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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MARCH 1997
BEING THE SECOND NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT

EDITORIAL

THESE are good times for being a believer. People are sinners. There is much sickness in body and weakness in mind. Hate and greed are everywhere, and wars are far from disappearing. We cannot get away from dangers and fears, and the sense of vulnerability keeps seeping into our lives.

But this is not simply because we are approaching the end of the second millennium since Christ came among us or that the characteristics of the last days of our era (*cf* 2 Tim.3:1-9) seem to be growing, but disease and unease have afflicted humanity from the very beginning. And the most powerful and greatest of remedies for this is, as it has always been, faith in God and His Word.

Job spoke of the prosperity of powerful oppressors of his day who arise and make it so "none can put reliance in their lives" (Job 24:22). In the days of Eli, his own sons became disqualified to mediate for sinners because of their own evil deeds (1 Sam.2:22-26). Yet Job, even under crushing affliction, was strengthened by secluding in his bosom the instruction and sayings of God (Job 23:12). Also in Eli's time, Hannah exulted in Yahweh Who *regulates* actions and Who makes destitute and enriches (1 Sam.2:3,7).

Similarly in our Lord's early ministry a leper came to Him with full confidence in His ability to cleanse, and a Roman officer approached Him with conviction concerning His authority to heal, while "the sons of the kingdom" whom Jesus came to save from their sins, continued in the *darkness* of their weaknesses and sorrows (Matt.8:1-13). How was it that Job and Hannah, and the leper and the centurion were blessed with faith, but thousands of others all around them remained in stubbornness, with all its distor-

tions and phobias? Did not Eliphaz and Eli and the sons of the kingdom need confidence in God and assurance in the wisdom and goodness of His ways as much as the others? And even more sobering, we must ask about the outright wicked people Job referred to, and the sons of Eli, and those who sought to kill Jesus: Did they not need to rest with confidence in the wisdom, power and glory of God?

Of course they did. Thus Christ died also for these sinners, these infirm and irreverent enemies who have not yet been given faith as we have been given (*cf* Rom.5:6-11, 18,19). But in the meantime, we can only rejoice that God has graciously granted us faith (Phil.1:29) in these days. The majority of mankind are like the unbelieving malefactor at the cross with our Lord, who voiced “skepticism” and only wanted “a *present* release from their woes They do not believe God or look for bliss in the future through His Anointed” (see p.55). What a privilege it is, in these dark days while death continues its relentless eroding of human hopes and strength, to believe that God is in control! What a blessing to keep firmly in our hearts the truth that He Who rouses Christ from among the dead (see p.57) will also vivify dying humanity in Him!

But even many who believe that Christ died for their sins have not been given the grace of being assured that in dying for all, all are identified in His death (2 Cor.5:14) and that all enemies in the universe will someday know that reconciliation that has been gained through the blood of the cross (Col.1:20). To believe what Paul writes concerning the oncoming eons and the “full glories of God’s consummation” (*cf* p.67) is not granted to all our brethren today. But what a spirit of joy and optimism believing this revelation instills!

May the considerations taken up in this issue of *Unsearchable Riches* encourage the reader, day by day, in confidence and assurance in faith, and in thankfulness and praise to our faithful God.

D.H.H.

The Word of the Cross

CRUCIFIED TOGETHER WITH HIM

THE CROSS is the basis of the evangel for today. The essential place of Christ’s humiliating death was never heralded before Paul, and even he did not proclaim it in the book of Acts, because Israel was still on the scene, and it was not yet recognized in their evangel. For that matter, it is not given its proper place in Christendom today, which does that for which Paul was not commissioned, and is founded on human wisdom and effort. The world, in its wisdom, demands something of man, either the deeds that had to be done under the law, in Israel, such as repentance, baptism, and corresponding conduct, or a life of doing and giving and self-improvement, utterly ignoring the sentence of crucifixion passed upon it by the Supreme.

Nevertheless, with boldness and clarity, the evangel of grace and peace has now been made known in Paul’s epistles, firmly founded on the crucifixion of Christ. “Yet we are heralding Christ crucified, to Jews, indeed, a snare, yet to the nations stupidity” (1 Cor.1:23). “For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death, nevertheless we shall be of the resurrection also, knowing this, that *our old humanity was crucified together with Him . . .*” (Rom. 6:5,6). “With Christ have I been crucified” (Gal.2:20).

When we died with Christ¹ we did not die an ordinary death of gradual dissolution, simply from lack of vitality.

1. See also A. E. Knoch’s article “Crucified With Christ,” *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.38, p.37.

We died as sinners, as incorrigible criminals, worthy of being wiped off the face of the earth. All this was within us, even if it never showed much on the surface. Christ received our deserts. His death was fraught with a time of terrible torture and disgrace from the hand of man and awful distress from the hiding of God's face.

THOSE CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST

It may help us to grasp the momentous truth of our crucifixion with Christ, in spirit, if we consider the literal occurrences when He was nailed to the stake. He was not the only one who was executed in this way on that occasion. Four in all, two robbers (Matt.27:38; Mark 15:27), and two malefactors (Luke 23:32), were crucified *with* Christ on that day. These were representative and illustrative of the great truth that the *world* (Gal.6:14), and the *flesh* (Gal. 5:24), and the *old humanity* (Rom.6:6), and *Paul* (Gal. 2:20) and *we* ourselves are reckoned to have died together with Him (Rom.6:8-11; Col.2:20), on that, the greatest crisis in human history.

THE FOUR CRIMINALS

It is generally supposed that only two others were crucified with Christ, but a careful consideration seems to show that there were two kinds, malefactors and robbers, each of which represents a different division of mankind. *Malefactors* are, literally, simply EVIL-ACTERS. It is used only in Luke, which is written about the Son of Adam, and includes a view of all humanity, all of whom do evil. All are sinners. *Robbers*, however, which is used in Matthew, refers especially to the people under law, and the nation who, not only sinned, but transgressed and offended. The A.V. actually uses the word "rob" in Malachi 3:8 where the whole nation is accused of defrauding Yahweh of tithes and heave offerings. In our Lord's day, especially at His

trial and crucifixion, the chief priests were far more guilty than Herod or Pilate.

THE WORLD CRUCIFIED

The simple fact that Christ not only suffered and died, but underwent the shameful, humiliating ordeal of crucifixion *for* the world, should show that it greatly deserves the same sentence. But we will never be able to see this if we do not view it as it appears in God's sight, and consider it in its relation to Him. Not until then will we, like the malefactor (Luke 23:41), acknowledge the justness of our crucifixion, in spirit.

Let us consider mankind as a whole. We have God's opinion of them before the deluge: "And seeing is Yahweh Elohim that much is the evil of mankind in the earth, and every form of the devices of its heart is but evil all its days" (Gen.6:5). And is not the world today altogether deserving of a similar assessment?

When Paul writes, "May it not be mine to be boasting, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (Gal.6:14), he is not referring to the *death* of Christ merely, for salvation, but the *cross* of Christ for humiliation. So few make the distinction, but there is a tremendous difference. It is the *shameful* death. *The end of the flesh is in view here*. There are all kinds of movements today to make man better. They have been at it for four or five thousand years, and behold, where we are! We cannot expect any more from human efforts now than in the past, for the simple reason that God has already crucified the world.

THE BELIEVING MALEFACTOR

Even though a malefactor, one of the men who was crucified with Christ had *faith* in Him and looked to the *future*. He did not even ask for present relief, but rebuked his com-

panion for his lack of godly fear. He then acknowledged the justice of his own judgment and recognized the sinlessness of the Saviour. He had evidently heard of His proclamation of the kingdom and believed, so looked forward, in faith, to a future salvation in that day. For those who are crucified with Christ, there is no glorification in this life, but only in that which is to come. We are “joint enjoyers of Christ’s allotment, *if so be that we are suffering together, that we should be glorified together also*” (Rom.8:17).

Of the four who were literally crucified with Christ, the believing malefactor comes closest to our spiritual position. The unbelieving malefactor may well be taken as representative of the *world* today. He it was who blasphemed Him, who challenged Him to bring about a *present* salvation from the evils that beset them. But the believer was like us. He acknowledged the justness of his fate, yet justified Christ, and believed in His salvation in the *future*.

THE MALEFACTOR STANDS FOR HUMANITY

Perhaps the most important point about this malefactor is the total *lack* of good works, or any effort whatever to *merit* salvation. Indeed, what could he have done in his position? He acknowledged his guilt, but had no opportunity whatever to do any works fit for repentance. He begs to be remembered by the Lord when He may be coming into His kingdom. But he had not fulfilled any of the conditions for entrance into it. So our Lord does not promise this boon, but assures him that he would be with Him under conditions the very opposite of the suffering and distress which he was enduring. This was best expressed by the term “paradise.”

The name paradise is often used in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures for a PROTECTED place, or garden. It is the Persian word for a *park*. It describes, no doubt, a literal garden in the new earth (Rev.2:7; 22:1-5), in the

midst of which will be the log of life, yet, at the same time, a symbol of future bliss in the spiritual as well as the physical sphere. Our Lord chose this term as a type of future felicity as a contrast to present suffering. Until He Himself returns in glory, the saints have no promise of physical pleasure or glory apart from His presence. There is an earthly paradise in the new earth. But Paul was snatched away to the third heaven, so it may also be symbolic of future bliss in any location.

PRESENT PAIN AND FUTURE BLISS

The great difference between faith and unbelief came to a focus at the crucifixion. The unbelieving malefactor, representative of mankind as a whole, in accord with Luke’s account, voices his skepticism by saying “Are not you the Christ? Save yourself and us!” (Luke 23:39). But he received no answer from our Lord. This exposes the heart of humanity. They want a *present* release from their woes. They will follow a leader who will promise them health, wealth and happiness in *this* life. The world is continually striving to improve the condition of humanity in this eon and will follow any antichrist who promises them immediate relief from their troubles. They do not believe God or look for bliss in the future, through His Anointed.

THE SEQUEL

Like the malefactor on the cross, we have no promise of present relief. Like the Israelites in the wilderness, we are under trial, as a preparation and a contrast to future bliss, so that we will all the more glorify God for it when it comes. God is faithful, so will not try us above our ability, and, as in the case of the malefactor, we are told the *sequel*, in order to enable us to undergo it (1 Cor.10:11-13). The AV gives us a false hope in this passage, when it translates “a *way of escape*, that ye may be able to bear it.” This is self

evident, for, if we had a way of escape, what need is there of ability to bear it? No, indeed! Apart from *His presence in glory*, our place is that which the world gave Him, in crucifixion, like the malefactor who died in faith, and will not be glorified until Christ comes in His kingdom.

BLESSING THROUGH DEATH

To the spiritual student, the Scriptures contain intimations of blessing through death from the first, for only thus can God reveal Himself as the Resurrection and the Life. To Adam and the race He gave the experience of dissolution, or dying. In His great love plan we can look at it only as a preparation for resurrection, in which He may reveal Himself as the Life. Later, in preparation for Israel, He gave some special experiences of life out of death. Abraham was as good as dead before He gave life to the chosen nation. Isaac was also doomed and resurrected in a figure. And last and greatest of all, all our blessings come to us, not through the life, but through the death of Christ, His Son.

A.E.K.

LLOYD A. HIBBERD

Our brother in the Lord and fellow worker in the evangel, Lloyd Hibberd, was put to repose on February 18, 1997, lacking only a few days of completing his 86th year. He had been a farmer and carpenter in the Centerville, Ohio area for much of his life before moving to Baldwin, Michigan in 1974 where he labored as pastor at the Grace and Truth Chapel. He also served as agent for *Grace and Truth* magazine for many years and as overseer for the monthly Fellowship gatherings in the area. Even in the last years of infirmity, he continued his mail ministry which had grown during the years. His appreciation for God as a God of order and purpose became reflected in Brother Hibberd's own concern to make plans and set goals in the heralding of God's Word. Yet he knew and came to realize more and more that "man proposes, but God disposes," and always rejoiced in the truth that God was operating all in accord with the counsel of *His* will. Our sympathy is extended to his wife, Dorothy, and the rest of his family. We will all miss him very much.

D.H.H.

Concordant Studies

“IN THREE DAYS I WILL RAISE IT UP”

QUESTION: In John 2:19, Jesus declared to the Jews, “Raze this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” How did Jesus “raise it up” (referring to His resurrection) if He was dead? In a letter to a correspondent, a friend of mine asked, Who resurrected Jesus if He was truly dead. The answer he received is that Jesus raised Himself, which seems to agree with John 2:19. Do you have any light to shed on this verse?

ANSWER: We should not assume, a priori, that when Jesus spoke the words recorded here, “I will raise it up” (in reference to His body), that He was referring to an act whereby He would give *life* to His erstwhile dead body, or, alternatively, that He was even hereby specifically referring to His own “resurrection” (i.e., His own return *to life*) itself. He speaks of doing something concerning His body; not Himself. And, He does not say that He will do that of which He speaks three days hence *while He is still dead*, but simply that He will do it three days hence, those three days being understood as a period in which He would be dead.

Our Lord's declaration is not, “Three days after you kill Me, I will do something, while yet dead.” Much less does He say that the specific thing that He would then do is give *life* to His formerly dead body. Specifically, He does not say, “I will then return My body *to life*.”

Such an assumption is no part of the text itself, nor is it a corollary thereunto. Such a supposition is simply a proposed interpretation. The question at issue is whether it is also a correct interpretation. To presume that it *is* a cor-

rect interpretation (not to mention to presume that it is the phrase in question's only possible reference), is to assume what is at issue, an elementary error in logic. Indeed, to accept such a supposition is to concede the question. Obviously, if Jesus were "dead," and yet, while dead, was able to do *something*—much less something so astonishing as return His own body to life—then, in "death," He was by no means truly dead.

If we believe that Jesus actually died, then we are aware that, while dead, He could do nothing at all.

Further, the Scripture nowhere speaks of resurrecting dead *bodies*, but of resurrecting dead *persons*. Since man has a body, when a man is "resurrected" from the dead, he "stands up." This simply has reference to the normally upright position of a *living* man, in contradistinction to the normally supine position of a dead man, a corpse, when buried. It is understood, by association, that for one to "stand up," one must first possess life, in order to be able to do so. "Stand up" (i.e., "resurrection"), when used of the return to life of men (from the dead to the living), is not actually a literal expression. It is rather a faded figure, the metonymy of the adjunct, by which that which is associated with the object in view is the actual intended reference (i.e., while the body is the object in view, it is the person himself [whose body it is], which is the actual intended reference).

Unacceptable as it may be to many, if we would be faithful, we must hold fast to the principle that "the dead do not live"; they are not alive, until they are *given* life. It does not follow that since when death occurs, a man's body continues to exist, therefore the man himself continues to exist, whether without any body at all or with a new body. Death does not consist merely in not having a body; much less does it consist in merely no longer possessing a former body while nonetheless possessing a new body

instead. Death, rather, consists of *not* having *life*. "Death" is the antonym of "life." One who is alive is not dead; and, one who is dead is not alive.

Much of the confusion over John 2:19 is over the English word "resurrection," even though neither it, in the Version, nor its Greek equivalent, in the Greek text, is a part of this phrase in question. The Version reads "raise," not "resurrect"; and, the Greek word here is not the one that says "UP-STAND," but the one that says "ROUSE." Hence, the English reader might well suppose that the Greek reads "UP-STAND," when in fact, instead, it reads "ROUSE." Much faulty reasoning is involved as well, in the usual considerations of this verse.

It is to be regretted, too, that the Concordant Version found it necessary (and I know of no better workable solution, either) not to distinguish in translation, here, the word which says "rouse" from that which says "stand up." In the Greek, the word which is often rendered "rise," or "raise" (even though this word, *anistēmi*, does *not* appear in John 2:19), is essentially the same word as that for "resurrection." (The only difference is that the former is a verb, and the latter, *anastasis*, is a noun.) All that the word says is "UP-STAND"; that is, "stand up."

It is wholly beside the point that the noun, by metonymy, is often *used* of the *event* which, in English, we call "the resurrection" (i.e., "the great up-standing"; in the words of the Negro spiritual, "the great gettin' up morning"). Our future resurrection from the dead includes not only our "standing up," but first, our being returned to *life* (indeed to a life of vivification, such as Christ's own). Even so, the Greek word for this does not mean "return to life," and it is not always even so used. In Luke 2:34, it appears in the phrase, "[Christ is lying] for the fall and *rising* of many in Israel"; i.e., through Him, many in Israel, one day, would fall under His judgment, while others would arise (i.e., be

caused to “stand”) in blessing and righteousness—regardless of specifically how this were to be achieved.

When used literally, “UP-STAND” refers simply to the change in bodily position from supine to erect. When one who, overnight, has been “reposing” (i.e., LYING [down]), in the morning, no longer continues to do so, he “raises” (or “resurrects”) himself from bed (Mark 1:35; see the various other literal and figurative usages of this term; p.250, Keyword Concordance).

Our passage in question, however, concerns not the word whose standard is “UP-STAND,” but “ROUSE” (see the CONCORDANT GREEK TEXT). The solution is simple: It was *God* Who roused the *Person*, Christ, from among *the dead* (e.g., Acts 4:10; 1 Cor.15:15); it was *Christ Himself* Who—once having been returned to *life* by God—subsequently, under God, roused (i.e., “stirred,” or “activated”) His own *body* (the “it” of John 2:19), with a view toward its subsequent change of position from supine, in death, to erect or upright, now, in vivification.

Every day, even we ourselves manage to “rouse” our own bodies from a drowsy state in a supine position to an awakened state in an upright position, so as, consequently, to stand up erect. There is nothing inherently remarkable that Christ should do the same, at any time, including “three days” in the future from the day on which He spoke. However, what *is* remarkable—indeed astonishing—is that He should do so even three days after His enemies had killed Him! That surely this One is the *Son* of God—“Whom *God* rouses from among the dead” (Acts 3:15)—was the sane conclusion drawn by those who were witnesses of His resurrection.

There is nothing whatever here, in John 2:19, in favor of the claim that Jesus is the Deity Himself; to introduce such accretions, is to distract from the real import and vitality of our Lord’s words.

J.R.C.

Enabled to Withstand

TRANSFORMATION

WE HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED to a gentleness and a grace in Paul’s words and deeds. All his actions reflect absolute commitment. His life, from that dramatic arrest on the Damascus road, was a vivid testimony of complete dedication to his Lord. He was changed; indeed he was changed! Throughout the whole of his special commission his zeal and devotion for Christ never faltered for one moment. In every sense of that word, he underwent a definite process of transformation. In a vision to Ananias, our Lord describes Paul as “. . . a choice instrument” (Acts 9:15).

A brief consideration of Paul’s former qualities will swiftly establish that the change in him was not a loss of strength of character but a transformation of these qualities by grace and in love. God had carefully prepared Paul, His “*choice instrument*.” The name of this young man was Saul. He was a Hebrew of very careful upbringing, intensely zealous in the performance of his religious duties (*cf* Phil.3:4-6), but with a mind broadened by contact with the wider life and speculative thinking of the Graeco-Roman world (*cf* Acts 17:18-34). Born in Tarsus of Cilicia, he was yet reared at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).

This brief review should make us look a little closer at the apostle’s background. Immediately, we will become aware that here is no mere *man of straw*! Although he stressed that he considered that his former achievements in flesh were but refuse in comparison with gaining Christ, they must not be discounted if we are to gain some estimation of his very impressive character. Towering above all his contemporaries in intellect, and possessing an intensely

logical and ordered mind, we perceive that in his personality there is tempered steel of the finest quality! Tough, resourceful, and very determined!

His strength of character and his firm belief in the divine commission should not be lightly passed over. Shortly following the confrontation with his Lord outside Damascus, and embarking on his assignment, Paul passed through the island of Cyprus to Paphos. Being withstood by a Jew, Bar-Jesus, named Elymus the "Magician," who sought to pervert the proconsul, Sergius Paul from the faith, Paul demonstrated just a little of the authority of his supreme office (*cf* Acts 13:9-12).

"Sergius Paul was the first individual among the nations who heard the evangel, without first becoming a proselyte of Judaism. Hence his case is typical. Bar-Jesus stands for the Jewish dispersion, who always resisted every attempt to proclaim the evangel to the nations. Seldom, indeed, do we find Paul performing any judgment miracle, but here he blinds the sorcerer for a season. This is the judgment which has befallen Israel during the present administration of God's grace. Israel, in part, has become calloused until the full complement of the nations may be entering (Rom. 11:25). Throughout Paul's missionary journeys, when he turned from the unbelieving Jews to the nations, the Jews became jealous and sought to turn the Gentiles against him. They became blind spiritually, as Bar-Jesus became physically."¹

"THE POWER OF GOD"

Forced by the imprudence of those to whom he ministered in Corinth, Paul catalogued some of the infirmities, outrages, necessities, persecutions and distresses which he gladly endured for Christ's sake. As we read of these in

¹ I. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.198.

that eleventh chapter of his recorded second letter to the ecclesia of that city, we shake our heads in wonder! But surely his threat of *a rod* in the preceding letter (1 Cor. 4:21), was simply that. May any be so unloving as to imagine Paul literally administering such discipline? However, his closing words of the second letter should make us catch our breath in awe: "I have declared before, and am predicting as when being present the second time and now, being absent, to those having sinned before and to all the rest, that if I should be coming again, *I shall not spare*, since you are seeking a test of Christ speaking in me, Who is not weak for you, but powerful among you. For even if He was crucified out of weakness, nevertheless He is living by the power of God. For we also are weak together with Him, but we shall be living together with Him by the power of God for you" (2 Cor. 13:2-4).

"HEAD OVER ALL"

In the great entreaty of Ephesians 6:10-17 we are greeted with the bold salutation, ". . . brethren mine." How encouraging to stand by the unflinching apostle, heed his sound advice, and take up all the accoutrements of our defensive armor in the conflict with our present celestial opponents. Reviewing the impressive forces opposed to us is a daunting task. The apostle openly declares that our evangel, which is covered, is, purely and simply, the heralding of the glory of Christ Jesus, our Lord. He further acknowledges that ". . . we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the transcendence of the power may be of God and not of us" (2 Cor. 4:7).

It is this reassurance which enables us, in our puny helplessness, to rise above our fear. Imagine, Sovereignities! Authorities! Powers and Lordships! As we gaze aloft at the vast canopy of stars in such profusion as to be quite beyond human computation, then small wonder if we sur-

render to an overwhelming sense of insignificance. But wait! We are not left thus exposed and vulnerable. Having *received* our helmet of salvation, now let us firmly grasp the sword of the spirit which is a declaration of God.

In the apostle's letters there is a repeated pattern. Prior to setting any task or requesting response, he is careful to present the motivating power. So we first discern his rich presentation of our glorious identity and the very special love gifts which have been lavished. May we review these again, *and again, and again!*

"Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, making mention in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints, and what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand among the celestials, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is impending; and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, to the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all" (Eph.1:15-23).

"THE PRIZE OF GOD'S CALLING ABOVE"

With becoming modesty, we may *roll up our sleeves* and look once more at the conflict which our dear brother, Paul, has advised. Let us identify those who are in opposition. They are not *all messengers*, and since the stars and their

respective planetary bodies are so numerous, then what may we surmise concerning the numbers of the celestials? *But not all are opposed to the transcendent glory of our privileged appointment!* At Bethlehem there were many who sang for joy at the birth of God's Son. Also, they must have witnessed the bewildering crucifixion and glorious exaltation. Could all of these have remained indifferent?

The disabled reasoning of humanity might suggest that it is absurd, even arrogant, for us to even suggest that we are accorded the privilege of bringing these celestials into subjection to Christ, but as Paul declared, "Brethren, not as yet am I reckoning myself to have grasped, yet one thing—forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—toward the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God's calling above in Christ Jesus" (Phil.3:13,14). In like manner, each one of the ecclesia, while eagerly anticipating presentation at the dais of Christ, must also regard even this wonderful time, not so much a climax in God's calling, but rather a glorious commencement of service among the celestials. Until the consummation, we, *and all of God's creatures* are, inevitably, in a loving process of transformation. Those messengers (or angels) who exhibited so close a scrutiny of Paul (1 Cor.4:9), brought him no divine communication, but we may be sure that they relayed vital information concerning him, his experience, and the outcome of his commission. What astonishment for the celestials to learn of our tremendous blessings in the exalted Christ!

TO-SUBJECTORS

God has chosen an ecclesia from humanity which, led by His beloved Son, is to bring all His creatures from the turmoil which prevails across the length and breadth of the universe, into loving submission. "Wherefore, also, God highly exalts Him, and graces Him with the name that is

above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should be bowing, celestial and terrestrial and subterranean, and every tongue should be acclaiming that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God, the Father" (Phil.2: 9-11). Already, through the strength of our weakness, all are learning of the multifarious wisdom and gracious love of God! It is patently evident that all positions of *rule* must necessarily imply a condition of *misrule*. Despite the present superiority of the celestials, they also suffer, like humanity, through their present insubjection, or misrule. What joy when in fully transformed glory, into the same image, and then endowed with powers beyond feeble imagination, we, as To-subjectors, will be able to resolve, in Christ, in love, all their distrust and resentment!

God's precious Word teaches that Christ Jesus alone has immortality (1 Tim.6:16). Exposure to the mighty power of celestials would be more than we, in our present corruptible, frail human flesh might endure, but even the greatest among these, Michael or Gabriel, the chief messengers, and even Satan have not that unique immortality which will be granted to those of the ecclesia when they are summoned and snatched away (1 Cor.15:53).

"The highest dignitaries in the universe will gladly bow before the members of Christ's body, which will have the place supreme, not only in rule, but in the dispensation of God's favor and in the reconciliation of the celestial hosts to Him. We who were last have become first. Such is the potency of grace."²

Surely through these, all must learn, not of man, but the love of God. But, conversely, what may the ideals and standards of celestials possibly mean to the ones who have been *earthbound*, whose corruptible lives, by comparison, have been, as it were, but a passing thought? In

2. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.60, p.206.

transformed, exalted glory, shall there be empathy, comprehension? What must life from among disabled, dying humanity have meant for our Lord, prior to the commencement of His ministry? The stench of putrefaction is more than we can bear, but what must the charnel house of this earth have been like for Him? What deep sadness for Him to observe the maimed and the blind, or to witness the intense grief and the sad helplessness? Did He soothe them in their restless sleep? How troubled He was to learn of the death of John the baptist. How disturbed in spirit He was to witness the grief of those sisters, Mary and Martha. As He was dying at Golgotha, He grieved for the comfort of His mother.

THE EVANGEL OF LOVE

Knowing His Father's purpose, our Lord faithfully fulfilled every single aspect, even to the prompting of His executioners to comply with the psalmist's words, "*They gave Me poison in My repast, and for My thirst they cause Me to drink vinegar*" (Psa.69:21) He exercised patience, and profound wisdom, but above all, through His great love, He changed the whole course of the history of mankind. It is presumptuous to compare our mission to His, but there is one vital similarity. We also are entrusted with a precious evangel. The evangel of love!

As the apostle Paul lay, unconscious, outside the city of Lystra, he was granted a vision into the future, even as the apostle John was enabled to view the future terrestrial kingdom. But it is to Paul that we must turn if we are to perceive the full glories of God's consummation. From this great apostle, who completes the Word of God (Col. 1:25), we learn not only the reason for transformation, but the full, glorious conclusion of this same transformation. *All achieved, in love, that God will be All in all!*

Donald Fielding

THAT I MIGHT FIND HIM

JOB'S WORLD has become a chaos. It is dark and confused and empty like the world of Genesis 1:2 before God speaks and light appears.

What Job's associates have to say only confirms the chaos because they refuse to relate God to the evil before them except as judgment upon Job for secret sins. That is the source of all despair, the idea that there is no divine origin of, and control over, and positive purpose for, the pain and losses of our lives. In effect, Eliphaz and his companions try to put God out of the picture except for the narrow compass of reward and retribution.

Beginning this third cycle of speeches, Eliphaz asks, "Is it to El that a master is profitable?" (22:2). He tells Job that God has no need of us, but we can profit ourselves by gaining intelligence, by "wising up" as modern Eliphazes put it. God's profit arises in spite of humanity, not because of it. "Is it delight to Him Who-Suffices that you should be righteous? And should it be His gain that your ways become flawless?" (v.3).

Eliphaz wants to put Job in his place and show him that God will go on quite well without him. God's profit, delight and gain do not depend on him. Job may speak all he wants about his history of fearing Eloah, but that will not make any difference to the divine Judge Who has brought this evil on Job because of Job's wickedness and irreverence, and for no other reason. "Is it because of your devout fear that He is correcting you, that He is entering into judgment with you?" Eliphaz asks sarcastically (v.4). Any possi-

JOB 22-24

22 +Then Eliphaz the Temanite ^lanswered, + ^{saying}:

² Is it **to El** that a **master is** ^lprofitable?

^lRather the **intelligent** ^lone is ^lprofitable ^{om}to himself.

³ Is it **delight to Him Who-Suffices**
that you should be righteous?

And should it be His **gain**
that your ways become ^lflawless?

⁴ Is it ^fbecause of **your devout fear**
that **He is correcting you,**
That **He is entering into judgment with you?**

⁵ Is it **not** because **your evil** is ^{mm}great,
And there is no end to your depravities?

⁶ **For you** have exacted ^lpledge
of **your brothers gratuitously,**
And you have ^lstripped off the **garments of the naked.**

⁷ **No** ^lwater have **you** ^cgiven the **faint** to ^ldrink,
And from the hungry have **you** ^lwithheld bread.

⁸ + The **man of the arm** of power, **he** ^lhas the land,
And he of **repute** ^lis dwelling in it.

⁹ **Widows you** have sent away **empty,**
And the **arms of orphans** ^lyou have ^lcrushed^c.

¹⁰ **Therefore,** snares are **round about you,**
And sudden alarm ^mfills you with ^lpanic;

¹¹ ^lLight has become[~] **darkness** so **you** cannot ^lsee,
And a concourse of water is covering you.

22:9 7--c you have 'crushed: Hb it is 'crushed.

22:11 7-- Light has become: Hb Or.

ble record of fearing God in Job's life is irrelevant in view of that depravity which he refuses to admit, whatever it may be. "Is it not because your evil is great and there is no end of your depravities?" (v.5).

Eliphaz is so convinced of his conclusion that he makes definite charges against Job without witnesses or evidence of any kind: Job has cheated and stolen from his brothers (v.6); he has withheld water and food from the poor (v.7); he has used his power to take land from others (much as Ahab was later to do in taking possession of Naboth's vineyard, 1 Kings 21), and has crushed the widow and orphan (22:8,9). These are all crimes that God expressly forbids in the law of Moses, as most serious and requiring of condemnation.

"Therefore," Eliphaz explains, snares and alarms and darkness have come upon Job (22:10,11).

The trend of Eliphaz's message is obvious. It is a classic lecture of a type still being heard. God's concern for His creation is overlooked and His anger against the sinner is underlined. The sinner is charged with specific wicked acts, and repentance is called for so that the sinner can get back on the right track before God.

In 22:12 Eliphaz points to the loftiness of Eloah, no doubt trusting Job will be properly abashed for his audacity toward the Deity. This leads to the further charge that because of God's loftiness and murkiness and thick clouds in between, Job assumes El cannot see what he is doing (22:13,14).

Eliphaz then likens Job to the lawless people of Noah's day (22:15-18) and in Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis chapters 19 and 20). From these threats of flood and fire he concludes his masterful sermon by stressing Job's responsibilities in behavior (v.21) and heart (v.22), the need to submit to Him Who-Suffices (v.23) and to put aside worldly wealth (v.24). For "Then He Who-Suffices will become

- 12 Is **not Eloah loftier** than the **heavens?**
 + **See** the **topmost stars**, 'how high they are.
- 13 +**Yet you say**, **What** does **El** know?
 Can **He** 'judge through murkiness?
- 14 **Thick** clouds are a **concealment for Him**,
 so +**that He** cannot 'see,
And He 'walks about the **circle of the heavens**.
- 15 **Are you keeping** the **path of the eon** of old
*w***That** the *ad* **men of lawlessness** **trod**,
- 16 **Who were arrested** +**when not** yet their **time**,
 When a **river was** 'poured over their **foundation**,
- 17 **Who were saying to El**, **Withdraw from us**,
And, **What** can **He Who-Suffices** 'effect for ⁷**us~c?**
- 18 +**Yet He Himself had filled their houses** with **good**;
 (+**Still** the **counsel of the wicked is far from me**.)
- 19 The **righteous** 'see it and 'rejoice,
And the innocent one 'derides ⁷ **them**, saying:
- 20 **Assuredly** whoever **rose** against **us** is **suppressed**,
And fire has devoured their surplus.
- 21 **Be careful**, I pray, *wi* **toward Him**, and **fare well**;
 'By these means **good** shall come to you.
- 22 **Take hold**, I pray, to the **law from His mouth**,
And place His sayings in your heart.
- 23 **If you** 'return unto **Him Who-Suffices**
⁷and you 'submit~,
 If you 'put iniquity 'far from your tent
- 24 **And set** aside your **gold ore** upon the **soil**,
And wealth of **Ophir** 'among the **rocks of the wadis**,
- 25 +**Then He Who-Suffices will become your gold ore**
And rich pinnacles of silver for you.
- 26 **For then you shall find pleasure** for yourself
on **in Him Who-Suffices**,
And you shall lift up your face to Eloah.

22:17 7--c us: Hb them.

22:23 7-- and you 'submit: Hb you shall be rebuilt.

your gold ore and rich pinnacles of silver for you,” (v.25) and you will find your pleasure in Him (v.26). Finally, with stirring words, Job is called to prayers of entreaty and the paying of vows (22:27,28), and is promised power and light and salvation and escape from all his woes (22:28-30).

But we know, as Eliphaz does not, that Job’s sufferings are not judgments for hidden sins, but rather they come immediately from the hand of Satan who questioned the enduring strength of Job’s *flawlessness*, and behind that lies the responsibility of God Himself. What Eliphaz says so eloquently is irrelevant, and thus both unintelligent and cruel.

JOB’S CONCERN

Job hardly seems to feel the hurt in the words of Eliphaz. His concern is the hand of God which is so heavy on his sighing (23:2). “O that I knew where I might find Him!” (v.3). Rather than Job thinking the thick clouds conceal his own sins from God (as Eliphaz charged in 22:13,14), he feels that God is concealing Himself from him. “I cannot detect Him . . . I do not perceive Him . . . I do not see Him” (23:8,9).

Job wants to arrange his plea before God (v.4) in order to hear “the declarations with which He shall answer” (v.5). Job knows that he is not guilty of secret sins that require such affliction and loss as he is enduring, and His confidence in God is that He will not place such false charges against him (v.6). There is no question in Job’s mind that the Judge will judge his case rightly and so grant deliverance (v.7) from all the darkness and chaos of the present. In fact, this is what will occur as described in Job 42:7, and it will occur in light, with power and be made evident and clear to all.

In the meantime Job cannot perceive his Judge. But God does know the way that has come upon Job, and Job will “go forth like gold” (v.10).

- 27 **You shall entreat > Him, and He shall hear you,
And you shall pay your vows.**
- 28 **+When you 'prescribe a ^{sa}matter,
+ it shall be confirmed to you,
And light will brighten ^{on} your ways.**
- 29 **'When they abase, +then you may ^{sa}claim pride,
+For He shall save the downcast of eyes.**
- 30 **He shall give escape to the innocent ~man~,
And ⁷you shall escape~ ⁱby the purity of your palms.**
- 23 **+So Job 'answered, + 'saying:**
- 2 **Today ^{mm}as well, my concern will seem rebellious;
⁷His~c hand is heavy on my sighing.**
- 3 **'O ^{lg}that I knew +where I might find Him,
That I might come unto His establishment!**
- 4 **I would 'arrange a plea before Him
And 'fill my mouth with pleadings.**
- 5 **I would 'know the declarations
with which He shall answer,
And I would 'understand what He shall say to me.**
- 6 **Shall He contend ^{wi}against me
ⁱwith an ^{mm}abundance of vigor?
⁹Surely He Himself shall not place charges ⁱagainst me!**
- 7 **There an upright man could plead' with Him;
And I would be 'delivered > permanently
from my Judge'.**
- 8 **Behold, I 'go to the east, and He is not there,
And ^{af} back again, and I cannot 'detect > Him.**
- 9 **'When He is ^dworking~ to the left,
+ I do not 'perceive Him;
He 'goes back to the right, +yet I do not 'see Him.**
- 10 **'But He knows the way with me;
When He tests me, + I shall go forth like gold.**

22:30 --- man: Hb where; 7-- you shall escape: Hb he shall be given escape.
23:2 7--c His: Hb My.

While Eliphaz's speech was a lecture appealing to the sinner to change his ways, Job's speech is a plea directed to God in the midst of crushing pain. Yet Job continues to focus on God's movement and way (23:11). He does not remove himself from "the instruction of His lips" and secludes in his bosom "the sayings of His mouth" (v.12). What an amazing store of endurance has come to Job from this association with God's ways and words! No wonder Job longs for a word from Eloah concerning evil that is unrelated to judgment on sin.

Another great burst of confidence and praise in Job's speeches is set before us in 23:13,14, such as in 16:19-21 and 19:25-27, resounding with hopeful implications: "He is One, and who can turn Him back? What His soul has yearned for He shall do. For He shall accomplish what is marked out for me." With humanity there are as many opinions and aims as there are people. But God is One, and He carries out His plans. What His soul yearns for is not expressed by the present distress of Job's experiences, but it will be expressed in the *accomplishment* of the entire operation marked out in the divine blueprint.

Eliphaz has spoken in health and strength, but Job is flustered because "El Himself has made my heart timorous" (v.16). But he is not effaced, not "perishing" (*cf* 2 Cor.4:9) because of the darkness and gloom that has disrupted his life (v.17). What is marked out for Job is full of chaos at present, but this cannot be the end.

FOR WHAT REASON?

After struggling to a lofty height of assurance Job is pulled down by consideration of the inequalities and unfairness easily perceived in the world. In asking why times for dealing with these wrongs have not yet been provided and why we have not perceived these days when He Who-Suffices will set things right (24:1), Job is not doubting they

- 11 My feet have held** closely ¹to His movement;
I have kept to His way and have **not** ¹turned aside.
- 12** From the **instruction of His lips**
 + I do **not** ¹remove myself;
I have secluded ⁷in~ my bosom
 the sayings of His mouth.
- 13** +**Yet He** is ⁱOne, and ^awho can ¹turn Him back?
 + What His soul has yearned for + He shall do.
- 14** **For He shall accomplish** what is marked out for me,
And many other plans are **with Him** like these.
- 15** **Therefore, I am** ¹flustered ^fat His presence;
 When I ¹consider + I am ¹afraid ^fof Him.
- 16** + **El Himself** has ^cmade my heart timorous,
And He Who-Suffices has flustered me.
- 17** ¹But I am not effaced ^f because of darkness
And ^f because gloom has covered my face.
- 24** **For what reason** have times for judgment
 not been set aside ^f by Him Who-Suffices,
And why do those **knowing Him** not perceive His days?
- 2** ⁷The wicked⁰ ¹move away boundary markers;
They pillage the drove and openly ¹graze them.
- 3** The **orphans'** donkey they ¹lead away;
They take the **widow's bull** as a ¹pledge.
- 4** **They** ¹turn aside the **needy** from the way;
 The **humbled of the earth** must **hide together**.
- 5** **Behold**, like **onagers** in the wilderness
They go forth early¹ for prey,
In their contriving ~until the evening;
 Yet **no**¹~ **nourishment** for their youths!
- 6** **They** ¹reap in the field ~ⁱat night~,
And they ¹scavenge in the **vineyard** of the wicked.
- 7** **Naked**, they ¹lodge at night ^f without clothing,
And they ¹have no covering ⁱfor the cold.

23:12 7-- in: Hb from.

24:5 --- until the evening; Yet no': Hb steppe, for it.

24:6 --- 'at night: Hb his fodder.

will come. But the flustered fear and gloom of 23:15-17 has grown into impatience which is only increased as Job turns his attention away from God to human wickedness in the world.

Job denies the charges of depravity hurled against him by Eliphaz, but he readily admits there are such wicked people in the world who cheat and steal and humble the needy (24:2-4). And Job fully agrees that God will deal with these wrongs. But Job's sufferings are not an example of this sort of retribution, and the question remains, Why do these wicked people seem to get away with their evil acts, and prosper?

The sufferings of their victims, children, the poor and the oppressed are recounted in 24:5-12. "Yet Eloah, He does not place charges of impropriety." The association of the wicked with darkness is described in verses 13-17, yet they remain uncondemned, valuing "the decadent things of the blackest shadow."

FLEET OVER THE SURFACE OF THE WATERS

Job 24:18a is one of several lines in this chapter that seem obscure and difficult to fit in the context. Some modern translations drastically emend the Hebrew wording in order to bring out some semblance of sense. Hence the New English Bible has: "Such men are scum on the surface of the water;" and the Jerusalem Bible, which transfers the line to follow 27:23 says: "Headlong he flees from daylight." The King James Version is more literal: "He is as swift as the waters," but the second "as" would better have been rendered "upon" as in Genesis 1:2, or "over" as in the Concordant Version.

This association with the last clause of Genesis 1:2 may offer a clue to the meaning of this line. Eliphaz identified darkness as Job's lot in 22:11, and in 22:13,14, he referred

- 8 **They are 'doused** ^f **by the mountain storm,**
And ^f **without a refuge they hug to a rock.**
- 9 Yet others 'snatch the orphan from the breast,
And they take as a 'pledge ~the infant of~ the humble.
- 10 **Naked they go** about without clothing,
And hungry they carry the sheaf.
- 11 ~Without their songs~ they 'clarify oil;
They tread the winevats ⁺yet are 'thirsty.
- 12 ^f**In the city** ~the dying~ 'moan,
And the soul of the wounded 'implores for help;
⁺**Yet Eloah, He** does not 'place charges of impropriety.
- 13 **They** ^bare ⁱamong those revolting against the light;
They neither recognize its ways
Nor dwell in its tracks.
- 14 [>]**When the light** is gone the murderer^l 'arises;
He 'despatches the humbled and needy one;
And in the night he ^{lb}continues as a thief.
- 15 ⁺ The eye of the adulterer^l keeps watch
for the gloaming,
[>] **Saying**~, No^t eye can 'regard me;
And he 'places a concealment over his face;
- 16 **In the darkness he burrows** into houses.
By day they seal [>] themselves up;
They do not know the light.
- 17 **For altogether morning** is blackest shadow to them,
For each one 'values the decadent things
of the blackest shadow.
- 18 **He is fleet** over the surface of the waters.
May their portion be dishonored ⁱon the land;
May he not face the way of the vineyards.
- 19 **May aridity** ^{mr}and warmth siphon away
the snow waters,
And the unseen those who have sinned.

24:9 --- the infant of: MT and on.

24:11 --- Without their songs: Hb Between their barricades.

24:12 --- the dying: MT ^{ad}men.

to murkiness and thick cloud. Job's great complaint has been that he cannot detect God, though he is not completely effaced because of the darkness and gloom that engulfs him. In addition Job has just been speaking of the darkness as the realm of the wicked, and his continuing longings for God to establish order and deal out judgment would naturally suggest a parallel with God's operations in dealing with the chaos and darkness that engulfed the earth in Genesis 1:2a. The remedy for chaos and darkness in Genesis 1 began with the spirit of Elohim *vibrating* over the surface of the waters, and it continued with the voice of Elohim calling for light.

In Hebrew the word "fleet" is in the same family as the word "sound" and "voice." All of this may suggest that it is Elohim, operating with the invisible power of spirit associated with the sound of His voice, speedily bringing light where there is darkness, and order where there is chaos, Who is in view here in Job 24:18a. Both the darkness of Job's afflictions and the concealment of the wicked one's acts must eventually be brought into the light, and it is God Who will do so. For that is the opening revelation of Scripture concerning Who He is and what He is like.

HIS EYES ARE ON THEIR WAYS

The remainder of chapter 24 consists of Job's maledictions on the wicked. He agrees with his associates that God will bring them to their deserts. But this is not a perceptible operation of God in the present. What is seen is chaos where iniquity and evil prosper "and none can put reliance in their lives" (v.22).

God gives serenity to the wicked person now, but His eyes are on their ways (v.23). The wicked "are exalted a little while, but each will be [exalted] no more; they will be reduced" and shut off (v.24).

- 20 **May the ~city square~ 'forget him,**
 The **maggot** find **him** ~sweet;
May he not be remembered any ^fmore,
 So **+that, like a tree, iniquity shall be broken** down.
- 21 **7He has 'done evil~** to the **barren** one who **'bears not,**
And he has not 'done 'good for the **widow.**
- 22 **+ He draws** forth the **sturdy** ones ⁱby his **vigor;**
He 'arises, and none can **'put 'reliance** in their **lives.**
- 23 **He^o 'gives > serenity** to **him, and he 'leans** back,
+Yet His eyes are **on their ways.**
- 24 **They are exalted** a little while,
+but each will be no more;
+ They will be reduced;
Like all others they shall be shut off,
And like the head of a grainstalk
they shall be snipped off.
- 25 **+But if not so, indeed ^awho** can **'prove me** a **liar**
+Or ^{h/l}establish my declaration as **nothing?**

24:20 --- city square: Hb womb.

24:21 7-- He has 'done evil: Hb grazing.

24:23 He: i.e., Eloah.



Even in the consideration of the wicked acts of sinners, Job is not utterly cast down. This is because even here His attention is drawn toward God Who will eventually settle all these inequalities which last only "a little while." The prosperity of the wicked is not permanent; so also the misery of Job is not marked out by God as a permanent condition.

If this "is not so, indeed who can prove" Job a liar (v.25)? If it is so, then also the voice of Him Who is fleet will bring light where darkness reigns and still the chaotic waters without and within Job.

D.H.H.

1 SAMUEL 1, 2

1 +There ^{lb}was a certain man from Ramathaim of the Zuphites, from the hill country of Ephraim; + his name was Elkanah son of Jeroham son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. ²+ He ^yhad two wives; the name of ⁷the^s one was Hannah, and the name of the second was Peninnah. And ^y Peninnah came to ^{lb}have children; +but Hannah ^yhad no children. ³+ From days to^d days^o this man went up from his city to worship and to sacrifice to Yahweh of hosts ⁱat Shiloh. + There ⁷Eli and^o the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests for Yahweh.

⁴+When the day ^{lb}came +that Elkanah ⁱsacrificed, +then he would give to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and her daughters their assigned shares. ⁵+But to Hannah he would ⁱgive one double-sized assigned share, for it was Hannah that he loved; +yet Yahweh had closed her womb. ⁶+ Moreover her rival would vex her to vexation in order to dishearten⁻ her ⁱsince Yahweh had tightly closed up her womb.

⁷+ ^{so}This ^{ld}happened year ⁱby year. As often as she went up⁻ ⁱto the House of Yahweh, the other would ^{lv}vex her in ^{so}this way, so +that she ^llamented and would not ^{eat}. ⁸+ Her husband Elkanah ⁱsaid to her, Hannah, why are you lamenting? + Why are you not eating? And why does your heart feel ^{lb}bad? Am not I better for you ^fthan ten sons?

⁹After ⁷they[~] had eaten⁻ and ^{af} drunk⁻ ⁱat Shiloh, +

1:3 From days to^d days: i.e., From year to year.
1:9 7-- they: Hb she.

Hannah ^larose ⁷and stood before Yahweh^o +while Eli the priest was sitting on the covered seat ^{on}by the door-jamb of the temple of Yahweh. ¹⁰+ She was in bitterness of soul +when she ^lprayed ⁷to^s Yahweh and ^llamented, yea lamented⁻. ¹¹+ She ^{lv}vowed a vow, + ⁱsaying, O Yahweh of hosts, if You will ^{lsee}look, yea ^{see}look⁻ ⁱupon the humiliation of Your maidservant and will remember me and not ^lforget Your maidservant, and if You will ^ggrant ^yYour maidservant a ^{mt}male ^{seed}descendant, +then I will ^gdedicate him to Yahweh for all the days of his life; ⁷he shall not drink wine or intoxicant^o, and no^t razor-blade shall come upon his head.

¹²+ It came to be ^tas she multiplied ^yher prayers⁻ before Yahweh, +that Eli was observing ^hher mouth. ¹³+As for Hannah, she was speaking ^{on}in her heart; ^{but}only her lips were moving, +yet her voice could not be ^lheard. +So Eli ^lreckoned her to be drunk. ¹⁴+ Eli ⁱsaid to her, How ^{fr}long will you behave ^ldrunk? Put away your wine from ^{on}you, ⁷and go from the presence of Yahweh^o. ¹⁵+ Hannah ^lanswered, + ⁱsaying, Not so, my lord! I am a woman who is hard pressed in spirit; + I have drunk no^t wine +or intoxicant. +Yet I have been pouring out my soul before Yahweh. ¹⁶You must not ^{lg}take your maidservant ^{bf}for a daughter of worthlessness, ^tsince I have spoken ^{bd}hitherto ^fout of the magnitude of my concern and my vexation. ¹⁷+So Eli ^lanswered, + ⁱsaying, Go ^yin peace! + May the Elohim of Israel ^ggrant your request ^wthat you have asked ^fof ^{wi}Him. ¹⁸+ She ^{lsg}replied, May your handmaid find favor in your eyes! +Then the woman ^lwent ^yher way ⁷and ^lcame to her booth^o +where she ^late ⁷and ^ldrank with her husband^o; and her face ^bwas no^t ^{fr}longer sad for herself.

¹⁹+ They ^erose ^learly in the morning and ^lworshiped before Yahweh. +Then they ^lreturned and ^lcame to their

1:10 7--s to: Hb on.

house at^d Ramah. + Elkanah knew his wife Hannah; and Yahweh remembered her.

²⁰ +So it came to be at the revolution of the days that Hannah had been pregnant and had borne a son. + She had called his name Samuel and had said^o, For it was of Yahweh Elohim of hosts^o that I have asked for him. ²¹ +When the man Elkanah and all his household were going up to sacrifice to Yahweh at Shiloh^o the annual sacrifice of the days, and to pay his vow and all the tithes of his field^o, ²² +then Hannah did not go up with him^o, for she said to her husband, ^{fr}When the lad is weaned, + I will bring him; +for he must appear before the face of Yahweh and ^{sit}abide there ^{fr}for the eon. ²³ + Her husband Elkanah ^{lsd}replied to her, Do what seems good in your eyes. ^{sit}Stay here until you have weaned him. ^oOnly may Yahweh confirm what was coming forth from your mouth^o.

+So the woman ^{lsit}stayed there and nursed her son until she weaned him. ²⁴ +Then she took him up with her to Shiloh^o, as soon as she had weaned him, with a three^l year old bull of the herd and bread^o, + one ephah of meal flour and a waterskin of wine. And though the lad was in his early youth, + she brought him to the house of Yahweh at Shiloh. ²⁵ +Then they slew the young bull, and they brought the lad to Eli. ²⁶ + She said, O! My lord! As your soul is alive, my lord, I am the woman who was standing up ^{wi}beside you in this place and praying to Yahweh. ²⁷ For this lad I had prayed, and Yahweh has ^{lg}granted to me my request ^wthat I had asked of ^{wi}him. ²⁸ + ^{mr}Therefore I have given him as a loan to Yahweh. All the days ^wthat he lives[~], he is one requested for Yahweh. And he bowed down there before Yahweh.

1:23 7--^o what was coming forth from your mouth: Hb His word.

1:24 7--^o a three^l year old bull of the herd and bread: Hb three young bulls.

1:28 7-- lives: Hb becomes.

2 +Then Hannah prayed, + saying:

Glad is my heart in Yahweh!
High is my horn in my Elohim^{es}!
Wide is my mouth over my enemies^l,
For I rejoice in Your salvation.

² No one is holy like Yahweh;

'Yea, no one is holy^o barring You,
And no one is righteous~ like our Elohim.

³ Do not speak with lofty superiority so much;

May no impertinence come forth from your mouth!
For an El of knowledge is Yahweh;
And actions are regulated by Him.

⁴ The bows of the masters are cracked,

+Yet those who stumble^l are belted with valor.

⁵ The surfeited have hired themselves out for bread;

+Yet the famishing leave hunger behind.

^{fr}While the barren one has borne seven,

+ She who was ^{mm}abundant in sons has wasted away.

⁶ Yahweh is putting to death and is ^mkeeping alive;

He is bringing down to the unseen, and He brings up.

⁷ Yahweh is making destitute and is enriching;

He is laying low and is exalting too.

⁸ He is raising the poor from the soil dust

⁷And^{es} exalts the needy from the ash heaps,

> Seating them with patrons of peoples^o,

+ Allotting them a throne of glory.

For Yahweh's are the stanchions of the earth;

+ He has set the habitation upon them.

⁹ He is guarding the feet of His benign ones;

+Yet the wicked shall be silenced in darkness,

For not by vigor has man mastery.

2:1 7--^{es} my Elohim: Hb Yahweh.

2:2 7-- righteous: Hb rock.

¹⁰ As for Yahweh, those contending with Him shall be undone;
^{on}Against ^{Sy}them^{~c} shall He thunder in the heavens.
 Yahweh' shall adjudicate the limits of the earth.
 + He shall give strength to His king;
 + He shall exalt the horn of His anointed one.

¹¹ +Then ⁷they^l left him there before Yahweh and ^lwent^{~d} to Ramah, ^Mto^{~s} his house; +as for the lad, he ^bremained in the ministry^l to Yahweh in the presence of Eli the priest.

¹² +Now the sons of Eli were sons of worthlessness, who did not acknowledge Yahweh ¹³or the priests' due portion from the people. When any one was sacrificing a sacrifice, +then a young attendant of the priest would come, ^{as}while the meat^o was cooking⁻, +with a three-tined fork in his hand, ¹⁴+which he would poke into the chafing-pan or ⁱ large pot or ⁱ caldron or ⁱ kettle. All ^wthat the fork ^cbrought up, the priest would ^ltake ⁱfor himself. Thus they would ^{ld}treat ^{at} Shiloh [>] all the Israelites who came^l there ⁷to sacrifice to Yahweh^o. ¹⁵ Moreover, ⁱ ere they ^cmade the fat ^lfume, + a young attendant of the priest would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, Do ^gdonate some meat^o to roast for the priest; +for he shall not take from you cooked^l meat^o ⁷f^out of the caldron^o, for it should be uncooked. ¹⁶ +If the man ^{sa}replied to him, Let the fat fume, yea fume^{- as} awhile, +then take for yourself ^{as w}what your soul is yearning for, + he would ^{sa}reply, No^t, for you shall ^gdonate it now; and if not, I will take it ⁱby brunt force. ¹⁷ + The sin of the young attendants ^{lb}was very great in the presence of Yahweh, for these men spurned the approach present of Yahweh.

¹⁸ + Samuel was in the ministry^l before Yahweh as a

2:10 *Sy--c* them: Hb him.

2:11 *7--* they left him there before Yahweh and went: Hb Elkanah went; *M--s* to: Hb on.

2:13,15 meat: lit. flesh.

lad girded^l with a linen ephod. ¹⁹ His mother would +also ^{ld}make a small robe for him, and she would ^cbring it up to him from days to^d days, ⁱwhen she went up⁻ with her husband to sacrifice the sacrifice of days.^o ²⁰ And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, + saying, May Yahweh ^Qrepay[~] you and give [>] you seed ^fby this woman in place of the loan ^wshe had loaned^{~Q} to Yahweh. +Then they went to ^Mtheir^{~c} ri place. ²¹ ^QAnd Yahweh visited[~] Hannah; + she had ^lpregnancies and gave ^lbirth to three sons and two daughters, +while the lad Samuel grew up ⁷in the presence of^{~Q} Yahweh.

²² +Now Eli was very old; and he heard of all ^wthat his sons were doing to all Israel, and ^whow they lay with the women who enlisted^l at the entrance opening of the tent of appointment. ²³ +So he would say to them, Why are you doing things like these? ^wFor I am hearing from all the people about these things of yours as evil. ²⁴ ⁷You^o must not ⁷do so^o, my sons; for not good is the report ^wthat I hear^l passing about among Yahweh's people. ²⁵ If a man sins against a man, +then Elohim will mediate for him. + If a man sins against Yahweh, ^awho should mediate for him? +But they did not hearken to their father's voice; for Yahweh desired to ^cput them to death. ²⁶ +Yet the lad Samuel was going on and growing greater + in goodness ^{mr}both with Yahweh and ^{mr}with men.

²⁷ + A man of Elohim came to Eli and said to him, Thus ^{sa}speaks Yahweh: Did I not reveal, yea reveal⁻ Myself to your father's house ⁱwhen they ^bwere⁻ in Egypt, ⁷servants^o to the house of Pharaoh? ²⁸ + I chose⁻ him from all the tribes of Israel to be Mine for the priesthood, to ascend ^{on} My altar, to fume incense, to wear the ephod before Me. And I ^{lg}assigned to your father's house all the

2:19 the sacrifice of days: i.e., the annual sacrifice.

2:20 *Q--* repay: Hb place; *7--Q* she had loaned: Hb he had loaned; *M--c* their: Hb his.

2:21 *Q--* And Yahweh visited: Hb For Yahweh visited; *7--Q* in the presence of: Hb with.

fire offerings of the sons of Israel ⁷for food^o. ²⁹ Why are you^o showing disrespect ⁱfor My sacrifice and ⁱfor My approach present ^wthat I have determined for My habitation? ⁺Why are you glorifying [`]your sons more ^fthan Me, to ^cmake yourselves plump⁻ ^fwith the first portion of every approach present [^]by My people Israel? ³⁰ Therefore, this is the averring of Yahweh Elohim of Israel: I said, yea said⁻, Your house and your father's house shall walk about before Me ^ffor the eon. ⁺Yet now, this is the averring of Yahweh: Far be it [^]from Me! For those glorifying Me shall I glorify, ⁺yet those despising Me shall be dishonored. ³¹ Behold the days are coming (^Mthis is the averring of Yahweh^c), ⁺when I will hack down [`]your seed and [`]the seed of your father's house, to keep them from becoming⁻ old in your house. ³² ⁺Then you will look on a rival in My habitation, in all ^wthat he ^cdoes good [`]with Israel. And there shall not ^bbe an old man in your house all the days. ³³ ⁺As for the man [^]of yours whom I shall not cut off from ^{wi} My altar, I will cause [^]all failure⁻ [`]to ⁷his^{-o} eyes and [^]pining [`]to ⁷his^{-o} soul. ⁺Yet all the increase of your house shall die ⁷ⁱby the sword of^o men. ³⁴ And this is the sign for you ^wthat shall ^{im}befall [^]your two sons, [^]Hophni and Phinehas: ⁱOn the same day shall both of them die.

³⁵ ⁺Yet I will raise up for Myself a faithful^l priest; he shall do ^{7all^{cs}} according to ^wwhat is in My heart and in My soul. And I will build for him a faithful^l house; ⁺ he will walk about before My anointed one all the days. ³⁶ ⁺Then it will ^boccur that everyone [`]who is left^l over in your house, shall come [^]and bow down⁻ to him for a gerah of silver ⁺or a loaf of bread, and he will say, Let me adhere, if you ^{pr}please, to one of the priestly duties, that I may have a morsel of bread to eat.

2:29 you: Qumran and LXX singular; Hb plural.
 2:33 7--o his: Hb your (2x).
 2:35 7-cs all: cf 2 S 15:24-37; 1 K 2:27.

FIRST SAMUEL: OVERVIEW

FIRST SAMUEL is a book containing many contrasts—contrasts carefully woven together to teach specific lessons about the control and rule that is exercised on our lives. There is the rule of the flesh, striving to do what it desires and what it thinks is right, but failing to be dependent upon God. And there is the rule of faith which honors God. Each of these is exhibited in varying degrees, and the struggle between them is most instructive because we, as believers, experience both. All experience the power of the flesh, but, by God's grace, a new power has entered the lives of those who walk by faith (*cf* Rom.7:25; 2 Cor.5:7).

Throughout 1 Samuel these themes of confidence in the flesh and reliance on God are presented in view of the broader theme of God's control of all events. Both in the relative sense of daily experience, and in the absolute sense of God's purposes, we see God actively involved and operating.

THE FLESH: RESPECT FOR PEOPLE, RATHER THAN GOD

Among the contrasts between flesh and faith are those illustrated in the lives of Eli and Saul. Eli shows us first the failing of the flesh when he speaks to his sons about their terrible sins. He said he was hearing reports *from the people* about the things his sons were doing. It is quite true that he knew these acts were sins against God, but it was the grumbling of the people, instead of jealousy for God, which triggered a response from Eli. Soon a man of God came to Eli with God's reproach and the ques-

tion, “Why are you glorifying your sons more than Me?” (1 Sam.2:22-30).

The nation Israel shows the same desire of the flesh in asking for a king. “Now do appoint for us a king, to judge us *like all the other nations*” (1 Sam.8:5). God’s response to Samuel’s prayer was, “. . . it is Me Whom they have rejected from being King over them” (8:7).

Saul is a premier example of the flesh. He tries repeatedly to serve God, but he continually bases his decisions on the people and circumstances that surround him: “When I saw that *the force scattered from me*, and you, *you did not come* within the appointed days, and *the Philistines were being gathered* . . . I felt compelled to offer up the ascent approach” (13:11-12). Saul explained to Samuel, “Because *I hearkened to the voice of the soldiers* . . . I brought back Agag . . . Yet *the soldiers took* from the loot some small cattle and large cattle . . . *I have sinned, yet now, I pray, bring glory to me in front of the elders of my people and in front of Israel*” (15:20,21,30). And to David Saul said, “*You are not able* to go against this Philistine to fight with him, *for you are a youth*, and *he* has been *a man of war from his youth*” (17:33). Saul continually had his eye on the flesh and judged according to the flesh, and this was the cause of his replacement by David.

FAITH: AFTER THE HEART OF GOD

The man of God who came to Eli said God would raise up for Himself *a faithful priest who would “do all according to what is in My heart and in My soul”* (2:35). When Israel pleaded with Samuel to help them return to God, Samuel said, “*If it is with all your heart that you are returning to Yahweh*, then put away the foreign elohim and the Ashtaroth from your midst and prepare *your heart for Yahweh and serve Him, Him alone*” (7:3; cf 12:20-24). When Saul, overcome with anxiety, offered the sacrifice, instead

of waiting for Samuel, Samuel told him, “Yet now your dynasty shall not be confirmed. Yahweh has sought out for Himself a man *in accord with His own heart*” (13:14). And when Samuel beheld Jesse’s sons, God’s word to him was, “You must not look at his appearance and at the loftiness of his stature [the outstanding feature of Saul (10:23)], for I have rejected him. For not as a human sees, does the One, Elohim, see. *A human sees the visible appearance, yet Yahweh sees into the heart*” (16:7).

The contrast throughout these passages is the difference between a heart that is fully committed to God, and one that, while it may want to serve God, honors other things as well. “More than any guarding, *preserve your heart*, for from it spring the outflowings of life” (Prov.4:23). This commitment was voiced by Christ during His temptation in the wilderness, “The Lord your God shall you be worshipping, and *to Him only shall you be offering divine service*” (Matt.4:10).

THE CONTROL AND CHOICE ARE GOD’S

The book of 1 Samuel tells of many changing events and patterns of life in the history of Israel. Corruption was increasing in the days of Eli. His sons were profaning the worship and frustrating the worshipers. Israel needed a replacement for Eli—someone strong to lead the nation—someone who could take charge and change things.

Notice the subtle description the Scriptures give of the situation: “The *lad* Samuel was in the ministry before Yahweh under Eli the priest. *In those days the word of Yahweh had become rare; there was no vision being unfolded*. Then it occurred on that day: Eli was lying down in his own place; *his eyes had started to grow dim, and he was not able to see. The lamp of Elohim was not yet quenched, while Samuel was lying down in the temple of Yahweh where the coffer of Elohim was*” (1 Sam.3:1-4). Eli was nearly blind phys-

ically, and this represented his greater blindness toward God. But as long as the lad in an ephod was in the temple (*cf* 1 Sam.2:18), the light of God was not quenched. “A lad cannot replace a priest,” we cry! A lad, of himself, could not. But that is all the flesh sees. The flesh is slow to see God, standing strong in young Samuel.

Saul started his era of leadership with victories and a reasonable acceptance by the people. Had we been Israelites then, we probably would have thought Saul was an average king, but needed to have a better replacement. And seeing Jonathan’s character and leadership, we would likely have been content to wait for his natural ascent to the throne. But God is in control, and He removes both Saul and Jonathan, even Saul’s entire house, in one fell stroke. In His wisdom it was much better to establish David as king.

But perhaps the most striking feature of God’s control was His calling of prophets. There was no fleshly succession of the great prophets. One was called from here and another from there. He brought them forth from nowhere to rebuke priests and kings and whatever form of leadership the nation had at the time. Even David was humiliated by the prophet Gad (1 Sam.22:5; 2 Sam.24:11-14). All of this shows that there is no human form of rule—no rule of the flesh—that can permanently guide humanity.

The whole scenario may be summed up best in the song of Hannah. After years of hoping for a child, a new life within her, Hannah flung herself upon God, and canceling all confidence in her flesh, she poured out her heart to Him. Her song at the dedication of Samuel praises a God Who is little known by the terms of her expressions (1 Sam.2:1-10). Here is the God Who is “operating all in accord with the counsel of His will” (Eph.1:11). He is humbling some and exalting others and His wisdom and power pervades all that occurs. Our expectation is in Him.

J. Philip Scranton

He Shall Save His People

IF THE LORD IS WILLING

IN His sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke of the kingdom and the blessings for those who heard and heeded His words. But it is evident, not only in looking back at the failure of Israel but at our own experience of weakness and sin as well, that no one can achieve the perfection described in Matthew 5:17-48 apart from God’s deliverance from sin. The words of Matthew 5-7 only make the promise of Matthew 1:21 more clearly necessary. There must be One Who saves from sin.

Otherwise, when the kingdom arrives, all Israel must be cast into Gehenna (Matt.5:22,27-30); they all must collect the wages of hypocrisy (6:3-5); everyone of them will be brought to destruction (7:13,14); the Lord must declare to them all: “I never knew you! Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness!” (7:23). Jesus required that they be doing the will of His Father Who is in the heavens (7:21). Yet for this to happen they must be established under the covenant of Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36. And for that to happen there must be a work of the Saviour that saves from sin.

DESCENDING FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Those who listened to the Lord’s message “were astonished at His teaching” (7:28), and when He descended from the mountain “vast throngs follow Him” (Matt.8:1). Yet to begin with, we read of only one individual out of the vast throngs who comes to Jesus as the Saviour. This is a man afflicted with leprosy, who worships the Lord, saying “Lord, if Thou shouldst be willing, Thou canst cleanse me!” (8:2).

The leper is a picture of the sinner, and cleansing from leprosy is a picture of cleansing from sin. This is very promising in light of the message of Matthew 5-7. If He was willing Jesus could cleanse all the sinners of Israel from their sins. The very fact that He was willing to cleanse the leper from leprosy, and that He did so, tells us of His willingness to save His people from their sins and that He will do so.

Nevertheless, it was not the time for this cleansing. Jesus sent the cleansed leper to the priest "as a sign that He is the One Who can cleanse the leprosy of the sinful nation. [The priesthood] should have known that the One Who can do this is the long-desired Messiah. There is no intimation that they heeded this testimony, so that here we have, in a parable, the same truth with which John begins his evangel: His own people do not accept Him (John 1:11). Indeed, this is more striking. For the priests had before them continually the lesson of the suffering sacrifice. If no other class in the nation could understand His rejection and sorrow and death, they should have recognized that this is the One Who was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter. But, in that deeper wisdom of God, they were also the ones who were ordained to be the slayers of the great Sacrifice."¹

Indeed we may well say that the priests ought to have known that Jesus was the Promised One Who would save His people from their sins. The testimony of the cured leper was clear. But they were blinded to what was right before their eyes, so that they might offer up the Lamb of God Who thus would take away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

What shall we say, however, concerning the results of this blindness as they affect this particular priest who received this marvelous testimony? And what of the priesthood as a whole, which became the instrument for the giving up of

¹ I. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.20.

the Lamb of God? If anyone is destined to hear the Lord's words, "Depart from Me, workers of lawlessness!" surely they must be included.

NO ONE IN ISRAEL

It is not that the priestly unbelief should escape judgment. But we must not make the words of condemnation and rejection spoken by the Saviour mean something that makes it impossible for Him to save such sinners as these. The priest was a sinner as well as the leper. They both needed cleansing from sin. *And so did everyone in Israel and in the entire world.*

This great need even beyond the circle of His people Israel is shown by the next occurrence in our Lord's ministry as recorded by Matthew. A centurion, that is, a Roman military officer, came to Jesus in Capernaum, and pleaded that the Lord would cure his boy who was prostrate with paralysis and dreadful torments (Matt.8:5-8). There is much for our learning here, but first of all, let us note that which was so marvelous to Jesus, that this Roman centurion displayed more faith in Him than His people Israel were displaying. "Verily, I am saying to you, With no one in Israel so much faith did I find" (Matt.8:10).

There was *no one in Israel* who had faith like this centurion's. And yet, Jesus was the One Who was to save His people from their sins!

The leper was cleansed, and the boy was cured, but the priest showed no indication of comprehending the leper's testimony, and countless Israelites, as "sons of the kingdom" would be cast out into outer darkness with lamentation and gnashing of teeth when the kingdom arrived (Matt.8:11,12). These are our Lord's words, and they will be fulfilled.

But to make this condemnation an everlasting punishment in hell, without hope, without relief, without any

possibility of Jesus becoming the Saviour and Shepherd of these who are His people (*cf* Matt.2:6) is surely to mistake the mind of God. Unbelief is sin, and its wages must accord with the serious nature of the sin. Nevertheless, it surely is impossible that Jesus will never know in a saving way those whom He came to save, that He can never wipe away the tears of those cast out into darkness away from the light of the kingdom, that all the sons of the kingdom will never bow in the Name of the Saviour and acclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

THE TEACHING OF HELL

The traditional doctrine of hell is founded on more passages in Matthew than any other portion of God's Word. The King James Version renders the word *Gehenna* "hell" seven times in Matthew (5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33), and two times it uses "hell" for *hades* (11:23; 16:18). From this it is concluded that hell is a place of fire, where the whole body perishes, the soul and body destroyed, where one is brought down in judgment, and where there are strong gates. (There is renewed controversy today over the sense implied by the words "perish" and "destroy," some claiming from these terms that hell involves the annihilation of the sinner and the majority still taking the terms figuratively as symbolic of hopelessness. Very little attention seems to be given in this connection to the fact that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, *i.e.*, those who are perishing.)

The whole subject of an unending punishment is expanded by taking every warning of future judgment and loss in our Lord's ministry as further revelation concerning hell. Hence, as we have noted, the fire of hell is determined by a further mistranslation to be unquenchable (Matt.3:12), punishment in hell is supposed to be the "wages" of hypocrites (Matt.5:2-5), hell is seen as the place of destruction at the end of broad and spacious way (Matt.7:13), the des-

tiny of workers of lawlessness who are expelled from our Lord's presence (7:23), and despite normal implications of the word "fire" hell is found to be a place of "outer darkness" where those who are destroyed continue to lament and gnash their teeth (8:12).

Many more such details are added from later passages in Matthew, culminating in the use of the terrifying words of Matthew 25:46 as rendered by the King James Version, and followed by most other translations. From the Lord's description of the future judgment of the nations, it is claimed that hell is the place of "everlasting punishment," making punishment an end in itself, and finally securing the impossibility of Jesus ever fully taking His place as Saviour.

HIS WILL AND OURS

The willingness of Jesus to save sinners is not consciously questioned by believers, but in effect many fail to appreciate its importance. Other issues intrude on almost every consideration of our Lord's will, such as: "What about the human will? What if the human being is not willing to be saved?" "What if the divine willingness to save is limited and arbitrarily directed?" Theological problems concerning election, predestination, and free will keep cropping up. Few seem to see our Lord's willingness as such a decisive and determinative factor in salvation as the leper saw it. Few are as clear about the certainty and authority for healing of a word from the Lord as the centurion was. "Lord, I am not competent that Thou mayest enter under my roof, but *only say the word and my boy will be healed!*" (Matt.8:8).

But the willingness of the Lord to save is not held captive to conditions and situations outside of God's control. It is not a well-meaning but hopeless wishing for the best. The casting out of the sons of the kingdom into outer darkness is not proof that Jesus can never be their Saviour from sin, nor evidence that He has no willingness to save them

from such sorrow. They must weep and lament for a time, but this is only part of the process, and not at all the goal, or the ultimate expression of the divine will. Darkness and sorrow serve and do not oppose the operations of the One Who is willing to save.

The critical issue here is the divine willingness to save, not ours to be saved. "It is not of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful" (Rom.9:16). His people will be willing in the day of His power (Psa.110:3). May we become more and more like the leper who boldly testified to the vital and effective place of the Lord's will, and more and more like the Roman centurion who was unswerving in conviction concerning the Lord's authority and power to heal. No matter how much human stubbornness and blindness, darkness and lamentation come in between, the final resolution is the Lord's Who is willing to save, Who is Jesus the Saviour, Who shall save His people from their sins.

D.H.H.

REPOSING IN CHRIST

Sister Hazel Silva of Boise, Idaho, was put to repose on December 9, 1996, at age 85. Along with her husband Ted, who preceded her in death in 1974, she eagerly embraced the truth concerning God's delight to head up all in the Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bindery work has now been completed, and *Unsearchable Riches* volume 87 (1996) is now available for shipment (clothbound, dark green cloth, 288 pages; \$20.00 per copy, \$2.00 s&h (California residents add sales tax)).

Our current series, *Studies in Galatians*, which began in volume 87, number 1, does not appear in this issue. Since our writings on Galatians 4 (which, sequentially, would be the next portion of Scripture due for exposition at this time) were already published in volume 82 (pp.155-164; 219-231), we intend to resume our publication of these Galatians studies in our next issue, beginning with Galatians 5:1.