatever:** Hb **his bull.**
14:41 7-0 The scribe's eye skipped from "**Yahweh Elohim of Israel**" to the words after "**Your people Israel,**" thus omitting the lines preserved by LXX.
14:44 7-~ **today:** Hb **Jonathan.**
14:47 7-~Q **king:** Hb **kings.** 7-~ [l]**victorious:** Hb [l]**condemned.**

YET EVIL CAME

THE THIRD and final section of Job's concluding speech is found in chapters 29 through 31 and corresponds in structure with chapter 3. Where the suffering Job had first expressed his misery by indulging himself in wishing he had not been born, he now underlines the depths of his misery by its contrast with his former position of prosperity and honor. The use of first person pronouns, *I* and *my* and *me* is frequent. Only a short time ago "*I* expected good, yet evil came" (Job 30:26).

It is not that Job leaves God out of his thoughts. On the contrary, chapter 29 begins with the testimony that it was Eloah Who had guarded him and watched over his tent (29:2-4). But this was still seen in reference to Job's own upright behavior in the fear of God (Job 28:28). And it was only as Job was blessed that he could say "He Who-Suffices was still with me" (v.5).

The references to Deity in 29:2-5 are all connected with Job's former happiness and greatness among mankind, and starting with verse 6, direct references to God are absent until well into chapter 30. Job speaks of "my goings" (v.6) and "my seat in the square" (v.7). He recalls how youth and the hoary headed stood in awe of him and honored him and called him happy (8-11).

Because Job feared Yahweh he led a model life which shaped him in moral discipline and maturity so that others could rely on him for aid and justice and counsel (29:12-17). This in turn led Job to expect a long life in comfort and safety (18-20).

Concordant Version of Job 29–31

29 +**Then Job** ˡ**continued** to **lift**⁻ up **his discourse,** +
ˡ**saying:**
2 [a]**O** ˡ[g]**that I** were **as** in [pc]**former months,**
As in the **days** when **He, Eloah was guarding me,**
3 +**When He** caused **His lamp** to **irradiate**⁻
over my head,
And ˃**by His light I** ˡ**went** through the **darkness,**
4 **Just as I** [b]**was in** the **days of my autumn,**
[i]**When** the **deliberation of Eloah**
watched **over my tent,**
5 [i]**When** He **Who-Suffices** was [fr]**still with me,**
And **my lads** were **around me,**
6 [i]**When my goings** were **washed**⁻ **in clotted cream,**
And the **rock** ˡ**poured** out [wi]**for me rillets of oil.**
7 [i]**When I** went **forth**⁻ to the **gate**
standing **over** the **town**
And ˡ**prepared my seat in** the **square,**
8 The **youths would see me and hide** themselves,
+**While** the **hoary headed would rise** and **stand.**
9 The **chiefs would restrain** [i] their **declarations**
And ˡ**place** the **palm** ˃**over their mouth;**
10 The **voices of** the **noblemen were hidden** back,
And their tongue would cling to their palate.
11 [t]**When** the **ear heard,** + **it** [m]**called me** ˡ**happy,**
And when the **eye saw,** + **it** ˡ**testified** in **my** favor.
12 **For I made** a way of ˡ**escape**
for the **humble** who **implored**ˡ,
And the **orphan and him** who ˃**had no**[t] **helper**ˡ.
13 The **blessing of** the one **perishing** ˡ**came on me,**
And I caused the **heart of** the **widow** to **be** ˡ**jubilant.**
14 **I put on righteousness, and it** ˡ**clothed me;**
My right **judgment** was **like** a **robe and** a **turban.**
15 **I became eyes to** the **blind,**
And feet to the **lame** was **I.**

Job had been a great and good man, commanding respect and well deserving of the honor he received. "Noblemen hearkened to me" (29:21). No one even wanted to alter his wise pronouncements which they waited for with anticipation (22,23). "I would uplift them" (24) and "I would choose the way for them . . . like a king among his troops" (25).

But even though Job now leaves out direct references to Deity, he has not forgotten Him. Hovering over these recollections of his former times of greatness and prosperity is the haunting mystery of its removal and replacement by evil in light of the existence and reality of God. Chapter 29 makes the challenge of Job 2:10 all that more pressing. Should one who fears Yahweh and lives uprightly receive only good from God and not at all receive evil? The good is fully recalled in Job 29, and this is traced directly to the "deliberation of Eloah" when He was "still with" Job as the One Who-Suffices (29:4,5). But the one who would comfort others was cast down to unprecedented depths. The one who would choose the way for others to go, sat in uncertainty and aching anxiety.

YET NOW

Job's longing all along is for assurance that Eloah is One Who is still with him even in afflictions that come *in spite of* a morally upright life in the fear of God. Surely this evil is in accord with the divine purpose, so much so that it must ultimately be traced to God Who alone could bring it all to a wise and good consummation.

"Yet now" (Job 30:1) every experience and every perceptible bit of evidence, as recounted in chapter 30, work against this assurance. Not only has Job lost the respect of noble and honest people, he is made sport of by lawless outcasts of society (30:1-10). His three co-equals in discipline and rule have found Job guilty of secret crimes and sentenced him to penal payments of confession, repentance

16 **I** was **father to** the **needy** ones,
And the **cause of** him **I knew not,**
I would [l]**investigate it.**
17 + **I** would [l]**break** the **fangs of** the **iniquitous**
And would [l]**fling** the **prey from his teeth.**
18 **And** so **I** would [l]**say** ~**with**in **my**self~:
I shall breathe my **last** [7]in **old** age~,
And I shall multiply my **days like sand;**
19 **My root** is **open**[l] **to** the **water,**
And the **night mist** [l]**lodges** [i]**on my harvest** branch;
20 **My glory** will keep **new with**in **me,**
And my bow shall rejuvenate in my hand.
21 Noblemen **hearkened to me, and they waited;**
+ **They** would **stand** [l]**still for my counsel.**
22 **After my speech they** would **not** [l]**alter** it,
And my declaration dropped gently **on them.**
23 + **They waited for me as** for **rain,**
And they gaped with **their mouth**
as **for** the **latter rain.**
24 **I** would [l]**uplift** › **them** when **they were not** [l]**sure,**
And the **light of my countenance**
they would **not** [l]**cast** down.
25 **I** would [l]**choose** the **way** for **them**
and would [l]**sit** as their **head,**
And I would [l]**tabernacle like** a **king**
[i]**among** his **troops,**
Just as one who [l]**comforts mourners.**

30 +**Yet now they** make **sport** [on]**of me,**
Men **junior** [f]**to me** ›**in days,**
Whose fathers I would have rejected
To set with the **dogs of my flock.**
2 **Even** the **vigor of their hands,** › **what** use was it **to me?**
~Their strength~ had ~entirely~ perished.

29:18 ~~~ **within myself . . . 7**~~ **in old age:** Hb **within my nest.**

and reform. But also, those whose fathers Job "would have rejected to set with the dogs of his flock," (30:1) who were driven out from society, (v.5) who were "sons of decadence" (v.8) now mocked him in his misery. "They abhor me; they keep far from me, yet they do not keep back their spitting from my face," (30:10) which conveys a picture of worthless individuals darting forward to insult him and immediately darting back to a safe distance, like dogs in a pack.

HE IS HUMBLING ME

Of all the resounding testimony of chapter 30, Job's words in verse 11a, expanded in verses 17 through 23, most shock and sober us. This has consistently been the direction of Job's thoughts. He would associate the evil he is experiencing with divine responsibility and thus with divine purpose. The pronoun *I* in the presence of affliction must be related to the pronoun *He*. It is *He*, Eloah, Who "has unloosed my cord [of sustained prosperity] and is humbling me."

To the "vile brood" this is motivation for adding to Job's woe, and there is no restraint put upon their attacks (12-14). God had revealed Himself to Job before as a Protector of those who feared Him and One Who restrained wicked men. What is He revealing of Himself now in this astounding reversal of experience?

The lowest members of society who now make Job their jest suffered far less from being driven out from the comforts of life than Job suffers now. Those who lived among the wilderness shrubs, in craters of the wadis found in Job their inferior and their source of mocking declarations (30:3-9). Decadent things have turned against Job, and His soul, all his pleasure and comfort, is poured out upon him in pain and humiliation (30:15,16).

In 30:17-19 Job refers to Deity by the pronoun *He*. What is most essential here is not what others say and do

3 **In lack and in stark starvation**
'They were **gnawing** on **arid** ground,
Yesternight's ruination and wasteness.
4 'They were **plucking** the **orach** *on*among the **shrubs,**
And the **root of** the **broom** bush was **their bread.**
5 **From society they were** 'driven out;
Men 'shouted *on*after **them as** after a **thief.**
6 **In** the **craters of** the **wadis** they › **tabernacled**⁻,
In **holes of dirt and caverns.**
7 *bt*Among the **shrubs they** 'brayed;
Under the **prickly acanthus**
they were 'huddled together.
8 **Sons of decadence, even sons** of those
without a **name,**
They ~were cut off~ **from the land.**
9 **And now I have become their jest,**
And I 'b**continue** ›**as** a mocking **declaration** of **theirs.**
10 **They abhor me; they** keep **far from me,**
+**Yet they** do **not keep back**
their **spitting from my face.**
11 Now **that He has unloosed my cord**
and is humbling me,
+ **They have** *m***let** the restraining **bridle go**
*f***in my presence.**
12 **On** the **right** hand the vile **brood** 'rise up;
They have sent forth **my feet,**
And they 'heap up **their paths of calamity**
*on***against me.**
13 **They have torn up my** own **track;**
They *c***add** 'on **to my woe;**
No*t* one is ~**restraining**~ › **them.**
14 **As** through a **wide breach they** 'arrive;

30:2 ~~~ **Their strength:** Hb **On them;** ~~~ **entirely:** Hb **maturity.**
30:8 ~~~ **were cut** off: Hb **were** made **sore.**
30:13 ~~~ **restraining:** Hb **helping.**

to the increase of Job's sufferings, but what *He* is doing in not restraining the wicked and in multiplying the gnawing pain and insult, the confining misery and horror of Job's treatment, so that Job becomes like dirt and ashes. These are powerful words indeed, and we can appreciate how they stirred and shocked the young man, Elihu, who will soon speak, starting with chapter 32.

But in the meantime, we who know Yahweh's declaration that Job spoke rightly (42:8), must find in Job's bold, and seemingly reckless charges concerning God something that will open Job's eyes to a real perception of the Deity (see again Job 42:5). What Job says concerning the One ultimately responsible for his gnawing pains and fierce sorrows will lead him to an appreciation of the goodness of God's operations that he could not have previously known. It is Job's endurance in continually erupting out of the traps of self-justification and despair into a focusing of his thoughts Godward, that is upright. Once again, in 30:20-23, Job is turned about in the right direction as he implores to God for His answer. Job's charges may not be correct in themselves, but his longing to hear from God is wholly right.

This Godward focusing of Job's thoughts is now made more direct and personal by the reference to Deity as "You." Here Job exposes the key to his complaint: "I implore to You, yet You do not answer me" (30:20). This seems to be more troubling to Job than the cruelty and assailing and his closeness to death which he also traces to Deity (21-23). When, in the past, those in misfortune implored to Job, he would lament for them with commiseration (24,25). Yet in pleading to God, Job expected good and waited for light, but still remains without sunshine and music, in gloom and lamentation (30:26-31).

In noting Job's frustration over the silence of God we are not finding a model for us in our experiences of evil.

They have rolled themselves forward
under the **ruinations.**
15 **Decadent** things **have turned** *on*against **me;**
My reputation is ˡ**pursued as** by the **wind,**
And my salvation has passed away **like** a **dense** haze.
16 **And now, my soul is** ˡ**poured out** upon **me;**
Days of humiliation are taking **hold** of **me.**
17 By **night He gouges out my bones** all *f* **over me,**
And my gnawing pains **never** ˡ**lie** still.
18 *i*With His *mn*great **vigor He** *7*ˡ**grabs**~*Q* **my clothing;**
He ˡ**belts me** about **like** the **collar of my tunic.**
19 **He has shot me** down into the **clay,**
So ⁺**that I am** made ˡ**comparable** *as*to **dirt and ashes.**
20 **I** ˡ**implore to You,** ⁺**yet You** do **not** ˡ**answer me;**
I stand up, ⁺**yet You** do *M*not*s* ˡ**consider** *i* **me.**
21 **You are** ˡ**turned** › **cruel** toward **me;**
*i*With the **staunchness of Your hand, You** ˡ**assail me.**
22 **You** ˡ**lift me** up into the **wind** and *c*make **me** ˡ**ride** on it,
And You ˡ**dissolve me** in the **tumult.**
23 *t* **I know** that **You are turning me back** to **death,**
⁺ To that **house appointed for all** the **living.**
24 **Yea** *7*I~ did **not** ˡ**put forth** my **hand**
~*i*against the **humble~,**
If in his misfortune he is **imploring to** *7*me~.
25 *if* **Would I not lament for** one in **hardship of days?**
My soul was always **sorry for** the **needy.**
26 *t*Indeed **I expected good,** ⁺**yet evil** ˡ**came,**
And I ˡ**waited for light,** ⁺**yet gloom** has ˡ**come.**
27 **My bowels, they boil and are never still;**
Days of humiliation confront me.
28 **I go** about in **somberness**ˡ **without sunshine;**
I rise up **in** the **assembly** and ˡ**implore.**
29 **I have become** a **brother to wild jackals,**

30:18 *7*~*Q* ˡ**grabs:** Hb ˡ**disguises.**
30:24 *7*~ **I:** Hb **he;** ~~~ *i*against the **humble:** Hb **rubbish** heap; *7*~ **me:** Hb **them.**

Job's association of his afflictions with God and the directing of his thoughts toward Him remain the ideal pattern for every believer. But God has revealed Himself to us in the gift of His Son, so that we are aware that He is operating all together for our good. In Paul's epistles we have received details of God's power and wisdom and concern (indeed, love) way beyond what Yahweh makes known to Job in chapters 38-41. This gives us assurance and joy in a perception of God that Job never yet has received.

Job wanted to know "what is the portion of Eloah from above, and the allotment of Him Who-Suffices from the heights" (31:2). In Romans we already find revelations of an allotment from God for us (Rom.8:17) who glory in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:2). And in Ephesians we are told of our lot cast in Christ as Head over all (Eph.1:10,11,18,23). What a wealth of revelation for our endurance and strengthening and joy and peace!

But in chapter 31 Job still knows God only as One Who can bring calamity and disaster upon sinful humanity (v.3) and Who sees all our acts and knows all our movements (v.4). Despite all his passionate imploring to know more from God about the experience of evil beyond its relationship to judgment, Job remains at the end of these long disputations at much the same level of understanding that he had at the beginning. The fear of God has not led Him to a reliance on God that comes with full confidence that He operates all things with design and purpose.

Job ends these speeches with a closing argument for the defense. If he has walked with hypocrisy (31:5), if he has turned aside from the right way (7), if he has committed crimes of lust and assault (8,9), then that would deserve humiliation and fire (10-12). If he has brought harm to others and rejected their pleas, then he could put forth no defense before El (13,14). He would have nothing to say.

But, in the fear of God (*cf* 31:23), Job has always viewed

And an **associate to** the **ostrich.**◊
30 **My skin, it blackens** and falls **from** *on* **me,**
And my bones burn **hot** *f*-**with** scorching **heat.**
31 + **My harp** *b*-**is** turned **to mourning,**
And my shepherd's pipe to the **sound of lamenting.**

31 I contracted a **covenant** ›**with my eyes**
+**So** *wt*-**how should I** wrongly |**consider** *on* a **virgin?**
2 +**Yet what** is the **portion of Eloah from above,**
And the **allotment of** Him **Who-Suffices**
from the **heights?**
3 Should **not calamity** be **for** the **iniquitous,**
And disaster for contrivers| **of lawlessness?**
4 Does **He´ not** |**see my ways**
And |**number all my steps?**
5 **If I have walked with hypocrisy,**
And my foot has |**hurried** *on*-**after deceit**
6 **(Let Him weigh me in** the **scales of justice,**
And let Eloah know my integrity),
7 **If my movement** has |**turned aside from the way,**
And my heart has *go*-**run after** what **my eyes** see,
And any **blemish clings** *i*-**to my palms,**
8 Then **let me** |**sow and another** |**eat,**
And may my output be |**rooted out.**
9 **If my heart has been enticed** *on*-**by** another's **wife,**
+**Or I have** waited in **ambush** *on*-**at my associate's portal,**
10 **May my wife grind** corn **for another,**
And may others crouch down upon **her.**
11 **For that** would be a **crime,**
And that would be **depravity**
calling for judiciary **mediators.**
12 **For that** would be a **fire** that |**devours unto Abaddon**
And |**roots out** *i* **all my yield.**
13 **If I** have |**rejected** the **plea of my servant**
and my maidservant

30:29 ostrich: lit., **daughters of ostrich.**

others as equally a creature of God's hand (15). He has treated the poor, the widow, the orphan and the needy with compassion and given genuine help (16-19). If he ever displayed anger toward those who received his aid without appreciation, then he would deserve punishment (20-22).

If Job has placed his confidence in gold (31:24) and found his joy in abundance (25), and if he has been enticed to secret idolatry, this would be a disavowal of El calling for judicial trial (26-28). If Job has rejoiced in the misfortune of those who hated him (but he has not done anything like that!), and if his guests have never complimented his treatment of them (he has always opened his door to the sojourner!), and if he has tried to conceal evidence of transgressions and acted cowardly (29-34)—but here the exhausted man breaks off his thought and summons all his remaining strength to gasp out his most pressing concerns: first to be heard, and then to hear from Him Who-Suffices (31:35). If an indictment can be made against him he would bear the document openly and face his accuser "like a nobleman" (31:35b-37).

It is his desire to hear from God that receives Job's mark, the representation of himself, his soul and heart. Yet still there is no answer to all his confusion and dismay over the evil, so like a curse from God, that has come upon him.

In the absence of a direct reply from God Job turns his thoughts in 31:38-40 to what God had already said in that ancient time when a curse was indeed laid upon Adam (Gen.3:17-19), employing a line concerning the ground crying out in connection with God's curse on Cain (Gen. 4:10,11). If Job's ground cries out against him for cheating and depriving another of his life, the curse of Cain might apply to Job. But that is not the case and cannot explain Job's affliction.

"The words of Job are finished" without resolution.

D.H.H.

[i]**When they** have brought an **indictment** [wi]**against me,**
14 [+]**Then what shall I do** [t]**when El** [l]**arises,**
And [t]**when He** [l]**visits, what shall I reply** to **Him?**
15 Did **not** He Who [d]**made**[l] **me in** the **belly**
[d]**make him** also,
So [+]**that** the same **One** [l]**prepared us** both **in** the **womb?**
16 **If I** have [l]**withheld** [f] the **desire of** the **poor**
And have [m]**caused** the **eyes of** the **widow** to [l][all]**fail,**
17 **And I** have [l]**eaten my morsel** [›]**by** myself **alone,**
So [+]**that** the **orphan** could **not eat** [f]**of it**
18 ([t]**Indeed from my youth he**[◊] **grew up** with **me**
as with a **father,**
And from the **belly of my mother I** have [l]**guided her**),[◊]
19 **If I** have [l]**seen** anyone **perishing from lack** of **clothing,**
And there **was no covering for** the **needy,**
20 **If his loins** did **not bless me,**
[+]**Since he was** [l]**warmed** [f]**with** the **fleece of my lambs,**
21 **If I have swung my hand** [on]**against** the **orphan**
[t]**Because I** [l]**saw my backing** was **in** the **gate,**
22 Then **may my shoulder fall** away
from the **shoulder blade,**
And may my arm be broken from the **clavicle.**
23 ([t]**Indeed I** [›]**have** an **awe** of **calamity** from **El,**
And I cannot [l][all]**endure** [f] **before His** majestic **bearing.**)
24 **If I have** [pl]**made gold my confidence,**
And I have said to certified gold: **My trust,**
25 **If I** have [l]**rejoiced that my estate** is **vast**
And that my hand has found [mn]**abundance,**
26 **If I** have [l]**4;**[see]**looked** at the sun**light** [t]**when it** [l]**irradiates,**
And the **moon** [go]**advancing** like a **precious** gem,
27 So [+]**that my heart was** [l]**enticed in secret,**
And my hand [l]**kissed** [›] **my mouth,**
28 **This** [mr]**also** would be **depravity**
calling for judiciary **mediation,**

31:18 he: i.e., the orphan; **her:** i.e., the widow.

For I then **would have disavowed** ›**El**[f] **above.**
29 **If I** have [l]**rejoiced in** the **misfortune**
of the one **hating me,**
And I have roused myself in joy
[t]**because evil had overtaken him**
30 (+**Yet I have not** [g]**allowed my** [pt]**mouth to sin**
›**By asking**– [i]**with** an **imprecation** against **his soul),**
31 **If** the [ad]**men of my tent have never said:**
[a]**Who** can be [lg]**found** who has **not been satisfied**[l]
[f]**with his meat?**◊
32 (The **sojourner** has **not** [l]**lodged in** the **street;**
I have [l]**opened my doors**◊ **to** the **traveler),**
33 **If I have covered** up **my transgression like Adam,**
›**By burying**– **my depravity in my lap,**
34 [t]**Because I was** [l]**terrified** of the **vast throng,**
And the **contempt of families caused me** [l]**dismay,**
And I kept [l]**still** and would **not** go [l]**forth** from the **portal—**
35 ([a]**O** [lg]**that I** ›**had** someone **hearing** › **me!**
[bd]**Here** is **my mark; may** He **Who-Suffices**
answer me!
+ Let a **man write** his **indictment** against **me** on a **scroll;**
36 **Assuredly, I** would [l]**bear it on my** [bk]**shoulder;**
I would [l]**wind** it as a tiered **crown** ›**upon me;**
37 **I** would [l]**tell him** the **tale of my steps;**
Like a **nobleman I** would [l]**approach him.)**
38 **If my ground** has [l]**cried out** [on]**against me,**
And its furrows have [l]**wept together** with it,
39 **If I have eaten** of **its vigor without** paying **silver,**
So +**that I have caused** the **soul of its headmen** to
expire,
40 Then **may** the **thistle** come **forth** [u]**instead of wheat,**
And nightshade [u]**instead of barley!**
The **words of Job are finished.**

31:31 meat: lit., **flesh.**
31:32 doors: dual in Hb.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 1997
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT

EDITORIAL

IT IS ONE THING to declare what is true with the mouth, and another thing to believe it in the heart. For Israel there must be both the avowal and the believing that Jesus is Lord and that God rouses Him from among the dead (Rom.10:8-13) in order for salvation to enter into their experience. It is a great step to speak the truth, a blessed gift of God. But it is often found that our words are contradictory because faith does not prosper along with the avowal of truth.

Hence among the Galatians were those who doubtless affirmed by their words the crucifixion of Christ but denied the significance of the cross (see p.251). It did not speak to them of the end of the flesh and its boasting (see p.242). Elihu (see p.281) affirmed that God was over all the habitance (Job 34:13), but he had trouble believing that God Himself was the Director (*cf* Job 36:22) of Job's sufferings.

However, for the generation of Israelites to whom Jesus ministered, there was little either of avowal of truth or of faith (see p.265). For the majority, their hearts were stoutened, lest they would hear and perceive (Matt.13:14,15). But the purpose of Jesus to save them from their sins will assuredly be realized.

So today, many do not even speak of God as the Creator and Director. And others who, like Elihu, declare that God truly is over all, obscure this truth with further claims about the human will and wickedness that imply God cannot fulfill His will and make His glories known to all. Indeed we often hear our brethren say that God has accomplished our salvation through the cross of Christ, and yet they also insist that there are requirements placed on us in order to complete this "accomplished" work. Faith has not kept up with the avowal.

May God grant us a growing faith that accords with our proclamation of His Word. D.H.H.

THE CRUCIFIXION OF THE WORLD

GOD has three distinct, yet parallel lines in carrying out His grand purpose of revealing Himself. One operates in the material, one in the temporal, and the other the spiritual sphere. One is concerned with the heavens and the earth, the second with the eons, the third with the *worlds.* These run parallel in space, time and spiritual operation. In these there are three major divisions, conforming with the three heavens and earths, or five minor divisions, corresponding to the five eons or worlds. The material changes are comparatively easy to grasp, and the temporal, the eons, are comparatively simple, but His spiritual operations are more difficult, yet they may be seen and apprehended best by their association with the corresponding earths and eons.

The material creation is by far the best example of order which our senses can perceive. The finest human fabrication cannot compare with the solar "system" or with the earth, even in its present state of disintegration. The Scriptures often use this system to illustrate the "world" of humanity, as when our Lord told His disciples, "I am the light of the world" (John.8:12). That is, apart from Him, mankind gropes in the dark, and does not really know what it is doing or whither it is going, or even why it exists.

KOSMOS

The essential meaning of the Greek word for *world,* is SYSTEM, order, or adornment. This is easily remembered by our English derivative *cosmetic,* a substance

used for human adornment. SYSTEM is its basic thought which is largely preserved in the scholarly name for the physical universe, the *cosmos,* which the dictionary explains as an orderly and harmonious system, contrasted with *chaos.* Indeed, the CV translates the verb *adorn.* Slaves are to *adorn* the teaching (Titus.2:10; 1 Tim.2:9). The walls of the new Jerusalem are to be *adorned* with precious stones (Rev.21:19). This should always be remembered when the word is used in a context which implies something good.

The Greek word for "world" may also be rendered "adornment" (1 Pet.3:3). There is an element of beauty in all orderly arrangement, so that the "world," as created, was a beautiful as well as an efficient implement for the revelation of God in the beginning, and will be in the consummation. It may be applied to the constitution of human society, especially before sin entered, and when the relations of Adam and Eve to the lower creatures, to each other, and to Elohim were still unspoiled. And it will also apply, with fuller force, to the future, when all creatures will be in harmony with the Father.

THE WORLD AND THE SAINTS

The fact that the present world is subject to the just verdict of God (Rom.3:19), a criminal as it were ready for trial and sentence, and enemy of the great Judge, while the believer has been justified from all sin and transgression, and is reconciled with God, constitutes the great gulf between the called and the world. But it is not easy to realize how great this chasm is, in practice, and very few, if any, of us are able to walk in fullest recognition of His truth. It may help us, therefore to consider the contrasts as we find them in the case of God's Son, when He was in the world, as revealed in John's account, and then those which apply directly to us, as presented in Paul's epistles.

THE SON AND THE WORLD

The key to the character of the world of mankind lies in its relation to God through His Son. The world came into being through Him, yet, when He became flesh and was in the world, it failed to recognize Him. Even His own nation rejected Him, except the little band who believed on Him and accepted Him, who were especially empowered for this privilege by God. Expressed by means of an illuminating figure of speech the world of mankind had reverted to a chaos like the physical earth at the disruption (Gen.1:2). They were in darkness, and He came as a light. But they did not like the light, but loved the darkness, because their deeds were evil (John 1:8-12).

In such a case the just course would be to judge the world, and deal with men according to their deserts. Our Lord had the power and the right. He could have called more then twelve legions of messengers to enforce His just sentence (Matt.26:53), at anytime. Even the might of Rome could not have withstood His verdicts. But He did not, at that time, seek to assert His power, or to set right the evils of the world. Indeed, the machinations of the Adversary, and the world which was under his influence, were the essential background for the display of His highest and most precious attributes, His grace and love. Apart from His presence we would never have known the wickedness of the world, or the goodness and grace of God. We know so little of the evil of the world today because we offer so little contrast to it.

THE LAMB OF GOD

When John the baptist introduced Jesus to Israel, He did not announce Him as the grand King for Whom Israel was looking and longing, but as the great Sacrifice, the Lamb of God, Who will take away the sin, not merely of Israel, but of the whole *world.* In other words, His atti-

tude toward the world was an expression of God's *sacrificial love,* rather than one of condemnation. Judgment must come, in the future kingdom, but not during His sojourn among them, in His humiliation.

THE HATRED OF THE WORLD

The world did not fully vent its hatred of God's Son until His death upon the accursed stake. Then the two principal divisions of world power, the ecclesiastical and the political, joined in condemning Him, the priests because He exposed their hypocrisy and the political powers because He threatened their authority. Between them both He seemed to sink to the lowest level of human weakness and shame. In reality, however He offered the Sacrifice that settled for all sin, and laid the foundation for all future power and glory. Then it was that the world exposed its true character. It condemned itself when it crucified the Lord of glory. Throughout this eon it is worthy of the fate it dealt out to the Son of God. Let us give it this shameful place in our estimation.

The hatred of the world culminated in the crucifixion of Christ, but it did not cease then. It still continues in the various phases of the world, especially the ecclesiastical, for our realm, unlike that of Israel, is not on earth but inherent in the heavens (Phil.3:20), so we must be subject to the superior authorities on earth (Rom.13:1). But, though we do not wrestle with blood and flesh, we do wrestle with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials (Eph.6:10-13). In place of Pilate and the Roman world power, we are opposed by spirit forces among the celestials. This is the principal difference between our opposition and that of our Lord's day.

There is a widespread idea that, since the crucifixion and the spread of Christianity, the world is becoming better. Indeed, the "church" seems to cherish the mistaken notion

that world betterment is its chief function! The fallacy of this false inference is evident from the fact that, instead of improving in God's sight, it is fast approaching, if it is not already in, one of the perilous periods which characterize the last days. Every one of the twenty indictments of 2 Timothy 3:1-5, from selfishness to a denial of the power of devoutness, is abundantly evident. Politically, notwithstanding the union of the nations, there is perplexity and fear. Morally there is steady deterioration. Religiously, formality and outward show has largely replaced spiritual power. The world is worse and ripe for judgment.

OUR PRESENT PLACE IN THE WORLD

It is of utmost importance that the saints grasp their present relation to the world, for, while they are *in* this world, they are not *of* it. God does not, as a rule, call the wise of the world, or the powerful, or the noble, and those who are something, but rather the stupid, and the weak and the ignoble, and the contemptible, and those considered nothing. The reason is simple. No *flesh at all shall boast in His sight.* There is to be no boasting except in the Lord (1 Cor.1:26-31).

PAUL'S EXAMPLE

In his contact with the Corinthians, Paul had already declared this truth by his actions, which, we may well believe, were more effective than words. No doubt he was far superior to most other men in word and wisdom, and he had an excellent opportunity to display it, especially in Greece, where such gifts were highly esteemed. But his theme, a crucified Saviour, was by no means such as would appeal to his audience, nor could it be enforced by the usual persuasive arguments. Apart from God's intervention by His spirit there was no likelihood of any response. His weakness, fear, and trembling cancelled his

personal power, so made room for the outflow of God's spirit (1 Cor.2:1-5).

The cross, situated at the very center of the eons and the worlds is the climax of all wisdom when viewed from the divine standpoint. No other occurrence during the eons or in the worlds so clearly reveals, not only the ruin of man, but the love of God, as the *crucifixion* of the Lord of *glory,* the utter debasement of the highest of all God's creatures, the divine curse resting on the Beloved of His heart, for the sake of His sinful creatures. It is utterly impossible to even imagine any other action that would so completely demonstrate the fullness of the divine affection.

WORLD CRUCIFIED

The world was crucified to Paul and he to the world by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal.6:14). While the world directly in view here is the world of Judaism, it, in fact, is but a picture of the greater system in which we all presently live. The spirit of both is boasting in the flesh. All such glory is shameful, and will give place to a new creation (Gal.6:15). Most of us have a very vague notion of the force of the term "world" in this connection, and of its place in God's plan. It is used of the various *systems* which He uses during the eonian times. Like the respective epochal eons, the five corresponding worlds are arranged as a reversal. The first world was created good, and so with the last. The second from the beginning and end see the entrance and exit of evil, under the first and the last Adams. The central wicked world, in which we live, is the worst of all and comes to its climax in the cross, the summit of human depravity, and will end in the impending era of God's indignation.

THE VARIOUS WORLDS

There are five different "worlds" mentioned in Scrip-

ture which vary much in character, according to the eon in which each is found. We live in the present *wicked* eon (Gal.1:4), so it is a hateful (John.15:18), corrupt (2 Pet. 1:4), world. But the first and last worlds have no such character. Before the disruption, ere sin had entered and man had not even been created, there is no intimation of wickedness. So, also, in the world of the new creation, after the great white throne judgment, everyone is ready to be subject to God, the Father. These two worlds are not wicked, by any means.

Only because the first, faultless world was *not adapted to bring about God's glorious goal,* was it rejected and ruined and readjusted for the first phase of His dealings with humanity. This was altogether according to God's will, and not in the least due to human failure or transgression, although it prepared for it and foreshadowed it. As the great Subjector of all, He not only had the *right* to work His will in the physical realm, but His innate love demanded reciprocation, and fully justified every temporal evil that would make it possible for Him to reveal His fatherly affection for the creatures of His hand and *heart.*

THE ANCIENT WORLD

The worlds before and after the present wicked world are alike in this, that subjection, or government, is under the first Adam and his sons in the past, and under the Second Adam in the future. There will be a vast advance in the future, but is is still necessary to deal in judgment with individuals and nations. In the ancient world we have the problem of evil, the disruption of the first earth, repeated in the spiritual sphere. We are now distinctly told that Yahweh Elohim Himself caused the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to grow in the garden (Gen.2:9). Adam did not plant it there, nor did the Adversary. It was God's doing, and in later revelation He definitely takes the responsibility

(*cf* Rom.11:32). The reaon is clear. Good cannot be really "known" or appreciated apart from the experience of evil.

THE PRESENT WICKED WORLD

We are now prepared to see why this world is wicked beyond the rest, and should be crucified. Essentially, wickedness is insubjection to the Deity, Who takes the title of Subjector during the eonian times, in which the world systems operate. The worlds before and after this are held in a measure of subjection by Adam and his greater Son, but today there is no head or central authority in charge of mankind. Noah's eldest son did not take over the rule of the rest. The divine right of kings is a myth, except in the case of His own nation, Israel. Even there, *the Only One Who is equipped to subject others to the Supreme Subjector was crowned with thorns and crucified.* The world that committed this accursed crime is fit for nothing else than crucifixion.

THE FOURTH WORLD

As the deluge destroyed the previous world and prepared for the present, so the impending judgments will clear the scene for Messiah's kingdom. As in the days of Noah, so it will come, unexpectedly, and by means of tremendous physical catastrophies, clear the scene for the reign of Christ Himself. Because of His presence and power, it will be a glorious world compared with the previous ones, but evil and enmity will only be supressed on the part of the other nations. So it, more definitely than other worlds, is limited in time (to a thousand years). Then Satan is loosed and deceives the people for the last time. Thus even this world has a share of evil, to set forth the good.

THE FIFTH WORLD

The fifth world is the result of a new creation, and dif-

fers from the first largely in that it is the fruit of its disruption, as well as the other worlds (Rev.21-22). But, even with all its many blessings, it is not the consummation, when God becomes All in all. The lake of fire is still present (Rev.21:8).

The blessings are largely confined to one nation, Israel, and their holy city, New Jerusalem, to which the nations bring their glory. They will still need healing (Rev.22:2). Some will be unjust and filthy (Rev.22:11). Without the city are evil characters (Rev.22:15). Throughout the worlds and eons, evil has its place, as God's means of revealing to mankind the innate operations of His heart.

THE FINAL SYSTEM

Only Paul can carry us beyond the heavens into the celestial regions, or beyond the eons in the course of time. At the consummation all sovereignty and authority and power, the kingdom of Israel and the nations well be abolished. Those who have died, and are in the lake of fire, which is the second death, will be vivified. Even the Son Himself, Who has succeeded in subjecting all to God, will Himself be subject, that God may be All in all. This is the final, perfect system, in which all have been headed up in the Christ (Eph.1:10), Who then brings all under the august Headship of the Father.

A. E. Knoch

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Title of publication: *Unsearchable Riches*. 2. Date of filing: September 9, 1997. 3. Frequency of issue: every other month. 4. Location of the known office of publication: 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 5. Location of headquarters or general business offices of the publisher: 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 6. Publisher: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 7. Editor: Dean H. Hough, 6800 Hough Road, Almont, MI 48003. 8. Owner: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 9. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: none. 10. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months. 11. Extent and nature of circulation: Total number of copies printed: 2400. Total paid circulation: (all through mail) 1100. Total for office use: 1300. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (signed) *James R. Coram*, Business Manager.

BOASTING IN THE CROSS

(Galatians 6:11-18)

Lo! with what size letters I write to you with my own hand! (6:11)

"It seems probable that the rest of the epistle was penned by Paul himself. His usual custom was to write only a short ending to attest the genuineness of a letter [*cp* 2 Thess. 3:17], but here he is so concerned that he rehearses the heart of the argument in his own handwriting. It has been suggested that the writing was in large letters because of his defective eyesight [*cp* 4:15b]."[1]

While this may be so, we cannot help wondering whether it may not also be the case that if, at this juncture, Paul now takes pen in hand himself and inscribes the remainder of the epistle *personally, written in large letters,* he does so more especially to draw attention to the summary of the entire epistle which follows. In any case, it is helpful to picture this brief, remaining portion of the epistle as perhaps having been written thus, that we might take special note of what is said here accordingly:

Whoever are wanting to put on a fair face in the flesh, these are compelling you to circumcise only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ Jesus. For not even they who are circumcising are maintaining law, but they want you to be circumcised that they should be boasting in that flesh of yours. (6:12,13)

Paul does not say that *"some"* among his opposers who wished to put on "a fair face *in the flesh*" were guilty of such unworthy motives as to be practicing such a doc-

1. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.285.

trine in order to escape persecution for the cross of Christ Jesus, but that "*whoever*" among them[2] were practicing such a doctrine were motivated thus.

The only reason these opposers had so "revised" Paul's message was to avoid persecution, especially such persecution as the apostle himself had undergone because of his heralding of the evangel, uncorrupted. Whether Jew or Greek, the vast majority of men were offended by Paul's heralding, "according as the truth is in Jesus" (*cp* Eph.4:21).

Since the mass of men were scandalized by the truth of the evangel, they persecuted both those who taught it and those who accepted it. Hence, by twisting the evangel—specifically, by giving man himself a key roll with a view to his justification—these circumcisionists succeeded not only in contriving a message which would be inoffensive and acceptable to the masses, but one which would deceive even many of God's own, such as the Galatians. This same basic error has prevailed throughout the centuries, even as it continues to prevail today.

"The circumcisionists played for *popularity*. They were after a 'show.' They used the gospel to swell their own ranks. The rite of circumcision, apart from any moral and spiritual considerations, filled them with pride. They 'counted' their converts, and rivalled with each other for Jewish favor on that ground. To be able to point to a bodily condition or some other outward observance as proof of their influence—this was their object. Their policy was cowardly. Their zeal for circumcision was not genuine. In theory, their enthusiasm for the rite was ascribed to its supposed virtue; in fact, they used it as a makeshift to avoid persecution. They were insincere as well as unprincipled and selfish. These men who professed such zeal for the law,

2. The scope of "whoever" here is that of all who were compelling the Galatians to circumcise: "*Whoever* . . . *these* are compelling *you* . . . ."

neither respected nor regarded it; they used it to secure position and the perquisites of religious place. Insincere, cowardly, time-servers—such were the circumcisionists. They were facing two ways, studying the safest, not the truest course, anxious to be friends at once with Christ and His enemies."[3]

The hypocrisy and inconsistency in such an approach is transparent. It is not as if even those who were circumcising or imposing other points of law for justification were actually *maintaining* law, but at most were only attempting to do so. Yet whoever are of works of law are under a curse, for it is written that, Accursed is everyone who is *not remaining* in *all things* written in the scroll of the law to do them (3:10; *cp* Deut.27:26; 28:15).

The criterion of law-justification is not that the listeners of law are just with God, but that the doers of law shall be justified (Rom.2:13; *cf* Deut.6:25). Nevertheless, since all are under sin (Rom.3:9), no one measures up to this criterion. Hence, by works of law, no flesh at all *shall* be justified in God's sight. Law affords the human not a means of justification but of condemnation, for through law is the recognition of sin (Rom.3:20).

Even those in Israel who were comparatively faithful and worthy, were never "of" works of law in such a sense as to make their own obedience the ultimate basis of blessing. They too had sinned (even if less than many of their fellows), and so had become liable for all the law's curses (James 2:10), even as the rest. They had no more claim on God's blessing than the wicked kings of old, and could only look to His mercy, according to His *grace.*[4]

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3. Vladimir Gelesnoff, PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, p. 132.

4. Paul's words in Romans 9:15 in his slightly adapted citation of God's declaration of Exodus 33:19, reads, "I shall be *merciful* to whomever I may be merciful, and I shall be *pitying* whomever I may be pitying." In Exodus 33:19 itself, however, the record is that Yahweh said

Hence, in any ultimate sense, such faithful ones were by no means "resting on law" (*cf* Rom.2:17), even though it remained their duty to heed it. Instead, their only hope, even as our own, was the grace and compassion of God. And, like ourselves again, they could only become willing to obey in the day of God's *power* (*cf* Psa.110:3; *cp* Rom.7:15; 8:7).

SCANDALOUS TRUTH

The theme of the believer's dependence upon God's *spirit,* in His *grace,* both for justification through Christ and faithful service in His name, permeates this entire epistle. Yet alas, in the case of the Galatians, the flesh's native desire to exalt itself through its own sufficiency had gained the day and so had crowded out the evangel of grace.

If Paul had continued to herald circumcision, his later persecutions for *not* heralding circumcision would never have occurred. As he said, "If I am still heralding circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?" (5:11a). Yet, conversely, as he went on to say, "Consequently the snare of the cross of Christ has been nullified" (5:11b).

That is, in that case, those considerations related to the cross which scandalize the mind of man would no longer be a problem since they would no longer exist. So long as man may suppose that he can do something for his own justification, that is, something with a view to that objective being realized, he is content. He is content, because of the gratification of his own supposed virtue thus afforded him. He may have committed many a sin, but at least when it comes to doing those things which he fancies must be done in order to save his own neck, he is really quite an

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to Moses, "I will be *gracious* to whom I am being gracious and will have *compassion* for whom I am having compassion." Thus we learn that God's mercy is according to His grace, and His pity according to His compassion.

all-right fellow after all. By doing what he imagines is required of him, then, he will *save himself* from disqualification for heaven so that God will save him from hell.

Indeed, if it should be announced to a believer of such a mind that salvation is granted gratuitously in grace, apart from law, and hence *that all boasting in self is debarred* (Rom.3:27), he or she simply will not tolerate any such affirmation.

The snare or "scandal" (*scandalon*) of the cross consists in its all-sufficiency for justification and attendant blessing of salvation. In the sight of God, man can become justified only through the *gratuitous* and *gracious* deliverance which is in Christ Jesus (Rom.3:24).

Yet this truth scandalizes the fleshly mind which in its pride ever seeks to "do its part," that it might gain its own glory. Since to the flesh, the truth of the cross becomes the snare[5] of the cross, those who would stand for its truth, must also bear the persecutions which attend such a stand.

"Persecution" is not confined to retributive acts of extreme bodily injury, but may consist of any type of *mistreatment* of another as a result of such a one's having incurred the displeasure of the persecutor. Many who are actually egregious persecutors would deny the charge, ones who in their religious zeal may be largely unaware of their acts, and attitudes, of persecution.

The Greek word translated "persecution" (*diōgmos,* CHASing), as a verb (*diōkō*), is translated not only "persecute" but "pursue." It is used both of positive pursuing (e.g., 1 Thess.5:15) and of negative "chasing" (as here, in 5:11 and 6:12). Such "chasing" may be overt or covert, subtle or obvious, even as slight or extreme. Those who take an open stand for the truth of the evangel, however, *will,* in whatever way or degree, be "persecuted" for so doing.

5. i.e., "a means of tripping or a cause of falling," KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.275.

A CORRESPONDENT RANSOM FOR ALL

One may be a friend of *Christ,* and yet an enemy of His *cross* (Phil.3:18b), that is, of its significance and accomplishment. One may speak continually of the crucifixion *event,* while continually denying the crucifixion *accomplishment.* Paul entreats the Philippians to become imitators of him, and to be noting those who are walking thus, "according as you have us for a model." He does so, for, as he says and had often told them before, there are many who are walking as "*enemies* of the *cross* of Christ."

The contrast which Paul draws here in Philippians 3:18, is not between believers and unbelievers, but between those who are imitating him and those who are not imitating him, in relation to the "cross" of Christ. Obviously, Paul does not hereby refer to the wooden instrument itself upon which Christ was impaled, but, by metonymy, to the significance of the Death which occurred thereupon, the death of Christ, and the achievement of the deliverance which was wrought there, that of the salvation of all mankind and the reconciliation of all, throughout the universe.

Unbelievers, as a rule, if they have even heard of it, do not so much oppose as simply ignore God's gracious work of salvation for all through Christ. It is rather *unfaithful believers*—in contradistinction to Paul and those believers who would imitate him—who stand against the truth concerning the cross. The Philippians hardly needed to be told to imitate *Paul* in his acceptance of the mere event of the cross; any believer would do for that. Nor is it at point by Paul's words here for the Philippians to become careful to maintain their wariness of the claims of atheists or idolators, ones who often deny even the event of the cross, who in any case disclaim it of all salvific value.

It becomes evident, then, that in speaking of those who are enemies of the *cross* in contrast to those who are *not,* Paul does not set in opposition believers and unbeliev-

ers, but *faithful believers* and *unfaithful believers*, in this relation. He does so in respect of each class of believers' walk in consideration of the *significance* and *achievement* of the cross.

The significance of the cross as to the individual sinner concerns not so much what the sinner has *done*, but what the sinner *is*. One who sins, sins because he *is* a sinner. It is because he is such an awful person that he has done such awful things! The lusts of the flesh, collectively (even if not, perhaps, in some points, individually), are *his* lusts! If he is less guilty than others of certain of the more socially unacceptable works of the flesh, he is still quite guilty himself of various of the more socially acceptable fleshly desires.

The desire of the flesh is a terrible thing. This is so not only in its acknowledged perversions such as rape or murder, but in its perversions which, in its own perverseness, it deems only "minor shortcomings." These include sins such as self-exaltation, coveting, and ostentation, not to mention vanity, impatience, unkindness, strife, and anger.

How one may compare to other men is not the point. Every sinner *himself* is such a terrible sinner that none other than Christ Himself had to die for that sinner alone, let the sins and needs of others be what they will.

Further, every sinner himself is such a terrible sinner that his justification, hence, his salvation, would seem to be impossible. And, unless God should take the most extreme measures at unspeakably great cost both to Himself and to His Son, every sinner is such a terrible sinner that indeed his salvation would be impossible.

To speak as a man, By our sins, we have made ourselves the worst imaginable nuisance to God and caused Him an unfathomable measure of trouble. How would *you* like it if you had to give up *your* most precious child—the only one who had truly loved you and been obedient to you—to death, even a death of *crucifixion*? And most especially,

how would you like it if you had to do this because it was the only way to ransom the rest of your children out of the terrible plight which had befallen them due to their own foolish wickedness?

Thus the significance of the cross, in respect to the sinner, is that such were *our* deserts. It is *we* who are deserving of death (*cp* Rom.1:32), not Christ. To say that crucifixion was the Roman death penalty, not the Mosaic, misses the point. The point is that the sufferings of the cross comprised the death which *God Himself* appointed unto His Son in His death for sinners (*cf* Acts 4:27,28). If some swift, painless, and shameless form of euthanasia performed in private might have sufficed, doubtlessly it would have been employed. No; to ransom such as ourselves, nothing less than an ignominious and public, literally *excruc*iating (i.e., "from the cross") death would suffice.

In relation to the sinner, considered as such, *this* is the significance of the cross. Since it is so exceedingly uncomplimentary of the flesh, however, the flesh does not care for such a message at all. The believer, while actively believing under the influence of God's spirit, loves the word of the cross; for it at once serves to humble him and to exalt his God even as His vast love. Yet let that same believer be removed from vital influences of the spirit and left to himself, which is to say to his own flesh, and he will once again yield to whatever desires of the flesh happen to be his peculiar portion.

Most believers are too pious to join voices with Cicero the Roman orator and openly declare, "No wise man ever thanked God for virtue." Yet not many believers are sufficiently enlightened and devout to thank God alone for virtue, while meaning what they say. Howbeit, the apostle Paul, at the zenith of this summary word in defense of his evangel of grace, plainly declares:

Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the

cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (6:14)

The world specifically and immediately in view in the above quotation is the world of Judaism, for this is the world of the context. To be strictly literal, in each case where the above text reads "the world," it should simply be "world." In more literal English, we would render this idiomatically as "a world."

Paul, through the truths contained in his evangel, especially in his prophetic writings of the "untraceable riches of Christ" (Eph.3:8), was vitally aware of "the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" (Phil.3:8) contained therein, which transcended the revelations given earlier to the Circumcision concerning the kingdom and its law.

Hence, to Paul, the world of Judaism with all its laws, rituals, and related service, no longer had any practical existence, insofar as any involvements of his own therein were concerned. That world had been crucified to him. Similarly, Paul the apostle, likewise, who in his evangel of justification apart from law no longer had any place within the environs of Judaism, had become "dead" from the perspective of that world. Thus he had been crucified to it.

No doubt, most today are motivated to make law-obedience or some other form of "requirement-meeting" compulsory, because they think that it *is* compulsory,[6] even in our calling today. Still, the fact remains that to teach that "eternal" salvation can only be obtained by the cross *plus something else* (it makes little difference what) is effectually to boast not only in the cross but in that something else as well, whether intentionally or not.

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6. Law-obedience for entrance into the terrestrial kingdom is indeed compulsory under the Circumcision administration. That calling and its blessing, however, is still on a *basis* of *grace* for those who are *chosen*. The blessings of the Circumcision have no more place for prideful notions of free will than the blessings of the Uncircumcision.

Boasting is not confined to overt bragging, but includes all inward glorying and exulting as well, according to a boastful spirit (1 Cor.4:7; *cp* Prov.6:17a, "exalted eyes"). Preachers continually praise their converts for making their "decision for Christ." They are taught to think well of themselves for having used their "free will" aright in "accepting Christ," unlike so many others who have not done so. Indeed, if it is something ultimately of man himself alone which determines whether one enjoys eternal bliss or is subjected to eternal misery, how could one *not,* even if only inwardly, extol his own greatness for an achievement of such stupendous importance?

IN CHRIST, A NEW CREATION

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation. And whoever shall observe the elements by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God. (6:15,16)

Believers of the Circumcision who were enlightened, who recognized the *grace* of their own calling, albeit of a grace under the law which acknowledged its requisite place in relation to their entrance into the terrestrial kingdom, would therefore continue in the observance of its various particulars, or elements.

It is true that the elements of their system had a vital place in relation to their allotment of *eonian* life in the *kingdom* announced by their prophets. That allotment was only granted as a reward for worthiness of service, according to the criterion of the Mosaic law. Ultimately speaking, however, it would be only those whom God would make worthy, according to His choice in grace (Rom.11:2-5; *cp* Isa.26:12), who would become worthy of that glorious reward. Even so, they themselves must strive and struggle daily that they might not be classed among the doers of lawlessness and thus debarred from the kingdom.

Still, in the case of any such Circumcision believers, as much so as for the rest of mankind, it is through the work of Christ *alone* that sin is taken away, that man is conciliated to God, that justification is afforded, that vivification (with its attendant immortality and incorruption) is granted, and that peace and reconciliation are established.

It is in light of all such considerations that Paul declares: "*In Christ Jesus,* neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything, but a new creation." In relation to that which God achieves in grace through Christ Jesus, what is true of circumcision is true of all law: *it is nothing.* Instead, in Christ Jesus, what is everything, is the new creation which God achieves for all through the blood of Christ's cross.

Hence, "*whoever* shall observe the elements *by this rule,* peace be on them, and mercy, also on the Israel of God" (6:15,16). Whether, in the case of an observant, believing Jew or proselyte, who thus would observe the elements literally, or in the case of all called according to Paul's evangel, who thus observe the elements in spirit (5:25), Paul invokes peace upon them, considered individually.

Similarly, he goes on to speak specifically of those faithful ones within the nation of Israel considered as a discrete company, invoking peace and mercy upon them collectively. Such ones comprise all out of Israel who through faith are "Israel" indeed (i.e., "upright with El"; Gen.32:28; *cf* Rom.9:6b). More fully expressed, the phrase "also on the Israel of God," is: "also, may peace and mercy be upon the Israel *of God.*"

"Paul does not wish to condemn all of the Circumcision indiscriminately for the sins of his opponents. Those amongst them who acknowledge the power of the cross in the midst of their observances, on these he invokes peace and mercy, for they are the true Israel of God."[7]

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7. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.285.

For the rest, let no one afford me weariness, for I am bearing in my body the brand marks of the Lord Jesus Christ. (6:17)

By this sobering word, Paul plainly intimates that this is to be the end of the matter. It is as if he were to declare: "See here; this is the way it is. Period. I am bearing in my body the brand marks [*stigmata*] of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who personally revealed to me the very evangel which I proclaimed to you and must now defend before you. Do not weary me any further with any of your 'Yes-but' retorts."

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren! Amen! (6:18)

Paul's emphasis here on *spirit,* is in line with the overall teaching of the epistle. As the evangel is full of the *grace* of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is to this grace alone which Paul appeals. The apostle thus expresses his longing for the Galatians, his beloved but "foolish, little children" in faith, that the Lord's grace might illumine them and God's spirit empower them, that they might embrace the truth and no longer oppose it.

Paul was confident *in the Lord* that the day would come (whether or not it came, following this time, during his lifetime) when the Galatians would be rejoicing in the truth of the evangel which he was heralding among the nations (2:2) and in nothing would be disposed otherwise (5:10).

Since our Saviour, God, wills not only that the Galatian saints should be saved and come into a realization of the truth, but that "all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth" (1 Tim.2:4), we would join our voice with Paul's in this same confidence. It is our God and Father Himself, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has formed the decision that such a goal should be realized. How we rejoice to know that all His counsel shall be confirmed, and that all His desire He will do (Isa.46:10). To Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! J.R.C.

LEST THEY PERCEIVE

THE DISCIPLES were told not to herald the kingdom to anyone except "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5). Now in Matthew 13 Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables, and in fact, "apart from a parable He spoke nothing to them" (13:34). He changes His emphasis from the nearness of the kingdom to the *secrets* of the kingdom which are made known only to the disciples (13:11). The rest are made deaf and blinded with stoutened hearts "lest at some time they . . . should be turning about, and I should be healing them" (v.15).

The way in which our Lord conducted His ministry to Israel is full of surprises. The messenger's prophecy to Joseph had been that Jesus would save His people from their sins (Matt.1:21). Yet this goal has not yet been announced to the people. To the contrary, Jesus has warned that "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). The call for repentance has not been heeded by those to whom it was given; hence the Lord declared, "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! . . . For Tyre and Sidon shall it be more tolerable in the day of judging than for you" (11:21,22).

In short, Jesus has not pointed the people to His position as Saviour from their sins. He has predicted that only a few would heed His message about the kingdom and find the way to life. He has told the disciples to go only to Isra-

elites. And now he speaks in parables which He will not explain to the people in general, lest they repent, and He tells the disciples the people as a whole have been blinded.

NOT GIVEN TO KNOW

We can say all we want about the disciples eventually being commissioned to disciple "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19), and we can try to convince ourselves that Jesus kept truth hidden only from those who had already shown they would not receive it, but these facts do not change the fact that the ministry of Jesus did not result in saving the very people who received it, and the testimony of our Lord is that this failure finds its roots in divine prophecy made centuries before. It is clearly the operation of God.

What was happening "filled up" (Matt.13:14a) the prophecy of Isaiah 6:9,10 which says as translated from the Hebrew: "Go, and you will say to this people, Hear yea hear, yet do not understand; and see, yea see, yet do not know. Stouten the heart of this people, and make its ears heavy, and make its eyes squint, lest it may see with its eyes, and with its ears it may hear, and with its heart it may understand."

To the vast majority of the people of Israel it was not given (Matt.13:11b) to understand what Jesus was saying. It was not given to them to perceive and to know, *lest they should be turning about and the Lord be healing them* (Matt.13:15).

Jesus was able to speak plainly. He could have avoided the use of parables, or in using them to give the explanation of them to everyone. But He did not minister to the people this way; He did not tell them openly and plainly these secrets of the kingdom; for if He did take this approach in His ministry the people would have repented and turned about from their ways and He would have saved them. He spoke in parables, *lest* they should be healed! The word

heal comes close to the idea of *save,* and is often used to picture the broader work of deliverance from any danger. But Jesus spoke in such a way that the people would not turn from their ways and be saved.

SPEAKING IN PARABLES

The parables on Matthew 13 are elucidated to the disciples by the Lord. They indicate that only a few Israelites will enjoy the "superfluity" of blessing in the kingdom (v.12). This is in accord with the ways of God, which are not our ways. God blinds the hearts of the many and grants understanding to the few. He sows, or places, the various individual types of people in a situation favorable or unfavorable to the firm reception of the Word (Matt.13: 18-23). Some who heard Jesus speak did so while placed in an environment that was hostile to understanding and appreciating the message, being sown "beside the road," or "in the thorns."

Nothing could so clearly present the truth that the kingdom will come and be administered in a way that glorifies God. To those who were given, more was to be given (13:12). The privileged blessings of the kingdom would not be enjoyed by every Israelite, for only a few would be granted the insight and the faith to treasure these blessings and "shine out as the sun" (v.43) in the kingdom. These blessings are *given* in accord with God's operation in placing Israelites in environments which either are conducive or not conducive to understanding and heeding of the Word.

FIRE AND GNASHING OF TEETH

In view of these many factors limiting the effect of Jesus' teaching in the hearts of His people, we surely must take special care in attempting to understand His warnings of judgment. If someone is sown "among the thorns," that is, receives the word in an environment (in which they were

"sown") of many worries of life and struggles to earn money, they will suffer loss for it. But God's wisdom, in placing only a few in situations where they will understand what they hear, cannot be honored if the lamentation and gnashing of teeth of the many is eternal and hopeless.

From the very lessons of these parables, the meaning of the burning of the darnel (v.30) cannot be everlasting hell. It is more than irreverence, it is a denial of His wisdom and righteousness to speak of God as annihilating or tormenting forever those whom He has blinded, from whom understanding has been taken away, through the instrument of the Adversary.

Their stoutened hearts will bring them eventually to "a furnace of fire" and "lamentation and gnashing of teeth," but to speak of these results of their sins in terms of the traditional hell is to twist the Scriptures and its revelations of the living, wise and powerful God of all goodness, out of all recognition. God Who kept them from turning about from their self-centered and proud ways will bring them to the realization of the evils of these ways. But this too will be for their good and the glory of God.

As the farmer burns up the darnel after it has been separated from the harvested grain, so also God will exclude those deceived by Satan from the blessings of the kingdom. But this "furnace of fire," characterized by intense sorrow over their loss will certainly have benefits of opening their eyes and hearts to the truth and an appreciation of God. The sentence is severe, and we would not minimize the severity of its significance, but it is a judgment of God, Who judges in accord with truth and for purposes that harmonize with His glorious Being. This fire and this weeping are divine operations of condemnation, but they are not expressions of some sort of everlasting, hopeless reprobation. Our Lord is not speaking of hell,

and it is shameful to obscure His place as Saviour by thus twisting His words.

THE SAVIOUR'S WISDOM AND POWER

But also, this fire and weeping is not God's means of saving from sin. It may open up their eyes, but it cannot save these sinners from their sins. Nor indeed does the hearing and believing and heeding of the Word save the disciples from their sins. It is Jesus alone Who saves His people from their sins. Though this is not being made known as He traverses the land of Israel, it will be the solid foundation for all the blessings of pardon and rule and life promised to that people.

But for now, here in Matthew 13, that is not being made known even to the disciples. What is being made known, however, is great and glorious! Even in His own country where He was not honored, the people were astonished at His "wisdom and powerful deeds" (Matt.13:54).

In this the people of Nazareth were not thinking of a kind of wisdom that depends on human beings using their free will to change their thinking and their will in order to make themselves worthy of the kingdom. They were not thinking of a kind of power that is dependent on their own independent decisions in order to be employed. And they were not thinking of a power that sent and kept sinners in pain and lamentation forever, or annihilated what it could not save. Instead, they were thinking of a wisdom that knew hidden things about themselves and revealed secret things from God, and they were thinking of a power that healed and blessed.

THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

We have been granted further revelations of divine wisdom and power in the wisdom and power of the cross. What was being shown by the blinding of many hearts

and the choosing of a few disciples to understand and heed Jesus' words is shown also in our own calling. "For you are observing your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh; not many powerful, not many noble, but the stupidity of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the wise, and the weakness of the world God chooses, that He may be disgracing the strong, and the ignoble and the contemptible things of the world God chooses, and that which is not, that He should be discarding that which is, *so that no flesh at all should be boasting in God's sight*" (1 Cor.1:26-29).

This wisdom of choosing fishermen over the learned Pharisees, or people like the Corinthians (and us) over others who seem more deserving, is a wisdom that brings out the power and grace and love of God. But it does not exclude His righteousness and involve sending those who are not called to endless punishment. Indeed, the greatest example of stubborn phariseeism was Saul of Tarsus!

The wisdom of the cross is to save in full recognition of the entire helplessness and hopelessness of sinful humanity. "For the love of Christ is constraining us, judging this, that if One died for the sake of all, consequently all died" (2 Cor.5:14). In reality, those who are wise according to the flesh are not wise; no one can truly be called strong or noble. These value judgments are only temporary, part of what seems to be so for the present. But in faith we see all put to death in the death of Christ, and all headed up in the Christ in vivification and reconciliation.

Since this is so, the teaching of everlasting hell is proven false. It is a doctrine that distorts and hides God's character and that denies His deity. "O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! . . . seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.11:33,36).

D.H.H.

JOB 32-37

32 +**So** `**these three** `**men** |**ceased from answering**¯ `**Job, for he** was **righteous in his** own **eyes.** 2 +**Yet** the **anger of Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite, from** the **family of Ram,** grew |**hot. His anger** burned **hot** ⁱ**against Job** *on***because he justified**¯ **his** own **soul** rather *f***than Elohim.** 3 **And his anger** burned **hot** ⁱ**against his three associates** *on***because** *w* **they had not found** an **answer, and** so **they** |**condemned** *S*`**Elohim***ph*. 4 +**As** for **Elihu, he had tarried** ⁱ**while ~they spoke¯~** `to **Job, for they** were **older** *f***than he** was >**in days.** 5 +**When Elihu** |**saw that** there **was no** further **answer in** the **mouths of the three men,** + **his anger** grew even |**hot**ter. 6 +**So Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite** |**answered** + |**saying:**

I am **junior** to you >**in days, and you** are **hoary headed;**
Therefore I shrank back and was |**fearful**
From disclosing¯ **my knowledge** `to **you.**
7 **I said** to myself, **Let days speak**
And many years *c***make wisdom** |**known.**
8 But *so***surely it** is the **spirit in** a **mortal,**
And the **breath of** Him **Who-Suffices**
that *c***gives them** |**understanding.**
9 **Seniors may not be wise**
+**Or elders** |**understand** right **judgment.**
10 **Therefore I say,** Do **hearken to me;**
Let me disclose my knowledge, me too.

32:3 *S-ph* **`Elohim:** Hb **`Job.**
32:4 ~~~ they spoke¯: MT **speeches.**

11 **Behold, I waited for your words;**
I [l]**listened** [fr]**for your understanding**
[fr]**While you were sounding out declarations.**
12 + **I** [m]**gave consideration** [fr]**to you,**
+**Yet behold,** there **was no correcting** ›**of Job**
Or **answer**[l] to **his** [sa]**arguments from you.**
13 Beware **lest you** [l]**say, We have found wisdom;**
El Himself ~**is our** [l]**Mentor**~**, not man.**
14 +**Hence** ~**I shall not array**~ such **declarations** [7]as **these**~**,**
And [i]**with your** [sa]**arguments I shall not reply** to **him.**
15 **They are dismayed; they** do **not answer further;**
They shift declarations away **from them.**
16 + **I have waited,** but [t]**since they are not speaking,**
[t]**Since they stand** and do **not answer further,**
17 **Let me answer, me too,** with **my portion;**
Let me disclose my knowledge, me too.
18 **For I am full** of **declarations;**
The **spirit of my inner being constrains me.**
19 **Behold, my inner being** is **like wine** that **is not** [l]**opened,**
Like new wineskins, it is ready to [l]**split.**
20 **Let me** [l]**speak** so +**that it** can **ventilate** › **me;**
I must [l]**open my lips and** [l]**answer.**
21 [pr]**Indeed I certainly shall not show**
partiality to any **man,**
Nor shall I flatter › a **human.**
22 **For I** do **not know** how **I** could [l]**flatter,**
Else **my** [d]**Maker**[l] would [l]**carry me** off **speedily.**
33 Nevertheless +**now, I pray,**
O **Job, hear my declarations,**
And do [c]**give ear** to **all my words.**
2 **Behold,** [pr]**now, I open my mouth;**
My tongue speaks [i]**on my palate.**
3 **My** [sa]**arguments** reflect the **uprightness of my heart,**
And my lips declare knowledge in **purity**[l].

32:13 ~~~ **is our** [l]**Mentor:** Hb [l]**whisks him away.**
32:14 ~~~ **I shall not array:** Hb **he has not arrayed;** 7~~ **as these:** Hb ›**against me.**

4 The **spirit of El, it has** [d]**made me,**
And the **breath of** Him **Who-Suffices,**
it [m]**preserves me** [l]**alive.**
5 **Reply** to **me if you** [l]**can;**
Do **arrange** yourself and **stand up before me;**
6 **Behold, I** am **corresponding** [as]**to you** [>]**before El;**
I myself [mr]**also was nipped off from** the **clay.**
7 **Behold, no**[t] **dread of me should frighten you,**
And my palm shall not lie **heavy on you.**
8 **Yea, you have** [sa]**spoken in my ears,**
And I have [l]**heard** the **sound of** these **declarations:**
9 **I** am **spotless, without transgression;**
I am **unstained, and no**[t] **depravity** is [>]**in me;**
10 **Behold, He** [l]**finds** reasons to **repudiate** [on] **me**
And [l]**reckons me** [>]**as** an **enemy**[l] **to Him;**
11 **He** [l]**places my feet in shackles;**
He [l]**observes all my paths.**
12 **Behold, I am answering you:**
In **this you are not justified,**
For Eloah is [mn]**greater** [f]**than** a **mortal.**
13 For **what reason** do **you contend** [>]**against Him**
That He does **not** [l]**answer all his**◊ **words?**
14 [t]**Indeed El** does [l]**speak** [i] **once,**
And [i] **twice,** yet **no**[t] one [l]**regards it,**
15 **In** a **dream,** a **vision of** the **night,**
[i]**When stupor falls**~ upon **men,**
In slumberings on their **bed;**
16 **Then He** [l]**reveals** matters to the **ear of men,**
And He [7][l]**dismays them**~[c] [i]**with** [7]**admonitions**~,
17 **To withdraw** a **human** [7]**from**~[c] his [d]**deed,**
And that **He may** ~**obliterate**~ **pride** [f]**in** a **master.**

33:13 his: i.e., man's.
33:16 *7-~c* [l]**dismays them:** MT [l]**seals;** *7-~* **admonitions:** Hb **their admonition.**
33:17 *7-~c* **from:** Hb lost by haplography; *~-~* **obliterate:** Hb **cover.**

18 **He** ˡ**keeps back his soul from** the **pit**
And his life from passing⁻ into ˜the **unseen**˜.
19 ⁺**Also he is corrected** ⁱ**by pain on his bed,**
And by **perennial disputing** in **his bones,**
20 So ⁺**that bread is repugnant** to **him,** to **his life,**
And to **his soul,** the **food of yearning.**
21 **His flesh is** ᵃˡˡ**vanishing from sight,**
And his bones are ridges that once **were not seen.**
22 ⁺ **His soul** draws ˡ**near to** the **pit**
And his life to ˜the ᵐ**place of** the **dead**˜.
23 **If** there **is** a **messenger on his** behalf,
An **intermediary**ˡ, **one** ᶠ**out** of a **thousand,**
To tell › the **human** what is **upright** for **him,**
24 **And he is** ˡ**gracious** to **him and** ˡ**says,**
Do **ransom him from descending⁻** to the **pit;**
I have found a propitiatory **shelter;**
25 Then **his flesh will** become **hale** ᶠ**with youth**
And **shall be restored to** the **days of his adolescence.**
26 **He shall entreat to Eloah, and He shall accept him;**
⁺ **He shall see His face** ⁱ**with** joyful **shouting**
And He shall restore to the **mortal his righteousness.**
27 **He shall sing** ᵒⁿ**before men and say,**
I have sinned and contorted what is **upright,**
⁺**Yet He** did **not compensate** it fully **to me.**
28 **He ransomed my soul from passing⁻ into** the **pit,**
And my life is seeing ⁱ the **light.**
29 **Behold, El is effecting all these** things
Twice and **thrice with** a **master,**
30 **To restore his soul from** the **pit,**
To enlighten him ⁱ**with** the **light of the living.**
31 **Attend, Job; hearken to me;**
Be silent, and I myself **shall speak.**

33:18 ~~~ the **unseen:** Hb **javelin.**
33:22 ~~~ the **place of** the **dead:** Hb those ᶜ**putting** to **death.**

32 **If** there **are declarations, reply** to **me;**
Speak, for I would delight to **justify~ you.**
33 **If** there **is no** word from **you, hearken to me;**
Be silent, and I shall train you in **wisdom.**
34 **+Then Elihu** continued to **|answer, + |saying:**
2 **Hear my declarations,** you **wise** men,
And you **having knowledge, [c]give ear to me.**
3 **For** the **ear |tests declarations**
+As the **palate |tastes › food~.**
4 **Let us |choose for our**selves what is **due;**
Let us |know [bt]among us what is **good.**
5 **For Job has said: I am just,**
+Yet El, He has taken away my due;
6 **[on]Concerning my due, should I lie?**
My ~lesion~ is **mortal|,** yet I am **without transgression.**
7 **[a]What master** is **like Job?**
He |drinks derision like water;
8 **+ He travels ›in partnership**
with contrivers| of lawlessness
And › goes~ about **with men of wickedness.**
9 **For he says, It is |unprofitable** for a **master**
[i]When he strives to **be acceptable~ [wi]to Elohim.**
10 **Wherefore, men of heart** understanding,
hearken to me:
Far be it ›from El [f]to do **wickedness,**
And Him **Who-Suffices [f]to** do **iniquity.**
11 **For** the **contrivance of** a **human,**
He shall repay it **to him,**
And according to **man's path,**
He shall provide it to **him.**
12 **El, truly indeed He** does **not [c]do |wickedness,**
And He **Who-Suffices** does **not |distort judgment.**
13 **[a]Who** gave **supervision [on]to Him** over[d] the **earth,**
And [a]who [pl]placed Him over the **habitance, all of it?**

34:6 ~~~ lesion: Hb **arrow.**

14 **If He** ˈ**places** it in **His heart** ˃**concerning him,**◊
He can ˈ**gather** back **His spirit**
and His breath to Himself;
15 **All flesh** would ˈ**breathe** its **last together,**
And humanity would ˈ**return** *on***to** the **soil.**
16 +**Now if** you have **understanding,** do **hear this;**
Do *c***give ear to** the **sound of my declarations.**
17 **Indeed,** can anyone **hating** right **judgment** ˈ**govern?**
And *if***would you** ˈ**condemn**
the **Abundantly Righteous** One,
18 *7-*Who **says**ˈ*~c* **to** a **king, Worthless** one,
And **to patrons, Wicked** one,
19 **Who** does **not repute chiefs,**
Nor is He partial to the **rich-man** *bf***above** the **poor,**
For they all are the *d***work of His hands?**
20 In a **moment they** ˈ**die;**
+ At **midnight** the **people** ˈ**reel and** ˈ**pass** away,
And the **sturdy are** ˈ**taken away** *i***by no***t* human **hand.**
21 **For His eyes** are **on** the **ways of** a **man,**
And He ˈ**sees all his steps.**
22 There **is no darkness and no blackest shadow**
To conceal there the **contrivers**ˈ **of lawlessness.**
23 **For** it is **not** *on***for** a **man** that **he may** *pl***set**
an ~**appointed** time~
To go ˃**before El in judgment.**
24 **He** ˈ**smashes** those of **abundance**
*not***without investigation**
And ˈ**installs others** *u***in their stead.**
25 **Wherefore, He** ˈ**recognizes their occupations**
And overturns them in a **night, and they are** ˈ**crushed.**
26 **He slaps them** down *u***with** the **wicked,**
In a *ri***place** *w***where**◊ all can **see**ˈ,

34:14 him: i.e., man.
34:18 *7-~c* **-Who says**ˈ: MT Can one **say**-.
34:23 ~~~ appointed time: Hb **further.**
34:26 *w***where:** transposition from v.27a.

27 **Because they withdrew from following Him**
And did **not contemplate any of His ways,**
28 But they **caused** the **cry of** the **poor** one
to be **brought**¯ *on*|**before Him,**
So +**that He** |**heard** the **cry of** the =**humbled.**
29 +**When He**´ **is** |**quiet,** + *a*|**who** can |**condemn?**
+**When He** |**conceals** His **face,** + *a*|**who** can |**regard Him?**
+**Yet** He is **over** a **nation and over humanity alike,**
30 *f*|**Lest** a **polluted human reign**¯,
One **from** the **entrappers of** the **people.**
31 *t*|**Indeed has** one **said to El,** ~**I have been lured** away~;
I shall not harm ~any *fr*|**more**~;
32 ~**Until**~ **I** can |**perceive, direct me Yourself;**
If I have contrived iniquity, I shall not do so **again?**
33 **Shall He repay it** *f wi*|**on your** terms
t|**since you have rejected** otherwise,
t|**Since you yourself are choosing, and not I?**
+**Now what you know, speak.**
34 **Men of heart** understanding **shall say to me,**
And any **wise master** who is **hearkening to me:**
35 **Job is not speaking** *i*|**with knowledge,**
And his words are **not** *i*|**with intelligence**¯.
36 **My will** is that **Job should be tested unto permanence**
on|**For** making **replies** *i*|**like men of lawlessness.**
37 **For he** |**adds transgression** *on*|**to his sin;**
i|**Among us he** |**slaps** his hands
And |**increases his sayings** ›**against El.**
35 +**Then Elihu** continued to |**answer,** + |**saying:**
2 Is **this** what **you reckon** ›**as** right **judgment?**
Do **you say,** This is **my righteousness** *f*|**before El,**
3 *t*|**When you** |*sa*|**ask,** *wt*|**How is it** |**profitable to** ~**me**~**?**
What more do **I** |**benefit** *f*|**than** if **I** had **sin**ned?

34:31 ~~~ **I have been lured** away: MT **I have borne;** ~~~ any *fr*|**more:** Hb lost by haplography.
34:32 ~~~ **Until:** Hb **Apart from.**
35:3 ~~~ **me:** Hb **you.**

4 **I myself shall reply to you with declarations,**
And `to your associates with you.
5 **Look at the heavens and see;**
+ Regard the skies; they are loftier *f*than you.
6 **If you sin, what |effect do you have *i*on Him,**
And if your transgressions are many,
what do you |do to Him?
7 **If you are righteous, what do you |give to Him?**
Or what does He |derive from your hand?
8 **Your wickedness affects › a man like yourself,**
And your righteousness › a son of humanity.
9 ***f*Under a multitude of exploitings they |cry out;**
They |implore *f*under the arm
of those with *mn*great power.
10 **+But not one has said, Where is Eloah, my *d*Maker|,**
Who is **giving psalms in the night,**
11 **Training us *f*by the beasts of the earth,**
And *f*by the flyer of the heavens, He makes us |wise?
12 **There they |cry, +yet He does not |answer**
***f*Because of the pride of evil men.**
13 **Yea, it is futility; El does not |hear,**
And He Who-Suffices does not |regard it.
14 **How much less *t*when you *sa*complain**
you cannot |find Him out,
That **adjudication is set before Him,**
and you are waiting for Him?
15 **And now *t*because He does not visit His anger**
And does not acknowledge *i*
the *7*transgression~ of ~humanity~,
16 **+ Job is opening his mouth wide with transitory breath;**
He *c*makes declarations |abound *i* without knowledge.
36 + Elihu |continued, + |saying:
2 **Compass about › me a bit,**
and I shall disclose it all to you,
For I *fr*still have declarations ›concerning Eloah.

35:15 7-- transgression: Hb **diffusion; ~-- humanity:** Hb **exceedingly.**

3 **I shall bear my knowledge › from afar**
And [lg]ascribe righteousness to my Maker[l].
4 **For truly my declarations** are **not false;**
One of **integrity** in **knowledge** is **with you.**
5 **Behold, El** is **abundant** in **vigor**◊
And does **not [l]reject** ~the **pure of~ heart.**
6 **He** does **not** [m]**keep** the **wicked [l]alive**
+**But [l]gives** the **humble** their **due.**
7 **He** does **not [l]diminish** the guard
of **His eyes** [f]**over** the **righteous,**
+**But** `with **kings** ›**on** the **throne**
+ **He [l]seats them › permanently,**
And they are [l]elevated.
8 +**But if** being **bound** [i]**with manacles,**
They are [l]seized [i]**by** the cord **lines of humiliation,**
9 +**Then He is telling › them** of **their deeds**
And their transgressions, that they are making
themselves arrogant **masters.**
10 +**Thus He [l]reveals**
to **their ears** › His **disciplining** authority,
And [lsa]demands that they [l]turn back from lawlessness.
11 **If they [l]hearken and [l]serve** Him,
They [lall]finish their days in well-being
And their years in pleasantness.
12 +**But if they** do **not [l]hearken,**
They [l]pass away [i]**by** the **javelin**
And [l]breathe their **last** [as] **without knowledge.**
13 +**As** for the **polluted of heart** who ~[l]**nourish~ anger,**
Who do **not [l]implore** [t]**when He binds them,**
14 **Their soul [l]dies in youth,**
And their life ends [i]**among** the **cult-prostitutes.**
15 **He [l]liberates** the **humbled** one [i]**by his humiliations**
And [l]reveals truth to **their ears** [i]**by oppression.**

36:5 vigor: transposition from v.5b; ~~~ the **pure of:** Hb **abundant** in.
36:13 ~~~ [l]nourish: Hb [l]**place.**

16 +**Thus also He will allure you**
from the **mouth of distress**
To a **wide** place *not***without constraint,** u**in its stead;**
And for **rest** at **your table He will fill** it with **richness.**
17 **And** with the **adjudication of** the **wicked** one
you will be filled;
Adjudication and right **judgment shall be upheld.**
18 t**But ~beware~ lest** one **should** l**allure you**
i**with affluence;**
+ **Let not** the **vastness**
of the **sheltering** gift l**turn you aside.**
19 **Shall He arrange your salvation** *not***without** i **distress**
And all exertions of vigor?
20 **Do not** l**gasp** after **the night**
›**When peoples ascend**‹ to **their** u**place.**
21 **Beware, you must not** l**turn around to lawlessness,**
For on account of **this you have ~been tested~**
f**by humiliation.**
22 **Behold, El is** l**impregnable in His vigor;**
a**Who** is a **Director**l **like Him?**
23 a**Who calls His way to account** *on***against Him?**
+**Or** a**who says, You have contrived iniquity?**
24 **Remember that you should extol His deeds,**
Of **which men have sung.**
25 **All humanity have perceived** i **it;**
A **mortal, he** l**looks from afar.**
26 **Behold, El** is so **great** + **we** can**not** l**know** it,
And◊ the **number of His years** is **fathomless.**
27 **For He** l**condenses** the **drops of water**
That l**filter** as **rain for His mist,**
28 w**That** l**exude** from the **skies**
And l**drip** down **on humanity** ~as **showers~.**

36:18 ~~ beware: Aramaic **beware;** MT **fury.**
36:21 ~~ been tested: Hb **chosen.**
36:26 And: transposition from middle of line.
36:28 ~~ as showers: Hb **multitude.**

29 **Indeed,** [if]**can** one ˡ**understand**
the **spreading, thick** clouds,
The thunderous **tumults** from **His booth?**
30 **Behold, He spreads His ~mist~ over it,**
And covers the **roots of the sea.**
31 **For** [i]**with them He** ~gives ˡ**sustenance**~ to the **peoples;**
He ˡ**gives food** ˃**in abundance**ˡ.
32 **He covers light**ning [on]**in** His **palms**
And ˡ**instructs** [on] **it** [i]**with sure aim**ˡ.
33 **His ~thunder~** ˡ**tells** [on]**about it,**
The **cattle, also,** [on]**about** what is com**ing up.**
37 Indeed, ˃**at this my heart** ˡ**trembles**
And ˡ**leaps out** [f]**of its** [ri]**place.**
2 **Hearken,** yea **hearken**⁻
[i]**to** the **thunderous sound of His voice**
And the rumbling **soliloquy** that comes ˡ**forth**
from His mouth;
3 **Under the entire heavens He unleashes it,**
And His lightning **over** the **wings of the earth.**
4 **After it** ˡ**roars** a **voice;**
He ˡ**thunders** [i]**with His swelling voice**
And does **not** ˡ**stem them** so **that His voice is** ˡ**heard.**
5 **El** ˡ**thunders marvelously**ˡ [i]**with His voice,**
Doing great things +**that we** can**not** ˡ**know.**
6 **For He** ˡ**says to** the **snow, Fall**◊ on the **earth,**
And to the **downpour of rain,**
+**even His strong downpours of rains.**
7 [i]**On** the **hand of every human He** places a ˡ**seal**
So ˃**that all ~men~** may **know**⁻ **His** [d]**work.**
8 +**Then** the wild **animal** ˡ**enters in**to its **lair,**
And ˡ**tabernacles in its habitations.**

36:30 ~~~ mist: Hb **light**ning (*cf* 32a).
36:31 ~~~ gives ˡ**sustenance:** Hb ˡ**adjudicates.**
36:33 ~~~ thunder: Hb **shouting.**
37:6 Fall: Hb word **"be"** has the Aramaic meaning **"fall"** here.
37:7 ~~~ men: Hb **men of.**

9 **From** its ˙**chamber** ˡ**comes** the **sweeping** whirlwind,
And cold from the **sifting winds.**
10 ᶠ**By** the **breath of El ice** ~**is** ᵍ**made**ᶜ,
And the **broad waters** becomes ⁱ a **frozen solid.**
11 **Indeed, He** ˡ**encumbers** the **thick** cloud
ⁱ**with soaking** moisture;
He ˡ**scatters His light**ning **cloud,**
12 **And He** directs them **round about,**
Turning ⁱ**according** to **His strategies,**
˃**That their deeds** be **all** ʷ**that He** ˡ**instructs them**
On the **face of** the **earth's habitation.**
13 ⁱᶠ**Whether** it be **for** a **club**
~that **He** ˡ**fulfills His approved** plan~,
ⁱᶠ**Or for benignity,** it is **He** Who **causes** it to ˡ**occur.**
14 Do ᶜ**give ear** to **this, O Job;**
Stand and consider the **marvelous**ˡ works **of El.**
15 Do **you** ˡ**know in** what way **Eloah**
ᵖˡ**sets**~ direction **over them**
And how **He causes** the **light**ning **of His cloud** to **shine?**
16 Do **you** ˡ**know** ᵒⁿ**about** the **balancings of** the **thick** cloud,
The **marvels of** One **flawless** in **knowledge,**
17 **You whose garments** are **warm**
ⁱ**When** the **earth** is **quiet**~ᶠ**because** of the **south** wind?
18 Could **you with Him** have ᶜ**made**
the ˡ**atmosphere** ˃**in** the **skies,**◊
Steadfast as a **mirror** that is **solidly**ˡ set?
19 **Inform us what we should say to Him;**
We can**not** ˡ**arrange** our case ᶠ**because of** the **darkness.**
20 **Should it be recounted to Him that I** would ˡ**speak?**
ⁱᶠ**Would** a **man** ˢᵃ**ask that he be** ˡ**swallowed** down?
21 + **Now** men can**not examine** the sun**light**
As **it** is **ablaze in** the **skies,**
+**When** the **wind has passed and made them** ˡ**clean,**

37:10 ~–*c* **is** ᵍ**made**ᶜ: MT ˡ**gives.**
37:13 ~~ that **He** ˡ**fulfills His approved** plan: Hb **if for His land.**
37:18 Could . . . **skies:** *cf* Gn 1:6-8.

22 And **from** the **north,** rays of **gold** ˡ**arrive.**
on**About Eloah** is **fearful**ˡ **splendor;**
23 He **Who-Suffices, we** can**not find Him** out,
Great in **vigor and** right **judgment,**
And mn**abundant** in **righteousness,** Who ˡ**humbles not.**
24 **Wherefore, men fear Him;**
Do **not all wise of heart** ~stand in ˡ**fear**~**?**

37:24 ~~~ stand in ˡ**fear:** Hb **He** ˡ**sees.**



THE SPEECHES OF ELIHU

THE BOOK OF JOB, like all Scripture, directs our attention to God. The evil that came upon Job could be directly traced to boils and Sabeans, Chaldeans, fire and storm, and then further back to Satan as recorded in chapters 1 and 2. But behind it all was the hand of God, as Job himself declared in his crucial question to his wife, "Indeed should we receive good from the One, Elohim, and should we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10).

In the debate between Job and his three associates (chapters 3-31), Job tenaciously maintained that his sufferings had a cause that lay within the control and purpose of God. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, however, would associate Job's troubles with Deity only so far as they were divine responses to Job's secret sins; otherwise, they would put God at a distance from all these great evils as though He were unconcerned with petty, human problems.

Now in chapters 32 through 37 a new character comes before us, Elihu son of Barachel the Buzite. He is a young man with a great deal of self-confidence and ambition,

who trusts he can succeed where the other three failed in answering Job, and more importantly, in justifying God.

What Elihu says about *himself* is invariably bombastic and generally foolish: "Let me answer, me too, with my portion; Let me disclose my knowledge, me too. For I am full of declarations" (Job 32:17,18). But what he seeks to establish concerning *God* is worthy and right, and despite himself, he ends up, especially in chapter 37, contributing to the great revelation of divine glory that is provided by the book of Job as a whole. Ironically, it is when he adopts the very position of Job he was seeking to refute, that Elihu makes a positive contribution in glorifying God.

"LET ME ANSWER"

Elihu is angry against Job because, in his opinion, Job "justified his own soul rather than Elohim" (32:2). Indeed, Job's defense of himself has often struck us this way as well; and Yahweh Himself will later ask Job, "Would you condemn Me that you might be justified?" (Job 40:8). The weakest parts of Job's speeches were those concerned with himself, not because they were untrue but because they did not advance Job's understanding of God.

Job's self defense, of course, was in reply to the charges of his associates that he had committed hidden sins. Indeed, he succeeded in silencing his three accusers on this issue by setting forth his commendable record of righteousness in relation to other human beings. But, although Job had never forgotten that he was a sinner (*cf* 7:20), and consequently Elihu's charge in 33:8 that Job claimed there was no depravity in him is clearly mistaken, nevertheless, Job's defense of himself distracted from the vital question of God's part in these experiences of evil.

Elihu was wrong in thinking Job was placing his own righteousness above God's. But his perception that Job spoke of God as reckoning him as an enemy and plac-

ing his feet in shackles (33:10,11) was fully warranted (*cp* 13:24-27).

Again, when Elihu claims Job has said, "I am just" (34:5), there is misunderstanding, but Elihu heard correctly when he concluded that Job believed El had taken away his due (34:5; *cf* 27:2). Job was not comparing himself with God, but rather comparing his record with the accusations of his associates and then relating the facts of his sufferings with the fact of God's supremacy in all things.

PLACED OVER ALL THE HABITANCE

Because he accurately sets forth Job's thoughts relating his afflictions to Deity, Elihu finds himself in 34:10-13 saying more than he intended. He eagerly defends God's righteousness: "Far be it from El to do wickedness, and Him Who-Suffices to do iniquity" (v.10). This, Elihu seems to say, should expose the foolishness of Job's claims about God being involved in his sufferings. But, as though realizing that God may have good reason for bringing certain sufferings, Elihu adds that God does "repay" human beings for their contrivances (v.11). This is expanded in 34:21-27 by recognizing that God does *smash* and *overturn* and *crush* and *slap down* wicked men for their acts. But, Elihu quickly explains, these are not wicked acts, for they are matters of judgment which must not be distorted (34:12).

This means the acts, such as crushing and overturning, are not wicked in themselves but only in accord with the motivation and purpose involved. If the purpose is for good, then the evil, which may well involve much sorrow and affliction, is not absolutely evil, but only serves an ultimate good. If this is true when judgment and repayment are in view, it may well be true in Job's case where repayment does not appear to be involved.

Now, with these remarkable testimonies, Elihu proceeds by praising God with a claim that appears through-

out Scripture and that most of us have echoed, but few have realized. God has supervision over the earth, and He is placed over the habitance, *all of it* (Job 34:13). God Who does not do wickedness is placed over all the earth where Job is in the midst of misery. This is Job's argument; more than that, it is his *hope,* his most fervent longing.

Perhaps realizing the implications of his words in 34: 10-13, Elihu quickly turns to that very argument of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar that Elihu had promised he would not use (32:14). God does bring evils on people, but only as repayment for human wickedness (34:18-33). Then, almost desperately, Elihu returns to his attacks on Job's sayings concerning God. Any truly wise person, Elihu claims, would agree that Job has not spoken with knowledge (34:34,35). This will also be Yahweh's charge against Job. But, as we have noted, Job's sayings that were without intelligence were those concerning himself; what he said *concerning God* was rightly so (42:8), and not at all "against El" as Elihu thinks (34:37).

In not following through with praise for God's place over all, and in endeavoring to find Job at fault no matter what, Elihu gets caught up in a jumble of thoughts in chapter 35. He first charges Job with complaining his righteousness had not brought him any benefits (35:3; *cp* 34:9). Then Elihu seems to say in 35:5-7 that God is unaffected by either human transgression or righteousness. How these ideas fit together is almost impossible to see.

Yet once again, in 35:10,11, Elihu adjusts his thoughts in order to focus on the greatness of God. Here he points to Eloah as our *Maker,* Who gives psalms in the night, and Who conveys wisdom to us through the lower creatures of His hand.

But he returns to the theme of divine indifference, or at least unresponsiveness, in 35:12-15. This too was an argument occasionally used by the other three. But it is wholly

mistaken, as the Abundantly Righteous One Who is over all the habitance (*cf* 34:13,17) is soon to verify.

DECLARATIONS CONCERNING ELOAH

So far Elihu has not impressed us with the consistency of his arguments. But his determination to speak of God's righteousness coupled with his examination of Job's declarations concerning God is about to bear good fruit. It may be that his words in 35:10 stay with him, while the rest of his arguments in that chapter fade away as his own "transitory breath" rather than Job's (*cf* 35:16).

In any case, the personal title given God in 35:10 appears now in 36:3 as Elihu's own: "my Maker." Elihu does not speak of "my Judge," but of the One Who made me! This is not One Who is distanced from human concerns, but Who is very much involved with deeds of integrity (36:4) and vigor (v.5). Although Elihu continues to see this involvement mostly in terms of judgment (36:6-15), he also sees his Maker as using distress as a pathway to rest and salvation "Shall [El] arrange your salvation without distress and all exertions of vigor?" (36:16-19). Our experiences are part of God's *making* of us.

God teaches us by the testings of humiliation (36:20,21); "El is impregnable in His vigor; Who is a Director like Him?" (v.22). Even in trying to turn this truth about God against Job in verse 23 (as though Job really accused God of contriving iniquity), Elihu finds himself associating God with Job's troubles as the Maker and Director of all. He is to be extolled for His deeds and the greatness of His Being (36:24-26).

With praises like these concerning the supremacy of God, Elihu is beginning to fulfill the meaning of his name, "El-is-He;" indeed such a One as Elihu now describes, He is truly El. All that is wanting now is an association of this One with the afflictions of Job.

THE RAIN AND THE THUNDER

This association begins in Job 36:27 with Elihu's praise of God as the One Who condenses the drops of water in the clouds into rain and mist. God's wisdom and power and ability for good in providing moisture for our needs shows His concern for humanity and responsibility for that which he has made (36:28-31).

God is responsible not only for rain and mist, but also for lightning and thunder (36:32,33). Such forces invariably bring distress and destruction in their wake. This speaks of evils from God for His own purposes, perhaps for discipline and correction, perhaps for unknown ends of the "Abundantly Righteous One" (34:17), Who does not contrive iniquity (36:23).

Then, as Elihu speaks of the rain, a storm arises in view of them all. And Elihu exclaims, "Indeed, at this my heart trembles and leaps out of its place" (37:1). God makes Himself apparent among them, as He is able to do at any time, but rarely does in the present eon.

The last storm of those days, mentioned in Job, involved a great wind or tornado that killed Job's children (Job 1:18,19). Now something like that terrible, destructive force, is appearing again. And Elihu associates it with God! "Hearken, yea hearken to the thunderous sound of His voice and the rumbling soliloquy that comes forth from His mouth" (37:2).

The storm comes not only with thunder but with snow and ice and downpour of rain, with sweeping whirlwind and thick cloud and soaking moisture (37:3-11). It is God Who sends it, directing and turning the clouds "according to His strategies" (v.12). It is El Who instructs it and causes it to occur, "whether it be for a club . . . or for benignity," in accord with his approved plan (37:13). Since this is so in relation to the frightening storm, it is true of the fearful evils that have engulfed Job.

At this point Elihu has adopted the argument of Job, and he turns to Job to give ear to these "marvelous works of El" (v.14). The questions he asks Job are very much like Yahweh's questions to come. Do you know about the marvels of God's ways in cloud and darkness, in warmth and quiet, in sunlight and wind (37:15-21)? These are matters which bring both good and evil into our lives. And they are all from God.

THE SUNLIGHT ABLAZE IN THE SKY

Thus the storm is the final force that leads Elihu to his position of preparing the way for the Lord. It is given to Elihu to describe the magnificent scene of the approach of Him Who-Suffices:

The storm ceases, and the sunlight breaks through so brightly that no one can examine the skies, now completely cleared of clouds (37:21). In front of all who are gathered there about the suffering Job, Yahweh arrives from the north amid rays of gold and fearful splendor (v.22). Elihu had boasted that he would set them all straight concerning God, but now he declares, "He Who-Suffices, *we* cannot find Him out" (v.23).

But God is able to make Himself known. How easily Elihu is directed to turn the focus of his thoughts from a determination to expose the errors of Job to the glories of God in relation to all things, both good and evil! The great lesson given us in the speeches of Elihu is that He Who-Suffices can and will finally make Himself known in light blazing forth in contrast to the darkness which He also had sent. This is what Job has insisted must be so, and it is what Elihu had opposed but now is brought to embrace with exultation.

Now, standing in fear of Him (Job 37:24), Elihu and Job and all the rest are readied for Yahweh to speak.

D.H.H.

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