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UNSEARCHABLE RICHES FOR MAY 1996  
BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME EIGHTY-SEVEN

EDITORIAL

*In Memoriam*  
*Herman H. Roche*  
*1908-1996*

OUR BROTHER and fellow worker, Herman H. Roche, has been put to repose. It is with sorrow and with a deep sense of loss that we make this announcement. Yet we are thanking our God and Father for the wise and gracious guidance He channeled to us for many years through this chosen vessel.

Born in Germany on July 21, 1908, he, in his own words, "received peace with God through the blood of Christ" as a boy of 15. He spent many years filled with questions, searching for answers in the established churches and schools. He wanted to know as clearly as possible just what God was saying in His Word, and toward this end he studied both Hebrew and Greek as taught in the universities.

It was during the last years of the Second World War that he visited a church in Berlin, pastored by Brother H. Grossman, where A. E. Knoch had enjoyed fellowship several years previously. In a letter to Brother Knoch written in 1946, Herman related: "The answers to my questions [were] given by Grossman's sermons and the Concordant Literature which was made available to me by Brother Wolff at Stepenitz."

His schooling in languages opened up jobs for him as English interpreter and later as coordinator of cultural events for soldiers in the American army. In the meantime he was engrossed in reestablishing the Concordant work in Germany. By 1954 he was living in Hamburg and serving as managing editor of the magazine and other German publications.

Then in the January 1960 issue of *Unsearchable Riches* it was announced, "At the time of writing, we have received word of the impending departure of the Editor of our German magazine, Brother Herman Rocke, and his wife, from Hamburg, for the United States. Our brother plans, D.V., to take up residence in Los Angeles, where he will assume the duties of editorial assistant to A. E. Knoch, the Compiler of the Concordant Version."

Thus, while still continuing his labors with the Konkordanter Verlag, Brother Rocke and his wife Luise, moved to Los Angeles, living for awhile nearly next door to Brother and Sister Knoch, and so he became much involved in the English work as well. I remember well my own first visit to Los Angeles in July 1960, when I was privileged to meet Brother Knoch and his family, and also Herman and Luise, as well as their two children who had previously moved to the United States. The humble setting only made the thrill of witnessing the daily conferring of A. E. Knoch and Herman Rocke, along with David Knoch, on the Concordant Version of Isaiah, all that more striking. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gratuity (as Herman so often repeated)!

My real acquaintance with Brother Rocke began when I moved to California in 1972 and assumed many of the duties previously carried on for many years by Brother Ernest Knoch. The Rockes were then living in Carpinteria, California, in a mobile home near the ocean shore. They would drive to the office in Canyon Country each week, putting in long hours on the Concordant Version of the Old Testament and the preparation of *Unsearchable Riches*.

Herman seldom spoke about himself or family concerns. He immersed himself in his work with great discipline and dedication. It seems to me that I came to know him best during the last few years when we were separated by many miles of distance (after Luise's death in 1992, Her-

man lived first with his son in Davis, California, and then more recently with his daughter in Beaverton, Oregon). Our communication was principally by mail, sometimes by telephone, but the fellowship of mutual solicitude by prayer and petition as we labored together on the Old Testament translation was the highest of privileges for me in our association for the last 24 years.

Up to about eight weeks ago, Herman was still working 40 hours or more a week on the Concordant translation and on both the German and English magazines. He occasionally mentioned intestinal distress, and his age had taken its toll. But it did come as a shock to me when I learned in early March that he had terminal cancer and had been forced to leave his desk completely. He was able to stay at home under his daughter's care. I spoke with him briefly by telephone on April 22 and felt it was for the last time in this life, as it came to be. He died the evening of April 25.

I would like to share some lines from his letters and reports of the past few years and months. Perhaps his words will be as encouraging and uplifting to others as they have been to me (the first citation is much earlier than the others and seems especially timely in light of Bro. Rocke's death as well as the current studies on the book of Job in the magazine):

*April 19, 1985.* "I have spent some time on Job 19:25-27 . . . Job was *inspired* to speak these words; so the expectation of resurrection lies at the very heart of Job's faith. Hence he may be called a prophet in his own right; for by many portions and *modes*, of old, God was speaking to the fathers . . . Another important point is the fact that Job expected to perceive *Eloah* with his own eyes (i.e., from my flesh), not El, not Elohim. So Job used the divine title that reflects the general direction of Christ's activity, *Godwards*.

"The scroll of Job stands out from all the other books of

the O.T. in that the title Eloah occurs 41 times in Job, and only 17 times elsewhere. In this way the scroll as a whole points to Christ, the Redeemer. The expressions, 'with my own eyes, from my flesh, behind my skin,' show that it is indeed Job in person who will be present and stand erect and perceive Eloah, his Redeemer."

*September 29, 1991.* "My daily prayer is not only for spiritual wisdom and revelation of the divine thoughts, but also for a full mental grasp of the intricacies of the Hebrew texts that will come before me in the course of the day. I also pray for the ability to accurately translate them into English. I pray for the gift of logical thinking and for a good memory so as to be able to recall the occurrence of similar Hebrew phrases."

*September 20, 1993.* "This morning I woke up at 5:48 (Oregon time). I do not rise this early now, but I wake up around 5:00 almost every morning. Since this is 8:00 your time, I start praying for you and ye all for the Lord's blessing for the new day—blessing for all endurance and patience with joy: that we may be endowed with all power, in accord with the might of His glory."

*July 10, 1994.* "If the Lord should ever be willing, and I shall be living (James 4:15), I would like to write a few articles about *Samuel, the Last of the Judges* . . . . About four weeks ago, I became sick with jaundice [and] had to spend 24 hours in the hospital for continuous intravenous drip of antibiotics . . . . Right now, I have no pain. 'Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless our inward [man] is being renewed day by day' (2 Cor.4:16)."

*August 23, 1994.* "Thank you for your mail of Aug. 17 and the description of the star gazing session. This brings to mind Col.3:1-4 . . . . be seeking that which is above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.—So often I am looking up to the heavens from where He will be descend-

ing, with a shout of command. Then we will be snatched away together, to meet the Lord in the air. While we are waiting, the Father makes us competent for a part of the allotment of the saints in light. And He says to us: 'Look to the service which you accepted in the Lord, that you may be fulfilling it.'"

*October 1995* (Report to the Board of Directors): "The revision of 1 Samuel was completed earlier this year. Then I started rechecking and retyping 2 Samuel. We had found the Hebrew text of 1 Samuel in a relatively poor shape, and we had to add many emendations based on the evidence of LXX and Qumran.

"The Hebrew text of 2 Samuel is in a better shape, though it is often defective in certain respects and must have suffered in the process of textual transmission, mainly due to scribal errors, such as haplographic omissions in particular (the first [or the final] letter or syllable of a Hebrew word dropped out, when it occurred also in the preceding [or in the following] word). Bro. A. E. Knoch had discovered most of these defects in his sublinear translation; he advised us to compare our emendations with the recommendations of conservative commentators. ('They spent a lifetime on these things, and they know better,' he once said.)"

*October 13, 1995.* "This week I tried to memorize the Greek text of 2 Cor.12:9. I am so happy and thankful for [these] words . . . . In my bodily weaknesses, the power of Christ is tabernacling over me! On my way to our mailbox, I have to descend fifteen steps; and I remember this verse, while I have one hand on the bannister, and the other on my metal cane."

*January 28, 1996.* "The snow outside keeps me in the house. In the morning, on my weak legs with the support of my sturdy metal cane, I used to go out to the edge of the sidewalk to our mailbox where I deposited my outgoing mail, and in the afternoon I picked up incoming

mail. I have been thanking the Lord daily for having full vision on my right eye (there is cataract on the left one), and the recent inflammation is receding. Praise the Lord, there is no stomach pain today as has been every day in the past weeks.”

The final note from his hand was attached to some work on Amos that he was returning to me; it is dated February 25, 1996, and is here given in its entirety: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you! Yours in Him, Herman.”

Brother Rocke nearly completed the revision work on 2 Samuel but was unable to do this for the two books of Kings as he had hoped. Yet always he reminded himself of the praise and prayers of Paul, centered in confidence in the One Who will be completing the work He has begun in us (*cf* Phil.1:6). This is reflected in his study, *The Prayer of Faith*, which appeared in *Unsearchable Riches* for March 1960 and in his book, CHECK YOUR PANOPLY, from which we have excerpted the article beginning on the following page.

The article on 2 Corinthians 5:18,19 that appeared in our March issue was prepared at Brother Rocke’s request. For one who lived through two world wars at close hand, this message of God’s achievement of conciliation held special meaning, and it seems fitting that he was so concerned in his last months that we continue to give it stress. He knew it was because of the truth that God was in Christ conciliating the world to Himself that our prayers are broadened toward all mankind, and we may find something of what Paul called “a mild and quiet life” (1 Tim.2:2) even in these stressful days.

Memorial services were held by his family in Oregon, and friends in California and Michigan. We say good night for now, in expectation of the morning that begins that blessed time when we will always be together with our Lord.

D.H.H.

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*A Mild and Quiet Life*

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### THE PRAYER OF FAITH

PUTTING ON THE PANOPLY of God is something which cannot be accomplished without “praying on every occasion” (Eph.6:18). This signifies that the various phases (girding the loins, putting on the cuirass, etc.) should each be accompanied by such prayers and petitions, as were *practiced by Paul* and his associates.

Some people are under the impression that a prayer is nothing more than the opening of their heart toward God, just like the opening of a flower toward the light. They consider this to be their utmost effort. God will have the rest. To a certain degree this may be correct in a case of great personal affliction. If this, however, became our permanent attitude we would remain in the realm of emotion instead of taking the path leading toward the highest praise of God of which the human tongue is capable. We need to learn more thoroughly how to *pray with the renewed mind*. This means we have to abandon any passive attitude in prayer and become as *active* in it as we possibly can. The point should be emphasized that praying is like performing a task for which we have to prepare ourselves. Mature prayer requires our undivided attention in addition to spiritual wisdom and realization of God. If the words are vague and general, this is a sign that something is lacking.

Perhaps we have not yet fully grasped all of *God’s promises* that pertain to us. They ought to be studied time and again, and as thoroughly as possible; otherwise our faith is in danger. It may be overshadowed by pious fantasies, leading us to believe that this or that is urgent and valuable

and useful in the work of the Lord. It is not right to bring such arbitrary petitions before God in prayer even if they are well meant and find the approval of pious tradition.

We should become acquainted with the Lord's will before we attempt to do our utmost in His service. We ought to know what He expects from us in this administration, and we should heed His warnings of the traps of the Adversary. It is true that the Lord said that no one is able to be snatching the disciples out of the Father's hand (John 10:29). And nothing shall be separating us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom.8:35). But it is also true that Satan *claimed* even the apostles, to sift them as grain. The Adversary was *authorized* in his attempt to ruin Job's faith. Yahweh told Satan, "He is in your hand!" But there was the restriction, "Only keep his soul alive" (Job 2:6).

Even today the Adversary is requesting such authorization, especially in order to prevent the most fervent of the faithful from growing into maturity. If he cannot hinder their spiritual growth by Job's plagues, he will try time and again to distort God's Word before their spiritual eyes, so that they do not come into a realization of the truth and will not sober up out of the trap of the Adversary (2 Tim.2:25,26).

The most common *deception* is to assume the translation of the Bible to be inspired and therefore infallible. Hence people are reluctant to accept any truth which is apparent in the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures only, but not in their translation.

Others revel in the delusion that they can request from God as much as they are able to believe, and that, even if it be impossible, God will finally grant it to them. They do not know that what God denies, Satan will readily provide if this provision serves to detain them in deception.

Only by nourishing ourselves daily with the *words of faith and of the ideal teaching* (1 Tim.4:6) may we avoid

the trap of asking for things which God has not promised for today. The prayer of faith is therefore primarily based on the words of faith and teaching which the exalted Christ had Paul write down for us. Concentrating on the Pauline letters we should not overlook, however, that the path leads from immaturity in Corinthians to maturity in Ephesians.

#### GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

If, praying with a renewed mind, we address the Supreme with these few words, He would consider them far superior to ten thousand uncontrolled words, when we let our emotions run away with us, and fail to glorify the Supreme as we should. By the invocation "God and Father of our Lord *Jesus* Christ" we acknowledge that it was *Jesus* Who took away the sin of the world and became obedient unto the death of the cross on Golgotha; hence there is no longer a barrier between God and us. In addition we are obedient to our *Lord* Jesus Christ and serve Him until all is subjected to Him (1 Cor.15:28). Finally *Christ* is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, and He makes peace through the blood of His cross in order to reconcile all to Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens (Col.1:15-20). Christ is also the Head of the ecclesia which is His body, the complement of the One completing the all in all (Eph.1:23).

Whenever we make petitions for something which exceeds the abilities of weak mortals, we should address *God*, the Almighty, the supreme Subjector, the Source of all power, wisdom and love. As a matter of fact we can hardly pray and ignore *Him* Who is all and has all and does all that we are longing for. Anybody else is only channeling those gifts which originate from Him. This is why we always should go back to the fountainhead, to God Himself, in order to give Him all the praise and thanks and glory which are due to Him alone.

When Jesus says, "I am the Way . . . No one is coming to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6), then He means that henceforth no other way leads to God. Up to that time Israel had approached Yahweh by means of a divine ritual of various sacrifices. Since Golgotha the situation is different. Now we approach the Almighty in the *new Way* which is Christ Who was sacrificed for us. Through Him we now have *direct access* to His Father in spirit.

Let us make ample use of this invocation: *God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!* Paul did so and he should have known, for he had seen the exalted Christ repeatedly (Acts 26:16) and had become His spokesman for the highest revelations. Whenever he wants to glorify God with the most sublime words at his disposal he uses this invocation and he occasionally adds "Father of pities" or "Father of glory" (2 Cor.1:3; Eph.1:3,17; Col.1:3).

Certainly He is our God and Father, too; but when we address Him as "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" we grant Him higher honors and greater glory and subjection, as well as our fullest agreement with everything that God did through *Christ*, not only in the creation but also in the reconciliation, not only for us but also for the rest of mankind and the spiritual beings.

Some people are afraid to address God directly and prefer to begin their prayers with the words, "Dear Jesus." This might be due to a feeling or assumption that He Who also walked this earth and died for our sins would be closer to us and perhaps understand us better than His God and Father. There is, however, no reason for such shyness. On the contrary, Jesus said that the *Father* is seeking those who are worshiping Him (John 4:23). God wants us to grow in the realization of His will (Col.1:9,10) until we finally see that *He* is actually and originally everything of which Christ became the Image (Col.1:15). Our acquaintance with the Image should help us to correct our ideas about God Himself and to adore Him in an appropriate manner.

When things overwhelm us, however, there might be no time for us to pray with the renewed mind. Then we will perhaps sigh and groan in ourselves and pray the way we always did under similar distress. God will never weigh our words under such circumstances, for He reads the thoughts from our hearts, regardless of whether we exclaim "Dear Jesus" or "My God and Father" or whatever had been our habit.

#### PLEADINGS AND THANKSGIVING

The result of praying should always be to keep out any estrangement between God and ourselves. Whenever addressing the Supreme we may have fellowship with Him, similar to that which everybody is going to enjoy to the fullest extent in the future when God will be All in all (1 Cor. 15:28). In our prayers today, even if He is not yet *all* in us, He is at least *something* in you and in me. When petitions are made in the ecclesia and all those present say, "Amen," God is at least *something* in them. The more mature the prayer, the better; if the hearers are able to follow its trend of thought, God will be even *more* in them. Being true and, in love, making all grow into Him, Who is the Head, Christ (Eph.4:15), we may be coming nearer and nearer, in spirit, to the consummation when God will be *all* in us, too. Thus such hours as lead to estrangement with Him, will become fewer, and continuous harmonious fellowship with Him will become the dominant factor in our lives.

In prayer, our thoughts will go to our fellow men; our superiors, and authorities in this country and elsewhere. In Paul's day the overall situation was by no means peaceful; under the reign of Emperor Claudius all Jews were expelled from Rome; the young ecclesia at Thessalonica went through such persecutions and afflictions that they were alarmed and afraid, thinking that perhaps the day of the Lord was already present; they felt they might have

missed the snatching away. In addition, Paul's personal career was marked by "much endurance in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in blows, in jails, in turbulences, in toils," etc. We can look that up in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10.

It is under the impact of such events during those restless years, and also under the leadership of God's holy spirit, that Paul gives to Timothy, and to us as well, a prayer guide pertaining both to our *inward* peace and the *outward* situation with relation to the people around us. Paul strongly recommends *pleadings* and *thanksgiving* for all of them, including the superior authorities (1 Tim.2:1-4). Since he does so in view of the Roman government of his day, in view of the wicked men and false brethren, we may even more feel like *imitating* him in his attitude.

Only on condition of daily nourishment with the words of faith and of the ideal teaching (1 Tim.4:6), however, will we be able to rejoice in pleadings and thanksgiving for those who seemingly add to our hardships in life. As long as we are not fully aware of the divine truths for today we might be inclined to withstand our superiors and our authorities, quoting Peter to the effect that we should obey God rather than men. But Acts 5:29 does not apply to the political rule or to Roman military government which was in power at that time, but to the Sanhedrin, a Jewish council consisting of chiefs, scribes, and elders. It was to *them* that Peter and the apostles replied, "One must yield to God rather than to men." The words of ideal teaching concerning our relationship to superiors and authorities today are found in Romans 13:1-7; Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25 and Titus 2:9,10.

Our prayer guide (1 Tim.2:1-4) tells us that a life in devoutness and gravity is ideal and welcome in the sight of God, that is, a mild and quiet life. God is not only *our* Saviour, but He wills that all mankind be saved and come into a realization of the truth. This truth is brought out once

more in the same letter (4:10): "... for this are we toiling and being reproached, that we rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of all mankind, especially of believers." And the apostle adds: "These things be charging and teaching." In agreement with this fact is Colossians 1:20: "... through Him to reconcile all to Him, (making peace through the blood of His cross), through Him, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens."

These words of faith and of the ideal teaching contain a *promise* which alleviates the hardships originating from our contact with the outside world: It is God's irrevocable will that everybody be saved and come into a realization of the truth about God and about Himself. We are well aware that this will not happen in our day; but after the eons when all beings will be reconciled with Him in the consummation, then indeed He will be All in *all* and not only in us who believe today.

On the path toward this goal everyone has his individual experience with bitterness, fury, anger, clamor, calumny and malice. This experience may be more or less thorough; it may be gained actively or passively, until all *detest* these things as much as God does. For this purpose most people will have to review their lives before the great white throne (Rev.20:11-15), in order to evaluate it objectively, that is, to see it with God's eyes and agree with His verdict. Later on, every creature will have no other desire but to enjoy and reflect God's love.

As believers it is our immense privilege to know already *now* how intensely God hates sin because it prevents His creatures from enjoying real happiness. Our way of life will indeed be peaceful, mild, and quiet when we consider sin to be a tool used by God to help His creatures realize their absolute dependence on Him until they will *dread any life without Him* so much that they are driven to His heart. When we have recognized this divine line of

thought we will be able to adopt the same attitude toward all men as the Father of pities is showing.

As long as we are conscious of the words of faith and of the ideal teaching as quoted above we will rejoice in always including all mankind in our pleadings, with thanksgiving, not forgetting kings and all those in a superior station. We may be leading a mild and quiet life, not because God will remove wicked men and false brethren and turbulences, but because we will begin to look at them the way *He* does. We will agree with His plans in all their details and be subject to His will in all things. Therefore we cannot but praise Him continually.

H.H.R.

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#### SORROW ON SORROW

The death of Herman Rocke has brought sorrow on sorrow (Phil. 2:27), in that it has followed the death of several other close friends in faith:

**Louis Abbott** of Stover, Missouri was a brother who so rejoiced in the truth of universal reconciliation that he gave up his work as a full-time minister so that he could speak freely of the certainty of God's victory in Christ for everyone. Hence, as an auto mechanic he studied Greek and shared the truth of God's Word with customers, by correspondence and in travels. He died, with both joy and peace in his heart, on April 17 at the age of 80.

**Walter Dane** of San Gabriel, California, was also a brother who suffered loss in fellowship because of his conviction that God will be All in all. He also found that this was not a loss in confidence and joy in the Lord, and he was always an encouragement to us in our work and in the fellowship of the faith (Philemon 6). He died on February 8 at 89 years of age.

**Theodore Jodar** of Edmonds, Washington, was in his 93rd year when he died on March 28. With his wife, Elva, who survives him, he had come to grasp the truth of God's eonian purpose under the ministry of Adlai Loudy and others, many years ago. And more recently he shared in fellowship and support with our friends in the Seattle area.

Yes, these losses bring us sorrow, but not without expectation!

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### *The Epistles of Paul*

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#### PAUL'S PROMISE EPISTLES

THE blessed expectation of our Lord's return before the day of His indignation is the subject of these, Paul's earliest epistles. It is the early opening wedge between those who received his ministry among the nations and those of the Circumcision, who looked for Messiah's advent after the display of His indignation and the destruction of man's kingdoms.

The historical background for this change is given in the book of Acts, though the teaching itself is not found there because the Acts is a treatise on the kingdom of God for Israel. In the ministry of our Lord and His twelve apostles His coming is always presented in its connection with the promised kingdom. It will be with power and great glory (Matt.24:30; Mark 12:26; Luke 21:27). His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:11,12; Zech.14:1-5). All the predictions in the book of Daniel and in the Revelation of Jesus Christ will find fulfillment from then on. It will follow an era of the most awful and terrific judgments mankind will ever be called upon to endure. So long as the kingdom was impending, these judgments, also, were hanging over a rebellious race.

At first Paul, like all the rest, confined his ministry to the Jews. At Antioch, where the disciples were first called "Christians," there were none except Jews and proselytes. From this he was separated (Acts 13:2). At *Pisidian* Antioch he first turned to the nations, or Gentiles. After that, though he spoke to the Jews first, he proclaimed Christ freely among the nations, preaching grace. One of the first questions for

these believers among the nations was, What shall become of us in the great judgments which precede the coming of the kingdom? Will God visit us also with the terrors of His indignation? In answer to this the apostle is given an entirely new revelation concerning the future presence of the Lord. The believers among the nations were saved on the ground of *grace*. This is to characterize all God's dealings with them. Hence they *cannot* remain in the scene which is visited by His indignation. They must be sheltered or removed. Some saints in Israel are sheltered, but the new company, composed principally of saints from the other nations who have believed Paul's preaching, are to be removed. Paul receives the revelation that, long before the Lord descends in glory to set up His kingdom, He will descend, not to the earth, but to the air, and His saints will be caught up to meet Him there. Thus they will be above the lightnings and thunders of the terrible day of the Lord.

In later epistles, as the truth was gradually developed, more details were added to this glorious revelation. The Corinthian mind found difficulties in this doctrine, so the apostle unfolds to them the secret of the resurrection (1 Cor.15:51,52), that our bodies, which, at present, are adapted only to an earthly environment, are to be *changed* to suit the celestial spheres. The Philippian letter caps the climax by the added revelation that they shall be *transfigured* into the glorious likeness of our Lord Himself!

#### 1 THESSALONIANS

The historical setting and occasion for this epistle is found in the book of Acts (17:1-15; 18:5). By constraint of the Spirit of God, after he had revisited the scenes of his first missionary journey, Paul is led to go across to Macedonia. He perceived a vision in which a Macedonian entreated him, "Cross over into Macedonia. Help us!" In response to this appeal Paul and his party founded an ecclesia in

Philippi, to which also he afterwards penned the epistle of that name. After being beaten and imprisoned, they are besought to leave the city, and came to Thessalonica.

Paul first reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue for three sabbaths, showing from their Scriptures that Christ must suffer and rise from the dead and that Jesus was their Messiah. Some believed, but some did not. As at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:46-48), Paul then turns to those outside the pale of Judaism, and of these a vast multitude believe. But, as at Pisidian Antioch, the unbelieving Jews stirred up a persecution against them so that they were sent away. After going to Berea (Acts 17:10) and Athens (Acts 17:15-34), he came to Corinth, where both Silas and Timothy joined him (Acts 18:5; 1 Thess.3:6) and where he probably wrote this, the first of all the writings of the Greek Scriptures.

Paul did not desire to leave the Thessalonians. They had only just received the evangel and needed to be taught and confirmed in the faith. He was deeply concerned about them and sought twice to return to them, but was hindered. So he sent Timothy in his stead. The report of Timothy greatly comforted him. Not being able to go to them, he pens this epistle.

#### THE LITERARY STRUCTURE

The literary framework shows that the whole epistle takes its color from the persecutions endured by the Thessalonians. At present they are suffering from the anger of men, but they shall be saved from the indignation of God. The Jews who persecute them are drawing down God's indignation, but the Thessalonians will never be subjects of His wrath (1:10; 2:16; 5:9).

The doctrinal burden of the epistle is based on the truth of the Lord's future presence. He had taught this during the few days he was with them but it needed further explanation.

Some had died and some were indifferent. Would these two classes be left out when He comes? The answer is that those who are asleep will be roused first and accompany the living when they are caught up to meet the Lord in the air. They will not be left behind.

So, too, those who do not watch. The death of Christ provides for their salvation from future wrath quite apart from their present walk. All who are His, whether watchful or drowsy, shall live together with Him.

#### FRAMEWORK OF 1 THESSALONIANS

Salutation and Benediction (1:1)

Prayer (1:2-5)

Thessalonians—Experience (1:2-3:10)

Prayer (3:11-13)

Thessalonians—Walk (4:1-5:22)

Prayer (5:23,24)

Salutation and Benediction (5:25-28)

#### 2 THESSALONIANS

This second letter to the Thessalonians is a sequel to the first. The Thessalonians are still unable to distinguish between the rage of man and the wrath of God. Their continued trial and persecution leads them to conclude that God is against them instead of for them. The kingdom of God, which was proclaimed among them, is to be introduced with divine judgments. The day of the Lord, in which it will be set up, opens with an unparalleled display of divine indignation. They still persist in imagining that this day had begun, especially as, in some way, this was represented to be the apostle's teaching (2:2).

In reply Paul and his fellow workers define these dreaded judgments as those which fall only on those being unacquainted with God and who do not obey the evangel, especially on such as their persecutors. Their main argument is

founded on the teaching of the first epistle in reference to the Lord's presence and our assembling with Him in the air. There they had been definitely taught that this must occur *before* the day of His indignation.

The secret phase of lawlessness has been in operation throughout this economy, but its full development has been held in check by the presence of the saints. When we are taken out of the midst, then, and not till then, will the apostasy bear its bitter fruit. Its presence will be indicated by the presence of the man of lawlessness, corresponding to the head of the wild beast of the Unveiling of Jesus Christ (Rev.13:1) who will be seconded by the false prophet who does signs and miracles to prove his claims (Rev.13:11). By these mankind is deluded to its destruction.

But the Thessalonians are not deceived by God but preferred for salvation and belief of the truth and the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The latter part of the epistle is devoted to some practical disorders, especially busybodies who do not work for their living.

#### FRAMEWORK OF 2 THESSALONIANS

Salutation—Benediction (1:1-2)

Thanksgiving (1:3-10)

Prayer for Thessalonians (1:11,12)

Admonition—Apostasy (2:1-12)

Thanksgiving (2:13-17)

Prayer for Apostles (3:1-5)

Admonitions—Disorder (3:6-15)

Salutation—Benediction (3:16-18)

The literary framework is a simple alternation within the salutations. A thanksgiving, a prayer, and an admonition are found in this order in both the former and latter half of the letter.

If the epistle is read with its leading thought in mind—

that we are delivered from the coming divine indignation—it will be seen to give it color and warmth everywhere, and especially in the assurances of God’s mind toward them in their trials.

IN GOD THE FATHER

It is marvelous to trace God’s method in revealing His grace. Using the severe trials of the Thessalonians as a background and their fears as a foil, He assures them that they will not be involved in the terrible time when His indignation shall be poured out on the earth. The faithful among the Circumcision will be saved *through* it, but these will be caught away *before* it comes. They are not assigned to indignation but to the procuring of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. This salvation is not based on their faithfulness, but on the fact that Christ died for them (1 Thess.5:9,10).

The two great arguments in these promise epistles are these: The dead are at no disadvantage, for they shall rise first; the drowsy will not be left behind, for it is a matter of pure grace, dependent on Christ’s death. All will be caught away from the earth before the indignation of God is manifested.

Thus is the future aspect of our salvation revealed in Paul’s earliest epistles. And we submit that the opening words are a key and clue to the character and abundance of its grace, when the Thessalonians are placed *in God the Father*. That those who had so lately bowed down to idols, who still lacked all covenant relations with the God of Israel, should be so described is hint enough of unique and inexhaustible stores of grace which must flow from it. Indeed, the very absence of any covenant leaves the Father’s heart free to deal with them untrammelled by their disabilities and failures.

A.E.K.

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*Studies in Galatians*

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“THE TRUTH OF THE EVANGEL”

(Galatians 1:18-2:5)

WHEN IT DELIGHTED GOD to unveil His Son in Saul of Tarsus that he might be evangelizing Him among the nations, rather than immediately submitting his revelation to flesh and blood, or going up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before him, he instead went away into Arabia, and then returned again to Damascus (1:15-17). This itself is most striking, for it is most unusual. But what happened next, three years later, is even more remarkable:

*Thereupon, after three years, I came up to Jerusalem to relate my story to Cephas, and I stay with him fifteen days. Yet I became acquainted with no one different from the apostles, except James, the brother of the Lord. Now what I am writing to you, lo! in God’s sight, I say that I am not lying. Thereupon I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. Yet I was unknown by face to the ecclesias of Judea which are in Christ. Yet only they were hearing that “He who once was persecuting us, now is evangelizing the faith which once he ravaged.” And they glorified God in me. (1:18-24)*

“The natural course for one in Saul’s case would be to go up to Jerusalem and submit to them what he had received from the Lord and seek their patronage and fellowship in its proclamation, or indeed, ask their opinion and permission to promulgate it. But what did he do? He went into the desert where no human influence was at work. He waited three years before telling Peter about it, and then he does not even form the acquaintance of the twelve or of the ecclesia. They actually did not know him personally, though

they were glorifying God for the great change in him. All of this shows conclusively that Paul did not, at that time, derive his doctrine from Peter or the twelve.”<sup>1</sup>

The ecclesias of Judea were only hearing concerning Paul that he who had once persecuted them, was now evangelizing “the faith” which once he ravaged (1:23). The faith which once he ravaged, was simply that elemental yet vital faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. What the Jews thus had heard concerning Paul undoubtedly reflects the essence of his message at that time. We may not infer from this, however, that this is all that Paul ever taught. Nor may we infer from this that “[that] faith” which, as a body of teaching, is “the expectation of Israel” (cf Acts 28:20), which faith, time and again, Paul indeed rehearsed in making known the entire counsel of God (cf Acts 20:27), is to be identified with the evangel which he was heralding among the nations.

“They glorified God in me” (1:24). The believing Jews gave glory not to Saul but to his God; they glorified God, in him. May we be doing the same, not only in considering the faithful career of our apostle, but in taking note of “whatever is renowned” among ourselves (“if there is any virtue, and if any applause”; Phil.4:8b). Let us be imitating Paul in the humble acknowledgement that, “in the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor.15:10).

*Thereupon, after the lapse of fourteen years, I again went up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also along with me. Now I went up in accord with a revelation, and submitted to them the evangel which I am heralding among the nations, yet privately to those of repute, lest somehow I should be racing or ran for naught.*

*But not even Titus, who is with me, being a Greek, is compelled to be circumcised. Yet, it was because of the false*

1. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.280.

*brethren who were smuggled in, who came in by the way to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, that they shall be enslaving us—to whom, not even for an hour do we simulate by subjection, that the truth of the evangel should be continuing with you. (2:1-5)*

Paul was not deficient in anything pertaining to the “paramount” apostles (2 Cor.11:5; 12:11). In fact, in relation to Paul, they were paramount (i.e., of greatest concern or importance; supreme in rank, power, or authority), only in the sense that undiscerning men perceived them thus.

Previously, Paul had “related” his story to Cephas (1:18). Now, he “submits” (2:2) the evangel which he was heralding among the nations to those in Jerusalem. In each case, he imparts something to the others; he does not learn from them. Initially, he had perceived that his evangel of grace apart from law was bound to be disturbing to many. Hence, he had prepared Cephas for this, before the crisis came. And now, fourteen years later, due to the ever-widening rift among many over issues of law-obedience, Paul went up to Jerusalem to place his evangel before them.

In so doing, Paul acted not only in accord with a revelation, but in response to some who came down from Judea to Antioch, with whom Paul and Barnabas had “come to have no slight commotion and questioning” (Acts 15:2). At Antioch, Paul had informed the believers that “God opens to the nations a door of faith” (Acts 14:27). Yet these antagonists who had come down from Judea, “taught the brethren that ‘If you should not be circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’ Now as Paul and Barnabas come to have no slight commotion and questioning with them, they prescribe that Paul and Barnabas and some others from among them are to go up to Jerusalem concerning this question” (Acts 15:1,2).

Paul, however, submitted his evangel privately to those of repute, lest somehow he should be racing or run for naught

(2:1,2). Paul was well aware that Peter and James were by no means free from the influences of the circumcisionist party, those who sought to impose the law on the believers of the nations. So Paul constrains these “pillars” to express a definite opinion on this question to him privately, before any further influence from such zealots could be brought to bear upon them. Then, when gathered in assembly together with the circumcisionists, they freely affirmed in public what they had already assured Paul of privately, that they agreed that the law was not to be imposed on the nations (Acts 15:10; 15:19-21).

It was only because of the “false brethren” who were “smuggled in” (2:4) when Paul and his party were received by “the ecclesia and the apostles and the elders” (Acts 15:4) at Jerusalem, that any controversy arose concerning circumcision. It was not that the profession of faith itself in Christ by such ones was false, for we are informed that they had “believed” (Acts 15:5). These included certain Pharisees who rose up in the midst of the Jerusalem assembly saying of those reached by Paul that they “must be circumcised, besides charging them to keep the law of Moses.” Instead, Paul’s characterization of them as “false” brethren, is in reference to their false testimony and teaching. They were brethren who were acting falsely; thus they were “false” brethren. Yet it is not by being “false,” but solely by “being true,” that we “in love . . . should be making all grow into Him, Who is the Head—Christ” (Eph.4:15).

#### GLORYING IN EXPECTATION

It is in an awareness of the importance of proclaiming “the truth of the evangel,” that we strive to make Paul’s evangel known. In seeking to carry out such ministry, we often point out that Paul’s evangel is not a message to the effect that at least some will escape eternal torment, or even that at least some will be exempted from eternal annihilation.

Nor is Paul’s evangel some speculation claiming that *most but not all* will be saved, or that *perhaps, but perhaps not*, eventually all will be saved. Further, Paul’s evangel is not that, in the end, all believers too will be saved, together with the rest of humanity, while unworthy believers must first be subjected to God’s wrath, prior to being put to death once again, for long eons of time. Nor is Paul’s evangel to the effect that while all will finally be *made alive*, this will only be so because, even as with believers today, all will have finally *saved themselves* from rejecting Christ by virtue of their own responsible decisions, for which, in the end, God can neither be thanked nor glorified.

Maturely speaking, Paul’s evangel is not even the truth that none will be lost; instead, it is the revelation that *God* will be *All* in all. Hence we are glorying not so much in anticipation of our own deliverance, but in expectation of the glory of God (Rom.5:2). *To God be the glory* in the ecclesia and in Christ Jesus for all the generations of the eon of the eons! Amen! (Eph.3:21).

If we ourselves would affirm the evangel which Paul was heralding among the nations, we can no more deny its present aspect than its ultimate issue. Indeed, the greater part of its teaching concerns not questions of human destiny, but those aspects of the untraceable riches of Christ centered in the present ecclesia. Yet conversely, if we too would proclaim the fulness of the evangel brought by Paul, we must freely herald God’s purpose of the eons, the goal and consummation of all.

That God will vivify all mankind and reconcile all throughout the universe, is ever in our hearts and frequently on our lips. Yet we wish to present this glorious revelation not in isolation, but, according as Paul, in its vital connection to the entire divine counsel. Beyond this, we would especially announce God’s ultimate in its relation to those revelations which Paul terms, “God’s wisdom in a secret” (1 Cor.2:7),

namely, the entire complement of Pauline teachings elsewhere undisclosed throughout the Scriptures.

“THE BLASPHEMY OF THE SPIRIT”

One of the most common claims we encounter is that since some commit the so-called “unpardonable sin,” all will not be saved.

There are three accounts as to the sin that is not being pardoned. In Matthew, the reading is, “. . . the blasphemy of the spirit shall not be pardoned . . . whoever may be saying aught against the holy spirit, it shall not be pardoned him, neither in this eon nor in that which is impending” (Matt.12:31,32). Mark’s account reads, “. . . ‘whoever<sup>2</sup> should be blaspheming against the holy spirit is having no pardon for the eon, but is liable to the eonian penalty for the sin’—for they said, ‘An unclean spirit has he’” (Mark 3:29). The third account, that of Luke, simply reads, “the one who blasphemes against the holy spirit shall not be being pardoned” (Luke 12:10).

“The blasphemy of the spirit consists in attributing the works of *Christ*, done by the power of God’s Spirit, to demons or unclean spirits. As these works were the means used to produce repentance and pardon, and this was essential for entrance into the kingdom [prophesied by

2. Like all universal expressions, in all contexts in which they appear, “whoever” (even as “each,” “every,” and “all”) refers to all without exception who come under the purview of the subject of the context. It is not such words themselves, but their present usage which determines their scope. In some instances, in cases in which the subject of the context itself is universal, such terms refer to all universally; but in other instances, such as our present text, such terms refer solely to all of a limited class. Our Lord’s earthly ministry concerns the evangel of the Circumcision; it does not contemplate the untraceable riches of Christ for the nations through Paul, or God’s ultimate purpose for all, where, in each case, transcendent grace apart from law is the only consideration.

Israel’s prophets], it is readily seen that pardon is impossible in such a case. The time, however, is limited to this eon or the coming eon of the kingdom. Eventually, all mankind will be far more than pardoned. They will be justified (Rom.5:18) and reconciled (Col.1:20). But this will not take place until a full eon later, when the kingdom is given over to the Father (1 Cor.15:24).

“We cannot commit the sin against the holy Spirit because our salvation is not based on miracles and signs. It follows faith, not sight. And, [before God as our Judge,] we are not pardoned, but justified (Rom.3:24,26). Condemnation is impossible (Rom.8:1). Moreover, we are explicitly told that, in the latter eras, some will be withdrawing from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and the teachings of demons. Any spirit manifestation [or ostensibly ‘spiritual’ teaching] not in perfect accord with the scriptures should be given the most severe tests, lest we be among those who are deceived by them.”<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, just as our Lord declared that those who blasphemed against the holy spirit would not be being pardoned, He likewise affirmed that the indignation of God “is remaining” on those “being stubborn” as to the Son (John 3:36). Yet even as this latter passage does not address what will be the consequence, in relation to indignation, should such stubbornness be removed, the former texts do not address what will be the result consequent to the time when one who was *not* pardoned is nevertheless *judged*.

We should not reason if a sin should go unpardoned, that therefore those who do not obtain pardon but instead enter the judging, will never be saved. Even in human systems of justice, many who never obtain a pardon, who instead must undergo the full penalty for their lawless deeds, after they have done so, are released from prison,

3. A. E. Knoch, THE CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.27.

having paid their debt to society. It does not follow because they were never pardoned, that they were never released from prison. Even in the case of the most serious crimes where the death penalty is imposed, the state, at that juncture, considers justice to have been met. It does not sentence the criminal to “eternal” death, but simply to death. Should God resurrect and eventually vivify one thus put to death (and He will!), the state could have no objection that the demands of its justice had not been met, in any such case.

Warnings concerning the sin that is not being pardoned, are not addressed to the members of the body of Christ. Instead, Paul’s message to us is that we are not appointed to *indignation*, but to the procuring of *salvation*, through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we shall be *saved* from the indignation of God (1 Thess.5:9; Rom.5:9).

Further, we are not saved because we believe, but we believe because we are saved. While it is true that we must believe if we would be saved, this is so simply in light of the fact that salvation is not apart from faith. It is not, however, that we are “required” to believe and accept Christ, for our salvation is in grace, apart from law. Instead, we are graciously granted to be believing (Phil.1:29); God parts a measure of faith to each of His chosen ones (Rom.8:33; 12:3).

God saved us *out of* our unbelief. Even as in the case of Paul, the “faith and love in Christ Jesus,” “overwhelms” our unbelief (1 Tim.1:14,16). Like self-control, faith is a *fruit* of the spirit (Gal.5:23); not a prerequisite of salvation. Salvation is not a matter of making some sort of “responsible” decision in favor of a requirement, but of being chosen and predestinated of God, before the disruption of the world (Eph.1:4,5).

As presented in Paul’s evangel, eonian life is a *gracious* gift (Rom.6:23). Hence, in granting us eonian life, God displays not the generosity of His reward, but the transcendent riches of His *grace* (Eph.2:7). In this provision, He

makes known not His integrity as a faithful Rewarder, but His vast love as a gracious Saviour. Hence, as many do, to make our eonian life hinge on our own obedience, is egregiously to misrepresent Paul’s evangel at its very core.

For us, Grace *reigns*, for life eonian (Rom.5:21), any forfeiture of an allotment in God’s kingdom that may be incurred by us for unfaithfulness, notwithstanding (*cp* 2 Tim.2:11-13; Gal.5:21).<sup>4</sup> Thus, in this connection, where sin increases, *grace* superexceeds (Rom.5:20). God has designated us beforehand for the place of a son for Him through Christ Jesus (Eph.1:5), having chosen us, fore-known us, called us, graced us with faith, and justified us as well, all unto this glorious end (Rom.8:30; *cp* 1 Cor.1:24).

This is the evangel of our salvation; it is the evangel which Paul heralded among the nations (Gal.2:2). It is in accord with the delight of God’s will and for the laud of the glory of His grace (Eph.1:6).

Beyond these marvelous considerations as to our own salvation, may we indeed *also* come to realize the glorious truth that our Saviour, God, *wills all mankind* to be saved,

4. It does not follow that if we do not enjoy an allotment in God’s reign, that we therefore will not live under its jurisdiction. *Basileia* (translated “kingdom”) is simply the corresponding noun of the verb *basileuō* (translated “reign”). It will be helpful for us to be aware that even as *basileuō* literally means “reign” (used as a verb), thus also, *basileia* also literally means “reign” (used as a noun). The former means “to exercise a king’s sovereignty”; hence, the latter means “the sovereign power pertaining to [a king’s sovereignty].” It is only when *basileia* is used metonymically, as a figure of speech for “a *realm* ruled by a king” (or the territory or people thereof), that it should be understood in the common sense of the English “kingdom” (i.e., dominion). Yet it is on this basis, that of the common English usage of “kingdom,” that it is claimed that those who do not “inherit the kingdom,” must necessarily either be dead or in hellfire. Any such notion related to *basileia* here, however, is not only unwarranted but mistaken, for it contradicts the glorious truth that “the allotment of life eonian” (Titus 3:7) is an expectation in *grace*.

and to come into a realization of the truth (1 Tim.2:4). God has formed the decision that this should occur; and, He is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph.1:11). All His counsel shall be confirmed, and all His desire will He do (Isa.46:10).

God is not exclusively the Saviour of believers, but *especially* the Saviour of believers. Those who believe, enjoy a special salvation, with unique blessings for the eons to come. God is not only our Saviour, but is also the Saviour of all mankind (1 Tim.4:10). The fact is that God will one day abolish death and become All in all (1 Cor.15:26,28). It is His purpose as well, through Christ Jesus, to reconcile all, whether those on the earth or those in the heavens; thus, "making peace through the blood of His cross" (Col.1:20).

All contrary claims such as that all "Christ-rejectors" or sundry other sinners will be eternally lost, must be repudiated. Those who make such claims are simply mistaken.

Such ones do not have a realization of "the *grace* of God in truth" (Col.1:6), nor of "the *gratuity* in grace, which is of the One Man, Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:15). Yet it is only thus, in gratuitous grace, that "Christ Jesus . . . is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all" (1 Tim.2:6). And, it is also only thus, consequently, that, "even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified" (1 Cor.15:22).

In the question of human destiny, those who oppose the grace of God in truth, either deny that Christ died for the sake of the salvation of all mankind, or, alternatively, *represent* salvation as a *reward for obedience*, while merely *calling it* a "free gift." "As to the faith, they swerve" (1 Tim. 6:21), in advocating any such false teachings.

May we be given eyes to see and ears to hear "the truth of the evangel," the evangel which the apostle Paul heralded among the nations. "Now may the God of expectation, be filling you with all joy and peace *in believing*, for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the power of holy spirit" (Rom.15:13).

J.R.C.

### FOR THE SAKE OF HIS DELIGHT

THE CIRCUMSTANCES of our lives, our parents, our environment, and even our digestion, all vitally affect our character, and corresponding judgments. The years of our minority have an inevitable influence on what we are pleased to describe as our maturity. If a man is honest with himself he will concede that most of the time he is unable even to think clearly or objectively on any subject under the sun. No matter how many years we may devote to questing after truth, our conclusions will be shaped in some degree by the formative years. Is this the thought that passed through Pilate's mind as he exclaimed, in a somewhat helpless way, "What is truth" (John 18:38). Right there, before him in the pretorium, was his answer, in the royal Person of the Son of God! *Yet this perception was not granted.*

We have no means of understanding why God has designated us for the stupendous blessing of being conformed to the image of His dear Son, for Him to be Firstborn among many brethren. It well may be that we might flatter ourselves with the thought that initially, many years before our calling, we realized that the only sure source of all and any truth lay in God's precious Word. Although true, it is vanity which prompts us to make such a claim, as though any interest in divine things arose independently in ourselves; such foolishness is another legacy of human disability. The fact is that long before our realization of God's choice, we were being *prepared*, imperceptibly, often with grievous experience. Small wonder that Paul saw his own painful

memories as something to be left behind, “. . . forgetting, indeed, those things which are behind, yet stretching out to those in front—towards the goal am I pursuing for the prize of God’s calling above in Christ Jesus” (Phil.3:13). Incidentally, let those distressed or troubled, who have not yet grasped the loving provision of God’s justification, ponder on this, requesting enlightenment of His spirit.

It will not be a palatable thought, but whether we like it or not, we are virtual prisoners, bound by influences which are far more restrictive than any iron bars.

#### CAPTIVITY

“The real law and apparent functions of the law are very different. And, in order to effect its real object it was necessary that it should not appear on the surface. The apparent object of the law was to give life to all who consistently and constantly kept it. As it never gave life to anyone, for no one was able to fulfill its demands, it appears as if the law has failed of its primary object. And further, as it revived the passions of sin which were dormant, it seems to have defeated its own aim. But the real object of the law was to reveal the inordinate sinfulness of sin, and in this it was most successful.”<sup>1</sup>

When one reads the apostle Paul’s epistles there is a heart-warming sense of instant rapport. He fully experienced the dilemma of being enslaved, a helpless prisoner in a body of death. What a wonderful relief he expresses as he writes: “A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? Grace! I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Consequently, then, I myself, with the mind, indeed, am slaving for God’s law, yet with the flesh for Sin’s law” (Rom.7:24,25).

With characteristic boldness, the apostle’s words con-

<sup>1</sup> I. A. E. Knoch, CONCORDANT COMMENTARY, p.237.

cerning the enslaving grip of our bodies of death are very searching (Rom.7:24). Quite firmly, he acknowledged his own helplessness in striving to please God by obeying the clear mandates of holy and just laws. With evident relief, he turned from such anguish to the blessed freedom assured under Grace.

Mindful of the tremendous sacrifice which had achieved this glorious gift of love, he further urged that, as former slaves and prisoners of sin, in righteousness we should now be slaving for the Lord. Indeed, in this epistle to the saints in Rome, he begins by presenting himself as *Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus*.

“Yet you are not in flesh, but in spirit, if so be that God’s spirit is making its home in you. Now if anyone has not Christ’s spirit, this one is not His. Now if Christ is in you, the body indeed, is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is life because of righteousness. Now if the spirit of Him Who rouses Jesus from among the dead is making its home in you, He Who rouses Christ Jesus from among the dead will also be vivifying your mortal bodies because of His spirit making its home in you. Consequently, then, brethren, debtors are we, not to flesh, to be living in accord with flesh, for if you are living in accord with flesh, you are about to be dying. Yet if, in spirit, you are putting the practices of the body to death, you will be living. For whoever are being led by God’s spirit, these are sons of God” (Rom.8:9-14).

#### FREEDOM OF WILL

Should we question the much vaunted, philosophic vanity of “free will,” then rest assured, there will certainly be no lack of opponents. It was Samuel Johnson, English lexicographer (1709-1784), who, in 1769, rather foolishly wrote, “Sir, we *know* our will is free, and there’s an end on’t.” What the particular issue was we are not certain, but of this much we are sure: Doubtless, he was influenced by the circumstances of his birth, and education.

“What is meant by freedom of will is the correspondence between heredity and environment. Lack of friction is mistaken for liberty. If the impulses received from our ancestors urge us into a course agreeable to our surroundings we have the consciousness of being free to do as we please. But to imagine that these seeds of our volition were planted by our own hands, or that they have been conjured forth by us from void vacuity, so that our will arises without root, and flourishes without soil, water or air, is sheer imbecility.”<sup>2</sup>

Proponents of such “freedom” will swiftly quote many examples from Scripture, of how the wills of both saint and sinner are frequently in conflict with the will of God! Further, they even refer to our Lord's own words as He entered Jerusalem, “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.23:38); and again, to the Jews: “Search the scriptures, for in them you are supposing to have life eonian, and those are they which are testifying concerning Me, *and not willing are you to come to Me that you may have life*” (John 5:40). Evidently, these dissenters are not only ignorant and oblivious of the true deity of the God and Father of all, but also, in their pride, they display a complete lack of understanding the reasons why Israel is now, *in part*, calloused.

With regard to God's purpose in connection with the nation of Israel, the scriptures are quite plain. These truths are stated so emphatically; not once, but several times. First, they rejected Yahweh (Isa.6:9,10); then they rejected the Lord (Matt 13:14,15); and finally, they rejected the testimony of the spirit (Acts 28:26,27). Here, it must be stressed; Did this nation have any choice? We might equally ask, with reverence, Did any of those involved in

2. A. E. Knoch, THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD, p.137.

the cruel death of our Lord have a choice? We deplore their vile treachery and hate, but without this there would be no cross, no disgrace or public shame, *yet no salvation!*

“NOT WHAT I WILL”

Not to be outdone in this debate, many opponents will triumphantly refer to our dear Lord's words in Gethsemane. To what despicable depths will men sink when striving to pit their puny reasoning and empty philosophy against the Creator's wisdom! But those agonizing words of self-effacing devotion, far from supporting the deceptive arrogance associated with foolish, unloving insistence of “free will,” demonstrate just the opposite. In the relative sense, Christ's will was “free,” but bearing in mind His own words, “Lo! I am arriving . . . to do Thy will, O God” (Heb.10:7), we find Him trustingly submitting His will to His Father, “But not what I will, but what Thou” (John 14:36). Consequently, God's will, which is absolute, is done.

No matter how gentle we are towards all, apt to teach, and bearing with evil, sooner or later in our debate, there will be the usual impatient, exclamation of complaint: “Then if we have no will, we might just as well be robots.” *But when did we ever argue that creatures, especially humans, nationally or individually, have no will?*<sup>3</sup> This has neither been taught nor implied in our humble faith. However, we do firmly insist that God does not save men contrary to their will. *He first makes them willing!* “O, the depth of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable are His judgments, and untraceable His ways!” (Rom.11:33).

Repeatedly, our Lord insisted that His will was to do His Father's will. He taught His disciples to pray, “Thy will be done.” There is not a single incident in Scripture to indicate that He faithfully served His Father through mere obedient compulsion (except the precious and gracious compulsion of love).

As declared above, these bodies of death are yet *temples*. They are habitations for three spirits. The spirits of God and His loving Son take up residence, with our own! It might be concluded that in consequence, all our conduct would then be beyond criticism. Not so! Not so! We all learn, through sad experience, that there is only one deliverance from the disabling, corrupting influence of indwelling sin, and that way is to consider ourselves dead to all its lusts and excesses, yet gloriously alive, in grace, to bring our loving Father the real joy for which He longs. Not negative, grudging, hypocritical lip-service, nor passive indolence, but *willing* response. Even commendable selfless service will not satisfy Him unless it is in response to His transcendent gratuity of grace and love.

#### MATURITY

Nearly two thousand years have passed, and still, like Epaphras (Col.4:12,13), we have much misery over those about us who will not even bear with the truths of God's evangel, much less become mature and established. Some may protest this concern, declaring, "God chooses and calls. Furthermore, He justifies and glorifies (Rom.8:29). To thus trouble yourselves would seem to set at naught the apostle's injunction not to worry (Phil.4:6)."

Whenever scripture is quoted in such disputes, then let this be a warning to us. Our Lord's trial was marked by the Adversary using a similar subterfuge: "It is written" (Matt.4:6). But how do we know that scripture is being misused here? How may we be sure? We have a defensive weapon, the sword of the spirit which is a declaration of God, and we must learn to wield it, opportunely, inopportunely. Only thus will the peace of God garrison our hearts and apprehensions in Christ Jesus. Be assured, whether here or in our future ministry among the celestials, we will not view those who do not rejoice with us in

the wonderful love of God with complacency or indifference. We were not chosen and called for this! The absolute grace of our election must redound to God's glory. His hunger for the love of all creatures must find a like response in ourselves.

The apostle yearned to present every saint mature, ". . . not minors, surging hither and thither and being carried about by every wind of teaching, by human caprice, by craftiness with a view to the systematizing of the deception" (Eph.4:14). This maturity is not arrived at immediately, but through Paul's later epistles we are guided to maturing confidence in God, with blessed relief. How refreshing to discover for example, such reassurance as this:

"So that, my beloved, according as you always obey, not as in my presence only, but now much rather in my absence, with fear and trembling, be carrying your own salvation into effect, for it is God Who is operating in you *to will as well as to work* for the sake of His delight" (Phil.2:12,13).

"When the spirit of God is received and imparts life to the saint, this is limited to his spirit, his mind, his *will*, and does not affect the flesh directly until the deliverance of the body in Christ's presence. It does not *eradicate* his will, but *forms* it. Unwilling obedience would be most unacceptable to God."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, beloved in the Lord, take heart; be not cast down. Although detained in these bodies of death until our Lord's appearing, now, our whole outlook is being changed. It is God Who is operating in us, for the sake of His delight.

Donald Fielding

3. A. E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, vol.41, p.221.

#### SUMMER FELLOWSHIP

Weekend Scripture Conferences are scheduled for June 7-9 in Willard, Ohio (phone: 419-935-2027) and in Baldwin, Michigan for August 2-4 (phone: 616-745-7562).

## IF NOT GOD, INDEED WHO?

JOB HAS STRUGGLED to keep the focus of the debate concerning his sufferings on God. His associates, however, see his experience as a warning to Job for self-examination and repentance. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are united in their conviction that Job is treading on dangerous ground in relating God to the evil that has come upon him apart from the standard and ancient qualifications.

### BILDAD'S FIRST ANSWER (Job 8:1-22)

It is perhaps kindly meant when Bildad calls Job's words "abundant wind" (8:1), as though to suggest an excuse for Job's utterances. In any case, Bildad tries to get Job to think more conventionally about Deity and then get himself better positioned for divine favor.

First of all, Bildad asks, "Does El distort judgment?" (8:3). The associates see Job's evil as divine judgment on human evil. And this means, in their opinion, that Job is responsible for some evil, very much out of the ordinary, that calls for this severe and unusual judgment.

But rather than placing the blame entirely on Job's shoulders, Bildad ingeniously suggests it may have been Job's sons who had committed this evil (8:4). If this is the case, Bildad offers Job a way to extricate himself from the affliction. He should diligently seek early for El and supplicate to Him (8:5). If it is his sons who were at fault and Job himself is "spotless and upright," then Job should look for the return of peace to his homestead, as long, of course, as it is truly a *righteous* homestead (8:6).

## JOB 8-10

- 8 +Then Bildad the Shuhite <sup>l</sup>answered, + <sup>l</sup>saying:  
2 How <sup>fr</sup>long shall you declare these things,  
And the sayings of your mouth be such abundant wind?  
3 Does El <sup>l</sup>distort judgment,  
And should He Who-Suffices <sup>l</sup>distort justice?  
4 If your sons sin <sup>l</sup>against Him,  
+Then He shall cast them out into the grip  
of their transgression.  
5 Yet if you yourself <sup>m</sup>seek <sup>l</sup>early for El,  
And to Him Who-Suffices you <sup>l</sup>supplicate,  
6 If you are spotless and upright,  
<sup>l</sup>Even now He would <sup>l</sup>rouse Himself over you,  
And He would <sup>m</sup>bring peace  
to your righteous homestead.  
7 +So your beginning will <sup>b</sup>seem inferior,  
+Yet your latter state shall grow very great.  
8 For ask, I pray, <sup>l</sup>of the former generation,  
And <sup>so</sup>survey <sup>l</sup>the investigations of their fathers.  
9 For we are of yesterday, and we <sup>l</sup>know nothing,  
For our days on the earth are but a shadow.  
10 Shall they <sup>l</sup>not direct you, <sup>sa</sup>apprise <sup>l</sup>you  
And <sup>l</sup>bring forth declarations from their heart?  
11 Can papyrus <sup>l</sup>grow <sup>l</sup>with no <sup>l</sup>marsh?  
Can marsh grass grow <sup>l</sup>great without water?  
12 <sup>fr</sup>Even while it is in its full pollination,  
though it be not <sup>l</sup>plucked,  
+Yet it would <sup>l</sup>dry up before all other grass.

Already we see how Bildad has directed attention away from the central issue of God's responsibility and purpose for this evil, just as Eliphaz had done in chapters 4 and 5. This means that the focus is now on Job to take whatever steps are required to get the evil removed.

In 8:8-22 Bildad points Job to the established wisdom that has been passed down from one generation to the next. It does not occur to him that Job's pain and sorrow could be anything but divine correction. The parables of verse 11 bring out the truth that there is always a cause for any effect. This is a fundamental principle, and Job would fully agree with it. But Bildad's error is that he refuses to join Job in searching for the cause of the present evil in the operations of God outside of His works of righteous judgment on human sinning. Hence Bildad assumes that the marsh grass (Job's situation of suffering) must have developed solely from the "water" of human sinning. To be sure, God has brought it on Job, but Bildad would have this seen as God's *reaction* to Job's (or his sons') secret sins. Bildad would not have the cause traced back any further than human depravity.

In modern terms, "the buck stops" with Job or his family.

Since Bildad has closed the door on any further investigating he is left with irrelevancies. God disavows the one who forgets Him and who is thus polluted (8:13-19), but He does not reject the flawless man (8:20). Job can still be brought back into blessing, and his enemies will be destroyed (8:21,22).

JOB REPLIES TO BILDAD  
(Job 9:1-10:22)

But what does this have to do with what is right there before Bildad's face? Job has not forgotten El, and in relation to other human beings he is flawless and upright. Although Job agrees that what Bildad has said is true (9:2a), it avoids

- 13 **So** are the **paths** laid for **all** those **forgetting El**,  
**And** so the **expectation** of the **polluted** man **shall perish**,
- 14 He **whose confidence** is cut 'asunder,  
**And his trust** is a **spider's house**.
- 15 He 'leans on his house, +but it does not 'stand;  
He 'holds 'fast 'to it, +but it does not 'stand firm.
- 16 He is moist 'in the presence of the sun,  
**And his young shoots** are sent 'forth  
*on* throughout his garden.
- 17 His roots become 'tangled *on* about a mound;  
He ~'holds on~ a house of stones.
- 18 But if one 'swallows him up from his *ri* place,  
+Then it disavows *i* him: I have not seen you.
- 19 Behold, this is the elation of his brief way,  
**And from the soil others shall sprout**.
- 20 Behold, El Himself does not 'reject the flawless man,  
**And He** does not 'hold 'fast 'on the hand of evildoers'.
- 21 He shall *f* yet fill your mouth with mirth,  
**And your lips** with joyful shouting.
- 22 Those **hating you shall be clothed** with shame,  
**And the tent of the wicked, it shall be no more**.
- 9 +So Job 'answered, + 'saying:  
2 Truly I know that this is so,  
+Yet *wi* how can a mortal be 'righteous *wi* before El?
- 3 If he 'desires to contend with Him,  
**He could not 'answer Him one time** *f* out of a thousand.
- 4 He is wise in heart and resolute in vigor;  
'Who has stiffened himself 'against Him  
and 'fared well?
- 5 He is the One shifting mountains,  
**and they do not know it**,  
**Who overturns them in His anger**,
- 6 The One disturbing the earth from its *ri* place,  
So +that its columns are shuddering,

8:17 --- 'holds on: Hb 'perceives.

the real issue of the origin and purpose of evil. This is what needs to be addressed, and Job insists on doing so.

As a first step, Job asks, “How can a mortal be righteous before El?” (9:2b). He is at an impasse, and his associates do not seem to realize it.

Here Job is not accusing Bildad of saying something untrue, but of ignoring the facts in the case. Job is suffering; it is of God; Job cannot be justified before God; no one seems to have an explanation; and God Himself remains silent about it all (9:3).

What Bildad has said about God, that He rewards the righteous and rejects the sinner, is so inadequate! It just does not deal with the reality of the immediate evil. God is transcendently wise and powerful, doing great wonders and marvelous works (9:4-10). Human beings are not righteous before Him. And life is full of evil. Let these facts all be examined together. Job cannot fit them together, but he is making more progress than Bildad who refuses to associate them clearly.

Job cannot “see” God or “detect” His Character (9:11) or discover what He is up to. Yet he wants to know what God is doing (9:12).

Bildad was not at all helpful because he wanted to limit the discussion to the level of human accountability for their sins and divine justice in dealing with their sins. Consequently, Job turns again to Eloah concerning all these seemingly contradictory facts. But so far He remains silent. Even if Job were righteous, it appears that Eloah would not speak (9:13-16).

#### INJURED GRATUITOUSLY

Once again Job speaks boldly, even bluntly, to and concerning Deity (17-20). From what Job *knows* concerning his own faults and his present sufferings his injuries are gratuitous.

- 7 **The One <sup>sa</sup>speaking to the sun's disk**  
so **+that it** does not **'rise,**  
**And** Who places a **'seal about** the **stars,**
- 8 Who **alone** is **stretching out** the **heavens,**  
**And** Who is **treading on** the **high swells** of the **sea,**
- 9 Who is **d**making the **Great Bear, Orion**  
**And** the **Pleiades, +besides** the **chambers<sup>o</sup>** of the **south,**
- 10 Who is **doing great** wonders  
**until** there can be **no fathoming,**  
**And marvelous<sup>l</sup>** works **until** there can be **no numbering.**
- 11 **Behold,** when **He 'passes<sup>om</sup>** before me I cannot **'see** Him,  
**And** when **He 'passes by, + I** cannot **'detect >** Him.
- 12 **Behold, should He abduct, <sup>a</sup>who** could **'turn Him back?**  
**<sup>a</sup>Who** could **'say to Him, What are You doing?**
- 13 **Eloah, He** does not **'reverse His anger;**  
The **helpers<sup>l</sup>** of **Rahab<sup>o</sup>** **prostrate** beneath Him.
- 14 **Indeed, <sup>t</sup>how** should **I' answer** Him  
Or **'choose my words** with Him?
- 15 **I, who, <sup>if</sup>though** I were righteous, **<sup>7</sup>am not 'answered<sup>c</sup>**  
When **I am supplicating** to my **Judge<sup>l</sup>,**
- 16 **If I call** out, and **He should answer** me,  
**I could not 'believe that He is <sup>c</sup>giving ear** to my **voice.**
- 17 **He Who is hurting** me **<sup>t</sup>for** the worth of a **hair,**  
**And** Who **has multiplied my injuries** gratuitously,
- 18 **He does not <sup>lg</sup>allow** me to **get back** my **wind,**  
**'But** rather **He 'surfeits** me with **bitter** things.
- 19 **<sup>if</sup>As for vigor, behold** the **Resolute One,**  
**And <sup>if</sup>as for judgment, <sup>a</sup>who** can **<sup>lf</sup>summon <sup>7</sup>Him<sup>c</sup>?**
- 20 **<sup>if</sup>Though I were 'righteous,**  
**my mouth** would **'condemn** me;  
Though **I were flawless, He** would declare me **'perverse.**

9:9 chambers: i.e., starry regions.

9:13 Rahab: i.e., audacity, a symbol of Egypt (cf 26:12; Ps 87:4; Is 30:7).

9:15 7--c am not 'answered: Hb shall not answer.

9:19 7-c Him: Hb me.

Yahweh Himself had declared to the Adversary that he was trying to “incite Me against [Job] to swallow him up gratuitously” (Job 2:3). There was no discernable cause for Job’s sufferings. When all the suggestions of Eliphaz and Bildad are cleared aside as irrelevant, we are left at the present point in the debate with the harsh assessment that Job is afflicted for no purpose beyond “the worth of a hair,” that is, gratuitously (9:17). Furthermore, God, as “the Resolute One,” has so far revealed nothing further than this fact of Job’s condemnation.

We are aware that Job is not suffering gratuitously, and this by the very fact that it was God Who was swallowing him up. God does not do anything without a reason. God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11), and this is for good (Rom.8:28). But Job does not have this awareness, and he struggles just to maintain an honest and clear perspective on life as it is (9:21-24).

What Job’s associates are urging is a pretence. Job shows that their solution does not get to the root of the problem. God brings “both the flawless and the wicked one” to their end. Even more depressing, there is evidence He has given the earth into the hand of the wicked and blinds the judges (Job 9:24). “*If not He, indeed who is it?*”

That is the critical question. It must not be swept under the rug. The pain is too sharp to indulge in half truths and pious principles. Hence Job speaks frankly about what Eloah has brought upon him. His life is brief (9:25,26); he is physically unable to suppress his grief and smile (27,28); he is condemned and does not know why (29); and even if he could make himself pure before God, He would still dip him in the slough (30,31).

There is no question in Job’s mind that it is God Who is doing this. The question is whether or not God is aware of what He is doing and has a reason for doing it. Because of his suffering Job is able to leap miles ahead of his asso-

21 Were **I flawless**, I would **not know my own soul**;  
I would **reject my life**.

22 It is all **one**.

**Therefore I say**,

Both the **flawless and wicked** one

Will **He bring** to their *all* **end**.

23 If a **scourge brings death suddenly**,

**He derides** <sup>γ</sup> the **trial of the innocent**.

24 The **earth is given into the hand of the wicked**;

**He covers the faces of its judges**;

**If not He, indeed <sup>a</sup>who is it?**

25 + **My days are fleeter <sup>f</sup>than a runner**;

**They race away; they see no good**.

26 **They pass on <sup>wi</sup>like ships of bulrush**,

**Like the vulture that pounces down on its food**.

27 **If I say, Let me forget my concern**,

**Let me set my face free and smile**,

28 **I still shrink before all my griefs**;

**I know that You do not <sup>m</sup>hold me innocent**.

29 **I am already being condemned**;

**Why is this that I should be wearied in vain?**

30 **If I washed myself <sup>i</sup>with waters of snow**

**And purged my palms in purity**,

31 **Then You would dip me in the slough**,

**And my own raiments would abhor me**.

32 **For He is not a man like me that I should assert to Him**;

**Let us come together <sup>i</sup>for judgment**.

33 There is **not any arbitrator<sup>l</sup> between us**,

Who could **set his hand on us both**.

34 **Let Him withdraw His club from <sup>om</sup> me**,

**And let not the dread of Him frighten me**.

35 **Let me speak and not fear Him**,

**But I am not so within myself**.

10 **My soul is disgusted <sup>i</sup>with my life**;

**Let me give free rein <sup>om</sup>to myself and my concern**;

**Let me speak in the bitterness of my soul**.

ciates in considering the problem of evil in light of the existence of God.

Chapter nine ends with an important step forward in Job's thoughts. Turning from direct address, Job speaks of Deity in the third person (9:32-35). "He is not a man that I should assert to Him." Consequently, the suffering Job (the suffering "enemy") calls for an "arbitrator" between God and himself. This will be mentioned again in later speeches.

#### THE LABOR OF ELOAH'S PALMS

After this thought of an intermediary Job returns to his pleas directly addressed to Deity. In this there is no thought of telling God what is so, but of bringing what is so out in the open. Nor is there any thought of criticizing Deity, but rather a pressing desire to know that God is truly in charge. Job is a sinner and a creature of earth, but the fact remains that he is "the labor of Your hands" (10:3). Eloah does not see as a mortal sees (10:4); nevertheless "Your hands shaped me and made me" (10:8). All that Job has has come from God (10:11,12).

God has every right to do with us as He wants. But in our experiences of bitterness (10:1), we, like Job, desperately want to hear from Him. Job wants to know why Eloah contends with him (10:2); is there any *good* in this (10:3)? does God understand anything of our mortality and depravity and helplessness, without a rescuer (4-7)?

God brought Job into the world and molded him like clay (8-11). "Life and benignity have You granted to me." And even through his life, Job was aware that God was supervising and guarding him (10:12). But in relation to the present situation of extreme suffering and loss, God has *secluded* in His heart any hint of purpose or meaning (13a). All that Job knows concerning the mind of Deity in this is that whether he is wicked or righteous, Eloah hunts him like a lion, sends marvelous works against him and brings fresh changes of charging hosts upon him (10:13b-17).

- 2 **Let me 'say to Eloah, O do not 'condemn me!**  
 'Let me know *on wt* why You 'contend with me!
- 3 **Is it good to You that You should work harm,**  
**That You should reject the labor of Your palms,**  
**And that You shine on the counsel of the wicked?**
- 4 **Do You 'have eyes of flesh?**  
*if* Can You 'see as a mortal sees?
- 5 **Are Your days like a mortal's days,**  
*if* Or Your years like the days of a human master,
- 6 **That You should seek 'out my depravity**  
**And should inquire into my sin,**
- 7 *on* **Although Your knowledge is that I am not 'wicked,**  
**And there is no one rescuing from Your hand?**
- 8 **Your hands shaped me and 'made me;**  
 +Yet *afterward*~ You 'swallow me up round about.
- 9 **Remember, I pray, that You 'molded me like clay,**  
**And You shall turn me back to soil.**
- 10 **Did You not 'pour me forth like milk**  
**And 'curdle me like cheese?**
- 11 **You 'clothed me with skin and flesh,**  
**And 'hedged me together *i* with bones and sinews.**
- 12 **Life and benignity have You *d* granted *wi* to me,**  
**And Your supervision has guarded my spirit.**
- 13 **+Yet these things You secluded in Your heart;**  
**I know that this was *wi* in Your mind:**
- 14 **If I sin, +then You observe me,**  
**And You do not *m* hold me 'innocent 'of my depravity.**
- 15 **If I am wicked, woe to me!**  
 +Yet if I am righteous, I shall not lift up my head,  
**Surfeited with dishonor and ~satiated**  
 with~ my humiliation.
- 16 + ~August~, You 'hunt me like a black lion;  
 +Then You 'again and again send 'marvelous works  
*i* against me.

10:8 7-- afterward: Hb altogether.

10:15 --- satiated with: Hb see'.

10:16 --- August: Hb He is august.

- 17 **You 'renew Your testimonies in front of me,  
And You 'increase Your vexation <sup>wi</sup>against me;  
Changes <sup>+of</sup> hosts come <sup>wi</sup>upon me.**
- 18 **+Then why did You <sup>c</sup>bring me forth from the womb?  
I would have 'breathed my last,  
and no<sup>t</sup> eye would have 'seen me.**
- 19 **I would have <sup>lb</sup>been just as if I had not come into being;  
I would have been 'fetched from the belly to the tomb.**
- 20 **Are not <sup>7</sup>the days of my transient lifetime few<sup>~c</sup>?  
<sup>set</sup>Turn away from me <sup>+that</sup> I may smile a little,**
- 21 **<sup>i</sup> Ere I 'go away and not 'return,  
To a country of darkness and the blackest shadow,**
- 22 **A country of such faintness as deepest gloom,  
Of blackest shadow and disorder,  
And which 'shines like deepest gloom.**

10:20 7--c the days of my transient lifetime few: Hb my days few which are 'left off.



This is the sort of problem that Job insists on investigating. The associates refuse to touch it with a ten foot pole. And Eloah remains silent. And there does not seem to be a mediator. Consequently, once again Job pleads for a brief respite and then “deepest gloom . . . blackest shadow and disorder” (10:20-22).

But death is no solution, as God has now made clear through Paul (Phil.1:23). It is not an end of pain in the darkness and emptiness of death that solves the problem of pain, but rather the defeat of pain and its justification through the faith of Jesus Christ, with the consummation of the appreciation of the glory of God in life. Job would not see this fully, but he will receive what becomes an early type and picture of the Creator's solution. God is for us; He Who spares not His own Son but gives Him up for us all shall be graciously granting us all. D.H.H.