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**UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1998
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-NINE**

EDITORIAL

GOD does the unexpected. He creates the heavens and earth, and He also creates evil (Gen.1:1; Isa.45:7). He allows Satan to bring great suffering to His servant Job, and when He finally speaks to Job about this, without referring to Satan, He tells him of *His own* responsibility in similar cases among animals. He is in charge of all things, including the groaning and travailing of the creation.

It is God Who directs Samuel to anoint Saul as king, then rejects Saul and transfers His spirit to David. He locks up all in stubbornness that He might be merciful to all.

Who would have predicted that God would choose Jacob to be the father of His special, twelve-tribed people? Who would have supposed that in instructing Israel of His *will*, it was God's *intention* that the nation would fail to do His will? Who would have guessed that in sending His Son to save sinners it would be His counsel that the Son be crucified and that this death should be the basis of the promised salvation?

Furthermore, who would have foreseen that just when all God's promises of blessing for His chosen people seemed about to be fulfilled following the death and resurrection of His Son, God would commission a blaspheming enemy of His Son to bring an evangel of grace and peace, on the basis of the Son's death and resurrection, to the nations? Who would have thought He would have designated beforehand and begin calling out from Israel and the nations, a motley group of people like us, wholly and obviously undeserving, and grant us transcendent blessings of grace and peace and glory?

Earlier this month I stood at the bedside of a young man,

Damon Klinger, as he fought for breath while his body struggled vainly to rid itself of the leukemia cells that filled his bloodstream. It had seemed to me in recent years that God would deliver this talented youth from his sickness and grant the mercy given to Paul and the Philippians regarding Epaphroditus (Phil.2:27). Damon felt so, too. Consequently, it was with great perplexity (*cf* 2 Cor.4:8) that Damon cried out on his deathbed, "I did not think it would come to this!"

While death is everywhere and in us all, it seemed especially untimely for Damon that day. Yet it came to him a few hours later.

All is out of God.

Here unbelievers (and some of our brethren as well) will exclaim that if we think this is of God, and is included in His intention, then they will have no part with us in such faith. But Job, who never imagined that God would bring him into such severe afflictions and losses, only turned the more intensely to God and clung the more tenaciously to His words. So also Damon's perplexity never deflected him from his reliance on the living God Who is the Saviour of all mankind.

Consequently, we thanked God together for the gift of His Son, Whose death, alone of all deaths, speaks of good news as the means for the abolishing of death and the assuring of immortal and incorruptible life.

It is not that God's ways are different from our ways for no reason or purpose other than to prove He is God. He acts unexpectedly from our standpoint. But He does not act arbitrarily. God created evil and brought affliction to God-fearing Job and counseled the crucifixion of His Son for the gaining of good that could not have come by any other means. This carrying out of His intention for the achievement of His will does prove that He is God. But it also brings countless blessing finally to everyone.

All is out of God, but all is through Him and for Him as well. To Him be the glory!
D.H.H.

Concordant Studies

GOD'S WILL AND INTENTION

IN translating the ninth of Romans, verse nineteen, I felt almost as if the text before me was faulty. It should surely read, "who hath resisted His will?" Yet the word is not *will*, but *intention*. There seemed so little difference, at the time, that I did not appreciate the concordant rendering myself. Since then I have been most thankful for it. It helps to solve one of the deepest difficulties and contradictions connected with the place and problem of evil. To the question, Who hath resisted His will? we may answer, *Many*, if not all. But to the query, Has anyone withstood His intention? the reply is the opposite, for *no one* can thwart Him. Even when withstanding His will we are fulfilling His intention.

ROMANS NINE

There are not many passages in God's Word like the ninth of Romans. Seldom are we taken behind the scenes into the realm of the absolute. Much in this chapter *seems* to contradict other portions of the Scriptures, because they deal with processes, as seen by man, while this is concerned with causes, known only to God. God has a goal. In order to reach it He must have had absolute control from the beginning. All the intervening process, no matter what it may appear to be to men, must be the working out of His original intention. He is the great Potter. His creatures are clay. This is true only in regard to God's intention. Viewed in relation to His will they are not at all the passive material suggested by the clay. "Ye will *not*" (*cf*

Matt.23:37) describes man's antagonistic attitude toward God's revealed will.

The case of Pharaoh is the classic example of the chasm between God's will and His intention. His revealed will was very plain. "Let My people go!" It seemed to be fulfilled in the liberation of Israel. But no one who reads the account and believes it can escape the conviction that God's intention included more than His revealed will, and that it involved opposition to that will. This much might be easily inferred if Pharaoh had been hard-hearted enough to play his part. It is put beyond doubt by the action of God in hardening his heart.

God's revealed will was limited to the release of Israel. His intention was to display His own power and glorify His Name in all the earth. This is given us as a specimen of His complete purpose and of the process by which He will attain it. Mankind does not comply with His will; His saints do not comprehend His intention. Yet He uses both the opposition and the ignorance to effect His object. No doubt many in Israel were fervently praying that Pharaoh's heart would soon soften, and he would let them go. God's answer to their prayer was to harden his heart. They sighed for salvation. He wrought with a view to His own glory.

It takes little imagination to picture this scene. Its continuous repetition during the first three eons makes it most important to our spiritual welfare. The same conflicting forces are at work today. It is quite conceivable how the saints would have managed the affair. They would have implored Yahweh to compel Pharaoh to let them go. Perhaps they would call a grand prayer meeting for this purpose. Perhaps they would set aside a week of intercession. "We know not what to pray for" was as true of them as of us. Perhaps they would be "definite" in their petitions, and insist that He melt the heart of the king, and so remove his opposition.

How much there is of this today! Many brethren unite in great "world movements," seeking to soften the heart of mankind, trying to do away with sin, seeking to abolish the many evils that harass us, uniting against war and vice and corruption, for all of these are against the revealed will of God. These efforts, we are told, are *practical*. They are not mere theory, words without works. Of what use is such an article as this, for example, to stem the tide of iniquity? Using the same figure, I would advise all that the tide will become the highest in all history, and that no human effort will be able to stop it, for it is necessary to fulfill God's intention.

The Israelites hoped Yahweh would soften Pharaoh's heart. What they wished was to quietly slip out of Goshen into the promised land. They wanted none of the terrible signs. They did not ask for the passover. Surely they would not have entered the trap which threatened to destroy them. They did not ask for the miraculous passage through the Sea. The forty years in the wilderness was not of their choosing. The most illustrious epoch in their history was forced upon them. It was a continuous exhibition of disobedience to God's will. Yet who doubts for a moment that it was in line with His purpose?

GOD'S WISDOM AND POWER

Now that all is past and we can get a true perspective of these events, who would prefer to have Israel's prayer answered? It was not necessary to soften Pharaoh's heart. It was too soft already. If it had not been hardened the exodus would have been a flat, uninteresting story, with no outward manifestations of Yahweh's power of love. Its glory would be gone. Its God would be unknown. The wisdom and power of Egypt must be exposed by conflict with the wisdom and power of God. His attributes must be revealed by contrast with the mightiest and wisest of humankind.

The antitype of this marvelous period of Israel's history lies just before us, only the miraculous manifestations will be far more wonderful than of old. God is today hardening the world's heart in preparation for that epoch. Men are approaching the wisdom of ancient Egypt in their knowledge of nature, and are far surpassing it in power. Shall Yahweh weaken them before using them as a foil to display His might? Rather it is His wisdom to harden their hearts, so that, in opposing His will, they may fulfill His ultimate intention.

MAN'S WILL, AND GOD'S

Too often we are told that, if man has no free will, he is a mere automaton. This is a mistake. The so-called "freedom" consists merely in the lack of *conscious* coercion. Being ignorant of the constraining or restraining influences which determine his conduct, and altogether unaware of ulterior forces, he subconsciously *yields* at the very time that he imagines he is most independent. His freedom of will is simply ignorant unconsciousness or submission to environment or heredity.

In relation to the will of God, men are consciously independent. They can accept it or reject it, and imagine that no other force but the divinity enthroned within them has anything to do with their decision. But when we find the niche assigned them in God's intention they are (thank God!) the most utterly dependent slaves of circumstance it is possible to imagine. It will be found that, throughout their lives, they were not more masters of their fate than they were of the date and details of their birth.

The doctrine of man's free will peoples the earth with a race of puny gods. We object to the dual gods of Persia or the many deities of the Greek and Roman pantheon, yet these ancient pagans never rose to the absurdity of making every man a god. The possession of a free, untrammelled,

unconquerable will is the exclusive attribute of deity. Only One God can possess it. Our blessed Lord Himself did not claim it. He came, not to do His own will, but the will of Him Who had sent Him.

ILLUMINATION OF DEITY

The failure to recognize both the divine will and the divine intention has led to incalculable confusion and misunderstanding. Those who reject God's intention rob Him of His godhood and deify man. Those who confuse His intention with His revealed will make of Him a love-lacking tyrant, a hard-hearted monster. Others, who wish to believe all the Scriptures have to say, are not clear how to harmonize His character, with the presence of sin, especially when it becomes evident that sin has a place in the attainment of His ultimate purpose.

All evil and every sin reverses its character completely when we take it from the limited light of God's revealed will to the universal illumination of His intention. This is the reason that we do not hesitate to believe the Scriptures that all is of God. No sin remains such when completely illumined by His intention. It is a failure, a sin, and subject to dire penalties when man commits it, but it is no longer a mistake when it finds its place in God's purpose. The same act which brings shame and dishonor on the creature, when subjected to the divine alchemy, is transmuted into a source of glory and peace to God.

Such general observations are apt to be dismissed as bordering on blasphemy. But let anyone take the great sins in the Scriptures and ponder all their aspects. Each one is essential to God's plan. But it is better to be specific. Pharaoh is the great sinner in this scene. He is the one who opposes God's expressed desire. Make him willing or compliant with God's command, and what is left? In that case God would have failed in His object. To avoid this He

finds it necessary to stiffen the opposition. *Yahweh hardens Pharaoh's heart in order that he may sin against Him!* Some insist that God cannot have such a close connection with sin. They would prefer to fix the blame on Pharaoh, or on Satan. But, while Yahweh directly causes Pharaoh to sin, *by doing so He Himself avoids failure of sin.*

NEED FOR CAREFUL DISCRIMINATION

Any lack of discrimination when speaking on these themes is likely to cause confusion. The same statement may be both true and false. Two directly contradictory assertions may both be true or both be false, according as they are related to God's will or to His intention. A beloved brother, who had been meditating on these things, made the statement that Adam's "fall" was really a fall upward. I would strenuously object to such a suggestion, apart from explanation. Adam's sin and transgression and offense were very bad and degrading when viewed as disobedience to God's will. When associated with the work of Christ and God's ultimate purpose it was the very best he could have done. Even its immediate effects were not all evil, for he obtained a knowledge of good, impossible in his previous condition.

So with sin as a whole. We almost dread to speak of it in relation to God's ultimate, for few, even of His beloved saints, have seen behind the scenes, and almost any assertion would be false if related to His revealed will. Is sin good? *No!* It is the worst thing in the world. No words can express our horror and detestation of it. Is sin good? *Yes!* Not, indeed, in itself, but its effect will be beneficent beyond anything else this world can give, when combined with the mediatorial work of Christ and the reconciliation of which it is the occasion.

Perhaps this is why some beloved brethren insist that I teach that God sins, or is the Author of sin. I have never said this or even thought it, so far as I am aware. If I have

unwittingly done so, I humbly retract and recant. But I am informed that various passages in my writings on this subject imply it, though they do not express it in so many words. When I review these passages, I do not see the implication. I did not intend such a thought. I did not express it. To my own consciousness, I did not even imply it. Some inferred from the apostle Paul's teaching that they should do evil that good may come. *If he* could be misunderstood, I count it an honor to be in the same condemnation.

But what is an implication? Is it not the result of combining what we think with another's statement? It is reasoning from two premises, one our own and one supplied by another. In its crudest form the argument may be stated thus: I believe that all is of God. My inquirers insist that sin is part of the "all." Therefore, I believe that God sins. It seems very logical *to them*. I may object and say that I do not concur in their conclusions. I may even say that my premise is not mine, but God's. But no. My scheme is simply an attempt to exonerate Satan and prepare people for the homage which he will demand at the time of the end! Away with such a fellow from the earth!

This places me in a strange position. I cannot but consider their deduction a mistake in logic, a transgression of morals, and even an offense. In short, it is a full-orbed sin. I am eager to acknowledge, however, that it is of God. But even my small mind, weakened by overwork, and dulled by distress, has not the slightest difficulty in discriminating between the human and the divine aspect of these acts. God is making no mistakes. His servants are. He will justify their injustice, not because they are in line with His will, but because they are carrying out His intention. I have no hesitation in thanking God for this distressing antagonism, for I know that in His hands it is no error. Truth as this needs opposition for its development and dissemination. It takes friction to rub off the rust of centuries.

The difficulty seems to be that we cannot easily view an act from its moral character. We do not readily see that no act is sinful in itself, but in its relations. The act of plucking and eating fruit is not necessarily a sin. Yet it was humanity's primal error. The mistake lay in its relation to the God Who had forbidden it. If He had commanded it, it would have been commendable. Now that we know that it was essential to His intention, that He had provided for it before it occurred, that He arranged everything so that it should occur, we see that, though it was a sin in relation to His will, it was no mistake in view of His benevolent intention.

THE LAW

Perhaps the greatest example of the distinction between God's will and His intention is found in the law promulgated from Sinai. Yahweh made known His will in a complete code of laws, besides the condensed commandments which were carved in stone. The Jew, who was resting on law, is said to "know the will" (Rom.2:18). But if it was God's intention that the nation should keep the law, it certainly was a dismal failure on His part. They broke its greatest precept before it reached them.

But, though the failure of the law seems to be contrary to the will of God, it actually was a fulfillment of His intention. It was really given that "every mouth may be barred, and the entire world may become subject to the just verdict of God, because by works of law, no flesh shall be justified in His sight, for through law is the recognition of sin" (Rom.3:19,20). The law which, ostensibly, was to deter from sinning, actually was given for the detection of sin. It was given to prove that no one could keep it. Beneath the revelation of God's will in it was His intention that it should not be kept, but should accomplish its object through its infraction.

"Law crept in that the offense should be increasing" (Rom.5:20). How differently did Israel, at Sinai, feel about it! They were quite sure that they would greatly lessen the distance between themselves and Yahweh by their obedience to His precepts. Why had He told them what He wanted them to do and to avoid unless it was His will to carry out His instructions? The *will* of Yahweh was clear. But His *intention* was quite concealed. He could not make known His intention at that time without frustrating it.

SIN

This should help us in considering the larger question of sin. Sin is always against the revealed will of God. No one can possibly find any excuse for sinning so far as His expressed precepts are concerned. Both conscience and nature add their voice to restrain us from wrong. But we do sin. How can we be *justified* unless the sin is, in some sense, justifiable? We know that it is God's intention to draw His creatures into loving intimacy with Himself through sin and a Saviour. We know that the temporary term of sin will leave the world infinitely richer in the knowledge and appreciation of God. It will bring God immeasurable treasures of love and adoration. As a whole, its results vindicate its presence for a time. What is true of all sin must be true of every sin.

This truth is the foundation of the doctrine of justification. Because it has been lost, justification has also disappeared, or has been degraded to a pardon or an "imputed" fiction. Few believe that God actually justifies believers. They imagine He only alters the court records, so that no one can legally prove their guilt. It is of the utmost comfort and satisfaction to know that all that we have done is vindicated by the part it plays in carrying out His intention. Do not let anyone sell you an imitation justification! God's is the actual, the genuine, the precious reality.

THE CONSUMMATION

All that the usual theology has to offer us at the consummation, even in the saved, is a partial, patched, repaired and repainted universe. The song of the saints will be in a minor key, "I was a *guilty* sinner." Their joy will be clouded by eternal regret and shame for their part in the tragedy of the eons. The eonian times will be the eyesore of eternity. Oh! if they only had not been! And so will God's wisdom and power be questioned, and His glory dimmed, for He Himself must be the chief culprit in the collapse of His creation.

But away with such unworthy thoughts! The consummation will not reveal a patched, but a perfected universe. We will not be worrying about our past sins, but overwhelmed with God's wisdom and love in their vindication. Much as they distress us now, much as we fear them and avoid them and dread the very possibility of further sin, God will see to it that they will leave no stain, no blot to mar the bliss eternal, but will blend into His benign designs, and discover to a delighted universe the delicious depths of love which could not be displayed by any others device, or appreciated by any other plan.

This teaching is also the substructure for a mature experience in the things of God. It gives stability, a calm confidence in the face of the chaotic conditions which surround and engulf us. We are not worried, as once we were, by the awful opposition to God's will, nor do we fear for the fulfillment of His purpose. The flood tide of evil and sin, however contrary to His will it may be at present, is essential and indispensable to His intention and the ultimate realization of His will.

He is the great Alchemist Who will transmute everything into glorious gold by contact with the accursed tree.

A. E. Knoch

That Now May be Made Known

"TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST"

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

The apostle Paul bowed his knees to God that we be made staunch and strong, through His spirit, to grasp the marvelous wonder of so great a revelation. A secret is not a mystery as the King James version translates the Greek word *musterion*, but what is mysterious to each one of the ecclesia is why God chose us for so high an honor and privilege. We marvel that He should graciously answer the further prayer that we grasp, ". . . together with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ as well which transcends knowledge—that you may be completed for the entire complement of God" (Eph.3:17-19).

Our service has already commenced! Sovereignties and authorities among the celestials who perceive and resent our future displacement of their privilege and powers, are in present conflict with the body of Christ. Working through flesh and blood, these are our real adversaries.

This was a matter of such grave concern to the apostle that he went to great lengths to urge: "Take up the panoply of God that you may be enabled to withstand in the wicked day" (Eph.6:13). This present time in which we live is, for us, that "wicked day"!

All the armament, described by the apostle as being vital during our severe conflict with these mighty beings, is defensive, for in this eon we wrestle "... with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world might of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials" (Eph.6:12). In a distinctly honored way, very similar to the privilege accorded the apostle Paul, "... God demonstrates with us "... as death-doomed, for we became a theater to the world and to messengers and to men" (1 Cor.4:9). This is not our time to reign, but we all "... with uncovered face, mirroring the Lord's glory, are being transformed into the same image, from glory to glory" (2 Cor.3:18).

A SPECIAL ACT

The concept of us, "... conformed to the body of His glory" (Phil.3:21) must seem, to our finite minds, to be beyond belief. "Yet we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). Moreover, although there is a becoming modesty in such incredulity, it should always be remembered that when God created man, it was a very special act: For God said "Let us make humanity in Our image, and according to Our likeness" (Gen.1:26).

"It is hard to express in human words all that it must have meant to God when He created this wonderful creature in His own image. Man had to be god-like to such an extent that the Christ could become Man without sacrificing His real status Once we grasp that we were made in order that Christ could, in our form and likeness, reveal to the universe what God is, what He Himself is,

and what Satan is, we can only bow our heads in adoration. Such a vision, once it dawns upon us, is overwhelming. It is an answer to the question of our existence that surpasses in its marvellous grandeur all human explanations, as God's wisdom surpasses ours. But there it is, hidden in the Scriptures."¹

CHANGE AND DECAY

Reflecting on such wonder, I recalled an incident which occurred many years ago in the land of Egypt. For well over an hour I had stood before the great pyramid of Cheops (original name, "Khufu") at El Giza, on the west bank of the river Nile, opposite the city of Cairo. I was contrasting the countless centuries which had elapsed since God's choice of us in Christ, with the comparative brief span of years for all such monuments. Passing through my mind were the words, "Change and decay in all around I see." This tomb was built with over six million tons of stone, 4,500 years ago, and has excited the interest of King Cyrus of Persia; Alexander, king of Macedon, Gaius Julius Caesar, Napoleon, and millions of tourists. Try as I would, I just could not grasp the sheer immensity of such an amazing construction, and I was about to ease the increasing ache in my neck, when a little Egyptian boy requested a few piasters for climbing to the top of the pyramid, where, he solemnly promised he would wave to me. This little gesture seemed to put everything in proper perspective.

I watched his rapid progress for some time, but eventually, when he had climbed over 450 feet, it was not possible to discern his happy smile and his cheerful, waving hand. When he arrived at the summit however, he danced about, waving both arms to me, far below. Acknowledging his salute, I observed him begin the descent and then I

1. *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.35, p.233.

turned away, awaiting his return. Nearby, I was intrigued with a huge hole which had been painstakingly hacked out of the bedrock. There was no mistaking the shape of a boat, but imagine my surprise to note not only the impression of the length and wide beam of the hull, but the clear evidence of the shape of wheels! Of course, the vessel was long gone, but I wonder if this vessel was used to convey huge slabs of marble, which I am given to understand once encased the whole of this impressive heap of stone? Imagine this vast mausoleum thus blindingly reflecting rays of the midday sun. Further, was this same lovely covering and spectacle in place when our Lord was taken as a little Boy to this land?

ON A MANTELPIECE

I was thinking about that amphibious vehicle used in the second world war and known by the code name DUKW, when my attention was distracted by a curious clinking sound. There were tourists nearby, and the activity of one lady was quite incredible. Wielding a small, metal, toffee hammer, once used by many confectioners, she was surreptitiously chipping away at one of the enormous base stones of the pyramid! My immediate reaction was one of horror, but then, as I heard my young friend call, “Effendi!, Effendi!,” I shook my head, smiled, and handed the lad the promised reward. Once more, through this incident of vandalism, my thoughts were brought to earth with a dull thud as I reflected that in this present generation, a small portion of the former glories of great and mighty Egypt now has pride of place on some humble mantelpiece.

To show his gratitude, little Metwali; for that was his name, duly escorted me from the “boat grave,” explaining that this had been prepared for the sacred *dhow* which had been used in transportation on the surface of the river Nile and across the remaining ground. With my limited

grasp of the Arabic language and his impressive command of English words, he explained where the ancient queens had been buried, and thence we arrived at the huge statue of a sphinx. The head of this is reputed to be a carved portrait of the fourth-dynasty Pharaoh, Chephren. During our progress, Metwali evidently indicated that he would brook no nonsense from the many vociferous would-be escorts, and we were left in peace. Sadly, the time came for us to part, but not before he had taught me the sound of our Lord’s name—in his language: “Eesa!” At least, that is what it sounded like. I often wonder what became of this sincere and happy boy, who reflected the mind of his Creator there in that scene of splendid decay that so well reflected the transitoriness of human glory.

“HOT IN YOUR EYES”

Earlier that same day I had spent the dawn hours in quiet meditation. I had read the denouement of that heart-breaking scene when Joseph made himself known to his brothers:

“At this, Joseph was no longer able to check himself before all who were stationed by him, and he called out: ‘Have every man go out from me.’ So no one stayed with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. He raised his voice in lamentation, and the Egyptians heard it; and Pharaoh’s house heard about it.

“Joseph said to his brothers: ‘I am Joseph. Is my father still living?’ But his brothers were not able to answer him, for they were flustered at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers: ‘Now come closer to me.’ When they came close, he said, ‘I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold to Egypt. And now do not be grieved nor let it be hot in your eyes that you sold me hither, because Elohim has sent me on before you for the preservation of life’” (Gen.45:1-5).

Thus Joseph, son of Jacob by Rachel, discloses his under-

standing of the grim suffering which he had endured. All at the hand of Elohim!

“The treatment of Joseph by his brothers is a precious type of the death and resurrection of the Son of God. Joseph’s brothers did not actually kill him, even as Abraham did not slay Isaac, but in both cases, there was the intent of the heart, which is what counts with God. The brothers typify the nation which brought Christ’s blood upon their heads. Jacob represents the Father, and Joseph the Son.

“It must be noted that the only ones who suffered unjustly because of this sin are the ones who did not commit it. Jacob had no hand in the crime, yet he suffered from its effects. The loss of his son caused anguish of heart which but feebly reminds us of the awful gulf which separated the Father and His beloved at Golgotha.”²

DELIGHT AND SORROW

What possible significance will the above phrase and condition of “hot in your eyes” have for denizens of the celestial realms whom we shall instruct? How curious they now must be to observe and trace the many causes of tears which overflow! Judging from their present conflict with believers, we will need to administer severe measures to change their present course.

“Oh, all-embracing mercy, how could I ask for more?
 What shall I do without Thee, when heart and eyes run o’er?
 When all things seem against me, to drive me to despair
 I know Thy heart is open, and Thou shall hear my prayer.”

But how shall we make known the multifarious wisdom and love of God to these “morning stars and sons of God,” who, when the foundations of the earth were laid, were capable of singing and shouting for joy at every new creation, yet who lacked the capacity to perceive God not only

2. A. E. Knoch, THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, p.164.

as the embodiment of might, but also as the embodiment of love? Not all of these celestial beings rebelled against God and His Son, for when the birth of our Saviour was proclaimed at Bethlehem, the loyal element perceived the divine solution to their problems, and were unable to contain their joyous acclamation of praise.

Is there any kind of relationship among the celestials that thus they might comprehend our praise and wonder of the sacred filial tie between Father and Son? How shall we even attempt to describe our own delight with God’s grace, manifested against the deep sorrow of bereavement which we suffer? How explain the crippling pains which wrack these mortal, human, decaying frames? There is only one way. Love’s gracious example! Paul declared: “Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing—forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:13,14). Shall the observers of such devotion have learned nothing at all through the manifestation of love in our Lord’s life and the corresponding complete commitment in the apostle’s adoration?

Whenever we think of the sacrifice and suffering of our Lord at Golgotha, our thoughts are now no longer restricted to our salvation which was thus secured; but rather do we rejoice in the reconciliation which embraces us in our Father’s wonderful love. Through the most searching disqualification of all and any human righteousness, we have obtained a righteousness apart from law. “. . . 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).

Through this experience we have learned to concentrate on God’s complete and wonderful purpose to be All in all! Rather than remaining preoccupied with our mis-

erable selves, we are now vitally concerned with the glorious evangel which we will rejoice to bring to the monarchs and rulers among the celestials. Our earnest instruction will certainly carry the unmistakable ring of authority. We shall teach that which we have learned in the stern yet loving school of suffering and endurance.

“No trial has taken you except what is human. Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are able, but, together with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable you to undergo it” (1 Cor.10:13). Our rule over these sovereignties and principalities among these same celestials, will not be eternal. Our rule is eonian. All sovereignty, as well as authority and power will be abrogated at the consummation.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

Our loving God and Father will ensure that we shall not require either armament or shield in that day. With Satan effectively prevented from any future interference, we shall as lovingly as possible, enforce obedience, but our primary task will be to disclose—even as our Lord during the full course of His faithful ministry on earth—the multifarious wisdom and love of His blessed Father.

“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 glory in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen!” (Eph.3:21,21).

Donald Fielding

Our sister, **Marion Tenniswood**, of Melvin, Michigan, was put to repose on March 5 at age 81. She was a motherly woman who considered the traits of Titus 2:4,5 perfectly logical and harmonious in view of Christ’s death on her behalf. We join with her husband and our brother, Clint, and their six children and their families in sorrow over her death and in the joyful expectation promised in God’s Word.

Questions and Answers

FOREKNOWLEDGE AND SALVATION

For, not as yet being born, nor putting into practice anything good or bad, that the purpose of God may be remaining as a choice, not out of acts, but of Him Who is calling . . . (Rom.9:11)

Question:

“WHEN I was in Bible school at Bethany Fellowship, Minneapolis, they taught us that to be chosen before the ‘foundation of the world’ (AV) referred only to the service that God would have us serve in and not to our salvation at all.

“Bethany teachers taught us that God chose for salvation only those that He knew beforehand would choose Jesus, and only in that sense did He choose anyone for salvation. They maintained that any reference to God choosing us first refers only to how He wants us to serve Him after we choose Him.

“They insist that the only way God can truly be glorified in our salvation, is if we choose Him of our own ‘free will.’ Hence they further claim that grace is something that God gives us to use, or not use, to get ourselves saved. We are responsible for how (or even if) we use grace; hence, we are responsible for whether or not we are saved.

“Can you help me better answer their argument? Surely the idea of ‘free will’ does not glorify *God* at all; in fact, it does just the opposite. Still, it often bothers me that I don’t know how to respond to such claims, other than to say that grace wouldn’t be grace if our salvation depended on our choice.”

Answer:

YOUR REPLY in stating that “grace wouldn’t be grace if our salvation depended on our choice,” is certainly correct, and is an excellent start in responding to such mistaken claims as those advocated by Bethany Fellowship and indeed by the vast majority of Christian teachers.

In order to gain a true understanding of such issues we must first of all define our terms according to their scriptural usage. The terms in question are “reward” and “grace.” This is vital, for it is from the day on which we hear and realize “the *grace* of God *in truth*,” that the word of *the truth* of the evangel begins bearing fruit and growing in us (Col.1:5,6).

A reward (or a wage) is a provision granted in return for obedience or service. A Rewarder acts in *reciprocity*, on a *quid pro quo* (this *for* that) basis. Whether explicitly or implicitly, the Rewarder declares to the one to whom he gives a reward, “Because you *did* what I *required* in order to *qualify* for my reward, I now give it to you” (*cf* Rom.4:4).

Conversely, a gracious gift is a provision that is *not* granted in return for obedience or service, but simply in order to bring joy to the one thus blessed. Considerations of fulfillment of requirement or achievement of qualification, are foreign to the concept of a gracious gift. The basis of a gracious gift is found in the will and purpose of the Giver, not in any consideration of the acts of the one to whom the gracious gift is given. Hence, a gracious gift is *not* granted in reciprocity, out of obligation, on a *quid pro quo* basis. Whether explicitly or implicitly, the gracious Giver declares to the one to whom he gives a gracious gift, “I give it to you apart from any consideration of your acts, simply because it pleases me to do so, according to my own will and purpose” (*cf* Rom.11:2b-6; *cp* Luke 6:32-35).

It is far from the truth to affirm that God, in choosing us before the “disruption of the world” (CV; i.e., before sin

entered the scene), did not choose *us*, much less choose us for salvation, but simply chose the service in which He would have us serve, leaving this, of course, to our “free wills” as to whether we should ever do so.

Further, the grace in view here given to us does not consist of some means to be used or not used by ourselves in order to qualify us for salvation, but of the very blessings of salvation themselves which God has appointed for us.

The facts are these: The apostle Paul writes, “To all the saints who are also believers in Christ Jesus [lit., ‘(to all the saints,) the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus’]: . . . Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . *He chooses us . . .*” (Eph.1:1-4a).

“[God] chooses us in [Christ] . . . *to be* holy and flawless in His sight, in love *designating us beforehand for the place of a son* for Him through Christ Jesus” (Eph.1:4,5). He does so, “in accord with [*kata*, DOWN, i.e., on a basis of] the delight of *His will*, for the laud of the glory of *His grace*” (Eph.1:6).

We “are called according to the *purpose* that, whom He *foreknew*, He *designates 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.8:29,30).

This is the “salvation” for which we are chosen and unto which we are called. Having now called us, He justifies us and will yet glorify us also, as sons of God, holy and flawless in His sight.

It is not that God “foreknew” something *about* us, but that He foreknew *us*. Even as we *are* “known” by Him *now* (1 Cor.8:3), we already *were foreknown* by Him *then*, when He designated us beforehand to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Even if it were so that the revelation here had in view “knowledge *about* us,” and this was in reference to a divine prior knowledge of our future acts, this would not make such acts “free,” but rather inevitable. This is because foreknowledge of events, entails the inevitable occurrence of those very events which are foreknown. It cannot be *known* that an event *will* occur, if perhaps it will not occur. Yet events said to be events of free will, by the very nature claimed for them, are events which may or may not occur, concerning which knowledge of their future existence is therefore impossible, even by one who has a perfect knowledge of all that is a proper object of knowledge.

When “knowledge” is used concerning a fact, it is literal; but when, as here in Romans 8:29, it is used concerning a person, it is figurative. To “know” a person is to have a relationship with that person, even as Adam knew Eve, or God knew Israel alone, of all the nations of the earth.

In the counsels of God, we were already chosen and so “known” of Him before the disruption of the world. Thus, in a proleptic sense, God’s “foreknowing” us, is the practical equivalent of His fore-blessing us. In His determinate counsels, we, whom He designated beforehand for glory, already had a “relationship” with Him, when He then pre-designated us to be called, justified, and glorified. Now, being *justified* in Christ’s blood, we shall be *saved* from indignation through Him (Rom.5:9). Likewise, having been conciliated to God through the death of His Son, we shall be *saved* in His life (Rom.5:10).

Accordingly, God has graciously granted a measure of faith to all whom He calls (Rom.12:3; Phil.1:29), overwhelming¹ their unbelief with faith and love in Christ Jesus (1 Tim.1:14). The essence of the faith of God’s cho-

1. It is idle to say that if this be so, God is guilty of violating our rights—as if perpetual rejection of God’s truth were a matter of

sen ones, whom He calls and justifies, is that Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor.1:24). Those who can truly say from the heart that, to them, Christ is indeed thus, therein find assurance of their calling. Their faith does not qualify them for their place in Christ; it rather affords them assurance that they themselves are included among God’s chosen ones.

Therefore, whatever the nature of the human will and of any sense in which we may be “responsible” to God for our deeds, such questions simply have no place in the matter of our election, of our having been *chosen* of God unto the end of the glorious salvation which He has appointed for us. It is contradictory to the evangel of grace to hold a position which entails it being so that we are somehow “free” to choose contrary to the blessings of that very evangel. Since it is God Who “*graciously* grants us all” of these blessings (Rom.8:32), namely, the blessings of being foreknown, designated beforehand, called, justified, and glorified, *He alone is responsible for our possession of them.*

If this were not so, and instead it was because of some obedience of our own for which we ourselves were finally responsible that we enjoyed these blessings, then these blessings would not be a gracious gift, but a reward for obedience. Yet since they are not a reward for obedience

“human rights”! Whatever God does is right, and so is apart from all guilt. Likewise, the only just claims we truly have are those which God actually gives to us. *A priori* (i.e., presuppositionally), and especially, merely according to our own wishes, we have no rights. The Almighty is no more “guilty” of “violating our freedom” by instilling faith in our hearts than in endowing our minds with a sense of conscience. If it should be true that He overwhelms our unbelief with faith, then it is *right* that He should do so. Since it is true that He *does* overwhelm our unbelief with faith, it is beyond all question that it is right for Him to do so. And, accordingly, it is beyond all question that we have no “rights” in the matter.

but are instead a gracious gift, it follows that we are *not* responsible for having been endowed with them.

The issue, then, is not the nature of human freedom, but of divine grace. Whether the popular notion of free will is true or false is beside the point. That is, whether or not man is truly independent of God and *could* refuse a mere conditional offer of salvation were such an offer made to him, the point is that the evangel is not the announcement of a conditional offer but of a gracious gift. Therefore, insofar as salvation in Christ is concerned, the nature of man's will makes no difference, since that question has no bearing on the evangel of our salvation.

Our faith does not "qualify" us for salvation. Indeed, the evangel is true apart from our acceptance of it. The believer's faith simply affords him knowledge of salvation, not salvation itself. Christ died for our sins whether or not we believe that Christ died for our sins. Similarly, God chose us before the disruption of the world, having preferred us from the beginning for salvation (2 Thess.2:13), quite apart from any consideration of our present acceptance of these glorious facts.

It is as foolish and unseemly for us to seek to take the credit for the success of our own salvation as it would be for us to seek to take the credit for the creation of the universe. For us there is no part in either matter. Hence, we wish to repudiate all our proud boastings, and instead simply joyously declare: "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).



Question: re. *Drawing All to Himself*

"In John 12:32, in signifying by what death He was

about to be dying (v.33), Jesus said, 'And I, if I should be exalted out of the earth, shall be drawing all to Myself.' I have been told that the Greek word for 'draw,' actually means 'drag.' Is this correct?"

Answer:

The word in question, in John 12:32, is *helkuō*. It is best rendered by the English "draw," not "drag." The idea is simply "to cause to move in a given direction" (e.g., John 18:10); idiomatically, in certain instances, we might say, "to reel in" (*cp* John 21:6,11). Another illustration would be that of drawing water from a well.

When applied to voluntary behavior, the idea is that of "bringing forth through incentive"; to attract (Acts 16:19; *cp* Acts 21:30; James 2:6). Whether one is drawn into sin, or drawn to virtue, one is still caused to move in the direction of, and eventually brought into, the behavioral sphere thus delineated.

The point is that "draw" speaks of effective, causative agency. Hence, this is as true of cases in which it is applied to acts of human behavior as of incidents in which it is concerned with the movements of inanimate objects. Therefore, "draw" is by no means a "weak" term, but a powerful expression.

It is not that "draw" means "drag"; it is rather that an agency which *draws*, is equally as *effective* as an agency which *drags*. When a man is *dragged*, he is moved contrary to his will; when a man is *drawn*, he is moved in correspondence to his will, according to the influences which cause him to choose as he does. Agencies which drag, determine the body; agencies which draw, determine the heart, from which spring the outflowings of life (Prov.4:23).

When one is "drawn in" to doing something, he is still *caused* to act as he does; he *must* still do what he, even if gently, is "drawn" to do—as much so as if he were "dragged"

(“kicking and screaming”) into so doing. It is simply that an agency which “draws,” *engages* the will and *instills* the voluntary behavior which follows, in contradistinction to a power that merely *compels* outward acts—“dragging” them forth—without gaining the acquiescence of the will.

To “drag” (*surō*), means to “pull along by force.” As applied to human behavior, such force has in view not simply the power of causative agency, but that of a causative agency which compels outward acts, ones to which the will, considered in the abstract, remains opposed (e.g., Luke 12:58). Unlike causal influence which acts upon the heart and *changes* the will—which *draws* forth corresponding, resultant behavior—causative agency which merely *drags* its objects, has in view either the *burden* which attends the pulling of inanimate objects (John 21:8), or the *unwillingness* as well which attends the compelling of outward acts (Acts 8:3; 14:19; 17:6; cf KEYWORD CONCORDANCE, p.82).

Thus we rejoice to know that while no one can come to Christ if ever the Father Who sends Him should not be drawing him (John 6:44), in due time, under God, Christ “shall be drawing all to [Him]self” (John 12:32).



Question: re. *The New Earth*

“Do both Revelation 21 and 22 concern the new earth? Will righteousness be present only in the new Jerusalem, or throughout the new earth? Also, if there will be no illness, why is there a need for the cure of the nations (Rev.22:2)?”

Answer:

Yes, both Revelation 21 and 22 record John’s vision of the *new earth*; the time in view is the final epochal eon

of Scripture, following the thousand years. Peter speaks of the new earth itself (not solely of the new Jerusalem) as the sphere in which righteousness is dwelling (2 Peter 3:13). As kings of the earth, it will be Israel’s glory to serve the other nations in God’s illumination of them, through His chosen people, which will foster righteousness among all.

The *knowledge* of God, indeed, will greatly increase among humanity during the coming eon (cf Isa.11:9). As excellent as this will be, it will be far grander still, in the eon of the eons, when not only knowledge but *righteousness* itself will be “dwelling” in (i.e., will be an abiding characteristic of) the new earth.

The attenuation of sin coupled with the amplification of virtue will radically change the character of the world, or SYSTEM, which will obtain in that glorious eon. The “cure of the nations” by the leaves of the log, will not only bring healing agency to the body, but liberation to the spirit. That which will most significantly determine the character of that eon, however, will be the fact that God Himself will then be *with* humanity. In that day, the tabernacle of God will be with mankind; He will be tabernacling with them, and they will become His own. In perfect correspondence to God’s own presence, death will be no more, nor mourning, nor clamor, nor misery (Rev.21:4). These radical blessings will constitute a vast and saving grace among all the peoples of the new earth.

Such considerations call to mind the hymn, “I Need Thee Every Hour . . . temptations lose their power when Thou art *near*.” Surely the sentiments of that hymn will come into their own in that day.

Isaiah 33:24 (the passage to which you refer, re. lack of illness) speaks of Messianic blessings for Israel in the coming eon; it does not contemplate the nations, nor God’s provision to them of Revelation 22:2, in the final eon.

J.R.C.

“DO YOU OBSERVE THE TRAVAILING?”

THE FOCUS of Yahweh's words to Job is on forces and creatures that are, for the most part, beyond human control. In Job 38:4-38 Yahweh spoke of physical phenomena, and now in 38:39-39:30 He directs attention to wild animals and birds that bring questioning and dismay to the human heart. All of these are of God's making, and none of them are left outside His operations and responsibility.

Yahweh says nothing here about His power delivering Job from his afflictions or about His wisdom bringing good out of the evil that has enveloped him. Instead He speaks of present operations that parallel Job's own experience. He directs attention to the groaning and trawling of His creation, where His power and wisdom do not yet lead to deliverance and glory.

Yahweh does not speak of the sheep and dove in 38:39-41 but of the lion and the raven. The former might convey thoughts of peace and prosperity, but the latter definitely suggest different ideas entirely. The lion speaks of a ferocious and deadly hunting of prey by ambush, and the raven of neglect and noisy imploring. Yet they both struggle for food apart from human supervision and appreciation.

The pangs of birth as well as unfeeling habits of wild animals must ultimately be traced to God Who created them as they are, and placed them where they are (Job 39:1-6). He observes, without altering the fact, the trawling in birth of the hinds (39:1). Yahweh is the One Who unlooses the bonds of the onager and other kinds of wild donkey, so that they face constant dangers and depravations (v.5).

JOB 38:39–39:30

- 39 Can you **'hunt** the **prey** for the **lioness**?
And can you **'fill** the **life** needs of the **sheltered** lions,
40 **'When** they crouch **'prostrate** in their **habitations**,
'Sit for **ambush** in their **covert**?
41 **'Who** **'prepares** its **provision** for the **raven**,
'When its young **'implore** to **El**,
Which **'stray** **'from** lack of **food**?
39 **Are** you **acquainted**^o
with the **bearing**⁻ of the **ibexes** of the **crag**?
Do you **'observe** the **trawling**⁻ in birth of the **hinds**?
2 Do you **'number** the **months** they must **'fulfill**,
And do you **know** the **time** of their **bearing**⁻?
3 **They** **'crouch**; they **~'deliver**[~] their **young**;
They **'put** forth the cause of their **cramps**.
4 **Their** young ones **'thrive**; they ^{lmm}**grow** up in the **open**;
They go forth and return **no**^t more to them.
5 **'Who** has sent forth the **onager** free,
And **'who** has unloosed the **bonds** of the **wild donkey**,
6 **Whose** home I have ^{pl}**constituted** the **steppe**,
And the **salty wastes** as his **habitat**?
7 **He** makes **'sport** **'of** the **clamor** of the **town**;
He does **not** **'hear** the **tumults** of the **taskmaster**^l.
8 **He** **'explores** the **mountains** as his **pasture**
And **'seeks** after ^{af} **every** **green** thing.
9 **Is** the **wild bull** **'willing** to **serve**⁻ you?
if **Would** he **'lodge** all night ^{on} **at** your **crib**?

39:1 **acquainted**: Hb repeats the last two letters of this word, meaning "time of" as in v.2b.
39:3 --- **'deliver**: Hb 'slice.

Such creatures prefer to search the salty wastes and barren mountains for food rather than serve taskmasters who would provide their forage (39:6-8). The wild bull also is not willing to give its strength to harrow and threshing even though this would bring safety and grain to it as well as those it would serve (9-12).

This also is of God. Job has nothing to do with it and no say in it.

Yahweh is not telling Job of His blessed goals of glory and peace but of His place in the present struggle where self-interest and pain abound. Neither is Yahweh pointing to human failures in subjecting the animals and overseeing their affairs. He draws attention to the way things are and reminds Job that He is the One Who has brought this about.

How different this is from Eden! There Elohim had instructed the human, “. . . fill the earth and subdue it. Hold sway over the fish of the sea and over the flyer of the heavens, . . . and over every animal that is moving on the earth” (Gen.1:28). But without speaking of Adversary or human disobedience, God continues to speak of these situations as “constituted” and caused by Him (39:6,17).

The ostrich is both stupid and uncontrolled (39:13-18). Why should Yahweh bring this up? This is not the sort of thing we would expect to build up Job’s confidence in God and the wisdom of His ways.

Even the horse which can be trained is never fully submissive, manifesting mastery in the power of its neck, the dreadful splendor of its snorting and its eagerness in battle (19-25). And of all its uses, why should Yahweh speak of its intense and insane delight in the destructive and deadly actions of war? What is this supposed to say to Job pierced by the arrows of Him Who-Suffices (Job 6:4)?

The hawk and the vulture, for all their soaring and nesting on high, are nevertheless creatures feeding on the blood of prey and on the carrion of animals previously

- 10 Can you ¹tie the wild bull ¹with ~curb and rope~?
^{if} **Would he ¹harrow the vales after you?**
- 11 Would you put ¹trust in him ¹because his vigor is ^{mm}great,
And would you ¹entrust your labor to him?
- 12 Would you ^cput ¹reliance ⁱon him that he would ¹return
And ¹gather your seed^o to your threshing site?
- 13 The wing of the ~ostrich~ flaps ¹joyously,
 But is ^{if}not the pinion of the stork ⁺with its feathers.
- 14 **When she ¹entrusts her eggs to the land**
And ¹warms them on the soil,
- 15 + **She ¹forgets that a foot may press down on it,**
⁺**Or a wild animal of the field may stomp on it.**
- 16 **She is ^cmade indurate to her young ^{’as} though not hers,**
Without alarm that her labor be for nought.
- 17 **For Eloah caused her to be oblivious to wisdom**
And did not apportion ⁱ understanding to her.
- 18 Yet ^{as}any time she ¹springs up ⁱon high,
She makes ¹sport ^{’of} the horse and [’] his rider¹.
- 19 Do you ¹give to the horse its mastery?
 Do you ¹clothe its neck with thunder?
- 20 Do you ^cmake him ¹quake like the locust?
 The splendor of his snorting strikes dread.
- 21 ⁷He^c ¹paws in the vale and is ¹elated in his vigor;
He goes ¹forth to meet the weapons of battle.
- 22 **He makes ¹sport ^{’of} alarm and is not ¹dismayed;**
Neither does he ¹turn back ^f because of the sword.
- 23 **On him the quiver is ¹jubilant,**
 The blaze of spear and scimitar.
- 24 **With quaking and thunderous sound,**
he ¹gulps up the earth,
And he cannot ^cstand ¹restfully
[’]**at the sound of the trumpet.**

39:10 --- curb and rope: Hb furrow of his rope.

39:12 seed: transposition from v.12a.

39:13 --- ostrich: Hb jubilations.

39:21 7-c He: Hb They.

slain. This is within Yahweh's *understanding* and of His *bidding* (39:26-30).

In speaking of these things, of the stubbornness of the animals, of the lack of orderly contribution of each animal to the good of all, of ambush and war, of lack of food and shelter, and of a great deal of lack of sense, Yahweh is underlining the reality of evil everywhere in His creation. This is deliberate, and it is Yahweh's point. In claiming responsibility as Creator and Sustainer, He is speaking what is most relevant and meaningful to Job in his private experience of severe evil. This is a powerful endorsement of Job's own original position: "Yahweh, He gives, and Yahweh, He takes away. Blessed be the Name of Yahweh" (Job 1:21).

Why this is so may not be fully revealed in the book of Job, but the fact that this is so is made indisputable.

These are not at all ordinary revelations of divine wisdom and power. Yahweh speaks of the fearful and foolish creatures of *His hand*. Unlike Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, Yahweh does not point to His fearful judgments on the wicked, or, as we might expect, to the schemes of Satan. But with bold clarity He points to things as they are under His authority and within His full understanding.

What is so must never be kept in a separate compartment from a consideration of Deity. If God is to be known He must be known with respect to Job's afflictions and the lion's roaring and the incessant cries of hungry raven chicks. Job's recognition of this will lead him to see better than ever before that God operates in accord with wisdom and purpose, even though he cannot see that purpose. Then Job will describe Yahweh's revelations here as "things too marvelous for me, that I did not know" (42:3), and exclaim, "With the hearing of the ear I had heard of You, but now my eye sees You" (42:5).

Many years later, Paul will speak of God's work of creation in fuller light. In subjecting creation to vanity, God has

- ²⁵ **As soon as the trumpet sounds, he ^{isa}shouts, Aha!**
And from afar he 'smells the battle,
The thunder of the chiefs and the shouting!
²⁶ Is it ^f **by your understanding** that the hawk 'glides,
 That it 'spreads its wings › southward?
²⁷ ^{if} **Or is it ^{on}by your bidding** that the vulture soars 'aloft,
And that he ^cmakes his nest so 'high?
²⁸ **He roosts on a crag and 'lodges himself**
On the tooth of a crag and a fastness;
²⁹ **From there he reconnoiters for food;**
His eyes 'scrutinize › far off;
³⁰ + **His brood 'imbibe the blood,**
And where there are the slain, there he is.



a determined purpose for good, a purpose which involves His own expectation of the deliverance into glorious freedom of the *entire* creation, including lion, raven and bull, ostrich, horse and vulture, and Job, and all of us. Groaning and travailing are not eternal, and are only for awhile, from Eden "until now" and still a little beyond, to be sure, but not forever (Rom.8:18-22).

The experience of evil is not a mistake in light of the goal. Yahweh cannot be blessed for giving if the giving is not appreciated, and He cannot be blessed for taking away if the taking away does not have a purpose for good. It is not necessary at this point for Job to know what good will come out of all his sufferings. It is enough for him to believe that God, as the Creator of all, remains in control, according to His designs, in every situation of every creature of His hand. That is the message Job is now hearing.

D.H.H.

THE SPIRIT OF YAHWEH TRANSFERRED

IN the opening verses of the sixteenth chapter,¹ Samuel reminds us of his forefathers. Abraham, at the announcement of Isaac's birth cried, "O that Ishmael should live before You!" (Gen.17:18). The flesh was exhausted. Abraham had no more energy for schemes. Here God reprimands Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go! I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have selected among his sons a king for Myself" (1 Sam.16:1).

But Samuel replied, "How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me" (1 Sam.16:2). Is this the same fiery Samuel who rebuked the entire nation of requesting a king? Or is it a shadow of limping Jacob, who trembles, ". . . he will kill me," (cf Gen.32:11)?

Samuel had worked long with Saul through his victories and shortcomings. Perhaps he felt that the burden for success was on himself. Perhaps he thought that anointing a new king would mean starting over with another Saul. Samuel was getting old. How many times could he start over? In common with Abraham, Jacob and Samuel, we come to the day when we fear the flesh and feel there is nothing more we can do with it.

But when the flesh is exhausted, the eyes are cleared to see the power of the grace of God. "Fill your horn with

1. The Concordant Version of 1 Samuel 16 appears in *Unsearchable Riches*, vol. 88, pp.136-138 (May 1997).

oil . . ." The horn is the symbol of power. Saul's anointing was with oil from a vial. But now when the flesh is rejected, the power of God will be seen. And the power of God is known where His Spirit moves.

A CHANGE OF DIRECTION

Verses 13 and 14 are the fulcrum of this pivotal chapter: "So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the spirit of Yahweh prospered on David from that day onward. Then Samuel rose and went to Ramah. As for the spirit of Yahweh, it had withdrawn from Saul, and a evil spirit from Yahweh frightened him."

The following outline shows the progression of events surrounding this part of the book.

Jonathan's victory soured by Saul's oath (chap.14)

Saul's disobedience with Amalek (chap.15)

Samuel in fear comes to trembling Bethlehem (16:1-4)

The spirit of Yahweh prospers on David from his anointing onward (16:13)

The spirit of Yahweh withdraws from Saul and the evil spirit from Yahweh frightens him (16:14)

Saul having depression and fear (16:15-23)

David's great victory over Goliath (chap.17)

Jonathan's covenant of loyalty to David (chap.18)

THE SPIRIT OF YAHWEH DEPARTS

The spirit of Yahweh had prospered on Saul to enable him to govern and lead the people. But Saul's heart was set on himself, his dynasty and the elusive glory of popular opinion. Leaning upon himself, Saul had nothing to shore up his unsteadiness and unpredictability. Saul was seeking his own glory instead of God's, and there can be no peace

for any who follow that path. So he needed the soothing comfort of fellowship with one who rested on the Rock.

Paul cites Scripture concerning Israel: “. . . God gives them a spirit of stupor, eyes not to be observing, and ears not to be hearing, till this very day.’ And David is saying, ‘Let their table become a trap and a mesh, and a snare and a repayment to them: Darkened be their eyes, not to be observing, and their backs bow together continually’” (Rom.11:8-10). Just as God sent an evil spirit to trouble Saul when he was rejected from ruling Israel, so also He sent a spirit of stupor to trouble the generation of Israel that was rejected from taking the place of rule over the nations of the world.

We can rejoice in such events, though they may seem abstruse or even unjust, knowing that these are the working of the wonderful God Who “. . . locks up all together in stubbornness, that He should be merciful to all” (Rom. 11:33). It is such events as these that prepare the way for the display of God’s powerful grace.

J. Philip Scranton

REPOSING

Brother **Damon Klinger**, of Eaton Rapids, Michigan died, March 7, 1998, after a struggle of more than seven years with cancer. He was 27 and is survived by his grandparents, Leonard and June Bowerman, his parents, Lou and Diane Klinger and his sister, Michele.

In recent months Damon had served as pastor and teacher at the Truth and Grace Chapel in Lansing. He had a keen interest in God’s Word, concordantly translated, and rejoiced in the gratuitous justification that comes in God’s grace through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus.

At the funeral service, among several speakers, Brother John Krauss shared many of Damon’s favorite passages of Scripture, mainly from Paul’s prison epistles, and Brother Jeff Priddy spoke of God’s “sequel” to our trials. Like Paul, we are aware Whom we have believed, and are persuaded that *He* is able to guard what is committed to us all in the evangel of His grace.

He Shall Save His People

WHO, CONSEQUENTLY, CAN BE SAVED?

GOD’S GOAL of saving the people of Israel from their sins (*cf* Matt.1:21; 2:6) receives steadfast support in the ministry of Jesus, as recorded in the book of Matthew. The healing of the infirm, the feeding of the hungry, the stilling of the storms, and above all else the heralding the nearness of the kingdom—all of these testify to the truth that Jesus is the promised Saviour, the Anointed One and Son of the living God.

A NATION NEEDING SALVATION

Yet this message was not being received. In hearing the words of Jesus, the people were not understanding it; in observing the works of Jesus, the crowds who flocked to Him for physical blessings were by no means perceiving Who He was (Matt.13:14). And beyond the human failure lies the remarkable fact (at first both surprising and even shocking to us) that Jesus did not tell the people the healings and powers were harbingers of the deeper and more essential cleansing from sin that was promised. Rather, the Lord came to the point where He deliberately spoke obscurely to the people, and plainly only to the inner circle of disciples (who still did not fully grasp the import of His words). Indeed, just after Peter made his great avowal of Matthew 16:16 (a revelation that he had *received* from the Father), Jesus “cautions the disciples that they may be saying to no one that He is the Christ” (Matt.16:20).

None of these realities, neither Israel’s failures nor the divine operation (most mystifying at first) of locking them

up in stubbornness, should allow us to forget and neglect the promise that Jesus would save His people from their sins. The nation's failures make it all the more obvious that they needed to be saved from their sins. And God's operations of blinding eyes and hardening hearts make it evident that He is the living God, the active and "hands-on" Deity, Whose knowledge is unparalleled and Whose power is unlimited. Such a God will surely fulfill His promises. The stoutening of the hearts of the people of Israel, far from being fatal to their salvation, is for a purpose of good. It is a step toward the goal of salvation, for the manifestation of God's mercy, as made clear in Romans 11:32.

THE RICH YOUNG MAN

The account of the young man who came to Jesus asking about good works, (along with further developments stemming from this event) is of special interest (Matt. 19:16-30; *cp* Luke 18:18-30 where the rich man is identified as a chief). We note that the youth addresses Jesus as Teacher, not as the Saviour. To him, life eonian is something that is achieved by the doing of good by good people. All that is needed is that they be taught what to do so that they might do it. He has no suspicion that Jesus will save him from his sins, nor even that his need was great. "Teacher, what good shall I be doing that I should be having life eonian?" (19:16).

What an opportunity for Jesus to evangelize! What an ideal time for Him to reveal that He is the Son of the living God Who has come into the world to save sinners! Or so it would seem.

As a matter of fact Jesus does proclaim the very heart of every evangel of Scripture. Yet this is hardly noticed, and Jesus does not follow up on the message until the great revelation of the latter half of verse 26. The words, "One is good" (v.17) compose an evangel of great joy. If any-

one wants to know about the doing of good and the having of eonian life, that person need only look to God Who is good. He alone is the One doing the good work of gaining eonian life for sinners, through the gift of His Son.

The young man, however, does not grasp the grand and God-glorifying implications of the Lord's words.

Consequently, Jesus accepts the position of Teacher, which has been His position throughout His ministry, notably in the teaching of Matthew 5-7 (*cf* Matt.5:2, "... He taught them"). Since the youth wants to know about the good he himself is required to do, and is not particularly concerned with good in association with God, Jesus instructs, "... if you are wanting to be entering into life, keep the precepts" (v.17).

GOOD WORKS

To be sure, this means that all the precepts had to be kept in accord with their full meaning. "For anyone who should be keeping the whole law, yet should be tripping in one thing, has become liable for all" (James 2:10). But taking up the viewpoint of the young man, Jesus refers to certain precepts that He knows the man will feel fairly comfortable with. If he wants to know what good he must do to get eonian life, this is the place to start, with precepts five through nine of the ten given in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5: "You shall not be murdering. You shall not be committing adultery. You shall not be stealing. You shall not be testifying falsely. Be honoring father and mother" (Matt.19:18,19; Exodus 20:12-16). And then, Jesus points to the words of Leviticus 19:18, summing up the five precepts already mentioned with the words, "You shall be loving your associate as yourself" (v.19).

It may have been that the young man had never heard the sermon of Matthew 5-7, or, more likely, since Jesus taught this message on more than one occasion, that hav-

ing heard it, the youth did not understand it. In any case, Jesus had drawn from this same group of precepts, including that of Leviticus 19:18, and showed how demanding they were, how high their real meaning was (Matt.5:17-48). This call to perfection, however, was not grasped by the young man, and he boldly, and foolishly boasts, “These all I maintain. In what am I still deficient?” (v.20).

Jesus could very well have replied: “You are deficient in truly maintaining all of the precepts I have mentioned. Murder, adultery, stealing, lying and dishonoring of your parents have all lurked in your heart in the form of anger and lust, in the swearing of oaths and the hating of your enemies.”¹ Instead Jesus adds two instructions showing how the precepts mentioned can be expressed right here in this critical time: “If you are wanting to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and be giving to the poor, and you will be having treasure in the heavens. And hither! Follow Me” (Matt.19:21). This is what obeying the precepts means right now in the demands of this moment as Jesus travels southward to Jerusalem.

FACING TOWARD JERUSALEM

What were the particular circumstances of this time which called for this particular behavior of selling possessions, giving to the poor and following the Lord? These were days of great moment, days of crisis, calling for keen and undistracted attention.

Jesus had just told the disciples that “He must be coming away into Jerusalem and to be suffering much from the

1. Since Jesus also mentioned the precept enjoining the honoring of one’s parents, it may well have been that this young man was guilty of the hypocrisy exposed in Matthew 15:3-6, claiming that the presenting of sacrificial gifts in the temple worship was sufficient in fulfilling Exodus 20:12.

elders and chief priests and scribes, and to be killed, and the third day to be roused” (Matt.16:21; *cp* 17:12,22,23; 20:18,19,28). His face was set steadfastly toward Jerusalem, in obedience to His Father and with love for mankind. If one is to be avoiding evil and doing good in this dark hour, there must be complete devotion to the Lord.

The young man went away sorrowing (19:22). He had been very confident that he could handle every precept that the Lord gave, but he could not handle poverty and the dependency and reliance associated with following another. He wanted a Teacher Who would challenge him in accord with his abilities, but he had no longing for a Saviour Who would save him from his sins.

If ever one needed salvation from his sins, this man did. He was actually a failure at maintaining the precepts. He had unknowingly testified falsely, and, without being aware of it, he possessed very little love for his associate. But his sorrow was evidence, not of one doomed to everlasting hellfire, but of one in whom some learning was already developing, stirred up by the Teacher, in accord with the purpose of the good God.

Here was a sinner who clearly needed to be saved from his sins. And in this, he was not unique.

WITH THE HUMAN IT IS IMPOSSIBLE

Then, after he had gone, Jesus comments on this incident for the enlightenment of His disciples. He does so at first with apparent exaggeration but with actual understatement: “Verily, I am saying to you that the rich squeamishly will be entering into the kingdom of the heavens. Yet again, I am saying to you that it is easier for a camel to be entering through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to be entering into the kingdom of God” (Matt.19:23,24).

This does not mean that a rich man, or for that matter even a poor man, might occasionally be able to squeeze

his way through into the kingdom. Apart from God's provision, no one is able to keep the precepts perfectly and carry them out exactly in the right way appropriate to every hour and under every circumstance that arises.

Jesus has led the disciples into an impasse. The highest perfection is required for salvation into the kingdom. Yet even an Israelite like this rich youth had failed. As a youth he was vigorous and confident. As a rich man he had all the material means to support a life of disciplined adherence to the precepts. As a chief he enjoyed authority and power and the respect of others which kept him focused on his responsibilities. He had everything a human being seemed to need. And it still was not enough.

Whether or not the disciples comprehended all the implications of this impasse, they ask one of the most important questions of their schooling: "*Who, consequently, can be saved?*" (Matt.19:25).

They were not rich. They were following Jesus. But in light of the demands of the precepts as clarified by the Lord, how can any Israelite, rich or poor, willing or unwilling, be saved? If this man who, from the standpoint of the traditional understanding of the law, was maintaining the precepts, is apparently not to be saved for the kingdom, how can they themselves be saved?

It cannot be by their perfect maintaining of the law. "With [human beings] this is impossible."

There is a solution of good news to this impasse, however, for Jesus shall be saving His people from their sins.

WITH GOD ALL IS POSSIBLE

The solution lies in the revelation here that "with God all is possible" which is the complement of the earlier declaration, "One is good" (Matt.19:17,26).

The word "possible" is not in any sense used here to suggest doubt or obscurity concerning the salvation of human

beings. Jesus is not coyly saying that as to the salvation of sinners, God may do so, or He may not. It is a positive, glorifying truth that God, Who is able to do all things, is the One to look to for salvation.

To those who want to make the word "possible" an opening for the claim that God will actually not save certain individuals (such as the rich man here, or Judas), we can only insist it suggests no such thing. There is power and ability in God for the salvation of Peter and John, and the rich young man and Judas as well, even as there is no power and ability for saving themselves in the young man and Judas, and in Peter and John as well. All their sins, and all the lamentation and gnashing of teeth stemming from their sins, even the fires of Gehenna, cannot stop God from saving sinners such as Peter, the rich man and Judas. The sorrow and losses are necessary lessons being taught by the Teacher. But they do not cancel the salvation gained by the Saviour, in which the lessons learned may bear good fruit.

PETER'S BOAST

The young man was unable to give up his possessions and follow the Lord in this time of great trial. But Peter points out, "Lo! we leave all and follow Thee" (Matt.19:27). In saying this, Peter boasts in what he and the others were doing in contrast to the rich man who found it impossible to do these things. Yet Peter's confidence in his own and his fellow disciples' obedience to the precepts proves premature. This is most obvious in the case of Judas, but the others also, one by one, fail in following Jesus. This will finally include Peter himself.

Nevertheless, with God all is possible. God not only enables the disciples (not yet with the perfection of the new covenant) to give up all their acquisitions and to be following Jesus as He heads toward Jerusalem, but He

enables eleven of them to follow Him somewhat farther than the betrayer, even to Gethsamane. Of themselves, they could not have done this any more than the rich man could do it. In addition, besides enabling them to go as far as they went, God will add to their salvation, granting even greater blessings than other Israelites will enjoy. For Jesus replies, "Verily, I am saying to you, that you who follow Me, in the renascence whenever the Son of Mankind should be seated on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Matt.19:28).

Apart from God's merciful provision, it was as impossible for Peter as it was for the rich young man to obey the precept, "Follow Me," laid down at the end of Matthew 19:21. However, God enabled Peter to go some distance in obeying this precept. And under the new covenant Peter will be saved even more completely, with the law written on his heart, and God's spirit invigorating him within as he judges among the people of Israel.

Nevertheless, for the time being, Peter still has much to learn from the operations of the One Who is good. He will be saved with exalted blessings, but this will not be because he fully followed the Lord. He will soon come to the point where he denies acquaintance with Jesus. Then the cock will crow, and Peter will be reminded of the Lord's words. "And coming outside," he will lament bitterly (Matt.26:73-75). Like the rich young man Peter will learn through sorrow. They both will learn of the human impossibility in gaining eonian life and salvation by way of their strength in obeying the precepts.

Yet as for Peter, so also for His people Israel, God will place His spirit in their hearts. Then, in God's own timing, they will not murder or be angry, they will not commit adultery or carry lust in their hearts, they will not steal or lie or neglect their duties, and they will love their asso-

ciates as themselves. Then they shall be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect (Matt.5:48). That, however, will not be the basis of their salvation. With Israel, obeying the precepts is essential, but it is the provision of the One Who is good, Who gives His only-begotten Son as their Saviour unto life eonian (*cf* John 3:16). It is not a human achievement, but the work of the One Who does the impossible.

We are not to assume, therefore, that these revelations have no significance for the rich young man, or even for Judas. On the contrary, the teaching of the great Teacher here clearly focuses on the certainty of God's good work. The truth that God is good and that all is possible for Him certainly cannot *mean* that the rich young man and Judas will actually end up in hell for all eternity! Nor could these teachings be taken to *imply* such a thing; nor even to *allow* for it. What God did not enable the rich young man to do, and what He did not enable Judas to do, and what He did not enable Peter to do, will not keep God from achieving the good end of salvation.

GOD'S GOOD WORK

Even as the rich young man goes away sorrowing, and as the disciples remain following Jesus, poor in possessions but rich in joyful anticipation of future exaltation, the Lord is making His way toward Jerusalem where the firm basis of the salvation of His people Israel will be laid. Every indication is that "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom.11:26).

To this we may add the testimony of John: "For God does not dispatch His Son into the world that He should be judging the world, but that the world may be saved through Him" (John 3:17). And an enlightened Peter wrote as well, that "not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, were you ransomed from your vain behavior, handed down by tradition from the fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:19). Beyond this we have the exult-

ing words of Paul, the former Pharisee, who was “becoming blameless” as to the law: “For what was impossible to the law, in which it was infirm through the flesh, did God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sin’s flesh and concerning sin . . .” (Phil.3:6; Rom.8:3).

Whenever all of Israel are brought fully under the new covenant they will be knowing the Lord, from the least to the greatest. The law will be placed in their hearts, and they will be obeying the precepts, not as they were defined by their traditions, but as expanded by Jesus in Matthew 5 and throughout His ministry.

Nevertheless, the Lord’s warnings are to be taken seriously. His words concerning “fire eonian” and “the Gehenna of fire” (Matt.18:7-9) are sobering even when it is understood that the fire is not eternal. But these refer to temporary conditions, involving instruction for Israel and the nations (*cf* Isa.66:23,24), and must not be taken in opposition to the saving work performed by the Saviour. Even those who are executed and whose bodies are cast into Gehenna must, in God’s own time, be drawn in joyful subjection to their Saviour and Lord (*cf* John 12:32; Phil.2:10,11).

The principle of Matthew 19:30 seems to point especially to those in Israel who are wealthy and powerful and strong in this life, like the rich young chief. “Many of the first shall be last, and the last first.” For one who was among the first in Israel, to become among the last in the kingdom will surely involve instructive disappointment and sorrow. But what joy will be his when he finds that this Teacher Who spoke of the One Who is good, has saved him from his sins!

The final word is not Gehenna or sorrow. These are no more final than the word “poor” is for the disciples. These are part of the process but not the goal. The final word focuses on God, Who is good, and it speaks of salvation and of life and of glory.

D.H.H.