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

EDITORIAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D.H.H.

The Word of the Cross

THE STUPIDITY AND THE WISDOM OF THE CROSS

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

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

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

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

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

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

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

STUPIDITY IN THE SCRIPTURES

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

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

A LASTING FOUNDATION

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

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

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

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

DIVINE VALUES

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

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

STUPID AND PRUDENT

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

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

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

WISDOM AND THE CROSS

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

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

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

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

THE STUPIDITY OF WORLDLY WISDOM

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

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

THE LARGER PERSPECTIVE

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

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

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

HERALDING CHRIST CRUCIFIED

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

A. E. Knoch

RAYMOND VAN DYKE

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

ELOHIM UNDERSTANDS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOB'S CONTINUED DISCOURSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THIS TRANSITORY BREATH

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

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

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

Concordant Version of the Book of Job

JOB 27,28

- 27** ⁺Then Job ^lcontinued to lift⁻ up his discourse,
⁺ ^lsaying:
- 2** As **El** lives, Who **has taken away judgment** for me,
⁺ He **Who-Suffices**, Who **has** ^ebrought bitterness
on my soul,
- 3** ^t As long as my breath is yet **whole** within me
And the spirit of Eloah is **in my nostrils**,
- 4** **My lips shall assuredly not speak iniquity**,
And my tongue, it shall assuredly not ^{coo}utter deceit.
- 5** **Far be it** ^lfrom me should I ever ^ljustify you;
Until I ^lbreathe my last,
I shall not put away my integrity from me.
- 6** **I will** ^ehold fast ^tto my righteousness,
and I shall not relax;
My heart shall never reproach me
^fthroughout my days.
- 7** **May my enemy** ^lbecome like the wicked,
And the one **rising** against me like the iniquitous.
- 8** **For what is the expectation of the polluted**
^twhen he is ^lclipped off,
^tWhen Eloah ^leases away his soul?
- 9** **Shall El hearken to his cry?**
^tWhen distress ^lcomes upon him,
- 10** ^{if} **Would he find** ^lpleasure ^{om}in Him Who-Suffices?
Would he ^lcall on Eloah ^tat all times?
- 11** **I shall direct** back ^tto you these matters
ⁱabout the hand of El;
^wWhat is ^{wi}concerning Him Who-Suffices
I shall not suppress.

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

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

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

A QUEST FOR WISDOM

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

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

27:12 *transitory* breath: In vs.13-23 Job cites the "transitory breath" of his associates.

27:19 *7--c* do so again: Hb **be gathered.**

27:20 *---* by day: Hb like water.

27:21 *---* toss him away in a hurricane: Hb **horrify him** (*cf* Ps 58:9).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D.H.H.



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

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

28:4 --- people: Hb from with.

28:8 The strutting beasts: lit., Sons of strutting; --- passed: Hb ornamented.

ANOINTED AS KING

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

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

THREE SIGNS

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

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

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

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

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID

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

behold, he is shepherding the flock. Samuel said to Jesse, Do send and procure him, for we shall not gather around until he comes here. So he sent and had him come; he was ruddy with lovely eyes and of good appearance. And Yahweh said, Rise and anoint him, for this is he. So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the spirit of Yahweh prospered on David from that day onward."

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

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

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

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

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

THUNDERCLAPS AND RAIN

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

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

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

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

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

J. Philip Scranton



1 Samuel 10

10 +Then Samuel ¹took ²a vial of ³oil, + ⁴poured some on his head and ⁵kissed him. + He ⁶said, Has not ⁷Yahweh anointed you ⁸as governor over His people, over Israel? And you, you shall steer the course ⁹of the people of Yahweh. + You' shall save them from the hand of their enemies¹⁰ ¹¹round about. And this is the sign for you¹² that Yahweh has anointed you ¹³as governor over His allotment: ¹⁴When you ¹⁵go leave¹⁶ ¹⁷me today, + you will come upon two men ¹⁸near the tomb of Rachel in the territory of Benjamin ¹⁹at Zelzah; and they will ²⁰tell ²¹you, The jennies ²²that you went out to seek, have been found; and ²³now your father has abandoned ²⁴the matter of the jennies and is anxious ²⁵about you, ²⁶saying, What shall I do ²⁷about my son?

²⁸When you pass on from there and beyond and come as far as the oak of Tabor, + ²⁹you will find³⁰ there three men going up to the Elohim at Bethel, one carrying three kids, and one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a crock of wine. ³¹They will ask ³²after your welfare and give ³³you two ³⁴wave offerings of³⁵ bread; and you must take them from their hand. ³⁶Afterward you shall come to the Hill of Elohim, where the ³⁷garrison³⁸ of the Philistines is. And there, as you enter³⁹ the city, it shall ⁴⁰occur ⁴¹that you will come upon a group of prophets descending from the high-place, ⁴²with zithers, + tambourines, +

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

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

¹⁴+ Saul's uncle ^{lsa}asked him and his lad, Where did you go? + He ^{lsa}replied, To seek the jennies. And when we saw that they were nowhere to be found, + we came to Samuel. ¹⁵+Now Saul's uncle said, Do tell me, ^{mr}please, what Samuel said to you. ¹⁶+ Saul ^{lsa}replied to his uncle, He told, yea told us that the jennies had been found. +Yet about the matter of the kingship he did not tell him what Samuel had said.

¹⁷+ Samuel ^{lery}summoned the people to Yahweh at Mizpah ¹⁸ and said to the sons of Israel, Thus ^{sa}speaks Yahweh Elohim of Israel: I brought Israel up out of Egypt and rescued you from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt and from the hand of all the kingdoms that were oppressing you. ¹⁹+Yet you have today rejected your Elohim Who has been bringing salvation to you from all your evils and your distresses. +But you said, ⁷No ^{tcs}, for you should ^{pl}set up a king over us. + Now station yourselves before Yahweh by your tribes and by your thousands.

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

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

+Yet he ^{lb}was ^{as} silent!

IN THE DAY OF JUDGING

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

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

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

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

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

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

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

NEITHER REASONABLE NOR TENABLE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

UNVEILING THE FATHER

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

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

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

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

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

JUDGING AND VICTORY

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

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

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

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

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

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

UNPARDONED SIN

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

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

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

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

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

THE TIME IS CIRCUMSCRIBED

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

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

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

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

THE CONTEXT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Studies in Galatians

WALKING IN SPIRIT

(Galatians 5:16-26)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ALL IS ALLOWED ME”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DISTINCT ALLOTMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

It is only when *basileia* is used metonymically, as a figure of speech for "a *realm* ruled by a king" (or the territory or people thereof), that it should be understood in the common sense of the English "kingdom," that is, of a territory or people ruled by a king. This cannot be the case here, certainly not in any sense of "[fail to] *live* under the jurisdiction and within the realm of [the 'kingdom']." Since we have been justified in *grace*, we may be becoming enjoyers, in expectation, of "the allotment of life eonian," quite apart from any consideration of whether we may also enjoy an allotment of God's reign.

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

THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SPIRITUAL FRUIT OF GRACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

J.R.C.