Unsearchable Riches

A Bimonthly Magazine
For God and His
Word

VOLUME XC

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Found of them that sought Him not

I will arise and to my Father go;
This very hour the journey is begun.
I start to reach the blissful goal, and, lo,
My spirit at one bound her race has run.
For seeking God and finding Him are one.
He feeds the rillets that towards Him flow.
It is the Father Who first seeks the son,
And moves all heavenward movement, swift or slow.
I dare not pride myself on finding Him.
I dare not dream a single step was mine.
His was the vigour in the palsied limb—
His the electric fire along the line—
When drowning, His the untaught power to swim,
Float o'er the surge, and grasp the rock divine.

John Charles Earle

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JANUARY 1999
BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY

EDITORIAL

ACQUAINTANCE with those sacred scriptures originally written in Hebrew is most beneficial for believing and teaching and standing by the evangel brought by Paul (2 Tim.3:14-17). Every article in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches* is built around passages from this portion of God's Word. But also, every article either leads to a consideration of parallel passages in Paul's epistles or prepares our hearts for the revelations of the evangel.

All Scripture leads us to Christ, and thus to a full revelation of God. The revelation of God in creation is not enough. The deeper revelation of God opened up by the entrance of evil into the creation is not enough. God must be revealed in and through His Son, through His faithful obedience "even to the death of the cross" (Phil.2:8) if the "breadth and length and depth and height" of His power and wisdom and *love* are to be grasped (*cf* Eph.3:18).

Consequently, in meditating on Genesis and 1 Samuel and Ecclesiastes and the rest of the ancient, Sacred Scriptures, we feel a special need for vigilance lest we neglect the "evangel of the untraceable riches of *Christ*" which Paul brought to the nations (*cf* Eph.3:8; 6:18-20). It seems especially critical in these days, not so much because of the humanly devised date (1999), but because of strengthening signs of "the last days" described in 2 Timothy 3:1-7, that we hold firm to and announce clearly and joyfully the evangel graciously granted to Paul.

The trend of the current series of studies in this magazine is toward this end. In the twenty-seven years during which I have been closely involved in the production of this magazine, I cannot recall an issue of *Unsearchable*

Riches, that has caused me more struggle than this current one. This is partly because I just underwent major surgery for the second time in fifteen months (I am thanking God for bringing me through these operations safely and that I am recovering well). It is also partly because of added work required in bringing the CONCORDANT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT toward publication, though we are excited and happy to see that the long project of translation is nearly complete. Above all else I feel certain that most of the struggle must be traced to that spiritual opposition Paul spoke of in Ephesians 6:12,16.

Yet my happiness in this work continues to grow, and I find much peace in the hope that the thoughts expressed in this magazine will be beneficial to many. If the passages from the "Old Testament" centered on in this issue direct the reader's attention toward Christ and the evangel concerning Him, then this hope is sure of realization.

Finally, I am pleased that Brother Jim Coram has accepted the position of co-editor of the magazine with me. We have worked together since 1981, with Jim not only contributing his unique studies in depth on often controversial, scriptural themes, but also overseeing all, and handling much, of the publishing and distributing chores, besides serving as business manager. Now he will join me more extensively than before in compiling and editing the magazine. He will also be contributing more regularly to this editorial section.

I know our readers will remember us in prayer concerning these changes, not only regarding the magazine but the added work we are taking on in bringing the CVOT to a more finished and complete form of publication. God is faithful. He knows the longings of our hearts, and He will give wisdom and strength in accord with His will. To Him be the glory!

D.H.H.

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I first learned of the ministry and teaching of the Concordant Publishing Concern in 1974. The following year I met Dean Hough. Ever since, I have been asking him questions, and receiving helpful answers. Dean has taught me many things about language and critical thinking, not to mention about exegesis and hermeneutics; and it was through Dean that my own interest in academic theology and philosophy blossomed.

But the most important things that I found in Dean were fairness and honesty, founded upon devoutness, in an awareness of the importance of competency, yet in the presence of the further awareness that competency, even as all else, is out of God.

I have often said that the three happiest days of my life were the day I married my wife, Suella, the day our son, Marc, was born, and the day the first box of *Unsearchable Riches* magazines arrived in our mail.

It goes without saying that the most important day of my life was the day that I first heard and believed that Christ died for my sins, that He was entombed, and that He has been roused the third day, all of these, according to the scriptures—which I suddenly found myself believing! Now that day (which occurred several years before I first heard of the Concordant ministry) was a happy day, indeed. Still, it was also a day in which my joy in Christ promptly became stifled by the fear-based, man-centered, and anti-grace teaching which I also then accepted.

Like most others, in the most artful of terms (ones not designed to deceive yet no less effectual unto that end), I was taught that though Christ, potentially, was my Saviour, I nonetheless must save myself from disqualification for His actually being my Saviour! Above all (and most frightening of all, too, for I knew my own heart), it was insisted

that I must not only endure unto the end to be saved, but that I alone must determine my own destiny, based upon my own "inner resources." At the critical juncture, I could not look to God to save me, for that would not do. When it mattered the most, I myself must independently save myself from "disqualification."

In a word, the "gospel" I received was that the gate was strait and the way narrow which leads to eternal life, *and few there be* that find it. Hence, it was unlikely that I would find it. Furthermore, those who would find it, would only do so finally thanks to themselves, not to God. (While this was never said, this was precisely the notion advocated, albeit in more delicate language.) If I should fail to be sufficiently upright and cooperative, then God would have no recourse but to subject me to endless punishment (so I was told, "only" an endless punishment consisting of death, not conscious torment).

Until I first heard and realized the *grace* of God in truth through the printed and spoken ministry of the Concern and its friends, I too held to the usual, mistaken teachings. It was solely through the *power* of the marvelous message of God's overwhelming grace, the evangel of our being justified gratuitously in God's grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus, that the spell of delusion was broken for us (for my wife Suella, too, as well as myself).

What a privilege and joy it is for us to continue on in the ministry of the Concern, now in its ninetieth year. Especially as we approach the final work (though that consists of so much) in the translation and publication of the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, we covet your prayers on our behalf that God would grant us strength of mind and will, together with diligence of heart in the completion of this tremendous task. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gratuity (2 Cor.9:15). And, thanks be to God for His goodness and faithfulness to us all. J.R.C.

THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

THE BEGINNING of *both* creation and generation is the burden of the scroll the Greeks called "Genesis," which denotes *Generating.* Since the first and foremost function of this book is a record of God's *creation,* we use the Hebrew heading, *B-rashith,* IN-HEAD, or IN-BEGINNING, as a title of the whole book. Thus we discover the inspired summary of this sacred scroll, which presents God's creative work, as well as the first generations of mankind, which fill the balance of the book.

It is characteristic of mortals, when estranged from God, to look back to the *time* of creation, rather than to the creation itself. The rendering "In the beginning," is probably as close to the significance of the Original as English idiom will allow; still it is sufficiently inexact to cause cloudy conceptions and questionings to arise. It seems to fix a definite point of *time,* and to be limited to the single act of creation, whereas the Hebrew is not the name of a specific instant in the past, but a descriptive term, giving *priority* or *origination* to the contents of the whole book.

The Hebrew stem, *rash,* denotes HEAD, and is used idiomatically in the sense of *principal, summit, top, beginning, first* (in time). The special form used here, rash*ith,* must usually be rendered by *first of,* or *beginning of* in English, as "the *beginning of* his kingdom" (Gen.10:10), "the *first of* the firstfruits" (Ex.23:19). The very phrase with which the Bible begins, B-rash*ith* (B is IN), occurs four times elsewhere, and is translated "In the *beginning of*" (Jer.26:1; 27:1; 28:1; 49:34), and is always followed by a noun,

"the reign of." But in Genesis it is followed by the *verb* create—In the beginning [of] He-creates . . . . This seems to show that it is not a part of the sentence, but the title.

The beginning spoken of in this section is *creation,* in contrast to the rest of Genesis, which speaks of *generation.*

CREATE

"To make something out of nothing," that is the usual definition of *create.* This is confirmed by the dictionary, which makes it: "To bring into being; to cause to exist . . . the world is regarded as brought into being out of nothing." But we have been unable to find any confirmation for this in God's Word. Indeed, the only passages which throw any light upon this point teach the opposite. Peter wrote to the dispersion, "You may be subject to every *human creation* . . . (1 Pet.2:13). No man can create anything out of nothing. When God created the Circumcision and Uncircumcision into one new humanity, these were already in existence (Eph.2:11-15). He simply made both one by putting them into Christ.

The Scriptures teach that all is *out of God* (Rom.11:36; 1 Cor.11:12; 2 Cor.5:18), not out of nothing. This includes all the substance of all later creations, for God's creative acts are not confined to the beginning. Not only was the joint body of Ephesians created out of the Circumcision and Uncircumcision, but we are a new creation, created in Christ Jesus, just as all was created in Him in the beginning (Eph.2:10; Col.1:16).

In Christ we can see clearly that creation was not out of nothing. He calls Himself "God's creative Original," or, as the AV has it, "the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev.3:14). And He Himself also said, "I *came out* and am arriving *out of God*" (John 8:46). What is better evidence than a double witness from the lips of Truth Himself? It is further confirmed by our apostle, Paul, who calls Him

the "Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created . . ." (Col.1:15,16). All was in Him in the beginning, even as all humanity was in Adam at first. And we feel sure that all who love Him and have tasted of His grace will be slow to say that He was nothing, when they would never think of saying that Adam, in whom we were made sinners, was nothing.

God, when He created Adam, and humanity in him, did not create it out of nothing. He used previously created soil and atmosphere. These must be continually renewed in order to keep human beings alive. If we had been created out of nothing, then it might have been our lot to live out of nothing. This, I suppose, would be very welcome to some. But those who have tried it have returned to the soil from which they sprang.

Probably the worst effect which this false view of creation produces, is the warping of our thoughts as to the future. If creation came out of *nothing* it could easily return to oblivion. This would lend color to what is usually termed annihilation. On the other hand, if creation originated in *God,* then it is almost impossible for a sound mind to be fully content with any other ultimate than an enriched return to its Origin. This is marvelously expressed for us in the summary of the didactic portion of the book of Romans (11:36). There we are told that, not only is all *out of Him* in creation, but also *through Him* in the eonian times, and *for Him* in the consummation, when He becomes All in all.

TOWARD-SUBJECTORS

After the heading, "In the beginning," the Word of God says that creation was by *Elohim,* by *Toward-Subjectors.* The key to this use of the plural soon follows, in the third verse. "Yet the *spirit* of Elohim is vibrating over the surface of the water." God is *spirit,* and *He works by means of His spirit,* yet through *those to whom He has imparted it.*

Not only the Father, as Subjector, but also His Son was engaged in the creation of the heavens and the earth. God was the *Source,* for all is *out* of Him (Rom.11:36), but all is created *in* the Son of His love (Col.1:16). It also may have included such as those sons of Elohim who were present at the foundation of the earth (Job 38:7).

An absolute beginning is unknown to the Scriptures, as well as an absolute end. Such a thing is beyond human comprehension, even were it mentioned in the Word. The beginning of Genesis is not *the* beginning of all things, but only of the material heavens and earth. As all was created in the Son of God's love, He is *before* all else, and all has its cohesion in Him. Although there were no *human* beings before Adam, there *were* sons of Elohim present at the founding of the earth, as made known to Job. In order to put him where he belongs, with all the rest of humanity, Job was asked some pointed questions (Job 38:4-7):

Where were you when I founded the earth?
Tell if you know with understanding.
Who determined its measurements—for surely you know!
Or who stretched out a measuring tape upon it?
On what were its sockets sunk?
Or who directed its cornerstone in place,
When the stars of the morning were jubilant together,
And all the sons of Elohim raised a joyful shout?

Here we are introduced to those who were present in this work of creation. They were powerfully and joyfully impressed by the founding of the earth. It seems to have been a prolonged process, a period of time, rather than an instantaneous miracle, which is here likened to the erection of a great edifice on earth.

God's spirit is literally imperceptible, even when present in others. It would be impossible to describe it in literal terms, so that these early sons are also presented

under the figure of stars. The coming of Christ was predicted by a Star out of Jacob (Num.24:17), which guided the magi to His birthplace (Matt.2:2). Abram's seed are compared with stars (Gen.15:5). The moon and stars are messengers of the ecclesias (Rev.1:20), and the Root of David will be the resplendent Morning Star, harbinger of the coming kingdom (Rev.22:16). So, in the beginning, the stars of the morning celebrated the advent of the earth. This is most suggestive. When the earth was founded, the day was about to dawn, for it was to be the means of God's fullest revelation to all His creatures.

THE EXERCISE OF DIVINE POWER

The Disposer, or Subjector, *created* the heavens and the earth. This shows that that title *God,* in English, or *Elohim* (Alueim), in Hebrew, or *Theos,* in Greek, is broader and more comprehensive than *Creator,* and includes it. The meaning of the title Elohim, Toward-Subjectors, is by no means limited to creation. In the first chapter of Genesis Elohim goes on to *vibrate* by His spirit, and so inaugurated all *motion,* which resulted in the light and the atmosphere and the waters and the dry land. In other words, His power was exercised in subjecting or placing all the elements He had created to prepare the earth for the living souls which He was about to create.

May we not take this as a primitive example of His way of working? There is to be a future new creation. Is the Disposer idle meanwhile? Is He not doing as He did in the beginning, operating in the present creation in preparation for the new? By His spirit He has already introduced His saints into the new creation, in anticipation of that which is to come. This should show us that God is far more than Creator. He is the *Operator,* the Controller of that which He has made. Otherwise how could He make any advance toward the consummation?

All intelligent creatures are overwhelmed with awe when they contemplate the innumerable, immeasurable, infinitesimal, incomprehensible marvels of creation. Nothing is so great and nothing so small but it reveals the wonders of His workmanship. We cannot except the tiniest atom from His attention, for who else could create it? Nor can we excuse Him from the task of making such an incalculable number, for no one has the power or the skill to form even one. It is well for believers to contemplate these things, and meditate upon them, for they are tangible and material, so present no problem to faith. These marvels of the *Creator* should prepare us for the more marvelous movements of the *Subjector,* Who *operates* the creation in order to work out His will.

If God, the Subjector, had simply flung the stars into space, and did not hold them to their orbits, all would soon be confusion, and chaos. Their *movements,* as well as their creation, are due to His disposal. If He did not regulate the times and seasons on the earth, life would soon vanish from its surface. His revelation tells us very little about creation. It is almost altogether concerned with His operations among the sons of Adam. The unbeliever does not see His hand, or realize His presence. Although the Scriptures are full of examples of His directive and corrective influence, few of the saints fully realize the pervading power of His spirit. Indeed, it was not fully revealed until Paul's full and final unfoldings show us that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is operating *all* in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). May He give us grace to receive it and believe it!

A. E.Knoch

The preceding article is compiled from portions of studies by Brother Knoch, appearing in *Unsearchable Riches,* volumes 40, 42 and 45.

GENESIS 1:1

1 In the **Beginning:**
Elohim created `the heavens and `the earth.

SKELETAL STRUCTURE

1:1-2:3 Heavens and Earth—eneological Annals *2:4-50:26*

1:1 Creation—Disruption *1:2a*

NOTES AND CROSS REFERENCES

in-beginning: preposition prefixed to noun, *beginning,* which belongs to the Hebrew family, HEAD, ENGLISHMAN'S CONCORDANCE (E.C.) p.1147 (*cf* Prov.8:22; John 1:1).

Elohim (Toward-Subjector-s): Title of Deity, plural in form but generally used with singular verb, occurs over 2000 times, belonging to Hebrew word family, SUBJECT; E.C. p.76 (*cf* Psa.136:2-6; Isa.45:5-10; John 1:2; 1 Cor.15:25-28).

created: simple, active, complete verb form, third person singular, CREATE; E.C. p.270 (*cf* Psa.148:4,5; Col.1:16).

`the heavens: direct object particle with definite article prefixed to plural noun, *heavens,* in the Hebrew family PLACE; E.C. p.1286 (*cf* Psa.8:3; 96:5).

`the earth: direct object particle with definite article plus singular noun, *earth,* in the Hebrew family LAND; E.C. p.776 (*cf* Job 38:4-7; Psa.102:25; Prov.3:19; Isa.40:28; 45:12,18; Jer.51:15).

THE VERB "CREATE"

A CONCORDANT STUDY of scriptural words is the best approach for understanding their meanings. In the absence of a Concordant Keyword Concordance of Old Testament words, we hope to provide lists of references for certain important terms in passages being studied in the pages of this magazine. The first of these is presented herewith for the verb of Genesis 1:1, "create."

All the occurrences of this verb in its simple form, as given in ENGLISHMAN'S HEBREW CONCORDANCE, page 270, are provided. This list does not include references to the uses of the "make" and "cause" aspects of this Hebrew verb, which are used for actions that cannot well be expressed by the English verb *create.* This list of references for the occurrences of the simple aspect of this verb is divided into various forms of the verb, such as active and passive, complete and incomplete, infinitive, participle and imperative.

The Concordant Version does not recognize the verb "create" in Isaiah 4:5 even though it appears in the Masoretic Hebrew Text (based on manuscripts dating back about one thousand years). On the basis of the Septuagint Greek translation (based on even older manuscripts), we conjecture that the original Hebrew manuscript read differently here and that the verb "create" was introduced into the Hebrew text in error. But we include Isaiah 4:5 in the list and provide our translation as it would be if we had accepted "create" as the correct verb, with the entire reference put in square brackets.

We hope our readers will find a survey of these occurrences of the Hebrew verb for "create" edifying and enlightening.

CREATE

SIMPLE, ACTIVE, COMPLETE:

Gen.1:1 Elohim *created* the heavens and the earth.
Gen.1:27 male and female He *created* them.
Gen.2:3 ceased from all His work that Elohim had *created.*
Gen.5:2 Male and female He *created* them.
Gen.60:7 wipe out humanity that I have *created,*
Dt.4:32 from the day that Elohim *created* humanity
Ps.89:12 The north and the south, You *created* them;
Ps.89:47 have You *created* all the sons of humanity?
[Isa.4:5] [Yahweh *will create*]
Isa.40:26 Who *created* . . . these?
Isa.41:20 the Holy One of Israel, He *created* it.
Isa.43:7 for My glory I *created* him;
Isa.45:8 I, Yahweh, I *create* it.
Isa.45:12 And *created* humanity on it;
Isa.45:18 He did not *create* it a chaos;
Isa.54:16 I Myself *created* the craftsman,
Isa.54:16 I Myself *created* the ruiner.
Jer.31:22 For Yahweh *has created* a new thing.
Mal.2:10 Did not one El *create* us?

SIMPLE, ACTIVE, INFINITIVE:

Gen.5:1 On the day Elohim *created* Adam.

SIMPLE, ACTIVE, IMPERATIVE:

Ps.51:10 *Create* for me a clean heart,

SIMPLE, ACTIVE, INCOMPLETE:

Gen.1:21 Elohim *created* the great sea monsters.
Gen.1:27 Elohim *created* humanity in His image.
Nu.16:30 should Yahweh *create* an unprecedented

SIMPLE, ACTIVE, PARTICIPLE:

Ecc.12:1 Yet remember your *Creator*
Isa.40:28 *Creator* of the ends of the earth;

Isa.42:5 *Creator* of the heavens
Isa.43:1 Your *Creator*, Jacob
Isa.43:15 *Creator* of Israel
Isa.45:7 and *Creator* of darkness,
Isa.45:18 *Creator* of the heavens;
Isa.57:19 *Creating* the produce of the lips.
Isa.65:17 behold Me *creating* new heavens and
Isa.65:18 future which I shall be *creating*,
Isa.65:18 *creating* Jerusalem an exultation
Am.4:13 And *creating* the wind,

SIMPLE, PASSIVE, COMPLETE:

Ex.34:10 marvels which *have* not *been created*
Ps.148:5 He Himself determined, and they *were created*.
Isa.48:7 Now *are* they *created*,
Ezk.21:30 place where you *were created*,

SIMPLE, PASSIVE, INFINITIVE:

Gen.2:4 the heavens and the earth when they were *created*
Gen.5:2 on the day they were *created*.
Ezk.28:13 In the day of your *creation*
Ezk.28:15 From the day of your *creation*,

SIMPLE, PASSIVE, INCOMPLETE:

Ps.104:30 send forth Your spirit; they *are created*

SIMPLE, PASSIVE, PARTICIPLE:

Ps.102:18 a people yet *being created* shall praise



In an idiomatic translation, Hebrew verb classifications termed "complete," "incomplete," "infinitive" and "participle" cannot always be rendered by the corresponding forms in English. In such cases the particular Hebrew verb form used is indicated in the CVOT by small vertical or horizontal strokes before or after the English verb used, as shown in the Abbreviation Key accompanying the translation.

ELOHIM CREATES

THE FIRST sentence of the Sacred Scriptures lays the foundation of divine revelation. God's Word begins with the simple and momentous claim that Elohim creates everything. He is the Cause; we are a small part of the caused.

God is the Cause. Consequently He is responsible, and He receives the glory or blame in accord with the end results. With creation comes the responsibility of the Creator for what He has created, but if He brings the creation to a good consummation, the glory for creating and following through to this good outcome is His alone. There is no room for dualism in Genesis 1:1. It is true that the title, Elohim, is plural, referring to the fact that the Subjector (the Father) is operating in and through the Toward-Subjector (the Son), but the work is singular, by one spirit and under the hand of the Supreme. God is the One Who achieves creation, and He is the One Who will be finally acclaimed when the heavens and the earth and all connected with them reach the glorious position He has purposed.

THE BEGINNING OF GOD'S REVELATION

All revelation from here on stems from this revelation. The whole of Scripture finds its point of reference from this statement in Genesis 1:1. What is said concerning humanity and its various divisions, needs and hopes must ultimately be seen in relation to the fact that God has brought everything into existence and takes full responsibility for what He has done. We must never lose sight of the truth that God is the One Who created this universe

in which we live. Passing pleasure or continuing pain can never change the facts set forth here concerning the power and intelligence of the Creator.

It would be difficult to find a claim that is more fundamental. Yet it is stated with the greatest of simplicity. It says nothing unnecessary and everything essential for beginning our acquaintance with God.

God's existence is assumed. This is unacceptable for many today; those, however, who believe that "God is" (Heb.11:6), and that He speaks to us in His Word and in His Son (Heb.1:1,2) should eagerly accept what is said here in Genesis 1:1, without qualification. Three revelations of God in this passage are irrefutable. God has the powerful ability to create the heavens and the earth. Furthermore, God has the intelligent skill to do so. And finally, God actually puts this power and knowledge to work, and thus creates the heavens and the earth.

DIVINE LIMITATIONS?

The first verse of the Bible instructs us clearly that there are no limitations to God's power and knowledge. It is foolish and irreverent to claim that God cannot accomplish something He promises or wills to do. If God tells Abram He is going to bless him and make him a blessing, both him and his seed, and allot to him a certain piece of land, He will do so. God knows how to do so and has the ability to do so. If God declares that He wills to save all mankind and bring them into a realization of the truth, nothing can keep Him from this achievement. Since God was able to create the heavens and the earth, He is able to bring the world to the consummation He has set. Such conclusions are drawn both logically and convincingly from the facts of Genesis 1:1.

The creature is the one with limitations. No created being can rise up above the Creator and spoil his work.

Evil is not a power independent of God. The human will can never change God's will, let alone defeat it. God is supreme, and this is made clear from the beginning.

THE COMPLEMENT OF GENESIS 1:1

In a sense, the entirety of the rest of God's Word, from Genesis 1:2 forward, is the complement of Genesis 1:1. It is the *complement,* not only a *supplement* to the first verse. We cannot leave the truth of Genesis 1:1 carefully wrapped and put aside in its own compartment and look (for example) at Genesis 1:2 or Exodus 20:3 or Matthew 25:46 or Philippians 3:20 by themselves without any recognition of the fact that God is responsible for the whole of creation.

We cannot glorify God as God without seeing that as the Creator of the heavens and the earth He is glorious, indeed glorious in purpose, glorious in operation, glorious in achievement. The fact that God creates the universe is not enough. A universe that is without order or meaning or contains that which never contributes to the glory of its creator is not the creation of the God of Scripture.

Therefore, when we come to Genesis 1:2 and learn that the earth became a chaos, there is only one solution bringing glory. This darkness and lifelessness and disorder cannot be absolute waste if the powerful and intelligent Creator is still employing His power and exercising His intelligence in accord with a purpose beyond the present chaos. Surely Genesis 1:1 tells us He is *able* to carry out a purpose for good even in and through the chaos itself.

We will hold to the revelation of Genesis 1:1 as vitally relevant to the evil that bursts forth in Genesis 1:2. God is powerful and God is intelligent, and therefore the evil of the second verse of Scripture is firmly within the province of God. It *must not* be something beyond the Creator's power to handle or an unexpected development that escaped His all-knowing foresight.

The whole question of responsibility has been established. As the Creator, powerful and intelligent, God must be recognized as the ultimate Cause of everything. Consequently He holds ultimate responsibility. We must not shrink from this truth. It is to God's glory.

GOOD AND WISE

However, the revelation of God in Genesis 1:1 is only two-dimensional. We have learned, as noted above, that God has tremendous ability and intelligence, but Genesis 1:1 does not, in itself, show us that God's power is fully directed to good or that His knowledge is employed wisely. On the other hand, the entrance of darkness, chaos and vacancy into the world, if deliberately and specifically counseled by the Creator, introduces a third dimension. We are seeing not only God's ability and skill but also are seeing an extraordinary test of His *character.* Are His powerful works ultimately for good, and are they wisely carried out so that even those temporary elements which are not good in themselves are truly needed for the achievement of that good consummation? These are vital concerns that Genesis 1:1 does not answer.

This is exactly what is shown in Genesis 1:2-31. Within the overall responsibility of God Who created the heavens and the earth, evil enters in the form of chaos and vacancy and darkness. Then God, Who created the heavens and the earth, speaks, and light and order and life come about, ending with the revelation that "it is very good."

Genesis 1:1 is not enough to reveal the goodness of the Creator. We do not *know* anything about the goodness of the heavens and the earth apart from a contrast with the evil of chaos, vacancy and darkness. But now that Genesis 1:2-31 is added as a complement of Genesis 1:1 we glorify the Creator indeed. He is wise beyond our greatest

thoughts and able beyond our highest hopes. His power and knowledge are employed for the highest good.

THE LOVE OF GOD

This test of the divine character is rehearsed anew starting with the creation of humanity and the deception in Eden which leads to the entrance of death into our world. For "through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind" (Rom.5:12). The goodness of the powerful and all-knowing God is put to the test, and throughout the rest of Scripture this remains the pivotal question until God reveals Himself in His Son.

Then, in the most fearful and astounding act of God giving His Son for sinners, in the death of Christ and the results of His death, entombment and resurrection, the full truth is set before us. God is not only able to create humanity, but with supreme wisdom and the purest of righteousness and love, God's goodness is displayed as never before. The God of Genesis 1:1 is revealed in all His glory, though none of us have yet been able to grasp its dimensions.

It is with the commendation of His love in the giving of His Son (Rom.5:8) that all questions of God's character are finally and completely settled. This love of God is such a glorious aspect of divine goodness that Paul had to speak of it in a measure of four dimensions. Thus he prayed that believers, "having been rooted and grounded in love" should be strong to grasp what is the breadth and length and depth and height of this revelation as it affects us and ultimately all in the heavens and on the earth (Eph. 1:10,11; 3:14-19).

STRONG TO GRASP

Only God can give us spiritual strength for grasping the vastness of His love as revealed through the sufferings and

exaltation of His Son, and the operations of His choice and call and blessing of us in Christ. But this is true of every revelation of Scripture. For us who are called there is an awareness that God is working all together for good (*cf* Rom.8:28). This is why we claim that in creating the heavens and the earth, God was beginning a good work that will ultimately bring Him glory in every aspect, in everyone, everywhere and always.

Chaos will give way to order, to a glorifying of God that could never come about apart from the temporary chaos.

Vacancy will give way to life and activity, to the praise of the Creator Who intended that vacancy to exist for awhile.

Darkness will give way to light that will be fully appreciated to the honor of the One Who planned even the darkness itself for its time.

These glories will come about because God will bring them about. The Creator will be revealed as the Saviour, the Reconciler, the wise and loving Subjector of all.

THE CREATOR

When the Scriptures are complete, the revelation of God given in the first verse is greatly enlarged. There we saw One Who commands power and intelligence effectively. But now we are seeing that He is wise and righteous, and above all, He is love. The Creator never turns away from His creation or ceases to carry forward His purpose for its good and His glory.

Today we still live in the midst of darkness and sufferings. "For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it" (Rom.8:20). But this vanity is a transitory state; it is not everlasting. The Creator has subjected His creation to this vanity "in expectation that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom.8:21). D.H.H.

WRITTEN FOR THIS TEACHING OF OURS

OUR THEME in this series of writings is the *deity* of God (commonly termed His "sovereignty"). By this we mean His "GOD-ness"; that is, His *subjector*ship or *placer*ship (*cf* "deity," KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.71: "*theotês*, PLACERship, 'that which pertains to God'").

Humanity's fundamental sin is its failure to glorify and thank God *as God* ("not *as God* do they glorify or thank Him"; Rom.1:21). Nevertheless, that which *is* known of God is apparent among them, "for God manifests it to them" (Rom.1:19). This is because God's invisible attributes are "descried" (i.e., "made out" or "detected") from the creation of the world, being apprehended by His achievements, besides His imperceptible *power* and *divinity* (*theiotês*, PLACERship). Hence man is "defenseless" (Rom.1:20b) in making the claim that since nothing can be known of God, therefore he is to be held guiltless in neither honoring nor serving Him, in neither glorifying nor thanking Him as God.

Any such defense will fail, for however limited their knowledge may be—and however insistent they may be in seeking to deny it—*humanity knows God.* That is, even if they will not admit it and may not *realize* it, they *have* a "relationship" with Him, according to the knowledge which they possess concerning Him. To be sure, their relationship to Him is largely one of estrangement. Nevertheless, just as surely as a former husband or wife continues to sustain a certain relationship to his or her former mate, humanity, in the midst of its darkness and estrangement from God, still sustains a certain relationship to Him.

Humanity's problem is not that they do not know God at all, but that they do not know Him well. The apostle Paul declares that they *do know* Him, saying that they *are* ones "knowing God" (Rom.1:21a). It is not that men do not know God at all, but that, "*knowing Him,* not *as God* do they *glorify* or *thank* Him" (Rom.1:21b).

This failure to glorify and thank God as God, common to mankind, remains our failure as well, even though we are believers in Christ Jesus and are growing in the growth of God (*cf* Col.2:19). During this present lifetime, the "growth of God" is a very slow growth and a very limited growth, even for those who may have been granted comparatively more progress therein. All who are saints are still members of the old humanity, which is corrupted in accord with its seductive desires (*cf* Eph.4:22). Considered in ourselves, we are but "flesh," and, even as our Lord, can do nothing of ourselves (*cf* John 5:30; *cp* John 15:5; Rom.8:7).

Yet we do not *think* that we can do nothing of ourselves; hence neither do we *believe* that this is so. We are taught to have confidence in ourselves; that God helps those who help themselves; and that *self*-confidence is essential to success.

Now it is true that we must first act before the grace which is appointed to follow such initial acts will be granted. Likewise, practical confidence in one's own abilities, *under God,* is ideal. There is nothing, however, in any of this that denies that the vital first act, or any other needful acts of our own along the way toward the achievement of a goal, is something for which we should neither glorify nor thank God.

In accord with the wisdom of the world, most of us, in fact, embrace the sentiment of the Roman statesman and orator Cicero, who declared, "No wise man ever thanked God for virtue." Our notion is that while the grace of God is indispensable, it is also insufficient. In our fancied inde-

pendence of God, we imagine that were it not for ourselves, we would be "even as the rest of men."

Many have convinced themselves that such a schema is essential to "human dignity." This artful phrase, however, is little more than a euphemism for self-pride. For most of us, it is not that we sometimes fail to ascribe our all to God, but that the thought of doing so does not even cross our mind. And, it is not that we simply fail to ascribe our *all* to Him, even the evil, which will eventuate in our good and His glory, but that we fail even to ascribe our virtue to Him! Never mind gracing Him with our trust concerning His purpose in our shortcomings, we refuse even to thank Him for whatever goodness we do possess. Instead of thanking God for His saving grace which alone has wrought our salvation, we insist on claiming that He has merely made our virtue possible. Our claim is that while we could not have succeeded apart from Him, still, all His help notwithstanding, it was finally something of ourselves (hence, thanks to ourselves) that turned defeat into victory.

The reason why we both entertain and maintain such stupid notions (notions from which, at least in spirit, perhaps none of us have been fully delivered), is because, *knowing God,* not *as God* do we glorify or thank Him. Consequently, we ourselves, in our own measure, "even as the rest," have been made vain in our reasonings, even as darkened in our unintelligent heart (*cf* Rom.1:21b).

From this fearful foundation have proceeded all of the evils which continue to dog us all our days. We may not have crafted idols of stone, but who among us has not engaged in "prostitution [i.e., sexual impurity], uncleanness, passion, evil desire and greed—which *is* idolatry" (Col.3:5)? It may be true, in our circle of acquaintance, that not many have "effected indecency" by altering the natural use of their bodies, taking part in passionate acts with those of their own gender (Rom.1:27). But even if

so, who among has not effected various *other* indecencies himself, ones such as envy, strife, guile, whispering (i.e., gossip), vilification, pridefulness, ostentatiousness, stubbornness, implacableness, or unmercifulness (*cf* Rom.1: 29-31)? Do we realize that these too are acts of indecency, just as surely as unnatural sexual relations?

It is my prayer that through the ongoing careful consideration of our theme, which is, "The One Who is Operating All," both the reader and the writer might be built up together in faith and love. Therefore we would not cease praying for one another, requesting that we might be filled full with the realization of God's *will,* in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, we to walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in *the realization of God;* being endued with all power, in accord with the might of His glory, for all endurance and patience with joy (*cp* Col.1:9-11).

The reality of our situation is that for mortal sinners, it is difficult to walk by faith, not by perception. Indeed, beyond difficult, it is impossible for us to do so, that is, for us to do so of ourselves. How, then, we rejoice to learn that when we *are* walking "beside God," all is possible ("with [lit., 'beside'] God [all is possible]"; Matt.19:26). We therefore soberly look to Him in His grace that He might condescend truly to grant us discernment of His will and acquaintance with His mind. Thus, and only thus, may we be learning to glorify and thank Him truly "as God."

MOTIVE AND INTENTION

"Whoever should smite his associate without knowledge when he was not hating him heretofore, or he who should come with his associate into the wildwood to chop trees, and his hand may be impelled with the axe to cut down a tree, and the iron head flies off the wooden handle and finds his associate so that he dies, that man, he

shall flee to one of these cities [of refuge] that he may live" (Deut.19:4,5).

"The smiter of a man that dies shall be put to death, yea death. But if he had no malicious intent, *yet the One, Elohim, He had fated him into his hand,* then I set for you a place where he shall flee" (Ex.21:12,13).

With this striking example of God's deity, we begin our endeavor, that of gaining a realization of the great truth that God is the One Who is *operating all* in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11).

Note that in this precept of Moses the general rule was that the smiter of a man that dies was to be put to death. In a case, however, in which the one effecting the killing had no malicious intent, such a one was not to be put to death, and was rather appointed a place where he might justly flee from any who sought to injure him for the evil done, albeit unintentionally.

From this we learn that divine judgment is concerned with intent, or motive, not simply with action, considered in itself. No act is wrong of itself, but only in relation to its motive and purpose. For example, the removal by incision of the human heart from the chest cavity in order to save a life by organ transplantation, is surely a noble deed. Yet if the same surgeon, with equal skill and expertise, should excise a human heart in order to effect murder even as to engage in cannibalism, it is recognized by all that such a one has committed an ignoble deed. How can this be so, in reference to the same act? It is because it is not, in itself, the act of excising the organ that we either praise or condemn, but the surgeon's purpose in so doing, even as his subsequent acts, in consideration of the consequences thereof to the patient, or victim.

Note especially, however, that, in Israel, in any such cases as above in which a man killed another accidentally, as when the iron head of a workman's axe flew off and fatally

injured his associate, or, in any other instances in which one man killed another unintentionally, such acts were to be accounted for as having occurred by God's appointment.

If the smiter of a man unintentionally killed another, it was to be understood that Yahweh must have fated him into his hand. Any such tragedy, though accidental from the human standpoint, was to be recognized, according to truth, as having been purposed of God.

Now rather than jumping ahead and presuming that God does or does not appoint all evil events—ones of whatever kind—to occur, from this present text itself, one should simply learn that whenever accidental or otherwise unintentional homicide occurs, it is because God has wisely determined that it should come to pass. It is not that He merely "allows" such things to happen, but that, having *appointed* all such events to occur, He then, also, allows them to come to pass.

We should therefore appraise all similar events in our own lives today in a similar light. Hence, when, due to a complex chain of unintended events, a great ocean liner sinks resulting in the deaths of many hundreds of souls, it must be because God had determined beforehand that this should occur, according to His own wise counsels. Or, when a school bus driver accidentally drives over a cliff and a large group of children die bringing sorrow to an entire community, it must be because God had fated this to occur.

Unless we accept those occurrences of both good and evil recorded in the Scriptures which are expressly declared to have been decreed of God as indeed having been decreed of God, not only will we be disbelieving, but we will lose the benefit of realizing that such events are not exceptions to the rule but are rather the rule itself. Only as we view such occurrences as, first of all, *true,* and then, as *representative* rather than exceptional, will we be in a position to realize that, "*Whatever* was written before, was written for this teach-

ing of ours, that through the endurance and the consolation of the scriptures *we* may have expectation" (Rom.15:4).

If we do at least acknowledge that whenever accidental evil events occur, they occur because God has purposed them to occur, we will then be in a position to receive the still more astounding revelation that *all* is out of God (Rom. 11:36). This is even as Isaiah is saying, "O Yahweh our Elohim, You shall *set* peace on the hearthstones for us, *for* indeed, *all our doings* You have *made* for us" (Isa.26:12).

KEPT BACK FROM SINNING

Let us now take note of a number of further specific revelations of God's deity, recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures.

In Genesis 12, God makes certain promises to Abraham. Specifically, He promises him that He will *make* his descendants a great nation, and that He will give them the land which He had appointed unto them. Then, in Genesis 15: 1-5, God further promises that Abraham shall have an heir, even as an innumerable posterity. Most significantly, in Genesis 17:1, God declares that He is "the El-Who-Suffices," that is, the Almighty God or Subjector. God can do whatever He pleases to do. He can operate upon an elderly woman's body so that she can bear a son; *and,* He can also cause Abraham to choose to migrate to Palestine and later cause Jacob to migrate to Egypt in order to fulfill the prophecy of Genesis 15:3, "Behold, You have given no seed to me; and now a son of my household will take over from me."

In light of this prophecy we should ask, Was it possible for Jacob to will never to descend to Egypt? Can man "choose" to prevent God's predictions from coming to pass? Must not man rather will to fulfill them?

Though it may seem odd at first, it follows from the fact of God's promise to Abraham that he should have both an heir and a vast posterity, that Abraham could neither commit suicide nor decline to have sexual relations. If God

promised to give Abraham's seed the land of Palestine, then it was certain that Abraham would have children. He had no free will by which to commit suicide. God controlled Abraham's will so that he could not choose otherwise.[1]

Consider, too, another verse where Abraham had moved south to Gerar, in the kingdom of Abimelech. Abimelech immediately was attracted to Sarah. He took her. God then spoke to the king in a dream. "Elohim came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him: Behold, you are to die on account of the women whom you have taken, for she is the spouse of a possessor. Now Abimelech had not gone near her, and he said: My Lord, are You going to kill even an unknowing and righteous nation? Did not he himself say to me, She is my sister? And moreover, did not she herself say, He is my brother? In the sincerity of my heart and in the innocence of my palms have I done this. The One, Elohim, replied to him in the dream: I too know that you have done this in the sincerity of your heart, and *I was also keeping you back from sinning* against Me. Therefore I did not allow you to touch her" (Gen.20:3-6).

Abimelech had no free will. He simply could not have chosen to lie with Sarah that night because God controlled his will and caused him to refrain. This is because God is Almighty, because He is the All-Sufficient One. *He did not need Abimelech's help to achieve His own purpose.*

Perhaps most notable of all in Genesis in relation to God's deity concerning human events is Genesis 50:20. Joseph declares to his brothers: "You devised evil against me, *yet Elohim devised it for good* in order to accomplish, as at this day, to preserve many people alive."

Joseph's jealous brothers had originally entertained murdering him; later, however, they changed their minds and

1. *cf* Gordon H. Clark, PREDESTINATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, p.5 (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978).

sold him into slavery. They could not have remained resolute in their proposal to kill their brother, since God had determined that Joseph should go to Egypt, later to save his family from starvation. The brothers were neither free to kill Joseph, nor to let him go. Their motives were impure; but God's purpose was good and could not fail. In the same event, *they* devised evil against Joseph, yet *God* devised it for good, according as He was intending.

In Exodus, God's deity is presented in most striking terms concerning Pharaoh. In Exodus 4:21, Yahweh says to Moses: "When you go to return to Egypt, see to all the miracles which I place in your hand, that you do them before Pharaoh. Yet I shall make his heart *steadfast,* and he shall not dismiss the people."

In Exodus 3:19, God had already declared: "*I know* that the king of Egypt *shall not* give you leave to go yea not even by a steadfast hand." Since God had made Pharaoh's heart steadfast in its resolution not to let the people go, how can anyone say that Pharaoh was "free" to let the slaves go? Is not God omnipotent, and is not His knowledge perfect? Now, we may hedge and say that God *can* control His creatures, but out of respect for their "dignity," He *will* not control them. However, what we may say God will not do, Exodus 4:21 says He did do.

Moreover, God expressly declares that, "I Myself shall *harden* the heart of Pharaoh and increase My signs and My miracles in the land of Egypt" (Ex.7:3).

The facts are these: Moses said, "Thus says Yahweh, Elohim of the Hebrews . . . . Dismiss My people that they may serve Me!" (Ex.7:16). Pharaoh said, "Go!" (Ex.10:8). "Yet Yahweh made the heart of Pharaoh steadfast, so that he did not dismiss the sons of Israel" (Ex.10:20).

This is all according as Paul recounts, "For the scripture is saying to Pharaoh that 'For this selfsame thing I rouse you up, so that I should be displaying in you My

power, and so that My name should be published in the entire earth.' Consequently, then, to whom He will, He is merciful, yet whom He will, He is *hardening*" (Rom. 9:17,18; cit. Ex.9:16).

The vital thing to see is that God was *operating* counter to His revealed will, and yet according to His intention. His preceptive will was, "Let My people go!" Yet His decretive will was to make the heart of Pharaoh steadfast, so that he would not dismiss the sons of Israel.

Similarly, in Deuteronomy 2:30 we are told that "Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through it, for Yahweh your Elohim *made* his spirit obstinate and *made* his heart resolute, that He might give him into your hand (as is known this day)."

Finally, in considering various passages from the writings of Moses about God's deity, let us turn our attention to Deuteronomy 30:6. This is not a text concerning God's causing of evil but of His determining good. The day will yet come concerning Israel when, "Yahweh your Elohim will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed so as to love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may stay alive."

This will occur in the coming eon, in the day when He *cleanses* them from *all* their uncleannesses. In that day, He will bestow His law in their inward part, and write it upon their heart (Jer.31:33). Gloriously, He will give them a new heart and bestow a new spirit within them. Indeed, He will bestow His own spirit within them, and *make it* that they will go in His statutes even as that they will observe and do His judgments (Ezek.36:26,27).

In order that we might truly believe the Scripture's own testimony regarding God's deity, may we be given an awareness that whatever God actually does is right, even if it should go counter to the popular ethics of our day. To Him be the glory! J.R.C.

JONATHAN AND DAVID

THERE is no mention of Jonathan in the seventeenth chapter where Israel stood trembling before Goliath. He was among the crowd of the fearful. His previous exploits showed a faith in God unknown to his father Saul. Yet his faith was one which looked for signs and direction (1 Samuel 14:6-10), while David's faith was one of much greater confidence in God and self-abandonment. Perhaps the complexities of court life had affected Jonathan. Though he had a follower who could say, "My heart is like your heart" (14:7), it seems he himself had no one on whom to lean and with whom to fellowship.

1 SAMUEL 18:1-5

18 + **It** [lb]**came** about [as]**when he** had [all]**finished**– › **speaking**– **to Saul,** +**that Jonathan's soul was tied** [i]**to David's soul; and Jonathan** [l]**loved him as his** own **soul.** 2 + [i]**On** ·**that day Saul** [l]**took him and would not** [g]**allow him to return** to **his father's house.** 3 + **Jonathan** [l]**contracted** a **covenant** +**with David,** [i]**since he loved**– `**him as his** own **soul.** 4 **And Jonathan** [l]**stripped** himself `of **the robe** [w]**that** was **on him and** [l]**gave it to David** along +**with his coats and** [fr]**even his sword and** [fr] **his bow and** [fr] **his girdle.** 5 + **Then David** went [l]**forth** with the men of war; [i] **wherever Saul** [l]**sent him, he** [c]**proceeded** [l]**intelligently,** so +**that Saul** [pl]**set him over the men of war; and it** seemed [l]**good in** the **eyes of all the** [wi]**soldiers and** [mr]**also in** the **eyes of Saul's courtiers.**

JONATHAN CAPTIVATED

"It came about when he [David] had finished speaking

to Saul, that Jonathan's soul was tied to David's soul; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (18:1). Saul may have been expecting to learn something from David's lineage that might explain his courage and military prowess. Perhaps David's grandfather or great uncle had been a valiant warrior. Saul would look for such explanations that were acceptable to the flesh. But Jonathan, witnessing David speak with Saul, was totally captivated by something he recognized—something to which Saul was blind.

Jonathan had been a military leader for some time, and would have been familiar with all the ploys used by soldiers to curry favor with their leaders. Probably he had been standing by when David was brought before Saul on the field of battle and refused Saul's armor. What did Jonathan see in David now? Perhaps it was something in his answer to Saul. "Saul said to him, Whose son are you, young man? David replied, The son of your servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite" (1 Sam.17:58). David's humility was remarkable. There were no claims of glory, either for self or family. And his simplicity and humility gave credence to his actions and all he had said before.

David continued acting intelligently and humbly, and his favor with all the people grew. In this respect he represents Christ, Whose disposition led to His emptying, His service, His humility and His unparalleled obedience (Phil.2:5-8). Paul exhorts us to possess and display this same disposition (Phil.2:1-5).

TIED

"Jonathan's soul was *tied* to David's soul; and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." The word *tied* simply means *to bind* or *tie* together. But when it is *souls* that are bound, the strands that unite are something other than can be touched with hands. It is very interesting that the Hebrew word here translated *tie* is frequently translated *conspire*.

Conspire is from the Latin, a compound of "con" (together) and "spire" (breathe). The thought is "breathe-together." Those who are so united in purpose that they are willing to give up self for the common goal are conspirators. They are not only united in purpose and action, but the unifying cause is so dear it is as if they even "breathe together."

Conspire, of itself, has neither a good or evil connotation; it simply refers to those who are bound together for a common goal or purpose. But perhaps the evil conspirators of our day illustrate it best. Revolutionists bond together with a common purpose, willing to give up their lives to accomplish the goal and what they consider the ultimate good of the many.

It seems that Jonathan had yearned for a *conspirator* who shared his devotion to Yahweh and his patriotism and his values. Jonathan's persuasions and arguments with Saul show that they truly had little in common. But in David, Jonathan not only found one who hungered and thirsted for the same things as he, he found one who excelled himself. In David, Jonathan found someone with whom he could share all that was truly precious. His response was love and self-abasing devotion.

Christ was once so tightly surrounded by listeners that His own mother and brothers could not reach him. His response to one questioning this was, "For anyone whoever should be doing the will of My Father Who is in the heavens, he is My brother and mother!" (Matt.12:50).

ACCEPTANCE OF THE SAVIOUR

The 17th and 18th chapters of 1 Samuel speak of four different sets of armor. There is the armor of Goliath, David's armor (if a stave, a sling and a shepherd's bag with stones may be termed armor), Saul's armor and Jonathan's armor. Both Saul and Jonathan offer their armor to David with respect to his being their deliverer. But

their means and attitudes in offering it are strikingly and instructively different.

Saul greeted his deliverer with denial, "You are not able . . ." (17:33). Upon David's insistence of God's faithfulness and care, Saul consented and pronounced an affirmation of Yahweh's presence, but his actions denied that he believed Yahweh's presence would be sufficient. "Then *Saul clothed David* in *his* coats, placed a helmet of bronze on his head and put on him a body armor" (1 Sam.17:38). This is as if to say, "You may, in fact, save me, but you must wear the armor I provide and use my weapons to do so."

Jonathan met David, accepting him as his deliverer, declaring his love and allegiance to him and making a covenant of loyalty to him. No effort does Jonathan make to regulate David, but "Jonathan *stripped himself* of the robe that was on him and gave it to David along with his coats and even his sword and his bow and his girdle" (18:4). Jonathan offers to David, not only all that he has, but also all that he is. David went forth with the men of war and became their leader—this was Jonathan's position. Jonathan could easily have required that David be second to him, but his disposition was, "You shall reign over Israel, and I myself shall become second to you" (1 Sam.23:17). Saul's attitude was, "I shall retain you in my service. You will fight my battles and lead my warriors and avenge me of my enemies."

These same attitudes are displayed daily a millionfold. There are many that would say to Christ, "You may be my Saviour, but you must wear the robes of my righteousness and the coats of my works, and you must wield the weapons of my strength." The armor of the self-righteous is heavy, and they prize it highly. But to those, like David, who know something of grace, it is only wearisome.

Then there are those with Jonathan's attitude who say, "I will love the Lord my God with all my heart and with

all my soul and with all my understanding" (*cf* Matt. 22:37). Or, with the Baptist they say, "He must be growing, yet mine it is to be inferior" (John 3:30). Or with Paul they say, "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death . . . . I am also deeming all to be a forfeit because of the superiority of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, because of Whom I forfeited all, and am deeming it to be refuse, that I should be gaining Christ, and be found in Him, not having my righteousness, which is of law, but that which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God for faith" (Phil.1:20; 3:8,9).

JOINED IN SOUL

Not only should the believer be united with Christ and the Father in love and devotion, but there should also be a great and deep unity between members of the body. ". . . Fill my joy full, that you may be *mutually disposed,* having *mutual love, joined in soul,* being *disposed to one thing* . . ." (Phil.2:2). Paul gave the Philippians an exhortation (Phil.1:27-2:4) which he followed with four examples (Phil.2:5-30). The exhortation was to be united and steadfast regardless of circumstances.

The first example was of Christ, Who emptied Himself of the glory inherent to His form, and took a lower form in which He manifested God's love. His complete and selfless emptying was a display of His equality with God in love and truth. Secondly, Paul testified of his willingness to give up his life in the service of the evangel to the Philippians. Timothy was the third example, one who was "equally sensitive" (or, *equal-souled*) with Paul, and who would be genuinely solicitous to the Philippians' concerns (2:20). Finally there was Epaphroditus, who risked his soul to perform the ministry of the Philippians (2:30).

All these examples hark back to the giving up of one's

own life and the display of the love of God. They are examples of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians, "Become, then, imitators of God, as beloved children, and be walking in love, according as Christ also loves you, and gives Himself up for us, an approach present and a sacrifice to God, for a fragrant odor" (Eph.5:1,2). How closely do we approximate this in our fellowship?

J. Philip Scranton

ADDITIONAL NOTES ON GENESIS 1:1

The Concordant Version of Genesis 1:1 given on page 13 differs in several respects that given in the 1957 edition. These changes are generally made in the interest of consistency with similar expressions elsewhere in the Version, or because of demands of idiomatic English when these do not conflict with Concordant principles. Two of these changes may call for special explanation, as follows:

Brother Knoch was surely correct in his insistence that the Hebrew title of this book does not refer to some sort of absolute beginning. Yet the use of "the" in lightface type, does not, in itself, indicate such an inconceivable idea (see the Concordant rendering of John 1:1). The whole book deals with beginnings, especially the beginning of creation as far as the earth is concerned, and the beginning of generation on the earth.

It is also correct that the verb "created" appears before the subject "Elohim" in the Hebrew word order of the first sentence of Scripture. But this is the normal word order for a simple, direct statement in Hebrew (verb, subject, object). It seems to us that this sentence ought to be expressed in the normal word order for a direct statement in English (subject, verb, object). In this way the emphasis is given to the entire statement itself rather than to any particular word.

D.H.H.

INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES

UNDER the general title, "The Words and Work of God and Man," I am presenting a series of studies in Ecclesiastes. While the exposition developed in these pages must be allowed to speak for itself, a few explanatory remarks regarding the process by which the conclusions advanced have been reached seem both desirable and necessary.

Those seeking the mind of God through the Scriptures are confronted with a critical obstacle of an unusual kind. The current versions of the Bible often translate the same Hebrew word in various ways, and quite as often one English word is made to do the duty of several words in the Original. In this way a veil of mystery has been thrown over many a passage, and a certain amount of human opinion and guesswork has been imported into God's truth.

The Book of Ecclesiastes has severely suffered from this inconsistency in translation. Evidence of this fact will come before us in these studies. Meanwhile an illustration will serve to show the way in which the Scriptures have been unconsciously obscured. The noun *chesbon* in verses 25, 27 and 29 of the seventh chapter, is represented by "reason," "account," and "invention" in the AV. It must be evident to the least critical reader that the author's thought is necessarily obscured when in a brief paragraph with a sustained argument the same word is rendered by different terms conveying divergent, and even unrelated, ideas.[1]

1. The CV of Ecclesiastes renders this word "design" and "devisings" in these passages.

Another powerful factor in determining one's conception of Ecclesiastes is the question of the Hebrew text. The Massoretic accents are used not only as signs of interpunction, but often as a Rabbinical commentary on the text. We are not bound by the accents in any case and should scrutinize them carefully, especially in Messianic prophecies. Of great value, yet they are *no part of the sacred text.* It is possible also that we may not fully know the reasons of their location in important places, and may impute wrong motives to the Jewish editors of the text. That they can be perverted is plain enough from the fact that the vocalization often foists upon a passage a meaning out of harmony with the context.

AIM

No sacred book has ever been so much misunderstood in its whole aim and spirit as Ecclesiastes. The opinions of learned men have been put on a level with sacred writings. Eventually the views which became popular have been considered "authoritative"; and to this day theology is unable to free itself from the trammels of tradition and confess that authority in matters of exegesis rests exclusively with facts derived from the Bible itself. Our aim should always be to adjust our thoughts to the facts, and never to adjust the facts to our thoughts.

Applying this principle to the matter in hand, our prime concern is to ascertain what the book of Ecclesiastes has to say about itself. In the epilogue we read, "The terminus of the whole matter has been heard: Fear the One, Elohim, and keep His instructions, for this is the whole duty of humanity. For the One, Elohim, shall bring every deed into judgment concerning all that is obscured, whether good or whether evil" (12:13,14). Hence we may say the book aims at achieving a threefold object: (1) Recognition

of God as God; (2) Reception of His revelation; (3) Regulation of life in view of a future rectification or judgment.

CHARACTER

What the author wrote was upright and true. "The Assembler sought to find words of delight, and what was written is uprightness and words of truth" (12:10).

This statement explodes the idea in vogue which reads into Ecclesiastes the pessimism of a broken-spirited debauchee. Some have even placed this gem on a level with the works of Byron, Heine, and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

To substantiate this theory appeal is made to the speeches of Job's associates as examples of utterances by misguided critics, who had less understanding of God's ways in providence than the man whom they sought to correct. Concurring in this opinion of the discourses of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, we would point out that the case of Ecclesiastes is by no means analogous. At the end of the book of Job, Yahweh informed his associates that they had not spoken concerning Him what was rightly so (Job 42:7). The opposite is true of Ecclesiastes. The categorical statement of the epilogue describes its contents as words of uprightness and truth.

AUTHOR

We are now prepared to consider whether Ecclesiastes asserts itself as the work of Solomon. When we turn to the prologue and epilogue, where it is most natural to expect information respecting authorship, we find no mention whatever of Solomon, nor anything to suggest his personality. On the contrary, there are many things in the book incompatible with the historic Solomon. But it may be said, While Solomon is not mentioned by name, the designation "Son of David" is equivalent to it. This seemingly decisive argument is in reality of no weight. The Hebrew "son" may

equally well mean "descendant;" hence evidence from the book itself must decide between the alternative meanings.

The thrice repeated reference to those who were "over Jerusalem before me" (1:16; 2:7,9) proves that Ecclesiastes looks back on a series of predecessors, a thing Solomon could not do. To say that the writer may have had in mind the old Jebusite princes is gratuitous. What Israelite, not to say anointed of the Lord, would think of identifying himself with the rulers of an accursed nation?

There are three problems which preoccupy Ecclesiastes—death, succession, the just suffering as a sinner. Death occupies a large place (*cf* 2:16; 3:19; 4:2; 7:1,17,26; 8:9; 9:3-5), the special point of perplexity being the just dying the death of the unclean. The prominence given to Succession (2:18,19; 4:8; 6:2) is not surprising, seeing the writer himself is a king, for with royalty it is a paramount question, especially in Israel, where the Messianic hope was bound up with the perpetuity of the Davidic house. Hence the kings of Judah occupied a place which no other kings ever have, or could, occupy—they were *forerunners* of the Messiah. The violent fate overtaking the just—his being carried off from the holy place—is also a matter of grave concern (7:15; 8:10-14; 9:2,3).

A moment's consideration will show that the problems contemplated in Ecclesiastes do not fit with Solomon's experience. As to death, in his old age Solomon lapsed into idolatry; therefore death in a manner indicating the Lord's displeasure—a possibility which dismays Ecclesiastes—would, according to Hebraic conceptions, be a just reward of his deserts. As to succession, Solomon reigned forty years. As Rehoboam, his son and heir, was forty years of age at the time of accession to the throne, he must have been born the very year of his father's coronation. Solomon's succession was thus assured from the beginning of his reign. As for the trials of the just, the calamities which

marred the close of Solomon's tranquil reign were inflicted by the Lord because of his apostasy.

The author of the book, being a king of the Davidic line, the question of date is restricted within definite bounds. It cannot be earlier than Rehoboam, nor later than Zedediah. Now, there is only one king possessing the necessary requirements: Hezekiah of Judah.

The problems which engage Ecclesiastes present a striking analogy with Hezekiah's experience. When Israel came out of Egypt Yahweh promised not to put on them the diseases of Egypt, if they would heed His commandments, and keep His statutes (Ex.15:26). King Hezekiah gave himself to Yahweh's service, loved His law supremely and trusted in Him implicitly. Yet he is smitten with the disease of Egypt, and his death is decreed by the God he served: "Thus speaks Yahweh: Give instruction to your household, for you are going to die; and you shall not remain alive" (Isa.38:1). Surely here is an experience to stagger faith and arouse questionings.

Succession was no less pertinent with him. He faced a dynastic, and therefore a Messianic, crisis, when brought to the gates of the Unseen having neither "son nor second." The word of Isaiah announcing his certain death involved another grave fact—as his disease was a species of leprosy, it meant burial with the unclean, and this, coupled with childlessness, was to him, and to the nation at large, a sign that Yahweh had rejected him.

The problems in Ecclesiastes find an echo in the psalm of Hezekiah (Isa.38:9-20). Here is mourning over death and the rejection by Yahweh which parallels the somber mood prevailing in the first part of Ecclesiastes. "My lifespan is uprooted and is deported from me like a shepherd's tent; I have rolled up my life as a weaver does; He is clipping me from the thrum. From day unto night, You are finishing me up" (Isa.38:12). And even as hopeful-

ness is on the ascendency in the second part of Ecclesiastes, so also Hezekiah's psalm concludes with acclamation: "The living! the living one! he is acclaiming You as I do today" (Isa.38:19).

The conclusion emerging from these considerations is that to designate the Book of Ecclesiastes as a "dissertation" and its author a "skeptic" is to ignore the practical intention or purpose enunciated in the book itself. The purview of this book is much broader and grander than Bible students have hitherto been willing to allow. It approaches no less a theme than the place of evil in the Divine plan.

This need not surprise us after what we have already seen of the relation it sustains to King Hezekiah. The character and experience of the man preeminently fitted him to assume a representative capacity in his discussion of the universe.

The affliction of Hezekiah, which paved the way to a glorious aftermath of prosperity and peace, furnished a concrete illustration of the gracious purposes subserved by evil. We cannot but believe that such unique experience would crystalize into a masterpiece of literature.

The view here advanced puts a different complexion on the alleged materialistic ideas. If we identify the words of Ecclesiastes with the unusual trial of a particular personage—Hezekiah, for instance—then the texts can be put into context. The so-called "materialistic" ideas are but reflections on the possible meaning of events which were suggested to the writer as he observed life. The occasion which brought this book into existence enables us to discern in it the plaint of a saint, holding fast to his faith in God, who is brought into perplexity before the strange dispensation of God's providence. V. Gelesnoff

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The original study from which the preceding article was selected appeared in *Unsearchable Riches,* volume 3.

WHAT ELOHIM HAS GIVEN TO THE SONS OF HUMANITY

WE might well suppose that the theme of Ecclesiastes is the *vanity,* or *transitoriness,* of life, the world and its affairs. This is indeed one of the most obvious issues of the book, a very apparent point of interest. But this is no dissertation on resignation or despair. Rather it is an honest recognition of these evils viewed in the light of, and with firm attachment to, the existence of God.

There is all the difference in the world between the secular, sophisticated cynic or scholarly epicurean, who may soberly and calmly observe this vanity of things, recording it as boldly and grandly as the Assembler himself, and the writer of Ecclesiastes. The Assembler sees and states what we all see and feel but may not often state. But he observes and speaks always with God in view. And he never views the transitoriness and the seeming unfairness of things as they appear without relating them to God. God is the Creator. He is the First Cause. He has the ultimate responsibility.

Thus the book becomes a source of hope and praise. We are thankful that the scriptural sense of vanity is not eternal meaninglessness, but rather transitoriness. In recognizing God as the One responsible, we begin to realize that there is power and purpose behind the vanity. This means that the vanity finally is not in vain. We are caught up by the Assembler's frank recognition of vanity and stirring description of disorder, but if we listen carefully to the writer's contextual connection of this evil with the existence of God Who is wholly involved with all His creation

and its sad situation, we will not despair. Instead indeed we will say with exultation and thankfulness, "All is well."

The theme of Ecclesiastes is vanity and struggle and hurt *in relation to God* Who knows what He is doing with His creation and where He is going with it.

THE ONE, ELOHIM

Elohim, the One Who subjects all through His chosen channels and means is the Protagonist of this book. Since this is so, we are assured that our own experiences of weariness and being cast down are not meaningless or matters of absolute vanity, but are part of God's operations within the province of His purpose. They enlighten us concerning Elohim, or as the Assembler often designates Him, *the* Elohim. The Concordant Version renders this divine title which is preceded by the definite article, **the** One, **Elohim.** The word "One" in lightface type is not intended in the sense of "singular," but is used as a pronoun (so as to say, "that One, Elohim") in order to indicate the emphasis which the definite article suggests. *The* One being spoken of is Elohim, the Supreme Subjector.

It may be helpful to separate certain references to God in this book, stringing them together apart from the details concerning human experience and observation which occupy so much space. This may aid us in keeping this necessary aspect of Ecclesiastes in view later when we look more closely at the various details. The writer never loses sight of God or of His operations as he writes. Neither should we as we read and meditate on his writings.

The Assembler, therefore, reminds us:

Elohim has given us our experience of evil (1:13). He gives wisdom, knowledge and rejoicing (2:26). He gives experience (3:10) and makes everything and does His work (3:11). To eat and drink and see good is a gift of Elohim (3:13). What Elohim is doing shall be for the eon and can-

not be added to or subtracted from by others; He does it (3:14). The One, Elohim, shall seek out (3:15) and judge (3:17). He manifests and shows (3:18). The One, Elohim, is in the heavens (5:2), and He gives us the number of our days (5:18). He gives riches and substance and good (5:19) and keeps our hearts occupied (5:20). With His giving of riches He may not give power to enjoy them (6:2). He is mighty (6:10). He has overturned (7:13). He makes all kinds of days (7:14). The One, Elohim, made humanity upright (7:29) and gives us toil (8:15). The righteous and the wise are in the hand of the One, Elohim (9:1). He gives us the days of our transitory lives (9:9). The One, Elohim, made everything (11:5) and shall bring us into judgment (11:9; 12:14). The spirit will return to the One, Elohim, Who gave it (12:7).

Remember your Creator (12:1).

These are not words for discouragement. They are full of promise and hope, assurance and expectation. God is our Creator. Remember Him in all situations and at all times.

GOD HAS GIVEN EVIL TO US

In contemplating the experience of evil he has seen, the Assembler is not caught up in a feeling of hopelessness or selfish cynicism because he begins with the premise that God has given the experience of evil to us. The vanity and the apparent unfairness of our lives and the ways of the world "is an experience of evil Elohim has given to the sons of humanity to humble them by it" (Ecc.1:13; *cp* 3:10). There are two major revelations here that we must keep in view as we go through this book. First of all, this vanity and apparent injustice is given to us by God. And then: What is given to us by God is given to us for a purpose.

The particular evil that has captured the mind of the Assembler is the experience of not getting anywhere despite toil and honesty in our deeds and reverence in service to

God. But this is only apparent. It cannot be eternal if God does exist and He has a goal. To be humbled is a goal, and even if we cannot appreciate its goodness, at least it speaks of an end which God has in view. In time we will become thankful for this humbling, and so we will become prepared for the further glories God has for us, all of which will be realized with joy because of the background of evil that we experience during the brief years of the present.

THIS TREASURE FROM GOD

For us today the revelation of God is far more glorious than the Assembler could have discovered. In the evangel we are given "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor.4:6).

This does not mean that we will not observe or experience hurts and pressures and perplexities. In our transitory days there will be apparent injustices and real discouragements. When we see the foolish exalted and the wicked applauded, as we will, it will dishearten us. Death is all around and within us. But we have the awareness of the treasure of the love of Christ, Who died for the sake of all (2 Cor.5:14).

Having this treasure, the apostle Paul penned his own "Ecclesiastes" from time to time. "In everything, being afflicted, but not distressed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down but not perishing" (2 Cor.4:9). "For what is being observed is temporary, yet what is not being observed is eonian" (2 Cor.4;18). "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, being rich, because of you He became poor, that you, by His poverty, should be rich" (2 Cor.8:9). As we experience the vanity to which God has subjected the entire creation (Rom.8: 20-25), we are aware that He is working all together for good (8:28), for He spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all (8:32). D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1999
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY

EDITORIAL

THE FOLLOWING PRÉCIS of the foundations of our faith is set forth in response to the many requests which we have received, asking us to provide a "statement of faith." This we gladly do, as submitted herein:[1]

We believe that all scripture is inspired by God, and is beneficial for teaching, for exposure, for correction, for discipline in righteousness . . . (2 Tim.3:16; 1 Thess.2:13). The pattern of sound words must be preserved as given in the Originals (2 Tim.1:13). The word of truth must be correctly cut (2 Tim.2:15), and each part applied to those to whom it was written: our Lord's ministry (Rom.15:8) and the twelve apostles to the Circumcision, and Paul to the nations (Eph.3:8; 1 Tim.2:7). All scripture is *for* us, but it is not all *about* us.

Our faith is founded upon the *deity,* or subjectorship, of God; that is, upon the revelation that *all* is out of, through, and for God (Rom.11:36)—the One Who is *operating all* according to the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11), the One Who is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ (Eph.1:16) and the only true God (John 17:3).

Thus we believe that there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, and we for Him, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom all is, and we through Him (1 Cor.8:6).

Accordingly, then, we believe that as to divine blessing, it is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful (Rom.9:16). To whom He will, He is merciful, yet to whom He will, He is hardening (Rom.9:18).

How we rejoice in believing that all those who are in Christ today, were chosen by God before the disruption of the world, and were designated beforehand for the place of a son for Him,

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1. A wider summary-affirmation of our faith is provided in the document, "Some of the Special Truths for which We Stand," available on our Internet site (http://concordant.org/about/special_truths.html), or upon request, by postal mail.

through Christ Jesus. This was in accord with the delight of His will for the laud of the glory of His grace (Eph.1:4-6).

Further, how we especially rejoice in believing that God locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all (Rom.11:32); that He is the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim. 4:10); that, at the consummation, the last enemy is being abolished: death (1 Cor.15:26); that all shall be subjected to God that God may be All in all (1 Cor.15:28); that, even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified (1 Cor.15:22).

Indeed, we even believe that it is the secret of God's will to head up all in the Christ, both those in the heavens and those on the earth (Eph.1:10), and that, through Christ, it is God's delight to reconcile all to Himself (making peace through the blood of Christ's cross), whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:20).

Now concerning all of these things we declare: "*Righteous* is Yahweh in *all* His ways, and *benign* in *all* His works" (Psa.145:17).

In our quest for truth, we must begin by realizing that beloved pastors and renowned scholars may well be mistaken. Let *no one* be boasting in men (1 Cor.3:21). Likewise, whatever God actually reveals is true, and whatever God actually does is right. It is of no significance as to truth, if any certain teaching should fail to gain the approval of our conscience. The conscience is often governed by false tradition; it is not the arbiter of truth. The conscience may be weak, or defiled (1 Cor.8:7; Titus 1:15); or, it may be cauterized (1 Tim.4:2).

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—however plainly and explicitly expressed in Scripture—*are concealed* in Him, in the God and Father, of Christ (Col.2:2,3). A man cannot get anything if it should not be given him out of heaven (John 3:27). It is God to Whom we owe our all; and, specifically, it is God Who makes our faith "grow up" (1 Cor.3:6).

The greatest need for every believer is to be granted *a spirit of wisdom and revelation* in the realization of God, the eyes of our heart having been enlightened (Eph.1:17). In providing this brief word in testimony of our faith, then, we are praying on behalf of all the saints for this very spiritual endowment, giving thanks to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.

J.R.C.

GENESIS 1:2

2 +**As** for **the earth, it came** to **be** a **chaos and vacant, and darkness** was **over** the sur**face of the abyss.**

And the **spirit of Elohim** was **vibrating over** the sur**face of the waters.**

NOTES AND CROSS REFERENCES

As for the earth, it: The conjunction usually rendered "and" is used disjunctively here; the unusual Hebrew word order of subject before verb puts emphasis on the subject, *earth,* which is indicated here by the use of the pronominal suffix of the verb ("it").

came to be: simple, active, complete verb form, third person singular; ENGLISHMAN'S CONCORDANCE (E.C.) provides only a few examples of the some 3,560 occurrences, pages 360, 361; when not translated by forms of *become* or *come to be,* a superior italic *b* is placed immediately before the term used; *cf* Isa.45:18; Jer.4:23; 2 Pet.3:6.

chaos: masculine, singular noun in the Hebrew word family CHAOS, E.C. p.1336, rendered *chaos,* and idiomatically, *ineffectual, ineffectual idols, wasteland:*

Gen.1:2	the earth, it came to be a *chaos*
Dt.32:10	in a *chaos*, a howling desolation.
1 S.12:21	*ineffectual idols* which neither benefit nor rescue.
1 S.12:21	since they are *ineffectual.*

Job 6:18 They ascend into the *wasteland* and perish,
Job 12:24 to stray in a wayless *wasteland.*
Job 26:7 He stretched out the north over the *chaos*
Ps.107:40 to stray in a wayless *wasteland*
Isa.24:10 The town of *chaos* is broken down;
Isa.29:21 turning aside the righteous into a *chaos*
Isa.34:11 measuring tape of *chaos.*
Isa.40:17 Less than nil and a *chaos*
Isa.40:23 makes judges of the earth to be like *chaos.*
Isa.41:29 Wind and *chaos* are their molten images.
Isa.44:9 all of them are *ineffectual,*
Isa.45:18 He did not create it a *chaos;*
Isa.45:19 I did not say . . . Seek Me in a *chaos;*
Isa.49:4 exhausted My vigor for *chaos.*
Isa.59:4 Trusting in *chaos* and speaking futility,
Jer.4:23 and behold it was a *chaos* and vacant,

vacant: masculine, singular noun, E.C. p.188, 3 occurrences (always in association with *chaos*): *vacant* Gen.1:2; Jer.4:23; *vacancy* Isa.34:11.

darkness: masculine, singular noun in the Hebrew word family KEEP BACK, E.C. p.470; *cf* Ex.10:21; Deut.4:11; 5:23; Job 19:8; Psa.88:12; 105:28; Isa.45:7; 60:2; Ezek. 32:8; Joel 2:2.

over the surface of: literally: *on the face of,* a phrase occurring twice in this verse; see also: Gen.1:29; 6:1; 7:3,18,23; 8:9; 11:4,8,9; Job 5:10,10; 24:18; 26:10; 37:12,19; 38:30; Amos 5:8; 9:6; the preposition *on* is frequently used in the sense of *over,* E.C. p.932 (partial list); the masculine noun in the Hebrew word family FACE is always plural in Hebrew, E.C. p.1023; among several idiomatic variants used in the CVOT are: *facade, presence, surface;* this Hebrew word also serves in certain cases for the preposition *before.*

abyss: feminine, singular noun in the Hebrew word family CHAOS+SEA, E.C. p.1336, based on the Greek word used

in the Septuagint translation; the former CV rendering, *submerged chaos,* reflected a sense here of the earth in chaos surrounded by a thick, sea-like atmosphere, but *abyss* maintains that sense of deep chaos and is appropriate for all occurrences. A complete concordance listing follows:

Gen. 1:2 darkness was over the surface of the *abyss*.
Gen. 7:11 all the springs of the vast *abyss*.
Gen.8:2 The springs of the *abyss* and the crevices
Gen.49:25 With blessings of the *abyss* reclining beneath,
Ex.15:5 *Abysses* covered them;
Ex.15:8 The *abysses* were congealed
Dt.8:7 springs and from the *abyss*
Dt.33:13 water from the *abyss* reclining beneath,
Job 28:14 The *abyss* says, It is not in me!
Job 38:16 walked about in the fathoms of the abyss?
Job 38:30 the face of the *abyss* is frozen over?
Job 41:32 reckon the *abyss* to be greyhaired.
Ps.33:7 Bestowing the *abyss* in treasure vaults.
Ps.36:6 Your judgment like the vast *abyss*:
Ps.42:7 *Abyss* to *abyss* is calling in the sound
Ps.71:20 bring me up from the *abyss* of the earth.
Ps.77:16 Indeed the *abyss* was disturbed.
Ps.78:15 let them drink from the *abyss*,
Ps.104:6 You covered it with the *abyss*
Ps.106:9 enabled them to walk through the *abyss*
Ps.107:26 they descended to the *abyss*;
Ps.135:6 In the seas and every *abyss*;
Ps.148:7 Sea monsters and every *abyss*,
Pro.3:20 By His knowledge the *abyss* broke forth,
Pro.8:24 When there were no *abysses*
Pro.8:27 the horizon on the face of the *abyss*,
Pro.8:28 set the springs of the *abyss*
Isa.51:10 the waters of the vast *abyss*,
Isa.63:13 Who conducted them in the *abyss*

Ezk.26:19 when I bring up the *abyss* over you,
Ezk.31:4 The *abyss* made it rise high;
Ezk.31:15 I will cover the *abyss*,
Am.7:4 it is devouring the vast *abyss*,
Jon.4:5 The *abyss* is surrounding me;
Hab.3:10 The *abyss* sounded forth its voice;

spirit: feminine, singular noun in the Hebrew word family WIND, E.C. p.1160; occurs often, usually rendered *wind, windy* or *spirit,* but rendered idiomatically as *direction* (1 Chron.9:24), *scent* (Job 19:17), and in a plural usage, *motives* (Prov.16:2); *cf* Psa.104:30; Ezek.1:4,12,20.

Elohim: Divine Title, meaning: T*oward-Subjector-s; cf* John 1:2,18; 10:30-38; Col.1:16-20; 1 Cor.15:28.

vibrating: participle in the "make" branch of a Hebrew verb that occurs only three times, E.C. p. 1169, rendered *be-tremulous* (Jer.23:9), *hover* (Deut.32:11), and *vibrate* (Gen.1:2).

the waters: definite article prefixed to masculine, plural noun in the Hebrew word family FROM+SEA, E.C. p.694.

The spirit vibrating *over the surface of the waters* will lead, in association with Elohim's words, to a separating of the waters (Gen.1:6). This brings order to the confused mixture of liquids, gases and solids of the abyss. The waters of the deluge in Noah's day had mastery over the earth and brought death (Gen.7:17-24). Again the solution was given by Elohim Who caused a *wind* to pass over the earth, "and the waters subsided" (Gen.8:1). Later, in the midst of his own personal chaos, Job was reminded of these passages in Genesis, and, speaking of God, he exclaimed, "He stretched out the north over the chaos . . . . He delineated the horizon over the surface of the waters, unto the boundary of light with darkness" (Job 26:7-10). So also David sang: "The voice of Yahweh is over the waters . . . . The voice of Yahweh sounds with vigor" (Psa.29:3,4).

DISRUPTION AND THE POWER OF SPIRIT

THE first physical disruption is recorded in the forefront of revelation, after the creation of the heavens and the earth, by which the earth became a chaos and vacant.

"As for the earth, it came to be a chaos and vacant, and darkness was over the surface of the abyss" (Gen.1:2a).

This primeval cataclysm is referred to in the Scriptures as if it were the most important event in the past history of the earth, second only to its destruction by fire in the future. Other vital events are dated either *before* or *from* the disruption. *Before* it the Father loved the Son (John 17:24). Then it was that He chose us in Christ (Eph.1:4). Then also Christ, as the *flawless* and *unspotted* Lamb was *foreknown* (1 Pet.1:19-20). *From* the disruption the Lambkin was *slain* (Rev.13:8). There is the shedding of *blood,* beginning with Abel (Luke 11:50-51), besides the making ready of the kingdom (Matt.25:34).

The apostle Peter explains the relation of the earth to the cosmic arrangements upon its surface by calling the latter a "world." He speaks of the *earth* cohering out of water and through water, by the Word of God; through which the then *world,* being deluged by water, perished. This is accurately described by the phrase *"the disruption of the world."* The earth itself was not disrupted, only the system upon it. The same was true of the ancient *world* of Noah's day (*cf* 2 Pet.2:5; 3:6). Then, of course, it included all land life, as well as mankind, with the exception of those in the ark.

We do not know the underlying cause that produced the two deluges which disrupted the earth in the past. Some of the contributing causes are revealed. In the past the *water* stored in the earth played a large part in the catastrophe. The corresponding future disasters will be due, in part, at least, to the fact that the earth now is stored with *fire* (2 Pet.3:7). Volcanoes are clear evidence that the fire is there. I have visited Vesuvius, and have seen what it did to Pompeii when it buried it under ashes many feet deep. We are not told that the subterranean fire will burst forth during the judgment period, which corresponds with the second deluge, but fire is used to dissolve the present earth just before the new creation (2 Pet.3:10; Rev.21:1).

THE SPIRIT OF ELOHIM

If we do not know the underlying cause of this disruption, we do know the cause of its correction and the restoration of the earth. "The spirit of Elohim was vibrating over the surface of the waters" (Gen.1:26).

The operations of God's spirit in imparting *motion* and *life* and *intelligence* transcend human expression, and are usually too abstract for us to grasp in literal language. Hence we are introduced to it by a series of illustrations. Indeed, much of the truth of God's earliest revelation comes to us as if it were a picture book for children. So it is that in the first intimation of the mode of the spirit's operation, a word is used which is elsewhere applied to the vibratory motion of a bird's pinions when it is *hovering* in the air. The *tremulous action* of the vulture's wings suggest the mode of operation of the spirit in restoring the earth. Repeated and powerful impulses were given to the ruined wreck which resulted in its restoration. First there is light, as distinct from darkness. Then the gases are separated, and the fluids are parted from the solids, to form the various layers of which the present earth is composed.

THE MEANING OF SPIRIT

How difficult it is to define spirit in literal language! It takes about half a column in our Greek-English Concordance, and is longer than any other. But God provides a picture of it preceding even those of light and life. In the original Hebrew the word is WIND. It was a "wind" of God that vibrated over the waters and brought light. It is a pity that we cannot use this for both in other languages, for it is the inspired illustration of *spirit.* The wind *itself* cannot be perceived by our faculties. We can feel and see and hear and smell its *effects,* but the power itself lies beyond our apprehension. Our Lord compared its action to a powerful blast (John 3:8). So it is that nature provides us with the clearest definition of the most intangible and spiritual of all things, the very essence of God, for He is not merely *a* spirit, but *is* literally Spirit.

A clear understanding of the very first action of the spirit of God may be of value in apprehending its further operations. The AV says that the spirit *moved.* This is correct, but it gives us no clue as to the character of its motion. The Hebrew word occurs only three times. The most helpful is found in Deuteronomy (32:11) where we read of a vulture that "*fluttereth* over her young" (AV). In Jeremiah 23:9 the prophet says "all my bones *shake.*" Not many of us have seen a vulture hovering over her fledglings. But some of us have observed a hawk or other bird of prey, hovering in mid-air, before plunging downward, or a humming bird, as it vibrates its wings when draining the nectar from a flower. Perhaps all of us have experienced the shaking of our bones.

THE SPIRIT OF LIGHT

The contexts give us the kind of movement which is attributed to God's spirit. It was a fast to and from motion, which is best expressed by the world, VIBRATE; hence we

have chosen this for the standard of this stem, though it cannot well be used of birds or of man. This meaning is confirmed by the first result, which was *light.* This is now generally taken to be the effect produced by etherial vibrations on the eye. I would never seek to conform the Scriptures to the *theories* of so-called "science." But when God's revelation agrees with the evidence of *nature,* I am convinced. All the more so, as the following events also are in agreement with our present knowledge of natural phenomenon.

In bringing us back from death into life when we first believe, the spirit of God pursues the same course. "The God Who says that, out of darkness light shall be shining, is He Who shines in our hearts" (2 Cor.4:6). First the spirit hovers over the sinner in his darkness and enlightens him through the power of God's Word. One is a fine figure of the other, in a higher realm. The Son of God, anointed by the spirit, is the Light of the world (John 1:9). We also, who have the spirit dwelling in us, are light (Eph.5:8), and children of light (1 Thess.5:5). We must understand the meaning of the literal operation in this passage before we can fully appreciate its force in these figures.

CREATION

Creation is not confined to the making of one plant of each species, in the beginning, but of including in it all the plants of that species that will ever exist in the future. It is not a question of *ev*olution and constant change to correspond to environment, but of *in*volution, not in its restricted biological sense of degeneration, but of having in itself all that eventually comes out of it. Out of nothing nothing comes. Each species remains true to its original, and reverts to it when left free to do so. Each plant was created *for its species*, or, as the Hebrew more exactly expresses it, "*for* its FROMS" or from-kind, that is, those

that spring *from* it. It never changes to make another species. As a result there is not a single species in the world today that was not created in the beginning. There are species that have died out, but no new ones that have evolved from the original, or have been produced by crossing.

What a relief it is to read God's own account of His creation! A single line of it is worth more than all the books ever written on evolution. Life began with verdure (Gen. 1:11). Here are a few phrases that settle the "origin of species." When God spoke verdure into being by His spirit, He made "herbage *seeding seed for its from-kind.*" Marvelous is it, and utterly beyond the power of any of His creatures, how God makes a single living thing. Men might imitate a blade of grass so as to appear like a real one, but *it would not grow.* How utterly impossible would it be to even make a dead member of the human body! Even if our eyesight were deceived, a microscope would soon detect its imperfections. But how can we give it life? Who can see with a glass eye? Wherever there is life we should perceive the "finger," or spirit, of God.

On a memorable occasion I was most powerfully impressed with the greatness of God in the smallest things. I stood before General Sherman, as the biggest of the "big trees" is named, and marveled at its tremendous bulk, the largest living thing on earth. I had seen large pine cones, or seed containers, and reasoned that its cones must, of course, be the largest of all. Instead, they were rather small. Its seed, instead of being the largest of all, was a tiny thing, light as a feather. Indeed, one could not feel its weight. So may a most insignificant act, almost unnoticed at the time, contain the potentials of great things in the future. The mere execution of an alleged traitor, long ago, will result in the restoration of all of God's creation at the consummation.

But some will be sure to say that it is impossible to put

the life and the form of millions of millions of living plants into the microscopic part of one single seed. Yes, so it is, for a *man*. But God not only *can*, but *has done so*. If He will pry open our closed eyes to acknowledge this, one of the minor marvels in the grand revelation of His power and wisdom and foresight in the realm of life, it may help us to go on and *believe* His Word in reference to the higher manifestations of His love and prescience in dealing with man himself. He, too, along with millions of his fellows, originated in an invisible speck of spirit, which has determined beforehand, not merely his species, but his form and destiny. All was *in*volved in Adam when he was created, and *in* Christ, even before, as God's Creative Original.

CONTRAST AND REPETITION

David, the sweet psalmist, has phrased these simple yet solemn thoughts most marvelously in one of his psalms (19:1-4): He says,

> The heavens are *recounting* the glory of El,
> And the atmosphere is telling the work of His hands.
> Day after day is uttering a saying
> And night after night is disclosing knowledge.
> There is no audible saying, and there are no words;
> Their voice is unheard.
> Yet into the entire earth their voice goes forth,
> And into the ends of the habitance their declarations.

The heavens do not only *declare* the glory of God, but *recount* them continually. The Hebrew word comes from the stem *sphr* NUMBER. Literally it means *enumerate*. A single glimpse of the glorious galaxies of the celestial sphere, especially as seen in the clear sky of a Palestine night, would amaze us and make us marvel. But it needs to be repeated night after night to be transformed into *knowl-*

edge. Sight is the most spiritual of the senses, for it reaches far beyond the air, in which alone a sound can be heard. In solemn silence we may sit in the great school room of the universe each night and listen to the atmosphere as it tells us of the glories of His celestial handiwork.

In God's book of nature the lessons are emphasized by contrast, impressed by repetition, and enlarged by variety. Darkness is contrasted with light, day and night are constantly repeated, and almost an infinite variety of forms and colors are created for the sense of sight alone. Even the function of darkness is clearly revealed by the night. For by it alone can we see the stars, which thrill us with a glimpse of His celestial glory. We are thankful for the darkness as well as the light, for it suggests to our hearts the great truth that His highest honors are revealed through sadness and suffering.

Not only does each succeeding day repeat the tale that God is light and life, but the seasons add their lesson of the eons. The annual change, from cold to heat, winter and summer, constitute the best treatise that we have on the eonian times. The dark and dismal seasons, when death reigns in nature, when the trees shed their leaves and the vegetation vanishes, speaks eloquently of the evil eons, in which we live. But, when winter gives place to summer, then life reappears, and the plants not only live, but give life to the souls that cannot get it from the soil. Here we have a picture of the eons of the eons, when resurrection recalls the dead to life and blessing will abound. Each year is a miniature rehearsal of God's grand circle of the eons.

THE LESSON OF LIFE

God is the *life* of all that lives. This also is a daily occurrence in our experience. While we do not die daily, we enter into a state which is so like it that sleep is the figure employed to denote death in view of resurrection.

Normally, at night we are worn out, our activity ceases, our faculties become dormant, so that we are "dead to the world," until the morning. Then we become alive again. God gives us this recurrent contrast in order to teach us what life and death are, and that He alone supplies the light of life.

SPIRIT

Spirit is the power that God used to restore the ruined earth. Later, when Adam caused an even greater ruin in a higher sphere, *only spirit* could restore humanity to God. Only God's Word can dispel the darkness with light, and replace death with life. This is the chief lesson found here, at the very forefront of revelation. *And nothing else was needed.* God begins here with spirit, and this remains the power throughout unto the end. During man's immaturity spirit was displaced by many material forms, which were only tangible representations of spiritual things, but these are laid aside when man becomes mature.

The lack of God's spirit, and the futility of all man's efforts to satisfy and save himself by any other means, lies at the basis of all history, human or divine. Notwithstanding the tragedy of the last six thousand years, man is still seeking for peace and plenty from many other sources. Even those whom God has called, who hear His Word, and have learned to rely upon Him for salvation, for the most part have not fully learned the lesson taught us at the very beginning of the Bible. The spirit of God is the only power to restore the wreck that man has made.

We, who have all *spiritual* blessing as our peculiar portion, should be better able than all others to learn the lesson of God's spirit, and enjoy the light and life and love that He imparts. May all who read these lines be partakers of this bliss!

A. E. Knoch

DISRUPTION, DARKNESS AND LIGHT

GOD CALLS the darkness night. The darkness existed before God commenced His six days of reconstructive work. It was merely a new name, for the darkness was not an accompaniment of the first heaven and earth. It was an outcome of the disruption, that event which called God's kingdom into His counsels, and before which He chose and designated in Christ those whose salvation is to be glorified as the ecclesia which is Christ's body.

Light was the first requirement of the work of God, which in some measure restored the ruin of the disruption and rehabilitated the earth for the moving forward of God's ways. The character of life and conditions on the present earth were controlled by the disruption, for God formed and shaped the ruin to suit His ways whereby He will reach a greater and grander display of His glory than could be otherwise.

When, on the fourth day, God locates the light in heavenly luminaries, then the light of the luminaries functions with darkness to continue that cyclic activity which we know as the alternation of day and night. And, doing this, all life forms, on earth or in the sea, or atmosphere, plants, animals, and humans, are constituted agreeable to this phasic movement. At the same time, in retaining the darkness as night, God indicates the temporary character of the present heavens and earth. This fact is rounded out by God's later revelation regarding the new heavens and earth, when we learn of the absence of the sea, as well as

night. Not until we reach the consummation will there be permanence in God's creation.

DISRUPTION

The rendering in Genesis 1:2 of the Hebrew verb *eie* (more usually known as *hayah*) by our English word *was* has been most unfortunate. The meaning of the infinitive is TO BECOME, not TO BE, and the grammatical forms of the several species of this Hebrew verb must take their significance from *to become.* Many times is the word rendered *it came to pass.* Had even this been used in this instance, then the minds of the students of the Scriptures would not be started falsely, burdened by the idea that chaos and darkness prevailed before God's creation.

The cataclysm of Genesis 1:2a is termed a disruption in the later Scriptures. It gave rise to (1) a *waste* earth in which state all life thereon was effectually stifled; (2) a *vacant* condition as to vegetation, with no possibility for the growth of plant life; (3) *darkness* on the surface of the abyss of water out of which and through which the earth cohered; (4) the *abyss* itself which arose with the disruption. These were the characteristics of the desolate situation out of which God's disrupted creation was raised by His six days of work.

The first three days were mainly devoted to repairing the *waste,* by separating the elemental solids and liquids and gases to their respective spheres, so making life again possible. The second three days corrected the *vacant* condition by putting living things anew on the earth.

The darkness was partially dispelled and controlled on day one, when God commanded light, separating between it and darkness. The atmosphere of the second day, and the seas of the third day, put the gases and the waters and the abyss within limits. The waste was nullified by the draining off and regulation of the waters into one place on the third

day, and on the same day was the vegetation dealt with by the production of verdure, herbage and fruit trees with their seeds. The darkness was further controlled, when, on the fourth day, it is brought within the serial days, and luminaries are made and appointed. The days preceding have made the waters and the atmosphere suitable for life, and so, on the fifth day, living souls appear in the waters and flyers in the atmosphere. On the sixth day God creates living souls on the land, and also humanity. Here we reach the peak of God's six days of reconstructive work, and history moves forward to unfold that which God plans from the disruption, as well as a period during which God reverts to His decisions which antedate that signal event.

The evil of the disruption has not been fully eliminated, but light with its possibilities has been introduced, and so there is a partial respite from the ruin of creation, and God's world moves forward again under His ordering.

DARKNESS

Darkness did not exist before the eons. Then God was All, and, even as during the eons, so then, before the eons, in Him is no darkness. Nor was the forming of darkness related to God's creative activity which initiated the eons. True it is that God in His word claims to create darkness as well as light, but that statement is no criterion of God's original creation. It speaks of His ways in this sinning world of humans and nations. Darkness is due to interference which produces inertia. It indicates a lack of harmony and is not an element agreeable to a perfect creation.

The literal meaning of the Hebrew word *chshk*, which as a noun signifies dark or darkness, can be seen in the verbal form; it is KEEP-BACK. To Abraham, Yahweh said: You have not *kept back* your son, your only one, from me. Joseph, speaking to Potiphar's wife, said: Potiphar has not *kept back* aught from me save you. So in the darkness ensu-

ing during the period when the first heavens and earth lay in ruins, God's glory is being *kept back.*

The figurative usages in Scripture of this noun are several. In Isaiah 9:2 darkness denotes the absence of God, while in Psalm 107:10 it has an analogy to the shadow of death. Amos 5:18 uses the word to describe an aspect of the day of the Lord. Darkness illustrates the condition of Israel in particular, and the world in general, when the Word came to illuminate humans (John 1:5). It was the jurisdiction of darkness which operated in the hours preceding the arrest and crucifixion of the Lord (Luke 22:53). And from the authority of darkness the saints of the present administration are rescued (Col.1:13).

We may well conclude that darkness *overtook* the first heavens and earth in the sense of the figure in John 12:35. The whole evidence of the Scriptures regarding darkness is that it is an intruder, an evil related to sin. But in the present heavens and earth God has harnessed it to His system and made it serve His ways, which function to lead forward to His glorious ultimate. God is only partially revealed at present, even as light over the earth is only partial.

DAY ONE

"And Elohim said: Let light come to be! And it became light. And Elohim saw the light that it was good. Then Elohim separated the light from the darkness. Elohim called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And it became evening, and it become morning: day one" (Gen.1:3-5).

A cardinal day! Of prime importance! Light is becoming! Light called forth and caused to shine out of darkness by the word of God. Such are the features around day *one.* And *that* light, more than any other consideration, had the major aspect that it illuminated God's glory as above all and any ruin which could arise in His creation. This was

not any resurgence of nature because of its own potential, but it was God directly and immediately filling creation's lack, and without even using any medium to do so.

Light, as relative to darkness, was at *that* point an innovation. It had not been so in the first heavens and earth, for night and day were not features of that world and eon. God now uses light and its opposite, darkness as features and factors in the present heavens and earth.

LIGHT

God speaks according to His glory and power, but humans think and speak in terms of matter, and can only appreciate light as one of the phenomena of matter. To them it is that portion of the energy band of substance which emits radiations with such rhythmic vibrations as to enable humans to see. For light to be before and apart from the sun has been deemed to be one of the ignorant conceptions, spread by the folklore of the Hebrews. Science could not admit such a conception. It was a matter for faith, which sees God transcending His creation, as well as constituting creation to accord with His ways and intention at any given point or period of the eons. God is not limited by His creation, nor does creation display His limits. The luminaries He has given are serving according to His appointment, and yet He is still able to give light other than that emitted by these.

Saul was arrested by a considerable light, above the midday sun. God is the Father of lights, and the associated statements seem to suggest that He can give light without shadows. Isaiah shows God as able to step up the light of His luminaries, for the prophet speaks of the light of the moon being as the light of the sun, while that of the sun becomes sevenfold as the light of seven days. Still farther ahead, the sun is no more Israel's light, but Yahweh is their eonian light.

Light excels darkness, and is diffusive and dispensing, for it constitutes the condition of life as we know it at present. It gives health and happiness and blessing upon the earth, and without its favor we would have nothing but death.

When God next intervenes to make His presence known in creation, He will make it evident by showing His control over the stars of heaven and the constellations, for they shall not give their light. The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not cause light to shine. The gloom He then introduces will be the prelude to His judging among the nations on behalf of His people Israel. Then will be the establishing of God's kingdom on earth through Israel, and it will become more widely understood that Israel is the light of the world, because associated with their Messiah Who in a more pre-eminent sense is also the Light of the world.

We are so accustomed to the features of our experiences that we are prone to view them as being permanent, yet if we truly believed God's Word, and studied it to gain knowledge and wisdom from Him, then would our mind and understanding benefit. We should learn that He is leading creation (and not the reverse) to His glorious end. There is no such thing as a self-running nature. Darkness is but a temporary agent. Light is the permanency to which God moves. So death is but transient, and abnormality due to sin's presence. God will eliminate both darkness and death by repudiating sin. This will be through His Son, because in Him is Deliverance, Light and Life.

E. H. Clayton

WEEKEND CONFERENCES

Besides the regular monthly Fellowships, there are 3 weekend Scripture Conferences scheduled this year in the Great Lakes area. Jeff Priddy (phone: 419-752-7383) will host the meetings in Willard, Ohio, scheduled for June 11-13; the Baldwin, Michigan meetings are scheduled for August 13-15 and October 1-3 (Grace and Truth Chapel, PO Box 84, Baldwin MI 49304).

DEVELOPMENTS IN GENESIS 1:2

GOD REVEALS Himself by His works. In Scripture, first of all, He reveals His incomparable power and intelligence by creating the heavens and the earth (Gen.1:1). But this revelation is now put to the test by the entry of chaos, vacancy and darkness capturing the earth (Gen.1:2a). This disruption, in turn, prepares the way for the deeper revelation of God which comes through His activities in dealing with it. God's response to chaos and darkness begins with the vibrating of His spirit.

A THREEFOLD PATTERN

God's work of creation is not chaos and vacancy (Isa. 45:18). Genesis 1:2a describes neither the state of things before creation nor a first step of creation. Chaos, vacancy and darkness are subsequent to creation. Nevertheless, the Creator holds primary and ultimate responsibility for all that happens to His creation. Elohim is the only One in view in the opening verses of Genesis, and we trust that the chaos has not come to Him as a surprise, but is rather within the province of His established power and intelligence.

Later He speaks of Himself in no uncertain terms as the "Maker of good and Creator of evil" (Isa.45:7). He reveals Himself as the One Who created the ruiner to harm (Isa. 54:16). Passages such as Ecclesiastes 1:13 and Romans 11:32 will eventually make plain that God has a purpose for good in human experiences of evil. But much has been provided already by Genesis 1:1 to assure us that nothing is outside God's ability to control powerfully and intelli-

gently, and direct events toward His goal. Furthermore, Genesis 1:3-31 will present God as bringing His creation out of its disruption into that which is "very good."

The pattern is clear: 1. God creates; 2. Evil enters; 3. God reverses evil, and good is perceived to the glory of God.

This pattern begins again in Genesis 2 with the making of humanity, and continues in chapter 3 and throughout much of the rest of Scripture with the entrance and extension of death and sin into the world. God's work of dealing with the evil (step number 3) is spoken of in promises and types, all directed to the revelation of God and His glory in His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

GENESIS 1:2

In the second verse of Genesis we can distinguish the second step and the beginning of the third of this threefold pattern. Chaos, vacancy and darkness define the evil that comes upon the earth. And the vibrating of God's spirit over this chaotic abyss that has engulfed the earth is the beginning of the revelation of God, not merely as a God of power and knowledge, but as a God of glorious power, wisdom and goodness.

As far as humanity is concerned, we have been created (step number 1), and evil has captured us in the form of death and sinfulness (step number 2). But also, God's spirit has begun to stir, in a special sense, in the lives of certain ones of His choosing, so that, as it was in the single verse of Genesis 1:2, there is represented both step number 2 and step number 3 in the single world in which we live.

GOD'S WORK

As noted above, Genesis 1:1 speaks plainly of God's work. Genesis 1:2b speaks of the beginning of God's operations by means of His spirit. But Genesis 1:2a makes no mention of God. We must assume, on the basis of the revela-

tion of His immense power and ability revealed in verse 1, that God holds ultimate responsibility, and this is verified by later revelations in His Word. The entrance of evil is first presented in Scripture, as something that comes to be, without direct reference to God.

This is as it should be. The great, positive work of creation and the equally great work of ridding the earth of evil are directly attributed to God. The verbs themselves are striking, dynamic and full of glorious and specific implications: *create,* and *vibrate.* But the verb in Genesis 1:2a, though by no means static, is, by its common and wide usage, less likely to attract our attention. Evil is temporary and certainly does not, in itself, bring glory. It exists only for the purpose of contrast with that which is really glorious, such as the work of creation or the powerful movement of divine spirit.

The place of evil, and indeed its great purpose, is to bring the goodness of God to the creature's perception and appreciation. Consequently, the action of bringing chaos, vacancy and darkness into God's creation is secondary, subservient and indirect. The action itself does not reveal God, but serves to bring those actions that do reveal God into sharp focus.

COMES TO BE

It is certainly misleading to translate this verb by the English word "was." In creating the earth, God did not create something that was chaos. God created the earth, and it *came to be* a chaos. Again, we insist that God is fully responsible to the earth that He created, and the chaos must ultimately be traced to Him. But the wording of Genesis 1:2a by means of the verb "became" directs our attention, not to God's place in this development, but to the development itself, so that our focus can be on the actions of God in dealing with this development.

Nevertheless, most English translations of the Scriptures follow the lead of the King James Version and use the verb "was" here. The commentaries generally explain this to mean either (1) that the earth was in a state of wasted emptiness before God "created" it as described in the rest of Genesis chapter one; or (2) that the chaos and darkness were first stages of God's creative work.

But it is a mistake, and highly unscriptural, to think of chaos as a condition independent of God and His operations. This is a tenet of dualism and a direct contradiction to the truth that all is out of God (*cf* Rom.11:36). On the other hand, it is also a mistake to see chaos as a phase of creation. It is obviously a phase in the history of the earth, but the work of creation spoken of in Genesis 1:1 is a matter of positive achievement. The entrance of evil is a separate matter which direly influences creation and ultimately leads to an appreciation of its goodness, but it is not a part of that goodness.

EVIDENCE FOR "BECOME"

It is unfortunate, then, that most translations of Genesis 1:2 in English use the word "was" here rather than "became." This is compounded by current commentaries which, when they consider the question at all, dismiss the use of "became" without a careful consideration of the evidence.

It becomes a special source of gratitude, therefore, to read such a book as WITHOUT FORM AND VOID by Arthur C. Custance.[1] Without agreeing with all of Dr. Custance's points, we appreciate his efforts here in gathering together historical and linguistic evidence for translating Genesis

1. First published by Doorway Publications, Brockville, Ontario, in 1970, and reprinted in 1989; we presently have a small stock available, $9.95 plus $1.50 postage and handling; CA residents add sales tax.

1:2 as a later development that occurred after the heavens and earth were initially created.

This evidence leads him to conclude that the Hebrew verb here is "not *normally* employed to express the simple copula" (to say that one thing *is* or *equals* another thing). Furthermore, this verb "is employed only when change of a specific kind is involved. This does not mean change in the sense that a past situation is no longer true in the present, but rather that a present situation is changing, has changed from what it was, or will change in the future" (p.59).

Chaos, vacancy and darkness were changes that came about after the heavens and earth were created. They were in accord with God's purpose, but the fact that they entered later than the creation of Genesis 1:1 agrees fully with the fact that they are temporary and can have no place when God's purpose for creation is complete.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD VIBRATING

God's spirit was certainly the power for the creation of Genesis 1:1. But this, and all other details, both major and minor, was not noted in the opening revelation of God. However, now that evil has entered into God's creation, many details will be presented, starting with this most fundamental and critical detail, the identification of God's means for carrying out His works, *the spirit of God.*

The divine power for life, intelligence and action begins to vibrate over the chaos and darkness of the wasted earth. This will be channeled first through what God *says.* His spirit operates in His word.

Again we find that a vital pattern of divine activity is being set forth in the early verses of Genesis. The spirit of God operates in His speaking, in His word, in what He is saying.

This pattern is found again in Genesis 3 after the chaos of death has come into humanity. Adam and Eve "heard

the *sound* of Yahweh Elohim walking about in the garden in the *windy part* of the day" (Gen.3:8). The Hebrew word for *spirit* is also used for *wind* (in this case: *windy part*). The word *sound* anticipates the words that Yahweh Elohim soon speaks to the serpent and the two human beings. These words begin a process of reestablishing order, including powerful words of promise concerning the seed of the woman: He shall hurt the head of the serpent (Gen.3:15); and concerning the husband who shall be a channel of restoration (3:16).

These were not sounds without meaning or power. The spirit of God was in these words to the extent that the Seed *has come* into the world to save sinning humanity (*cf* Gal.3:16; 4:4; 1 Tim.1:15), "giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all" (1 Tim.2:6). It is written, furthermore, that when He came, just before His ministry, that the spirit of God descended on Him, as if a dove, in association with God speaking of Him as His beloved Son (Matt.3:17). (Here the parallel with the vibrating wings in Deuteronomy 32:11 is noteworthy.) And still God's spirit vibrates in opening up hearts of sinners who hear the word of truth, the evangel of salvation, and believe, becoming *sealed* with the holy spirit of promise (Eph.1:13). Our believing of the evangel is a work of God's spirit and invigorates with spirit (*cf* Gal.3:2-5).

Will God's spirit cease before it completes this process? To ask the question is to answer it. "For even as in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified" (1 Cor.15:22).

Thus we see in the second verse of Scripture, a pattern of the entrance of evil and the initiating force for its removal. Already, then, we are beginning to see God as God and exult with praise in the depth of His wisdom and power and love.

D.H.H.

INTUITIVE ANTICIPATION

"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" (Eph.1:3).

"The act of God in raising Adam above the beasts by blowing into his nostrils the breath of life not only raised him and his posterity to a place superior to the other creatures, but is a sample and intimation of His method in raising mankind to the highest place in creation. It was only the first step in its elevation."[1]

FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The oncoming of holy spirit ensures a gradual but certain refinement. We ". . . are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured) for the laud of His glory" (Eph.1:14). This very special and gracious influence tenderly escorts us from the misery of sin's enslavement into the glorious freedom reserved for the children of God. "Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God's spirit is making its home in you. Now if anyone has not Christ's spirit, this one is not His" (Rom.8:9).

For many, it must seem that those who identify with the ecclesia and this unique privilege, are suffering from the effects of megalomania. However, there is a way to mea-

1. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.43, p.267.

sure this. Is there conceit, bigotry, or indifference for the rest of creation among the believers? Or, to the contrary, are the fruits of the spirit; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self control, clearly in evidence among those who unceasingly give thanks to God for the transcendent grace of His love?

"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.1:26-30).

Almost at once, we yearn to trace the footsteps of our Lord. Is there humility and compassion? Is there devotion, love and a becoming modesty in this? Already we strain to commence our service in bringing such good news of our Lord's supreme sacrifice to the celestials! The transfiguration of these bodies of our humiliation into conformation to the body of Christ's exalted glory is absolutely essential for us, in His worthy name, to achieve the eventual reconciliation of such mighty beings!

INHERENT IN THE HEAVENS

"All down the centuries covered by the Hebrew Scriptures the ecclesia was hidden, as it were, in Christ, oblivious of the passage of time, oblivious even of its existence, unknown and unseen by anyone. It was, however, from the very beginning a great reality in the mind and purpose of God. In due course, God caused a deep stupor to fall upon His Son, the stupor of death. For three days He lay in the tomb, and was then roused by the mighty power of God, and from that time, in God's sight, the ecclesia

began a separate existence—a glorious celestial existence to accord with the status of the risen Lord, for its realm is '*inherent* in the heavens' (Phil.3:20)—and is to be presented to Christ, without spot or blemish, as His complement—that without which, even in His highest exaltation, He would not be complete.

"Christ's death was, as we know, for all, but in a very special sense indeed it was for the ecclesia, that it too, might have a conscious and separate existence. And so we read, 'according as Christ also loves the ecclesia, and gives Himself up for its sake . . . that He should be presenting to Himself a glorious ecclesia'—an ecclesia in which, through its union with Christ, God Himself would be able to find glory throughout all the generations of the eons of the eons. Amen!

"Thus, not the least of the blessings accruing to Christ as a result of His being obedient unto death is the fact that He now has a complement, the ecclesia, which He dearly loves (Eph.5:25), and which should be reciprocating that love."[2]

This wonderful revelation of God's unique purpose for the ecclesia is fully expressed in those precious words, ". . . 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.1:23).

GROANING AND TRAVAILING

The precise explanation of God's *choosing* and *calling* and *justifying* (Rom.8:30), is, for many of the saints, quite overwhelming! It is possible that disclosures which preceded this grand revelation, and which also concerned the rest of creation, might have passed unremarked. Yet the

2. John H. Essex, "The Origin of the Ecclesia," *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.66, p.70.

Scriptures are so explicit! Surely, we might be forgiven as we imagine how Tertius, the scribe, writer of the Roman epistle, would have rejoiced as he recorded each precious sentence which the apostle Paul dictated. May we pause for a while as once more we read the intriguing words:

"For I am reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us. For the *premonition* of the creation is *awaiting* the unveiling of the sons of God . . . . For we are aware that the entire creation is groaning and travailing together until now. Yet not only so, but we ourselves also, who have the firstfruit of the spirit, we ourselves also, are groaning in ourselves, *awaiting* the sonship, the deliverance of our body. For to expectation were we saved. Now expectation, being observed, is not expectation, for what anyone is observing, why is he expecting it also? Now, if we are expecting what we are not observing, we are *awaiting* it with endurance" (Rom.8:18-25).

INTUITIVE

When we study the word *premonition*, (FROM-SKULL-SEEM), we learn that this is defined in context as *an intuitive opinion*. A dictionary definition of the word, *intuition*, is "knowledge or belief obtained neither by reason nor by perception." *This premonition is something which is shared by the ecclesia and the rest of creation!* The ecclesia is awaiting exaltation, deliverance from bodies of humiliation, and the rest of creation is awaiting this unveiling of the ecclesia.

We are aware that these present bodies, even in humiliation, are temples of God by virtue of the spirit of God making its home in us. Thus we perceive and are sustained through our expectation of being caught up to be with our Lord at His summons! This will be operative whether we are reposing or living! (1 Thess.4:13-18). *But*

what is that which causes groaning and travailing among the rest of creation who have been subjected to vanity and stubbornness? Although stubborn and conceited, mortal man is persuaded by a spirit—which often he will not even admit exists—that there is more! There surely must be more than can be traced in the brief life-span of mundane, human experience.

With the solitary exception of His beloved Son, all are subjected, through the experience of evil and suffering, to humility and estrangement from God. Paul skillfully explains this necessity in the illustration as it affects the nation of Israel (Rom.11:25-36).

Through obedience, caused by imposed stubbornness, God thrusts the object of His love away in order that the resultant *temporary* enmity will enhance the wonder of His gracious love. Without the patient guidance of the spirits of God and His Son, together with our own spirit, we could not possibly learn and comprehend these verities, which are regarded as stupidity and foolishness by the wise of this world!

THE SCRIPTURES PRESERVED

The preservation of the administration of the secret, entrusted to the apostle Paul, yet concealed from the eons in God, is miraculous. Despite bitter conflicts in Christendom, and often, paradoxically, as a consequence of such conflict, the Scriptures have been carefully protected. Continuous disputes and debates have ensured that many scholars and critics have been unwitting guardians of precious revelations which were but dimly perceived, yet *intuitively* treasured! In recent years there has been a marked acceleration in recover of truth, but there has always been, even in the dark ages of suppression, some evidence of sacred intuition.

Donald Fielding

SAUL'S PERSECUTION OF DAVID

BOTH Moses and Elijah came to a time when they fled for their lives into the wilderness. Other prophets were persecuted, and even killed. But the Hebrew Scriptures give record of no one whose life was so relentlessly stalked as David's. 1 Samuel 18:6 through chapter 20 lists eight schemes and direct attempts by Saul to kill David. Chapters 21 through 27 detail notable events occurring while David was a fugitive, fleeing for his life from one hideaway to another. No less than one third of this book, which records events from Eli through the lives of Samuel and Saul, treats the topic of attempts on the life of David.

The trouble began with celebration (1 Sam.18:6-9).

THE SONG OF CELEBRATION

6 + **It** [b]**came** about [i]**as they** were **coming**⁻ home, [i]**when David** had **returned**⁻ **from smiting**⁻ `**the Philistine,** +**that the women from all** the **cities of Israel** went [l]**forth** › **singing**⁻ **and** dancing in `**choruses to meet** `**king Saul** [i]**with tambourines,** [i]**with rejoicing and** [i]**with three-**stringed instruments.

7 + **The gamboling** `**women** sang in [l]**response,** + [l]**saying:**

Saul has smitten [i] **his thousands,**

+**Yet David** [i] **his myriads!**

8 + **Saul's** anger grew **exceedingly** [l]**hot;** + `**this** `**matter was** [l]**displeasing in his eyes, and he** [l]**said, To David they have** [g]**ascribed myriads, and to me they have** [g]**ascribed** only `**thousands.** +**What** [fr]**more** can **he** ›**have** [y]**but the kingship?** 9 + **Saul** [b]**was** jealously **eying** `**David from** `**that** `**day and beyond.**

The celebration of chanting and dancing by the women of the cities, welcoming Saul and their soldiers back from the war against the Philistines, glorified David above Saul. The chant, failing to honor God, was not consonant with the character of David. Neither did it follow the example of Miriam and the women who sang and danced before Yahweh at the deliverance of Israel through the sea (*cf* Ex.15: 20,21). But it was in character with the reign of Saul. And it was the occasion for inciting the jealousy of Saul against David. The very deliverance Saul was unable to provide became the focus of his jealousy and hatred. The flesh is ever furious that it cannot deliver itself.

TROUBLED SAUL

The trouble was intensified on the morrow by God sending an evil spirit upon Saul, and this led to further sufferings (1 Sam.18:10-30).

10 + **It** [b]**came** about [f]**on** the **morrow** +**that** an **evil spirit** from **Elohim** [p]**prospered** `**on Saul.** + **He** [p]**prophesied inside the house,** +**while David** was **playing** the harp [i]**with his hand, as** he did **day** [i]**by day;** +**but** there was `a **spear in Saul's hand.** 11 + **Saul** ~[l]**lifted up**~ `**the spear** + [sa]**thinking, I shall smite** [i] **David** + **in**to the **sidewall.** +**Yet David** got [p]**around** [f] **his presence** [du]**twice.**

12 + **Saul was** [p]**fearful** [f] **because** `**of David's presence** [s]**since Yahweh came** to **be with him,** +**but had withdrawn from** [wi] **Saul.** 13 +**Hence Saul** [p]**put him away from** [wi] **him**self; + **he** [pl]**made him his chief of** a **thousand** + who marched [p]**forth and** [p]**came** in **before the** [wi]**soldiers.** 14 + **David** [b]**continued** to [c]**proceed intelligently**[l] [7]**in**~[cs] **all his ways,** +**for Yahweh** was **with him.** +**When Saul** [p]**saw** [w]**that he** was [c]**proceeding very intelligently,** + **he** [p]**shrank** away **from his presence.** 16 +**Yet all Israel and Judah loved**[l] `**David, for he** marched **forth**[l] **and came**[l] in **before them.**

17 +Then Saul |said to David, [bd]Here is my `older daughter Merab; I shall give `her to you ›as a wife. [y]Only become › a valiant son for me and fight the battles of Yahweh. +As for Saul, he [sa]thought, Let my hand not [b]be [i]against him; +but let the hand of the Philistines [b]be [i]against him. 18 + David |[sa]replied to Saul, [a]Who am I, and [a]who are my kinfolk, my father's family in Israel, that I should become son-in-law to the king? 19 +But [i]at the time that `Merab, Saul's daughter, should have [b]been given⁻ to David, + she´ was given to Adriel the Meholathite ›as a wife.

20 +Now Saul's daughter Michal |loved `David. +When they |told › Saul, + the matter was |upright in his eyes. 21 +So Saul |[sa]thought, I shall give her to him; + let her [b]be › a trap for him, and let the hand of the Philistines come to be [i]against him. +Hence Saul |said to David [i] a second time, You may become son-in-law [i]to me today. 22 And Saul |instructed `his courtiers, Speak to David [i]by stealth, › saying⁻, Behold, the king takes delight in you, and all his courtiers like you; +so now become son-in-law [i]to the king. 23 + Then Saul's courtiers |spoke `these `words into David's ears. +Yet David |[sa]replied, Is it lightly esteemed in your eyes [M]to[s] become son-in-law [i]to the king, [i]when I am a man destitute| and inconsequential|?

24 + Saul's courtiers |told › him, › saying⁻, `These are [as] the words that David has spoken. 25 +Then Saul |said, Thus shall you say to David, No delight ›has the king in a bride-price, [7]but rather~[s] in a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance [i]on the king's enemies|. +As for Saul, he devised to cause `David's fall⁻ [i]by the hand of the Philistines. 26 +So his courtiers |told › David `these `words, and the matter was |upright in David's eyes, to become son-in-law [i]to the king. +When the days were not yet fulfilled, 27 + David |rose and |went, he and his men, and he |smote [i]among the Philistines two hundred men. + David |brought `their foreskins, and [7]he~ [m]delivered them

in ˡ**full to** the **king, to be**come son-**in-law** ˡ**to** the **king.** ⁺**So Saul** ˡ**gave** ˃ **him** `**Michal his daughter** ˃**as** a **wife.** [28] ⁺ **Saul** ˡ**saw and** ˡ**knew that Yahweh** was **with David and** that ⁷**all Israel**~ **liked him,** [29] ⁺**yet Saul** ˡ**continued to be** *ᶠr***even** more **fearful**~ *ᶠ* **because** of **David's presence;** ⁺**so Saul came** to ˡ**be** `**David's enemy all** his `**days.**

[30] ⁺ **Then** the **chiefs of** the **Philistines** would march ˡ**forth** to battle; ⁺**yet it came** to ˡ**be, as often as they** sallied **forth**~, that **David was** more **intelligent** *ᶠ***than all** the other **officials of Saul,** ⁺**so** that **his name be**came **very** highly ˡ**esteemed.**

THE NEED FOR A SEPARATION

The 18th chapter provides one of the reasons God sent an evil spirit to trouble Saul. Apart from the troubling of Saul, it would have been quite easy and natural for David to become part of Saul's family. Jonathan would have fully accepted him and submitted to his leadership. Merab was soon promised to David as wife. When Merab was given to Adriel, Michal soon became her replacement. But it was a marriage that was shortly fragmented by the rage of the tormented Saul. Had Saul been able to accept David as his replacement, the transition could have been smooth. But Saul represents the flesh, and David faith.

As surely as it was necessary for Christ to be pure, so surely will God not accept a mixture of faith and the works of the flesh. The fruit of our vineyard should spring from a single kind of seed. Our service is not to be the plowing of a donkey and an ox yoked together. Stubbornness and contemplative contentment do not blend. Our covering is to be the fine linen of righteousness, not a mongrel fabric of flax and wool (Deut.22:9-11). David's faith and Saul's disposition of the flesh are oil and water. Even the most vigorous efforts to combine the two can only yield a cloudy mixture, which will eventually separate again. The uniting of David and Saul would have been analogous to Christ

compromising with the Pharisees, instead of denouncing them as the spawn of vipers.

Saul was envious of David, as the religious leaders of the Jews were envious of Christ (Matt.27:18; Mark 15:10). As Saul feared David would take his position as king, so the Jewish leaders feared for their position if Christ was allowed to live (John 11:49-53). When his initial efforts to kill David failed, Saul resorted to cunning plans in which the Philistines were to dispose of David. When the Jews initial efforts to silence Christ failed, they tried to entrap Him with questions and ritual observances. David came, with no ulterior motives, and artlessly served God, his country and Saul. Christ came to His own people to save them, and they crucified Him. The evil spirit that God sent to trouble Saul prevented Saul from accepting David, and thereby forced David to follow a path on which he would be a display of the sufferings of Christ.

DAVID AS A TYPE

Typically, David pictures both the nation Israel and Christ. On the national plane, Israel is God's anointed, and will eventually rule in righteousness and peace. But, before that time of rule, that nation is persecuted and slain throughout the world. From the slavery of Egypt, through the captivities of Babylon and Persia, through the holocaust of World War 2, and to the future persecutions of the tribulation, God's anointed is hunted as "a partridge in the mountains" (1 Sam.26:20) and slaughtered like a sacrifice.

But while David may typically represent Israel, Israel itself is a type of Christ, and so in Him alone is to be realized the depths of truth and instruction which these persecutions of David teach.

This beckons us to pause and consider the accounts of Christ's life from a specific viewpoint. We are led to look at Christ as the coming Saviour Who must not only die for

the sins of the world but must also struggle for the preservation of His life until He comes to the cross. This is a human perspective rather than one from the standpoint of the Deity's total control, but it is a perspective from which Christ viewed His life.

ATTEMPTS ON THE LIFE OF CHRIST

After the visit of the magi to Herod, Joseph fled to Egypt with Mary and Jesus (Matt.2:14,15), because the dragon stood ready to consume the woman's child (Rev.12:1-6). Part of Christ's temptation was to cast Himself down from the top of the temple edifice (Matt.4:5-7; Luke 4:9-12), an act presented by Satan as a means of verifying to all what His true identity was. And yet, coming from the Adversary, it may also be construed as an attempt on Christ's life. In the beginning of His ministry in Nazareth, the congregation of the synagogue threw Him out of the city, and carried Him to the brow of the mountain to throw Him over the precipice. Yet He escaped from their midst, evidently by the use of supernatural power.

When He healed on the Sabbath, the Jews plotted to kill Him for breaking the Sabbath (Matt.12:14-16; Mark 3:6; Luke 6:6-12; John 5:15-18). When He spoke of Who He was, they picked up stones to stone Him for making Himself equal with God (John 5:15-18; 8:57-59; 10:27-31).

They plotted to entrap Him with questions so they might accuse Him of crimes and execute Him (Luke 11:53,54; John 8:4-6). Finally they planned His execution (Matt. 26:3,4; Mark 14:1,2; Luke 22:1,2) and bought His betrayal (Matt.26:14-16; Mark 14:10,11) because of their envy (Matt.27:18; Mark 15:10) and fear of losing their position of authority (John 11:49-53).

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was no isolated incident precipitated in the midst of a festival. Attempts were made on His life from the cradle to the cross. The years of His

public ministry are marked with continual roaming from place to place, not only because of the press of the crowds and the desire to evangelize others, but also because of the intensity of efforts to kill Him (John 7:1,2,19-25,30,44-46; 11:8; Luke 13:31-35).

The recorded accounts of Christ's life are brief, and the events written were recorded for the specific purpose of teaching truth. They do not include details designed to inspire fleshly people with awe at the things Christ endured. There is no way of knowing how many attempts were actually made on Christ's life, or how many such attempts He thwarted by taking a course which avoided conflict. But David's word to Jonathan, "There is but a small step between me and death" (1 Sam.20:3), could have been spoken of Christ at any time.

In addition to the attempts on Christ's life, His teaching of the disciples is filled with references to His death. These are recorded in contexts which emphasize the reasons for His death. In more ways than one, the life of Christ was all about His death. Perhaps bearing these things in mind will enlighten our eyes to see, in the struggles of David, more of what Christ suffered for our sakes. J. Philip Scranton

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CVOT REPORT

Only the books of 2 Chronicles through Esther need to be gone over for final checking before typesetting. The rest of the CVOT is ready for typesetting, or has been entered into our computer files.

REPOSING IN CHRIST

We sorrow to report the deaths of the following brethren in Christ; yet we rejoice in contemplation of their happy expectation in Him as well: **Vincent Brehm,** of Leavenworth, Washington; **Dorothy Downie,** of Castlecrag, New South Wales, Australia; **Leona Fisher,** of Cosmopolis, Washington; **Letha Stafford,** of Clearwater, Kansas; **Everett Taylor,** of Bozeman, Montana; **Margery Yoder,** of Murrieta, California; **Clarence Young,** of Independence, Missouri.

WORDS AND WORKS

WHILE the place of evil figures large in Ecclesiastes, it must be borne in mind that the problem of evil, rather a certain phase of it, is not faced at once; it is approached gradually and arrived at by successively subjecting to review the strange riddles of individual and racial experience.

The introduction, or prologue to Ecclesiastes (1:2-11), touches two subjects: The vanity of "works," and the weariness of "words," and marshalls an array of facts in support of each thesis. Subsequent chapters embody a detailed discussion of those themes. Of the five "books" of the treatise the first (1:12-2:26) and the third (5:10-7:12) analyze the *works* under the sun; the second (3:1-5:9) and the fourth (7:13-11:6) discuss *words* relating to God's plan of the universe; while the fifth (11:7-12:7) takes in both fields at once, and dwells on the two positive thoughts which analysis has yielded. The epilogue (12:8-12) draws the inference from the data attained and formulates the moral.

THE PROLOGUE

2 **Vanity of vanities, says** the **Assembler;**
Vanity of vanities, all is **vanity.**
3 **What advantage has** a **human in all his toil**
Which he toils under the sun?
4 One **generation goes, and** another **generation comes,**
Yet the earth is **standing for** the **eon.**
5 **The sun rises, and the sun sets**
And gasps back **to its place,**
That **it** may **rise there** once more.

6 **Going to** the **south and** turn**ing around to** the **north,**
Around[l] and **around**[l] **the wind** is **going,**
[+]**Yet on its courses the wind returns**[l].
7 **All the watercourses** are [go]**flowing to the sea,**
[+]**Yet** it **is not filling the sea;**
To the **place** from **which the watercourses**
are [go]**flowing,**
There they return[l] **to go** forth again.
8 **All the words** are **weary;**
A **man** [l]**cannot** [›] [sp]**utter**[‹] it.
The **eye is not** [l]**satisfied** [›]**with seeing**[‹],
Nor is the **ear** [l]**filled** [f]**with hearing**[‹].
9 **What** [w] [b]**occurred** once, **it** [w] **shall** [b]**occur** again,
And what [w] **was done, it** [w] **shall be done** again.
[+] There **is no**thing at **all new under the sun.**
10 **Is** there any**thing** of **which** one **may say:**
See this, it is **new?**
It has already [b]**occurred**
[›]**In eons** [w]**that** [b]**were** [f] **before us.**
11 There **is no remembrance** [›]**of former** generations,
And [mr]**also for** those **who shall** [b]**come** [›] **after** us,
A **remembrance** [›]**of them shall not** [b]**continue**
With those **who shall** [b]**come** [›] **after**ward.

The prologue (1:2-11) states the two questions which the quest is to answer:

(1) "Vanity of vanities, says the Assembler; vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (1:2). This is not everything in the universe, as the reading "all is vanity" might imply, but every department of human toil, as indicated in verse 3. The word "vanity" is used of that which soon vanishes. The point here is the fleetness of the works done under the sun, which is elaborated, in verses 7-9, in a series of illustrations from the natural world. In things of nature, as in the succession of events, there is no advance; everything moves in a circle, like motion in a treadmill—an unceas-

ing round of monotonous repetition without novelty or progress. "What was done, it shall be done again."

(2) "All the words are weary; A man cannot utter it" (1:8). The Hebrew term *dbrim* is best rendered here by its primary meaning of "words;" besides being more natural than the AV "things," this emphasizes a differentiation between words of weariness and words of delight and truth, a differentiation sustained all through the book and finally established in the epilogue (12:10-12).

The verses immediately following expand the thought by showing that the continually recurring circle of history underlines the inadequacy of human theories to account for the vanity of man's works under the sun (Ecc.1:9-11). Existing theories are insufficient, and fail to satisfy the mind. Though one theory has replaced another, nothing new has been evolved; the changes that have taken place have only modified their form. Formulae have changed, methods of expression have altered to suit the speech of succeeding generations, but the substance of man's theories of the universe is unchanged.

THE EPILOGUE

8 **Vanity of vanities, says the Assembler,**
The whole is **vanity.**

9 **+Yet furthermore, *w*because** the **Assembler *b*was wise,**
He *fr*still taught `the people knowledge,
And he listened and investigated
And **set in order many¯ proverbs.**

10 The **Assembler sought to find words of delight,**
And what was **written**ˡ is **uprightness**
and **words of truth.**

11 The **words of** the **wise** are **like goad points,**
And like imbeddedˡ **bolts** is the **possessing**
of gathered sayings**;**
They are given *f* by one shepherdˡ**.**

12 +**Yet furthermore, my son,** *f* **beyond these, be warned;**
Of the *d*making⁻ of many⁻ scrolls there **is no end,**
And much⁻ study is **weariness** to the **flesh.**

At the close, then, we get the epilogue (12:8-12), in which the author returns to the questions with which he started his quest, and restates them in the light of the results which his analysis of things has yielded. The vanity of man's works upon the earth is reaffirmed (12:8). Extensive experiment embracing various fields of human toil has but accentuated and confirmed the transient character of present activities.

Examination of the various theories of the universe, however, has demonstrated certain fundamental principles which carry a self-evident, self-manifest light, by which the truth is sealed to the conscience in the sight of God with a certainty transcending all conjectures, and superior to all changes of human feeling. We can surely appreciate the contrast between the words of weariness and those words of delight and truth, which, in the absence of power to solve the mystery of the whole, warn us against indulging in fruitless speculation and profitless discussion.

The Divine purpose behind things as they are is so far off and so exceeding deep, that man can never reach it; nevertheless reason can lay hold of principles which instil reverence for God and enjoin conformity with His instructions. To discover these principles was the aim or "terminus" of our author's word or treatise. The function of reason is limited to the gathering of wise thoughts which stimulate an ordering of life in the light of a coming rectification or "judgment," but to go further is to take a leap into the realm of fancy.

THE SUMMARY

It only remains to sum up all duty in one conception—

human works regulated by wise words pointing to a future readjustment (12:13,14).

"The terminus of the whole matter has been heard: Fear the One, Elohim, and keep His instructions, for this is the whole duty of humanity. For the One, Elohim, shall bring every deed into judgment concerning all that is obscured, whether good or whether evil."

V. Gelesnoff

ANALYSIS OF ECCLESIASTES

Title: Words of the Assembler, Son of David, King in Jerusalem (1:1)

Prologue: Works of Vanity and Words of Weariness (1:2-11)

Book 1: Man's Work—Wisdom and Toil; a Survey of what is done Under the Sun (1:12-2:26)

Book 2: God's Work—Antagonism between Good and Evil (3:1-4:8)

—notes: (4:9-5:9)

Book 3: Man's Work—Desire; a Study of the Principles underlying Activity Under the Sun (5:10-6:11)

—notes: (6:12-7:12)

Book 4: God's Work—Relation of Good and Evil (7:13-9:15)

Book 5: Review; Human works conditioned by Divine Appointments (11:7-12:7)

Epilogue: Works of Vanity and Words of Purpose (12:8-12)

Summary (12:13,14)

ELOHIM GIVES EXPERIENCE

THE haunting lines of Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 strike us at first, not with courage and determination, but with the very familiar, human feeling of melancholy. The repetition of human experience is paralleled by nature's cycles, sunlight and darkness, rain and evaporation. "What has occurred once, it shall occur again, and what was done, it shall be done again. There is nothing at all new under the sun" (Ecc.1:9).

Yet even though there is transitoriness in all this, it is not absolute vanity because above it all is God. The Assembler inquired and explored concerning all that is done, but in doing so he never forgot that it was what "Elohim has given" (Ecc.1:12,13).

CONCERNING ALL THAT IS DONE

12 **I myself,** the **Assembler, came** to **be king over Israel in Jerusalem.** 13 + **I** [g]**applied** `**my heart to inquiring**⁻ **and** › **exploring**⁻ [i]**by wisdom** [on]**concerning all** [w]**that is done under the heavens: it** is an **experience of evil Elohim has given to the sons of humanity to humble** them [i]**by it.**

These lines which begin the survey of human deeds and wisdom should also be associated with the prologue concerning vanity and weariness. What the Assembler said in 1:2-11 came from his own observation, from his inquiring and exploring of that which is done and occurs under the heavens. Consequently, the repetitious experiences of generation after generation, and the weariness and lack of satisfaction that come from these experiences are given to us all by God to humble us by them.

Why is it important that we see that this transitoriness is given to us by God? The answer is that since it is given by God it has meaning. If it is given by God, it has a purpose. If it is given by God it is something we need for ultimate good.

EXPERIENCE OF EVIL

The Hebrew words translated "experience" and "humble" here belong to the same general word family to which we have assigned the name RESPOND.

The former word occurs only in Ecclesiastes (1:13; 2:23,26; 3:10; 4:8; 5:3,14; 8:16), and is translated "experience" in every case but one. In Ecclesiastes 5:3 we use the word "responsibility" to express the idea of pressing experiences of daily life leading to nightly dreams. This indicates that the Hebrew word connotes a sense of negative experience. And this is verified by the other usages, many of which occur in association with the word "evil." This is the reason many other translations use such English words as "travail" or "affliction."

God gives us burdensome experiences developing response, and the response that these produce is that we are humbled.

In the experience and its results themselves there is nothing we would desire. But in seeing that God has given this whole process to us there is much that should encourage and assure us. Because we rely on God we can expect that the experiences we would rather avoid eventually will be appreciated as truly for our good and His glory. That is the great value of Ecclesiastes and the reason why it rises above the dark and despairing poetry of humanistic artists.

TO HUMBLE US

The Assembler, as a descendant of David, had many privileges as well as responsibilities. But the special advantages

he enjoyed were greatly tempered by the unique measure of "sore travail" in his experiences. What might have made him proud and forgetful that his blessings were from God was balanced by hard experiences which also, like all things, were from God. The result was that he was humbled.

Humility in the human is not an evil. It is a blessing, consisting in itself of wisdom and power for endurance and compassion.

As believers we are aware that we are special people, chosen and called of God, blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials. But our experiences keep us humble, reminding us that indeed we have been chosen and called more because we are less powerful and noble and wise and strong than others who are not chosen and called (*cf* 1 Cor.1:26,27).

We do not have to sign up for these hard knocks. They will come because God graciously *gives* not only the blessing of believing but the suffering as well (Phil.1:29).

These are given, as they were to Paul, lest we should be lifted up by the transcendence of the blessings (*cf* 2 Cor.11:7). And they bring us, as they did Paul, a sharper acquaintance with the happiness and power in the blessings of grace. "With the greatest relish, then, will I rather be glorying in my infirmities, that the power of Christ should be tabernacling over me" (2 Cor.11:9).

Through his experiences, given to him by God, Paul became aware what it is to be humbled (Phil.4:12). In accord with the evangel and its faithful impression on the one believing, we may be "being led away to the humble" (Rom.12:16). Humility and humbleness are not produced simply by command and desire. They result from acquaintance with sufferings and discouragements and realization that we must place reliance on God to bring out justly and gloriously the values of our experiences.

In contemplating the sad, repetitious failures of human-

ity to learn from the past, to make real progress and know true satisfaction, the Assembler was being led toward a growing appreciation of God. Because his blessings were merely physical and terrestrial he could not reach the level of enlightenment given Paul, nor be given the level of humbling. Nevertheless, there was, for the Assembler, a beginning, which parallels more closely the levels of humbling that mankind in general are given through their lives. But, indeed, the Assembler was given something that has so far not been given to the majority of mankind. This was the gift of knowing that the experiences and their results are given by God.

VANITY AND WEARINESS

Hence we would listen to the words of Ecclesiastes 1:2-11 in the context of verse 13. All human toil is transitory, all is vanity, but God has given this frustrating experience to us. The very experience of needing to toil and then finding the need to start all over again, and never reaching the point where we can be satisfied that all has worked out well, is given to us by God.

What the Assembler says is true, and we have all observed it. As a whole, humanity does not progress or bring to an end the need of toil and learning lessons previous generations had also learned. The pictures afforded by the patterns of nature, the sun, the wind, the water cycle, all these are reflections of the transitoriness and repetitiousness of human toil and wisdom.

But this must not cast us down in despair because God remains over it all. He uses all these hard experiences for our eventual good and His glory.

There is weariness in human words, in the cycles of ideas and philosophies and discoveries. We think we have come up with something new, but it turns out to be only a different way of expressing old ideas or facing old responsibilities.

But this must not discourage us. We need these experiences, and because God gives them to us, they will accomplish His purpose.

WHAT IS HUMAN

The book of Ecclesiastes is not a discourse in human philosophy but, while recognizing that much of human philosophy speaks truly, the book directs us beyond those truths to God and what He is doing. It speaks of what is human and what is so concerning human history, *because God has made it so.* We should not dismiss these words as pessimism unworthy of believers who have been blessed with every spiritual blessing among the celestials in Christ. For we are also human beings, sinners, infirm, living in this current, wicked eon. And we need to be reminded that our own experiences of transitoriness and weariness are from the hand of the living God Who is our Saviour.

Paul also speaks of human realities. "No trial has taken you except *what is human*" (1 Cor.10:13). As human beings we experience much of the disquietude and depression described in Ecclesiastes. Along with everyone else we discover that we cannot escape the cycles of toil and disappointment that God has given to humanity. But as believers we recognize God in the trial, not simply the existence of God, but God as One involved in the experience. We have been given faith to see that God is *faithful.* God has given us the experience, but He is also faithful in bringing a sequel, or issue, an "out-stepping," out of the troublesome experience.

God gives us our experiences and purposes their sequels. The experiences are transitory, and often wearying, but they are part of what God has designed for us. This is of tremendous value for us to know, and the book of Ecclesiastes greatly helps to bring this truth before us.

D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 1999
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY

EDITORIAL

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES bring God into our lives. They are very honest about human weaknesses and never avoid the unpleasant things of human experience. But in doing so they always keep God in view, sometimes even in disconcerting ways.

My own studies recently in the book of Job, and now in Ecclesiastes, have helped me immensely in facing personal struggles and losses. It is not simply a matter of misery loving company. These books speak of the very universal, human experience of evil in full recognition of God's supremacy and responsibility. Consequently, they are powerful in preparing us for the evangel of God which we find in Paul's epistles.

In Job, the Scriptures speak of physical misery and pain. The evil faced by the Assembler was of a different sort: the psychological sorrow and despair that comes by the transitory nature of every human gain. The evil that came to Job was more basic, more down-to-earth, and more obvious. That faced in Ecclesiastes was more subtle, more obscure perhaps, but in certain ways no less devastating.

Physical pain on one hand, or mental travail on the other, both are part of human experience. We may not experience the intensity of pain and despair of Job or the Assembler; but we know something of such evils. And like these men of God we can never endure and mature apart from the recognition that God gives these experiences for His own reasons and purposes, under His directing hand of faithfulness and by His wise heart of love.

The lessons learned from nature, as Brother Knoch points out (*cf* p.108) aid us in becoming acquainted with

God. What we perceive in the world around us and what we experience in our lives work together to give meaning to what is written in God's Word. Certainly any suffering and discouragement we receive helps in grasping and appreciating the riches of God's love and grace made known in the evangel.

Yet from the human standpoint, the message of the gratuity of God's grace in Christ Jesus is not prospering. The truth that all is out of God and comes about through His operations and is for His glory is made secondary to considerations of human morality and daily activities. Human religious tradition holds back much of the light in God's Word, even in these days of increased availability of ancient manuscripts and means for accuracy in translation.

This would be discouraging to the point of downright despair if we forget that God is still God, and He is still operating all together in accord with His purpose. The very revelation of God given in the Sacred Scriptures is that He knows what He is doing and is doing it wisely and effectively. The evangel of His love, commended in the death of His Son for sinners, is the foundation and the strong tower of our faith. In this we have so much more than Job or the son of David. Once we catch a glimpse of the reliability of God and the vastness of His love, we are given peace and even thankfulness in our little troubles, knowing they have a place in God's purpose and will, for our good and His glory.

May the circumstances of our lives not distract us or blind us to the greatness and glory and grace of God. May we be like Job and the Assembler in acknowledging God as the great Disposer of both our temporary experiences and lasting blessings. May our experiences of evil not turn us away from reliance on the living God and rejoicing in His Word. Faithful is God Who is calling us and will be doing it also.

D.H.H.

GENESIS 1:3-5

3 **And Elohim** ˡ**said: Let light come** to **be! And it** ˡ**became light.** 4 + **Elohim** ˡ**saw** ˋ**the light that** it was **good.** +**Then Elohim** ˡ**separated** *bt* **the light** + *bt***from the darkness.** 5 **And Elohim** ˡ**called** › the **light Day, and** › the **darkness He called Night.**

And it ˡ**became evening, and it** ˡ**became morning: day one.**

NOTES AND CROSS REFERENCES

And: common Hebrew conjunction used here adjunctively to carry forward the previous thought.

And Elohim said (literally, *And He-is-saying, Elohim*): conjunction joined to simple, active, incomplete form of verb SAY (Englishman's Concordance, p.105), followed by Divine Title as subject of verb; this clause occurs ten times in Genesis 1 (verses 3,6,9,11,14,20,24,26,28,29).

Let . . . come to be! And it became (literally, *it-is-becoming . . . and-it-is-becoming*): both verbs are simple, active, incomplete forms of *become* (E.C. p.360), first used to express a command, then its exact fulfillment; *cf* the expression, *so it came to be,* in Gen.1:6 [7],9,11,15,24,30.

light: masculine, singular noun, E.C. p.32, occurs six times in Genesis 1 (verses 3,4,5,18); *cf* 2 Sam.23:4; Job 26:10; 29:3; 38:24; Psa.27:1; 36:9; 43:3; 97:11; 119:130; Isa.2:5; 45:7; 51:4; 58:8,10; 60:1,3,19,20; 2 Cor.4:6.

Elohim saw (literally, *and-He-is-seeing, Elohim*): conjunction added to simple, active, incomplete form of verb SEE (E.C. p.1141) followed by Divine Title as subject of verb.

`the light: direct object particle followed by definite article and masculine, singular noun.

good: masculine, singular adjective in the Hebrew word family, GOOD, E.C. p.476, entry 3 (or: simple, active, complete form of verb, *be-good,* E.C., p.476, entry 2); occurs seven times in Genesis 1 (verses 4,10,12,18,21,25,31).

Elohim separated (literally, *and-He-is-separating, Elohim*): simple, active, incomplete form of verb SEPARATE, E.C. p.187, followed by Divine Title as subject of verb; a complete listing of the occurrences of the verb *separate,* classified by grammatical form, follows:

Simple, Passive, Complete

1 Ch.12:8 these *separated* themselves to David
Ezr.9:1 have not kept themselves *separate*

Simple, Passive, Imperative

Nu.16:21 *Separate* yourselves from the midst
Ezr.10:11 and *separate* yourselves from the peoples

Simple, Passive, Incomplete

1 Ch.23:13 yet Aaron *was set apart* to sanctify
Ezr.10:8 he himself *be separated* from the assembly
Ezr.10:16 Ezra the priest *set apart* various men

Simple, Passive, Participle

Ezr.6:21 by *separating* himself from the uncleanness
Neh.10:28 everyone who had *separated* himself

Cause, Active, Complete

Ex.26:33 The curtain *will separate* for you
Lv.20:24 Elohim, Who *separates* you from the peoples.

Lv.20:25 you *will make* a *separation* between clean
Lv.20:25 Which I have *separated*
Nu.8:14 you *will separate* the Levites from
Nu.16:9 the Elohim of Israel *has separated* you
Dt.10:8 Yahweh *separated* the tribe of Levi
Dt.29:21 Yahweh *will separate* him from all the tribes
1 K.8:53 You Yourself *separated* them to be
Ezk.22:26 they do not *differentiate*

Cause, Active, Infinitive

Gen.1:14 *to separate* day from night,
Gen.1:18 *to separate* light from darkness.
Lev.10:10 *to differentiate* between the holy and
Lev.11:47 *to differentiate* between the unclean and
Isa.56:3 yea *separate* me from His people
Ezk.42:20 *to separate* the holy from the profane

Cause, Active, Incomplete

Gen.1:4 Elohim *separated* the light from the darkness.
Gen.1:7 *separated* the waters under the atmosphere
Lev.1:17 its wings, yet *shall* not *separate* it.
Lev.5:8 its nape, yet *shall* not *separate* it.
Lev.20:26 I *am separating* you from the peoples
Dt.4:41 Then Moses *separated* three cities
Dt.19:2 you *shall separate* for yourselves three
Dt.19:7 Three cities *shall* you *separate* for yourself.
1 Ch.25:1 *set apart* for service the sons of Asaph,
2 Ch.25:10 So Amaziah *separated* them out
Ezr.8:24 I then *separated* twelve,
Neh.13:3 they *separated* out of Israel all those
Isa.56:3 saying: Yahweh *shall separate*
Ezk.39:14 they *shall set apart* men for continual

Cause, Active, Participle

Gen.1:6 that it may be *separating* waters
Isa.59:2 depravities have become *separators*

between the light . . . between the darkness: preposition (E.C. p.212) occurring twice, followed by nouns with definite article attached.

Elohim called (literally, *and-He-is-calling, Elohim*): conjunction added to simple, active, incomplete form of verb CALL, E.C. p.1117, followed by Divine Title as subject of verb.

Day: masculine, singular noun, DAY, E.C. p.508; *cf* Psa. 19:2; 74:16.

and . . . He called: conjunction added to simple, active, complete form of verb CALL, E.C. p.1117; *cf* Gen.2:19; 3:20; 17:5; Ex.2:10; Isa.9:6; 54:5.

Night: masculine, singular noun in the Hebrew word family KEEP-BACK, E.C. p.470; *cf* Psa.92:2; 104:20.

evening: masculine, singular noun in the Hebrew word family MIX, E.C. p.975; *cf* Gen.8:11; Ex.12:6,18; Psa. 104:23; Zec.14:7.

morning: masculine, singular noun in the Hebrew word family QUEST, E.C. p.266; *cf* Psa.5:3; Ecc.11:6.

day one: masculine, singular noun in the family, DAY, followed by the cardinal number ONE, E.C. p.41, *cf* Gen.1:9; 11:1; Ezek.37:16-24.

"Where is this, the pathway where light tabernacles, and where is this, where darkness has its place? . . . I am Yahweh, and there is no other. Former of light and Creator of darkness . . ." (Job 38:19; Isa.45:6,7).

"And the light is appearing in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not . . . . It was the true light—which is enlightening every man—coming into the world" (John 1:5,9).

"For the God Who says that out of darkness light shall be shining, is He Who shines in our hearts, with a view to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ . . . . For you were once darkness, yet now you are light in the Lord. As children of light be walking . . ." (2 Cor.4:6; Eph.5:8,9).

THE LIGHT OF LIFE AND LOVE

THE RESTORATION of the earth from the chaos of the abyss was effected by *vibration*, as apparent in *light* (Gen.1:2,3). But this was a recurrent phenomenon, for it was alternated with *darkness*. Darkness, however, is not a positive, forceful manifestation in Hebrew, but a negative, impotent thing, as is evident from the Hebrew word, which signifies KEEP-BACK. This is well illustrated by Abraham, who did not *keep back*, or *withhold* (AV) Isaac, his son, when he was called upon to offer him up to God (Gen. 22:16). It is simply the absence of light. It is practically ignored, however, in the following account, for it effected nothing. At *first* the light alone is called "Day" (Gen.1:5). Thereafter, however, except on the seventh day, the evening and the morning are added to it; yet it is still reckoned a "day." We also use the word day as distinct from darkness or night, and also for the whole period of twenty-four hours, which includes both.

It was the recurrent *light* that accomplished the restoration of the earth. It separated the atmosphere and the seas from the dry land. It provided the vitality for the verdure and the soul life in the water and the air and on the land. The stages in this restoration were marked by the recurrence of darkness. The work was evidently done during the day, for the vibratory power of God's spirit not only made the scene visible, but provided the energy that separated the waters and made the atmosphere and supported the verdure, as well as the living souls which can-

not exist without these to this day. Yet *after* the day's work was done, we read "*and* it became evening" (skipping the night), "*and* it became morning," which made a whole day. "Evening" is just before the night, and "morning" follows it. In the night no work is done (*cf* John 9:4).

THE LENGTH OF THE DAYS

Much has been made of the *length* of the days by scientists, falsely so called, with the purpose of discrediting the inspired account of *creation*, although these days are not concerned with the original *creation* at all, but the *restoration* of the earth. Now, however, the latest scientific theory, based on the study of atomic energy, claims that creation took a very short time, much less than six days!

The length of time it takes to accomplish a given task is altogether dependent on the conditions under which it is done. I am told that a process somewhat similar to that of the restoration, in which the solid, liquid, and gaseous elements of the abyss were separated into land, water and air—that of refining crude oil into asphalt, the various liquid products, and gas—has been greatly accelerated by newer methods. As we know nothing of the precise conditions which obtained during the six days, we have no real premises on which to reason out the length of time. Under some conditions it might have taken what we call billions of years, under others an infinitesimal part of a second. We cannot measure absolute time without a standard, and the day itself is the basic unit of chronology.

It is quite true that the word "day" is used, with a figurative force in divine revelation. The "Lord's day," or the day of Yahweh, seems to last somewhat over a thousand years. Man's day has already run much longer than that. That these are figurative "days" is evident from the fact that, while they are *like* ordinary days in some respects, they *differ* from literal days, not only in their length, but

in being composed of many such days in time. Moreover, they are not repeated with periods of darkness between. But the days of the restoration have every feature of literal days such as we are acquainted with in our own lifetime, which have been recurring throughout man's history. The days of the restoration are composed, not only of light, but of evenings and mornings. As such they would make a rather complicated figure of speech.

The length of time consumed in any action is not an infallible measure of the result. I have often been criticized because of the briefness of my messages. But I would rather speak a minute to the heads and hearts of my hearers for their edification, than an hour to their hulks to their stupefaction. When I was in Europe, my relatives showed me an old church in which one of my ancestors had preached. They also exhibited the collection bag at the end of a long pole, so as to reach down the rows, with bells on it to wake up the drowsing. They told me that it was not only used for that purpose, but also to prod anyone who snored too loudly. I am told that, in these days, a modern audience can endure only about twenty minutes of solid sermon.

Time, like space, is only relative. If we should travel around the earth at the same speed as the sun, we would live only one continued, literal day, from our standpoint. Theoretically, if we had a vine with us we could transform water into wine in a single day. God is independent of time as He is of space. So Christ could transmute water into wine without either time or effort (John 2:1-10). Consequently, I would have no difficulty, on that score, in believing modern scientists, that creation was the work of an instant. Then, of course, it would not strain my faith at all, to believe God, when He tells us that He took six days for the restoration of the earth.

But, just as we cannot fully learn the lesson of light during the night, unless it is followed by the day, so, on the

larger spiritual scale, men cannot learn the larger lesson of God's illumination during the evil eons. They sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and grasp it only after the rousing from among the dead, when they live in the sevenfold radiance of the eons of the eons, or stand before the great white throne. Only those whose hearts have been illuminated by God's holy spirit, get a glimpse of the glory. But even their eyes must look through a dark glass, lest the blazing brilliance blind them, so long as they are in the flesh.

BECOME, NOT BE

Fault has been found with the CV rendering: *Let light come to be! And it became light.* It is a great pity that, throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, the difference between the simple (be) and the *causative* form (become) of the so-called substantive is practically ignored in our popular versions. During the restoration of the earth there was continual *change*, not merely a repeated *state*. Translators into English have our profound sympathy in this case, however, for English idiom makes it almost impossible to be faithful to the original in this matter. So the CV often changes it to ^{b}**come**, and sometimes into ^{b}**be**, where the context directs it.

NATURE THE HANDMAID OF REVELATION

Nature is God's primer, full of illustrations, with words, which give us the vocabulary of His revelation. The first lesson is taught us daily at the rising of the sun. Darkness gives place to *light*. God is light. In Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). This constant contrast is given us in order that we may grasp His glory. Just as the light unfolds to our admiring eyes the wonders of the visible creation, so the power of His spirit reveals to our minds and hearts the marvels of the spiritual realm. In the beginning, His initial act in the restoration of the earth was to illuminate

the scene by the vibration of His spirit in producing *light*. We know what this was because He rehearses this in our experience every day.

Missionaries to the heathen who have never heard of God have grave difficulties, I am told, in making Him known. I have sometimes thought that they should first begin with the book of nature and interpret it by the Scriptures. Beginning with light and darkness, the day and the night, which are known to the most ignorant savage, they could reveal Him Who is light, as well as the powers of darkness, and His Son Who is the Light of the world. Showing first that all life depends on light in nature, they could go on to make known the Life of all that lives, as well as His Son, Who descended into the darkness of death for their sakes in order to express His love and win them for Himself. Nature is known by all, and God has given it to illustrate His revelation.

We are all training to be missionaries among the celestials, so we should be deeply interested and sympathetic to the problems of our missionaries on earth. Their greatest task is to reveal God to those who do not know Him. One of the first difficulties is a name. Choosing one they already have is fraught with many dangers, for none is like Him. In China there was much discussion on this theme for many years, for none of the pagan titles fully fitted. Even in English, we attach only a vague notion of deity to the title "God," instead of the definite idea of the Subjector. I have often wished that we could change to this, but it seems to be impracticable, so I seek to associate this idea to the title as much as possible. The Greek version has it better, for there He is called *Theos*, the Placer.

Nature speaks a universal language. In order to reveal God as Light and Life and Love, I would point to the lesson of light as illustrated every day and night, and show how good the light is compared with the darkness. Life

and death may be used in the same way to show that He is the Living One. I would press the point that man's life depends upon death, for all his food must die that he may live, and so prepare for the death and resurrection of the Saviour. I would use the many examples of love and hate among mortals to prepare for the revelation of the love that gave His Son to reconcile all to Himself.

NATURE TEACHES

The apostle Paul has given us the highest revelation of God and His Christ. But this by no means supersedes or abolishes the teaching of nature. Paul himself appeals to the Corinthians, who were going contrary to natural instincts. He does not refer them to previous revelation or give them fresh instructions, but asks the question: "Is not even *nature* itself *teaching* you . . . ?" (1 Cor.11:14). Even the nations, by nature, fulfill some of God's law, although their great mistake is to go contrary to nature (Rom.2:14; 1:26). Yet some of the saints, doubtless influenced by the false rendering of *soulish* by "natural" (1 Cor.2:14; 15:44, 45,46), seek to be unnatural in their speech and conduct, as if nature were sinful. This leads to an unnatural, artificial, unwholesome mode of life, which is to be deplored. Let us be natural.

But let us also learn from nature the lessons which God teaches through it. We cannot understand the Scriptures themselves without this preparation. "God is light" means nothing at all to one who has not learned what light is from the primer of nature. The greatest of scholars dare not forget his abc's. And, conversely, let us not fail to use the Scriptures to reveal to us the full *lesson* of nature, the great and glorious truth that it is not a meaningless jargon, without significance, purposeless and vain, but a revelation of the Deity, through which His creatures may learn of His attributes and divinity, and, moreover, by means of

which He can reveal His inmost affection for them in His written revelation.

NIGHT AND DARKNESS

Darkness, the "keeping back" of light, may furnish the most instructive lesson in all nature. We usually take the night for granted, as if it were normal, an essential and indispensable feature of human existence. Quite the contrary is the truth. In the new earth there will be no night and no darkness. (Rev.21:25). The literal meaning of the Hebrew stem, as usual, gives us a correct clue as to its place in God's plans. It signifies KEEP-BACK. It is abnormal. God is *keeping back the light during* the first few eons in order that men may appreciate the light. It is a daily lesson that all have learned to some extent. It has made many sun worshipers, but it leads none to worship the God Who made the sun. Like sin, it is a temporary and intermittent evil, introduced as a foil to reveal the light.

Because it gives us a temporary respite from the duties of the day, and helps us to recuperate our failing faculties by entering into a death-like sleep, we welcome the shades of night, and fail to see its essentially evil character. This is shown us in the Scriptures, where the darkening of the sun, moon and stars and the kingdom of the wild beast (Matt.24:29; Mark 13:24; Rev.8:12), are shuddering portents of judgment. Some of the sons of the kingdom will be cast into outer darkness where there will be lamentation and gnashing of teeth (Matt.7:12).

But all this is only a picture of the *spiritual* darkness which holds sway in the world today. At the advent of Christ, even Israel, the one nation to whom God had revealed Himself, is represented as sitting in darkness and the shadow of death (Isa.9:2; Luke 1:17). If that was true of them, how much more so of the nations today! The unintelligent hearts of the so-called "heathen" nations are certainly

as dark as ever (Rom.1:21). Even so-called Christendom, with all its religion and ritual, has far more darkness than light. Few, indeed, have turned their backs on the light of nature and reason, and entered the holy place and revelled in the light of revelation. And, of these, far fewer bask in the bright blessings of the Shekinah glory, for they do not see that the curtain has been rent, so that the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God beams upon them in the face of Christ (2 Cor.4:6).

The *activity* of God's spirit is manifested in the three *"ells," light, life* and *love.* The *passivity* of His power is evident in the three "hells," *darkness, death,* and *indifference,* if we take the word "hell" in its true meaning of that which is *imperceptible.* We *perceive* light and *experience* life and *revel* in love, but our senses are *numbed* by darkness, we enter the *imperceptible* in death and we are *calloused* in indifference. So far as the earth is concerned, God created light in one verse in Genesis, and life in the first chapter, but it takes the whole Bible to create love. Figuratively speaking, light is only the root, and life the tree on which love is the fruit. These are three stages in God's revelation, but the highest is love.

Many years ago a manuscript was sent in by a very intelligent and beloved brother, seeking to show that all *evil* is due to the *absence* of God. At that time we did not know the vast difference between evil and sin, so that there seemed to be much evidence in its favor. Adam sinned when God was absent from Eden. But there were other Scriptures which seemed to show that evil occurred in His *presence.* In fact many of His judgments consisted in the infliction of evil. Why, He is even said to be the Creator of evil. I was very much inclined to publish the article of this beloved brother, even if I had my doubts. Now I am most thankful that I did not do so, for it led to the study and separation of evil and sin.

It is *sin,* not evil, that comes from the withholding of God's spirit. Adam and Eve indeed had light and life, nevertheless they were in a measure of darkness, for their eyes were closed to spiritual light, even if they did see the forbidden fruit. The serpent predicted that their eyes would be unclosed if they ate of it, and, sure enough, they had never seen *themselves* until after they ate! More than that, although they had more light, which should have kept them from sinning, death was now operating in them. The lack of life is even more provocative of sin than the lack of light. And the lack of life led to the lack of love, so that they feared God and hid themselves.

For the present, let us thank God for the darkness that enables us to appreciate the light, yet, at the same time, we may exult in the future, when we will bask in the full blaze of His effulgence without being blinded by His glory. Then the light that restored the ruined earth will restore us, and enable us to enjoy its full fruitage of eonian life, and everlasting love. A. E. Knoch



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"REJOICING NEVERTHELESS"

"FOR is any of humanity acquainted with that which is human except the spirit of humanity which is in it? Thus also, that which is of God no one knows, except the spirit of God. 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.2:11-13).

Throughout the precious words of Scripture we are able to trace many delightful parallels. These are not contrived by our fancy, but the spirit which is of God leads us, with clear perception and refreshing joy, to observe what is there. They seem to draw our eyes and hearts for consolation into every relevant and wonderful page. May we consider the following example from incidents which occurred during the ministry of our Lord and His *choice instrument,* the apostle Paul:

"John averred to Him, saying, 'Teacher, we perceived someone casting out demons in Thy name, who is not following us, and we forbade him, for he followed not with us.' Yet Jesus said, 'Be not forbidding him, for there is no one who will be doing a powerful deed in My name, and will be able swiftly to speak evil of Me. For who is not against us is for us. For whosoever should be giving you a cup of water to drink in the Name, seeing that you are Christ's, verily I am saying to you that by no means should he be losing his wages'" (Mark 9:38-40). Compare this expression of profound wisdom with the like understanding of the apostle:

"Now I am intending you to know, brethren, that my

affairs have rather come to be for the progress of the evangel, so that my bonds in Christ become apparent in the whole pretorium and to all the rest, and the majority of the brethren, having confidence in the Lord as to my bonds, are more exceedingly daring to speak the word of God fearlessly. Some, indeed, are even heralding Christ because of envy and strife, yet some because of delight, also; these, indeed, of love, having perceived that I am located for the defense of the evangel, yet those are announcing Christ out of faction, not purely, surmising to arouse affliction in my bonds. What then?—Moreover, seeing that, by every method, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is being announced, I am rejoicing in this also, and will be rejoicing nevertheless" (Phil.1:12-18).

Without the spirit of God which is searching all, *even the depths of God,* we would not presume to examine such verities. In similar manner to those who stood together with Job awaiting the words of Yahweh, we also would be in fear and trembling. With Elihu, we also would declare, "He Who-Suffices, *we* cannot find Him out" (Job 37:23). Yet to us it is confided, "For who knew the mind of the Lord? Who will be deducing from Him? Yet we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor.2:16)!, and again, ". . . you may become blameless and artless, children of God, flawless, in the midst of a generation crooked and perverse among whom you are appearing as luminaries in the world" (Phil.2:14).

MONOTHEISM

Life in Egypt for the Hebrews was, for a time, very pleasant. This was not to last, and indeed, a time came when persecution was intolerable. The story of the exodus and the effective leadership of the patriarch, Moses is well known. During the forty years which were spent in the wilderness of the Sinai peninsula, something happened that was to have a resounding effect on this people,

and not on these alone. In a region which was known for worship of a multiplicity of gods, for the first time, *monotheism*, that is, a religious system based on the belief that only one God exists in the universe, became known!

Loathe to yield to this unique faith, the surrender of adherence to idols came slowly, but as the nomadic and divisive social patterns of these Hebrews changed, and conquests of the Canaanite cities led to increasing prosperity, so it appeared to the other nations that this belief in one God and the imparted code of laws was very impressive. Certainly it seemed that God was fulfilling His promise to watch over the interests of this nation.

PURPOSE OF THE EONS

If the revelation of belief in one God was quite overwhelming for the neighboring tribes among the Canaanites, then imagine the staggering effect among the celestials to learn of God's plan for the ecclesia, ". . . which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all"! (Eph.1:23). Let us revel in the glorious words:

God is ". . . to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Eph.3:9-11).

Yes, how the celestials must have been completely astonished! But the spiritual forces of wickedness among these must have been utterly frustrated! Everything they had done in their hatred had not changed a single thing. To the contrary, their opposition had provided the essential contrast to God's gracious gift of love, in the all-embracing sacrifice of His beloved Son. What divine wisdom is brought to light through this amazing revelation! It is evi-

dent that this is not kept secret from the celestials. As Israel was to the Canaanites, so the body of Christ is to the celestials. This is a delightful parallel, illuminating the wisdom of God.

FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Whenever a child of God manifests nobility in unselfish love or compassion, wherever some devotion is expressed in striving, without any hope of reward, to present God's precious Word sincerely, in brief, when we are walking in newness of life, we are not just bringing the celestials a foretaste of the future blessings for them when these bodies of our humiliation are transfigured. But rather, and this is to be preferred, most humbly, such walk is for Him Who gave Himself for all, a fitting tribute of unintermittent thanksgiving.

This leads into another heart-stirring illustration. This time, may we turn to the wondrous words of our Lord: "And Jesus, being seated facing the treasury, beheld how the throng is casting the coppers into the treasury. And many rich cast in much. And one woman, a poor widow, coming, casts in two mites, which is a quadrans. And calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, 'Verily, I am saying to you that this poor widow casts in more than all who are casting into the treasury. For all cast out of their superfluity, yet she, out of her want, casts in all, as much as she had—her whole livelihood'" (Mark 12:41-44).

"Twice we are exhorted by our apostle to reclaim the era (Eph.5:16; Col.4:5). Let us remind ourselves that, in all the glory and perfection which we will enjoy above, we will lack one way of honoring our Lord and glorifying Him, that is, by a walk in faith and obedience. And just this brings Him an honor which we cannot accord Him when above. Therefore we should prize such occasions and use them to the full" (*Unsearchable Riches,* vol.46. page 253).

MORE COMPASSIONATE, NOT LESS

All God's acts are dictated by love. Though the evil of humanity *grieved His heart,* and He regretted making humanity on the earth (Gen.6:6), the deluge was not a detached judgment. He sympathizes with His creatures and His heart goes out to them even when they are disobedient.

The spirit of humanity is not at any time able to comprehend why the apostle should be rejoicing in his sufferings that Christ should thus be heralded (Phil.1:18). But, conversely, graced with the glory of the spirit of God and awaiting the summons of our Lord, are we at present indifferent to the groaning and travailing of creation?

Does the sheer prodigality of human life after years of miserable pain and sorrow which afflict humanity leave us unmoved? Surely, this same spirit makes us *more compassionate, not less!*

We are awaiting the sonship, the deliverance of our bodies. "Now, similarly, the spirit also is aiding our infirmity, for what we should be praying for, to accord with what must be, we are not aware, but the spirit itself is pleading for us with inarticulate groanings" (Rom.8:26).

On every side we witness unceasing research and investigation. There is a helplessness in it all. Timothy was warned that in the last days many would be immoral and vain, ". . . always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth" (2 Tim.3:1-9). With Paul, from whom we all derive so much strength, we must be, ". . . reckoning that the sufferings of the current era do not deserve the glory about to be revealed for us. For the premonition of the creation is awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God" (Rom.8:18,19). May we always keep the glory of the consummation foremost in our minds, but especially in our hearts.

Donald Fielding

THE INITIAL ACTIONS OF GOD

THE ACTIONS of God are expressive of His being. The fact that God *creates* (Gen.1:1) tells us much about His power and ability. But this has been put into question by the introduction of chaos, vacancy and darkness into the scene (Gen.1:2). Now, starting with Genesis 1:3-5, we are becoming more acquainted with God by means of His further actions, which deal with the chaos and darkness. These initial actions of deliverance are expressed by the common verbs, *say, see, separate* and *call.* These activities, especially the first two, are basic in human affairs, and it is not without significance that we find God dealing with the emptiness and darkness of Genesis 1:2 by means of these very elementary actions.

The vibrating of God's spirit (1:2) is directed through His words "Let light come to be," and is then centered in the light that came to be. So also God powerfully enlightens us by His Word, revealing Himself while dealing effectively with the chaos and darkness of our individual lives. What He says identifies the goal of good, which is then perceived.

The further actions of God in this passage certainly have the goal of good in view. God separates between two opposites, dividing the evil from the good, and identifies each by a name by which they are called. These actions, however do not, in themselves, speak of the goal, but are directed toward it. They bring order where there once was chaos. But The darkness which is called "night" is only a temporary part of the process toward the goal of permanent, and fully appreciated light.

GOD IS SAYING

The second action, therefore, directly attributed to God in Scripture is that He *says* or speaks a thought. He did not speak in English of course, saying the words, "Let light come to be," or, even more literally, speaking in the form of a declaration, "It is becoming light." Even if we could reproduce the Hebrew words here accurately, we would not grasp by that means what is being revealed in Genesis 1:3. It is unimportant as far as we are concerned what the words *sounded* like. The likeness that we are interested in is the likeness to God which His message conveys. The vital point is that these words were spoken *by God,* and that they were keen and operative (*cf* Heb.4:12), reflecting His glory.

We did not hear this commanding declaration, but we who believe know something of the character of the words of God. We know something of the traits of this first recorded message of God because we have become acquainted with the power and music and enlightenment of God's words to us. "The opening of Your words is enlightening . . . . Refined is Your promise exceedingly" (Psa.119:130,140). His words are *inspired* and *beneficial* in countless ways to the believer (*cf* 2 Tim.3:16,17).

On hearing the evangel of our salvation, and on believing also, we "are sealed with the holy spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). The word has come to us that Christ died for our sins, that He was entombed and has been roused (1 Cor. 15:3,4). With the hearing and accepting of this faithful saying (*cf* 1 Tim.1:15), we received spiritual enlightenment and invigoration (Gal.3:2,3), like Abraham many centuries ago (Rom.4:20).

Anyone who has ever heard and believed the word of gratuitous grace (*cf* Rom.3:24), no matter the measure of faith, will have had some inkling of the glory of that

which God *says*. His words are powerful and effective, enlighening and invigorating.

We read these words of Genesis 1:3-5 over and over again, and we discover anew each time how fitting they are, how basic and fundamental, yet profound and inexhaustible. They encourage and assure us, for once God has spoken of good to come, that good cannot fail of coming.

The words declaring the coming of light and order and life in Genesis chapter one are, according to the psalmist, still going forth, day after day, into the entire earth, recounting the glory of God (Psa.19:1-6). So also His words to Israel restore and rejoice the hearts of His people (Psa.19:7-14). Even so believers today are lifted up and strengthened by "the illumination of the evangel of the glory of Christ, Who is the Image of the invisible God" (2 Cor.4:4). For we have heard a word of truth and love, paralleling the words of Genesis 1:3, given by "the God Who says that, out of darkness light shall be shining . . . Who shines in our hearts, with a view to the illumination of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (4:6).

Human disbelief is merely darkness. Human stubbornness and irreverence and enmity are only chaos. They cannot withstand the power of life-giving light. As soon as God removes the ignorance, whether by graciously granting faith or by showing the truth visibly in the Person of His Son, the light will come forth and do its work until all are enlightened and the darkness is eliminated everywhere.

GOD IS SEEING

God's direct activities have led to good. His work of creating and then of speaking in conjunction with the vibrating of His spirit have dealt with disorder and darkness and ended with good. This is what God always looks forward to. Through "world mights of . . . darkness" (*cf* Eph.6:12) He has subjected His creation to the vanity of suffering,

corruption, groaning and travailing, but He has done so "in expectation." He anticipates with a sure and certain hope that it will end in good, so that "creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom.8:18-25).

What will God see when the present corruption is finished? To what end is God leading the current situation of a creation groaning in chaos and darkness? The evangel that light shall shine out of the darkness in and through the faith of Jesus Christ leads to good. Every knee shall bow and every tongue avow that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, and God will be All in all (Phil. 2:10,11; 1 Cor.15:28).

God will not rest until He *sees* that which He set out to achieve. "From the toil of His soul He shall *see* light, and He shall be satisfied by His knowledge" (Isa.53:11). That is the great and glorious goal of God, toward which all His actions are directed. In Genesis 1 God's seeing of light came "from" what He said, from His word. The light which God will see in the consummation will come "from the toil of His soul," centered most specifically in that toil of the suffering and shame of His Son, foretold in Isaiah 53.

GOD IS SEPARATING

God's work of separating light from darkness is a great work. But it is not a goal in the same sense as the seeing of good. It is, as we have noted above, part of God's process in reaching that goal, but it is not the goal itself. As long as darkness remains, even though it is separated from light, the goal has not been reached. Eventually there will be no more darkness at all, fully in accord with John's vision of the new earth (Rev.22:4). We who believe are rescued out of the jurisdiction of Darkness and transported into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in accord with God's delight to reconcile all to Him through His beloved Son

(Col.1:13-20). The purpose of God will not be realized until all darkness is gone.

Hence the separation of darkness from light represents an important step forward, while further manifesting God's wisdom and power. A period of darkness remains, of necessity under current conditions, teaching us daily, by contrast, the values of light. In this sense we can say that darkness clarifies light. But once it has fulfilled its purpose it can be removed so that light alone remains. The jurisdiction of darkness continues now separately from the kingdom of the Son of God's love, but that kingdom of light of love must increase and broaden until all creation comes under its sole sway.

There is a pattern here which is carried through in many of God's eonian operations. Abram is separated from his family, and Israel is separated from the other nations. Saul and Barnabas are severed from the other apostles, Paul from his birth connections, the believers from the unbelievers. These separations are channels for many blessings, but none of them represent final states. All separations will come to an end, and the light and the joy and the peace and the love which is gained through the blood of the cross will remain alone.

GOD IS CALLING

God gives names to the channels of blessing and those of ignorance and shame which stand in contrast to them. These names speak of the place and function of the thing named in God's eonian operations, but more than this they are evidence of the purposefulness of the Supreme Subjector. The fact that God gives names to the darkness and the light is an indication of God's control over them. God calls the separated period of darkness "night" and continues to see to it that its function is carried out; once that occurs, night will be no more. And God calls the separated

period of light "day" and, through the accomplishment of the cross and the victory of the resurrection, God patiently but surely calls the day into its uninterrupted destiny.

The name *night* is not permanent; the name *day* will always remain and increase its scope. Peter speaks of the "day of the Lord," while hurrying forward to "the presence of God's day" (2 Pet.3:10-13).

Paul says to us that we who are "of the day" are not appointed to indignation "but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess.5:8,9). This is our calling, to be of the day. We might truly say that God calls us "those who are of the day," for indeed we are called "sons of the light and sons of the day" (5:5). By thus calling us, we are certain that we will come into the full enjoyment and appreciation of all that the day of God means. "Faithful is He Who is calling you, Who will be doing it also" (5:24).

All the grand designations by which God calls us will be realized in full by His faithful operations. We are called "saints," hallowed in Christ Jesus (1 Cor.1:2), and named Those-Who-Are-Called-Into-The-Fellowship-Of-God's-Son (1:9). We are The-Called-In-The-Grace-Of-Christ people (Gal.1:6; 2 Tim.1:9). But those who are not given these callings today are not doomed to remain outside of God's callings of light and love forever. For Christ has died for sinners, and God is the Saviour of all mankind.

The darkness is needed for awhile in order to learn about the light. The light is brought into our lives by what God says. God's Word continues to separate for us between the darkness and the light. But the *day* is coming because of the faithful operations of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when there will not be any more night. Thus God will call all into the light, and He will see that the light is very good.

D.H.H.

DIVINE FOREKNOWLEDGE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

WE LEARN that man's volitions and actions cannot be such that they occur apart from all necessity by a consideration of God's certain foreknowledge of such very events as those which are comprised of voluntary human behavior.

To make this clear, I wish first to show that God has a certain foreknowledge of man's voluntary acts; second, I would prove that it follows from this that man's voluntary acts cannot be such that they are devoid of all necessity or causality.

One might suppose that it would be wholly unnecessary to set forth such arguments on behalf of any who are sincere and impartial. Do not the Scriptures give abundant testimony to the foreknowledge of God, and is not causality the first dictate of common sense? Yet some deny God's foreknowledge of voluntary acts; and nearly all wish to claim that—the infallible prophetic word of God notwithstanding—voluntary behavior is devoid of all necessity. It therefore becomes needful to prove (1) that God already knows that of which the future consists, and (2) that voluntary behavior, therefore, cannot be such that it is devoid of all necessity.

By way of introduction to our present topic, that of divine foreknowledge and its significance, it should be noted that our interest here is not simply to learn whether God knows the future, but to perceive what this entails, if indeed He knows the future.

The question before us is whether foreknowledge precludes free will. But before we address that specific ques-

tion, we will do well to recognize what the fundamental issues concerning free will are, in any case—whether or not God knows the future.

In philosophy, the view that man's volitions and actions ultimately occur apart from all necessity or causality, is termed *libertarianism.* The similar popular view commonly termed "free will," likewise entails it being true that human choice is ultimately uncaused, that is, that it is finally "indeterministic" in nature.

Proponents of free will recognize that if it should be so that human behavior, in fact, is of a deterministic nature, the notion of freewill moral responsibility (i.e., of categorical could-have-done-otherwiseness) would thereby be precluded. Such ones, however, not only wish to *hold* men responsible (i.e., accountable or liable), but wish to claim that men *are "morally responsible."* What is intended by this phrase is the claim that men are responsible (i.e., liable) for their moral deeds *because* they possess a power of "free will" over them.

By such artful use of the term "responsible," cleverly seeking to get what they want by using a legitimate term in an illegitimate way, proponents of free will do not intend merely an affirmation of the fact of the accountability of the doer of the deed. Instead, they wish to claim and give credence to the necessarily false notion that within the human there exists an ever-present, absolute power of contrary choice, a faculty of choice which is finally undetermined by all influences and conditions, whether of heredity, environment, present state of mind, immediate circumstance, or anything else whatsoever.

Such ones suppose that through their denial of determinism, they will be able to maintain this very notion of absolute contrary choice. Hence, in considerations of ultimate issues of human choice, they opt for and affirm indeterminism while denying determinism. It is not that they are, *ipso*

facto, against the proposition of determinism in relation to human behavior. It is only because they are against what the proposition of deterministic human behavior entails, that they therefore have decided against determinism.

Such a bias-based rejection of determinism, however—especially of the *divine* determinism of God's operation of all—is not wise. What of it if a certain proposition (determinism) precludes a certain popular notion and ethical opinion (free will)? That does not make the proposition false; hence it should not be rejected on such a basis.

It is not as if the Scriptures, whether by declaration or corollary, actually affirm the notion of free will. Free will is merely presupposed, and is therefore read *into* the Scriptures. It is not that it is *found* there; it is rather that advocates of that view, inferring its presence and abhorring any thought of its absence, unwittingly seek to *put* it there.

In denying determinism, the free willer necessarily involves himself in indeterminism. Yet indeterminism is just as incapable as determinism in affording any room for free will. This is because an ultimately uncaused event is truly an unaccountable event. Being due to nothing, it can be traced to nothing; hence no one is responsible for it. It is an event of sheer chance: uncontrolled, and uncontrollable. Specifically, it is not an event over which one might even conceivably exercise control, whether to bring it to pass or to prevent its occurrence.

Since both determinism and indeterminism (or any combination of the two) preclude free will, free will is demonstrably false. Further, since in all possible worlds, free will is precluded, it is impossible to give any objective account of how it might exist. That which is necessarily unreal, cannot be made real by the mere force of rhetoric. All that one can do in the interests of free will is to engage in circular arguments on its behalf, special pleading, on the assumption of a necessarily incorrect premise, that of

the validity of traditional ethics, which demand the existence of free will.

VOLITION CONNECTED TO ACTION

In this first principal section, I wish to demonstrate that God foreknows what man will do; that, specifically, He has an absolute and certain foreknowledge of the voluntary, moral actions of men. If God did not foreknow, He could not foretell, peremptorily, and to a certainty. If God had no more than an uncertain guess, He could declare no more than an uncertain guess.

It should similarly be noted that if God did not already know what men's future choices will be, neither could He foreknow those events which are dependent on and the consequences of these choices. The knowledge of the existence of the one depends on the knowledge and existence of the other. Hence, one cannot be more certain than the other.

"Therefore, how many, how great, and how extensive soever the consequences of the volitions of moral agents may be, though they should extend to an alteration of the state of things throughout the universe and should be continued in a series of successive events to all eternity and should in the progress of things branch forth into an infinite number of series, each of them going on in an endless line or chain of events, God must be as ignorant of all these consequences as He is of the volitions whence they take their rise. All these events, and the whole state of things depending on them [i.e., upon the volitions of moral agents]—how important, extensive, and vast soever—must be hid from Him."[1] That is, it must be so that

1. Jonathan Edwards, FREEDOM OF THE WILL *(A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will Supposed to be Essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame),* p.62 (New York: 1881, Robert Carter and Brothers).

God knows nothing of future events which are the outcome of the choices of moral agents, if He knows nothing of the future choices of moral agents.

In light of these considerations, I would now observe the following:

Men's moral conduct—their virtues and their vices, their uprightness and their wickedness, things rewardable and punishable, praiseworthy and blameworthy—have often been foretold by God. Pharaoh's evil moral conduct, in refusing to obey God's command in letting His people go, was foretold (Ex.3:19; *cp* 7:4; 9:30; 11:9).

Josiah's righteous moral conduct in opposition to idolatry was foretold over three hundred years before he was born (1 Kings 13:1-6,32). This prophecy, effectually, was also a prophecy of the idolatry which Josiah would oppose.

1 Kings 21:20-22 foretold the wicked and foolish conduct of Ahab in which he would refuse to obey the word of Yahweh which came to him by the prophet Micaiah, choosing instead to hearken to the false prophets in going to Ramoth Gilead to his ruin.

In 2 Kings 8:12 the wicked moral conduct of Hazael, king of Aram, is foretold, to the consternation of Hazael himself. The prophet Elisha spoke of that which he knew, not what he conjectured, when saying that of the sons of Israel, Hazael would slay their young men, dash their infants to pieces, and rip up their pregnant women.

Long before his birth, the moral conduct of Cyrus is foretold, in his mercy to Yahweh's people and regard to the true Elohim, in turning the captivity of the Jews and promoting the building of the temple (Isa.44:28; 45;13; *cp* 2 Chron.36:22,23; Ezra 1:1-4).

Nathan's prophecy against David (2 Sam.7:11,12) was fulfilled by the horrible wickedness of Absalom, in rebelling against his father, seeking his life, and lying with his concubines in the light of day.

The prophecy against Solomon (1 Kings 11:11-13), was fulfilled by Jeroboam's wicked rebellion and usurpation. The prophecy against Jeroboam's family (1 Kings 14), was fulfilled by the conspiracy, treason, and cruel murders of Baasha (1 Kings 15:27).

The future cruelty of the Egyptians in oppressing Israel, and God's judgment of them for it, was foretold long before it came to pass (Gen.15:13,14).

The final obstinancy of those Jews who were left in the land of Israel, in their idolatry and rejection of the true God, was foretold in Jeremiah 44:26,27. In Isaiah 48, God tells the people that He had predicted those things which would be the consequences of their treachery and obstinancy, because He knew that they *would* be obstinate, and that He had declared these things beforehand for their conviction of His being the only true God.

The destruction of Babylon, together with many of its circumstances, was foretold as God's judgment for the great pride and haughtiness of king Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, for their wickedly destroying other nations, and especially for their exalting themselves against the true God and His people. Yet the prophetic word concerning these things was foretold before any of these monarchs existed (Isa.13,14,47; *cp* Hab.2:5-20; Jer.1; Jer.51)! The immorality which the people of Babylon, particularly her princes and great men, were guilty of in the very night that the city was destroyed (the revelling and drunkenness at Belshazzar's idolatrous feasts) was foretold (Jer.51:39,57).

The return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity is foretold in detail, peremptorily, and with many circumstances (Jer.31:35-40; 32:6-15, 41-44; 33:24-26). The very time of their return was announced (Jer.25:11,12; 29:10-12; 2 Chron.36:21; Ezek.4:6; Dan.9:2), and yet the prophecies represent their return as dependent upon their repentance, which itself is expressly and particularly fore-

told (Jer.29:12-14; 31:8,9,18-31; 50:4,5; Ezek.6:8-10; 7:16; 14:22,23; 20:43,44).

The sufferings pertaining to the Christ and the glories after these (*cp* 1 Pet.1:10,11), are abundantly foretold in Scripture. That the Messiah should suffer greatly through the malice and cruelty of men is both typically and literally set forth (*cp* Psa.22; Micah 5:1; Matt.27:35,43; John 19:24). Indeed, these things had to happen ("thus it must occur," Matt.26:54), that the scripture may be fulfilled. The event of the crucifixion was, at once, the outworkings of the malicious wickedness of men, and, the loving sacrifice of God. "For of a truth, in this city were gathered against Thy holy Boy Jesus, Whom Thou dost anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the nations and the peoples of Israel, *to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel designates beforehand to occur*" (Acts 4:27,28).

At the deepest level, the death of Christ was the work of God, according to the wisdom of His counsel, for the achievement of the desires of His heart in the salvation of all mankind (1 Tim.2:4; 4:10; 1 Cor.15:22-28) and the reconciliation of all, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:20). Ultimately speaking, though He does no wrong, and no conceit is in His [i.e., Christ's] mouth, yet *Yahweh desires* to crush Him, and *causes* Him to be wounded (Isa.53:10).

Following the resurrection of Christ, and the severing of Barnabas and Saul (who is also Paul), for the work to which God had called them, Paul met with many grievous persecutions. And yet these persecutions were foretold. The Lord said concerning Paul: "He is a choice instrument of Mine, to bear My name before both the nations and kings, besides the sons of Israel, for I shall be intimating to him how much he *must* be suffering for My name's sake" (Acts 9:15,16). As Paul himself declared, "And now, lo! I, bound in spirit, am going to Jerusalem, not being aware what I

will meet with in it, more than that the holy spirit, city by city, certifies to me, saying that bonds and afflictions are remaining for me" (Acts 20:22,23).

Likewise, the prophet Agabus declared, picking up Paul's girdle, binding his own feet and hands, saying, "Now this the holy spirit is saying, 'The man whose girdle this is, *shall* the Jews in Jerusalem be binding thus, and they *shall* be giving him over into the hands of the nations'" (Acts 21:11).

Similarly, Paul himself asseverated to the Ephesian elders, saying, "Now I am aware that, after I am out of reach, burdensome wolves *will* be entering among you, not sparing the flocklet. And from among yourselves *will* arise men, speaking perverse things to pull away disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29,30).

The entirety of the book of Revelation comprises, "The Unveiling of Jesus Christ, which God gives to Him, to show to His slaves *what must occur* swiftly" [i.e., in swiftness] (Rev.1:1). This is so whether concerning the character of the various Jewish ecclesias of Asia Minor which will obtain there in the day of the Lord, or the many fearful judgments that will come upon the earth in that day, rehearsed throughout the scroll in such detail.

Most notably, the day will come when "the seventh messenger trumpets. And loud voices occurred in heaven, saying, 'The kingdom of this world became our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall be reigning for the eons of the eons! Amen!'" (Rev.11:15). Though Satan is to be bound during the thousand years' glorious reign of Christ, this is only "until the thousand years should be finished. After these things, he *must* be loosed a little time" (Rev.20:3b). Then, "Satan *will* be loosed out of his jail. And he *will* be coming out to deceive all the nations which are in the four corners of the earth" (Rev.20:8a).

Indeed, in Revelation 17:17, we are told why the nations who serve as the men of God's counsel in bringing such fear-

ful judgment upon the Jews in Babylon will do so: *"for God imparts to their hearts to form His opinion,* and to form one opinion, and to give their kingdom to the wild beast, until the words of God *shall* be accomplished" (Rev.17:17).

The various prophecies rehearsed above, are but a few of the far greater number of prophecies that might also be set forth in still more abundant testimony of the fact that God foreknows the moral volitions and actions of men.

THE OUTCOME OF GOD'S OPERATIONS

Beyond the rehearsal of the prophetic word, no doubt the greatest proof that God knows the future is because God controls the future. *Seeing that* out of Him and through Him and for Him is *all,* Paul therefore rhetorically affirms that no one *knew* the mind of the Lord, became His adviser, or gives to Him *first* (*cf* Rom.11:34-36). Thus it becomes evident that the all that is out of, through, and for God, is all that exists and all that occurs.

Since all is *out of* God, God certainly knows all that will occur, prior to its occurrence. Since all is *through* God—Who is *operating all* according to the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11)—it is evident that God is by no means ignorant as to the outcome of His own operations. Since all is *for* God and will yet redound to His glory (*cf* "to Him be the glory," Rom.11:36), we may be certain that God *knows* what He will do before He does it, of which the events of history are the result, according to His own unspeakably wise designs and powerful operations.

THE NECESSITY OF THE CONSEQUENCE AS RELATED TO PROPHECY

Finally, I would prove, apart from other demonstrations of the same conclusion, that on the ground of divine foreknowledge alone, human volition cannot be of a nature such as to debar all necessity. That is to say, it cannot be

of such a nature as is claimed under the banner of "free will," which therefore is necessarily a false concept.

It is true that foreknowledge does not *cause* future events. But it is just as true that foreknowledge *proves* that both future events and the human volitions from which they result, *are caused.* Therefore, the volitions and events of which the future is comprised, cannot be volitions and events of "free will," since free will is claimed to be an ultimately uncaused phenomenon.

It is evident with regard to a thing whose own existence is infallibly and ineliminably connected with something which has or has had existence, that the existence of that thing itself is necessary. Even as the existence of knowledge of the past makes it so that the events of the past are necessary, the existence of knowledge of the future makes it so that the events of the future are necessary. The existence of actual knowledge of past events, makes it too late to alter the past. Likewise, the existence of actual knowledge of future events, makes it too late to alter the future.

Most cannot believe that, "Yahweh has *made everything* for its own pertinent end, yea even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov.16:4). Hence, they speak of His "permissive decree," or of His "allowing" the occurrence of evil, the implication being that God *only* "allows" events to transpire while causing none of them to occur—whether the good or the evil—within the sphere of human conduct.

It is the *inevitability* of the future and *the lack of ultimate human control* concerning it, to which they object, when seeking to distance the Deity from the course of history and the affairs of His own universe, having no room in their view of things for the fact that God makes the world and all that is in it (Acts 17:24).

The fact is, however, that there is no more *fatality* (i.e., inevitability) in the universal *operations* of God, than that which already obtains in the universal *foreknowledge* of God, this latter proposition being affirmed at least for-

mally by nearly all who are naming the name of the Lord. Hence, to be consistent, if one wishes to object to the deity of God (i.e., to His Subjectorship in the operation of all), one should object as well both to His omniscience and to His prescience. Our teaching of God's universal deity no more entails it being so that free will is false, than the teaching of God's universal knowledge, including universal foreknowledge, likewise entails it being so that free will is false. Hence it does not become those who decry our teaching concerning God's deity to do so because of its preclusion of free will, when their own teaching of God's foreknowledge is open to the same fleshly objection.

In light of all the things we have considered here, it becomes evident that not only is the popular notion of free-will responsibility a seriously mistaken concept, but that the freewill suppositions commonly associated both with *praise* and with *blame* are gravely confused and mistaken as well. Hence our attitude concerning matters of praise and blame, and our response to actions which evoke either praise or blame, have become in need of adjustment.

Since the notion of free will is demonstrably false, it follows that the practice of either praising or blaming *because* of one's supposed exercise of free will in the acts for which one is praised or blamed, should be repudiated. The viability of praise and blame stands alone, apart from free will. Both praise and blame are already practicable and enjoy a proper sphere of operation, prior to the introduction of any spurious notions of free will. All that is necessary here is to rid both of these terms from the freewill *inferences* which many have made concerning them, which inferences they have consequently foisted upon these words themselves.

Both praise and blame must be confined to the excellence, or ignominy, of that which one *does* or that which one *is*, even as for the *motive* from which one acts. To praise is to laud and acclaim; to blame is to charge with wrongdo-

ing, even as, often, to connote liability. Thus understood, even in a world devoid of "free will," praise and blame retain a vital place and maintain an important sphere of service. The glory of virtue and the horror of vice, the importance of the advocacy of righteousness and the condemnation of sin, even as the incentive of reward for good and the deterrence of punishment for evil—none of these practical realities or salutary practices are diminished whatsoever by one's repudiation of free will.

It is a wonderful thing to view others, and yes, to view oneself as well, as those whose ways and deeds are "of God," both in cases in which one's actions are of God faithfully speaking as well as decretively speaking, and in cases, too, in which one's actions are not of God, faithfully speaking, even though, decretively speaking, they are of Him.

It is true that even with this realization, we will still have our reactionary attitudes of pleasure or displeasure, and, sometimes, even of anger or pride. But when these things arise in us, as we accept anew that the offense at hand was "part of the all" that is out of, through, and for God, *our outlook on life will be revolutionized,* and that in a most helpful way. Then, according as God gives grace, we may become more mindful of our own duty to deal graciously with the offense of others (Col.3:13) than desirous to maintain offense and bitterness.

In closing, we can only say, O, the *depth* of the riches and the wisdom and the *knowledge* of God! How inscrutable His judgments, and untraceable His ways (Rom.11:33)! We marvel and praise our God and Father in consideration of His operation of all and His knowledge of all. As the Psalmist declares, "Your eyes saw my embryo, and my days, all of them were written upon Your scroll; the days were formed when there was not one of them" (Psa.139:16). What a joy, and what a peace, in believing (Rom.15:13)!

J.R.C.

WISDOM AND TOIL

WITHIN the book of Ecclesiastes there are five "books" presenting the words of the Assembler concerning the works of the human, viewed finally as God's word concerning His works. In the first "book" (1:12-2:26) the author analyzes the perplexing problems of *individual* experience in the spheres of wisdom and toil. First of all he takes up wisdom, and in tracing knowledge finds that the condition of affairs under the sun is not what it should be, and that it is beyond man's power to correct. "What is distorted cannot be set in order, and what is lacking cannot be counted" (1:15).

Further pursuit of knowledge yields nothing beyond this positive idea. To go beyond is useless labor ("a grazing on wind"), which, while augmenting vexation and pain, contributes nothing of value towards the solution of the riddle (1:12-18):

12 **I myself, the Assembler, came to be king over Israel in Jerusalem.** 13 + **I** [g]**applied** `**my heart to inquiring**⁻ **and** › **exploring**⁻ [i]**by wisdom** [on]**concerning all** [w]**that is done under the heavens: it** is an **experience of evil Elohim has given to the sons of humanity to humble** them [i]**by it.**

14 **I saw** `**all the** [d]**deeds** [w]**that are done under the sun,**
And behold, the whole is **vanity and** a **grazing** on **wind.**

15 What is **distorted**ˈ ˈ**cannot** › be **set in order**⁻,
And what is **lacking** ˈ**cannot** › **be counted**⁻.

16 **I′ spoke with my heart,** › **saying**⁻,
Behold, I′ have [c]**grown** [mn]**great**
and have added in **wisdom**

Over all who [b]were over Jerusalem before me;
+ My heart has seen much⁻ of wisdom and knowledge.
17 **+Then I [lg]applied my heart to know wisdom,**
+As well as to **know⁻** about **raving and frivolity;**
I realize [w]that even this, it is a **grazing** on **wind.**
18 **For in much wisdom** is **much vexation,**
And he who **[l]adds knowledge [l]adds pain.**

DEEDS AND TOIL

The Assembler turns to the sphere of toil. As a king, he is endowed with the combination of all objects of human envy, and enters upon an experiment, by which the several kinds of good things are successively subjected to review. First, he accumulates without limit all possible objects of pleasure, and then engages in all kinds of human effort. The experiment includes the pleasures that are called frivolities; he gives himself freely to them, but while experimenting in frivolity he retains all the while "wisdom of heart" that could reflect on the frivolity.

The experiment is successful considered as an experiment. Success in achieving these enterprises brings with it an impression of pleasure; but when reflection is turned upon them there is no satisfaction. Ability to gratify his every wish and carry out his extensive undertakings has, after all, only met the wants of physical existence. Rich delights have pandered the soul, pleased the eye, tickled the palate, but have only appeased the feeling of hunger the same as a common meal, providing nothing for the spiritual cravings (2:1-11):

2 I′ said in my heart: Do [go]**come** [pr]**then,**
Let me probe you [i]with rejoicing;
+Now [see]**look [i]at** what is **good.**
+But behold, even this was **vanity.**
2 › **Mirth, I said,** is a **raving,**

And ›**rejoicing, what then** is it [d]**achieving?**
3 **I explored** with**in my heart**
›**by stimulating**¯ `**my flesh** [i]**with wine**
(+**While my heart** was **leading** [i]**with wisdom)**
And ›**by** getting a **hold**¯ [i]**on frivolity,**
Until [w] **I should see just where good** may be
for the sons of humanity
In [w]**what they** ['**do under the heavens**
during the **number of days** in **their lives.**
4 **I** [c]**made great** things as **my** [d]**works;**
I built houses for myself;
I planted vineyards for myself;
5 **I** [d]**made gardens and parks for** myself,
And I planted in them trees of every fruit.
6 **I** [d]**made reservoirs of water for** myself,
To irrigate from them the **sprouting grove of trees.**
7 **I acquired** men**servants and maid**servants,
And any **sons** born in the **house**hold **became mine;**
Moreover, [mn]**abundant**¯ **cattle, herds**
and flocks became mine,
More [f]**than all who** [b]**were** [i]**over Jerusalem before me.**
8 **I collected** [mr]**also silver and gold for** myself,
+ The **valuable** treasures **of kings and** ·**provinces;**
I [d]**provided** male **singers**' **and** female **singers**'
for myself,
And with the **rich delights of** the **sons of humanity,**
[7]a wine **waiter**' **and** wine **waitresses**'~.
9 +**As I** grew **greater and added** more [f]**than anyone**
who [b]**was** [i]**over Jerusalem before me.**
Indeed my wisdom, it stayed ›**by me.**
10 + **All** [w]**that my eyes asked** for **I** did **not deny** [f]**to them;**
I did **not withhold** `**my heart from any rejoicing,**
For my heart had **rejoicing from all my toil,**
And this itself [b]**was my portion from all my toil.**

11 +**Yet** when **I′ faced** [i] **all my** [d]**deeds**
[w]**that my hands had done,**
And [i] the **toil** [w]**that I had toiled** ›**in doing**‹ them,
+ **Behold, the whole** was **vanity and** a **grazing** on **wind,**
And there **was no**thing of **advantage under the sun.**

TO SEE WISDOM

Next, with burdened heart, the Assembler turns reflection on to wisdom itself, together with its opposites, raving and frivolity (2:12), to see if here any genuine satisfaction is to be found. He sees at once that wisdom excels its opposite as light excels darkness; but this is neutralized by the further consideration that both are involved in the same destiny of death; so that in the presence of the King of Terrors the pursuit of wisdom, despite infinite superiority to its opposite, seems not only profitless but "evil" (vs.17). "Since the destiny of the stupid man is also mine, and it shall befall me, to what advantage then have I been wise? Hence I spoke in my heart, This too is vanity" (2:15).

12 +**Then I′ turned around to see wisdom**
compared +**with raving and frivolity**
(For what will **the** [h]**man who** ⌊**comes after the king** do
`Beyond [w]**what** others **have already done?),**
13 **And I′ saw** [w] there **is** more **advantage**
for wisdom [f]**than** for ˙**frivolity**
Just **as** there is more **advantage** for ˙**light**
[f]**than** for ˙**darkness;**
14 **The wise** man uses **his eyes in his head,**
+**While** the **stupid** man **walks**⌋ **in darkness;**
+**Yet I′ realized** [mr]**indeed** [w]**that** the **same destiny**
⌊**befalls** `**them all.**
15 +**So I′ said in my heart,**
[as]**Since** the **destiny of the stupid** man is [mr]**also mine,**
and **it shall befall me,**

+ To what advantage then have I′ been wise?
+Hence I spoke in my heart, *w* This *mr*too is vanity.

FRUIT OF TOIL

Next he returns to survey the fruit of his toil wherein he had toiled under the sun. But this again appears hateful in the light of death, and the necessity of leaving it to a successor, who may prove to be frivolous. The thought and energy expended in the accumulation of goods do not even guarantee that after his departure they will be used in accordance with his wish. The survey has in all its departments ended in illusion (2:18-23):

16 **For** there **is no remembrance** ›**of** the **wise** man
*wi*or **the stupid** man **for** the **eon;**
In the days which are **already** ˙**coming**
˙**every**one **is forgotten;**
+ *how*Alas, **the wise** man ˈ**dies** along **with the stupid** one!
17 **+Then I hated** `**life,**
For *on*to **me the** *d*work was **evil**
*w*that was done **under the sun,**
For the whole is **vanity and** a **grazing** on **wind.**
18 **And I′ hated** `**all** the fruit of **my toil**
for **which I** was **toiling under the sun,**
*w*That **I** would ˈ**leave to** the *h*man
who shall *b*come after me.
19 + *a*Who knows‖ if **he shall be** ˙a **wise or** a **frivolous** man?
+Yet he shall have **authority** ˙**over all** the fruit
of **my toil** for **which I toiled,**
And in **which I was wise under the sun;**
This *mr*too is **vanity.**
20 **+So I′** turned **around** again ›**with despair**‾ `in **my heart**
Over all the fruit of **toil** for **which**
I had toiled under the sun.
21 **For** there **is** a *h*man **whose** fruit of **toil** is
in wisdom and in knowledge and in success,

+Yet to another **[h]man who has not toiled [i]for it,**
he must **[l]give it** as **his portion;**
This [mr]too is **vanity and** a **[mn]great evil.**
22 **For what** is **[b]coming to** a **[h]man [i]for all his toil,**
And [i]for the **shepherding of his heart**
which he is **toiling under the sun?**
23 **For all his days, pains and vexation** are **his experience;**
Even in the **night his heart will not lie** still;
This [mr]too, it is **vanity.**

THIS TOO IS FROM ELOHIM

The knowledge the Assembler has gained is now summed up and wisely related to the hand of Elohim (2:24-26):

24 There **is no**thing **better [i]for** a **[h]man**
than **[w]that he should eat and ¯drink**
And cause `his soul to **¯see good [i]from his toil;**
This [mr]too I´ see that it is **from the hand of Elohim.**
25 **For [a]who** can **[l]eat, and [a]who** can **have [l]pleasure**
outside [f]of [7]Him~[cs]?
26 **For to** the **[h]man who** is **well pleasing before Him,**
He gives wisdom and knowledge and rejoicing;
+Yet to the **sinner[l] He gives** the **experience**
`of gathering¯ and `of collecting¯ together,
To give it **to** one who is **well pleasing**
before the One, **Elohim;**
This [mr]too is **vanity and** a **grazing** on **wind.**

These concluding verses gather up the results. Thus far the experiment has shown that while the processes have been satisfactory and enjoyable the result has invariably been disappointing, even despairingly so when considered in light of the future. Evidence forces the conclusion that present enjoyment is man's only portion. But the important thought occurs that even appreciation of life as it passes is a gift of God, and is not in the power of the seeker.

V. Gelesnoff

FROM THE HAND OF ELOHIM

OUR EXPERIENCE of evil (Ecc.1:13) includes the discovery that nothing on earth is permanent. "All the deeds that are done under the sun, . . . behold, the whole is vanity and a grazing on wind" (1:14). All our efforts and all our gains of good are transitory. We toil and strive with our hands, concentrate and examine with our minds, seeking for our wants and needs, but the pleasures and satisfactions do not last. The figure of speech used here is appropriate; it is like "grazing on wind."

Yet this is *given* to us by God. It is from His hand (Ecc. 1:13; 2:24-26).

GIVEN BY GOD

None of us are rulers in Jerusalem, of the line of David, and few have the means and opportunity to apply our minds and hands as the Assembler could do. But his endeavors and investigations were given to him by God, and our toil and learning have also been given to us by God. We do learn from his reports here in Ecclesiastes, but we verify the truth of what he says by our own experiences. The important lesson for us in this book is to recognize, as the Assembler recognized, that whatever experiences we have and whatever lessons we learn from them are from God's hand.

It is true that we make decisions and do things with our hands. But if we trace our experiences only to ourselves and do not recognize the hand of God behind them all, then we must despair. The Assembler faced all *his deeds* that

his hands had done (2:11). But in the end he associated the experience and the lessons learned with the hand of *Elohim* (2:24).

HUMAN EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING

The Assembler applied his heart, or as we would say today, his mind, "to know wisdom" and such opposites of wisdom as "raving and frivolity" (1:17). This brought him a great deal of *vexation* and *pain* (1:18). He sought mirth (2:2) and frivolity associated with wine (2:3). He accumulated houses, vineyards, gardens, parks, reservoirs of water, servants, cattle and flocks, silver and gold, music and rich delights (2:4-8).

Most of us cannot accumulate such riches, though, to be honest, we do struggle for things that appeal. But wisdom acknowledges in truth, they do not give us lasting pleasure or real contentment anymore than his accumulations gave lasting pleasure to the Assembler.

To be sure, the Assembler found that this wisdom of knowing the vanity of frivolity was far better than the frivolity (Ecc.2:13). But this only temporized the frustration, for "the destiny of the stupid man is also mine, and it shall befall me. To what advantage then have I been wise?" (2:14,15).

This led the Assembler to exclaim, "Then I hated life . . . and I hated all the fruit of my toil for which I was toiling under the sun, that I would leave to the man who shall come after me" (2:17,18).

THIS TOO

All advantages are temporary and relative. Wisdom is better than frivolity, but in the end the wise toiler dies and the stupid, frivolous person dies. If they have gained some good, it is left to someone else. "This too is vanity" (2:19); "this too is vanity and a great evil" (2:21). Not only this,

but even while alive, those who toil diligently with pain and vexation are troubled with unrest even in the night, and "this too, it is vanity" (2:23).

As a whole, the best that can be said is that the enjoyment of good is better than stupidity, even though both are transitory. "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink and cause his soul to see good from his toil" (2:24).

Having said this, the Assembler changes his refrain from observing "This too is vanity," to "This too is from the hand of Elohim." The good of enjoying the fruit of one's labor is fleeting, and so it certainly is vanity, like everything else. But it is good, nevertheless, and the Assembler seizes the point, adding to it that vital recognition of God that gives Ecclesiastes its special place and value among human assessments of human experience.

The new observation, "This too is from the hand of Elohim," is like the old observation, "This too is vanity," in one respect at least. Both assessments include the little word "too." All these human experiences are vanity, or transitory. But they also are all from the hand of God.

"HE GIVES"

It is Elohim Who *gives* the relative goodness of "wisdom and knowledge and rejoicing" to the one who "is well pleasing before Him" (2:26a). It is also Elohim Who *gives* the experience of gathering possessions which ultimately must be given to others (2:26b). He gives the fleeting goodness to some, and He gives the fleeting-ness of gathering and collecting to all, for all are sinners.

In this, as we have insisted, lies the value of the Assembler's wisdom. Compared with the revelations given to Paul, for example, the book of Ecclesiastes takes us only a small step forward in appreciation of God. But the recognition of God as the One Who gives human experience

is essential to our appreciation of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The death of Christ on the cross tells us nothing great or glorious about God unless it is from the hand of God. The salvation of sinners tells us nothing of God's power and love unless it is from the hand of God. Our calling and expectation reveals nothing about God's grace and purpose unless they are from His hand.

PRESENT DANGERS

We live in a world where the recognition of God is denigrated. The traditional, religious presentation of God as an arbitrary tyrant full of eternal wrath against bad people and favoritism toward others for uncertain purposes, is much to blame for this. There are other powerful influences involved, indeed, but whatever the reasons, the fact remains that agnosticism is growing in the minds of modern humanity.

In anger, even in mild annoyance, God is cursed in everyday speech apart from much confidence in His existence, let alone a recognition of Him as the Source of all things. The language is intended to tell more about the speaker than anything whatever about God.

God is also sometimes spoken of more favorably, even prayed to, in formal, ritualistic, pious ways apart from any deep conviction that He is there. This also is done more to bring attention to the human being than the One Who gives us all, and upon Whom we rely for breath and life and meaning for existence.

Consequently, the book of Ecclesiastes is a most valuable portion of God's Word for mankind today. It faces the issues and problems of human experience honestly and forcefully. But more than this, it does so, clearly tracing these experiences to the hand of God, from which all experiences truly come.

D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR JULY 1999
BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY

EDITORIAL

WE have long given more attention to important, scriptural revelations which have been neglected (and often denied) by other ministries than we have to those we hold in common with all our brethren. Faith in God, our Creator and Father, finding joy and peace in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ Who died for our sakes, was roused from the dead, ascended and exalted, Who is our life and expectation—these, and many other teachings of God's Word are shared with us by thousands upon thousands who have never heard of our little magazine or even the Concordant Version. And among those who *have* heard of our ministry are many who bitterly oppose it, and yet we recognize that we stand together with them on vital and basic issues at which the world in general scoffs.

It would seem better and wiser from the standpoint of human power and influence to seek out ways toward agreement so that the fundamental truth of God's love in Christ might be advanced without all the present in-fightings and jealousies and political ambitions. Yet this is not the way set forth in the Scriptures; indeed it is rightly so that it should not even be considered. For truth is truth, and if it is diluted or compromised, whatever the motivation, it can no longer be the truth that mankind so desperately needs.

This is not to say that we see our ministry as wrestling with those of our brethren who have distorted the truth of the evangel. This would be contrary to Paul's reminder in Ephesians 6:12. Like Paul, we would speak boldly and beseech prayers from our readers that we may do so (Eph. 6:18-20). But we must speak apart from anger and self-promotion, in accord with the disposition of Christ (Phil.2:5-8).

We would speak the truth with the realization that we all are members of one another (Eph.4:25).

It is difficult to understand how the evangel of God's gratuitous grace and vast love can appear so dangerous to believers, and how the truth of God's deity, that He is operating all things toward a goal of universal reconciliation and good can seem so threatening to spiritual growth, yet God's Word has made it plain that this would be so. We continue to point to such revelations from the Scriptures.

God is the Source of all things (a continuing theme throughout this issue). He has a purpose for evil, for judgment, for the many puzzling and transitory experiences of our lives. And He brings out the good end which He has purposed, apart from any contribution of our good works, in His grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus.

We testify to these true declarations of God's Word not in fear of the opposition they seem to arouse, and not in any spirit of pride or self-advancement, but with feelings much as Paul expressed in 1 Corinthians 9:16. "For if I should be bringing the evangel, it is not for me to boast in, for necessity is lying upon me, for it were woe to me if I should not be bringing the evangel!" How can we not speak of the living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind? For we rely on Him. How can we not speak of the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God? For He has commended His love to us while we are still sinners.

We rejoice when other believers announce such a message of grace and seek to glorify God as He reveals Himself in Christ, even if they seem to oppose what they proclaim by additions from human traditions. We would avoid such distortions, though we recognize our own frailties. May God hasten the day when we all will be enlightened with realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). In the meantime, let us go forward together as God gives us grace, in making known His Word. D.H.H.

LIGHT AND LUMINARIES

OUR popular versions do not discriminate between the Hebrew words, *aur* light (Gen.1:3,4), and *maur,* light-(bearer), or luminary (Gen.1:14-16). The herbage of the third day (Gen.1:11-13) could not have lived in total darkness. In my very early years we lived in a four-apartment house with a rather small yard in the rear. I wanted to grow a garden, and was very serious about it. But where? I had a brilliant idea. I would dig a cave under the back-yard and grow my garden in that! I dug quite a hole, but, to my chagrin, we moved to another place, where I could not dig at all. Not till I came to California did we have a garden, and I learned that gardens do not grow without *light!*

Whatever light there was on the earth up to the fourth day seems to have come from invisible sources. The luminaries, with which we are now so well acquainted, could not be seen. These play a very important function during the eons, for they not only give an appreciation of the source of light, and, through it, of God Himself—for He is light—but they are the basis of all time periods. We could hardly measure time without them. We could not set any dates or fill any appointments without such a calendar, or time-piece.

Besides being God's great clock, they are the visible representations of the invisible celestial powers. As the sun "rules" the day, so Christ as the *sun* of righteousness will rule in the day of Yahweh. The moon is not a true luminary, for it only reflects the light instead of giving it forth. So the rulers of darkness have a pale adumbration of the

true light. Moreover, the moon, unlike the sun, is variable, and so the rulers of this darkness, now waxed to the full, will wane to almost complete extinction when the sun competes with it in the day of Christ's glory.

The little phrase "the stars also" (Gen.1:16, AV), marks a crisis in my life. I was intensely interested in the stars, and awed by the immensity and glory of the universe, and intended to make astronomy my life work. I also decided to read all the great books. Being too poor to buy any, I commenced with the Bible given to me some time before by my parents. But I insisted on *understanding* what I read. Nevertheless I did not dally with the first part of creation, as I supposed it to be. But when I came to the "lights," and read that God made "the stars also," as if they were a mere side issue, I was quite overwhelmed. In my studies I had been utterly amazed at their number and immensity. To dismiss them with the terse touch, "the stars also," seemed incredible. It greatly enhanced my awe of the Bible, and led me to study it closely. But, as I expect to take up astronomy later, when I visit the stars, I have changed my vocation to the study of the Scriptures.

THE LAMPSTAND

The light within the tabernacle was very different from that without. Its source is full of significance. The process by which it was made is in highest harmony with the elementary truths of the evangel. It was not a "candlestick," which burned tallow tapers, but *lamps* which used *olive oil.* It is not by chance that this was produced by *beating* and *crushing* or *pounding.* These bring to our mind the great Antitype, Who is the Light of the world (John 8:12). Just as the olive berries are beaten with a rod in order to loose them from the tree, so He suffered at the hands of the soldiers (Matt.27:30). I once was witness to the beating of an olive tree just outside the window of the

Jewish pension at which I stayed in the new part of Jerusalem. Alas! How little did the Jewish children who did the beating understand of the sufferings of their Messiah which they rehearsed!

THE CRUSHING OF THE BERRIES

But the beating given the berries on the tree did not turn them into oil for the light. A much more painful process was pictured by the various ways in which the oil was expressed. First they are usually crushed into pulp in a stone mill. But this does not extract all of the oil, so that the pulp was sometimes sewn up in canvas or horsehair bags and trodden by the feet of the women. More often still it was put into small flexible baskets and placed under a wooden press operated by a screw or lever. But the clearest oil, such as was used for the lampstand in the tabernacle was extracted by *pounding* (Ex.27:20; 29:40; Lev.24:2; Num.28:5; 1 Kings 5:11 (25). The same Hebrew stem is used in the recurrent phrase "*pound* their swords into plowshares" (Isa.2:4; Joel 3:10; Micah 4:3).

Thus is provided the illumination which comes from the oil in the seven-branched lampstand. This is the light that is shed abroad in the hearts of all the saints who are privileged to go inside the portiere. This is the illumination which is indispensable for all who desire to have fellowship with God, as set forth by the bread of the presence, and who wish to worship Him, as typified by the golden altar of incense. This is the light that Cain lacked. He sought to have communion with God and to sacrifice to Him in the darkness of unbelief. And today, even in Christendom, are there not myriads of pious religionists who are worshiping in the way of Cain?

The fact that oil is one of the symbols of God's spirit is evident from its use in *anointing* for spiritual *power* in ordaining a priest, a prophet, or a king. But its special sig-

nificance, as seen in the tabernacle, makes it the source of *light.* Darkness hides the *false,* light reveals the *truth.* Hence it is essential in any present offering to the Deity. It was absent from Cain's offering, which shows that it was false. This was confirmed by his later actions. In literal language we are told that, by *faith,* Abel offers to God more of a sacrifice than Cain, through which he was testified to that he is just (Heb.11:4). The light that he had came from believing God, and the lack of light on Cain's part arose from his refusal to accept God's Word. Apart from oil, from truth, from the light of faith, no worship or sacrifice can possibly be acceptable to the Deity.

THE DIM LIGHT

Notwithstanding the fact that the lampstand had seven lamps, the light it shed was not very bright. It was not to be compared with the Shekinah glory behind the inner curtain. Visiting the sites of archaeological explorations, I have seen hundreds of very ancient lamps. They were mostly quite small, shaped like a sauce dish, with an outlet for a wick opposite the handle, and could hardly have given as much light as a modern lamp with a chimney. They were burned all night through, for it was usually considered impossible to sleep in the dark. To say that a man's light had gone out was a feelingful figure of his death.

IMMATURITY

But even this had its significance. The holy place was not perfection. It was only the anteroom to the most holy. It typifies the time which the apostle Paul declared to be immature, an installment, when they saw by means of a mirror, in an enigma (AV, "through a glass darkly," 1 Cor. 13:9-12). Up to the time when Christ, the great Antitype of all the sacrifices, expired on the cross, the curtain between the holy and most holy places kept out the light

of the glory, so it was comparatively dim in the first compartment, even as it was in Israel before Christ, the Light of the world, offered Himself to God.

THE CURTAIN RENT

But now the curtain is rent! The blinding light of the glory, such as Paul saw when he was called, is illuminating all as never before. Its full significance was never realized by the earlier apostles. Only in Paul's writings do we see the full and final and perfect illumination of the divine presence above the propitiatory. The glory light now shines, not only in the holy of holies, but illumines the holy place also. The very lampstand itself is glorified by its beams. Literally, where there was pardon, there is now justification, where there was redemption, there is now reconciliation. Where there was access to God only through intermediaries, through one nation, now all have access in one spirit to the Father Himself (Eph.1:18).

THE LIGHT OF THE GLORY

In the far future, the new Jerusalem will need no sun or moon to give it light, for the *glory* of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lambkin (Rev.21:23). Then the Shekinah will not be enclosed in walls, hid from mortal gaze, as in the tabernacle and in the temples, for there will be no temple on the new earth. But long before that blessed time, even today, we have this light, in spirit, for we are already a new creation in Christ (2 Cor.5:17). We also have been given a literal intimation of this when the apostle Paul met our God on the Damascus road. He saw a light *above* the brightness of the sun (Acts 26:13). What an appropriate introduction to his ministry! He it is who leads the saints beyond the light of nature, and even beyond the shadowy revelation given to the sacred nation in their holy place. He goes beyond the "veil."

LIGHTS WHOLE TABERNACLE

But we do not enter the holy of holies and close the curtain behind us, so that we no longer have the light of the lampstand or the communion of the table or the worship of the golden altar. No indeed! "Within the veil," that is, inside the central curtain, there is no provision for fellowship or adoration. Shall we then cease to commune with God or offer praise to Him? By no means! The curtain has not been pulled back behind us, so that we are shut out of the holy place. It was not pushed aside to let us through. It was *rent* from the top to the bottom. Now the two holy places are one! *All* is a holy of holies!

THE THREE LIGHTS

The tabernacle brings before us three distinct stages of light. All are of God and were made by Him to reveal Himself; yet they are very different, especially in the degree in which He is illuminated by them. Outside, in the court, the cosmic luminaries, the sun, the moon and the stars, shed the light of *nature.* This was not present inside of the tabernacle, for there were no windows, and the portiere at the doorway had no provision for holding it open. Indeed, it was so arranged that the worshiper had to turn his back to the rising sun in order to enter. Within was the light of *revelation,* the seven branched lampstand in the holy place, which shed its rays upon the bread of communion, and upon the golden altar of worship. And beyond the inner curtain was the Shekinah.

A clear differentiation of these three distinct kinds of light will help much to clarify God's grand methods in revealing Himself. The light in the court was the same as that given to all men in every place. The light in the holy place was only for the priests, the holy ones, the saints. And the glory light in the most holy was only for the chief priest, who entered once a year. He was a type of the entrance

of Christ into the divine presence after His sacrifice for the sin of the world.

LIGHT OF NATURE

Let us never despise the light of nature! *It was created to reveal God.* If men had eyes to see they would find Him and some of His attributes displayed on every side. By means of it God has manifested Himself to all men. His invisible attributes are descried from the creation of the world, being apprehended by His achievements, besides His imperceptible power and divinity. God's indignation is not revealed against the irreverence and injustice of men who have no means of knowing about Him. In that case they would not be defenseless. But, with the light of nature, they have no valid excuse (Rom.1:18-23).

But the light of nature fails woefully in eliciting the *worship* of Adam's race. Notwithstanding the knowledge of the Deity which it does impart, they do not glorify or thank Him as God. They reason, but their heart is not intelligent. Even today the scientists seek to awe the rest of us with their superior wisdom. Yet their continually changing and conflicting theories show them to be stupid. No man, such as I am, is in a position to prefer such a grave charge against his fellows, for he must include himself. But, in His revelation, God has convicted us all of these crimes. It is because of *this* that the race is sunk in a morass of immorality and corruption and contention. Every effort to cure this condition, apart from the recognition of God, is doomed to failure. Only the lights within the tabernacle can bring about eonian bliss.

The book of nature is full of lessons about the Deity. Scripture itself assures us of this. Where else is His infinite power so fully displayed as in the starry heavens? Where else are His inexhaustible resources so evident as in the visible creation? No matter where we look, whether it be

above at the mighty sun stars in their parabolic paths, or at the tiny insect beneath our feet, our hearts exclaim, "The hand that made you is divine!" Why, even if we were blind and deaf and bereft of the sense of smell, our own bodies are replete with superhuman wonders, so that we should bow down in the dust before its mighty Maker.

NATURE IN SCRIPTURE

Indeed, nature provides the illustrations for the book of revelation. It is not merely in accord with it, but much of it could not be understood without it. If there were no heavens and no earth, who could understand the very first sentence? All the way through it, nature provides most of the background, the figures, the symbols which are needed to understand it. Even the material types and shadows, such as the sacrifices and the tabernacle, depend on nature to a large extent for their significance. The natural qualities of wood and metal, plant and animal are woven into the fabric of divine revelation.

LIGHT OF REVELATION

But, alas, men are blinded by the god of this eon. The apprehensions of unbelievers are unable to perceive the Deity in the world about them, and they cannot see through the thick curtain of unbelief which bars God's revelation from them. Is this not typified by the thick portieres which made it impossible for outsiders to see the lampstand, the presence (or "show") bread, and the golden altar, inside the holy place? Christ is the Antitype of them all. All knowledge of God, all communion with Him, and all worship of Him must come through Christ as the Mediator. Yet He is hid behind a thick portiere of unbelief from all except the saints who have been hallowed by His blood, and called by His spirit, through His Word.

A. E. Knoch

FROM GENESIS TO ROMANS

THE PATTERN established in Genesis 1, at the very beginning, is followed throughout the Scriptures. First of all, anything and any person or group treated in God's Word must be seen as created by God. He is responsible for creation (Gen.1:1). Then this basic revelation of divine power is put to the test by the introduction of evil into the situations under consideration, as first traced in Genesis 1:2a. Finally God is seen again in each instance as the One Who successfully deals with the evil toward an appreciative realization of the good which He achieves, as foreshown in Genesis 1:2b-2:3.

SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES

Certainly this is so with all the scriptures concerning Israel, a nation brought forth and chosen by God which experiences centuries of failure and sorrow, while God all along leads them toward His fulfillment of His promises to them. David, one of many key and characteristic individuals in this nation, was formed by God and brought into many troubles. Often, indeed, these can be traced immediately to David's own faults, but even then, the Word makes it clear that nothing happened to David apart from God. At the end we also see that all the experiences of David are marked out for good, and for the glory of God Who is operating all. Hence David sang (Psa.139:1,5,13,14):

O Yahweh, You have investigated me . . . .
Back and front, You have besieged me,

And You set Your palm upon me . . . .
For You Yourself achieved the making
of my innermost being;
You overshadowed me in my mother's belly.
I shall acclaim You,
for You are fearfully distinguished;
Marvelous are Your works.

We can trace this pattern in other portions of the Sacred Scriptures, in the experiences of Job, in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt to the promised land, in the lives of the prophets such as Elijah, Jonah and Jeremiah, and of individuals such as Joseph and Hezekiah and Daniel.

The pattern is especially delineated in the life and ministry of Jesus, culminating in the cross and God's glorious victory, resurrection and exaltation of His Son.

SEVERED FOR THE EVANGEL

The book of Romans, in which Paul presents the evangel of God for which he was severed and which he announced, is a portion of God's Word of great and unique importance to us. And here this pattern established in Genesis 1 is especially apparent, for the evangel expounded in Romans is the revelation of a supremely critical operation of God in carrying out His purpose from creation, through darkness, into glory. Let us trace this pattern through some of the key statements of the evangel in Romans:

ALL OUT OF GOD

"Elohim created the heavens and the earth" (Gen.1:1).

God manifests His power in creating the world and displays it continually in the world that He has created. "For His invisible attributes are descried from the creation of the world, being apprehended by His achievements, besides His imperceptible power and divinity" (Rom.1:20).

All is *out* of God (Rom.11:36), including humanity. He has caused our existence.

ALL HAVE SINNED

"As for the earth, it came to be a chaos and vacant, and darkness was over the surface of the abyss" (Gen.1:2a).

But mankind has become irreverent and unrighteous (Rom.1:18), even as the earth became corrupted by chaos, darkness and vacancy. "For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it . . . ." (Rom.8:20). Mankind has become involved in this corruption. "All sinned and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:23).

Romans 1:18 through 3:20, summarized in 3:23 and recalled often throughout the epistle, corresponds with Genesis 1:2a. Sin and offense has corrupted the human race so that "God's indignation is being revealed from heaven on all the irreverence and injustice of men . . ." (Rom.1:18). "Wherefore God gives them over" (Rom. 1:24,26,28). "Wherefore, defenseless are you, O man!" (Rom.2:1). "For there is no partiality with God, for whoever sinned without law, without law also shall perish, and whoever sinned in law, through law will be judged. For not the listeners to law are just with God, but the doers of law shall be justified" (Rom.2:11,12); ". . . for we previously charge both Jews and Greeks to be all under sin" (Rom.3:9); ". . . by works of law, no flesh at all shall be justified in His sight" (Rom.3:20).

"Therefore . . . through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned" (Rom. 5:12); ". . . it was through one offense for all mankind for condemnation" (Rom.5:18); ". . . through the disobedience of the one man, the many were constituted sinners" (Rom. 5:19). "For I am aware that good is not making its home in

me (that is, in my flesh), for to will is lying beside me, yet to be effecting the ideal is not" (Rom.7:18).

"Consequently, then, it is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God" (Rom.9:16). "Or has not the potter the right over the clay . . . ?" (Rom.9:21). "For God locks up all together in stubbornness" (Rom.11:32). All is "through" God (Rom.11:36).

GRATUITOUS GRACE

"And Elohim said: Let light come to be!" (Gen.1:3a).

Now, corresponding to these words of Genesis 1:3, God speaks to us with His good news. His words are true and full of power:

"Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest . . . yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing . . . . Being justified gratuitously in His grace, through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus . . . where, then, is boasting?" (Rom.3:21,22,23,27). ". . . God is commending this love of His to us, seeing that, while we are still sinners, Christ died for our sakes" (Rom.5:8).

"The grace of God and the gratuity in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ, to the many superabounds" (Rom.5:15); ". . . it is through one just award for all mankind for life's justifying" (Rom.5:18); ". . . through the obedience of the One, the many shall be constituted just" (Rom.5:19).

"I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord" (Rom. 7:25). "For what was impossible to the law . . . did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin's flesh and concerning sin, He condemns sin in the flesh, that the just requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us" (Rom.8:3). "Now we are aware that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God, who are called according to the purpose that, whom He foreknew, He desig-

nates beforehand also, to be conformed to the image of His Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren. Now whom He designates beforehand, these He calls also, and whom He calls these He justifies also; now whom He justifies, these He glorifies also" (Rom.8:28-30). "Surely, He Who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, be graciously granting us all?" (Rom.8:32).

It is "of God, the Merciful . . . that He should be merciful to all" (Rom.9:16; 11:32). "O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways! For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? 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).

LET GOD BE TRUE!

"And it became light" (Gen.1:3b).

The question regarding the evangel now becomes, "Will the righteousness and power and love spoken of in the evangel actually come to pass? Will that which the evangel declares to be so come about in realization and appreciation? Is it true, as the evangel declares, that God justifies and glorifies us whom He has foreknown and designated and called? Who would say no to this? Surely the declarations of good news in the evangel of God will become a fully realized reality for the believer. And this will be so not for the believer alone, but for all of whom the evangel speaks.

This is *because* of God, Whose expectation is "that the creation itself, also, shall be freed from the slavery of corruption into the glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom.8:21).

Despite all the traditions viewing God's justice in terms of final, eternal torment or hopeless annihilation and view-

ing God's grace in terms of a divine offer requiring human cooperation or in terms of an arbitrary divine election as an end in itself, despite all the claims of mature and respectable teachers in support of such mysterious dogmas, and despite the human failures and obscurity of those who have shared our viewpoint, we still must see the "well-message" of our deliverance and justification and expectation of glory as fully out of God, granted gratuitously in God's grace, solely through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus. The account of creation which opens the Scriptures themselves should guard against perversions of God and His ways.

"Now let God be true, yet every man a liar, even as it is written: 'That so Thou shouldst be justified in Thy sayings, and shalt be conquering when Thou art being judged" (Rom.3:4). Paul speaks here of God's promises for Israel, which he insists will be faithfully performed by God despite Israel's unfaithfulness. It is true for us as well. What God has said, He will perform, just as His words in Genesis 1 concerning life and light on the earth came to be so.

GETTING IT RIGHT

This is not to say that teachers and theologians and clergymen and Bible students always get it wrong. The message concerning Jesus Christ is so clearly given in God's Word that we cannot escape it altogether. Indeed as believers we must be impressed and humbled with rejoicing, at least to some measure of realization at some point, by the overwhelming grace of our Lord (*cf* 1 Tim.1:14). A case in point is the remark of one of the editors of a popular "evangelical" magazine recently made in introducing an attempt to define the gospel: David Neff writes, "Human beings seem to have an infinite capacity for getting things wrong, and unfortunately, we have often gotten the gospel wrong, looking for ways to take some of the credit for our

own rescue or fearing that giving God all the credit robs sinners of responsibility."[1]

Even here, the use of the word "responsibility" suggests that the evangel (or "gospel") places an obligation on the sinner which, whether claimed or not, opens the way for us to take some of the credit. A better term might have been "responsiveness" since the evangel does produce a response in the one who believes it as Paul shows us in Romans 6:2-17, for instance. But our response to the evangel is not the evangel itself, much less a requirement on our part that makes the evangel true. It is of greatest value to us in our response to the evangel to avoid the human tendencies this brother speaks of, and to see that the evangel is all of God, wholly in His grace.

THAT WHICH CALLS US

The sinner's response in faith, our daily walk, divine judgment, appreciation and praise and prayer and spiritual growth, these are all scriptural topics that have been wrongly presented and used as though they were part of the evangel. The evangel is not a set of instructions or even some sort of offer, but an *announcement* of good news concerning what God *has done* in Christ.

The Galatians distorted that evangel which called them in the grace of Christ (Gal.6,7). It announced that we are justified "by the faith of Christ and not by works of law" (Gal. 2:16). Paul says it tells of the Son of God, "Who loves me, and gives Himself up for me" (Gal.2:20), and this is what it says to each of us personally. "Now may it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal.6:14).

The testimony of Galatians is the testimony of Romans and that of all of Paul's epistles. It is in the pattern of Genesis 1 where the facts of God's deeds in creating and speak-

1. *Christianity Today,* June 14, 1999, p.50.

ing and calling and seeing are recorded. What is said in Genesis 1 impresses and affects those who believe it, especially in appreciation of God. Similarly, the evangel speaks of facts, and the facts concern what God does and what He achieves. And this has good effects on the believer.

OBJECTIVE TRUTH

We may complain that this makes the evangel itself too objective; it may seem academic and lifeless, a matter of "cold, hard facts." The evangel certainly is a message of uncompromising facts. But the facts are not cold. We are sinners and helpless, but the warm and vitalizing fact is that Christ died for our sins. The truth is not something we have made true by our acts or feelings or the carrying out of responsibilities. God is the One Who foreknew and designates and calls and justifies and glorifies us (Rom.8: 29,30). This is a message of happiness, comfort and peace, and a message of power.

The objective facts announced in the evangel do become subjectively part of the believer's thinking and living. It is the fact that God's love is commended to us in the death of His Son for sinners which led Paul and leads us into the subjectively felt, joyful and assuring persuasion that nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom.8:38,39). It is the objective truth that in the death of Christ "we died to sin" and that even as He was roused from among the dead "we shall be of the resurrection also" that we are invigorated to be walking in newness of life (Rom.6:2-11).

It is ideal, then, to understand the lessons of Genesis which center, of necessity, on God Himself. It is ideal to appreciate this pattern, and also to recognize it again and again throughout the Word of God. And it is especially ideal to understand and recognize and hold fast to this pattern as it exists in the evangel of our salvation. D.H.H.

"WHY, THEN, IS HE STILL BLAMING?"

IT IS a great advance in faith to truly accept the basic truth of divine revelation that *all is of God.* Even so, while one may *accept* that it is the teaching of Scripture that, ultimately speaking, all is out of, through, and for God, one may still find this teaching problematic or even troubling.

Such unrest and worrisomeness over questions of God's deity is by no means surprising among members of our society, in which the teaching of free will holds such a central place and is considered to be the touchstone of righteousness. As the English mathematician and philosopher Whitehead so astutely observed, "Western peoples exhibit on a colossal scale a peculiarity which is supposed to be more especially characteristic of the Chinese. Surprise is often expressed that a Chinaman can be of two religions, a Confucian for some occasions and a Buddhist for other occasions . . . . But there can be no doubt that an analogous thought is true of the West, and that the two attitudes involved are inconsistent. A scientific realism, based on mechanism, is conjoined with an unwavering belief in the world of men and of the higher animals as being composed of self-determining organisms. This radical inconsistency at the basis of modern thought accounts for much that is half-hearted and wavering in our civilisation. It would be going too far to say that it distracts thought. It enfeebles it, by reason of the inconsistency lurking in the background."[1]

1. Alfred North Whitehead, SCIENCE AND THE MODERN WORLD, p.73 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925).

If all is of God, however, it does indeed follow that the popular notion of freewill responsibility is false. This is so notwithstanding the fact that freewill responsibility is the foundational assumption of western ethics and jurisprudence, even as the implicit if not explicit dogma of the home, the church, and the school.

Ironically, those who rail against the teaching of God's deity, in so doing, only expose their own worldliness. They fail to realize that the present state of one's conscience is not the arbiter of truth, even as that societal mores are not decisive in the determination of righteousness.

It is not difficult to see how, long ago, free will became the morally-acceptable, societal norm, every way of a man seeming right in his own eyes and the wish becoming the father of the claim. The Latin saying, *Abeunt studia in mores,* sums it up well: "Practices zealously pursued pass into habits."

There is nothing more characteristic of the flesh than its desire to be independent of God; hence, its aversion to any thought of divine determination and control in the affairs of men. And, there is nothing more desirable to the flesh than the maintenance of self-pride; hence, the repudiation of the teaching of God's deity, since it leaves no room for self-pride.

It is often confidently claimed that the teaching that God judges men for their acts even though their acts fulfill His intention, "makes no sense," and is "unjust." In saying that this teaching of God's deity makes no sense, the thought is that it is absurd; and, in saying that it is unjust, the thought is that it is contrary to morality.

Any such claims, however—which are the principal bulwarks of free will—are purely subjective in nature, and can only be true themselves, if free will itself, first of all, is true. Obviously, if the teaching of free will is true, then the teaching of God's deity which contradicts it, is absurd

and unjust. But to assert, *a priori*, that the teaching of God's deity is absurd and unjust—apart from having proved free will to be true—is, at once, the moral failure of conceit as well as the fallacy of circular reasoning.[2]

The fact that such invalid arguments are nonetheless so persuasive and pervasive, and seem so upright to nearly all, merely evinces the power of conceit and prejudice—as well as the baneful, widespread effects of paucity of reasoning skills.

Let us not somehow feel "guilty" for believing that all is of God (and that free will, therefore, is false). We should instead recognize that the fact that to most people the denial of free will seems deeply absurd and unjust, is not any indication whatsoever that it *is* absurd and unjust.

Even if unwittingly, those who advocate free will nearly always appeal to their own sense of rectitude concerning this issue, implicitly equating that which *seems* right to them with that which actually *is* right, in fact. Yet if we who deny free will were to appeal to *our* own sense of rectitude concerning this question, likewise implicitly equating that which seems right to us with that which actually is right, our opposers, quite properly, would not be slow to expose any such "appeals to man."

Those who cannot wholeheartedly and unreservedly affirm that whatever the Scriptures actually reveal is true, and whatever God actually does is right, are disqualified even to approach this issue concerning God's deity and the question of free will. Those who claim that they would gladly believe that all is of God if this were truly the scriptural teaching who at the same time insist that this selfsame teaching is unreasonable and unjust, expose their own hypocrisy.

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2. Circular reasoning, or "begging the question" (*petitio principii*), occurs when the premises presume, openly or covertly, the very conclusion that is to be demonstrated.

Few there are who are not ready to join voices with Paul's representative *protestor* of Romans 9:19 in declaring, "Why, then, is He still blaming? for who has withstood His intention?" This protest is entered in response to the protestor's own consideration of the preceding propositions made by the apostle: (1) The children not of the flesh but of the promise are those whom God reckons for the seed (Rom.9:8); (2) The blessing of Jacob instead of Esau was such that the purpose of God might be remaining as His own choice, not out of acts (Rom.9:11); (3) God will be merciful to whomever He may be merciful and be pitying whomever He may be pitying (Rom.9:15); (4) Consequently, then, it is not of him who is willing, nor of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful. For the scripture is saying to Pharaoh that, "For this selfsame thing I rouse you up, so that I should be displaying in you My power, and so that My name should be published in the entire earth." Consequently, then, to whom He will, He is merciful, *yet whom He will, He is hardening* (Rom.9:16-18).

It is at this juncture that the *protestor* rejoins (as Paul puts it, "You will be *protesting* to me, then"): "*Why, then,* is He still blaming, for who has withstood His intention?"

It is vital to note that these words are not those of an innocent inquirer, asking in faith, nothing doubting, but of a vocal *protestor,* one who does not hesitate to drag the Deity before the bar of his own justice.

The protestor is not actually asking a question at all, but is instead entering a criticism. He is using a figure of speech, termed Rhetorical Question, in which a question is asked merely for effect, with no answer expected. The sense of the protestor's rhetorical question is this: "*It is wrong, then,* for God to blame Pharaoh [for example], since God Himself hardened his heart, and, since his disobedience in which he resisted the revealed will of God was the fulfillment of God's own intention."

In replying, Paul answers this *protest* thus, by a rhetorical question of his own in which he declares:[3]

"O man! *who are you,* to be sure, who are answering again to God? That which *is* molded will not protest to the molder, 'Why do you make me thus?' Or has not the potter the right over the clay, out of the same kneading to make one vessel, indeed, for honor, yet one for dishonor?" (Rom.9:20,21).

The protestor entirely ignores that it is *God* Who does these things. No one has the right to be "answering back" to God; by insinuation, effectually informing Him of what He must do if He should wish to maintain His righteous character. O man! *who are you,* to be sure, who are answering again to God?

Remarkably, in replying to his protestor, rather than somehow "backing off" under the supposed weightiness of the protestor's argument, Paul seeks instead to put him in his place through the use of metaphors, ones which, far from constituting a denial of God's deity, rather illustrate and confirm it. Paul has gone to considerable lengths to show that the human is that which *is* molded of God, and now only adds that it is not befitting that which is molded to *protest* to the Molder, saying, "Why do you make me thus?" (that is, "How dare you, God, if indeed You are righteous, *make* me the way that I am?").

By speaking of the *right* of the potter over the clay, out of the same kneading to make one vessel, indeed, for honor, yet one for dishonor, Paul makes it clear that, among men, God has the right—and is right in exercising that right—to make men thus: some as "*vessels* of indignation, adapted for destruction" (Rom.9:22), and others, as "*vessels* of mercy,

3. The apostle does not herein directly respond to the literal question which one might well ask who is simply seeking enlightenment as to *why* it *is* so, in fact, that God nonetheless "blames" those who fulfill His intention.

which He makes ready before for glory—us, whom He calls also, not only out of the Jews, but out of the nations also" (Rom.9:23,24).

WISDOM AND GOODNESS IN JUDGING

In the preceding exposition, "Divine Foreknowledge and Its Significance," I proved that the correct understanding of Paul's words in Romans 11:36, "seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all," is that all that exists and all that occurs, except for God Himself, is out of, through, and for God. Accordingly, I affirmed that since this truth precludes the validity of the ethical notion termed "free will," free will cannot be true. I also proved that since both determinism and indeterminism or any combination of the two preclude free will, free will is therefore not only a false notion but a notion concerning which it is impossible to give any objective account of how it might exist. Finally, in addressing the subject of divine foreknowledge, I proved that the existence of God's knowledge of those events of which the future consists, entails the necessity of the consequence, namely that of the inevitability of the events foreknown, which teaching also precludes free will.

Now, at present, on behalf of those who have understood and accepted those previous considerations, as well as that stressed already in this present writing as to it being so that God *is* righteous and wise in blaming men for their wrongdoing even though their wrongdoing is according to His intention, the following thoughts are set forth.

Only one who has come this far is in any position to go any farther. This is because, logically, acceptance of truth precedes understanding of truth. God, first of all, *informs* us of what is true and what is right. It is only through His further granting of wisdom and insight that the *wisdom* of truth and the *rightness* of righteousness become more evident, and, more explicable.

Those whose settled response to truth is to pass it by unrecognized, since, to them, it is "absurd and unjust," seem beyond human help. Still, we must remember that those who may indeed be beyond our ability to convince, are by no means beyond God's ability to enlighten. We may be assured that in God's own time, all will come into a realization of truth, for it is the will of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will that this should occur (*cp* 1 Tim.2:4; Eph.1:11).

Since even after we accept the truth that God nonetheless judges those who, ultimately, are not responsible for their actions, we may not see why this should be so, let us freely make our requests known to God concerning this question. That is, let us, then, prayerfully and reverently, in humility and meekness—not at all in a spirit of protest and unbelief, but in an attitude of faith and trust—simply *ask* our God and Father to enlighten us as to why it is so—seeing that it *is* so—that He "blames" His creatures for their wrongdoing, even though, therein, they have fulfilled His intention.

Now, for some, it may be God's wisdom for them to remain in such a spirit of confidence and trust for an extended period, without His granting their request for understanding. If so, however, this may become a most salutary experience in itself, for how wonderful it is for us to grow simply in confidence and trust in God, which, at least for a time, may be taught best in the absence of the justification of truth instead of through its presence.

I would say, however, that insofar as the Scripture enlightens us on this issue and I myself am able to perceive, the answer to our question here may be found in the answer to the wider question, Why does evil exist? specifically, Why, in the universe of the almighty and all-wise God, Who is love, does evil exist? The answer to this question is that God is doing all things well; that, specifically, in order that

His own glory as *Saviour* might be made known, and that His creatures might enjoy the greater blessing of *deliverance* from sin and evil than that of never having experienced these maladies, God has wisely ordered that sin and evil should exist. If Christ would become our Saviour, He must first be crucified. Sin and evil, then, are indispensable to the greater, permanent good.[4]

It is not casting any disagreeable reflections on the Almighty to say He determined all things for good. Indeed, it is glorious to learn not only that there is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, but that we are "for Him": "There is one God, the Father, out of Whom all is, *and we for Him*" (1 Cor.8:6a). Why are we here? For what purpose do we exist? The answer is, "for God"; that is, for God Himself, even as for His purpose in which we have a place. Just think of it: God actually has a *purpose* for each one of us, that we should exist rather than not exist and that His goal concerning us should be realized. Each one of us, then, is important to God; and, lest His purpose concerning any one of us should fail, He has ordered the universe in such a way that all is out of Him and through Him; all, in the end, being for Him as well.

To say that God "blames" us for our sins (even though

4. It is true that the measure of evil which exists will result in greater glory and blessing than that which would have resulted from a lesser measure of evil. It does not follow from this, however, that a greater measure of evil ought to obtain than that which, in fact, obtains. The will of God is not confined solely to issues of ultimate glory and salvation. It encompasses His present desires as well, including whatever present experiences of life He wishes to grant to each one of His creatures. In kind and degree, God gives humanity that particular "experience of evil" (Ecc.1:13; *cf* John 3:27) which accords with His wisdom and desire. This is evident, for all that God desires, He does (Psa.115:3; *cf* Isa.46:9-11). God is not simply operating all, but He is doing so according to the counsel of His own perfect will. Therefore, all things considered, our world is the best of all possible worlds.

our sins are ultimately sourced in His counsels), is simply to say that God *charges* us with wrongdoing where we have done wrong.[5] As the Authorized Version has it, God "finds fault" with us. Hence, since we thus *are* "at fault" (that is, simply in the sense that we *have* done wrong), it should not be surprising that God charges us accordingly.

It is true, however, that our *liability* for our wrongdoing, is also hereby connoted, indeed, that it is entailed. That is, it is true that we who have engaged in wrongdoing, are not only charged therewith, but are also subject to whatever consequences God deems appropriate for that selfsame wrongdoing.

Pragmatically, however, why should this surprise us? It is simply a fact—however we came by our sinfulness—that, in so many things, both our deeds and our motives *are* sinful; frequently, they are very sinful. Those who are sinful both in heart and hand, are sinful indeed, *and, are therefore in need of judgment.* That is, the sinner is in a terrible way. He must not be left to himself, simply to continue on in his refractoriness interminably. Here it is not a question whether the sinner is ultimately freewill-responsible for his own corrupt condition; the vital consideration is simply that neither Justice nor Love can ignore Sin.

It is true that our injustice serves God's purpose, in that by way of contrast, it commends His own righteousness. It is not true, however, that God—Who, through Christ, Who is the Emblem of God's assumption (in this case, that of God's assumption of "indignation"; Heb.1:3)—is unjust in "bringing on indignation" (that is, in subjecting the sinner to His own wisely contrived indignation, notwithstanding the good purpose which man's injustice serves; Rom.3:5). Even as Paul declares, "May it not be coming to that! Else

5. Nothing concerning free will follows from this fact; hence no such notion should be read into the text.

how shall God be judging the world?" (Rom.3:6). That is, since man's injustice serves God's *purpose* (and, it is true, is purposed of Him), it must not be imagined that man is therefore somehow to be exempted from judgment. Else (that is, If that were true), it would be impossible for God to judge the world at all.

Therefore, the sinner—*for the glory of God as well as for his own good, and certainly according to his own need*—is to be subjected to God's own *justice,* which, like all of the divine attributes, is in accord with the essence of God's nature, which is *love* (1 John 4:8). For the unbeliever, this will consist of "*chastening* in the day of judging" (2 Peter 2:9). "Chastening" (*kolasis*) is judgment which, though it may entail penality, is nonetheless imposed *with a view to amendment* (*cf* Acts 4:21). Aristotle distinguishes "chasten," which is *disciplinary* (*cf* Heb.12:7-13) and has reference to the one who suffers, from "punish" (*timōreō*), which is inherently penal and has reference to the satisfaction of the one who inflicts (*cf* KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, entries "chasten" [p.47] and "punish" [p.236]).

Thus, through such considerations as these, we are learning why God, Who is love, is "still blaming" men for their sins. While their sins fulfill His present intention, they do so only with a view to the realization of His ultimate goal, which is to glorify His own name as Saviour, and to bless His creatures in such a way that would be quite impossible apart from the temporary presence of sin. O, the *depth* of the riches and the *wisdom* and the knowledge of God! (Rom.11:33a). How we marvel and praise our God and Father in consideration of His operation of all and His wisdom concerning all. Even as the Psalmist declares, "Behold, You delight in truth even in the hidden parts, and in the secret parts You cause me to know wisdom" (Psa.51:6). Hence we declare again, What a joy, and what a peace, in believing (Rom.15:13)! J.R.C.

THE ELUSIVENESS OF GOD'S ANOINTED
(1 Samuel 19:1-10)

19 + **Saul** [sp]**urged** › **his son Jonathan and** › **all his courtiers to** [c]**put** `**David** to **death**⁻. +**But Saul's son Jonathan had** taken **intense delight in David.** 2 +**So Jonathan** [l]**told** › **David,** › **saying**⁻, **My father Saul** is **seeking to** [c]**put you** to **death.** + [now]**Therefore** [pr]**do be** on **guard in** the **morning!** + **You** must [sit]**stay in concealment and hide** yourself. 3 +**As** for **me, I shall** go **forth and I will stand** ›**by** the **side of my father in** the **field where you** are. + **I**′ **shall speak** [i]**about you to my father;** +**then what I** [see]**observe,** + **I will tell** › **you.**

4 +**So Jonathan** [l]**spoke well** [i]**of David to his father Saul.** + **He** [l]**said to him, Let not the king sin** [i]**against his servant,** [i]**against David, for he has not sinned** ›**against you, and** [t] **his** [d]**deeds** have been of **very good** service **to you.** 5 +**When he** [pl]**took** `**his soul in his palm and** [l]**smote** `**the Philistine, and Yahweh** [id]**wrought** a **great victory for all Israel, you saw** it **and** [l]**rejoiced. Why** +**then should you sin** [i]**against innocent blood** ›**by** [c]**putting** `**David** to **death**⁻ **gratuitously?** 6 + **Saul** [l]**hearkened** [i]**to Jonathan's voice, and Saul** [l]**swore, As Yahweh lives, he shall assuredly not be** [c]**put** to **death!** 7 + **Jonathan** [l]**called** › **David, and Jonathan** [l]**told** › **him** `**all** `**these** `**words.** +**Then Jonathan** [l]**brought** `**David to Saul, and he** [b]**was** ›**in his presence as heretofore.**

8 +**When** there › [b]**was**⁻ `**war** [l]**again,** + **David** sallied [l]**forth and** [l]**fought** [i]**against** the **Philistines;** + **he** [l]**smote** [i] **them** with a **great blow** so +**that they** [l]**fled** [f]**in view of him.** 9 +**Now** the **evil spirit** from **Yahweh** [b]**came** ›**on Saul,** +**while he** was **sit-**

ting in his house [+]with his spear in his hand, and David was **playing** the harp [i]**with** his **hand.** [10] [+] **Saul** [l]**sought to smite** [i] **David** [i]**with** the **spear** [+] **in**to the **sidewall; [+]yet he** [l]**dodged from Saul's presence, [+]as he** [l]**smote** [`]**the spear in**to the **sidewall. [+]So David fled and** [l]**escaped.**

A TYPE OF CHRIST

IT WAS no secret that Saul was seeking to put David to death. Jonathan knew it (1 Sam.19:1-7) along with all Saul's courtiers; Michael knew it (19:11-17), and certainly David knew it well from those who warned him and from his own personal experience. For the third time in two chapters, we read that Saul tried to kill David by thrusting a spear through him (two times in 1 Samuel 18:10,11, and then here in 19:9,10). These three attempts were all made, while David sat in the same room with Saul, playing the harp, trying to comfort the troubled man. Should the martial skills of the king be called into question? How does one armed only with a harp escape in such close quarters? How does one repeatedly escape, who is chased all over the countryside by the king and his army? And, amidst his fugitive ramblings, the hunted repeatedly finds time to deliver and aid the very nation that is hunting him.

David was typical of Christ in the many attempts that were made upon his life, and he also represents Christ in his elusiveness to Saul's persecution. How did the Lord Jesus escape, when the whole synagogue and a growing crowd thrust Him from the synagogue and the city, and then carried Him to the bluff to throw Him headlong to His death (Luke 4:16-30)? How did He twice escape when they had picked up stones to stone Him (John 8:59; 10:31-39)? The answer is hidden in the very reason the Jews wanted to kill Christ.

The identity of Christ was the crucial question in all these circumstances. At Nazareth they asked, "Is not this

Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22). In Jerusalem, the Jews could not abide such a statement as, "Ere Abraham came into being, I am" (John 8:58). Who was Christ, and who was David? In both cases it can be answered that they were God's Anointed. They each represent the start of the dynasty of the kingdom of God, David as the foreshadow, and Christ as the Reality.

Yet the perfections of Christ so far excel even the character of David. Christ is the Light of life. "And the light is appearing in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not" (John 1:5). The elusiveness of Christ in those situations was much more than a simple use of supernatural power. It was an illustration of truth. Darkness cannot overtake, or overwhelm, or limit light in any way. Light is a positive emanating force. Darkness is the absence of that force. Darkness is negative. Christ is truth and light, and the darkness of mortal humanity, even in the garb of God's chosen nation, could by no means clutch this Light and Truth.

"They pick up stones, then, that they should be casting them at Him. Yet Jesus was hid and came out of the sanctuary. And passing through the midst of them, He went and thus passed by. And, passing along, He perceived a man, blind from birth" (John 8:59-9:1). Even while "escaping" Christ made time to help the needy. And this healing of the blind man stood as a testimony to the very Jews who would have killed Him (John 9:30). To the man born blind, the Jews' quandary over Christ's identity was far more inscrutable than the fact of his healing. As Christ said in the close of the chapter, the Pharisees who were observing were becoming blind to what was before their eyes (John 9:39-41). And the Brilliance surpassing the noonday sun walked through the midst of the blind, and they could not lay their finger on Him, until the Father's appointed time.

J. Philip Scranton

THE TIMES AND SEASONS

IN the First Book, or chapter, of his work Ecclesiastes was wholly occupied with the problems of individual experience in the sphere of mental and technical activity; the Second Book (3:1-4:8) is wider in its outlook: The writer approaches the task of surveying the work of God.

3 **For every**thing there is a **stated** time,
And a **season for every event under the heavens:**
2 A **season to** give **birth and** a **season to die;**
A **season to plant and** a **season**
to chop down what is **planted**[l],
3 A **season to kill and** a **season to heal;**
A **season to breach and** a **season to build;**
4 A **season to weep and** a **season to make merry;**
A **season of wailing**[-] **and** a **season of dancing**[-];
5 A **season to fling** away **stones and** a **season**
to **collect**[-] **stones** together;
A **season to embrace and** a **season**
to stay **far from embracing**[-];
6 A **season to seek and** a **season to** [m]**count** as **lost;**
A **season to keep and** a **season to fling** away;
7 A **season to tear and** a **season to sew;**
A **season to hush and** a **season to speak;**
8 A **season to love and** a **season to hate;**
A **season of war and** a **season of peace.**

The times and the seasons as a whole are subjected to review. They are introduced with the phrase, "To every-

thing there is a stated time, and a season for every event under the heavens" (3:1). These important words indicate the special points dealt with in this section. Two distinct terms are used, referring to stated (or set) times and appropriate times (or seasons):

The word rendered "stated times" signifies a time definitely set apart for a special purpose, by royal edict or divine appointment, as is clear from its occurences. It is used in Ezra to denote the time specified by the chief officials for the adjustment of the mixed marriages among the returned captives (Ezra 10:14). Similarly it is used concerning the leave of absence granted to Nehemiah by letters of Artaxerxes (Neh.2:6), the Divine appointments relative to the temple services (Neh.10:34, 13:31), and the establishment of the feast of Purim by decree of Esther and Mordecai (Est.9:27,31).

The meaning which inheres the word translated "season" is clear from its usage in other parts of Ecclesiastes. We will take two of the most typical occurrences. "The wise heart shall know *season* [appropriate time] and judgment" (Ecc.8:5b). Note the setting of the passage. The whole section deals with subjection to authority, and the thought is emphasized that within the limits of obedience to the king there is safety: "He who observes instructions shall know no evil matter" (8:5a). In what follows, Ecclesiastes seems to have in mind the possible objection that resistance to evil is as much of an obligation as submission to right, to which answers Ecclesiastes that the wise know when each is in proper order. Akin to this is a passage further on, "Happy are you, O land, whose king is a son of notables, and whose chiefs eat in *season* for mastery and not for a drunken bout" (Ecc.10:17). The idea is doing a thing in the proper manner at the proper time; its meaning is what we should express by the metaphor of *place:* "Everything is good in its proper place."

The connections, therefore, in which the two terms are used suggest the ideas of divine appointment and appropriateness, so that the import of 3:1 is that, since for every work there is a time divinely determined, the events of our lives must be seen in relation to God's arrangement of things. Hence the idea (developed in Book Four) that events are neither good nor evil in themselves, but according to their relation to God's time of approving them. Hence, too, the thought (which forms the special subject of Book Five) that human happiness does not consist in carrying out one's every wish, but in fitting them with God's season; so that while the drift of things is irresistible, the individual can, by adapting himself to it, achieve satisfaction in his undertakings.

HISTORIC EPOCHS

The times and seasons spoken of in Ecclesiastes 3:1, then, are the predetermined times which pass over Israel and over all the kingdoms of the countries (1 Chron.29:29), the phases in the experience of nations which constitute historic epochs, the historic stages which mark the accomplishment of God's purpose among the nations of the world.

That this is the meaning is abundantly clear, not only from the scope of the passage, but also from the usage of the same phrases in other parts of Scripture. Can anyone believe, for example, that there is a proper time for any individual to kill and to heal? What are we to make of "a time to heal" according to this interpretation? Can one heal or restore the life of his fellow man which he has taken away? When all the passages where the same phrase is used are read together it becomes evident that the expression "kill and heal" refers to the administration of justice, the sentencing and pardoning of transgressors against civil law. In this poetic enumeration of the times and seasons our author unfolds a procession of history,

the great underlying principles of historic movements. The piecemeal experiences which make up the history of nations are passed in review, each touched with that marvelous felicity of descriptive suggestion which is the chief charm of the Assembler's style.

The seasons are twenty-eight in number. They commence with "birth," (3:2a) i.e., creation, when God gave outwardness, *ex*pression, to the archtypal thoughts of His mind, and they conclude with "peace" (3:8d). The intervening times are times of estrangement, marked by confusion, waste, ruin, toil, sweat, pain, passion, and blood. They are an epitome of the history of mankind: they begin with "death" (3:2b), pointing back to the sentence pronounced in Eden, and end with "war" (3:8c), looking forward to the great battle (later prophesied on the fields of Armageddon) which closes the history of Man's day.

FITTING IN ITS SEASON

9 **What advantage** does **the** [d]**worker**[l] have
in [w]**what he** is **toiling?**
10 **I see** `**the experience** [w]**that Elohim gives**
To the sons of humanity to humble them [i]**by it.**
11 **He has** [d]**made** `**every**thing **fitting in its season;**
[mr]**However, He has** [g]**put** `**obscurity in their heart**
[f]**So** [no] [w]**that the** [h]**man may not find** out `His [d]**work,**
That **which the** One, **Elohim, does**
from the **beginning** + [fr]**to** the **terminus.**
12 **I know that** there **is no good** [i]**for them**
[i]**But** [if] **to rejoice and to** [d]**achieve good in** [his]**one's life;**
13 **And, moreover,** anyone **of** `**humanity,**
[w]**That he should eat and** ¯**drink**
and ¯**see good** [i]**from all his toil,**
It is a **gift of Elohim.**
14 **I know that whatever the** One, **Elohim, is doing,**
It' shall [b]**be for** the **eon;**

Onto **it** there can **be no**thing **to add,**
And from it there can **be no**thing **to subtract;**
+ **The** One, **Elohim, He does** it
[w]**that they may fear** [f] **before Him.**
15 [wt]**That which** [b]**is, it already** was,
And [w]**what** is **to** [b]**come already has** [b]**been;**
And the One, **Elohim, He shall seek** out
`what has **been pursued**' away.

Having stated the times in poetic form, Ecclesiastes proceeds to consider them. First, he draws respecting them certain deductions which necessarily follow from the revealed character of God (3.9-15); then he considers them from a matter-of-fact view of the actual condition of things (3:16-4:8). Considering the times which God has appointed for Adam's sons in the light of the Creator's character, Ecclesiastes expresses the conviction: "He has made everything fitting in its season; however, He has put obscurity in their heart, so that the man may not find out His work, that which the One, Elohim, does from the beginning to the terminus" (3:11).

No one can find out how God is working His purpose out through the "seasons." His ways transcend human thought, but He has made everything fitting in its season and is working from the beginning to the terminus.

GOD'S APPOINTED PURPOSE

Ecclesiastes next gives expression to the thought that God's appointed times were in the very nature of things intended for man's profit and enjoyment. "I know that there is no good for them but to rejoice and to achieve good in one's life, and, moreover, any one of humanity, that he should eat and drink and see good from all his toil, it is a gift of Elohim" (3:12,13). Whatever *is,* is for a purpose, and that purpose is God's thought in creation.

This is true, not only of the works of nature, but also of the events of history.

Another fact which follows from the truth of the Creator's supremacy is the immutability of the times. God acts on fixed principles which no effort of the individual will ever influence or alter. "I know that whatever the One, Elohim is doing, it shall be for the eon; onto it there can be nothing to add and from it there can be nothing to subtract" (3:14). The tremendous importance of this truth in its bearing upon man's conduct Ecclesiastes will develop in a subsequent chapter, meanwhile he ventures to suggest one of its practical values—to foster man's dependence on God.

The One, Elohim, He does it
that they may fear before Him. (3:14)

In this statement Ecclesiastes is borne out by Paul, who, in his sermon to the Athenians, declares that God has determined the seasons of the nations that they should seek Him (Acts 17:26,27).

Ecclesiastes concludes this side of the survey with voicing the oft reiterated belief (emphasized at the close as the chief aim of the book) in a future rectification. "That which is, it already was, and what is to come already has been; and the One, Elohim, He shall seek out what has been pursued away" (3:15). Here are two ideas: the law of "recurrence," in virtue of which the times ever repeat themselves; and the seeking out or "inquisition" of the times. He has already stated, in the preceding verse (14), that the times are leading up to *the eon*: They contain the seeds which will then yield their fruit. In other words, we may compare the times to a flight of stairs, leading step by step to the golden age of peace.

PRESENT CONTRADICTIONS

16 **+Yet further, I have seen under the sun,**

Where **the** [ri]**place of judgment** is,
there[d] is `**wickedness,**
And where **the** [ri]**place of justice** is,
there[d] is `**wickedness.**
17 **I´ said in my heart:**
As for `**the righteous and** `**the wicked, the** One,
Elohim, shall judge both of them.
For ~He has [pl]**set~** a **season for every event**
and [on]**for every** [d]**deed.**
18 **I´ said in my heart:**
It is **on** [sp]**account of the sons of humanity**
That **the** One, **Elohim,** seeks **to manifest them**
And to show › **them** [w]**that they themselves** are **beasts.**
19 **For** the **destiny of the sons of humanity**
And the **destiny of the beast,**
+ It is **one destiny for them;**
As death is for **this** one, **so** is **death** for **that** one,
And one spirit is **for all;**
+ There **is no advantage** for **the human** [f]**over the beast,**
For the whole is **vanity.**
20 `**All** are **going to one** [ri]**place;**
`**All have** [b]**come from the soil, and** `**all return to the soil.**
21 [a]**Who** is **knowing** about the **spirit**
of the sons of humanity,
Whether **it** is `**ascending** › **above,**
And the **spirit of the beast,** whether **it**
is `**descending** › **below to** the **earth?**
22 +**So I saw that** there **is nothing better** for `a [h]**man**
[f]**than** [w]**that he** |**rejoices in his** [d]**works**
[t]**Since that** is **his portion;**
For [a]**who** can |**bring him to see**
[i] **what** [w] **shall** [b]**come after him?**
4 **And** ¯**again** + **I´** |**saw** `**all the exploitings**

[w]**that** are **done**[|] **under the sun;**
[+] **Behold,** the **tears of** [`]those **being exploited,**
And there **is no comforter**[|] **for them;**
[+] **Vigor** is [f]**in** the **hand of their exploiters**[|],
And there **is no comforter**[|] **for them.**
2 [+]**So I lauded**[−] [`]**the dead**[|], those **who had already died,**
[f]**Over the living, those who** are [fs]**still alive;**
3 [+]**Yet better** [f]**than them both** is [`]the one
who [fs]**still has not come** into **being,**
Who has not seen [`]**the evil** [d]**work**
[w]**that is done under the sun.**
4 **And I**[′] **saw** [`]**all** the **toil and** [`]**all** the **success**
of the [d]**work** done,
That it was **jealousy of** one **man** [f]**over his associate;**
This [mr]**too** is **vanity and** a **grazing** on **wind.**
5 **The stupid** man **folds**[|] [`]**his hands**
And eats[|] [`]**his** own **flesh;**
6 Yet **better** is one **palm full** with **rest**
[f]**Than both hands full** with **toil and** a **grazing** on
wind.
7 **And** [¯]**again** [+] **I**[′] [|]**saw** a **vanity under the sun:**
8 There **was one** person, [+]**but** there **was no second;**
There **even was no son** [+]**or brother for him;**
[+]**Also** there **was no end to all his toil,**
[mr]**Yet his eyes were not** [|]**satisfied** with his **riches.**
[+]**Then** he said, **For** [a]**whom** am **I toiling**
And making [`]**my soul lack** [f] **good?**
This [mr]**too** is **vanity, and it** is an **experience of evil.**

In these verses Ecclesiastes proceeds to show that the previous representation is not borne out by the actual state of things. "Yet further, I have seen under the sun, where the place of judgment is, there is wickedness, and where the place of justice is, there is wickedness" (3:16). In spite of the reasonableness of the earlier deductions, they are

at variance with actual experience. The actual condition of things in the world tells a very different tale. The times are often seen reversed: wickedness is seen in the place of justice, and while this fact may be construed to argue for a future rectification, it more often leads to the view that man is not different in his end from the beasts (3:16-22); suffering under oppression which makes death preferable to life (4:1-3); skill attained at the price of baneful rivalry and bitter competition fostering idleness in some and egotism in others (4:5-6); tireless effort dismayed by the recognition of its lack of its satisfaction (4:7-8)—all these realities which cannot be ignored force totally different conclusions.

The survey has yielded the following result: the theoretic side, founded on deductions flowing from the character of the Creator, argues that the "times" are for man's good; the practical side, resting on stubborn facts which everywhere stare us in the face, argues that the times and seasons contribute to man's misery and suffering. The reflective process has established an antagonism between good and evil. Here for the present the consideration of God's work is allowed to rest. But the clash between the ideal and the actual—the discrepancy between the traditional adoration of the works of the Lord, and the growing difficulty of the recognition of evil in the world—has given rise to a number of perplexing practical questions. These are dealt with in a string of "notes" (4:9-5:9).

NOTES

When studying the form of this work we find that the intervals between some of the "books" are filed with strings of sayings, which sustain some relation to the preceding matter; in fact, they are in the nature of "notes" dealing with the practical side of certain points that have emerged in the course of investigation.

In the group before us we have a series of four maxims arranged in pairs, each pair being founded upon an antithesis.

1. The Value of Friendship (4:9-12)

9 ˙**Two** are **better** [f]**than** ˙**one**
[w]**Because** there **is better reward for them in their toil;**
10 **For if they** ˈ**fall,** ˙**one** can ˈ**raise** up ˋ**his partner;**
+**But woe to him, the one who** ˈ**falls** +**when** there **is no second** person **to raise him** up.
11 [mr]**Also, if two** ˈ**lie** down together + **it is warm for them,**
+**Yet for one, how** can **he** keep ˈ**warm?**
12 **And if** somebody can ˈ**overpower him** ˙who is **single,**
Then ˙**two** can ˈ**stand** firm in **front of him** who attacks.
+ ˙A **three**fold ˈ ˙**thread** can**not** [i] **quickly be** ˈ**pulled apart.**

In a previous paragraph our author has been speaking of competition as fostering idleness in some (*The stupid man folds his hands,* 4:5), and isolation in others (*Better is one palm full with rest,* 4:6) In this maxim Ecclesiastes seeks to show that both these attitudes towards rivalry are as harmful as rivalry itself. The word "toil" is elsewhere rendered by "misery" (e.g. Judges 10:16). The point is, that the trouble involved in human associations, arising from differing mental attitudes, interests, temperaments, etc., is amply rewarded by such advantages as sympathy, help, strength. *Two can stand firm* (4:12) here has the sense of *holding one's own*: two or three can hold their own where one would be overpowered.

2. The Vanity of Adulation (4:13-16)

13 **Better** a **boy, provident and wise,**
[f]**Than** a **king, old and stupid, who** does **not know** how **to** take **warning**⁻ any [fr]**more.**

14 **For from** a **house of** ⌜**prisoners**⌝ one came **forth to reign,**
Even though in his kingdom he was born destitute⌞**;**
15 Yet **I saw** ⌜**all the living** who were **going**
about **under the sun**
Staying **with the second** ⌜**boy**
who ⌞**stood** up [u]**in his stead.**
16 There **was no end to all the people,**
to all before whom he [b]**was** set,
[mr]**Yet** ⌜those coming **later were not rejoicing in him;**
⌜**Indeed this** [mr]**too** is **vanity and** a **grazing** on **wind.**

There is no historical allusion here: it is a pictorial representation of matters of general experience. "Better is a boy, provident and wise, than a king, old and stupid, who does not know how to take warning any more. For from a house of prisoners [i.e., the womb] one [the foolish king] came forth to reign; even though in his kingdom he was born destitute. I saw all the living who were going about under the sun, staying with the second boy [i.e., the successor, as in 4:8] who stood up in his stead. There was no end to all the people, to all before whom he [the successor of the stupid king] was set, yet those coming later were not rejoicing in him; indeed this too is vanity and a grazing on wind" (4:13-16). The thought of the whole is: In essence, apart from the trappings of royalty, the king is as destitute as any youth born in obscurity; both were born naked (*cf* 5:15) and what does this external finery amount to? When the old king is gone, all the world flocks to his successor; but that successor will equally be forsaken in his turn.

3. *The Vanity of Folly* (5:1-7)

5 Guard your feet [as]**when** [w] **you** ⌞**go**
to the house of Elohim;
+ To go **near**⌐ **to hear** is better [f]**than** that **the stupid**
should [g]**offer**⌐ **sacrifice,**

For they know[l] **no**thing but **to do evil.**
2 **Do not be** [l]**rash** [on]**with your mouth,**
And your heart must not [l]**hasten to** bring **forth**
speech before the One, **Elohim;**
For the One, **Elohim,** is **in** the **heavens,**
And you are **on the earth;**
Therefore, let your words become few.
3 **For** as `a **dream comes**[l] [i]**with much responsibility,**
[+]**So** the **voice of** a **stupid** person comes
[i]**with many words.**
4 **Whenever you** [l]**vow** a **vow to Elohim,**
do not [l]**delay to pay it,**
For He [is]**has no delight in** those who are **stupid;**
`That **which you** [l]**vow, pay.**
5 It is **better** [w]**that you should not vow**
[f]**Than** [w]**that you should vow and not** [l]**pay.**
6 **Do not** [lg]**allow `your mouth to cause `your flesh** to **sin**¯,
And do not [lsa]**protest before the** temple **messenger**
that it was an **error.**
Why should the One, **Elohim,**
be wrathful [on]**at your voice**
And [m]**bring harm** `to the [d]**work of your hands?**
7 **For in many dreams and vanities,**
[+] there are **many**¯ **words;**
[t]**Therefore fear `the** One, **Elohim.**

This has obviously in mind the materialism produced in some by the spectacle of wickedness seated in the place of justice. Two maxims enjoining reverence in things divine are contrasted with the folly of speaking against God. The drift of thought is best apprehended from the parallelism of clauses:

Obedience better than sacrifice (5:1)
Ignorance better than neglected light (5:4,5)
Hasty words improper because God is greater than man (5:2)

Hasty words dangerous because God may
requite man (5:6)

Image: Dream (5:3)
Image: Dreams (5:7)

Speaking against God is like the talking in sleep of an overworked brain.

4. The Value of Wisdom (5:8-9)

8 **If you should see extortion of** the **destitute**[l]
And pillage of judgment and justice in a **province,**
Do not be [l]**amazed over the event,**
For one **lofty** official **above**
another **lofty** official is **observing,**
And other **lofty** officials are **over them.**
9 [+]**Yet** an **advantage** to the **land in all** respects is **this:**
A **king** devoted **to** the **field** that **it be served.**

The writer has before him the effects of oppression noticed in the survey. We follow the reading of the Septuagint: "If you should see extortion of the destitute and pillage of judgment and justice in a province, do not be amazed over the event, for one lofty official above another lofty official is observing, and other lofty officials are over them" (5:8). The object of the passage is to emphasize the fact that, strange as it may seem, God has a purpose in all that takes place. Verse 9 seems to illustrate the effects of recognizing or ignoring that truth by rulers: the one looks upon the province as a thing to be developed, the other looks upon it as a field of extortion. V. Gelesnoff

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ELOHIM DOES IT

THE SECTION of Ecclesiastes under consideration (3:1-5:9) presses the point that all our experiences are out of God and they are given for some reason. The experience of changing times and seasons (3:1-8) are given to the sons of humanity to humble us (3:10).

Whatever happens, whether we are able to rejoice in it (3:13), or we would like to see it changed (3:14a), God does it to the end that we grow in awe-inspiring fear of Him (3:14b).

But, according to Ecclesiastes 3:11, we cannot always trace the reasons and purposes of God very clearly. Nevertheless, He is working "from the beginning to the terminus" (3:11).

He is responsible for the cycles of human experience (3:15), for judgment and its consequences (3:16-21) and our ignorance of the future (3:22). This means that exploitations of humans, one against the other, our tears and jealousies, our stupidities and dissatisfactions (4:1-8), these all are given to the sons of humanity by God for His own reasons. Whatever is done, Elohim does it (3:14).

It was wisdom in the days of the Assembler, and it is wisdom today, to know that God is behind our experiences. But for us who have been given revelations of God's grace and purpose in Christ Jesus, there is less of "obscurity" concerning that which God does than in those ancient times. We do not know why God gives terrible seasons of war and sorrow and loss as well as happy times, and this not in apparently strict equality, though we do learn that no

one escapes the experience of evil altogether (Ecc.1:13). But, as believers, we are aware of many things about God's operations that the Assembler did not know.

"We are aware that God is working all together for the good of those who are loving God" (Rom.8:28). God is making known to us "the secret of His will (in accord with His delight, which He purposed in [Christ Jesus]) to have an administration of the complement of the eras, to head up all in the Christ—both that in the heavens and that on the earth—in Him in Whom our lot was cast also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will" (Eph.1:9-11). We are aware of the One we have believed, Who indeed abolishes death, yet illuminates life and incorruption (2 Tim.1:9-12).

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

The exact meaning of the Hebrew term in Ecclesiastes 3:11 translated "obscurity" by the CVOT is in dispute. It is the word generally rendered "eon" in our translation, and others, including Vladimir Gelesnoff, have preferred that sense here as well.

In his comments of this passage, Brother Gelesnoff wrote: "The phrase, 'He has set the eon in their heart,' is very striking. The rendering 'world' in the current versions, and the marginal alternative 'eternity,' rob the passage of its grand meaning. In perfect harmony with the whole cast and character of Hebrew prophecy, the 'times' of Ecclesiastes culminate in the golden age of peace. The character of the Messianic age is painted in colors most gorgeous and brilliant in the prophets; but the crowning glory of the Messianic eon is peace."[1] Hence our brother felt that such a "far-off, vague, indistinct" presentiment

1. *Unsearchable Riches,* vol.5, p.113.

in the hearts of mankind was what the Assembler had in mind in this passage.

Yet many, including Brother A. E. Knoch, have concluded that some such sense as "obscurity" is intended here. Brother Knoch has defended this rendering in an article appearing in *Unsearchable Riches,* volume 29, starting on page 371. The following selections from that article have guided in the current CVOT rendering:

HE HAS SET THE WORLD IN THEIR HEARTS

"Obscurity, in more than one sense, gathers around this passage (Ecc.3:11, AV). It is not clear what is meant by the words themselves, and they give no ground for what follows. The tendency of translators and expositors is to render it as the Septuagint, changing the word *world* to *age* or *eon*. Some prefer to make it *eternity,* and the teaching that God has set eternity in men's hearts (whatever that may mean) is quite popular in some circles. But why should this keep men from finding out what God is doing? Indeed, would it not be a help rather than a hindrance.

"First let us note the context. It concerns the fact that there is a *season* for everything (Ecc.3:1-9). Then the assembler of these sayings asks, 'What profit has the doer in what *he* toils?' The answer is, 'I see the experience which God gives to the sons of humanity, to be humbled by it.' Our life is not the aimless, purposeless, empty thing which it appears to be. Its evil and toil is a gift from God in order to lay us low before Him. With all our striving, how little do we accomplish! But the main object, the real profit, lies in our failure, so that we may take our true place before God.

"*In its season* God makes everything lovely (verse 11). See how beautiful is the flower in its bud and bloom! But soon thereafter, what a change! The season is past. One who had never seen the flower until its petals are faded and decayed, could not conceive how beautiful it was in

its time. This is the picture which is presented to us as introductory to the statement which we are studying. That which is disintegrating does not give us a proper idea of its beauty when it is in its prime . . . .

"Men see things out of season, in the time when they are disintegrating, and their hearts are too dark to recognize this and look back to their origin or forward to their consummation. They see only a small portion of the process, and even this at its worst stage, hence are sure to be led astray without a revelation from God Himself. Those who have this may exult that all begins in God's love and will terminate in its full display, even though, at present, it may appear to some as if His hate were the ruling factor in His dealings with mankind.

"But why translate *obscurity* in place of *eon* or *age*? The Hebrew stem *olm*, which is here used denotes OBSCURE. This is clear from the fact that it is rendered *secret, hide, blind,* and *dissemble* in the Authorized Version. The meaning *eon* or *age* is only a derived one, seeing that the eons were obscure to them. It also denotes an adolescent damsel or stripling. It is quite in order to fall back upon the basic sense when this is manifestly in accord with the context. We know that it is true that God gives men obscurity and that they do not know God's doing on account of it. All other renderings fail to satisfy the context. It must be something which incapacitates men mentally. Obscurity does this."

GOD IS THE PLACER

We conclude that the context does support the translation "obscurity" in this passage. God Himself *puts* (or "gives") this obscurity into the human heart. Since He has done so, we may be certain that He will be the One Who removes that obscurity, as indeed He has begun to do through the later revelations of His Word, in the hearts of those who believe. D.H.H.

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR SEPTEMBER 1999
BEING THE FIFTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY

EDITORIAL

MOST of our readers are acquainted with the words of the apostle Paul where he declares, "Have a *pattern* of *sound* words . . ." (2 Tim.1:13). Still, in my experience, it seems that we all need to endeavor to heed this counsel more faithfully. By doing so, many misapprehensions and misunderstandings may be avoided.

Paul's fuller statement here is as follows: "Have a pattern of sound words which you hear from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. The ideal thing committed to you, guard . . . ."

The apostle would not have us use a pattern of sound words, even those which we hear from him, except in a way that is reflective of "faith and love," indeed, of "faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." In order that one's custom here might be a *living* and *holy* custom, one's employment of a pattern of sound words cannot simply be "technically correct"; it must also be exhibited in a spirit of faith and love as that which is in Christ Jesus. Or to be more "sound" concerning this very point, our employment of a pattern of sound words, must be according to the work of Christ in us, engaging us thus, for any such faith and love is not native to ourselves; it must come from Him.

The "ideal (thing)" committed to us, is the very words of the sacred scriptures themselves (*cf* 2 Tim.3:15-17). This we are to "guard," yet not through the weaponry of fleshly tactics, but through the power of the indwelling holy spirit of God: "The ideal thing committed to you, guard through the holy spirit which is making its home in us" (2 Tim.1:13,14).

Most strikingly, immediately after declaring this solemn adjuration to Timothy, Paul then declares: "Of this you are aware, that *all* those in the province of Asia were turned from me . . ." (2 Tim.1:15).

Here Paul juxtaposes two thoughts: (1) "Beloved Timothy, it is imperative that *you* have a pattern of sound words, which you hear from *me*"; and (2) "Of this, Timothy, *you* are aware, that *all* those in the province of Asia were turned from *me*."

By his evident interrelating of the two statements, Paul plainly intimates the connection between the two facts, and, the deeper considerations concerning each one. Drawing on facts explicit to each statement itself yet also intimately related to its counterpart, we may state the wider thought thus: An instrumental cause of all in the province of Asia turning away from Paul, was their failure to maintain a pattern of sound words which they heard from him, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. And, therefore, if, under God, Timothy would save himself as well as those hearing him (*cp* 1 Tim.4:16) from a similar fate, he *must* "have [and use] a pattern of sound words" himself, even the pattern of sound words which he heard from Paul.

In an originative and essential sense, the only sound expressions which can be identified with our faith, are the very words of Scripture itself, of which our faith consists. These are the words—"taught by the spirit" (1 Cor.2:12,13)—with which, fundamentally, we are to *speak*.

We cannot rightly judge the sense and application of any certain scriptural declarations until we are first of all able to distinguish Scripture itself from those contrary words which are merely those of human "wisdom"—however zealously, sincerely, and seemingly spiritually, expressed.

"Now the spirit is saying explicitly, that in subsequent eras some will be withdrawing from the faith . . . [doing so] in the hypocrisy of false expressions, their own conscience having been cauterized" (1 Tim.4:1,2). "O Timothy, that which is committed to you, *guard*, turning aside from the profane prattlings and antipathies of falsely named 'knowledge,' which some are professing. As to the faith, they swerve. Grace be with you! Amen!" (1 Tim.6:20,21).

J.R.C.

THE ATMOSPHERE AND THE WATERS

6 **And Elohim** [l]**said: Let** an **atmosphere come** to **be in** the **midst of the waters,** [+]**that it may** [b]**be separating** [bt] **waters** [›]**from waters.** 7**And it came** to [l]**be so~.** 7 [+] **Elohim** [ld]**made** [`]**the atmosphere and** [l]**separated** [bt] **the waters** [w f] **under** [›] the **atmosphere** [+] [bt]**from the waters** [w] **above** [›] the **atmosphere.** 8 **And Elohim** [l]**called** [›] the **atmosphere** [=]**Heaven.**

And it [l]**became evening, and it** [l]**became morning:** the **second day.**

THE SECOND SAYING of God is involved in the first, as we have seen. The action of separating the gaseous envelope of the earth from the fluids was provided for in the creation of light. Indeed, the light was but the result of the activity of God's spirit.

And so it is with all of God's achievements. All are found first in Himself, and are only the outworking of what was within Him. By the multiplicity of His wonders we are bewildered, and fail to trace all to their Source. But here, at the very outset, the matter is simpler, and the chain complete. God is Spirit, the vibration of which produces light, the energy of which separates the atmospheric gases from the watery fluids (Gen.1:6).

We easily overlook the Deity in His operations. And we are not logical enough to trace them to their first and ultimate Origin. We do not realize that mere "natural" forces are not intelligent enough to act independently. Not only the *power* is divine, but its *control* is in His hands. It was not the light that thought out the idea of separating the

air from the waters. God provided both the energy and its direction. To remind us of this we are not told that the effect of the light was such that the gas ascended and the water separated of itself. To forefend such silly, "scientific," atheistic ideas, *God* once more *spoke.* And so it was at the beginning of each day. Nothing evolved of itself. But all unfolded its divine potentialities at a simple statement of His will.

Once more we hear the simple, yet magnifical statement of what is to be. The Deity does not need to use the imperative voice in nature in order to express His will. As He alone supplies the power, all He needs to do is *use* it, and foretell the result just as He does in all predictive prophecy.

The Original reads, "There is coming to be an atmosphere in the midst of the water, and there is coming to be a separation between water and water." In the first instance (v.3) the statement is simply repeated, "It is becoming light." Now, however, the record simply reads, "And it came to be so." This formula is used in the Hebrew in all the following cases, but here it does not appear in the Hebrew text until the end of verse 7. As it was preserved at this point, following the divine declaration, in the ancient Greek translation, we restore it.

THE STAMPING

The "firmament" of the Bible has been the sport of scholars. It is given as conclusive proof that this book is full of ignorant fables. We are told that the ancient Hebrews thought the heavens were a "firm" hollow shell on which the stars were fixed. It is true that the Septuagint Greek translation uses a words which means "solid," and that the Vulgate Latin version made it *firmamentum,* from which the AV took its "firmament." But the inspired Hebrew term, in the STAMP family, does not give support to these

ideas. It gives us the divine viewpoint, not the human. It looks at it as a whole from above, not as man sees it from the surface of the earth (Gen.1:6-8).

Like water, air *flows*. Water flows downward into the lowest hollows of earth's surface, and the atmosphere fills all the rest and rises far above both. To put it another way, water and air fill all the low spots and seek their level. The land is very uneven, but the waters fill the seas, and the air forces its way into every depression on the dry land.

This characteristic is figured for us in the highly pictorial vocabulary of the Hebrew tongue by comparing it to the thin layer of foil which was STAMPED out of metal, such as copper, silver or gold, to overlay the wooden parts of the tabernacle (Ex.39:3; Num.16:38,39), and the carvings of idols (Isa.40:19; Jer.10:9). This Hebrew stem, *rqo* STAMP, as a noun, *rqio,* is their name for the atmosphere. It covers the contours of the earth like the thin foil which was stamped out to overlay the sacred furnishings of God's dwelling place. The atmosphere is the costly covering of the earth. Next to light, it is the principal factor which changed it from a chaos into a fertile, life-sustaining habitation for plant and soul life.

THE ATMOSPHERE

So accustomed are we to the air in which we live that its marvels escape us. As we have seen, we can live without food or water for hours at a time, yet a very short time without air is usually fatal. Normally, we go without food or water for hours at a time, but we breathe in or out almost constantly.

Neither can we stand very great changes in quantity of air. This is dependent largely on the pressure, and changes with elevation above sea level. It takes time for the body to adapt itself to even small variations, for the pressure of the air within cannot be suddenly altered. As a conse-

quence, mankind is confined to the surface of the earth, and finds it difficult to climb the higher mountains.

The most important functions of the atmosphere for humanity are connected with *life* and *light.* It makes the celestial luminaries visible to our eyes and provides our bodies with vital oxygen apart from which we cannot survive, and which is joined with the other elements of which living tissues are formed. About one-fifth of it is a vitally essential gas, without which there could be no soul-life on the earth. It may be that this is referred to in the formation of Adam, when Yahweh Elohim blew into his nostrils the *breath of lives* (Gen.2:7), for the oxygen is that part of the air which is absolutely essential to life. When man ascends to the higher altitudes, where it is scarce, it is necessary to supply it by artificial means.

THE SEPARATIONS

A striking feature of the restoration of the six days is the sevenfold recurrence of the word *separate.* God *separated* between the light and the darkness (Gen.1:4). The atmosphere is the *separation* between the waters above and beneath (Gen.1:6,7). On the fourth day the luminaries *separate* between the day and the night (1:14) and *separate* between the light and the darkness (1:18). It will be noted that the first one separated abides, while the second eventually vanishes. Darkness and night will be done away (Rev.21:25; 22:5). So also with the waters. Those beneath the atmosphere are found on the new earth as a river of life (Rev.22:1; 22:17), while those above became the deluge of death (Gen.7:21).

THE TWO WATERS

Had we written this, we probably would have said that the atmosphere is *above* (not in the *midst* of) the water, and would not have made a separation *between* the waters, for

we seldom consider how much water or moisture there is in the upper reaches of the atmosphere. In order to appreciate God's marvelous mercy in placing water above as well as beneath the atmosphere, we will imagine that the water, being heavier than air, must always remain below. Then the ground, even if it was once saturated, would dry out and become absolutely unfit to support life of any kind. As it is, there are lands with so little moisture that they cannot be inhabited. Water is more necessary for life than food. Plants, as well as soul life, will shrivel up and die apart from a proper supply of moisture. Nevertheless, there are regions, in the center of continents, more than a thousand miles from a sea, which have more than enough water, especially in the equatorial belt.

How wise is the wonderful provision that water is not only heavier than air but can also be changed so as to float in it! It is very variable, changed by heat from a solid to a fluid and a gas. We are well acquainted with the fluid, water, but some know little of it as solid ice, while most of us seldom recognize its invisible gaseous condition unless it cools enough to show its shape in clouds or fog.

BEFORE THE DELUGE

But we must not take the present conditions as normal for antediluvian days. We never read of rain falling on the earth until the deluge. Indeed, we are distinctly told that Yahweh Elohim did *not* bring rain on the earth. At that time humidity came *up* from below and irrigated all the surface of the ground (Gen.2:5,6). Subirrigation is a much better method of watering plants than surface flooding or rain. It would be much more used in arid regions if it were not so expensive. It is probable, however, that in those days, the moisture was not only absorbed by plant life, but *rose* through it into the air and was stored *above* until the deluge, when it descended for forty days and forty

nights. Combined with the water from beneath and that which came through the crevices of the heavens, it covered the whole earth (Gen.7:11). Under present conditions it soon descends as rain. But then it may have been stored as invisible vapor. It may be that the limits of this method were reached at the time of the deluge, so that it gradually came down.

THE RAINBOW

God has given us a continual reminder of this in the rainbow. This was not visible to the antediluvians because the atmospheric conditions were not such as would refract the light into the multicolored arch which we see today. *Now* this is God's guarantee that no repetition of the deluge is possible. The moisture repeatedly forms globules of water which fall as rain. They had neither rainbow nor rain in Paradise or in the rest of the earth in that eon. As the moisture went up for two thousand years, more or less, depending on which chronology we take, it is not at all astonishing that the deluge covered the earth. That is nearly as long, or longer, than from the birth of Christ to the present.

I have seen magnificent rainbows, with an unbroken arch showing all the colors of the spectrum. At the grand canyon of the Colorado, I saw it as a rainround, a full circle, without ends. In the yawning depths of the abyss the "ends" continued to form another inverted bow, completing the upper semicircle.

But the most soul-stirring of them all I saw on the hills above the lake of Galilee. What a picture! What solemn associations! In the center, below me, was the lake, recalling all the sacred scenes centered around my Lord and His disciples, while high above the sign of God's unconditional covenant spanned the lake from shore to shore. God and His Beloved were brought very near by these visible tokens of their presence. A. E. Knoch

IT IS BECOMING SO

THE earth and the heavens about it had come into such a state of chaos and vacancy that only God, the One Who created the earth in the first place, could revive it. No fortuitous combination of elements or circumstances could change the situation. It was a world lost in darkness and disorder, hostile to life, cold and empty. God Himself must act, and when He does act it will necessarily be evident that all that occurs must be traced to Him.

Popular theories speak of movements and interactions of celestial bodies, of physical and chemical forces, of time and chance, all involved in bringing out some primordial spark of life. It is claimed that one thing led to another, though perhaps through billions of years and billions upon billions of misses and near misses. But what caused the "one thing" and the conditions required for the whole process?

Beginnings of life and development of good cannot be traced to blind chance. They must be traced to God Who possesses enlightened purpose and the power to carry it out. This One is Elohim, being now presented by His words and deeds in the first chapter of Genesis.

Blind chance is no explanation for light and life and order. It is like chaos, though far worse because it is thought of as something that replaces and excludes God.The chaos and vacancy and darkness of Genesis 1:2 plead for God as One responsible for and to what He has created.

Now in Genesis 1:6 God speaks again, this time saying, "Let an atmosphere come to be in the midst of the waters, that it may be separating waters from waters." These are

words which speak of putting things in order. God is the Placer (in accord with the Greek word *Theos*), the Subjector (in accord with the Hebrew title, *El*), Who orders things effectively and well.

Elohim's opening words of Genesis 1:6 may be expressed in English more literally as "It-is-becoming, atmosphere. . . ." This helps us see that the verb declares or announces a *developing* change. But the Hebrew verb could also properly be rendered "It-shall-become," thus emphasizing the *prophetic* nature of the words which Elohim uttered. These words are God's declaration of what will come to be. His command is actually a proclamation. What He says here can be relied upon.

In the CV the clause (literally rendered) "and it is becoming so" is moved from the end of verse 7, where it appears in the Masoretic Text, to the end of verse 6 where it appears in the Septuagint. This is in harmony with the pattern of verses 9, 11, 15, 24 and 30 (see also verse 20, CV), where it follows immediately after declarations of Elohim. The statement is a certification that what God has spoken is faithfully carried out.

Are we willing to apply this principle to all of God's declarations? What God has spoken is certain of coming to be so. Often there is no problem because, as with the words of Genesis 1:6, what God says has clearly been shown to be true and experienced with appreciation. But much of what God says in Scripture has not yet been realized. It remains as a promise and must be taken in faith apart from sight.

Even though much of what God has spoken has not yet come to be so in experience, it must become so. The first chapter of Genesis reminds us to be patient and expectant concerning the great promises of good that God has made. Very many scriptural declarations of God concern "things to come" which have not yet come. And the human tendency has been to dilute or alter the sense of these

unfulfilled promises because of the long periods of time between the declaration and its coming to be so. Motivations may be sincere, but if the fulfillment is not clearly and exactly a becoming so of what God has said, we may surely question the claims of fulfillment.

Let us consider a few examples:

THE SERPENT'S HEAD

When, by its craftiness, the serpent had usurped authority over humanity in the garden of Eden, Yahweh Elohim declared in terms very much the same as found in Genesis 1:6, "And I shall set enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall hurt you in the head, and you shall hurt Him in the heel" (Gen.3:15).

The second half of this curse is sometimes called the "protoevangel," or first presentation of the evangel, the good news of God's deliverance of sinners through the gift of His Son. The prophecy is expressed in figurative language, but its sense is easily discerned. It concerns the Descendent of the woman, Who will take away the headship or authority that the Adversary had seized in the garden, doing so at His cost, suffering in the very act of triumphing over the enemy. It concerns God's Son, Jesus Christ (*cf* Rom.1:1,3,5), His death on the cross (*cf* Rom. 3:24; 5:6-9) and the annulling of Satan's authority and acts (*cf* 1 Cor.15:24-27; 1 John 3:8).

Numerous human traditions have weakened the sense of Genesis 3:15, suggesting that its fulfillment will not be quite *so* as stated. Foremost are those teachings which, at best, confuse the issue of the Adversary's loss of headship, if they do not contradict it altogether. Another field of warfare against this prophecy is the advancement of ideas concerning supposed human contributions to the nullifying of Satan's authority. In this way the truth of Christ's victory and the centrality of His cross is drastically diluted.

No matter how loud and continuous the claim that everlasting hell or irreversible annihilation is no victory for Satan may be, such outcomes still would stand as triumphs of his authority. He led humanity into disobedience, and the doctrines of eternal loss must, in effect, trace that loss to his original usurpation of leadership. The doctrines of eternal loss might still allow the hurting of Satan's head to mean that he fails to gain *all* he wants. But an incomplete annulling of Satan's authority, or the exercise of divine authority over the creatures of God's hands with the tools of suffering and loss could never stand as a true triumph of the Seed of the woman.

The subjection of all under the feet of Christ is the coming-to-be-so of Genesis 3:15. Then He will "be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power" (1 Cor.15:24-27). Whenever this occurs, the protoevangel becomes the realized evangel in the hearts of all, so that "in the name of Jesus," the Saviour, every knee will bow and every tongue will avow the Lordship of Christ (Phil.2:10,11). For then God's delight and purpose to head up all in the Christ will be achieved in recognition by all throughout the universe, both that in the heavens and that on the earth, (Eph. 1:9-11) to the glory of God the Father. Peace will have spread everywhere, embracing all, because of the Seed of the Woman and the blood of His cross (Col.1:20).

That is the testimony of God's Word as to the fulfillment of His word to the serpent in Genesis 3:15. It shall become so.

HUMAN COOPERATION

The promise concerning the Seed of the woman was spoken to the serpent. Humanity stood in the position of hearers, or rather overhearers. They were not invited to participate in the hurting of the serpent's head, nor even offered the message of triumph as a matter of their choice,

as though it needed their verification by a faithful response. It was simply a declaration of what would become so.

The travail of the woman spoken of in Genesis 3:16 and the sweat of the man spoken of in 3:19 were channels for the continuance and preservation of the human race, but the promised victory was centered solely in the Seed Who would come. When Cain ("Acquired") was born, Eve centered upon what she had "acquired," naming him accordingly.

The groaning and travailing, in toil and in child-bearing, whether that given to the male or to the female, is not something we can boast in as our humanly contrived contribution to the defeat of the Adversary. Like humanity's hate and cruelty at the cross, our infirmity and enmity through the centuries only emphasizes our inability to rid ourselves of Satan's headship. If Mary was blessed, or made happy, or we are graciously granted experiences of suffering along with our believing, this is evidence of God's operations in and for us. What we do is only evidence of our need of a Saviour. When Genesis 3:15 becomes "so" it will be recognized that the annulling of the Adversary's headship was the victory of Christ alone.

THE PROMISED LAND AND KINGDOM

When His disciples came to Jesus after His resurrection and posed the question that was so dominant in their mind, "Lord, art Thou at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus gave a very important reply. He said, "Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction" (Acts 1:6,7). All through His ministry Jesus had directed attention to the kingdom, which, by His own testimony, had drawn near. But the promises of this great realm to be centered in a definitely prescribed area of the earth, and directed through a chosen people, go back to the twelfth chapter of Genesis and extend

through all the sacred scriptures of old. Not one of them can fail of realization.

At least two thousand years had passed since Yahweh had declared to Abram, "I shall make you into a great nation, and I shall bless you; I shall indeed make your name great, and you will be a blessing; I shall indeed bless those blessing you, and I shall curse the one maledicting you. In you all the families of the ground will be blessed" (Gen.12:2,3). And about a thousand years had come and gone since He had said to David, "Your house and your kingship will be authenticated before Me for the eon; your throne, it shall become established for the eon" (2 Sam.7:16).

We cannot be satisfied in thinking these declarations were fulfilled in the days of Joshua or Solomon. What was said has not even yet *become so.* The disciples were not confused into supposing that they were enjoying the blessings spoken of by Yahweh in Genesis and all the prophets. Christ had been with them, manifesting many of the powers of the kingdom, granting some of its blessings as a foretaste now and again, but that was not the fulfillment of the promises. The "times of restoration of all which God speaks through the mouth of His holy prophets who are from the eon" (Acts 3:21) had not arrived. They were still praying as Jesus had directed, "Thy kingdom come" (Matt.6:10).

Later, when it became obvious that the coming of the kingdom was still being delayed, Peter wrote, "Now of this one thing you are not to be oblivious, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not tardy as to the promise, as some are deeming tardiness, but is patient because of you, not intending any to perish, but all to make room for repentance" (2 Pet.3:8,9).

This theme is similarly taken up in the book of Hebrews with the recognition that they had not yet entered into the Lord's "stopping" (Heb.3:7-4:13). "You should not, then,

be casting away your boldness, which is having a great reward, for you have need of endurance that, doing the will of God, you should be requited with the promise. For still how very little, He Who is coming will be arriving and not delaying . . . . By faith we are apprehending the eons to adjust to a declaration of God, so that what is being observed has not come out of what is appearing" (Heb. 10:35-37; 11:2). The signs that had been appearing, and the great work of the cross, in their own days, had indicated the Lord's soon return and the establishment of the kingdom. And yet what they observed was that Rome still ruled, and what was promised in the prophets remained *not so*. The message was faith and endurance, steadfastness in "looking off to the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith, Jesus, Who, for the joy lying before Him, endures a cross, despising the shame, besides is seated at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb.12:2).

SPIRITUALIZING THE WORD

If the words of Genesis and Samuel concerning the land and the kingdom cannot be found fulfilled in the reign of Solomon with all its splendor and the extent of its sway, then we must take it that the standard of exactitude in fulfillment is as high as it was in Genesis 1. If the disciples living under the ministry of Jesus for three years and more did not find in His presence with them the fulfillment of the promised kingdom, then we surely can express the strongest of doubts that this fulfillment has existed even in the hearts of the most faithful and reverent of saints from the first century until now.

We have made the standards for the "becoming so" of what God has said too low. Not just preterists who claim the kingdom was set up in the year 70 A.D. or amillennialists who see it as existing today in the "church," but all of us who believe fall short in appreciation of the glory and real-

ity of God's fulfillments of His promises of blessing. How can we fully appreciate them until they have become so? But we can, as God gives us grace, believe what He has said and expect it will become so in fullest harmony with what He has said.

To be sure, we are not always clear about what exactly it is that God has said. But this is not the fault of what He has said, but of the corruption of our understandings by our traditions and imaginings, as well-meaning as these may be. Poor translations of the Scriptures, pride and stubbornness, these all have their parts as well. But we must insist that (to use two passages of scripture that have often been used to suggest the kingdom is currently in operation) if the kingdom of God is inside the chosen (Luke 17:21) and is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in holy spirit (Rom.14:16,17) it is not here in the body of believers today in any sense of wholeness, no matter how mature and faithful one may be, or righteous by human standards. It is surely *reflected* in the lives of believers, but until *all* of God's declarations concerning it have become so, it still remains a matter of promise and expectation, both for Israel in its terrestrial aspects and for us in its celestial aspects.

We will be greatly aided in joyful patience by holding fast to these foundational lessons concerning God, His word and His ways, given in the first chapter of Genesis. "God said . . . and it came to be so." Like Abraham, let us not be infirm in faith despite all that we observe to the contrary (Rom.4:19).

EXPECTATION IS NOT MORTIFYING

It is because of God's declarations of good news to us that we are able to endure afflictions with joyful anticipation. In His evangel to us God has spoken concerning gratuitous justification "through the deliverance which is

in Christ Jesus" (Rom.3:24). Furthermore He has said in His Word, "Being, then justified by faith, we may be having peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ," and added, that through our Lord Jesus Christ "we have the access also, by faith, into this grace in which we stand," and even beyond this, "we may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God" (Rom.5:1,2). God's grace at the cross and in our expectation bears the gracious fruit of endurance in our lives.

All around us there is much to discourage and distract us. This good news concerning righteousness and deliverance that God has spoken has not come to be so in fulness of experience and realization. Infirmity and failure and affliction make that evident. But "we may be glorying also in afflictions, having perceived that affliction is producing endurance, yet endurance testedness, yet testedness expectation. Now expectation is not mortifying, seeing that the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the holy spirit which is being given to us" (Rom.5:3-5).

We have heard God's declarations of grace, and we believe that all He has declared concerning us He is able to bring to pass; we fully anticipate that what He has said will come to be so. Like Abraham we are invigorated by faith, "giving glory to God, being fully assured also, that what He has promised, He is able to do also" (Rom.4: 20,21). "For the saving grace of God made its advent to all humanity, training us that, disowning irreverence and worldly desires, we should be living sanely and justly and devoutly in the current eon, anticipating that happy expectation, even the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Who 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. Speak of these things and entreat and expose with every injunction" (Titus 2:11-15). D.H.H.

SAUL'S SCHEMES AND GOD'S SPIRIT

SAUL continued to try and grasp David. He was like humanity groping in the darkness (Acts 17:26, 27), and like Israel struggling with Christ's "hard sayings" (John 6:60). He simply could not catch him. Realization of the truth comes by revelation from the Spirit of God, not from the efforts of the flesh. Apart from God's enablement we cannot discern between an idol in a cloak and the truth.

1 SAMUEL 19:11-24

11 7**It** b**occurred**0 **in that night** +**that Saul** l**sent messengers to David's house to observe him and to** c**put him** to **death in** the **morning.** +**But Michal his wife** l**told** › **David,** › **saying**¯**, If you are not** m**providing** `for **your soul** an **escape**l **tonight,** to**morrow you** will **be** c**put** to **death**l. 12 + **Michal** c**had** `**David** l**descend through the window** +**that he might go and** run l**away and** l**escape.** 13 + **Michal** l**took** `**the teraphim and** l**placed** them ›**on the couch.** + **She** p**laid** `**goats'** hair **gauze** where **his** 7**head**~ should be, **and** l**covered** it i**with** his **cloak.** 14 So +**when Saul** l**sent messengers to take** `**David** in, + **she** l**said, He** is **ailing.** 15 +**Yet Saul** l**sent** `**the messengers** back **to see** `**David,** › **saying**¯**,** c**Bring** `**him up to me** i**on** the **couch to** c**put him** to **death.** 16 +**When the messengers** had l**come** in, + **behold,** there were **the teraphim** ›**on the couch, and** ·**goats**l hair **gauze** where **his** 7**head**~ should be. 17 +**So Saul** l**said to Michal, Why** did **you deceive me thus and** l**send** `**my enemy**l away so +**that he might escape?** + **Michal** lsa**replied to Saul, He**´ **said to me,** m**Let me go! Why should I** c**put you** to **death?**

18 +**As** for **David, he** ran **away and** l**escaped.** + **He** l**came to**

Samuel at[d] **Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went** away **and** [sit]**stayed in** the **homestead.** 19 **Now Saul was told, saying, Behold, David** is **in** the **homestead at Ramah;** 20 **so Saul sent messengers to take David** in. **When they**[cs] **saw the assembly of prophets prophesying and Samuel standing stationed over them, then** the **spirit of Elohim**[b] **came on Saul's messengers, and**[mr] **together they prophesied** in ecstasy. 21 **When they told** it **to Saul, he sent other messengers; yet they**[mr] **too prophesied** in ecstasy. **So Saul sent messengers again,** the **third** group; **yet they**[mr] **too prophesied** in ecstasy.

22 **Now** the **anger of Saul** grew **hot**[0]**, and he himself**[mr] **also went** to[d] **Ramah. When he came as far as** the **cistern of the threshing site which** is **on** the **ridge, he asked, saying, What about Samuel and David?** **They**[c sa] **replied, Behold,** they are **in** the **homestead at Ramah.** 23 **As he went from there to** the **homestead at Ramah,** the **spirit of Elohim**[b] **came on him,** on **him**[mr] **too, while he went** on **walking and prophesying** in ecstasy **until he came to** the **homestead at Ramah.** 24 **Then he**[mr] **too stripped** off **his clothes, and he**[mr] **too prophesied** in ecstasy **before Samuel; he** lay **fallen naked all that day and all night. Therefore they say,** Is **Saul**[mr] **also among** the **prophets?**◊

A SIGN GIVEN TO SAUL

David escaped to Samuel at Ramah, and Saul sent messengers three times to apprehend him. The prophesying of Saul's messengers, and also of himself, should have called to Saul's mind his own appointment to the position of king. He had received three signs, one of which was prophesying in ecstasy (1 Sam.10:1-7). The same God Whose Spirit came upon Saul to verify his appointment to the throne now restrained Saul. This served as a divine sign that Saul was not to touch David. But Saul, like the flesh and like Israel, failed to heed the signs.

The failure of the messengers to apprehend David is similar to the messengers sent to Christ to question Him or entrap Him with His words. Their mouths were stopped, and they bore witness, "Never speaks a man thus!" (John 7:46; Luke 20:40).

This incident also calls to mind the sending of messengers to Elijah three times to apprehend him. (2 Kings 1:1-18). The first two groups sent to Elijah were consumed by fire. In 1 Samuel 19:20,21 the messengers sent to David were not injured. In both cases the problem was a failure to recognize and revere God's will and words. The differences in the examples show that they represent different aspects and times. David represents Christ coming in grace. Elijah's time represent the times of tribulation and the "rod of iron" rule.

There is great comfort for us in seeing that God's arm is never short to deliver His chosen. Whether the opposers simply fall backward to the ground (John 18:6), or whether they are plagued (Ex.7-12; 1 Sam.5-6; Rev.8-9), they can do no more or less than God determines. And God's hand should be seen in it all. Dagon, Goliath and Saul all fall prostrate before God (1 Sam.5:3-4; 17:49; 19:23-24). Whether the Presence is testified by the ark of the covenant, by God's anointed, or by His prophet, the same God is powerful in all situations.

J. Philip Scranton

HEINZ AND BRIGITTE HOFFMANN

We sorrow to report the deaths of our beloved brother and sister **Heinz and Brigitte Hoffmann** of *Konkordanter Verlag* (Concordant Publishing Concern of Germany). Heinz died on June 20, after an extended illness; his wife Brigitte, suddenly on August 12.

On two occasions, Heinz and Brigitte made extended visits here, to the Concern in California, conferring with Brothers Herman Rocke and Dean Hough in their common translation work, that of the *Concordant Version of the Old Testament.*

HUMAN WILL AND THE MINISTRY OF LAW

For, who knew the mind of the Lord? or, who became His adviser? or, who gives to Him first, and it will be repaid him? seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! Amen! I am entreating you, ***then,*** *brethren, by the pities of God...* (Rom.11:34-12:1a).

Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us, to Him be the glory in the ecclesia... I am entreating you, ***then,*** *I, the prisoner in the Lord, to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called* (Eph.3:20-4:1).

Question:

I find your logical argument against free will compelling: Either human behavior occurs deterministically or indeterministically (or some combination of the two). If determinism is true, then whatever occurs is the effect of those causal factors which produce it; hence free will is false. But if determinism is false, then whatever occurs is either a thing of chance itself or else the outcome of a random event; hence free will is also false.

That settles it, then; free will is false. It is wonderful to see, however, that "determinism"—that is, *divine* determinism or causality—is scripturally *revealed* to be both true and universal. You made that point clearly as well by showing that the scope of the "all" that is

out of, through, and for God (Rom.11:36), is necessarily all that exists and all that occurs. This is evident, since the entire point of Paul's rhetorical questions of Romans 11:34, 35 together with the apostle's causative expression, *"seeing that"* ["out of Him, through Him, and for Him is all"], requires this sense.

Your point is also well taken where you emphasize that we must not reject this truth simply because it is so unpopular, and since, at first, even to ourselves, it seems wrong. We should hardly expect such an important truth to be "popular" in the world in which we live; likewise, the unenlightened conscience is by no means a reliable guide. I have already conquered most of my uncomfortable feelings concerning the teaching of God's universal deity simply by *believing* the teaching of God's universal deity!

This brings me, however, to my question, which is this: Since men do *not* possess free will, why, then, do the Scriptures nevertheless contain such an abundance of commandments and entreaties, whether through Moses, for the nation of Israel, or through the apostle Paul, for believers of this present administration?

My pastor claims that the very fact that the Bible is replete with laws and exhortations, and, with punishments for disobedience, proves that free will is true. His argument is that it would be foolish and unjust to command men to do the impossible. Besides this, if free will were not true, then freewill-based moral responsibility would be an impossibility. Since God is not foolish and unjust, and since any suggestion that freewill-type moral responsibility is unwarranted is unthinkable, therefore, free will is true.

While I realize that, somehow, my pastor's arguments must be mistaken, it is not fully clear to me how this is so. I would appreciate your help.

Answer:

It is important for believers to understand the place of

entreaties and exhortations in relation to their walk and service. Clearly, all who are naming the name of the Lord are to "withdraw from injustice" (2 Tim.2:19). This is even as Paul is saying, "As children of light be walking (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), testing what is well pleasing to the Lord. And be not joint participants in the unfruitful acts of darkness, yet rather be exposing them also, for it is a shame even to speak of the hidden things occurring, done by them" (Eph.5:9-12).

Even though we are justified apart from law (Rom.3: 21,24), and, for us, grace reigns for life eonian (Rom.5:21), this in no way diminishes the importance of an obedient walk, which remains essential to faithful service.

The apostle Paul's writings are filled with "the imperatives of faithfulness," with the many instructions and warnings which are vital to our walk in the Lord.

There can be no doubt of the importance of our obedience; and, therefore, of the importance of the many corresponding entreaties and exhortations given to us with a view toward our heeding of their testimony. Insofar as our duty is concerned, it is clear that God's "directions" to us rehearse the various particulars of which our duty consists. As Paul declares, "What I am writing to you is a precept of the Lord. Now if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant!" (1 Cor.14:37b,38).

In this respect, there is little confusion as to the purpose of entreaties of virtue and exhortations of righteousness. Nevertheless, much confusion remains in connection with any such words of instruction. The confusion and error related to issues of our obedience consists primarily in our failure to recognize the Source of our obedience and to rely on God alone with a view toward the fulfillment of that very obedience. Our failure is that of failing to recognize our need of *the saving grace of God* in order for our obedience actually to occur.

Reasoning from the fact that the sons of Israel of old were entreated to obey all the law of Moses lest they become subject to all of the law of Moses' curses, one ancient school of thought, known as Pelagianism, concluded that, therefore, man, in himself, at all times, is able to obey the entirety of God's law, *doing so apart from* (any further) *divine grace.* The teaching of Pelagianism has been aptly summed up thus: "Since no grace is needed, none is given."

Since your pastor claims that duty proves ability (otherwise God is foolish and unjust), he should become a Pelagian. According to the Pelagians, men have no further need of divine grace—no need of the holy spirit of God and its powerful workings—in order for them to perform plenary obedience. Insofar as obedience is concerned, regeneration is unnecessary. Like the Israelites of the wilderness, the Pelagians' slogan is, "All that Yahweh speaks we shall do" (*cf* Ex.19:8). If it is their duty to live lives of purity and righteousness, then they will live such lives in their own strength, albeit while thanking God for their native powers.

As might be expected, the propagation of thoroughgoing Pelagianism did not have great success, and was soon replaced with semi-Pelagianism. This is because all but the blindest of sinners recognize at least something of their own insufficiency. Therefore Pelagianism's specious argument that sinners already have all the grace that they need, seemed simply unbelievable. Hence semi-Pelagianism soon gained the day, and even today remains by far the most popular means of deception in opposition to the truth of the evangel and the realization of God.

Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism can be both summed up and compared by the following illustrations: The Pelagian's prayer to God is, "I thank you for already having given me all that I need in order to obey You, in the gracious gift of my native powers, which gift, when joined

with my own exercise of free will, will ensure my success in all my moral endeavors." By way of contrast (however slight), the semi-Pelagian's prayer to God is, "I thank you for already having given me much that I need in order to obey You, in the gracious gift of my native powers, and, for offering to give me the rest that I need, in the gracious gift of Your holy spirit, which gifts, when joined with my own exercise of free will, will ensure my success in all my moral endeavors."

More specifically, Pelagianism says to God, "Thanks for Your help. Since You have already given me all that I need except for ensuring the proper use of my will, on which all depends, I will now get about the business of doing what I must in order to *save myself* from being disqualified for reward and/or for exemption from eternal punishment. If I succeed in my endeavor, I will then call *You* my Saviour." Semi-Pelagianism says to God, "Thanks for Your help. Since You have already given me much that I need and offer to give me the rest that I need except for ensuring the proper use of my will, on which all depends, I will now get about the business of doing what I must in order to *save myself* from being disqualified for reward and/or[1] for exemption from eternal punishment. If I succeed in my endeavor, I will then call *You* my Saviour."

Semi-Pelagianism has the tremendous advantage over Pelagianism not only of being more credible, but of affording a greater place to piety—while, just as surely even if

1. The careful reader will note that even the believer in the divine graces of the final salvation of all and/or of the saint's election in Christ who nonetheless holds to free will with regard to moral behavior, is likewise of the semi-Pelagian position in this respect. The self-righteousness of the Universalist or Calvinist who holds to free will in practical affairs is no better in this vital aspect than that of the self-righteousness of the Arminian who does the same, while maintaining this same pride-filled doctrine as well even in relation to his own salvation.

more furtively, in the end, effectually making men their own saviours, according to their own "free wills." Since semi-Pelagianism still leaves ample room for self-pride and autosoterism (i.e., "self-salvation") while at the same time granting a needful place to a measure of further grace, the more creative and sincere of its proponents are able to convincingly represent it as being the very truth of God.

Since your pastor is a "conservative, non-Calvinistic evangelical," even if he should be unfamiliar with the term "semi-Pelagianism," he nonetheless holds the above-described view, known historically as semi-Pelagianism, or in modern times, as evangelical Arminianism. While semi-Pelagianism claims that the grace termed "the *assistance* of the holy spirit," is *indispensable* both to regeneration and faithful service, it also claims that this grace is *insufficient* for the realization of these same objectives. While semi-Pelagianists may place great stress upon the sinner's need of "grace," it is not the all-sufficient and saving grace of God which they have in mind, but only the "possibility-making" grace of their own imaginations.

By whatever name, this is the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, and, of nearly all present-day Protestant bodies as well. It is a fact that semi-Pelagianism (not to mention Pelagianism) was repudiated and strenuously opposed by all of the original teachers of the Reformation. Indeed, it was the primary goal of the original reformers to overthrow this very teaching, which, as the mainstay of the Papacy, was the reformers' principal objection to Catholicism.[2]

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2. As Martin Luther, in opposing the doctrine of free will, declared in replying to his opponent Erasmus, "You alone . . . have attacked the real thing, that is, the essential issue. You have not worried me with those extraneous issues about the Papacy, purgatory, indulgences and such like—trifles rather than issues—in respect of which almost all to date have sought my blood . . . . You, and you alone, have seen the

Now, in reply to your pastor's arguments, let me respond to his second argument first, which is that, since, to him (and to nearly all others as well), it is "unthinkable" that freewill moral responsibility should be a non-reality it is therefore to be considered a vital constituent of all true reality, let me say the following: Such a claim is idolatrous. You, I, *and your pastor as well,* are but poor, stupid sinners. Nothing could be more imprudent than for any of us to approach this question of free will with the conviction that since free will is necessary as the very basis of moral responsibility as ordinarily understood, therefore free will must be deemed an unquestionable truth.

What, did the Word of God come out from us? And, what, are popular ethics in a world of darkness to be deemed that to which God Himself must submit if He would retain His righteousness? By no means. Whatever God actually does is what is right; and, whatever God actually reveals is what is true.

Likewise, whatever follows from true premises is that which constitutes a valid conclusion. A valid conclusion is necessarily a true assertion, not merely a logical conclusion; therefore, it constitutes conclusive evidence of a proposition. Indeed, apart from careful, correct engagement in such considerations of critical thinking, it is impossible to determine the true sense in which the Scripture is to be understood. To say that we care nothing about such "intellectual" disciplines, and since, purportedly, being spiritual, have no need of them, is tantamount to saying that we care nothing about and have no need of the only basis upon which any question may actually be decided. Further, we may hardly, at any time, much less *a priori,*

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hinge on which all turns, and aimed for the vital spot. For that I heartily thank you . . . ." (Martin Luther, THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL, *Historical and Theological Introduction,* p.42 (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1957).

reject whatever fails to please us or meet the approval of our conscience, or, whatever is unpopular in the world, including in the world of Christianity.

Now, in reply to your pastor's first argument, let me say the following: You will recall that, succinctly stated, his claim is that since it would be both foolish and unjust to command men to do what is impossible, and since God is neither foolish nor unjust yet He instructs men to obey Him and imposes penalties upon their disobedience, therefore, free will is true.

Your pastor's first error here, of course, is the egregious one of presuming that whatever may seem foolish and unjust to him, is necessarily foolish and unjust. Amazing as it may seem to some, it might just be that God would have wise and righteous reasons for doing what we fondly imagine to be foolish and unjust.

Secondly, it hardly follows that if God's purpose in instructing men to obey Him is not what we presumed it to be—namely, that of affording the human a venue within which he might exercise free will—therefore, God could have no other purpose in instructing men to obey Him.

Thirdly, your pastor misrepresents the actual scriptural presentation. In the Scriptures, God does not command men to do the impossible, that is, to *do* that which they cannot *do*. Instead, He commands them to do that which it is impossible for them to do *ultimately of themselves*. It is altogether righteous and wise to command a blind, self-reliant sinner to do that which he can by no means do of himself—even as, also, to impose temporary disciplinary penalties upon him for his disobedience—that he might learn of his true condition and desperate situation and turn to God and be saved.

Similarly, it is altogether righteous and wise for God to instruct His saints as well to do that which they can no more do of themselves than the most wretched of sinners

can do of themselves, that they might turn to God more fully and be saved from the sin of ignorance of their own intrinsic, fleshly condition, even as from their dreadful self-glorying in fancying themselves as the key to victory.

KNOWLEDGE OF OUR IMPOTENCE

In their disputation over free will, Erasmus, in his *Diatribe* against Luther, had argued that such words as found, for example, in Deuteronomy 30:19 ("Life and death I have put before you, the blessing and the malediction. Now *choose life* that you may live . . ."), constitute evidence of free will. As he claimed, "What could be more clearly stated? It leaves man freedom of choice."

Luther's reply to all such arguments was as follows: "What could be more clear than that at this point you are blind? [Is your argument here] in [the text's] use of the word 'choose'? Does it, then, come to pass that as soon as Moses says 'choose,' they do choose? In that case, there is . . . no need of the Spirit.

"Here is the matter in a nutshell: . . . By statements of this sort, man is not told what he can do [of himself], but what he ought to do [in his duty to God]. It is true that [in our voluntary behavior] we stand where two roads meet, and only one of them is open—indeed, neither is open [in a 'free will' sense]; and the law shows us how impossible is the one, that leading to good, *unless God bestows His spirit,*[3] and how broad and easy is the other if God [leaving us to ourselves] lets us go that way.

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3. It is a great advance when we are able to recognize that all of the virtue and goodness that is, indeed, present in unbelievers, is not the outworkings of their "free wills," but is the result of common grace, of the operative power of the *spirit* of God, according to the counsel of *His* will (*cf* Eph.1:11). A man can not get anything if it should not be given him out of heaven (John 3:27), out of God Himself, Who makes the world and all that is in it, Who is giving to all, life and breath and all (Acts 17:24,25).

"'By the law is knowledge of sin,' says Paul (Rom.3:20). He does not say: *abolition,* or *avoidance* of sin. The entire design and power of the law is just to give knowledge, and that of nothing but of sin; not to display or confer any power. This knowledge is not power, nor does it bring power; but it teaches and displays that there is here no power, and great weakness. What can 'knowledge of sin' be but knowledge of our weakness and badness?

". . . What if I prove that the nature of words and use of language, even among men, is not always such as to make it an act of mockery to say to the impotent, 'If thou art willing,' 'If thou shalt do,' 'If thou shalt hear'? How often do parents thus play with their children, bidding them come to them, or do this or that, only that it may appear how impotent they are, and that they may be compelled to call for the parent's hand? How often does a faithful physician tell an obstinate patient to do or stop doing things that are impossible or injurious to him, so as to bring him by experience of himself to a knowledge of his disease or weakness, to which he cannot lead him by any other course?

"And what is more common and widespread than to use insulting and provoking language when we would show our friends what they can and cannot do?

"I merely mention these things to show Reason how stupid she is to tack her inferences on to the Scriptures, and how blind she is not to see that they do not always hold good even in respect of the words and the dealings of men . . . .

"If, now, God, as a Father, deals with us as with His sons, with a view to showing us the impotence of which we are ignorant; or as a faithful physician, with a view to making known to us our disease; or if, to taunt His enemies, who proudly resist His [preceptive] counsel and the laws He has set forth (by which He achieves this end most effectively), He should say: 'Do,' 'Hear,' 'Keep,' or: 'If thou shalt hear,' 'If thou art willing,' 'If thou shalt do'; can it be fairly

concluded from this that therefore we can do these things freely, or else God is mocking us?

"Why should not this conclusion follow rather: therefore, God is trying us that by His law He may bring us to a knowledge of our impotence, if we are His friends; or else, He is really and deservedly taunting and mocking us, if we are His proud enemies? For this, as Paul teaches, is the intent of divine legislation (*cf* Rom.3:20; 5:20; Gal.3:19,24).

"The *Diatribe* dreams that man is whole and sound (as to human view, in his own sphere, he is); hence it argues from the phrases: 'If thou art willing,' 'If thou shalt do,' 'If thou shalt hear,' that man is being mocked, unless his will is free. But Scripture describes man as corrupted and led captive, and, furthermore, as proudly disdaining to notice, and failing to recognise, his own corruption and captivity; therefore, it uses these phrases to goad and rouse him, that he may know by sure experience how unable he is to do any of these things."[4]

THE PURPOSE OF ENTREATIES

In our concerns over issues of free will, beyond all these important logical considerations which demonstrate the untenableness of the freewiller's position, it is especially wonderful simply to learn that the apostle Paul, as God's spokesman, in at least two places, explicitly *tells* us why God entreats us to heed His word. *Since all* is out of, through, and for Him, *therefore,* our God and Father entreats us to heed His counsel: "*Seeing that* out of Him and through Him and for Him is all . . . . I am entreating you, *then* . . . to present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, [which is] your *logical* divine service" (Rom.11:36-12:1).

Since it is evident, then, that we are the men of God's

4. Martin Luther, *op.cit.*, pp.151-153; 157,158.

counsel (*cp* Isa.46:11), the *agents* of that of which He Himself is the first cause, a most important consideration follows from this fact. That consideration is that we should therefore be apprised of and instructed in the particulars of His will, "good and well pleasing and perfect" (Rom. 12:2b), even as come under the influence thereof accordingly *with a view to the realization of His intention in our lives.* "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.2:10).

Similarly, in Ephesians 3:20-4:1, Paul declares, "Now to Him Who is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, according to the power that is operating in us—to Him be the glory in the ecclesia— . . . I am entreating you, *then* . . . to walk worthily of the calling with which you were called."

Since *God,* according to the *power* that is *operating* in us, is able to do superexcessively above all that we are requesting or apprehending, and since the glory in the ecclesia is ultimately to be ascribed not to the members of the ecclesia themselves but to their God, Paul declares, "I am entreating you, *then.*" Here, too, in Ephesians, even as previously, in Romans (*cp* Rom.9:20-23; 11:33-12:2), since we are the agents of the divine counsels, the clay being formed in the Potter's hands in order to become His eventual, finished achievement, it is obviously the part of wisdom that we should be entreated in His faithful ways. This is so as surely as it is His goodness to us to nourish us in the word of His vast love, together with the word of His all-sufficient grace by which He has *chosen* to save us (*cf* Eph.2:5,7; Rom.9:11).

May these considerations serve to foster us in the word of God's grace, that we may be learning to be relying on our God and Saviour (1 Tim.2:3; 4:10), while having no confidence in flesh (Phil.3:3). J.R.C.

"EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS"

WE FIND in the first chapter of Colossians a plain statement of God's grand consummation: "And [Christ] 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), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens" (Col.1:18-20).

That the ecclesia is privileged to be presented as holy and flawless and unimpeachable in God's sight (Col.1:23), and to serve in connection with this glorious achievement of peace, beneath so great a Head, is rich sustenance for the spirit which defies all human description. This unique revelation, which should constantly impart life and peace (Rom.8:5-8), is treasured by us all.

Yet what an awesome cost! However diverse might be the individual circumstance or personality—whatever nationality, gender, or vocation—this one deep and abiding truth is profoundly etched upon our hearts and our spirits: *The blood of His cross.*

Heed the overwhelming wonder of so great an obedience. He Who emptied Himself in form and likeness and fashion humbled Himself in obedience unto death, "even the death of the cross" (Phil.2:6-8). How did God receive this presentation of evident love and humility? We know that as Jesus stepped up from the Jordan river, His Father declared, "This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight" (Matt.3:17), but surely through the words of the

great apostle we may subsequently read the answer to that heartbreaking, orphan cry, "My God! My God! Why didst Thou forsake Me?" (Matt.27:46), when he wrote: "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).

HIS SACRIFICE DEMEANED

This glorious message of God's vast love is entrusted to the ecclesia and is published in millions upon millions of copies of the Scriptures. All around this world, which is beset with conflict, oppression, frustration and misery, this evangel is available. Here is the answer to all the problems which afflict humanity.

Why is this not welcomed with eager hearts? It is "because, knowing God, not as God do they glorify or thank Him, but vain were they made in their reasonings, and darkened is their unintelligent heart. Alleging themselves to be wise, they are made stupid, and they change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of an image of a corruptible human being and flying creatures and quadrupeds and reptiles." Accordingly, "they alter the truth of God into the lie . . . and offer divine service to the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for the eons! Amen!" (Rom.1:21-25).

Brother A. E. Knoch has written on this passage, "There is no surer road to degradation than to degrade the object of our worship."[1] But what should be declared concerning those who make no distinction between the declarations of Scriptures *prior* and those *subsequent* to the death and

1. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.230.

resurrection of God's beloved Son? By such means His sacrifice is demeaned, made of little consequence. For such the precious shed blood of Christ's cross changes nothing! This surely must rank as the most shameful offense.

GRACE WILL BE INCREASING

God's purpose, through the great sacrifice at Golgotha, is largely unknown today. Members of the ecclesia are denounced, even persecuted, when they request that God's righteousness, wisdom, power and love in the cross of Christ be honored. There is great opposition to the revelations of gratuity and grace in God's giving of His Son for sinners.

Yet all knowledge is relative. Equally, grace will be increasing where necessary, and, in God's own time, each will receive the knowledge of the truth and sing for joy. It is consoling to reflect that when the grievous error of restricting the exaltation of Christ is exposed to them, then the perpetrators will in their despair be lifted up through the grace of God's love. In his summation Paul declares, "Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness of God is manifest (being attested by the law and the prophets), yet a righteousness of God through Jesus Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believing, for there is no distinction, for all sinned and are wanting of the glory of God" (Rom.3:21-23).

AN UNASHAMED WORKER

In the meantime, let us be apprised of the real dangers of deception. "Satan himself is being transfigured into a messenger of light" (2 Cor.11:14). Can there be a more despicable deception than this, that many who are, as far as we are aware, sincere believers, should hold lightly the most significant and valuable Gift in the universe?

Inevitably, we will have occasion to fellowship and worship with others. From a variety of many well-meaning preachers we may listen to sermons based on the Scrip-

tures. But frequently, it is soon apparent from their words that there is not merely a lack of understanding, but some, perhaps like the ones to whom the apostle Peter referred, in connection with an apprehension of the Scripture, are twisting what Paul wrote, "as the rest of the scriptures also, to their own destruction" (2 Pet.3:14-16).

Revelation imparted foreknowledge to the apostle when he urged young Timothy, "Endeavor to present yourself to God qualified, an unashamed worker, correctly cutting the word of truth" (2 Tim.2:15). And further, he wrote, "yet from profane prattlings stand aloof, for they will be progressing to more irreverence, and their word will spread as gangrene" (2:16,17).

In speaking of the qualifications of a teacher, Brother Knoch reminded us that, "Most of the believers today need adjusting quite as much as those to whom Ephesians was addressed. Their doctrine and experience is limited to the teaching of our Lord while on earth, or his apostles in the book of Acts . . . . How few go to Paul's final presentations and modify even his previous ministries to accord with these transcendent truths! This is the task of the true teacher today. He must, first of all, be an adjuster.

"He must also be a dispenser. Much of the teaching we hear fails to emphasize the grace of God and the gracious character of His gifts. He is not running a bargain counter or a commercial enterprise, but a free dispensary. Very few believers even know what He has for them. It is the duty of the teacher to put them into possession of their riches in Christ Jesus."[2]

"Furthermore, brethren, rejoice, adjust, be entreated, be mutually disposed, be at peace, and the God of peace will be with you" (2 Cor.13:11).

Donald Fielding

2.*Unsearchable Riches,* vol.64, p.247,248.

THE SOUL'S YEARNING AND GOD'S HUMBLING

BEFORE proceeding with our studies in Ecclesiastes it may be well to point out a peculiar morphological feature of this author. The five books, though they are independent, are yet "dove-tailed" together by the way in which the final thought of each leads directly to the next. The effect is that each successive composition is of the nature of a digression from the composition standing before it, but a digression which is expanded into an independent piece of writing.

The Third Book (5:10-6:12) resumes and carries forward to completion the train of thought developed in Book I. There the Assembler was engaged in surveying the various departments of human activity; here he analyzes the spring of all activity under the sun—the soul's desire, or yearning (6:2). The mode of treatment is both simple and methodic. The thoughts are drawn in orderly sequence: maxims (5:10-12); illustrations (5:13-6:6); reflections (6:7-12). The Book opens with a series of maxims setting forth the vanity of desire in its several phases. These are followed by a number of typical instances supporting the ideas expressed in the maxims. Then follow practical reflections suggested by what has been gleaned in the course of investigation.

Like the preceding, this Book is also followed by a string of "notes" responding to the questions of 6:12. These embody in pithy sayings the results which wise thinking has yielded (7:1-12).

In the First Book, where the author successively subjected to review the various phases of human activity, with the only result that each was found wanting, the sentiment was voiced that all labor, though bringing a sense of pleasure, fails to give genuine satisfaction. Now this line of thought is carried one degree further: What has been found to be true of outward activity is found to be equally true of the inward principle which prompted it. Ecclesiastes asserts that the soul is not satisfied with the attainment of the objects yearned for. This is the starting-point of the present book:

10 One who **loves**[l] **silver is nev**er [l]**satisfied** with his **silver,**
And one [a]**who loves**[l] [i] **superabundance**
never has enough **income;**
This [mr]**too** is **vanity.**

Having thus stated the main thesis of the present discussion, the Assembler proceeds to establish it. He points out that attainment without satisfaction is a familiar experience. He then observes the added fact, attested by concrete examples in actual life, that attainment is frequently attended by hurt and followed by failure, while on the other hand genuine happiness is found to exist where the most coveted objects of human envy are absent—

11 [i]**When** [c]**goods increase**[-]
those who **devour**[l] **them multiply;**
And what profit are they **to their possessor save**
for the **sight of his eyes?**
12 The **sleep of the servant**[l] is **sweet,**
[if]**Whether he** [l]**eats little** [+]**or** [if]**much**[-]**;**
[+]**Yet the plenty** which the **rich** man [›]**has,**
it does **not permit**[l] [›] **him to sleep.**

These considerations have paved the way for introducing the two contrasts which occupy the place of prominence in this book: On the one hand is a picture of God-given pros-

perity and God-given satisfaction in it, and on the other hand is the opposite picture of the same God-given prosperity and the satisfaction withheld. These companion pictures emphasize the idea, which is unweariedly reiterated, that happiness is not within the power of man, but is the direct and special gift of God to the individual:

13 There **is** a **travailing evil I have seen under the sun:**
Riches are **kept**[l] [›]**by their possessor to his peril;**
14 [+]**Then** [·]**these** [·]**riches perish**
[i]**through** some **experience of evil;**
[+]**Then he begets** a **son,** [+]**when** there
is not anything left **in his hand.**
15 **Just as he** came **forth from his mother's belly,**
Naked shall he return, to go as [w] **he came;**
[+] **He shall not take up anything** [i]**from his toil**
which he may [go]**carry in his hand.**
16 [+] **This** [mr]**too** is a **travailing evil;**
Exactly as [w] **he came, so shall he go,**
And what advantage is it **to him**
[w]**since he** [l]**toiled for wind?**
17 **Moreover, all his days** are **in darkness** [7]**and mourning~,**
[+]**With much**[–] [7]**vexation and illness~**[c] **and wrath.**
18 **Behold,** that **which I**[′] **have seen**
that is **good,** [w]**that** is **fitting,** is:
To eat and to drink and to see good in all [his]**one's**
toil [w]**that he is toiling under the sun,**
During the **number of days** in **his life**
[w]**that the** One, **Elohim, has given to him,**
For that is **his portion.**
19 **Moreover,** concerning **any** [h]**man to whom the** One,
Elohim, gives riches and substance,
And [c]**gives him power to eat** [f]**of it and to obtain**
[`]**his portion and to rejoice in his toil,**
This good, **it** is a **gift of Elohim.**

20 **For he shall not be much- mindful**
of `the **days of his life,**
For the One, **Elohim,** is [c]**keeping** [7]**him**[c] **humble**
in the **rejoicing of his heart.**

In 5:19 Ecclesiastes speaks of natural happiness as being God's gift to the individual. The thought is amplified in verse 20 by the assertion that natural happiness, like all things belonging to the eonian system, is alloyed with humbling (*cp* 1:13; 3:10).

That which is wrought under the sun, as also the times and seasons, has been designed by God for man's discipline and training. Parents spoil their children by giving free vent to their wishes; rulers corrupt manhood by lavish prodigality of favors to their supporters. But God's methods are adapted to man's present constitution, which is a strange admixture of good and evil. All His ways have in view the debasing effect of unstinted gratification. His dispensation of the good that gladdens the heart is tempered by the humbling which chastens the spirit. In all His methods is discernible a subtle combination, an exquisite balance of goodness and severity whereby spiritual aspirations are developed and heightened and baser instincts are curbed and subdued.

The vanity or transitoriness of the soul's yearning appears most fully in the light of death. "This too is a travailing evil; exactly as he came, so shall he go, and what advantage is it to him since he toiled for wind?" (Ecc.5:16). In concluding this composition Ecclesiastes dwells on this thought.

6 There **is** an **evil under the sun** [w]**that I have seen,**
And it lies [mn]**great** upon `**humanity:**
2 When a **man to whom the** One, **Elohim,**
[l]**gives riches and substance and glory,**
And he [is]**has no lack to his soul**
[m]**of all** [w]**that it** [l]**yearns** for,

+**Yet the** One, **Elohim,** does **not** [c]**give**
him [l]**power to eat** [f]**of it**
[t]**Because** a **foreign man** [l]**eats it,**
This is a **vanity, and it** is a **travailing evil.**
3 **If** a **man** [l]**begets** a **hundred** children
and [l]**lives** for **many years,**
+**So** [w]**that** the **days of his years** [l]**become** a **multitude,**
+**Yet his soul is not** [l]**satisfied** [f]**with** ·**good,**
And [mr]**also** there [b]**is no**[t] **tomb for him,**
I say, ·A **stillborn** child is **better** off [m]**than he.**
4 **For it comes in vanity,**
And in darkness it [l]**goes** away,
And in darkness its name is [l]**covered** over.
5 **Moreover, it neither saw** the **sun nor knew** anything;
Thus **this** ›**had** more **rest** [f]**than that** man,
6 +**Even supposing he lived** [du]**twice** a **thousand years**
and saw no[t] **good;**
Are **not** ·**all going to** the **same** [ri]**place?**

Only two points need to be noted here. He has been describing the spectacle of accumulated wealth with happiness withheld by God, and pronounced it the worst of all fates—an abortion is better than he. He passes on to practical reflections:

7 **All of** ·a [h]**man's toil** is **for his mouth,**
+**Yet even** then **the soul is nev**er [l]**filled.**
8 **For what advantage** ›**has** a **wise** man
[f]**over the stupid** one,
And **what for** the **humble** man who **knows**[l]
how **to walk** in **front of the living?**

The recognition of ability to enjoy the details of passing life as a God-given thing and the spectacle of the man to whom Elohim does not give the power to eat of his wealth (6:2) naturally lead on to the thought that God acts on fixed principles which the individual is powerless to alter.

9 **Better** the **sight of** the **eyes**
*f*than the *go*roving⁻ **of** the **soul.**
This *mr*too is **vanity and** a **grazing** on **wind.**
10 **What** *w* **has come** to **be has already**
been called by **its name,**
And *w*that *s*which *h*man is has been foreknown|;
+ **No***t* one |can › **adjudicate**⁻ *wi*against Him
Who is **mightier** *f*than **he.**

And since man is incapable of resisting his Maker, what is the use of following "words" ("theories" or "doctrines") which pretend to further man's welfare but in reality only multiply vanities?

11 *t*When there **are many**⁻ **words** the **vanity increases|;**
What advantage is that **to** *h*man?
12 **For** *a*who knows| **what** is **good for** a *h*man **in life**
During the **number of days** in **his transitory life,**
Seeing +**that He** |*d*makes them like a **shadow?**
*w*For *a*who can |tell › a *h*man **what shall** *b*come
after him under the sun?

Who can tell what is good for a human in this life, or who can tell what shall come afterwards? These questions are dealt with in the notes which fill the interval between this Book and the next.

NOTES

7 A **good name** is better *f*than the **best attar,**
And the day of one's **death** *f*than the **day of his**
birth⁻**.**
2 It is **better to go to** a **house of mourning**
*f*than **to go to** a **house of feasting**
In *w*that **it** is the **terminus of every** |human;
+**Thus let the living** *g*lay this ›on **his heart.**
3 **Better** is **vexation** *f*than **mirth,**
For *i*with a **troubled countenance**

the **heart may** be made **better.**
4 The **heart of** the **wise** is **in** the **house of mourning,**
And the **heart of** the **stupid in** the **house of rejoicing.**
5 **Better to hear** the **rebuke of** a **wise** man
*f***Than** for **one** to **hear**[l] the **song of** the **stupid.**
6 **For as** the **sound of the briars under the pot,**
So is the **mirth of the stupid** man;
+ **This** *mr***too** is **vanity.**
7 *t* **Extortion makes** a **wise** man [l]**raving,**
And a *g***bribe** [l]**destroys** the **heart.**
8 The *af***end of** a **matter** is **better** *f***than its beginning;**
A **long**-suffering **spirit** is **better** *f***than** a **haughty spirit.**
9 **Do not be** [l]**rash to be vexed in your spirit,**
For vexation [l]**rests in** the **bosom of** the **stupid.**
10 **Do not** [l]**say,** *wt***Why** *b***is it** *w***that the former days**
*b***were better** *f***than these** present times?
For it is **not** *f***in wisdom** that **you ask** *on***about this.**
11 **Wisdom** is **good with** an **allotment**
And an **advantage to** those **seeing the sun.**
12 **For in the shadow of wisdom**
it is as **in the shadow of silver,**
And the **advantage of knowledge** is that
wisdom *m***keeps** [l]**alive** those **possessing it.**

This series of sayings (7:1-12) is suggested by the two questions which concluded Book III, and which relate to the present life and the hereafter. *Who knows what is good for a man in life . . . Who can tell a man what shall come after him under the sun?*

I understand these questions as the interposition of an imaginary objector, and the notes that follow as the rejoinder of the Assembler.

The keynote to these sayings is found in the recurring word "better," which reveals both the point and purpose

of these sayings and the relation they sustain to the discussion standing before them.

To the roving soul (6:9) casting an envious eye on another's wealth Ecclesiastes says (in view of the instances considered): Since appearances are often misleading, it is not possible to decide that one's life is truly prosperous and happy until we know how it terminates. To the questions bearing on what is good in life and the hereafter the Assembler answers: (1) What is really good is not determined by personal preferences, but by the general effect of a thing upon humanity. (2) Man's future may, in a general way, be inferred with a certain degree of probability from the present. The thought developed in this string of sayings rests upon a series of "oppositions" arranged in two groups, which must be taken together, though the proverb of 7:7 separates them:

A good name, established at death and the consideration of death as the terminus of our lives exert a wholesome influence on the living (7:1,2).

Vexation and a troubled countenance and the seeking of self-improvement in the house of mourning work to improve the heart (7:3,4).

Rebuke from the wise is better than giddy mirth which is transitory (7:5,6).

The end of a matter, establishing the truth of a forecast, is better than the beginning where questions are raised as to the possible outcome (7:8).

Patience is better than a rash spirit which is a sign of stupidity (7:9).

It is not wisdom to judge the present, which is incomplete, by the former days, which afford a complete view by their entirety (7:10).

Both wisdom and silver defend against external attack, but wisdom also affects the life—the life of character (7:11,12).

V. Gelesnoff

GOD GIVES AND GOD WITHHOLDS

PROSPERITY WITH SATISFACTION is a rarity. But if it occurs even briefly in our lives it is the gift of God. The book of Ecclesiastes looks at human experiences with God in view, and throughout it remains consistent in its testimony that all that we experience is given to us by Elohim.

Ecclesiastes 5:10-7:12 considers a number of human situations including, specifically, prosperity with satisfaction and prosperity without satisfaction both of which are from God. But along with these considerations, the Assembler points to one experience that we all share alike, and that is our mortality and the certainty of death. In this also Ecclesiastes keeps God in view as the One Who gives what we receive.

This "high" view of Deity is unusual outside the Scriptures, and by itself it may tend to pessimism and bitterness, but within the context of God's Word as a whole, it is most edifying and uplifting. When God is seen not only as the wise and powerful Subjector and Placer but also as the God of expectation and goodness, His deity in giving and withholding is seen as full of purpose and glory.

Like the book of Job and much of the book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes stands out from most other books of the Sacred Scriptures in that it does not deal in a special sense with the nation of Israel and God's distinct promises concerning that chosen people. What is said concerns humanity as a whole and its common, transitory experi-

ences of struggle, gain and loss. Yet it accords fully with all of God's Word in focusing attention on God.

ELOHIM IS GIVING

Hence in speaking of the days of life given to each of us, all filled with times of much vexation and toil as well as times of repast and good, the Assembler observes that these are given to us by that One, Who is Elohim (5:17,18). If some of us are given riches and substance, along with the power and occasion for rejoicing in them even for a short while, Elohim is the One Who gives them. Such good "is a gift of Elohim" (5:19).

ELOHIM IS NOT GIVING

On the other hand, for some who are given illness and toil and then granted riches and substance and glory, all given by Elohim, there is no strength and time and occasion for the enjoyment of the riches. This also is from Elohim Who does not give such a one the power or opportunity to eat of the fruit of his toil (6:2,3). Entirely apart from whether or not a pattern of fairness and needed discipline or deserved reward may be detected, this is a fact of human life, and more importantly *a fact of divine operation.*

God gives toil and vexation. He gives riches and substance. He gives joy and satisfaction. And He withholds that joy and satisfaction. Our days as human beings, whether Israelites or not, and our many experiences are all to be traced finally to God.

HE WHO IS MIGHTIER

In Ecclesiastes 6:3-6 the Assembler gives an example of human experience in life, a unique life of one individual which is not different in its ending and its vanity from the life of anyone else. God gives a certain individual many years and many children, but He also gives this man the

experience of never getting to enjoy the good he has and even being denied a tomb commemorating his memory. His life ends exactly the same way as that of a stillborn child who never saw the light of day.

At this point the whole problem that is greater than the transitoriness of life, that is, the problem of death, is brought before us once again in Ecclesiastes. The stillborn child "comes in vanity, and in darkness it goes away" (6:4). But the same fate awaits us all. "Are not all going to the same place?" (6:6).

That is tragic and sad and depressing. But it is true to the human situation. But what is hopeful and uplifting in all this is the truth that God has given the life and experience of both this man and the stillborn child. It is a great blessing to know that "no one can adjudicate against [God]" (Ecc.6:10). God is mightier than any human being, and this is our hope and the source of great satisfaction for us all.

WHO KNOWS WHAT IS GOOD?

It may seem that we have jumped too quickly from the Assembler's words of apparent pessimism concerning mankind to conclusions of optimism concerning God. Yet this is poetry, and it calls for interpretation based on what is suggested as much as on what is said. "Who knows what is good for a man in life during the number of days in his transitory life?" (Ecc.6:12). Only God, Who is in charge of our days, and Who "makes them like a shadow" to us, can know what is truly good for us in life and in the times that shall come after us. Only He can know. And it follows that since He *can* know He *does* know, and in truth He Who is making them like a shadow to us, is making them for good even though we cannot see that this is so.

But we who have heard the evangel of God's righteousness and love in the giving of His Son for sinners, the truth of a good purpose and consummation is no longer like a

shadow. For "we are aware"—it is clear to us "who are loving God" *that God is working all together for the good* (Rom.8:28). Where the Assembler could only hope with poetic suggestion we believe with explicit expectation.

We do not apologize for bringing the evangel presented in Romans into the shadowy longing for an evangel presented in Ecclesiastes. The Assembler records the facts of the human situation, and he points to Elohim as responsible and involved, and he expresses the questions that arise from these facts. Now we who believe find that what we are believing is indeed the answer to the Assembler's questions. "For even as in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified" (1 Cor.15:22). D.H.H.

THE FIRSTFRUIT OF THOSE REPOSING

We are continually being reminded, by the death of a fellow believer, of the importance of Christ's resurrection. Paul wrote with exultation: "Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing" (1 Cor.15:20). This is our consolation and expectation in the recent loss of two diligent teachers of the Word. **Pastor R. Clay Kent** of Palm Harbor, Florida, died on August 12 after many years of boldly and eagerly heralding the message of grace and reconciliation that is in Christ Jesus. Then on August 29, **Pastor Leonard A. Bowerman** of Lansing, Michigan, who always labored with good humor and zeal, was put to repose, anticipating that happy expectation when we will all be always together with our Lord. They will be greatly missed by their families and friends and the many who profited from their toil and enthusiasm. Since they both were "believing that Jesus died and rose, thus also" for them both, who are now reposing, "will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him" (1 Thess.4:14).

Also on September 11 our Brother **Arthur Cronk** of Norwalk, Ohio, was put to repose at the age of 84. A great encouragement to our work for many years, we are thanking God for the way in which Art's staunch faith is still being echoed in the life of his son, Charlie, and other family members and friends. Jeff Priddy spoke of these things at the funeral on September 14. Being justified in the grace of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, "we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of the allotment of life eonian" (Titus 3:7).

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 1999
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY

EDITORIAL

IN VIEW OF the "new millennium" and the predicted problems with computer operations, is this the last issue of *Unsearchable Riches*? To the believer this question, besides its absurd jumping to conclusions, is inherently incoherent in that it is asked without having God in view. In the past ninety years there have been numerous, real hindrances, including wars and depressions, harsh criticism and rejection, illness and death, that could just as easily have been immediate factors leading to an end to this effort. In truth any undertaking is only temporary. It is God's grace that any issue of the magazine is published and if it has any value for spiritual growth and enlightenment.

Financial situations and health factors and mechanical means for printing and mailing are all, in the final analysis, in God's province. (Yes, we have made our computers "Y2K compliant," and we labor each day at our tasks, but our confidence is in God.) As the Assembler observed long ago, "See the work of the one, Elohim . . . . In a day of good be resting in the good, and in a day of evil, be vigilant; *indeed the One, Elohim, has made this one along with that one*" (Ecc.7:13,14; *cf* p.273).

So revising the question, Is it possible that *God* will bring about a situation of crisis and disorder within the next few weeks, channeled through computer failure or economic depression or social upheaval, that will make this the last issue of our magazine? But this question concerning possibilities is still defective because while it has God in view, it does not have His word to us in view. Our evangel speaks of grace, not of fear.

The character of God's message to us today is one of joy

("grace") and peace. Our expectation is one of consolation (1 Thess.4:18). "Yet we, being of the day, may be sober, putting on the cuirass of faith and love, and the helmet, the expectation of salvation, for God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ" (5:8,9). There will be troubles and disappointments, hard times as well as good times, but the evangel trains us to be living sanely and justly and devoutly in the current eon and to be engaged in our own affairs (*cf* Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thess.4:9-12).

Consequently, the question, so far, is found to be irrelevant. We are aware that God is working all together for good (Rom.8:28), so that whatever occurs we are thankful for it as God's provision, remaining eager to share the evangel with others, anticipating our happy expectation.

If we now ask, is it possible that God will bring about the rescue described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 before another issue of our magazine can be published, the answer is a resounding Yes! We do not look for signs or compute dates, but are watching and waiting for our Lord Who will descend for us at exactly the right time. It is also possible that we may be put to repose before then, and indeed we all are dying. Times and experiences are in the hands of God Who does all orderly and well (see p.249).

Our faith is centered in good news. And with such a message of grace and glory concerning Jesus Christ, His death, resurrection, exaltation and descent for us that we may always be together with Him, we are encouraged to continue in the tasks set before us, anticipating we will continue to greet you through the pages of this magazine, until God directs otherwise. We do not know when God will end this temporary effort, but we are persuaded that nothing present or impending can remove us from His love, and who can change this viewpoint into one of dread and dismay? D.H.H.

THE DRY GROUND AND VEGETATION
(Genesis 1:9-13)

9 **And Elohim** [l]**said: Let the waters**[f] **under the heavens flow together** in**to one** [ri]**place,** [+]**that the dry** ground **may** [l]**appear. And it came** to [l]**be so.** 10 **And Elohim** [l]**called** [›] the **dry** ground **Land, and** [›] the **flowing together of the waters He called Seas. And Elohim** [l]**saw that** it was **good.**

11 **And Elohim** [l]**said: Let the land** [c]**become verdant** with **vegetation:** with **herbage yielding seed on the land** [7]**and**[ncs] the **fruit tree** [d]**bearing fruit** according **to its kind, whose seed** is **in it. And it came** to [l]**be so.** 12 [+] **The land** [c]**brought** [l]**forth vegetation: herbage yielding seed** according **to its kind, and** the [7]**fruit**[0] **tree** [d]**bearing fruit, whose seed** is **in it,** according **to its kind. And Elohim** [l]**saw that** it was **good.**

13 **And it** [l]**became evening, and it** [l]**became morning:** the **third day.**

THE THIRD DAY

The new earth of the future will differ from the present one chiefly in this, that there will be no sea (Rev.21:1). There is no evidence that the *first* earth, when originally created, before it became a chaos and vacant, had a sea, either. It is confined, in time, to the present unsettled condition. In fact, the word "earth" is the same as *land* in Hebrew, and really refers only to the *dry* land, so that, when God created the heavens and the *earth,* we are not warranted in including the sea. This came later, after the disruption. Then, to begin with, there was no land. All was covered by the abyss. When the Spirit began its work of restoration,

it vibrated over the surface of the *water* (Gen.1:2). It was not until the third day that the water flowed together to form seas (Gen.1:9).

THE SEA

This, the temporary and transitory character of the sea, gives the term color in every passage in which it appears. It is a symbol of *impermanence, restlessness, turbulence,* and *strife.* Isaiah associates it with evil and wickedness. He says (57:20,21):

Yet the wicked are like the disgorging sea,
When it cannot be quiet,
And its waters are disgorging foulness and mud.
There is no peace, says my Elohim, for the wicked.

It remains as long as enmity and offense are present, but disappears when God is reconciled with the denizens of the earth. Along with the disappearance of the sea we read: "Lo! the tabernacle of God is with mankind, and He will be tabernacling with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them. And He will be brushing away every tear from their eyes. And death will be no more, nor mourning nor clamor, nor misery . . ." (Rev.21:3,4).

In the meanwhile, the dry land is used to figure any approach to this, such as Israel, the nation among whom Yahweh tabernacled in the past. The sea is a symbol of the other nations, with their changing and clashing governments, their Godless legality and unrighteousness, and their temporary term. The history of mankind is a record of disturbances and wars. Some have objected to this and sought to place prominence on its peaceful "evolution" and advance in civilization. But this is unimpressive, compared with its terrible revolutions and lapses into barbarism. Since the days of Cain the *methods* of murder have

been vastly improved, yet its victims have multiplied, and its operation is legalized.

DRY LAND APPEARS

It would seem that the waters were in great turmoil during the first and second days of restoration, for, although there was not sufficient to cover the entire earth when at rest, yet it all was submerged. On the third day, however, it responds to the normal force of gravitation, and falls from the higher elevations of the earth into the deeper hollows. Thus it flowed together, much as it still does in a minor measure, to form the seas. Consequently, the greater part of the earth's surface, being beneath the water, is not suitable for the support of land life, such as herbage and trees, or the soul life which is dependent on these. That this was not the case before the disruption, is evident from Isaiah's assertion that the earth was formed to be indwelt (45:18).

After the land was drained, it was fit for further restoration. It must be furnished with various forms of life, first plant life, and, thereafter with soul life, including humanity. On the third day only the plant life appears. In itself it is a great step in preparing the earth for habitation, not only providing the animals and man with food and shelter, but revealing to all the soul life an exhibition of God's wisdom and power and glory.

VEGETATION

"Let the earth *bring forth grass*" is the reading of the AV. The italicized verb and noun come from the same stem in Hebrew, and should show this, if possible, in translation. Moreover, the AV renders four different stems by *grass* and nearly a score by *bring forth.* Besides, this passage has a much wider scope than a single class of plants, for it seems to include both herbs and trees. This Hebrew stem is rendered by the AV not only *grass* and *bring forth,* as

here, but also *herb* and *spring*. Literally the original reads, "*Causing-to-be-verdant* the land (with) *verdure*."[1]

A TREASURE OF VARIETY

We might well marvel, even if God had formed only a single specimen of plant, but it ought to spur our hearts to wondering worship when we find myriads of *varieties* of vegetation, clothed in all the colors of the rainbow. Each one has its own exclusive shape and shade and contributes to the good of the higher forms of life. And each one seeds seed for its species, so that it has potentialities far beyond even our most daring dreams. God saw that it was "good." That seems far too modest an appraisal! To one who gets only a glimpse of the glory that it reveals it seems splendid, superb, super-excellent!

But if the herbs are so good, what shall we say of the trees and their fruit? Daily I enjoy samples of the wide range of God's goodness. In the morning, besides my grapefruit and orange juice, I partake of the seed food provided by the grains, wheat, or barley, or oats, or maize, or rice. Then, at noon, I eat vegetables with my meat, carrots or peas or chard or tomatoes, with a few olives. The rest of the day, at intervals, I revel in a variety, the pineapple, the banana, the grape, and the fruit of the trees, the apricot, the apple, the peach, the fig and the date. In this way I have a taste of many of the courses on the table He has set before me, and receive the benefit of the special and distinct virtues He has stored in each. In such a diet there is not only substance to repair the body, but vitality to keep the mind vigorous and in tune. And each contrib-

1. The CV now uses the more familiar term *vegetation* for the noun. While this does not reflect the etymological connection between the Hebrew verb and noun, it does express the wide range of plants in view, including non-green vegetation.

utes its particular benefits, not only enriching the life, but adding a note to the scale of praise that ascends to Him for His terrestrial goodness.

THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

The erroneous theory of evolution has had every opportunity to prove its correctness, but the more we learn of God's creation, the more we are convinced that it is as contrary to nature as it is to revelation. Different "species," or, as the Hebrew calls them, FROMers, cannot interbreed and reproduce. Even when man interferes and makes a mule, it is sterile. But, if it cannot be done with man's artificial help, how could it ever have taken place naturally? The fossils present an enormous amount of evidence, yet there is not the least trace of the multitudinous intermediate forms which should have connected the various species. In historical times there has been no record of any transmutation.

The early evolutionists thought that the reproductive cells of all animals were alike. A powerful microscope would have disillusioned them. Now, however, we know that *each species, or* FROM-KIND, has a different cell structure, and it always remains the same. The reproductive cell has a nucleus and a number of minute rods, called chromosomes, which contain the essential factors which are transmitted. *This cell structure is immutable in each species.* "Evolution" is impossible.

Even within species, the variable characteristics are regulated by natural law, so that small variations, such as size or color, cannot accumulate, so as to form entirely new species.

The wonders of creation are by no means exhausted by the *number* of each living creature involved in creation of the first one, great as that is. Still more astonishing is the fact that practically all *differ* in some slight degree from

the original and from each other. This is due to the process of *generation.* Two are always united to form the offspring, and, as they differ, only the dominant traits of each appears. The other factors are not apparent, but may reappear in future generations.

So it is that there are so many kinds of dogs. They are all of the same FROM-KIND or "species," but, in creating the first pair, all these varieties were provided for. And so it is with the human race. In creating Adam, God did not only make the first man, but all humanity, and all differ from him in some degree in body, soul and spirit. He was not merely the "head" of the race, but, as the Scriptures express it with scientific exactitude, all were *in* him, and, literally and vitally, partake of the spirit that was imparted to him.

For many years increased investigation led to arrogant assumptions, based on inadequate knowledge, and illogical reasoning, which threatened to destroy all faith in the Word of God. Now that scholars are learning more, the tide shows signs of reversing. Even men who do not claim to believe in inspiration are convinced that previous objections, especially in the realm of archaeology, were unfounded and false.

Whenever nature and revelation are correctly interpreted they are in complete harmony. In our comparative ignorance of the world about us, the only logical course is to accept the word of the Creator Himself.

A. E. Knoch

STUDIES CONCERNING EVOLUTION

Recent studies exposing fundamental weaknesses in the theory of evolution include the books, DARWIN ON TRIAL, by Phillip E. Johnson; INTELLIGENT DESIGN, by William A. Dembski; and DARWIN'S BLACK BOX, by Michael J. Behe. These may be found in many libraries or ordered through bookstores.

FROM LIGHT TO LIFE

GOD is operating all in accord with His will which, in turn, accords with His counseled purpose (Eph.1:9-11). He is doing this with orderliness, thoroughness and success. But in the midst of His operations this pattern of authority, wisdom and goodness is difficult to see. Not until a particular work is finished can we perceive its perfection and glory.

In Genesis chapter 1, however, the record of an operation begun and brought to completion provides us with a pattern which gives assurance concerning God's activities. God's rescue of the earth out of chaos and into light and life is presented in two series of "days" followed by a seventh day of ceasing and commemoration, making three stages in all:

First Stage
1. LIGHT
2. ATMOSPHERE, WATERS
3. DRY GROUND, VEGETATION

Second Stage
4. LUMINARIES
5. WATER AND FLYING LIFE
6. LAND ANIMALS, HUMANITY

Third Stage
7. CEASING AND HALLOWING

The two stages leading from light to life, culminating in the third stage of hallowed stopping remain for mankind a picture in miniature of the character of God's operations, so that in the midst of His ongoing, eonian activities

we may be assured of the rightness and purposefulness of things even though disorder and chaos seem, to our perception, to be in charge. The more we focus on the revelation of God given in the details of Genesis 1 (brief as they may be), the more we become settled with confidence in and reliance upon God and His power and goodness.

THE THIRD DAY

The record of God's activity on the third day (Gen.1: 9-13) calls for special attention. It is a day of *life.* The light of day one and the separating of water and air on the second day as well as the flowing together of the water and appearance of dry ground early on the third day, all can be seen as vital preparations for the life that now bursts forth. Each step was initiated by the powerful word of God, each was necessary, and each led orderly to the next.

Step by step, God Himself is solely and fully responsible for the achievements recorded here. In just the right order He has called forth the presence of light, the separated air and water, and dry ground with irrigation at hand, to the end that the earth would be covered by living and productive vegetation.

The light was the channel of energy for growth and reproduction. The air and water and ground each contributed a necessary part of the whole plant body. All was arranged ahead of time by Elohim, with plan and purpose. God is a God of order, Who does each thing He does at the right time and in the right arrangement, for His purpose of good.

TRIUMPH OVER EVIL

The progressive steps of Elohim from light to life successfully win over the opposition described in Genesis 1:2. The light of day one deals with the *darkness* that had enveloped the earth. The separation of waters from waters by the atmosphere brought in on the second day, and the

flowing together of the surface waters and appearance of the dry ground achieved at the beginning of the third day are set against the *chaos* which had corrupted the planet. And finally, the sprouting of plants bearing seeds and fruit transformed the *vacant* earth into a living and productive world.

What we especially perceive about God in this triumph over the evils of darkness, chaos and vacancy, is that He does not overlook any wrong or fail to deal with them thoroughly and successfully. The evils are abolished, but the creation is saved.

This principle is a sure foundation for reliance on the living God. God will never leave any element of evil undefeated. The whole idea of an eternal hell or final and hopeless death is as irreverent as it is absurd, if the God revealed in the Scriptures is kept in view.

THE WORDS OF ELOHIM

A third pattern of divine operations in these opening words of Scripture is that of God's perfect economics. Elohim has a needed place and use for everything that He makes. Every part contributes to the glory of the whole. We can trace this in the details of His language recorded in Genesis 1:3-13.

On the first day the words of Elohim were directly focused upon the object in view which was light. "Let light come to be!" But the value of light does not lie in itself alone, but in its essential role in all the divine operations that follow. As Elohim continues to bring the earth to a state of goodness, it becomes evident that light is fundamental and absolutely needful for every further step. This is made clear by the fact that God's work is always done in a time of "day" which is the name given to light in Genesis 1:5.

A further advancement is traced by Elohim's words on the second day. In Genesis 1:6 He again speaks directly

concerning the object in view. "Let an atmosphere come to be." But Elohim's words are more complicated than in verse 3. They direct attention not only to the provision of the atmosphere but to a distinct purpose for this provision. The atmosphere was to come in the midst of the waters, "that it may be separating waters from waters." In this quotation of Elohim's words we see that what God brings about leads forward to another provision. Each step is a link in a chain of achievements.

Now on the third day there is another and noteworthy change in Elohim's wording. He does not say (as in the pattern of verse 3), "Let vegetation come to be," or even (as in the pattern of verse 6), "Let dry ground come to be so that vegetation may come to be." Instead Elohim's declarations speak directly of the waters and land as channels for the emergence of living plants. Elohim brings about vegetation on the earth, but He does this *indirectly,* by means of His direct, preparatory activity.

In accord with this pattern presented in the third day, God directly sends His Son to save sinners, and *through* His Son He gives life.

FURTHER THREE-DAY PERIODS

Three is the number of completion as indicated by this high level of achievement on the third day. But even this was not the completion of these operations of God regarding the earth. There would be another cycle of three days of activity before a day of ceasing. That further cycle would begin with luminaries and end with the creation of humanity, a form of life that would become a vehicle for the display of the most transcendent of all revelations of God, His righteousness, His grace and His love.

There were other three day periods noted in Scripture. The three days and three nights of Jonah's distress in the bowels of a great fish (Jonah 1:17) are noted by

our Lord, Who pointed to them as a sign to the disciples of His approaching crisis and rescue out of death (Matt. 12:39; 16:4). They did not follow the pattern of light to life, but they did represent a critical operation of God leading toward His goal of bringing light and life to the Ninevites.

CHRIST'S DEATH, ENTOMBMENT AND RESURRECTION

The three days Jesus spoke of, long after the times of Genesis 1 stand as a climax in the pattern we find there. Considering the day of crucifixion from the standpoint of its ultimate meaning for humanity and all creation, it was a day of astounding *enlightenment.* It is in the day of Christ's faithful obedience to the death of the cross that God's righteousness is manifested (Rom.2:21,22). Gratuitous justification of sinners (Rom.3;24), the commending of God's love as it shines out against the background of sin and infirmity (Rom.5:8,9), and conciliation to God (Rom.5:10), are glorious divine achievements, among others, established on the day of Christ's death.

Further, for us as believers, we "were entombed together with Him through baptism into death" (Rom.6:40). These are operations of authority and power, and they are timely and orderly steps leading toward life.

But it is on the third day that the parallel with Genesis 1:9-13 is most striking. In presenting the evangel, the apostle Paul would announce it in three steps, corresponding to the three days involved: "For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been *roused* the *third* day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor.15:3,4). "Christ has been roused from among the dead" (1 Cor.15:20).

The resurrection of Christ holds such significance of life for Him and in Him for all humanity that a special word must be used to express its vibrant character. "For

even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be *vivified*" (1 Cor.15:22).

This message of glad tidings is "according to the scriptures." In a very real way it is first presented in Genesis chapter one, at least by analogy.

THREE CLASSES OF VIVIFICATION

As the three days from the cross to the empty tomb speak of God's completed work in dealing with sin and death by bringing in righteousness and vivification in Christ, so this vivification occurs in three stages. "Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father . . . that God may be All in all" (1 Cor.15:23-28).

These are all days of both light and life. But the full scope and brightness of this operation of vivification is not reached until the third order is achieved and all are brought into a level of life that knows God as their All.

GOD'S TIMING

In this study we have drawn attention to the timing and glory of God's works. In bringing the earth out of darkness and emptiness into goodness He does not begin and complete His work instantaneously, but rather He follows a grand pattern of steps, each leading forward to the next. This is marvelously illustrated in the first chapter of Genesis.

We live in the midst of God's great, eonian operation, which includes the temporary experience of evil, of sin and infirmity and enmity, but which is being directed by God toward a goal of immortality and reconciliation to the glory of God, the Father. Let us not become impatient or ever despair. God will complete the work He has begun, and He will do so in exactly the right way.

D.H.H.

CONCERNING DISPUTATIONS ABOUT FREE WILL

Yahweh has made everything for its own pertinent end, yea even the wicked for the day of evil (Prov.16:4).

O Yahweh our Elohim, You shall set peace on the hearthstones for us, for, indeed, all our doings You have made for us (Isa.26:12).

. . . This One am I announcing to you: The God Who makes the world and all that is in it . . . (Acts 17:23b-24a).

. . . the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will . . . (Eph.1:11b).

Question:

Thank you for your reply to my previous questions concerning the place that remains both for dutifulness and entreaties even in a world devoid of "free will."[1] I am finally beginning to grasp what I heard you say years ago in a recorded message, along the lines that, Obedience remains as important as we always (correctly) supposed it to be. The only thing that we lose—and good riddance!—is self-pride. Yet what we gain is vast indeed: we gain the recognition of God *as God,* together with the privilege of truly thanking Him for all things (Eph.5:20).

My pastor gave me a list of verses which he says "make no sense" unless free will is true, verses which, according to him, it would be "absurd" to interpret except in a freewill sense. The list is as follows: Mat-

1. see "Human Will and the Ministry of Law," *Unsearchable Riches* vol.90, pp.213-224.

thew 7:13,14; 21-23; Matthew 23:37; Matthew 24:13; John 5:40; 2 Corinthians 8:3,17; Revelation 3:20; Revelation 22:17.

While I realize that not one of these verses actually teaches (or requires) free will, I can certainly appreciate why my pastor would suppose this to be so. Still, while I commiserate with him in his feelings of "obligation" to defend free will (since he considers its denial "immoral"), as you say, his sense of obligation itself arises merely out of traditional teaching and ethics. This is so in the case of his feelings concerning free will, as much so as is the case with those who feel obliged to defend the veneration of Mary.

I would appreciate your comments on each of these verses, as well as on the practical matter of my pastor's feelings and concerns in opposition to "Concordant truth." By the way, he also says that you are "too intellectual."

Answer:

As I explained more fully in my previous letter, your pastor's inability even to consider that free will may not be true even as his "righteous indignation" against our teaching, is simply because he has made popular opinion together with his own conscience, the arbiter of both truth and righteousness. He thinks that these things are ever so important. Until *God* makes it clear to him (*cf* 2 Cor.10:4) that they are worse than useless, our best arguments will fall on deaf ears. In the meantime, we can only be kind and patient toward him.

Even if some cannot accept this, our whole purpose of ministry continues to be to convey the importance—the *primary* importance—of our becoming rooted and grounded in love, apart from which we are nothing, *while also* seeking to gain a competency in the perception of truth, according to the means of grace which God has provided, which

is discipline—albeit *enlightened* discipline—in language and logic, as relevant to scriptural issues.

Our message has never been that we need the "head" *instead* of the "heart," or, *less than* the heart, but that we *need* the "heart" *and* the "head." Because some dislike (or are simply lazy concerning) learning, and others somewhat hold to mystical, gnostic ideas in which critical thinking is greatly attenuated if not practically supplanted by supposed, personal divine communiqués, it has been convenient for some to claim or suppose, especially in my own case, that we are somehow spiritually cold, if not altogether lifeless. In any case, it is better to make any such perceptions more a matter of prayer than of criticism.

REINFORCEMENT IN TRADITIONAL ERROR

In responding now, first of all, to your pastor's feelings and concerns in opposition to our teaching which arise out of the ethics and traditional mores of western society, I want to emphasize that I truly understand and sympathize with him in his outlook. After all, I myself once believed as he does; and, I am certainly no stranger to western ethics. Curious as it may seem at first, perhaps I can best convey to you something helpful in relation to your pastor's feelings and concerns, by speaking frankly concerning certain of my own feelings and concerns.

Within the previous writings in this series and elsewhere, I have *briefly and simply* stated why I find free will to be false, explaining that, on any rational account, it is simply impossible for it to be true. If others will not read or cannot grasp this testimony even to the degree of understanding at least why *we* believe free will to be false, there is nothing I can do about this.

I will admit that it is sometimes unsettling and discouraging to observe that many simply do not seem to care what the truth may actually be here, but only wish

to live an unreflective, undisturbed life according to the dictates of their own conscience, attitudes, wishes, and reactive emotions.

Until I remember that it must ultimately be of God that it is so, it is troubling to note that in many cases even friends and acquaintances of many years (not to mention so many of the general reading public who come in contact with our work), cannot even say why we teach as we do, on the issue of free will. They seem only to be clear that certain ones—ones who seem to have their attention more than ourselves—claim otherwise, and, that such ones have their (purportedly) "good reasons" for so doing. Thus, they merely become reinforced and further persuaded in the nearly universally-held views which they too already had long embraced, in previous years, before they had ever heard of so-called "Concordant truth."

I realize that the phrase "Concordant truth" was, many years ago, only introduced in an attempt briefly to refer to that which was affirmed as truth, according to a certain ministry. In such a trite sense, however, we might as well speak of "Baptist truth," "Pentecostal truth," "Calvinist truth," or "Roman Catholic truth." Since the phrase "Concordant truth" is problematic, confusing, and unneedful, we will do well to discard it, replacing it simply with "Concordant teaching," if by this one means the teaching of the Concordant Publishing Concern.

We have often been asked *why* our ministry, throughout its ninety-year career, has remained so small and its message reached so few, especially in a deeper way in the interests of maturity. Our reply is simply that this is according to God's intention, at present, in the current wicked eon. Indeed, in a world in which God Himself locks up all in stubbornness (Rom.11:32), such a message and perspective—however glorious and true—which is nonetheless contrary to such an abundance of popular, cherished

traditions, can hardly expect to succeed. That is, it cannot expect to succeed except in those special instances in which God mercifully and graciously grants enlightenment.

Indeed, even among those acquainted with and more or less in general accord with our work, whether wittingly or unwittingly, it is usual to criticize, compete against, or simply ignore us, while unusual truly to complement and support our efforts in common cause. Therefore, if the question, Why are we not more "successful"? is asked not rhetorically, in a spirit of suspicion, but literally, it is a question which is not only easy to answer but one concerning which there need be no mystery whatsoever.

FREEDOM FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

Concerning scriptural truth, we neither acknowledge nor exercise any hierarchy of human authority. Whatever the Scriptures truly teach, alone is the truth. And, now that the scripture record itself has been both declared and completed, no man can do any more than affirm its testimony, praying for grace that he might do so faithfully. Hence, we say to all, You are free to believe and do as you please; in fact, we encourage you to do so. Only remember that you are not free from your own selves and the limitations and pleasures thereof, while being mindful as well that the foolish neither perceive their foolishness, nor their lack of perspicacity.

Now it is at this juncture that many are stumbled: If today there is no "true church," nor even any *necessarily-correct* faithful ministry, it will then be asked, How can I know what to believe? As many will say, "I am no scholar; how, then, can *I* know what is true?" We would only add to this that scholarship, even when helpful, is no sure guide to truth. Scholars are in disagreement among themselves over nearly every issue. And even though, in some things, there is a consensus among most scholars, there is hardly

ever a unanimity of opinion even among recognized scholars. Furthermore, in an era of widespread apostasy, majority views, often (though certainly not necessarily always), will be incorrect; and yet, conversely, neither is there any virtue in being in the minority, especially among such a diversity of minority opinions.

Our only recourse, then, is to do what we should have done in the first place and rely on God alone to reveal and teach us His truth, while at the same time deeply acknowledging (especially to ourselves) our own fallibility and susceptibility to error. It then becomes our prayer that *God* would make us competent, even if others should be unaware or even deny that He has done so. Then, we will believe and soberly realize Paul's words that, "Our competency is of God" (2 Cor.3:5).

INSTRUCTION IN THE EVANGEL

One who is an evangelist must actually herald the evangel of Christ, not "a different evangel" from that brought by Paul (*cf* Gal.1:6b); a pastor must truly "shepherd" those whom he serves; he must not be, as to the truth, a burdensome wolf in sheep's clothing (*cf* Acts 20:29,30); likewise, a teacher must be one whose work is characterized by faithful instruction and guidance, not misguidance and misinstruction (*cf* Col.1:7b; *cp* 2 Cor.11:13-15).

Hence, while recognizing that, *through mortal human agency* (*cf* Eph.4:11-14), with a view toward our maturity, God has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, we certainly are in need of wisdom and enlightenment in order to recognize and discern the teaching of any such ones. Even so, we will not care to speculate as to the "identity" of any such persons. From the Scripture record itself, we are aware of those who are our apostles and prophets; and, as we ourselves truly mature, we will not be ignorant of but grateful toward those who served us along the way, in whatever faithful capacity.

Remember, no person is any such servant except to the degree that he actually heralds, holds, and gives instruction in, the evangel. Indeed, some may do substantive, good evangelistic, pastoral, or teaching work, who may nonetheless hold to serious error. And, even those who truly may be most able to guide us toward maturity, can hardly make any claim of perfection.[2]

THE GIFT OF LEARNING

Our work is principally that of a *teaching* ministry, which in the nature of things can only be of service to those who wish to be "students"—however informally, and regardless of grade. Yet few indeed, so it seems, are "in the business of learning," or disposed even to engage themselves thus from time to time, infrequently and briefly.

Learning—learning anything at all—is certainly a gift. It is at the heart of our teaching that those who believe, who may have learned little more than the elements of "Christ and Him crucified," who are indisposed to substantial further learning, are nonetheless in Christ and complete in Him.

We sincerely honor and care deeply for all believers; it is only that we find it impossible to *teach* those who are disinclined to learning or at least to learning through us. Still, if this should be so in any individual case, it is so in the wisdom of God; and, all are to be at peace accordingly. We only ask that those who may choose to follow a path separate from our own, join with us, in spirit, in mutual regard and love.

MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS

Now, I will briefly consider the various texts provided

2. As a friend of mine once put it, "I fear that even the clearest-headed among us, may still be a little mixed up."

by your pastor, which he supposes to be practically demonstrative of free will.

(1) **"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! who are killing the prophets and pelting with stones those who have been dispatched to her! How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen is assembling her brood under her wings—and you will not!"** (Matt.23:37).

(2) **"Yet he who endures to the consummation, he shall be saved"** (Matt.24:13).

(3) **"Enter through the cramped gate, for broad is the gate and spacious is the way which is leading away into destruction, and many are those entering through it. Yet what a cramped gate and narrowed way is the one leading away into life, and few are those who are finding it . . . . Not everyone saying to Me 'Lord! Lord!' will be entering into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who is doing the will of My Father Who is in the heavens. Many will be declaring to Me in that day, 'Lord! Lord! Was it not in Your name that we prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many powerful deeds?' And then shall I be avowing to them that 'I never knew you! Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness!'"** (Matt.7:13,14; 21-23).

(4) **". . . not willing are you to come to Me that you may have life"** (John 5:40).

It is the leaders of the people of Jerusalem in our Lord's day who, at least principally, are in view here, in Matthew 23:37 (*cf* Matt.23:1-36). On many occasions, throughout their history, it was the heart-desire of God to draw near and assemble the people of Jerusalem unto Himself, in a manner even as a hen is assembling her brood under her wings. And yet the corrupt leadership of the people, who wished to maintain their own fleshly advantages even as their own human traditions, "willed not," thereby thwarting God's revealed counsels concerning the people as a whole (*cf* Matt.23:13; *cp* Prov.1:20-30). That this was so in the wisdom and purpose of God, is a matter of the depths of God, and is a consideration not addressed here. Still, this is no reason to impose a foreign philosophy of free will upon the text, simply because we ourselves are accustomed to and may be gratified by the contemplation of such notions.

Similarly, in the evangel of the Circumcision, the words, "Yet he who endures to the consummation, he shall be saved" (Matt.24:13), simply mean what they say. One should not from this, however, imagine that one who endures to the consummation does so not by the all-sufficient grace of God but by the self-reliant "free will" of man. In the Circumcision calling, eonian life is a reward for obedient endurance; hence, to enter into life, they must actually *do* the will of God, not be "workers of lawlessness."

The fact that the Jews, broadly, were "not willing" to come to the Lord Jesus that they may have life (John 5:40), was, indeed, the essence of their problem. But this is by no means to say that they had it within themselves to make themselves willing (*cf* Rom.8:7,8; 1 Cor.2:14). It is written, "Your people shall be willing in the day of Your potent power" (Psa.110:3), not prior thereunto, whenever they care to exercise aright their fancied free wills.

(5) **"... of their own accord..."** (2 Cor.8:3); **"... of his own accord..."** (2 Cor.8:17).

Especially considered in their contexts, these phrases are anything but an indication of the presence of free will activity. Paul, in making mention of the ecclesias of Macedonia having given generously, states that they did so, *"of their own accord"* ("they were *willing of themselves,"* AV; 2 Cor.8:3). Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 8:17, in speaking of Titus' diligence in his service for the Corinthians, the apostle declares, "he, indeed, receives the entreaty... [and] *of his own accord* he came out to you." Stating, however, that in a certain matter one acts of his "own accord," is simply to say that in so doing one therein acts voluntarily, as opposed to acting due to a requirement or out of compulsion (i.e., by being made to do what one does not want to do; *cf* Philemon 14).

Here in 2 Corinthians 8, Paul plainly tells us that this noble, voluntary service of the Macedonian ecclesias was

"through the will of God," and, that it was a manifestation of "the *grace* of God" which *He* had bestowed (2 Cor. 8:1,5). Likewise, Paul declares, "Now *thanks be to God,* Who is *imparting* for you to the heart of Titus [this] same diligence" (2 Cor.8:16) to which the apostle refers when stating that of his own accord Titus came out to the Corinthians, that he might serve them faithfully.

(6) **"Lo! I stand at the door and am knocking. If ever anyone should be hearing My voice and opening the door, I will also be coming in to him and dining with him, and he with Me"** (Rev.3:20).

This passage, too, like those of 2 Corinthians 8, merely indicates that the Lord deals with men as intelligent, voluntary agents, whom He does not compel to act contrary to their own wills. It does not address the issue of how we are ultimately to account for the state of one's heart, out of which spring the outflowings of life (Prov.4:23 *cp* Matt. 12:34), in one's chosen course of action.

(7) **"Let him who will, take the water of life gratuitously"** ["... *whosoever will,* let him take the water of life freely," AV] (Rev. 22:17).

This familiar passage simply speaks of the joyous, voluntary activity in which the blessed ones of that future day will gladly engage themselves. It is well worth noting, however, that they are to do so "*gratuitously,*" that is, in a way in which they recognize that their privileges therein are "gratuitous," which is to say, uncalled for with reference to anything that is of themselves (*cp* John 15:25). This alone debars any thought of meritorious free will.

CONCLUDING WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who *blesses* us; Who does so in accord with the delight of His will for the laud of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:3,6). Now thanks be to God for His indescribable gratuity (2 Cor.9:15)!

J.R.C.

1 SAMUEL 20

20 + **David** ran [l]**away from** the **homestead** [i]**at Ramah;** + **he** [l]**came and** [l]**said, facing Jonathan, What have I done? What** is **my depravity? And what** is **my sin before your father that** he is **seeking** `for **my soul?** 2 + 7**Jonathan**0 [lsa]**replied to him, Far be it! You shall not die. Behold, my father will not do** any **great matter or small matter** +**that he** does **not** [l]**reveal** `to **my ear.** +**Now** for **what reason should my father conceal** `**this** ·**matter from me?** There **is no**thing to **this!**

3 +**Yet David** 7[l]**replied**~ *fr***again,** + [l]**saying, Your father** must **know,** yea **know**~, **that I have found grace in your eyes;** +**so he** has [lsa]**decided, Jonathan must not** [l]**know this lest he should be grieved.** + **Nevertheless,** as **Yahweh lives, and your soul lives,** there is *t***but** *as* a **small step between me and** *bt* ·**death.** 4 +**So Jonathan** [l]**said to David, What**ever **your soul** 7**is yearning** for~, + **I shall do for you.**

5 +**Then David** [lsa]**explained to Jonathan: Behold,** to**morrow** is the **new moon;** +**as** for **me, I should sit,** yea **sit**~ **with the king to eat.** +**Instead you** must **send me** away, **and I will conceal** myself **in** the **field until the third** ·**evening.** 6 **Should your father** [n]**miss,** yea *n***miss**~ **me,** +**then you say, David asked,** yea **asked**~ **leave** *f***of me to run** 7**as far as***s* **Bethlehem, his city, for the whole family** `**has the annual sacrifice there.** 7 **If he** then [l]**says thus,** Very **well!** It means **peace** `**with your servant.** +**Yet if his** *hot***anger**~ grows [l]**hot,** then **know that** ·**evil has been** *all***determined** *f wi***by him.** 8 +**Now you** must *d***deal kindly** *on***with your servant, for you have brought** `**your servant** into a **covenant of Yahweh with you.** +**But if** there **is** any **depravity in me,**

[c]**put me** to **death** yourself. + **Why then should you bring me** [fr]**to your father?**

9 + **Jonathan** [sa]**replied, Far be it** ›**from you! For if I should realize,** yea **realize**¯ **that** `**evil has been** [all]**determined** [f wi]**by my father to come over you,** + would **I not** [t]**tell** › **you** `about **it?** 10 +**Then David** [sa]**asked** › **Jonathan,** [a]**Who shall tell** › **me** [7]**if**~[c] **your father should answer you harshly?** 11 + **Jonathan** [t]**said to David,** Do [go]**come!** + **Let us** go **forth** into **the field!** +**So both of them** went [t]**forth** into **the field.**

12 +**Then Jonathan** [t]**said to David,** By **Yahweh Elohim of Israel!** [t] **I shall sound out** `**my father** [as]**about** this **time** tomorrow or **the third** day; + [bd]**if he is well** disposed **toward David, shall I not then send** word **to you and** ¯**reveal** it `into **your ear?** 13 **Thus may Yahweh do to Jonathan and thus add** to it! [t]**But should** it [c]**seem well to my father** to do [on] **you** `**evil,** +**then I will reveal** it `into **your ear and send you** away +**that you** can **go unharmed.** + **May Yahweh** [b]**be with you, just as He** [b]**was with my father.** 14 **Nor,** [if]**while I** am [fr]**still alive,** + **shall you** [not]**fail** to [d]**show** [wi] **me** the **benignity of Yahweh; and** [7]**even if**~ **I** [t]**die,** 15 + **you shall not cut** off `**your kindness from** [wi] **my house** [fr]**for** the **eon, not** +**even** [i]**when Yahweh cuts**¯ off `the **enemies**[t] **of David,** each **man off** the surface **of the ground.** 16 +**Thus** has **Jonathan** [t]**contracted with** the **house of David; and Yahweh will seek** it out **from** the **hand of David's enemies**[t].

17 +**So Jonathan** [t]**continued to** [7]**adjure**~ `**David, in his love** `for **him, for he loved him** with the **love of his** own **soul.** 18 +**Then Jonathan** [t]**said to him,** Tomorrow is the **new moon, and you will be** [n]**missed, for your** empty **seat shall be noted.** 19 +**When you** count ¯**three** days, **you shall descend very** quickly; **and you** must **come to the** [ri]**place where you were concealed** [i]**on** the **day of the** [d]**deed, and you** must [sit]**stay beside the departure** `**stone.** 20 +**As** for **me, I shall shoot three** `**arrows** to one **side of it,** › **pointing**¯

to a **target for myself.** 21 +**Now behold, I shall send** `**the lad,** 7**saying**0**, Go, find** `**the arrows. If I shall say,** yea **say**¯ **to** the **lad, Behold, the arrows** are + bd**this** way **from you, take them,** +**then** do **come! For** there is **peace for you, and** there **is no** sp**plot,** as **Yahweh lives!** 22 +**But if I shall say thus to** the **stripling, Behold, the arrows** are + **beyond** f **you,** then go**leave, for Yahweh has sent you** away. 23 +**As** for **the** sp**promise** w**that we have** sp**discussed, I and you, behold, Yahweh** is 7**witness**0 **between me and** bt **you** fr**for** the **eon.**

24 +**So David** l**concealed** himself **in** the **field.** +**When the new moon** lb**came,** + **the king** l**sat** down **to eat** on **bread.** 25 + **The king** l**sat on his seat as** he had done du**time** i**upon** du**time,** >**in the sidewall seat;** + **Jonathan** 7sat lpc**opposite**˜ him +**while Abner** l**sat** f**at Saul's side.** +**But David was** n**missing** from his ri**place.** 26 + **Saul** did **not** sp**say anything** i **that day, for he** sa**thought, he** is absent by some **chance, he** is **not clean,** t**surely** he has **not** been **cleansed.** 27 +**Then it came** to l**be** f**on** the **morrow** after **the new moon, the second** day, +**that David was** n**missing** from his ri**place.** +**So Saul** l**said to his son Jonathan,** For **what reason has** the **son of Jesse not come to** eat **bread** mr**both yesterday** mr**and today?** 28 + **Jonathan** l**answered** `**Saul, David asked,** yea **asked**¯ f wi**of me** 7**to go**0 fr**to Bethlehem,** 7**his city**0**.** 29 + **He** l**said,** pr**please** m**let me go, for our family** is holding a **sacrifice in** the **city.** +**As** for Q**me**˜**, my** 7**brothers**˜ m**gave** > **me instructions.** +**So now, if I have found grace in your eyes,** pr**please let me** l**slip away and let me see** `**my brothers.** on**For** so**this** reason **he has not come to the king's table.**

30 + **Saul's anger** i**against Jonathan** grew 7**exceedingly**Q l**hot, and he** l**said to him, Son of** a **revolting** 7**maiden**˜Q**!** Do **I not know that you** are 7**partner**˜ >**with** the **son of Jesse, to your** own **shame and to** the **shame of your mother's nakedness?** 31 **For all the days** w**that** the **son of Jesse lives on the ground, you and your kingship, you shall not be established. Now** +**therefore send** out **and take** `**him** in **for**

me, for he is a **son of death.** 32 + **Jonathan** |**responded** `to **his father Saul,** + |**saying to him, Why should he be** *c*put to **death? What has he done?** 33 At +**that, Saul** ~|**lifted up**~ `**the spear** *on*at **him** as if **to smite him; and Jonathan** |**realized that** *7*evil **had been** *all*determined~ *f*upon *wi*by **his father, to** *c*put `**David** to **death.**

34 +**So Jonathan** *7*|**jumped up**^{Q} **from** *wi* **the table in** the **heat of anger;** + **he** did **not eat bread** *i*on **the second day of the new moon** festival, **for he was grieved for David,** and *t*because **his father had put him to shame.** 35 + *i*When the **morning** |*b*came, + **Jonathan** went |**forth** to **the field for** the **appointment** with **David, and** a **young lad** was **with him.** 36 + **He** |**said to his lad, Run! Find** *pr*now `**the arrows which I** am **shooting.** *7*+**While**^{s} **the lad** was **running,** + **he´ shot the arrow to** *c*make it **pass** beyond **him.** 37 +**When the lad** |**came** *fr*to the *ri*place *w*where **Jonathan had shot the arrow,** +**then Jonathan** |**called after the lad,** + |**saying,** Is **not the arrow,** + **beyond** *f* **you?** 38 **And Jonathan** |**called after the lad, Quickly!** Do **hurry! Do not stay** there! +**So Jonathan's lad** |**picked up** `**the arrows and** *7*|**brought** them~ **to his lord.** 39 +**As** for **the lad, he** did **not know anything** about it; *y*only **Jonathan and David, they knew** `of **the matter.**

40 +**Then Jonathan** |**gave** `**his** *all*gear **to the lad who** was ›**with him, and he** |*sa*told › **him, Go! Bring** them to **the city.** 41 When **the lad** had *in*gone|, + **David arose from beside the** *7*departure stone~; +**he** |**fell** ›**with his nostrils** to*d* the **earth and** |**bowed down three** *du*times. +**Then** each **man** |**kissed** `**his associate; and they** |**wept,** each **man** `with **his associate,** *fr*while their ~affection~ **magnified.** 42 + **Jonathan** |**said to David, Go** ›**in peace!** *w*Since **we, both of us, we have sworn in** the **Name of Yahweh,** › **saying**–**, Yahweh** |*b*is *7*witness^{0} **between me and** *bt* **you, and between my seed and** *bt* **your seed** *fr*for the **eon.** +**Then** *7*David^{Q} |**arose and** |*go*departed, +**while Jonathan** was **entering the city.**

THE DEPARTURE STONE

CHAPTER TWENTY of 1 Samuel marks a change in David's relationship to the royal family. From this time until the death of Saul, David becomes a homeless fugitive. Much of his time will be spent among the surrounding nations. He will not again return to the palace, nor will he lead the hosts of Israel until he is recognized as her king. This departure occurs at the time of the new moon festival. Apparently all the officers of the king's court were expected to assemble at this time (1 Sam.20:5,24-27).

The Jewish year is typical of the course of the eons in which God's purpose for humanity is completed. Each year the same events were repeated. Each year had one day of atonement, signifying the cross, and one each of the three primary festivals. The Passover speaks of deliverance, Pentecost speaks of the outpouring of God's Spirit, and Tabernacles speaks of the final ingathering to peace and stability. The new moons represent administrational changes of rule during the course of the eons.

There are many similarities between these events and those at the time of Christ. Many believed in Christ and wanted to make Him king, just as Jonathan knew that David would one day be king. But the established administration of rule wanted to destroy Christ, seeing Him as a threat to their position, just as Saul did David (compare 1 Sam.20:31 with John 11:48). It was a time for an administrational change, but the change that was to occur was not the expected one. The Jews were ready to celebrate Tabernacles, tearing down branches and heralding Christ

as God's anointed Deliverer. But it was the time when the Anointed was to be rejected. The Passover Lamb would be killed when Israel shunned Him to choose Barabas. On the national plane of God's plan, Israel would be cast away that the nations might be conciliated (Rom.11:15).

JONATHAN AND DAVID

1 Samuel 20 focuses on Jonathan's relationship to David, and reiterates the covenant between them. Viewing this as typical of Israel, it represents God's love for Israel. The difficulty with which David and Jonathan parted should provide us a window of view into the heart of God. Though Israel was hardened and disobedient, they are God's beloved, and their casting away cost Him dearly. Even though Israel is currently cast aside (*cf* Rom.11:15), she will ultimately be saved (Rom.11:26). In God's timing, Israel will fulfill His purpose of that nation being a blessing to all the nations. And God will then find great joy in Israel. The covenant between David and Jonathan represents the faithfulness and love of God.

STONE MEMORIALS

There are a number of stones mentioned in 1 Samuel. Large stones were a natural element to serve as memorials, tables on which to offer sacrifices or places of meeting. The departure stone (20:19,41) is called by that name before David and Jonathan part company. The narrative would have been written at a later time, probably as recounted by David to some scribe. The naming of this stone as the departure stone shows that it was a memorial in the mind and heart of David, and that his covenant with Jonathan before Yahweh was not forgotten. David's treatment of Jonathan's descendants shows his faithfulness to his promise (2 Sam.9). In this respect Mephibosheth represents Israel at Christ's return. God's grace will then be

manifested to Israel, and it will be in view of what caused their casting off, of God's "departure" from them.

EBEN-EZER

Earlier in 1 Samuel we read of another famous stone, Eben-Ezer. Like the departure stone, Eben-Ezer is called by its name before the incident occurred which was responsible for its naming (*cf* 1 Sam.4:1; 5:1; 7:12). Evidently the name Eben-Ezer became affixed to that place and was used to define that location when the history was recorded. But there are also some very interesting correlations between Eben-Ezer and the departure stone.

Eben-Ezer is the name of the place where Israel was encamped to battle with the Philistines (1 Sam.4:1). Israel was sorely losing the battle to the Philistines. The elders of Israel decided to bring the coffer of the covenant to the scene of the battle. Their expectation was that Yahweh would then help them to win the battle. The coffer was brought, and the morale of the Israelites received a tremendous boost, but Israel lost the battle, and the coffer was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam.4:2-11).

How ironic that this place should be named "Stone of the Helper" (1 Sam.7:12), and yet the first mention of the name comes when Israel believed they were insuring themselves of God's help, but they were utterly defeated! And not only were they defeated, but Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were all killed. And in the acute trauma of the situation, Phinehas' wife delivered her son and named him "Ichabod, meaning, the glory has departed from Israel" (1 Sam.4:19-22).

The coffer of Yahweh caused much trouble for the Philistines, and was eventually returned to Israel (1 Sam.5,6). Yet even this did not bring immediate blessing on Israel. It was not for another twenty years, and until Israel became plaintive after Yahweh and repented under Samuel's direc-

tion, that Yahweh showed Himself their Helper. This is described in 1 Samuel 7:1-14.

Israel put away her foreign gods and idols, and convened at Mizpah to seek Yahweh with sincerity. There Samuel sacrificed and prayed for them. The Philistines heard that Israel was gathered, and arrayed themselves to do battle, suspecting that Israel was planning to revolt against their domination. God thundered over the Philistines and discomfited them before Israel. Then Samuel set up the stone, calling it Eben-Ezer, "for he said, Hitherto Yahweh has helped us" (7:12).

THE HEAD OF THE CORNER

This course of events is similar to both the events at the departure stone and also to the events surrounding the coming of Christ. The priesthood was corrupt. Israel was dominated by another country. Israel needed to repent and seek God with a full heart. Christ is both the "stone of stumbling" and the "Head of the corner" (Luke 20:17; 1 Peter 2:7,8) At the rejection of Christ, the glory departed from Israel, and that nation was crushed for rejecting their Head. Yet in the future, Israel will become plaintive after God, and Christ will return as Head of the corner.

The cross of Christ is the place where God is known as mankind's Helper. But it began as the place where mankind rejected God's help. How marvelous it is in our eyes that God brings such glorious good out of our evil (Matt.21:42).

J. Philip Scranton

ALVIN ROBINSON

Our dear friend in the Lord, Alvin Robinson, age 67, of Marietta, South Carolina, was put to repose on October 15. We had known Brother Robinson for many years, and had enjoyed much good fellowship with him, rejoicing together in the all-sufficient grace of God. Alvin, even as his daughter, Debbie Rollins, who survives him, was an unusually kind and gracious believer.

THE WORK OF GOD

IN the Fourth Book (Ecc.7:13-9:15) Ecclesiastes returns to the subject dealt with in Book II—the work of God. There he emphasized the antagonism between good and evil. Here he considers the relation between the two opposites. The opening sentence strikes the keynote of the whole section.

13 **See** `the [d]**work of the** One, **Elohim;**
For [a]**who** |**can** ´ **set in order**¯
`**that which He has overturned?**
14 **In** a **day of good** [b]**be** resting **in** the **good,**
And in a **day of evil, be vigilant;**
[mr]**Indeed the** One, **Elohim, has** [d]**made**
`**this** one ´**along with that** one
[on]**For** this **reason,** [w]**that** `a [h]**man** can**not**
|**find** out **anything** about **his hereafter.**

This is an epitome of the thesis which our author proposes to consider. In accord with God's Word as a whole, the Assembler traces all to God.

A detailed exposition is not in harmony with the suggestive character of these studies. Hence we must content ourselves with noting the general drift of thought and offering a few remarks on the more obscure passages.

Having stated that God has made the day of good along with the day of evil, Ecclesiastes instances familiar experiences supporting the assertion (7:15-22), and then, surveying the totality of things, expresses the conviction that man lacks the power to solve the mystery of the whole.

15 **I have seen `all** this **in my days of vanity:**
There **is** the **righteous** man who **perishes**[l]
in his righteousness,
And there **is** the **wicked** man
who is **prolonged**[l] **in his evil.**
16 **Do not** [lb]**be** [mn]**abundantly**⁻ self-**righteous,**
And do not be thinking **yourself superlatively wise;**
Why should you make **yourself desolate?**
17 **Do not be** [mn]**abundantly**⁻ [l]**wicked,**
and do not [lb]**be frivolous;**
Why should you die [i]**when** it is **not your season?**
18 It is **good** [w]**that you** [l]**hold** [i]**to this,**
And from that [mr]**also do not** [c]**let `your hand** [l]**rest;**
For he who is **fearful of Elohim**
shall come **forth** `from **them all.**
19 ·**Wisdom itself** gives more [l]**strength to** the **wise** man
[f]**Than ten** men of **authority who** [b]**are in** a **city.**
20 **For** there **is no righteous** [h]**man in** the **earth**
Who [l]**does good and nev**er [l]**sins.**
21 **Moreover, to all the words** [w]**that** people [l]**speak**
do not [l]**give your heart**'s attention,
[w]**That you may not hear `your servant**
maledicting you;
22 **For even many** [du]**times your heart knows**
[w]**That you yourself** [mr]**also have maledicted others.**
23 **All this I probed** [i]**by wisdom;**
I said, I shall be wise,
[+]**Yet it** was **far from me;**
24 **Far** away is [wt]**that which has** [b]**been, and deep, deep—**
[a]**Who** can [l]**find it** out?

Accordingly, in what follows, Ecclesiastes endeavors to find a partial solution answering the practical ends of life.

25 **I′** turned **about** [+]**that my heart**
may ›**know**⁻ **and** › **explore**⁻,

+ **That** it may **seek**⁻ out **wisdom and design**
And may ˃ **know**⁻ the **wickedness of stupidity**
and the frivolity in **raving.**
26 + **I found**ˡ more **bitter** ᶠ**than death:**
ˋ**That** kind of ˙**woman whose heart**
is like **weir** traps **and seine** nets,
And **her hands** like **bonds;**
The man doing **well before the** One, **Elohim,**
he shall escape from her,
And the **sinner**ˡ, **he shall be seized** ⁱ**by her.**
27 **See, this** is what **I found, said** the **Assembler:—**
Adding **one** thing **to** an**other to find** a **design,**
28 **Which my soul** ᶠʳ**still sought,** +**but I** could **not find,**
I found one ʰ**man** out ᶠ**of** a **thousand,**
+**Yet I** could **not find** a **woman** ⁱ**among all these—**
29 **See, I found this alone:**
ʷ**That the** One, **Elohim,** ᵈ**made** ˋ**humanity upright,**
+**Yet they**´ **seek many devisings.**

In seeking to understand this portion of Ecclesiastes the student is confronted with a formidable obstacle. The AV translates the noun *cheshbon* in three different ways: "reason" (7:25), "account" (7:27) and, later on, "device" (9:10). In addition, the feminine form of this noun is rendered "invention" in 7:29. It must be evident to the least critical reader that the writer's thought is necessarily obscured when a Hebrew term is represented by such different words in English. When attention is given to the usage of these terms and their adjective and verbal forms it becomes clear that the sense of "device" or "scheme" is in view. [The CV uses "design" when the terms are used of divine or truly wise devisings.]

This whole paragraph, more especially verses 26-28, has occasioned many gratuitous remarks. As regards verse 27 the difficulty lies in determining to what the phrase "one

to one" may refer. Since the topic consistently discussed throughout the section is the relation between good and evil, the likely point is that to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the universe, good and evil must be considered together as parts of the divine plan. This fits with the special scope of this "book," and throws light on many otherwise obscure passages.

Relating the words of verse 28 to verse 26, the idea develops that one God-pleasing man among a thousand succumbing to feminine temptation can be found; a God-pleasing woman among courtesans is not yet found.

In the progress of his quest concerning all that is done under the sun Ecclesiastes has arrived at the truth that God is universally supreme. This conclusion is reached not by a process of consequence-making resting on presumed premises. It is forced upon our thinker by the existing order of things. When his inquiring mind turned from the consideration of the problems of individual experience to the larger problems of the universe, the world seemed a house hopelessly divided into two irreconcilable rival factions scrambling for the mastery. Chaos and anarchy seemed to reign. Then flashes the idea that good and evil are integral parts of one great plan, and therefore must be taken together and considered as a whole. The thought is firmly grasped that God is absolutely the first great cause; absolutely all things are of Him; all things are His servants working out His will. With the dawning of this truth a mighty change steals over Ecclesiastes. He breaks away from his gloomy thoughts, to apostrophize in a tone of rapture the man who has found wisdom:

8 [a]**Who** is **like the wise** man?
And [a]**who knows**[l] the **interpretation of** a **matter?**
Wisdom for a [h]**man** [l]**lightens** up **his countenance,**
And the harsh **strength of his face is** [l]**altered.**

2 **Observe** [7]^the~[c] **king's bidding,**
And that **on** [sp]**account of** the **oath of Elohim.**
3 **Do not be** ˈ**rash** in ˈ**going from his presence;**
Do not ˈ**stand in** an **evil matter,**
For all [w]**that he** ˈ**desires he** ˈ**does.**
4 [i] [w]**Since** a **king's word** has **authority,**
+ [a]**Who** can ˈ**say to him, What are you doing?**
5 He who **observes**ˈ **instruction**
shall know no[t] **evil matter,**
And the **wise heart shall know season and judgment.**
6 **For** there **is season and judgment for every event,**
[t]**Since the evil** for a [h]**man** is [mn]**abundant** up**on him.**
7 **For no** [him]**one knows**ˈ **what** [w] **shall** [b]**come,**
For just as it shall [b]**be,** [a]**who** can ˈ**tell** › **him?**
8 **No** [h]**man** has **authority** [i]**over** the **spirit**
to detain `**the spirit,**
And no one has **authority** [i]**over the day of death;**
+ There **is no dismissal in war,**
And wickedness shall make
no[t] way of **escape** `for **its possessor.**
9 `**All this I have seen and** have [g]**applied**¯ `**my heart**
to all [d]**work** [w]**that is done under the sun,**
At a **season** [w]**when** ·a [h]**man** has **authority**
[i]**over** another [h]**man to his peril;**
10 + **In** [so]**such** a case **I saw** the **wicked entombed**ˈ,
+ Those who used to ¯**come and** ˈ**go**
from the **holy** [ri]**place**
And [7]**were** ˈ**lauded~ in** the **city** [w]**where**
they had done [so]**such** things.
This [mr]**too** is **vanity.**
11 [w]**Because** there **is no sentence**
¯[d]**executed quickly** against **the evil** [d]**deed,**
Therefore the **heart of the sons of humanity**
in them is fully given **to do evil.**
12 [w]**Though** a **sinner**ˈ **does**ˈ a **hundred evils**

and days are **prolonged**[l] **for him,**
[t mr]**Yet I know**[l] [w]**that good shall** [b]**come**
to those **fearful** of **the** One, **Elohim,**
Who stand in [l]**fear** [f] **before Him.**
13 [+]**Yet good shall not** [b]**come to** the **wicked** one,
Nor shall he prolong his **days** which are **like** a **shadow,**
[w]**Because he** [is]**has no fear** [f] **before Elohim.**
14 There **is** another **vanity** [w]**that is done on the earth:**
[w] There **are righteous** men **for whom retribution**[l]
is **according** to the [d]**work of the wicked,**
And there **are wicked** ones **for whom retribution**[l]
is **according** to the [d]**work of the righteous;**
I say [w]**that this** [mr]**too** is **vanity.**
15 [+]**So I' lauded** `**rejoicing,**
[w]**Since** there **is no good for** a [h]**man under the sun**
Save to eat and to drink and to rejoice.
And it' shall be allied with **him in his toil**
through the **days of his life,**
Which the One, **Elohim, gives to him**
under the sun.

The difficulty which many experience with 8:9 arises from considering the verse by itself. The passage becomes clear (though not free from all difficulty) when 8:9-13 is treated as a whole paragraph elaborating one phase of the common argument. The thought is: There is a time (season) when one individual has the power to oppress another. The wicked tyrant who brings evil to another is buried without having received quick sentence for his evil, and the sight of this transitory vanity of providence encourages sin.

Though a sinner does evil, and his days are prolonged, yet I know that good shall come to those who fear God. A paradox: In spite of appearances it is not so; or in spite of individual cases the principle of judgment on the wicked is sound. Ecclesiastes impresses the importance of main-

taining moral principle side by side with our inability to perceive the justice of God's ways.

16 as w**When I** g**applied** `**my heart to know wisdom,**
And to see `**the experience**
w**that is** d**appointed on** ·**earth**
(Even though i**by day and** i **night,**
he**one** is**does not see**| **sleep** i**with his eyes),**
17 +**Then I saw** `in **all** the d**work of the** One, **Elohim,**
That ·a h**man is not** |**able to find** out
`**the** d**work** w**that is done under the sun,**
Forasmuch w**as** ·a h**man may toil** ›**in seeking**‾ it out
+**but shall not find** it;
And even if ·a **wise** man |**says** › he **knows**‾,
he is not |**able to find** it out.
9 **For I** g**laid** `**all this** ›**on my heart,**
and 7**my heart saw**~c `**all this:**
w**That the righteous and the wise and their services**
are **in** the **hand of the** One, **Elohim;**
mr**Whether** it will be **love** mr**or hate,**
·a h**man is not** able to **know**|;
·**Every**thing **before them** is 7**vanity**~.
2 **Just as to all,** there is **one destiny**
for the **righteous** one **and for** the **wicked** one,
For the **good** one 7**and for** the **bad** onecs,
+ **For** the **clean** one **and for** the **unclean** one,
+ **For** the one who **sacrifices**| **and for him**
who is**makes no sacrifice**|,
as**So** it is for the **good** person **as** for the **sinner**|,
For **the** one who **swears**| **just as**
for one **fearful** of an **oath.**
3 **This** is the **evil in all** w**that is done under the sun:**
That one destiny is **for all;**
+ **Moreover** the **heart**
of the sons of humanity is full of **evil,**

And ravings are **in their heart**
*i***throughout their lives,**
+**Yet after it,** they are joined **to the dead**ˈ.
4 *t***Indeed** for **anyone who is** ˈ**joined**
›**with all the living** there **is trust;**
For it is **better to** be a **living cur** *f***than** ˙**a dead**ˈ ˙**lion.**
5 **For the living know**ˈ *w***that they shall die,**
+**But the dead**ˈ **know**ˈ **no**thing **whatsoever;**
+ There **is no further reward for them;**
*t***Indeed remembrance** of **them is forgotten.**
6 *mr***Both their love** *mr***and their hate** *mr***as well as**
their jealousy have perished already,
And there **is no further portion for them for** the **eon**
In all *w***that is done under the sun.**
7 **Go, eat your bread** *i***with rejoicing,**
and drink your wine *i***with good heart,**
For already the One, **Elohim,**
has approved of ›**your** *d***works.**
8 **In every season, let your garments** *b***be white,**
And oil on your head, let it not be lacking.
9 **See life with** a **wife whom you love**
all the **days of your transitory life,**
Which He gives to you under the sun—
all your transitory days,
For this is **your portion in life**
And in your toil *w***that you** are **toiling under the sun.**
10 **All** *w***that your hand** ˈ**finds to do, do** *i***with your vigor,**
For there **is no doing** +**or devising**
+**or knowledge** +**or wisdom**
In the **unseen where***d* **you** are **going.**
11 ¯**Again I**ˊ + **saw**¯ **under the sun**
That the race is **not to** the **fleet,**
Nor the battle to masters of war,
Nor even bread for the **wise,**
Nor even riches for the **understanding,**

Nor even favor for the **knowing,**
For a **season** +**of mischance shall happen**
`to **them all.**
12 **For, moreover,** `a [h]**man** does **not** [l]**know** `**his season;**
Like fish [w]**that** are **held**[l] **in** a **vicious weir,**
And like birds `that are **held**[l] **in** a **snare,**
[as]**So the sons of humanity them**selves
are **trapped**[l] `**by** a **season of evil,**
[as]**When** [w] **it** [l]**falls on them suddenly.**
13 **I** [mr]**also saw this wisdom under the sun,**
And it seemed **great to me:**
14 There was a **small city** +**with** only a **few mortals in it,**
And a **great king came** `**against it**
and surrounded `**it,**
And he built great [7]**siege** works~[cs] [on]**against it.**
15 +**Now** a **man was available in it, provident** [M]**and**[cs] **wise,**
And he´ would have [m]**provided escape**
`for **the city** [i]**by his wisdom,**
+**Yet not** one [h]**person remembered**
`**that** `**provident** `**man.**

ALL OF GOD

The tone of confidence deepens as the thinker advances toward his conclusion. From the vantage point of God's immutable, sovereign "design" he can, with perfect composure, look down upon the "many devisings" of puny men with the assurance that they work out the will of God. Can the knowledge that all things have their origin in a divine forepurpose, that they are under absolute divine control, and that neither wicked men, nor any other evil power, nor all of them combined, can act independent of God, fail to give rest to the heart? Under the shadow of this great truth we may abide in perfect safety.

The word "mischance" is connected with the term "season" in 9:11 and refers to the season, not when things are

favorable to man, but are adverse to him. It is a fresh reiteration of the dominant thought of the book that adverse and favorable seasons take place in accordance with God's pleasure and affect all men alike, irrespective of character, ability or personal accomplishments.

Ecclesiastes dwells with all possible emphasis on the absolute deity of God. Herein lies the reason why his book is neglected and misrepresented. The dualistic theology of Christendom, with its Manichean idea of conflict between two rival deities and its dogma of the permanence of evil, found itself at irreconcilable variance with the absolute supremacy of God postulated by the Assembler. Accordingly, theology contrived to set aside the testimony of this unique book by throwing over it the veil of false interpretation. V. Gelesnoff

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DESTRUCTIVE DELUSIONS

If it is so that God will either annihilate or eternally torment most of His creatures, the thought will arise, Could He not save all His creatures in the past, how can He preserve all His saints in the future? If sin came in and ruined His fair creation against His will, what will hinder a repetition in the eternity to come? Even if we believe His promises, can we rely upon His love and power when they have been fulfilled, and there is no further guarantee? The more closely one considers the false doctrines of annihilation or eternal torment, the more it will be apparent that they make it utterly impossible for God to gain the full confidence of His creatures. A.E.K.

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ELOHIM HAS MADE ALL OUR DAYS

GOOD AND EVIL, we know them both. But as believers in the God of the Scriptures we accept something else also as true. All that is, including both good and evil, must be traced finally to God. "See the work of the One, Elohim . . . . In a day of good be resting in the good, and in a day of evil, be vigilant; Indeed the One, Elohim, has made this one along with that one . . ." (Ecc.7:13,14).

THE VIEWPOINT OF ECCLESIASTES

The book of Ecclesiastes has sometimes been dismissed as a philosophical dissertation that gives a mostly human viewpoint of life, and might even, in certain passages, undermine the divine requirements of moral behavior and devoutness. As a whole, the book does just about the opposite. It relates all human experience, both upright and sinful, both happy and miserable, to the operations of God. It refuses to leave God out of the picture no matter how dark and confused and unpleasant the picture may be.

Now in the "fourth book" (Ecc.7:13-9:15) the Assembler brings up the truth that we all will have good times and bad times in our lives, and the best way to deal with this in the current situation is to rest in the good and keep vigilant in the bad. There are many things in our lives that are intrinsically good and need to be enjoyed as long as they can be (*cf* Ecc.9:7-10). Yet these are uncertain, and mischance and a season of evil are certain to come eventually (9:11,12) That indeed is, by itself, a very human sort of philosophy. But the writer does not treat this by itself. He

has brought up such matters because they are included in "the work of the One, Elohim" (7:13).

The attention given to Elohim in all these considerations of the human experience of good and evil is extremely important. It takes these accounts of human activities, and of human experiences that are apparently allotted unevenly, and places them ultimately in the hands of God. It does not deny the human part in doing deeds of good and evil, but going beyond that it recognizes that God maintains His divine responsibility in it all; He is over all these experiences and is operating all.

LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE AND KNOWING BY FAITH

One of the reasons why there is such confusion about the book of Ecclesiastes is that we have often failed to distinguish what the Assembler has perceived by way of his *investigations* and what he has come to know by *faith.* These often seem contradictory. In his investigations, Ecclesiastes has found, "There is the righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is the wicked man who is prolonged in his evil" (7:15). By his own experience he has observed, "There are righteous men for whom retribution is according to the work of the wicked, and there are wicked ones for whom retribution is according to the work of the wicked" (8:14). Nevertheless, Ecclesiastes *knows* "that good shall come to those who stand in fear before the One, Elohim. Yet good shall not come to the wicked one, nor shall he prolong his days which are like a shadow" (8:12,13). This conviction of eventual settling of accounts is based not on what Ecclesiastes has found by observation but what he has found by his recognition of God in his heart.

What Ecclesiastes has observed with his senses is honestly recorded. But what he knows in his heart is that there

is a God Who is responsible and Who will do the right thing, no matter how much experience may contradict. Present facts observed do not contradict the fact of God and the fact of His righteousness.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH VANITY

This descendant of David, had the time and means to investigate many kinds of human experiences. We might well wonder why, if he were such a wise person, he did not avoid some of the very stupid experiences he sought out. But we must admit that no matter how foolish they were, these experiences were truly characteristic of human behavior.

Fleshly indulgences do produce many problems and corrupt our characters. But it is also true that the wicked sometimes seem to live more comfortably than the righteous.

Of course, no one is truly righteous in the full sense of the term. "There is no righteous man in the earth who does good [absolutely] and never sins" (7:20). It is all very relative. But things are not balanced out perfectly in this life. In our experiences at present, those who are more selfish and grasping may indeed have longer lives and less misery than those who are more God fearing and caring toward others. The only certain equality is death. "Just as to all, there is one destiny for the righteous one and for the wicked one, for the good one and for the bad one, for the clean one and for the unclean one, for the one who sacrifices and for him who makes no sacrifice, so it is for the good person as for the sinner . . . .One destiny is for all; moreover the heart of the sons of humanity is full of evil, and ravings are in their heart throughout their lives, yet after it, they are joined to the dead" (Ecc.9:2,3).

The facts are set before us. And most of us would agree that these are facts of life. But Ecclesiastes does not leave the facts alone in their harsh pessimism. He has insisted that *Elohim* has made our days what they are. And this is

what makes this book so unique, and indeed important to the whole of Scripture as the Word of God.

God would not have us ignore the reality of evil or pretend that it is otherwise than it is. But faith in God and His righteousness puts this reality into the right perspective.

Much of our misunderstanding related to this book is that we think of the term "vanity," so frequently used throughout, as a sort of everlasting uselessness, a kind of annihilation of the experience. This is wrong. Our life and experience are vain in that they do not last; they are transitory. But this is not absolute. In fact, in the light of the truth that God has made both the good and evil experiences, they must have a purpose toward a goal. When the factor of DEITY is brought into the equation, the pessimism turns to a reliance on God to bring about a righteous culmination.

THE SEEING OF THE HEART

But this is, to the Assembler, a matter that he cannot find out by present experience. He knows from the fact of God and the fact of human sin and suffering that there must be a setting right. But as far as the work of Elohim is concerned, he learned "that a man is not able to find out the work that is done under the sun, forasmuch as a man may toil in seeking it out but shall not find it; and even if a wise man says he knows, he is not able to find it out" (8:17).

The wise Assembler says he knows that God will judge, and that He will judge justly. But he has not found it out in all his searchings. Experience says otherwise, but a recognition of God in the heart brings us to the conclusion that God is operating and will judge rightly and will deal triumphantly with present vanity. "For I laid all this on my heart, and my heart saw all this: That the righteous and the wise and their services are in the hand of the One, Elohim" (Ecc.9:1). All will die, and "the dead know nothing what-

soever . . . and there is no further portion for them for the eon" (Ecc.9:3-6). But there is that which the Assembler has not observed by experience, and which rests on God, and goes beyond the eon.

The experiences of Ecclesiastes would all lead toward pessimism and despair. His honest account of what he perceived with his senses would strengthen a conclusion of meaninglessness. But he does not reach that conclusion. This is because of his faith, of the seeing of his heart. Because of this he knows that all human experience is finally in the hand of God. This is the solid foundation of the Assembler's knowledge of a righteous outcome to things, despite his accumulation of indisputable evidence in the present life against such an assurance.

Because of the evidence of God's presence within Israel, His personal dealings with them and their enemies and His personal word to them, the Assembler's faith in God was based more on sight and experience, more like that of Thomas (*cf* John 20:24-30), than it is for us today. But we may also say that we have a greater revelation of God's purpose for good than Ecclesiastes had because we have become acquainted with Christ. What is important for us from this book is its testimony that reliance on God as Deity over all things, both good and evil, is a great blessing.

We cannot prove from our experiences that there is a pattern of order and meaning and value in life. But we believe there is and have good reason for believing so. We believe that God will reward good acts and condemn wicked acts. And we will go much further now that we are believing that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners. The revelation of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ trains us to praise God as our Saviour and as the Saviour of all mankind. This is the testimony of God's evangel to us, and this is what we believe.

D.H.H.

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