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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,

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.

In the Beginning

GENESIS 1:2

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

And the spirit of Elohim was vibrating over the surface 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: *Toward-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 Lamb-kin 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 word, 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 ethereal 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 *evolution* and constant change to correspond to environment, but of *involution*, 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 *involved* 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

From Darkness to Light

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 *ie* (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).

God and His Work

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.

God’s Spirit Making its Home

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 I. 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 hide-away 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 ^{lb}came about ⁱas they were coming⁻ home, ⁱwhen David had returned⁻ from smiting⁻ the Philistine, ^{+that} the women from all the cities of Israel went forth [>]singing⁻ and dancing in choruses to meet king Saul ⁱwith tambourines, ⁱwith rejoicing and ⁱwith three-stringed instruments.

⁷⁺ The gamboling women sang in response, ⁺saying:

Saul has smitten ⁱhis thousands,

⁺Yet David ⁱhis myriads!

⁸⁺ Saul's anger grew exceedingly hot; ⁺this matter was displeasing in his eyes, and he said, To David they have ascribed myriads, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. ⁺What ^fmore can he have ⁹but the kingship? ⁹⁺ Saul ^{lb}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 ^{lb}came about ^fon the morrow ^{+that} an evil spirit from Elohim prospered on Saul. ⁺He prophesied inside the house, ^{+while} David was playing the harp ⁱwith his hand, as he did day ⁱby day; ⁺but there was a spear in Saul's hand. ¹¹⁺ Saul [~]lifted up[~] the spear ⁺ls^athinking, I shall smite ⁱDavid ⁺into the sidewall. ⁺Yet David got ^laround ^fhis presence ^{du}twice.

¹²⁺ Saul was ^lfearful ^fbecause [>]of David's presence [']since Yahweh came to be with him, ⁺but had withdrawn from ^{wi}Saul. ¹³⁺Hence Saul ^lput him away from ^{wi}himself; ⁺he ^{pl}made him his chief of a thousand ⁺who marched forth and came in before the ^{wi}soldiers. ¹⁴⁺ David ^{lb}continued to ^eproceed intelligently ⁷in^{~cs} all his ways, ⁺for Yahweh was with him. ⁺When Saul ^lsaw ^wthat he was ^eproceeding very intelligently, ⁺he ^lshrank away from his presence. ¹⁶⁺Yet all Israel and Judah loved ^lDavid, for he marched forth ^land came ^lin before them.

¹⁷ +Then Saul said to David, ^{bd}Here is my older daughter Merab; I shall give her to you as a wife. ^oOnly become a valiant son for me and fight the battles of Yahweh. +As for Saul, he ^{sa}thought, Let my hand not be against him; +but let the hand of the Philistines be against him. ¹⁸ +David ^{lsa}replied to Saul, ^aWho am I, and ^awho are my kinsfolk, my father's family in Israel, that I should become son-in-law to the king? ¹⁹ +But at the time that Merab, Saul's daughter, should have 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 ^{lsa}thought, I shall give her to him; + let her be a trap for him, and let the hand of the Philistines come to be against him. +Hence Saul said to David a second time, You may become son-in-law to me today. ²² And Saul instructed his courtiers, Speak to David by stealth, saying, Behold, the king takes delight in you, and all his courtiers like you; +so now become son-in-law to the king. ²³ + Then Saul's courtiers spoke these words into David's ears. +Yet David ^{lsa}replied, Is it lightly esteemed in your eyes ^{Mto} become son-in-law to the king, when I am a man destitute and inconsequential?

²⁴ + Saul's courtiers told him, saying, These are 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, but rather in a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies. +As for Saul, he devised to cause David's fall 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 to the king. +When the days were not yet fulfilled, ²⁷ + David rose and went, he and his men, and he smote among the Philistines two hundred men. + David brought their foreskins, and he delivered them

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

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

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.

The Words and Work of God and Man

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 ^rarises, and the sun sets
And gasps! back to its ^rplace,
That it may ^rrise! there once more.**

- 6 **Going to the south and turning 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 ^gflowing to the sea,
+Yet it is not filling the sea;
To the place from which the watercourses
are ^gflowing,
There they return^l to go forth again.**
- 8 **All the words are weary;
A man ^lcannot ^{sp}utter^r it.
The eye is not ^lsatisfied ^λwith seeing^r ,
Nor is the ear ^lfilled ^fwith hearing^r .**
- 9 **What ^w ^boccurred once, it ^w shall ^boccur again,
And what ^w was done, it ^w shall be done again.
+ There is nothing at all new under the sun.**
- 10 **Is there anything of which one may say:
See this, it is new?
It has already ^boccurred
λIn eons ^wthat ^bwere ^f before us.**
- 11 **There is no remembrance λof former generations,
And ^{mr}also for those who shall ^bcome λ after us,
A remembrance λof them shall not ^bcontinue
With those who shall ^bcome λ afterward.**

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, ^wbecause the Assembler ^bwas wise,
He ^fstill taught λthe people knowledge,
And he listened and investigated
And set in order many^r 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 imbedded^l bolts is the possessing
of gathered sayings;
They are given ^f by one shepherd^l.**

¹² **+Yet furthermore, my son, / beyond these, be warned;**
Of the ^d**making** of ^m**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 applied my heart to inquiring and exploring by wisdom concerning all that is done under the heavens: it is an experience of evil Elohim has given to the sons of humanity to humble them 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.