

Contents:

- 241 Editorial  
243 The Dry Ground and Vegetation  
249 From Light to Life  
255 Concerning Disputations  
    About Free Will  
265 1 Samuel 20  
269 The Departure Stone  
273 The Work of God  
283 Elohim has Made All our Days

**NOVEMBER, 1999**

**Volume XC**

**Number 6**



UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, volume 90, number 6, November, 1999, Portable Document Format (PDF) Edition, for use with Acrobat® Reader. Copyright © Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350, U.S.A. This publication may be reproduced for personal use (all other rights reserved by copyright holder).

UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR NOVEMBER 1999  
BEING THE SIXTH NUMBER OF VOLUME NINETY

**EDITORIAL**

IN VIEW OF the “new millennium” and the predicted problems with computer operations, is this the last issue of *Unsearchable Riches*? To the believer this question, besides its absurd jumping to conclusions, is inherently incoherent in that it is asked without having God in view. In the past ninety years there have been numerous, real hindrances, including wars and depressions, harsh criticism and rejection, illness and death, that could just as easily have been immediate factors leading to an end to this effort. In truth any undertaking is only temporary. It is God’s grace that any issue of the magazine is published and if it has any value for spiritual growth and enlightenment.

Financial situations and health factors and mechanical means for printing and mailing are all, in the final analysis, in God’s province. (Yes, we have made our computers “Y2K compliant,” and we labor each day at our tasks, but our confidence is in God.) As the Assembler observed long ago, “See the work of the one, Elohim . . . . In a day of good be resting in the good, and in a day of evil, be vigilant; *indeed the One, Elohim, has made this one along with that one*” (Ecc.7:13,14; cf p.273).

So revising the question, Is it possible that *God* will bring about a situation of crisis and disorder within the next few weeks, channeled through computer failure or economic depression or social upheaval, that will make this the last issue of our magazine? But this question concerning possibilities is still defective because while it has God in view, it does not have His word to us in view. Our evangel speaks of grace, not of fear.

The character of God’s message to us today is one of joy

(“grace”) and peace. Our expectation is one of consolation (1 Thess.4:18). “Yet we, being of the day, may be sober, putting on the cuirass of faith and love, and the helmet, the expectation of salvation, for God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ” (5:8,9). There will be troubles and disappointments, hard times as well as good times, but the evangel trains us to be living sanely and justly and devoutly in the current eon and to be engaged in our own affairs (*cf* Titus 2:11-13; 1 Thess.4:9-12).

Consequently, the question, so far, is found to be irrelevant. We are aware that God is working all together for good (Rom.8:28), so that whatever occurs we are thankful for it as God’s provision, remaining eager to share the evangel with others, anticipating our happy expectation.

If we now ask, is it possible that God will bring about the rescue described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 before another issue of our magazine can be published, the answer is a resounding Yes! We do not look for signs or compute dates, but are watching and waiting for our Lord Who will descend for us at exactly the right time. It is also possible that we may be put to repose before then, and indeed we all are dying. Times and experiences are in the hands of God Who does all orderly and well (see p.249).

Our faith is centered in good news. And with such a message of grace and glory concerning Jesus Christ, His death, resurrection, exaltation and descent for us that we may always be together with Him, we are encouraged to continue in the tasks set before us, anticipating we will continue to greet you through the pages of this magazine, until God directs otherwise. We do not know when God will end this temporary effort, but we are persuaded that nothing present or impending can remove us from His love, and who can change this viewpoint into one of dread and dismay?

D.H.H.

## THE DRY GROUND AND VEGETATION

(Genesis 1:9-13)

<sup>9</sup> **And Elohim 'said: Let the waters<sup>f</sup> under the heavens flow together into one<sup>ri</sup> place, +that the dry ground may 'appear. And it came to 'be so.** <sup>10</sup> **And Elohim 'called > the dry ground Land, and > the flowing together of the waters He called Seas. And Elohim 'saw that it was good.**

<sup>11</sup> **And Elohim 'said: Let the land<sup>c</sup> become verdant with vegetation: with herbage yielding seed on the land<sup>7</sup> and<sup>ues</sup> the fruit tree<sup>d</sup> bearing fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in it. And it came to 'be so.** <sup>12</sup> + **The land<sup>c</sup> brought 'forth vegetation: herbage yielding seed according to its kind, and the<sup>7</sup> fruit<sup>o</sup> tree<sup>d</sup> bearing fruit, whose seed is in it, according to its kind. And Elohim 'saw that it was good.**

<sup>13</sup> **And it 'became evening, and it 'became morning: the third day.**

### THE THIRD DAY

The new earth of the future will differ from the present one chiefly in this, that there will be no sea (Rev.21:1). There is no evidence that the *first* earth, when originally created, before it became a chaos and vacant, had a sea, either. It is confined, in time, to the present unsettled condition. In fact, the word “earth” is the same as *land* in Hebrew, and really refers only to the *dry* land, so that, when God created the heavens and the *earth*, we are not warranted in including the sea. This came later, after the disruption. Then, to begin with, there was no land. All was covered by the abyss. When the Spirit began its work of restoration,

it vibrated over the surface of the *water* (Gen.1:2). It was not until the third day that the water flowed together to form seas (Gen.1:9).

#### THE SEA

This, the temporary and transitory character of the sea, gives the term color in every passage in which it appears. It is a symbol of *impermanence, restlessness, turbulence, and strife*. Isaiah associates it with evil and wickedness. He says (57:20,21):

*Yet the wicked are like the disgorging sea,  
When it cannot be quiet,  
And its waters are disgorging foulness and mud.  
There is no peace, says my Elohim, for the wicked.*

It remains as long as enmity and offense are present, but disappears when God is reconciled with the denizens of the earth. Along with the disappearance of the sea we read: "Lo! the tabernacle of God is with mankind, and He will be tabernacling with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them. And He will be brushing away every tear from their eyes. And death will be no more, nor mourning nor clamor, nor misery . . ." (Rev.21:3,4).

In the meanwhile, the dry land is used to figure any approach to this, such as Israel, the nation among whom Yahweh tabernacled in the past. The sea is a symbol of the other nations, with their changing and clashing governments, their Godless legality and unrighteousness, and their temporary term. The history of mankind is a record of disturbances and wars. Some have objected to this and sought to place prominence on its peaceful "evolution" and advance in civilization. But this is unimpressive, compared with its terrible revolutions and lapses into barbarism. Since the days of Cain the *methods* of murder have

been vastly improved, yet its victims have multiplied, and its operation is legalized.

#### DRY LAND APPEARS

It would seem that the waters were in great turmoil during the first and second days of restoration, for, although there was not sufficient to cover the entire earth when at rest, yet it all was submerged. On the third day, however, it responds to the normal force of gravitation, and falls from the higher elevations of the earth into the deeper hollows. Thus it flowed together, much as it still does in a minor measure, to form the seas. Consequently, the greater part of the earth's surface, being beneath the water, is not suitable for the support of land life, such as herbage and trees, or the soul life which is dependent on these. That this was not the case before the disruption, is evident from Isaiah's assertion that the earth was formed to be indwelt (45:18).

After the land was drained, it was fit for further restoration. It must be furnished with various forms of life, first plant life, and, thereafter with soul life, including humanity. On the third day only the plant life appears. In itself it is a great step in preparing the earth for habitation, not only providing the animals and man with food and shelter, but revealing to all the soul life an exhibition of God's wisdom and power and glory.

#### VEGETATION

"Let the earth *bring forth grass*" is the reading of the AV. The italicized verb and noun come from the same stem in Hebrew, and should show this, if possible, in translation. Moreover, the AV renders four different stems by *grass* and nearly a score by *bring forth*. Besides, this passage has a much wider scope than a single class of plants, for it seems to include both herbs and trees. This Hebrew stem is rendered by the AV not only *grass* and *bring forth*, as

here, but also *herb* and *spring*. Literally the original reads, “*Causing-to-be-verdant* the land (with) *verdure*.”<sup>1</sup>

#### A TREASURE OF VARIETY

We might well marvel, even if God had formed only a single specimen of plant, but it ought to spur our hearts to wondering worship when we find myriads of *varieties* of vegetation, clothed in all the colors of the rainbow. Each one has its own exclusive shape and shade and contributes to the good of the higher forms of life. And each one seeds seed for its species, so that it has potentialities far beyond even our most daring dreams. God saw that it was “good.” That seems far too modest an appraisal! To one who gets only a glimpse of the glory that it reveals it seems splendid, superb, super-excellent!

But if the herbs are so good, what shall we say of the trees and their fruit? Daily I enjoy samples of the wide range of God’s goodness. In the morning, besides my grapefruit and orange juice, I partake of the seed food provided by the grains, wheat, or barley, or oats, or maize, or rice. Then, at noon, I eat vegetables with my meat, carrots or peas or chard or tomatoes, with a few olives. The rest of the day, at intervals, I revel in a variety, the pineapple, the banana, the grape, and the fruit of the trees, the apricot, the apple, the peach, the fig and the date. In this way I have a taste of many of the courses on the table He has set before me, and receive the benefit of the special and distinct virtues He has stored in each. In such a diet there is not only substance to repair the body, but vitality to keep the mind vigorous and in tune. And each contrib-

1. The CV now uses the more familiar term *vegetation* for the noun. While this does not reflect the etymological connection between the Hebrew verb and noun, it does express the wide range of plants in view, including non-green vegetation.

utes its particular benefits, not only enriching the life, but adding a note to the scale of praise that ascends to Him for His terrestrial goodness.

#### THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

The erroneous theory of evolution has had every opportunity to prove its correctness, but the more we learn of God’s creation, the more we are convinced that it is as contrary to nature as it is to revelation. Different “species,” or, as the Hebrew calls them, *FROMers*, cannot interbreed and reproduce. Even when man interferes and makes a mule, it is sterile. But, if it cannot be done with man’s artificial help, how could it ever have taken place naturally? The fossils present an enormous amount of evidence, yet there is not the least trace of the multitudinous intermediate forms which should have connected the various species. In historical times there has been no record of any transmutation.

The early evolutionists thought that the reproductive cells of all animals were alike. A powerful microscope would have disillusioned them. Now, however, we know that *each species, or FROM-KIND*, has a different cell structure, and it always remains the same. The reproductive cell has a nucleus and a number of minute rods, called chromosomes, which contain the essential factors which are transmitted. *This cell structure is immutable in each species.* “Evolution” is impossible.

Even within species, the variable characteristics are regulated by natural law, so that small variations, such as size or color, cannot accumulate, so as to form entirely new species.

The wonders of creation are by no means exhausted by the *number* of each living creature involved in creation of the first one, great as that is. Still more astonishing is the fact that practically all *differ* in some slight degree from

the original and from each other. This is due to the process of *generation*. Two are always united to form the offspring, and, as they differ, only the dominant traits of each appears. The other factors are not apparent, but may reappear in future generations.

So it is that there are so many kinds of dogs. They are all of the same FROM-KIND or "species," but, in creating the first pair, all these varieties were provided for. And so it is with the human race. In creating Adam, God did not only make the first man, but all humanity, and all differ from him in some degree in body, soul and spirit. He was not merely the "head" of the race, but, as the Scriptures express it with scientific exactitude, all were *in* him, and, literally and vitally, partake of the spirit that was imparted to him.

For many years increased investigation led to arrogant assumptions, based on inadequate knowledge, and illogical reasoning, which threatened to destroy all faith in the Word of God. Now that scholars are learning more, the tide shows signs of reversing. Even men who do not claim to believe in inspiration are convinced that previous objections, especially in the realm of archaeology, were unfounded and false.

Whenever nature and revelation are correctly interpreted they are in complete harmony. In our comparative ignorance of the world about us, the only logical course is to accept the word of the Creator Himself.

A. E. Knoch

---

#### STUDIES CONCERNING EVOLUTION

Recent studies exposing fundamental weaknesses in the theory of evolution include the books, *DARWIN ON TRIAL*, by Phillip E. Johnson; *INTELLIGENT DESIGN*, by William A. Dembski; and *DARWIN'S BLACK BOX*, by Michael J. Behe. These may be found in many libraries or ordered through bookstores.

---



---

### *God and His Work*

---

#### FROM LIGHT TO LIFE

GOD is operating all in accord with His will which, in turn, accords with His counseled purpose (Eph.1:9-11). He is doing this with orderliness, thoroughness and success. But in the midst of His operations this pattern of authority, wisdom and goodness is difficult to see. Not until a particular work is finished can we perceive its perfection and glory.

In Genesis chapter 1, however, the record of an operation begun and brought to completion provides us with a pattern which gives assurance concerning God's activities. God's rescue of the earth out of chaos and into light and life is presented in two series of "days" followed by a seventh day of ceasing and commemoration, making three stages in all:

##### *First Stage*

1. LIGHT
2. ATMOSPHERE, WATERS
3. DRY GROUND, VEGETATION

##### *Second Stage*

4. LUMINARIES
5. WATER AND FLYING LIFE
6. LAND ANIMALS, HUMANITY

##### *Third Stage*

7. CEASING AND HALLOWING

The two stages leading from light to life, culminating in the third stage of hallowed stopping remain for mankind a picture in miniature of the character of God's operations, so that in the midst of His ongoing, eonian activities

we may be assured of the rightness and purposefulness of things even though disorder and chaos seem, to our perception, to be in charge. The more we focus on the revelation of God given in the details of Genesis 1 (brief as they may be), the more we become settled with confidence in and reliance upon God and His power and goodness.

#### THE THIRD DAY

The record of God's activity on the third day (Gen.1: 9-13) calls for special attention. It is a day of *life*. The light of day one and the separating of water and air on the second day as well as the flowing together of the water and appearance of dry ground early on the third day, all can be seen as vital preparations for the life that now bursts forth. Each step was initiated by the powerful word of God, each was necessary, and each led orderly to the next.

Step by step, God Himself is solely and fully responsible for the achievements recorded here. In just the right order He has called forth the presence of light, the separated air and water, and dry ground with irrigation at hand, to the end that the earth would be covered by living and productive vegetation.

The light was the channel of energy for growth and reproduction. The air and water and ground each contributed a necessary part of the whole plant body. All was arranged ahead of time by Elohim, with plan and purpose. God is a God of order, Who does each thing He does at the right time and in the right arrangement, for His purpose of good.

#### TRIUMPH OVER EVIL

The progressive steps of Elohim from light to life successfully win over the opposition described in Genesis 1:2. The light of day one deals with the *darkness* that had enveloped the earth. The separation of waters from waters by the atmosphere brought in on the second day, and the

flowing together of the surface waters and appearance of the dry ground achieved at the beginning of the third day are set against the *chaos* which had corrupted the planet. And finally, the sprouting of plants bearing seeds and fruit transformed the *vacant* earth into a living and productive world.

What we especially perceive about God in this triumph over the evils of darkness, chaos and vacancy, is that He does not overlook any wrong or fail to deal with them thoroughly and successfully. The evils are abolished, but the creation is saved.

This principle is a sure foundation for reliance on the living God. God will never leave any element of evil undefeated. The whole idea of an eternal hell or final and hopeless death is as irreverent as it is absurd, if the God revealed in the Scriptures is kept in view.

#### THE WORDS OF ELOHIM

A third pattern of divine operations in these opening words of Scripture is that of God's perfect economics. Elohim has a needed place and use for everything that He makes. Every part contributes to the glory of the whole. We can trace this in the details of His language recorded in Genesis 1:3-13.

On the first day the words of Elohim were directly focused upon the object in view which was light. "Let light come to be!" But the value of light does not lie in itself alone, but in its essential role in all the divine operations that follow. As Elohim continues to bring the earth to a state of goodness, it becomes evident that light is fundamental and absolutely needful for every further step. This is made clear by the fact that God's work is always done in a time of "day" which is the name given to light in Genesis 1:5.

A further advancement is traced by Elohim's words on the second day. In Genesis 1:6 He again speaks directly

concerning the object in view. "Let an atmosphere come to be." But Elohim's words are more complicated than in verse 3. They direct attention not only to the provision of the atmosphere but to a distinct purpose for this provision. The atmosphere was to come in the midst of the waters, "that it may be separating waters from waters." In this quotation of Elohim's words we see that what God brings about leads forward to another provision. Each step is a link in a chain of achievements.

Now on the third day there is another and noteworthy change in Elohim's wording. He does not say (as in the pattern of verse 3), "Let vegetation come to be," or even (as in the pattern of verse 6), "Let dry ground come to be so that vegetation may come to be." Instead Elohim's declarations speak directly of the waters and land as channels for the emergence of living plants. Elohim brings about vegetation on the earth, but He does this *indirectly*, by means of His direct, preparatory activity.

In accord with this pattern presented in the third day, God directly sends His Son to save sinners, and *through* His Son He gives life.

#### FURTHER THREE-DAY PERIODS

Three is the number of completion as indicated by this high level of achievement on the third day. But even this was not the completion of these operations of God regarding the earth. There would be another cycle of three days of activity before a day of ceasing. That further cycle would begin with luminaries and end with the creation of humanity, a form of life that would become a vehicle for the display of the most transcendent of all revelations of God, His righteousness, His grace and His love.

There were other three day periods noted in Scripture. The three days and three nights of Jonah's distress in the bowels of a great fish (Jonah 1:17) are noted by

our Lord, Who pointed to them as a sign to the disciples of His approaching crisis and rescue out of death (Matt. 12:39; 16:4). They did not follow the pattern of light to life, but they did represent a critical operation of God leading toward His goal of bringing light and life to the Ninevites.

#### CHRIST'S DEATH, ENTOMBMENT AND RESURRECTION

The three days Jesus spoke of, long after the times of Genesis 1 stand as a climax in the pattern we find there. Considering the day of crucifixion from the standpoint of its ultimate meaning for humanity and all creation, it was a day of astounding *enlightenment*. It is in the day of Christ's faithful obedience to the death of the cross that God's righteousness is manifested (Rom.2:21,22). Gratuitous justification of sinners (Rom.3:24), the commending of God's love as it shines out against the background of sin and infirmity (Rom.5:8,9), and conciliation to God (Rom.5:10), are glorious divine achievements, among others, established on the day of Christ's death.

Further, for us as believers, we "were entombed together with Him through baptism into death" (Rom.6:40). These are operations of authority and power, and they are timely and orderly steps leading toward life.

But it is on the third day that the parallel with Genesis 1:9-13 is most striking. In presenting the evangel, the apostle Paul would announce it in three steps, corresponding to the three days involved: "For I give over to you among the first what also I accepted, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was entombed, and that He has been *roused* the *third* day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor.15:3,4). "Christ has been roused from among the dead" (1 Cor.15:20).

The resurrection of Christ holds such significance of life for Him and in Him for all humanity that a special word must be used to express its vibrant character. "For

even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be *vivified*" (1 Cor.15:22).

This message of glad tidings is "according to the scriptures." In a very real way it is first presented in Genesis chapter one, at least by analogy.

#### THREE CLASSES OF VIVIFICATION

As the three days from the cross to the empty tomb speak of God's completed work in dealing with sin and death by bringing in righteousness and vivification in Christ, so this vivification occurs in three stages. "Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence; thereafter the consummation, whenever He may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father . . . that God may be All in all" (1 Cor.15:23-28).

These are all days of both light and life. But the full scope and brightness of this operation of vivification is not reached until the third order is achieved and all are brought into a level of life that knows God as their All.

#### GOD'S TIMING

In this study we have drawn attention to the timing and glory of God's works. In bringing the earth out of darkness and emptiness into goodness He does not begin and complete His work instantaneously, but rather He follows a grand pattern of steps, each leading forward to the next. This is marvelously illustrated in the first chapter of Genesis.

We live in the midst of God's great, onian operation, which includes the temporary experience of evil, of sin and infirmity and enmity, but which is being directed by God toward a goal of immortality and reconciliation to the glory of God, the Father. Let us not become impatient or ever despair. God will complete the work He has begun, and He will do so in exactly the right way.

D.H.H.

---



---

### *The One Who is Operating All*

---

#### CONCERNING DISPUTATIONS ABOUT FREE WILL

*Yahweh has made everything for its own pertinent end, yea even the wicked for the day of evil* (Prov.16:4).

*O Yahweh our Elohim, You shall set peace on the hearthstones for us, for, indeed, all our doings You have made for us* (Isa.26:12).

*. . . This One am I announcing to you: The God Who makes the world and all that is in it . . .* (Acts 17:23b-24a).

*. . . the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will . . .* (Eph.1:11b).

#### **Question:**

Thank you for your reply to my previous questions concerning the place that remains both for dutifulness and entreaties even in a world devoid of "free will."<sup>1</sup> I am finally beginning to grasp what I heard you say years ago in a recorded message, along the lines that, Obedience remains as important as we always (correctly) supposed it to be. The only thing that we lose—and good riddance!—is self-pride. Yet what we gain is vast indeed: we gain the recognition of God *as God*, together with the privilege of truly thanking Him for all things (Eph.5:20).

My pastor gave me a list of verses which he says "make no sense" unless free will is true, verses which, according to him, it would be "absurd" to interpret except in a freewill sense. The list is as follows: Mat-

---

1. see "Human Will and the Ministry of Law," *Unsearchable Riches* vol.90, pp.213-224.

thew 7:13,14; 21-23; Matthew 23:37; Matthew 24:13; John 5:40; 2 Corinthians 8:3,17; Revelation 3:20; Revelation 22:17.

While I realize that not one of these verses actually teaches (or requires) free will, I can certainly appreciate why my pastor would suppose this to be so. Still, while I commiserate with him in his feelings of “obligation” to defend free will (since he considers its denial “immoral”), as you say, his sense of obligation itself arises merely out of traditional teaching and ethics. This is so in the case of his feelings concerning free will, as much so as is the case with those who feel obliged to defend the veneration of Mary.

I would appreciate your comments on each of these verses, as well as on the practical matter of my pastor’s feelings and concerns in opposition to “Concordant truth.” By the way, he also says that you are “too intellectual.”

**Answer:**

As I explained more fully in my previous letter, your pastor’s inability even to consider that free will may not be true even as his “righteous indignation” against our teaching, is simply because he has made popular opinion together with his own conscience, the arbiter of both truth and righteousness. He thinks that these things are ever so important. Until *God* makes it clear to him (*cf* 2 Cor.10:4) that they are worse than useless, our best arguments will fall on deaf ears. In the meantime, we can only be kind and patient toward him.

Even if some cannot accept this, our whole purpose of ministry continues to be to convey the importance—the *primary* importance—of our becoming rooted and grounded in love, apart from which we are nothing, *while also* seeking to gain a competency in the perception of truth, according to the means of grace which God has provided, which

is discipline—albeit *enlightened* discipline—in language and logic, as relevant to scriptural issues.

Our message has never been that we need the “head” *instead* of the “heart,” or, *less than* the heart, but that we *need* the “heart” *and* the “head.” Because some dislike (or are simply lazy concerning) learning, and others somewhat hold to mystical, gnostic ideas in which critical thinking is greatly attenuated if not practically supplanted by supposed, personal divine communiqués, it has been convenient for some to claim or suppose, especially in my own case, that we are somehow spiritually cold, if not altogether lifeless. In any case, it is better to make any such perceptions more a matter of prayer than of criticism.

**REINFORCEMENT IN TRADITIONAL ERROR**

In responding now, first of all, to your pastor’s feelings and concerns in opposition to our teaching which arise out of the ethics and traditional mores of western society, I want to emphasize that I truly understand and sympathize with him in his outlook. After all, I myself once believed as he does; and, I am certainly no stranger to western ethics. Curious as it may seem at first, perhaps I can best convey to you something helpful in relation to your pastor’s feelings and concerns, by speaking frankly concerning certain of my own feelings and concerns.

Within the previous writings in this series and elsewhere, I have *briefly and simply* stated why I find free will to be false, explaining that, on any rational account, it is simply impossible for it to be true. If others will not read or cannot grasp this testimony even to the degree of understanding at least why *we* believe free will to be false, there is nothing I can do about this.

I will admit that it is sometimes unsettling and discouraging to observe that many simply do not seem to care what the truth may actually be here, but only wish

to live an unreflective, undisturbed life according to the dictates of their own conscience, attitudes, wishes, and reactive emotions.

Until I remember that it must ultimately be of God that it is so, it is troubling to note that in many cases even friends and acquaintances of many years (not to mention so many of the general reading public who come in contact with our work), cannot even say why we teach as we do, on the issue of free will. They seem only to be clear that certain ones—ones who seem to have their attention more than ourselves—claim otherwise, and, that such ones have their (purportedly) “good reasons” for so doing. Thus, they merely become reinforced and further persuaded in the nearly universally-held views which they too already had long embraced, in previous years, before they had ever heard of so-called “Concordant truth.”

I realize that the phrase “Concordant truth” was, many years ago, only introduced in an attempt briefly to refer to that which was affirmed as truth, according to a certain ministry. In such a trite sense, however, we might as well speak of “Baptist truth,” “Pentecostal truth,” “Calvinist truth,” or “Roman Catholic truth.” Since the phrase “Concordant truth” is problematic, confusing, and unneedful, we will do well to discard it, replacing it simply with “Concordant teaching,” if by this one means the teaching of the Concordant Publishing Concern.

We have often been asked *why* our ministry, throughout its ninety-year career, has remained so small and its message reached so few, especially in a deeper way in the interests of maturity. Our reply is simply that this is according to God’s intention, at present, in the current wicked eon. Indeed, in a world in which God Himself locks up all in stubbornness (Rom.11:32), such a message and perspective—however glorious and true—which is nonetheless contrary to such an abundance of popular, cherished

traditions, can hardly expect to succeed. That is, it cannot expect to succeed except in those special instances in which God mercifully and graciously grants enlightenment.

Indeed, even among those acquainted with and more or less in general accord with our work, whether wittingly or unwittingly, it is usual to criticize, compete against, or simply ignore us, while unusual truly to complement and support our efforts in common cause. Therefore, if the question, Why are we not more “successful”? is asked not rhetorically, in a spirit of suspicion, but literally, it is a question which is not only easy to answer but one concerning which there need be no mystery whatsoever.

#### FREEDOM FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

Concerning scriptural truth, we neither acknowledge nor exercise any hierarchy of human authority. Whatever the Scriptures truly teach, alone is the truth. And, now that the scripture record itself has been both declared and completed, no man can do any more than affirm its testimony, praying for grace that he might do so faithfully. Hence, we say to all, You are free to believe and do as you please; in fact, we encourage you to do so. Only remember that you are not free from your own selves and the limitations and pleasures thereof, while being mindful as well that the foolish neither perceive their foolishness, nor their lack of perspicacity.

Now it is at this juncture that many are stumbled: If today there is no “true church,” nor even any *necessarily-correct* faithful ministry, it will then be asked, How can I know what to believe? As many will say, “I am no scholar; how, then, can *I* know what is true?” We would only add to this that scholarship, even when helpful, is no sure guide to truth. Scholars are in disagreement among themselves over nearly every issue. And even though, in some things, there is a consensus among most scholars, there is hardly

ever a unanimity of opinion even among recognized scholars. Furthermore, in an era of widespread apostasy, majority views, often (though certainly not necessarily always), will be incorrect; and yet, conversely, neither is there any virtue in being in the minority, especially among such a diversity of minority opinions.

Our only recourse, then, is to do what we should have done in the first place and rely on God alone to reveal and teach us His truth, while at the same time deeply acknowledging (especially to ourselves) our own fallibility and susceptibility to error. It then becomes our prayer that *God* would make us competent, even if others should be unaware or even deny that He has done so. Then, we will believe and soberly realize Paul's words that, "Our competency is of God" (2 Cor.3:5).

#### INSTRUCTION IN THE EVANGEL

One who is an evangelist must actually herald the evangel of Christ, not "a different evangel" from that brought by Paul (*cf* Gal.1:6b); a pastor must truly "shepherd" those whom he serves; he must not be, as to the truth, a burdensome wolf in sheep's clothing (*cf* Acts 20:29,30); likewise, a teacher must be one whose work is characterized by faithful instruction and guidance, not misguidance and misinformation (*cf* Col.1:7b; *cp* 2 Cor.11:13-15).

Hence, while recognizing that, *through mortal human agency* (*cf* Eph.4:11-14), with a view toward our maturity, God has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, we certainly are in need of wisdom and enlightenment in order to recognize and discern the teaching of any such ones. Even so, we will not care to speculate as to the "identity" of any such persons. From the Scripture record itself, we are aware of those who are our apostles and prophets; and, as we ourselves truly mature, we will not be ignorant of but grateful toward those who served us along the way, in whatever faithful capacity.

Remember, no person is any such servant except to the degree that he actually heralds, holds, and gives instruction in, the evangel. Indeed, some may do substantive, good evangelistic, pastoral, or teaching work, who may nonetheless hold to serious error. And, even those who truly may be most able to guide us toward maturity, can hardly make any claim of perfection.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE GIFT OF LEARNING

Our work is principally that of a *teaching* ministry, which in the nature of things can only be of service to those who wish to be "students"—however informally, and regardless of grade. Yet few indeed, so it seems, are "in the business of learning," or disposed even to engage themselves thus from time to time, infrequently and briefly.

Learning—learning anything at all—is certainly a gift. It is at the heart of our teaching that those who believe, who may have learned little more than the elements of "Christ and Him crucified," who are indisposed to substantial further learning, are nonetheless in Christ and complete in Him.

We sincerely honor and care deeply for all believers; it is only that we find it impossible to *teach* those who are disinclined to learning or at least to learning through us. Still, if this should be so in any individual case, it is so in the wisdom of God; and, all are to be at peace accordingly. We only ask that those who may choose to follow a path separate from our own, join with us, in spirit, in mutual regard and love.

#### MISUNDERSTOOD TEXTS

Now, I will briefly consider the various texts provided

2. As a friend of mine once put it, "I fear that even the clearest-headed among us, may still be a little mixed up."

by your pastor, which he supposes to be practically demonstrative of free will.

(1) **“Jerusalem! Jerusalem! who are killing the prophets and pelting with stones those who have been dispatched to her! How many times do I want to assemble your children in the manner a hen is assembling her brood under her wings—and you will not!”** (Matt.23:37).

(2) **“Yet he who endures to the consummation, he shall be saved”** (Matt.24:13).

(3) **“Enter through the cramped gate, for broad is the gate and spacious is the way which is leading away into destruction, and many are those entering through it. Yet what a cramped gate and narrowed way is the one leading away into life, and few are those who are finding it . . . Not everyone saying to Me ‘Lord! Lord!’ will be entering into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who is doing the will of My Father Who is in the heavens. Many will be declaring to Me in that day, ‘Lord! Lord! Was it not in Your name that we prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many powerful deeds?’ And then shall I be avowing to them that ‘I never knew you! Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness!’”** (Matt.7:13,14; 21-23).

(4) **“ . . . not willing are you to come to Me that you may have life”** (John 5:40).

It is the leaders of the people of Jerusalem in our Lord's day who, at least principally, are in view here, in Matthew 23:37 (*cf* Matt.23:1-36). On many occasions, throughout their history, it was the heart-desire of God to draw near and assemble the people of Jerusalem unto Himself, in a manner even as a hen is assembling her brood under her wings. And yet the corrupt leadership of the people, who wished to maintain their own fleshly advantages even as their own human traditions, “willed not,” thereby thwarting God's revealed counsels concerning the people as a whole (*cf* Matt.23:13; *cp* Prov.1:20-30). That this was so in the wisdom and purpose of God, is a matter of the depths of God, and is a consideration not addressed here. Still, this is no reason to impose a foreign philosophy of free will upon the text, simply because we ourselves are accustomed to and may be gratified by the contemplation of such notions.

Similarly, in the evangel of the Circumcision, the words, “Yet he who endures to the consummation, he shall be saved” (Matt.24:13), simply mean what they say. One should not from this, however, imagine that one who endures to the consummation does so not by the all-sufficient grace of God but by the self-reliant “free will” of man. In the Circumcision calling, eonian life is a reward for obedient endurance; hence, to enter into life, they must actually *do* the will of God, not be “workers of lawlessness.”

The fact that the Jews, broadly, were “not willing” to come to the Lord Jesus that they may have life (John 5:40), was, indeed, the essence of their problem. But this is by no means to say that they had it within themselves to make themselves willing (*cf* Rom.8:7,8; 1 Cor.2:14). It is written, “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your potent power” (Psa.110:3), not prior thereunto, whenever they care to exercise aright their fancied free wills.

(5) **“ . . . of their own accord . . . ”** (2 Cor.8:3); **“ . . . of his own accord . . . ”** (2 Cor.8:17).

Especially considered in their contexts, these phrases are anything but an indication of the presence of free will activity. Paul, in making mention of the ecclesias of Macedonia having given generously, states that they did so, “*of their own accord*” (“they were *willing of themselves*,” AV; 2 Cor.8:3). Similarly, in 2 Corinthians 8:17, in speaking of Titus' diligence in his service for the Corinthians, the apostle declares, “he, indeed, receives the entreaty . . . [and] *of his own accord* he came out to you.” Stating, however, that in a certain matter one acts of his “own accord,” is simply to say that in so doing one therein acts voluntarily, as opposed to acting due to a requirement or out of compulsion (i.e., by being made to do what one does not want to do; *cf* Philemon 14).

Here in 2 Corinthians 8, Paul plainly tells us that this noble, voluntary service of the Macedonian ecclesias was

“through the will of God,” and, that it was a manifestation of “the *grace* of God” which *He* had bestowed (2 Cor. 8:1,5). Likewise, Paul declares, “Now *thanks be to God*, Who is *imparting* for you to the heart of Titus [this] same diligence” (2 Cor.8:16) to which the apostle refers when stating that of his own accord Titus came out to the Corinthians, that he might serve them faithfully.

(6) **“Lo! I stand at the door and am knocking. If ever any-one should be hearing My voice and opening the door, I will also be coming in to him and dining with him, and he with Me”** (Rev.3:20).

This passage, too, like those of 2 Corinthians 8, merely indicates that the Lord deals with men as intelligent, voluntary agents, whom He does not compel to act contrary to their own wills. It does not address the issue of how we are ultimately to account for the state of one’s heart, out of which spring the outflowings of life (Prov.4:23 *cp* Matt. 12:34), in one’s chosen course of action.

(7) **“Let him who will, take the water of life gratuitously”** [“. . . *whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely,” AV] (Rev. 22:17).

This familiar passage simply speaks of the joyous, voluntary activity in which the blessed ones of that future day will gladly engage themselves. It is well worth noting, however, that they are to do so “*gratuitously*,” that is, in a way in which they recognize that their privileges therein are “*gratuitous*,” which is to say, uncalled for with reference to anything that is of themselves (*cp* John 15:25). This alone debars any thought of meritorious free will.

#### CONCLUDING WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who *blesses* us; Who does so in accord with the delight of His will for the laud of the glory of His grace (Eph. 1:3,6). Now thanks be to God for His indescribable *gratuity* (2 Cor.9:15)!  
J.R.C.

---



---

### Concordant Version of First Samuel

---

## I SAMUEL 20

**20** + David ran <sup>1</sup>away from the homestead <sup>1</sup>at Ramah; + he <sup>1</sup>came and <sup>1</sup>said, facing Jonathan, What have I done? What is my depravity? And what is my sin before your father that he is seeking <sup>1</sup>for my soul? <sup>2</sup>+ <sup>7</sup>Jonathan<sup>0</sup> <sup>1sa</sup>replied to him, Far be it! You shall not die. Behold, my father will not do any great matter or small matter <sup>1</sup>that he does not <sup>1</sup>reveal <sup>1</sup>to my ear. <sup>1</sup>Now for what reason should my father conceal <sup>1</sup>this <sup>1</sup>matter from me? There is nothing to this!

<sup>3</sup>+Yet David <sup>7</sup>replied<sup>~f</sup> again, + <sup>1</sup>saying, Your father must know, yea know<sup>~</sup>, that I have found grace in your eyes; <sup>1</sup>so he has <sup>1sa</sup>decided, Jonathan must not <sup>1</sup>know this lest he should be grieved. + Nevertheless, as Yahweh lives, and your soul lives, there is <sup>1</sup>but <sup>as</sup> a small step between me and <sup>bt</sup> death. <sup>4</sup>+So Jonathan <sup>1</sup>said to David, Whatever your soul <sup>7</sup>is yearning for<sup>~</sup>, + I shall do for you.

<sup>5</sup>+Then David <sup>1sa</sup>explained to Jonathan: Behold, tomorrow is the new moon; <sup>1</sup>as for me, I should sit, yea sit<sup>~</sup> with the king to eat. <sup>1</sup>Instead you must send me away, and I will conceal myself in the field until the third evening. <sup>6</sup>Should your father <sup>1</sup>miss, yea <sup>1</sup>miss<sup>~</sup> me, <sup>1</sup>then you say, David asked, yea asked<sup>~</sup> leave <sup>f</sup>of me to run <sup>7</sup>as far as<sup>s</sup> Bethlehem, his city, for the whole family <sup>1</sup>has the annual sacrifice there. <sup>7</sup>If he then <sup>1</sup>says thus, Very well! It means peace <sup>1</sup>with your servant. <sup>1</sup>Yet if his <sup>hot</sup>anger grows <sup>1</sup>hot, then know that <sup>1</sup>evil has been <sup>all</sup>determined <sup>f</sup>by him. <sup>8</sup>+Now you must <sup>d</sup>deal kindly <sup>on</sup>with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of Yahweh with you. <sup>1</sup>But if there is any depravity in me,

<sup>c</sup>put me to death yourself. + Why then should you bring me <sup>f</sup>to your father?

<sup>9</sup>+ Jonathan <sup>ksa</sup>replied, Far be it <sup>y</sup>from you! For if I should realize, yea realize<sup>e</sup> that <sup>e</sup>evil has been <sup>all</sup>determined <sup>f wi</sup>by my father to come over you, + would I not <sup>tell</sup> <sup>y</sup>you <sup>`about</sup> it? <sup>10</sup>+ Then David <sup>ksa</sup>asked <sup>y</sup> Jonathan, <sup>a</sup>Who shall tell <sup>y</sup> me <sup>7if~c</sup> your father should answer you harshly? <sup>11</sup>+ Jonathan <sup>l</sup>said to David, Do <sup>go</sup> come! + Let us go forth into the field! + So both of them went <sup>f</sup>forth into the field.

<sup>12</sup>+ Then Jonathan <sup>l</sup>said to David, By Yahweh Elohim of Israel! <sup>t</sup> I shall sound out <sup>m</sup>my father <sup>as</sup>about this time tomorrow or the third day; + <sup>bd</sup>if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send word to you and <sup>r</sup>reveal it <sup>`into</sup> your ear? <sup>13</sup> Thus may Yahweh do to Jonathan and thus add to it! <sup>t</sup> But should it <sup>c</sup>seem well to my father to do <sup>on</sup> you <sup>`evil</sup>, + then I will reveal it <sup>`into</sup> your ear and send you away + that you can go unharmed. + May Yahweh <sup>b</sup>be with you, just as He <sup>b</sup>was with my father. <sup>14</sup> Nor, <sup>if</sup> while I am <sup>f</sup>still alive, + shall you <sup>not</sup> fail to <sup>ld</sup>show <sup>wi</sup> me the benignity of Yahweh; and <sup>7</sup>even if~ I <sup>l</sup>die, <sup>15</sup> + you shall not cut off <sup>y</sup>your kindness from <sup>wi</sup> my house <sup>f</sup>for the eon, not + even <sup>i</sup>when Yahweh cuts<sup>e</sup> off <sup>`the</sup> enemies<sup>l</sup> of David, each man off the surface of the ground. <sup>16</sup>+ Thus has Jonathan <sup>l</sup>contracted with the house of David; and Yahweh will seek it out from the hand of David's enemies<sup>l</sup>.

<sup>17</sup>+ So Jonathan <sup>l</sup>continued to <sup>7</sup>adjure~ <sup>`David</sup>, in his love <sup>`for</sup> him, for he loved him with the love of his own soul. <sup>18</sup>+ Then Jonathan <sup>l</sup>said to him, Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be <sup>n</sup>missed, for your empty seat shall be noted. <sup>19</sup>+ When you count <sup>r</sup>three days, you shall descend very quickly; and you must come to the <sup>ri</sup>place where you were concealed <sup>i</sup>on the day of the <sup>d</sup>deed, and you must <sup>sit</sup>stay beside the departure <sup>`stone</sup>. <sup>20</sup>+ As for me, I shall shoot three <sup>`arrows</sup> to one side of it, <sup>y</sup> pointing~

to a target for myself. <sup>21</sup>+ Now behold, I shall send <sup>`the</sup> lad, <sup>7</sup>saying<sup>o</sup>, Go, find <sup>`the</sup> arrows. If I shall say, yea say<sup>r</sup> to the lad, Behold, the arrows are + <sup>bd</sup>this way from you, take them, + then do come! For there is peace for you, and there is no <sup>sp</sup>plot, as Yahweh lives! <sup>22</sup>+ But if I shall say thus to the stripling, Behold, the arrows are + <sup>beyond</sup> <sup>f</sup>you, then <sup>go</sup>leave, for Yahweh has sent you away. <sup>23</sup>+ As for the <sup>sp</sup>promise <sup>w</sup>that we have <sup>sp</sup>discussed, I and you, behold, Yahweh is <sup>7</sup>witness<sup>o</sup> between me and <sup>bt</sup> you <sup>f</sup>for the eon.

<sup>24</sup>+ So David <sup>l</sup>concealed himself in the field. + When the new moon <sup>u</sup>came, + the king <sup>l</sup>sat down to eat <sup>on</sup> <sup>`bread</sup>. <sup>25</sup>+ The king <sup>l</sup>sat on his seat as he had done <sup>du</sup>time <sup>i</sup>upon <sup>du</sup>time, <sup>y</sup>in the sidewall seat; + Jonathan <sup>7</sup>sat <sup>lpc</sup>opposite~ him + while Abner <sup>l</sup>sat <sup>f</sup>at Saul's side. + But David was <sup>n</sup>missing from his <sup>ri</sup>place. <sup>26</sup>+ Saul did not <sup>sp</sup>say anything <sup>i</sup> that day, for he <sup>sa</sup>thought, he is absent by some chance, he is not clean, <sup>t</sup>surely he has not been cleansed. <sup>27</sup>+ Then it came to <sup>be</sup> <sup>f</sup>on the morrow after the new moon, the second day, + that David was <sup>n</sup>missing from his <sup>ri</sup>place. + So Saul <sup>l</sup>said to his son Jonathan, For what reason has the son of Jesse not come to eat <sup>`bread</sup> <sup>mr</sup>both yesterday <sup>mr</sup>and today? <sup>28</sup>+ Jonathan <sup>l</sup>answered <sup>`Saul</sup>, David asked, yea asked<sup>r</sup> <sup>f wi</sup>of me <sup>7</sup>to go<sup>o</sup> <sup>f</sup>to Bethlehem, <sup>7</sup>this city<sup>o</sup>. <sup>29</sup>+ He <sup>l</sup>said, <sup>pr</sup>please <sup>m</sup>let me go, for our family is holding a sacrifice in the city. + As for <sup>Q</sup>me~, my <sup>7</sup>brothers~ <sup>m</sup>gave <sup>y</sup> me instructions. + So now, if I have found grace in your eyes, <sup>pr</sup>please let me <sup>l</sup>slip away and let me see <sup>m</sup>my brothers. <sup>on</sup>For <sup>so</sup>this reason he has not come to the king's table.

<sup>30</sup>+ Saul's anger <sup>i</sup>against Jonathan grew <sup>7</sup>exceedingly<sup>o</sup> <sup>hot</sup>, and he <sup>l</sup>said to him, Son of <sup>a</sup>revolting <sup>7</sup>maiden<sup>o</sup>! Do I not know that you are <sup>7</sup>partner~ <sup>y</sup>with the son of Jesse, to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? <sup>31</sup> For all the days <sup>w</sup>that the son of Jesse lives on the ground, you and your kingship, you shall not be established. Now + therefore send out and take <sup>`him</sup> in for

me, for he is a son of death. <sup>32</sup> + Jonathan <sup>l</sup>responded <sup>`</sup>to his father Saul, + <sup>l</sup>saying to him, Why should he be <sup>c</sup>put to death? What has he done? <sup>33</sup> At +that, Saul <sup>~</sup>lifted up <sup>~</sup>the spear <sup>on</sup>at him as if to smite him; and Jonathan <sup>l</sup>realized that <sup>7</sup>evil had been <sup>all</sup>determined <sup>~</sup>f upon <sup>wi</sup>by his father, to <sup>c</sup>put <sup>`</sup>David to death.

<sup>34</sup> +So Jonathan <sup>7l</sup>jumped up <sup>Q</sup> from <sup>wi</sup> the table in the heat of anger; + he did not eat bread <sup>i</sup>on the second day of the new moon festival, for he was grieved for David, and <sup>l</sup>because his father had put him to shame. <sup>35</sup> + <sup>i</sup>When the morning <sup>lb</sup>came, + Jonathan went <sup>l</sup>forth to the field for the appointment with David, and a young lad was with him. <sup>36</sup> + He <sup>l</sup>said to his lad, Run! Find <sup>pr</sup>now <sup>`</sup>the arrows which I am shooting. <sup>7+</sup>While <sup>s</sup> the lad was running, + he <sup>l</sup>shot the arrow to <sup>c</sup>make it pass beyond him. <sup>37</sup> +When the lad <sup>fr</sup>came <sup>to</sup> the <sup>ri</sup>place <sup>w</sup>where Jonathan had shot the arrow, +then Jonathan <sup>l</sup>called after the lad, + <sup>l</sup>saying, Is not the arrow, + beyond <sup>f</sup> you? <sup>38</sup> And Jonathan <sup>l</sup>called after the lad, Quickly! Do hurry! Do not stay there! +So Jonathan's lad <sup>l</sup>picked up <sup>`</sup>the arrows and <sup>7l</sup>brought them <sup>~</sup>to his lord. <sup>39</sup> +As for the lad, he did not know anything about it; <sup>9</sup>only Jonathan and David, they knew <sup>`</sup>of the matter.

<sup>40</sup> +Then Jonathan <sup>l</sup>gave <sup>his</sup> <sup>all</sup>gear to the lad who was <sup>g</sup>with him, and he <sup>lsa</sup>told <sup>g</sup> him, Go! Bring them to the city. <sup>41</sup> When the lad had <sup>in</sup>gone <sup>l</sup>, + David arose from beside the <sup>7</sup>departure stone <sup>~</sup>; +he <sup>l</sup>fell <sup>g</sup>with his nostrils <sup>to</sup>d the earth and <sup>l</sup>bowed down three <sup>du</sup>times. +Then each man <sup>l</sup>kissed <sup>his</sup> associate; and they <sup>l</sup>wept, each man <sup>`</sup>with his associate, <sup>fr</sup>while their <sup>~</sup>affection <sup>~</sup>magnified. <sup>42</sup> + Jonathan <sup>l</sup>said to David, Go <sup>g</sup>in peace! <sup>w</sup>Since we, both of us, we have sworn in the Name of Yahweh, <sup>g</sup> saying <sup>~</sup>, Yahweh <sup>lb</sup>is <sup>7</sup>witness <sup>o</sup> between me and <sup>bt</sup> you, and between my seed and <sup>bt</sup> your seed <sup>fr</sup>for the eon. +Then <sup>7</sup>David <sup>Q</sup>arose and <sup>lgo</sup>departed, +while Jonathan was entering the city.

## THE DEPARTURE STONE

CHAPTER TWENTY of 1 Samuel marks a change in David's relationship to the royal family. From this time until the death of Saul, David becomes a homeless fugitive. Much of his time will be spent among the surrounding nations. He will not again return to the palace, nor will he lead the hosts of Israel until he is recognized as her king. This departure occurs at the time of the new moon festival. Apparently all the officers of the king's court were expected to assemble at this time (1 Sam.20:5,24-27).

The Jewish year is typical of the course of the eons in which God's purpose for humanity is completed. Each year the same events were repeated. Each year had one day of atonement, signifying the cross, and one each of the three primary festivals. The Passover speaks of deliverance, Pentecost speaks of the outpouring of God's Spirit, and Tabernacles speaks of the final ingathering to peace and stability. The new moons represent administrative changes of rule during the course of the eons.

There are many similarities between these events and those at the time of Christ. Many believed in Christ and wanted to make Him king, just as Jonathan knew that David would one day be king. But the established administration of rule wanted to destroy Christ, seeing Him as a threat to their position, just as Saul did David (compare 1 Sam.20:31 with John 11:48). It was a time for an administrative change, but the change that was to occur was not the expected one. The Jews were ready to celebrate Tabernacles, tearing down branches and heralding Christ

as God's anointed Deliverer. But it was the time when the Anointed was to be rejected. The Passover Lamb would be killed when Israel shunned Him to choose Barabas. On the national plane of God's plan, Israel would be cast away that the nations might be conciliated (Rom.11:15).

#### JONATHAN AND DAVID

1 Samuel 20 focuses on Jonathan's relationship to David, and reiterates the covenant between them. Viewing this as typical of Israel, it represents God's love for Israel. The difficulty with which David and Jonathan parted should provide us a window of view into the heart of God. Though Israel was hardened and disobedient, they are God's beloved, and their casting away cost Him dearly. Even though Israel is currently cast aside (*cf* Rom.11:15), she will ultimately be saved (Rom.11:26). In God's timing, Israel will fulfill His purpose of that nation being a blessing to all the nations. And God will then find great joy in Israel. The covenant between David and Jonathan represents the faithfulness and love of God.

#### STONE MEMORIALS

There are a number of stones mentioned in 1 Samuel. Large stones were a natural element to serve as memorials, tables on which to offer sacrifices or places of meeting. The departure stone (20:19,41) is called by that name before David and Jonathan part company. The narrative would have been written at a later time, probably as recounted by David to some scribe. The naming of this stone as the departure stone shows that it was a memorial in the mind and heart of David, and that his covenant with Jonathan before Yahweh was not forgotten. David's treatment of Jonathan's descendants shows his faithfulness to his promise (2 Sam.9). In this respect Mephibosheth represents Israel at Christ's return. God's grace will then be

manifested to Israel, and it will be in view of what caused their casting off, of God's "departure" from them.

#### EBEN-EZER

Earlier in 1 Samuel we read of another famous stone, Eben-Ezer. Like the departure stone, Eben-Ezer is called by its name before the incident occurred which was responsible for its naming (*cf* 1 Sam.4:1; 5:1; 7:12). Evidently the name Eben-Ezer became affixed to that place and was used to define that location when the history was recorded. But there are also some very interesting correlations between Eben-Ezer and the departure stone.

Eben-Ezer is the name of the place where Israel was encamped to battle with the Philistines (1 Sam.4:1). Israel was sorely losing the battle to the Philistines. The elders of Israel decided to bring the coffer of the covenant to the scene of the battle. Their expectation was that Yahweh would then help them to win the battle. The coffer was brought, and the morale of the Israelites received a tremendous boost, but Israel lost the battle, and the coffer was captured by the Philistines (1 Sam.4:2-11).

How ironic that this place should be named "Stone of the Helper" (1 Sam.7:12), and yet the first mention of the name comes when Israel believed they were insuring themselves of God's help, but they were utterly defeated! And not only were they defeated, but Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were all killed. And in the acute trauma of the situation, Phinehas' wife delivered her son and named him "Ichabod, meaning, the glory has departed from Israel" (1 Sam.4:19-22).

The coffer of Yahweh caused much trouble for the Philistines, and was eventually returned to Israel (1 Sam.5,6). Yet even this did not bring immediate blessing on Israel. It was not for another twenty years, and until Israel became plaintive after Yahweh and repented under Samuel's direc-

tion, that Yahweh showed Himself their Helper. This is described in 1 Samuel 7:1-14.

Israel put away her foreign gods and idols, and convened at Mizpah to seek Yahweh with sincerity. There Samuel sacrificed and prayed for them. The Philistines heard that Israel was gathered, and arrayed themselves to do battle, suspecting that Israel was planning to revolt against their domination. God thundered over the Philistines and discomfited them before Israel. Then Samuel set up the stone, calling it Eben-Ezer, “for he said, Hitherto Yahweh has helped us” (7:12).

#### THE HEAD OF THE CORNER

This course of events is similar to both the events at the departure stone and also to the events surrounding the coming of Christ. The priesthood was corrupt. Israel was dominated by another country. Israel needed to repent and seek God with a full heart. Christ is both the “stone of stumbling” and the “Head of the corner” (Luke 20:17; 1 Peter 2:7,8) At the rejection of Christ, the glory departed from Israel, and that nation was crushed for rejecting their Head. Yet in the future, Israel will become plaintive after God, and Christ will return as Head of the corner.

The cross of Christ is the place where God is known as mankind’s Helper. But it began as the place where mankind rejected God’s help. How marvelous it is in our eyes that God brings such glorious good out of our evil (Matt.21:42).

J. Philip Scranton

---

#### ALVIN ROBINSON

Our dear friend in the Lord, Alvin Robinson, age 67, of Marietta, South Carolina, was put to repose on October 15. We had known Brother Robinson for many years, and had enjoyed much good fellowship with him, rejoicing together in the all-sufficient grace of God. Alvin, even as his daughter, Debbie Rollins, who survives him, was an unusually kind and gracious believer.

### THE WORK OF GOD

IN the Fourth Book (Ecc.7:13-9:15) Ecclesiastes returns to the subject dealt with in Book II—the work of God. There he emphasized the antagonism between good and evil. Here he considers the relation between the two opposites. The opening sentence strikes the keynote of the whole section.

<sup>13</sup> See `the <sup>d</sup>work of the One, Elohim;

For <sup>a</sup>who <sup>l</sup>can <sup>></sup> set in order<sup>r</sup>

`that which He has overturned?

<sup>14</sup> In a day of good <sup>b</sup>be resting in the good,

And in a day of evil, be vigilant;

<sup>m</sup>Indeed the One, Elohim, has <sup>d</sup>made

`this one <sup>></sup>along with that one

<sup>on</sup>For this reason, <sup>w</sup>that <sup>a</sup> <sup>h</sup>man cannot

<sup>l</sup>find out **anything** about **his hereafter**.

This is an epitome of the thesis which our author proposes to consider. In accord with God’s Word as a whole, the Assembler traces all to God.

A detailed exposition is not in harmony with the suggestive character of these studies. Hence we must content ourselves with noting the general drift of thought and offering a few remarks on the more obscure passages.

Having stated that God has made the day of good along with the day of evil, Ecclesiastes instances familiar experiences supporting the assertion (7:15-22), and then, surveying the totality of things, expresses the conviction that man lacks the power to solve the mystery of the whole.

- 15 **I have seen** `all this in my days of vanity:  
There is the **righteous** man who **perishes**<sup>l</sup>  
**in his righteousness,**  
And there is the **wicked** man  
who is **prolonged**<sup>l</sup> in his evil.
- 16 **Do not** <sup>lb</sup>be <sup>mm</sup>abundantly self-righteous,  
And do not be thinking yourself superlatively wise;  
**Why should you** make yourself desolate?
- 17 **Do not be** <sup>mm</sup>abundantly <sup>l</sup>wicked,  
and do not <sup>lb</sup>be frivolous;  
**Why should you die** <sup>i</sup>when it is not your season?
- 18 It is good <sup>w</sup>that you <sup>l</sup>hold <sup>i</sup>to this,  
And from that <sup>mr</sup>also do not <sup>e</sup>let your hand <sup>l</sup>rest;  
For he who is fearful of Elohim  
shall come forth <sup>l</sup>from them all.
- 19 **Wisdom** itself gives more <sup>l</sup>strength to the wise man  
<sup>f</sup>Than ten men of authority who <sup>b</sup>are in a city.
- 20 **For** there is no righteous <sup>h</sup>man in the earth  
**Who** <sup>l</sup>does good and never <sup>l</sup>sins.
- 21 **Moreover,** to all the words <sup>w</sup>that people <sup>l</sup>speak  
do not <sup>l</sup>give your heart's attention,  
<sup>w</sup>That you may not hear your servant  
maledicting you;
- 22 **For** even many <sup>du</sup>times your heart knows  
<sup>w</sup>That you yourself <sup>mr</sup>also have maledicted others.
- 23 **All this I probed** <sup>i</sup>by wisdom;  
**I said,** I shall be wise,  
<sup>+</sup>Yet it was far from me;
- 24 **Far** away is <sup>wt</sup>that which has <sup>b</sup>been, and deep, deep—  
<sup>a</sup>Who can <sup>l</sup>find it out?
- Accordingly, in what follows, Ecclesiastes endeavors to find a partial solution answering the practical ends of life.
- 25 **I** turned about <sup>+</sup>that my heart  
may <sup>l</sup>know and <sup>l</sup>explore,

- <sup>+</sup>That it may seek out wisdom and design  
And may <sup>l</sup>know the wickedness of stupidity  
and the frivolity in raving.
- 26 <sup>+</sup>**I found** more bitter <sup>f</sup>than death:  
<sup>l</sup>That kind of woman whose heart  
is like weir traps and seine nets,  
And her hands like bonds;  
The man doing well before the One, Elohim,  
he shall escape from her,  
And the sinner<sup>l</sup>, he shall be seized <sup>i</sup>by her.
- 27 **See,** this is what I found, said the Assembler:—  
Adding one thing to another to find a design,
- 28 **Which** my soul <sup>f</sup>still sought, <sup>+</sup>but I could not find,  
**I found** one <sup>h</sup>man out <sup>f</sup>of a thousand,  
<sup>+</sup>Yet I could not find a woman <sup>i</sup>among all these—
- 29 **See,** I found this alone:  
<sup>w</sup>That the One, Elohim, <sup>d</sup>made <sup>l</sup>humanity upright,  
<sup>+</sup>Yet they seek many devisings.

In seeking to understand this portion of Ecclesiastes the student is confronted with a formidable obstacle. The AV translates the noun *cheshbon* in three different ways: “reason” (7:25), “account” (7:27) and, later on, “device” (9:10). In addition, the feminine form of this noun is rendered “invention” in 7:29. It must be evident to the least critical reader that the writer’s thought is necessarily obscured when a Hebrew term is represented by such different words in English. When attention is given to the usage of these terms and their adjective and verbal forms it becomes clear that the sense of “device” or “scheme” is in view. [The CV uses “design” when the terms are used of divine or truly wise devisings.]

This whole paragraph, more especially verses 26-28, has occasioned many gratuitous remarks. As regards verse 27 the difficulty lies in determining to what the phrase “one

to one” may refer. Since the topic consistently discussed throughout the section is the relation between good and evil, the likely point is that to arrive at an intelligent understanding of the universe, good and evil must be considered together as parts of the divine plan. This fits with the special scope of this “book,” and throws light on many otherwise obscure passages.

Relating the words of verse 28 to verse 26, the idea develops that one God-pleasing man among a thousand succumbing to feminine temptation can be found; a God-pleasing woman among courtesans is not yet found.

In the progress of his quest concerning all that is done under the sun Ecclesiastes has arrived at the truth that God is universally supreme. This conclusion is reached not by a process of consequence-making resting on presumed premises. It is forced upon our thinker by the existing order of things. When his inquiring mind turned from the consideration of the problems of individual experience to the larger problems of the universe, the world seemed a house hopelessly divided into two irreconcilable rival factions scrambling for the mastery. Chaos and anarchy seemed to reign. Then flashes the idea that good and evil are integral parts of one great plan, and therefore must be taken together and considered as a whole. The thought is firmly grasped that God is absolutely the first great cause; absolutely all things are of Him; all things are His servants working out His will. With the dawning of this truth a mighty change steals over Ecclesiastes. He breaks away from his gloomy thoughts, to apostrophize in a tone of rapture the man who has found wisdom:

8 <sup>a</sup>Who is like the wise man?  
 And <sup>a</sup>who knows<sup>l</sup> the interpretation of a matter?  
 Wisdom for a <sup>h</sup>man <sup>l</sup>lightens up his countenance,  
 And the harsh strength of his face is <sup>l</sup>altered.

2 Observe <sup>7</sup>the<sup>~c</sup> king's bidding,  
 And that on <sup>sp</sup>account of the oath of Elohim.  
 3 Do not be <sup>l</sup>rash in <sup>l</sup>going from his presence;  
 Do not <sup>l</sup>stand in an evil matter,  
 For all <sup>w</sup>that he <sup>l</sup>desires he <sup>l</sup>does.  
 4 <sup>i w</sup>Since a king's word has authority,  
 + <sup>a</sup>Who can <sup>l</sup>say to him, What are you doing?  
 5 He who <sup>l</sup>observes<sup>l</sup> instruction  
 shall know no<sup>t</sup> evil matter,  
 And the wise heart shall know season and judgment.  
 6 For there is season and judgment for every event,  
<sup>l</sup>Since the evil for a <sup>h</sup>man is <sup>mn</sup>abundant upon him.  
 7 For no <sup>him</sup>one knows<sup>l</sup> what <sup>w</sup> shall <sup>b</sup>come,  
 For just as it shall <sup>b</sup>be, <sup>a</sup>who can <sup>l</sup>tell <sup>7</sup>him?  
 8 No <sup>h</sup>man has authority <sup>i</sup>over the spirit  
 to detain <sup>7</sup>the spirit,  
 And no one has authority <sup>i</sup>over the day of death;  
 + There is no dismissal in war,  
 And wickedness shall make  
 no<sup>t</sup> way of escape <sup>7</sup>for its possessor.  
 9 <sup>7</sup>All this I have seen and have <sup>e</sup>applied<sup>7</sup> <sup>7</sup>my heart  
 to all <sup>d</sup>work <sup>w</sup>that is done under the sun,  
 At a season <sup>w</sup>when <sup>a</sup> <sup>h</sup>man has authority  
<sup>i</sup>over another <sup>h</sup>man to his peril;  
 10 + In <sup>so</sup>such a case I saw the wicked entombed<sup>l</sup>,  
 + Those who used to <sup>7</sup>come and <sup>l</sup>go  
 from the holy <sup>ri</sup>place  
 And <sup>7</sup>were <sup>l</sup>lauded<sup>7</sup> in the city <sup>w</sup>where  
 they had done <sup>so</sup>such things.  
 This <sup>mr</sup>too is vanity.  
 11 <sup>w</sup>Because there is no sentence  
<sup>-d</sup>executed quickly against the evil <sup>d</sup>deed,  
 Therefore the heart of the sons of humanity  
 in them is fully given to do evil.  
 12 <sup>w</sup>Though a sinner<sup>l</sup> does<sup>l</sup> a hundred evils

and days are **prolonged** for him,  
<sup>t mr</sup>Yet I know<sup>l</sup> <sup>w</sup>that good shall <sup>b</sup>come  
 to those **fearful** of the One, Elohim,  
 Who stand in **fear** before Him.

<sup>13</sup> +Yet good shall not <sup>b</sup>come to the **wicked** one,  
 Nor shall he **prolong** his days which are like a shadow,  
<sup>w</sup>Because he <sup>is</sup>has no fear <sup>f</sup> before Elohim.

<sup>14</sup> There is another **vanity** <sup>w</sup>that is done on the earth:  
<sup>w</sup>There are **righteous** men for whom **retribution**<sup>l</sup>  
 is according to the <sup>d</sup>work of the wicked,  
 And there are **wicked** ones for whom **retribution**<sup>l</sup>  
 is according to the <sup>d</sup>work of the righteous;  
 I say <sup>w</sup>that this <sup>mr</sup>too is vanity.

<sup>15</sup> +So I **lauded** <sup>w</sup>rejoicing,  
<sup>w</sup>Since there is no good for a <sup>h</sup>man under the sun  
 Save to eat and to drink and to rejoice.  
 And it' shall be allied with him in his toil  
 through the **days** of his life,  
 Which the One, Elohim, gives to him  
 under the sun.

The difficulty which many experience with 8:9 arises from considering the verse by itself. The passage becomes clear (though not free from all difficulty) when 8:9-13 is treated as a whole paragraph elaborating one phase of the common argument. The thought is: There is a time (season) when one individual has the power to oppress another. The wicked tyrant who brings evil to another is buried without having received quick sentence for his evil, and the sight of this transitory vanity of providence encourages sin.

*Though a sinner does evil, and his days are prolonged, yet I know that good shall come to those who fear God.* A paradox: In spite of appearances it is not so; or in spite of individual cases the principle of judgment on the wicked is sound. Ecclesiastes impresses the importance of main-

taining moral principle side by side with our inability to perceive the justice of God's ways.

<sup>16</sup> <sup>as w</sup>When I <sup>g</sup>applied <sup>w</sup>my heart to know wisdom,  
 And to see <sup>w</sup>the experience

<sup>w</sup>that is <sup>d</sup>appointed on <sup>w</sup>earth  
 (Even though <sup>i</sup>by day and <sup>i</sup>night,  
<sup>he</sup>one <sup>is</sup>does not see<sup>l</sup> sleep <sup>i</sup>with his eyes),

<sup>17</sup> +Then I saw <sup>w</sup>in all the <sup>d</sup>work of the One, Elohim,  
 That <sup>a</sup>hman is not <sup>l</sup>able to find out  
<sup>w</sup>the <sup>d</sup>work <sup>w</sup>that is done under the sun,  
 Forasmuch <sup>w</sup>as <sup>a</sup>hman may toil <sup>w</sup>in seeking<sup>-</sup> it out  
 +but shall not find it;

And even if <sup>a</sup>wise man <sup>l</sup>says <sup>w</sup>he knows<sup>-</sup>,  
 he is not <sup>l</sup>able to find it out.

<sup>9</sup> For I <sup>g</sup>laid <sup>w</sup>all this <sup>w</sup>on my heart,  
 and <sup>w</sup>my heart saw<sup>-c</sup> <sup>w</sup>all this:

<sup>w</sup>That the **righteous** and the **wise** and their services  
 are in the **hand** of the One, Elohim;

<sup>mr</sup>Whether it will be **love** <sup>mr</sup>or **hate**,  
<sup>a</sup>hman is not able to know<sup>l</sup>;

**Everything** before them is <sup>w</sup>vanity<sup>-</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> **Just as to all**, there is **one** destiny  
 for the **righteous** one and for the **wicked** one,

**For** the **good** one <sup>w</sup>and for the **bad** one<sup>cs</sup>,  
 + **For** the **clean** one and for the **unclean** one,

+ **For** the one who **sacrifices**<sup>l</sup> and for him  
 who <sup>is</sup>makes no sacrifice<sup>l</sup>,

<sup>as</sup>So it is for the **good** person as for the **sinner**<sup>l</sup>,  
 For **the** one who **swears**<sup>l</sup> just as  
 for one **fearful** of an **oath**.

<sup>3</sup> **This** is the **evil** in all <sup>w</sup>that is done under the sun:  
**That one** destiny is for all;

+ **Moreover** the **heart**  
 of the sons of humanity is full of evil,

- And ravings are in their heart  
 throughout their lives,  
 +Yet after it, they are joined to the dead!  
 4 <sup>t</sup>Indeed for anyone who is joined  
 with all the living there is trust;  
 For it is better to be a living cur <sup>f</sup>than a dead lion.  
 5 For the living know <sup>w</sup>that they shall die,  
 +But the dead know nothing whatsoever;  
 + There is no further reward for them;  
 +Indeed remembrance of them is forgotten.  
 6 <sup>m</sup>Both their love <sup>m</sup>and their hate <sup>m</sup>as well as  
 their jealousy have perished already,  
 And there is no further portion for them for the eon  
 In all <sup>w</sup>that is done under the sun.  
 7 Go, eat your bread with rejoicing,  
 and drink your wine with good heart,  
 For already the One, Elohim,  
 has approved of your <sup>d</sup>works.  
 8 In every season, let your garments <sup>b</sup>be white,  
 And oil on your head, let it not be lacking.  
 9 See life with a wife whom you love  
 all the days of your transitory life,  
 Which He gives to you under the sun—  
 all your transitory days,  
 For this is your portion in life  
 And in your toil <sup>w</sup>that you are toiling under the sun.  
 10 All <sup>w</sup>that your hand finds to do, do <sup>i</sup>with your vigor,  
 For there is no doing <sup>+</sup>or devising  
 or knowledge <sup>+</sup>or wisdom  
 In the unseen where <sup>d</sup>you are going.  
 11 +Again I <sup>+</sup>saw under the sun  
 That the race is not to the fleet,  
 Nor the battle to masters of war,  
 Nor even bread for the wise,  
 Nor even riches for the understanding,

- Nor even favor for the knowing,  
 For a season <sup>+</sup>of mischance shall happen  
 to them all.  
 12 For, moreover, a <sup>h</sup>man does not know his season;  
 Like fish <sup>w</sup>that are held in a vicious weir,  
 And like birds that are held in a snare,  
<sup>as</sup>So the sons of humanity themselves  
 are trapped by a season of evil,  
<sup>as</sup>When <sup>w</sup>it falls on them suddenly.  
 13 I <sup>m</sup>also saw this wisdom under the sun,  
 And it seemed great to me:  
 14 There was a small city <sup>+</sup>with only a few mortals in it,  
 And a great king came against it  
 and surrounded it,  
 And he built great <sup>7</sup>siege works <sup>cs on</sup>against it.  
 15 +Now a man was available in it, provident <sup>M</sup>and <sup>cs</sup>wise,  
 And he would have <sup>m</sup>provided escape  
 for the city <sup>i</sup>by his wisdom,  
 +Yet not one <sup>h</sup>person remembered  
 that provident man.

## ALL OF GOD

The tone of confidence deepens as the thinker advances toward his conclusion. From the vantage point of God's immutable, sovereign "design" he can, with perfect composure, look down upon the "many devisings" of puny men with the assurance that they work out the will of God. Can the knowledge that all things have their origin in a divine forepurpose, that they are under absolute divine control, and that neither wicked men, nor any other evil power, nor all of them combined, can act independent of God, fail to give rest to the heart? Under the shadow of this great truth we may abide in perfect safety.

The word "mischance" is connected with the term "season" in 9:11 and refers to the season, not when things are

favorable to man, but are adverse to him. It is a fresh reiteration of the dominant thought of the book that adverse and favorable seasons take place in accordance with God's pleasure and affect all men alike, irrespective of character, ability or personal accomplishments.

Ecclesiastes dwells with all possible emphasis on the absolute deity of God. Herein lies the reason why his book is neglected and misrepresented. The dualistic theology of Christendom, with its Manichean idea of conflict between two rival deities and its dogma of the permanence of evil, found itself at irreconcilable variance with the absolute supremacy of God postulated by the Assembler. Accordingly, theology contrived to set aside the testimony of this unique book by throwing over it the veil of false interpretation.

V. Gelesnoff

#### DESTRUCTIVE DELUSIONS

If it is so that God will either annihilate or eternally torment most of His creatures, the thought will arise, Could He not save all His creatures in the past, how can He preserve all His saints in the future? If sin came in and ruined His fair creation against His will, what will hinder a repetition in the eternity to come? Even if we believe His promises, can we rely upon His love and power when they have been fulfilled, and there is no further guarantee? The more closely one considers the false doctrines of annihilation or eternal torment, the more it will be apparent that they make it utterly impossible for God to gain the full confidence of His creatures.

A.E.K.

#### STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Title of publication: *Unsearchable Riches*. 2. Date of filing: September 20, 1999. 3. Frequency of issue: every other month. 4. Location of the known office of publication: 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 5. Location of headquarters or general business offices of the publisher: 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 6. Publisher: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 7. Editor: Dean H. Hough, 6800 Hough Road, Almont, MI 48003. 8. Owner: Concordant Publishing Concern, 15570 Knochaven Road, Santa Clarita, CA 91350. 9. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages or other securities: none. 10. The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes have not changed during the preceding 12 months. 11. Extent and nature of circulation: Total number of copies printed: 2200. Total paid circulation: (all through mail) 1000. Total for office use: 1200. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (signed) *James R. Coram*, Business Manager.

---



---

#### Notes on Ecclesiastes

---

### ELOHIM HAS MADE ALL OUR DAYS

GOOD AND EVIL, we know them both. But as believers in the God of the Scriptures we accept something else also as true. All that is, including both good and evil, must be traced finally to God. "See the work of the One, Elohim . . . In a day of good be resting in the good, and in a day of evil, be vigilant; Indeed the One, Elohim, has made this one along with that one . . ." (Ecc.7:13,14).

#### THE VIEWPOINT OF ECCLESIASTES

The book of Ecclesiastes has sometimes been dismissed as a philosophical dissertation that gives a mostly human viewpoint of life, and might even, in certain passages, undermine the divine requirements of moral behavior and devoutness. As a whole, the book does just about the opposite. It relates all human experience, both upright and sinful, both happy and miserable, to the operations of God. It refuses to leave God out of the picture no matter how dark and confused and unpleasant the picture may be.

Now in the "fourth book" (Ecc.7:13-9:15) the Assembler brings up the truth that we all will have good times and bad times in our lives, and the best way to deal with this in the current situation is to rest in the good and keep vigilant in the bad. There are many things in our lives that are intrinsically good and need to be enjoyed as long as they can be (*cf* Ecc.9:7-10). Yet these are uncertain, and mischance and a season of evil are certain to come eventually (9:11,12). That indeed is, by itself, a very human sort of philosophy. But the writer does not treat this by itself. He

has brought up such matters because they are included in “the work of the One, Elohim” (7:13).

The attention given to Elohim in all these considerations of the human experience of good and evil is extremely important. It takes these accounts of human activities, and of human experiences that are apparently allotted unevenly, and places them ultimately in the hands of God. It does not deny the human part in doing deeds of good and evil, but going beyond that it recognizes that God maintains His divine responsibility in it all; He is over all these experiences and is operating all.

LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE  
AND KNOWING BY FAITH

One of the reasons why there is such confusion about the book of Ecclesiastes is that we have often failed to distinguish what the Assembler has perceived by way of his *investigations* and what he has come to know *by faith*. These often seem contradictory. In his investigations, Ecclesiastes has found, “There is the righteous man who perishes in his righteousness, and there is the wicked man who is prolonged in his evil” (7:15). By his own experience he has observed, “There are righteous men for whom retribution is according to the work of the wicked, and there are wicked ones for whom retribution is according to the work of the righteous” (8:14). Nevertheless, Ecclesiastes *knows* “that good shall come to those who stand in fear before the One, Elohim. Yet good shall not come to the wicked one, nor shall he prolong his days which are like a shadow” (8:12,13). This conviction of eventual settling of accounts is based not on what Ecclesiastes has found by observation but what he has found by his recognition of God in his heart.

What Ecclesiastes has observed with his senses is honestly recorded. But what he knows in his heart is that there

is a God Who is responsible and Who will do the right thing, no matter how much experience may contradict. Present facts observed do not contradict the fact of God and the fact of His righteousness.

ACQUAINTANCE WITH VANITY

This descendant of David, had the time and means to investigate many kinds of human experiences. We might well wonder why, if he were such a wise person, he did not avoid some of the very stupid experiences he sought out. But we must admit that no matter how foolish they were, these experiences were truly characteristic of human behavior.

Fleshly indulgences do produce many problems and corrupt our characters. But it is also true that the wicked sometimes seem to live more comfortably than the righteous.

Of course, no one is truly righteous in the full sense of the term. “There is no righteous man in the earth who does good [absolutely] and never sins” (7:20). It is all very relative. But things are not balanced out perfectly in this life. In our experiences at present, those who are more selfish and grasping may indeed have longer lives and less misery than those who are more God fearing and caring toward others. The only certain equality is death. “Just as to all, there is one destiny for the righteous one and for the wicked one, for the good one and for the bad one, for the clean one and for the unclean one, for the one who sacrifices and for him who makes no sacrifice, so it is for the good person as for the sinner . . . One destiny is for all; moreover the heart of the sons of humanity is full of evil, and ravings are in their heart throughout their lives, yet after it, they are joined to the dead” (Ecc.9:2,3).

The facts are set before us. And most of us would agree that these are facts of life. But Ecclesiastes does not leave the facts alone in their harsh pessimism. He has insisted that *Elohim* has made our days what they are. And this is

what makes this book so unique, and indeed important to the whole of Scripture as the Word of God.

God would not have us ignore the reality of evil or pretend that it is otherwise than it is. But faith in God and His righteousness puts this reality into the right perspective.

Much of our misunderstanding related to this book is that we think of the term “vanity,” so frequently used throughout, as a sort of everlasting uselessness, a kind of annihilation of the experience. This is wrong. Our life and experience are vain in that they do not last; they are transitory. But this is not absolute. In fact, in the light of the truth that God has made both the good and evil experiences, they must have a purpose toward a goal. When the factor of DEITY is brought into the equation, the pessimism turns to a reliance on God to bring about a righteous culmination.

#### THE SEEING OF THE HEART

But this is, to the Assembler, a matter that he cannot find out by present experience. He knows from the fact of God and the fact of human sin and suffering that there must be a setting right. But as far as the work of Elohim is concerned, he learned “that a man is not able to find out the work that is done under the sun, forasmuch as a man may toil in seeking it out but shall not find it; and even if a wise man says he knows, he is not able to find it out” (8:17).

The wise Assembler says he knows that God will judge, and that He will judge justly. But he has not found it out in all his searchings. Experience says otherwise, but a recognition of God in the heart brings us to the conclusion that God is operating and will judge rightly and will deal triumphantly with present vanity. “For I laid all this on my heart, and my heart saw all this: That the righteous and the wise and their services are in the hand of the One, Elohim” (Ecc.9:1). All will die, and “the dead know nothing what-

soever . . . and there is no further portion for them for the eon” (Ecc.9:3-6). But there is that which the Assembler has not observed by experience, and which rests on God, and goes beyond the eon.

The experiences of Ecclesiastes would all lead toward pessimism and despair. His honest account of what he perceived with his senses would strengthen a conclusion of meaninglessness. But he does not reach that conclusion. This is because of his faith, of the seeing of his heart. Because of this he knows that all human experience is finally in the hand of God. This is the solid foundation of the Assembler’s knowledge of a righteous outcome to things, despite his accumulation of indisputable evidence in the present life against such an assurance.

Because of the evidence of God’s presence within Israel, His personal dealings with them and their enemies and His personal word to them, the Assembler’s faith in God was based more on sight and experience, more like that of Thomas (*cf* John 20:24-30), than it is for us today. But we may also say that we have a greater revelation of God’s purpose for good than Ecclesiastes had because we have become acquainted with Christ. What is important for us from this book is its testimony that reliance on God as Deity over all things, both good and evil, is a great blessing.

We cannot prove from our experiences that there is a pattern of order and meaning and value in life. But we believe there is and have good reason for believing so. We believe that God will reward good acts and condemn wicked acts. And we will go much further now that we are believing that God sent His Son into the world to save sinners. The revelation of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ trains us to praise God as our Saviour and as the Saviour of all mankind. This is the testimony of God’s evangel to us, and this is what we believe.

D.H.H.

## INDEX TO VOLUME XC

Atmosphere and the Waters . . . . .	195
Book of Beginnings, The . . . . .	7
Concerning Disputations about Free Will. . . . .	255
Departure Stone, The . . . . .	269
Developments in Genesis 1:2 . . . . .	69
Disruption and the Power of Spirit . . . . .	55
Disruption Darkness and Light . . . . .	63
Divine Foreknowledge and its Significance . . . . .	123
Dry Ground and Vegetation, The . . . . .	243
Ecclesiastes Studies . . . . .	39,45,87,92,135,141,176,189,229,237,273,283
Elohim Creates . . . . .	17
Elohim has Made All Our Days . . . . .	283
Elusiveness of God's Anointed, The . . . . .	173
Even the Death of the Cross . . . . .	225
From Darkness to Light . . . . .	63
From Genesis to Romans . . . . .	155
From Light to Life . . . . .	249
Genesis, Studies in . . . . .	7,55,103,147,195,243
Genesis, Translation and Analyses . . . . .	13,51,99
God's Spirit Making its Home . . . . .	75
Human Will and the Ministry of Law . . . . .	213
Initial Actions of God, The . . . . .	117
Intuitive Anticipation . . . . .	75
It is Becoming So . . . . .	201
Jonathan and David . . . . .	33
Light and Luminaries . . . . .	147
Light of Life and Love, The . . . . .	103
Obituaries: L. Bowerman 240, V. Brehm 86, A. Cronk 240, D. Downie 86, L. Fisher 86, H. and B. Hoffman 212, R. C. Kent 240, A. Robinson 282, L. Stafford 86, E. Taylor 86	
One Who is Operating All, The . . . . .	23,123,163,213,255
Rejoicing Nevertheless . . . . .	112
1 Samuel, Notes on . . . . .	33,80,173,210,269
Saul's Persecution of David . . . . .	80
Saul's Schemes and God's Spirit . . . . .	210
Soul's Yearning and God's Humbling, The . . . . .	229
Times and Seasons, The . . . . .	176
Why, Then, is He Still Blaming? . . . . .	163
Wisdom and Toil . . . . .	135
Words and Works . . . . .	87
Work of God, The . . . . .	273
Written for this Teaching of Ours . . . . .	23